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"From Pearl Harbor to Calvary"

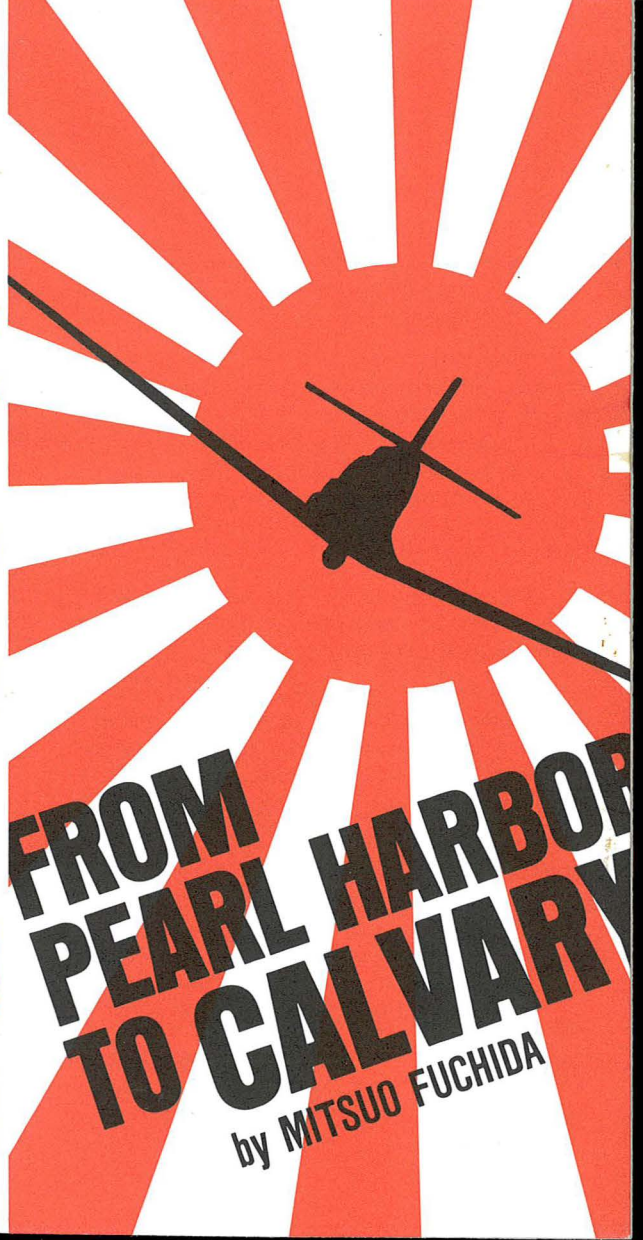
Mitsuo Fuchida

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**FROM
PEARL HARBOR
TO CALVARY**

by **MITSUO FUCHIDA**

Never underestimate the power of the printed page. It has a way of penetrating into minds and hearts as nothing else can!

For half a century, Bible Literature International has been the leading supplier of evangelical literature to missionaries and nationals on the world's front lines of evangelism. As a result, many amazing testimonies of how the "quiet miracle" of literature has transformed lives have filtered back to BLI's office in Columbus, Ohio.

The story you are about to read is a thrilling classic . . . the actual testimony of Mitsuo Fuchida, the commander of the Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor.

With permission from CAMPUS LIFE magazine, we are reprinting the first person account of Fuchida, as told to Dean Merrill, CL's contributing editor . . . just as it appeared in the December 1970 issue.

Along with this testimony, we have included the actual wording of the BLI tract, "I WAS A PRISONER OF WAR" by Jacob DeShazer, which led to Fuchida's conversion, and later, to his becoming Japan's most outstanding Christian evangelist.

— J. M. Falkenberg
President, Bible Literature International

FROM PEARL HARBOR TO CALVARY!

by Mitsuo Fuchida

Commander of Pearl Harbor Attack

I MUST ADMIT I was more excited than usual as I awoke that morning at 3:00 a.m., Hawaii time, four days past my 39th birthday. Our six aircraft carriers were positioned 230 miles north of Oahu Island. As general commander of the air squadron, I made last-minute checks on the intelligence information reports in the operations room before going to warm up my single engine, three-seater "97-type" plane used for level bombing and torpedo flying.

The sunrise in the east was magnificent above the white clouds as I led 360 planes towards Hawaii at an altitude of 3,000 meters. I knew my objective: to surprise and cripple the American naval force in the Pacific. But I fretted about being thwarted should some of the U.S. battleships not be there. I gave no thought of the possibility of this attack breaking open a mortal confrontation with the United States. I was only concerned about making a military success.

As we neared the Hawaiian Islands that bright Sunday morning, I made a preliminary check of the harbor, nearby Hickam Field and

the other installations surrounding Honolulu. Viewing the entire American Pacific Fleet peacefully at anchor in the inlet below, I smiled as I reached for the mike and ordered, "All squadrons, plunge in to attack!" The time was 7:49 a.m.

