

PM

AUGUST 28, 1945

Yank POWs in Tokyo Dance for Supply Planes

Display 'Take Us Home Signs'; Food, Medicine Dropped

By **EARNEST HOBERECHT**
United Press Correspondent



IN A HELLDIVER
OVER TOKYO, Aug. 28.
One hundred and fifty
feet below me I can see

American prisoners of war, jubilantly happy, cavorting in a war dance as this carrier plane and others like it flash by, dropping bundles of food and medicine.

The Yanks are smiling and laughing. As Navy pilot Ensign Merrill Skinner, Buhl, Idaho, skims overhead at tree-top level, we see them fling their arms high and wide in a joyous greeting. The prisoners apparently have the freedom of the camps.

For six hours, Skinner has been diving and banking this divebomber at extremely low level over the wrecked buildings of devastated Tokyo.

As we speed through Honshu's skies, we find Japanese coastal waters dotted with small fishing craft. Wrecked Japanese ships litter Tokyo Bay. My pilot had a hand in sinking some of them.

Work on Battleship

Over Yokosuka naval base I can see many gun positions which had made this area the dreaded "flak

OldMagazineArticles.com

2 Tokyo POWs

alley" for pilots approaching Tokyo. I see men working aboard the battered battleship Nagato. Some of the planes on the Yokosuka runways seem in good condition, but most appear damaged.

Tokyo seems desolate. Buildings still standing are burned out inside. There is some activity in the streets.

We veer toward the Imperial Palace. We can see the famed moat and precise formal gardens, untouched by bombs.

As we leave Tokyo, we see new prisoner camps. All are marked with American-erected signs in addition to the big "PW" signs put up by the Japs.

At one camp there is a sign:

"Take us home—thanks Yorktown."

The reference is to the carrier Yorktown, whose pilots dropped supplies to the interned men.

At another camp a sign says: "Food, candy, home!"

Bundle Misses Mark

One of the most heart-breaking sights of the trip comes when I see a parachute laden with supplies float down outside one camp. The prisoners line the fence—watching it fall outside their grasp. Some climb to a rooftop to wave directions to the pilot so he will hit the target on the next try.

At one camp the prisoners wave a French flag.

Most of the camps have gardens inside the fence. At one, there is wash hanging on lines between the buildings. About 100 men are in the enclosure. At another, the buildings appear to have been patched up by the men themselves. Men on the roofs are only partly clothed.

We see the prisoner-of-war camp at Kawasaki south of Tokyo. Kawasaki is a big oil center and has been a target of the B-29's. The camp is near a large grain elevator, which has been damaged. The Japanese buildings in the area show signs of bomb damage but the prisoner buildings are in fair condition.