

about us lay the putrifying bodies of our own men killed there three or four months previously. We lost as little time as possible getting away.

Our march that night was one I shall never forget. About us were the white limestone cliffs of the Shingmun Valley, shining in the light of a full moon. The quality of the light somehow suited the country. It eliminated distances: it scored every cleft of the valley and made the shapes and promontories of the hills familiar.



We were fortunate enough to find the main road again, but almost as soon as we had done so we had another lucky escape. As we sheltered in the shadows at the side of the road, two Japanese passed within 10 ft. of us. For the next few days we marched over hills and through swampy valleys. Our food-supply, which consisted at the time of our escape of two tins of bully, a tin of cheese, and a tin of sardines—sardines were worth about £30 a tin—had run out and we were getting very hungry.

Then, one very cold misty night in the hills, we met a Chinese who spoke excellent English. He told us he was a pro-British guerrilla operating in the surrounding country, and said that if we cared to wait a few hours he would find food and arrange for a junk to take us across the bay. Earlier that day we had passed through a village where we paid a thousand dollars in Hongkong currency for a guide for the afternoon. We surmised that this fellow, having seen our money there, had followed us.

The whole thing seemed a bit suspect, but we decided to accept the fellow's offer. It had been raining continuously for two days and we were wet, tired and, hungry. This possibility of assistance, therefore, was one we were not prepared to give up. The Chinese took us to a

cleft in the hills and told us to wait for two or three hours while he made the necessary arrangements.

We must then have dropped off to sleep, for the next thing I remember was seeing a man waving a dagger and shouting "Yakpunchai!" (Cantonese for "We are Japanese men"). One of my friends, Tony, was on the ground with four men beating him up. The only weapon at hand was a pole, sharpened at one end, which we had found in the hills. I picked this up and drove it into the stomach of the nearest of our assailants. As he collapsed, two more of the bandits—there must have been eight or nine of them altogether—turned to deal with me, but at this moment Doug, the third member of our party, appeared, from where I don't know, and smashed one of them over the head with a bayonet, which he had apparently taken from an earlier opponent. Between us, Doug and I managed to account for about four of them, and the others ran away.

When we picked Tony up we found he had two terrific gashes across the scalp and all the tendons of his right arm were severed. He was only semi-conscious, but we patched him up the best way we could with a couple of field dressings which we happened to have, and as soon as possible went on our way again.

Tony in the next few days performed miracles. The pain in his arm must have been great, but not once did I hear him complain. Doug, who was an Army doctor, managed to keep the wounds clean until we were able to get Tony to hospital some two weeks later, and this although we had only one bottle of permanganate and sometimes had to wash the wounds in stagnant water.

The day after this encounter one of Doug's knees packed up on him, and I contracted dysentery. And so when a couple of nights later we fell in with more bandits we were in no condition to oppose them. This time there were about sixty of them, and if we had resisted we would probably all have been killed. After they had stripped us of everything of value, the bandits, however, were not at all sure what to do with us. They held us for twenty-four hours, then let us go.