Like a hurricane out of nowhere, my torpedo planes, dive bombers and fighters struck suddenly with indescribable fury. As smoke began to billow and the proud battleships, one by one, started tilting, my heart was almost ablaze with joy. During the next three hours, I directly commanded the 50 level bombers as they pelted not only Pearl Harbor, but the airfields, barracks and dry docks nearby. Then I circled at a higher altitude to accurately assess the damage and report it to my superiors.

(Of the eight battleships in the harbor, five were mauled into total inactivity for the time being. The Arizona was scrapped for good; the Oklahoma, California and West Virginia were sunk. The Nevada was beached in a sinking condition; only the Pennsylvania, Maryland and Tennessee were able to be repaired. Of the eight, the California, West Virginia and Nevada were salvaged much later, but the Oklahoma, after being raised, was resunk as worthless. Other smaller ships were damaged, but the sting of 3,077 U.S. Navy personnel killed or missing and 876 wounded, plus 226 Army killed and 396 wounded, was something which could never be repaired.)

It was the most thrilling exploit of my career. Ever since I had heard of my country's winning the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, I had dreamed of becoming an admiral like Admiral Togo, our commander-in-chief in the decisive Battle of the Japan Sea.

Because my father was a primary school principal and a very patriotic nationalist, I was able to enroll in the Naval Academy when I was 18. Upon graduation three years later, I joined the Japanese Naval Air Force, and served mostly as an aircraft carrier pilot for the next 15 years. So when the time came to choose the chief commander for the Pearl Harbor mission, I had logged over 10,000 hours, making me the most experienced pilot in the Japanese Navy.

During the next four years, I was determined to improve upon my Pearl Harbor feat. I saw action in the Solomon Islands, Java, the Indian Ocean; just before the Battle of Midway on June 4, 1942, I came down with an attack of appendicitis and was unable to fly. Lying in my bed, I grimaced at the sounds of the firing all about me. By the end of that day, we had suffered our first major defeat, losing ten warships altogether.

From that time on, things got worse. I did not want to surrender. I would rather have fought to the last man. However, when the Emperor announced that we would surrender, I acquiesced.

I was in Hiroshima the day before the atom bomb was dropped, attending a week-long military conference with the Army. Fortunately, I received a long distance call from my Navy Headquarters, asking me to return to Tokyo.

With the end of the war, my military career was over, since all Japanese forces were disbanded. I returned to my home village near Osaka and began farming, but it was a discouraging life. I became more and more unhappy, especially when the war crime trials opened in Tokyo. Though I was never accused, Gen. Douglas MacArthur summoned me to testify on several occasions.

As I got off the train one day in Tokyo's Shibuya Station, I saw an American distributing literature. When I passed him, he handed me a pamphlet entitled, "I Was a Prisoner of Japan." (Published by Bible Literature International, known then as Bible Meditation League). Involved right then with the trials on atrocities committed against war prisoners, I put it in my pocket, determining to read the story later.

What I read was the fascinating episode which eventually changed my life. On that Sunday while I was in the air over Pearl Harbor, an American soldier named Jake DeShazer had been on K.P. duty in an Army camp in California. When the radio announced the sneak demolishing of Pearl Harbor, he hurled a potato at the wall and shouted, "Jap, just wait and see what we'll do to you!"

One month later he volunteered for a secret mission with the Jimmy Doolittle Squadron — a surprise raid on Tokyo from the carrier Hornet. On April 18, 1942, DeShazer was one of the bombardiers, and was filled with elation at getting his revenge. After the bombing raid, they flew on towards China, but ran out of fuel and were forced to parachute into Japanese-held territory. The next morning, DeShazer found himself a prisoner of Japan.

During the next 40 long months in confinement, DeShazer was cruelly treated. He recalls that his violent hatred for the maltreating Japanese guards almost drove him insane at one point. But after 25 months there in Nanking, China, the U.S. prisoners were given a Bible to read. DeShazer, not being an officer, had to let the others use it first. Finally, it came his turn — for three weeks. There in the Japanese P. O. W. camp, he read and read — and eventually came to understand that the book was more than a historical classic. Its message became relevant to him right there in his cell.

The dynamic power of Christ which Jake DeShazer accepted into his life changed his entire attitude toward his captors. His hatred turned to love and concern, and he resolved that should his country win the war and he be liberated, he would someday return to Japan to introduce others to this life-changing book.

DeShazer did just that. After some training at Seattle Pacific College, he returned to Japan

as a missionary. And his story, printed in pamphlet form, was something I could not explain.

Neither could I forget it. The peaceful motivation I had read about was exactly what I was seeking.

Since the American pilot had found it in the Bible, I decided to purchase one myself, despite my traditionally Buddhist heritage.

In the ensuing weeks, I read this book eagerly. I came to the climactic drama—the Crucifixion. I read in Luke 23:34 the prayer of Jesus Christ at His death: “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” I was impressed that I was certainly one of those for whom He had prayed. The many men I had killed had been slaughtered in the name of patriotism, for I did not understand the love which Christ wishes to implant within every heart.

