

Have another cigarette?

No . . . no, thank you not right now.

Here take one. It will ~~make~~ ^{bring you} feel better.

No, not right now, please. I want to talk first. I tried to give up the bloody things once but it was no go, ~~but~~ ^{not right now, please.} I want to ~~talk~~ ^{talk first.}

Well then?

The time? Hell who knew ~~what~~ ^{with} the time was? Who really cared? The Japanese never permitted us that luxury. They didn't even give us any of their propaganda. We knew nothing about our situation except that we were rotting in some flippin prison camp somewhere in Burma (we thought, though still weren't sure) under that bloody burma sun, the jungle all around us, the rats, the lice, the rotten food. ~~Oh~~ ^{My} god, it was hell. We were the privileged ones Major Crosby said. We were the ones who couldn't be broken and that was why we were isolated from the rest of the camp, separated from it by a wall of impenetrable jungle, so high, so dense that until we heard a man's death screams on the other side we thought we were completely ~~isolated~~ ^{the maddening} by ourselves miles from ~~any other~~ ^{any other} ~~good~~ ^{good} Australians.

~~I still to this day do not know why I was placed in with the others.~~

~~My brother was in the camp with me. He was captured sometime after I~~
~~was~~

I still to this day am not sure why I was separated with the others. I was not noisy like the others, nor really very deficient. I told them nothing of course, but then I told them that I had nothing to tell. Which

What time was it? Hell, no one there knew what the time was, nor really cared. The Japanese never permitted us the luxury. Hell, the war could have been over for all we knew

was the truth. Only colonel Crosbey and a few others really knew our strength. They never confided that knowledge to the rest of the men. ~~For~~ My interrogators seemed satisfied. They never bothered me after that except for the usual routine affairs. They even offered to let me write a letter home to my family and promptly assured me that they would get it. After I told them I had no family they left me alone entirely. That is why I think my brother had something to do with it. He was captured much later than I was, the exact time I do not know. I know that it was weeks ^{before} ~~until~~ they put us into the pen ^{which} ~~that~~ they were ^{then} building for us. Geofry, my brother was a trouble maker from the start. He defied the Japanese at every ~~turn~~ ^{turn} and was many ^{times} ~~times~~ severely beaten for it. Still he would not relent in his defiance ^{which} ~~which~~ became more drastic each time he displayed it. The only time I was ^{allowed} ~~allowed~~ to speak to him, I warned him about his obtuseness, but he only said humph and stopped off across the compound. I never spoke to him again. Major Crosbey would not permit it. He said that if the Japanese ever found out that we were brothers it would prove a useful tool to them for interrogation. I scoffed at such a ridiculous idea. I knew Geofry would, but the Major still said no go. He really didn't have to, ^{though} ~~for~~ Geofry after that day never seemed to want to speak to me. I could not understand why he looked at me as though I were a traitor. I only tried to caution him.

A week or so before they moved us into ~~the compound~~ that horrible hell which they were building for us, my brother Geofry was killed. He was trying to escape they said. Colonel Crosbey witnessed the affair and he later told me that my brother died most bravely. He had jumped a guard and was about to slit his throat with a wire when another guard which Geofry had not seen came up behind my brother and bayonnetted him in the back. The Major said that Geofry was defiantly not dead when the two guards dragged him from the compound, ~~infact~~ ^{in fact} that he was screaming. But the Japanese commandant later informed the major of my brother's death. I did not cry; I thought it was only a matter of a little more time until I too would follow Geofry. I was not well, you see.

It was early morning before sunrise when they came to get us. In spite of the heat there was a chill in the air. There was just enough light in the east to silhouette the jungle which surrounded the camp. The animals were already beginning to make their noises and I could hear monkeys, birds, insects screeching in the trees above us. The major and two attendants came to our hut, the major rapped on the pole with his swagger stick.

Alright boys get up. Johnson, Smith, Tyler and Dibbits get your gear and come with us. We're going on a little vacation.

The men began to mumble and to move around in the darkness.

~~Excerpt~~

"Common, hurry up with you," shouted the Major briskly. "The Nips don't like to be kept waiting. There not so polite, you know."

The four of us got what few belongings we had and followed the major's ~~silhouette~~ out into the compound where there were other men standing around talking low to each other or just standing by themselves waiting for what was to come next. Some of them were talking about a firing squad, but the major's chipper nature seemed to dispell that. As the sky got lighter I could see the Japanese guards, maybe twenty of them standing around in two lines on both sides of us with their rifles turned on the men. Then at the gate appeared colonel Basho, head man at the camp. He said something to one of the guards standing by the gate, then he turned around and walked quickly back to his office which stood not far from the compound. Then the Nips began to motion at us with their rifles. The Major lined us up (there were about fifty of us) and told us to march slowly out through the gate to where three trucks were waiting. The Guards motioned for us to get into the trucks; we of course obeyed and then they lashed the canvas down over the back so that we couldn't see. We were on the road for more than a half an hour and we made many turns and bridge crossing during that time. Some of the men in my truck whose senses were more acute than mine insisted that we were making a huge circle and that we were actually coming back to camp. They were correct, though none of us were to learn such until we heard the man in his death agonies

I shall never forget that moment when the canvas dropped down from the back of our truck, revealing in the early morning light, the pen that they had build for us. My heart sunk low. There were no sheds in the pen, nothing to keep the shade out except a rim of tin nailed around the

far end of the pen to form a crude sort of awning. In the middle of the pen was a trough. The guard's head appeared in the back of the truck.

" Out! "

The men said nothing as they ~~that~~ got down off the truck. They did not take their eyes from the cage. Even the major was silent. He spoke not a word until all of the men were out of the trucks and even then he only mumbled ^{few words} something in a low voice to Lieutenant Gordon. The guards formed into two lines a sort of lane funneling down to the opening of the pen. The men followed the major silently into cage and then some one said.

" They're puttin' us in a bloomin' pig pen. "

" It ain't going to be no picnic, " someone else said.

The major kept quiet. There was simply nothing that he could tell us that would have made any difference.