Right at that moment, I seemed to meet Jesus for the first time. I understood the meaning of His death as a substitute for my wickedness, and so in prayer, I requested Him to forgive my sins and change me from a bitter, disillusioned ex-pilot into a well-balanced Christian with purpose in living.

That date, April 12, 1950—became the second “day to remember” of my life. On that day, I became a new person. My complete view on life was changed by the intervention of the Christ I had always hated and ignored before. Soon other friends beyond my close

family learned of my decision to be a follower of Christ, and they could hardly understand it.

Big headlines appeared in the papers: “Pearl Harbor Hero Converts to Christianity.” Old war buddies came to visit me, trying to persuade me to discard “this crazy idea.” Others accused me of being an opportunist, embracing Christianity only for how it might impress our American victors.

But time has proven them wrong. As an evangelist, I have traveled across Japan and the Orient introducing others to the One who changed my life. I believe with all my heart that those who will direct Japan—and all other nations—in the decades to come must not ignore the message of Jesus Christ. Youth must realize that He is the only hope for this troubled world.

Though my country has the highest literacy rate in the world, education has not brought salvation. Peace and freedom—both national and personal—come only through an encounter with Jesus Christ.

I would give anything to retract my actions of 29 years ago at Pearl Harbor, but it is impossible. Instead, I now work at striking the death-blow to the basic hatred which infests the human heart and causes such tragedies. And that hatred cannot be uprooted without assistance from Jesus Christ.

He is the only One who was powerful

enough to change my life and inspire it with His thoughts. He was the only answer to Jake DeShazer's tormented life. He is the only answer for young people today.

Reproduction of actual page of DeShazer tract, where Mitsuo Fuchida signed his decision to accept Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

東京都世田谷区三軒茶屋一丁目四番地
ローター・ミチヲ

私は唯今、神の獨子に在すイエス・キリストを私自身の救主として御受けいたします。
住所、氏名は日本語と、ローマ字兩方で御書き下さい。
日本語名前 日本字名前
住所 奈良県高市郡敵傍町見瀬
ローマ字 Mitsuo Fuchida
Address Miso, Utsuki-cho, Takaini-gun,
Nara-ken
この契約の日附 一九四二年二月二十七日

Reproduction of front cover of tract which led to Fuchida's conversion . . . "I WAS A PRISONER OF WAR" by Jacob DeShazer . . . published by Bible Literature International (known then as Bible Meditation League). Its actual wording appears on following pages . . .



I WAS A PRISONER OF WAR

by Jacob DeShazer

I WAS A PRISONER of war for forty long months, thirty-four of them in a solitary confinement.

When I flew as a member of a bombing squadron on a raid over enemy territory on April 18th, 1942, my heart was filled with bitter hatred for the people of that nation. When our plane ran out of petrol and the members of the crew of my plane had to parachute down into enemy-held territory and were captured by the enemy, the bitterness of my heart

against my captors seemed more than I could bear.

Taken to prison with the survivors of another of our planes, we were imprisoned and beaten, half-starved, terribly tortured, and denied by solitary confinement even the comfort of association with one another. Three of my buddies were executed by a firing squad about six months after our capture, and fourteen months later, another of them died of slow starvation. My hatred for the enemy nearly drove me crazy.

It was soon after the latter's death that I began to ponder the cause of such hatred between members of the human race. I wondered what it was that made one people hate another people and what made me hate them.

My thoughts turned toward what I heard about Christianity changing hatred between human beings into real brotherly love and I was gripped with a strange longing to examine the Christian's Bible to see if I could find the secret.

I begged my captors to get a Bible for me. At last, in the month of May, 1944, a guard brought me the Book, but told me I could have it only for three weeks.

I eagerly began to read its pages. Chapter after chapter gripped my heart. In due time I came to the books of the prophets, and found that their every writing seemed focused on a divine Redeemer from sin, One who was to be

sent from Heaven to be born in the form of a human babe. Their writings so fascinated me that I read them again and again until I had earnestly studied them through six times.

Then, I went on into the New Testament, and there read of the birth of Jesus Christ, the One who actually fulfilled the very prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and the other Old Testament writers.

My heart rejoiced as I found confirmed in Acts 10:43, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His Name, whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins." After I carefully read this book of the Acts, I continued on into the study of the epistle Paul wrote to the Christians at Rome.

On June 8th, 1944, the words in Romans 10:9 stood out boldly before my eyes: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

In that very moment, God gave me grace to confess my sins to Him, and He forgave me all my sins and saved me for Jesus' sake, even as I later found that His Word again promises so clearly in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

How my heart rejoiced in my newness of spiritual life, even though my body was suffer-

ing so terribly from the physical beatings and lack of food! But suddenly I discovered that God had given me new spiritual eyes, and that when I looked at the enemy officers and guards who had starved and beaten me and my companions so cruelly, I found my bitter hatred for them changed to loving pity.

I realized that these people did not know anything about my Saviour and that if Christ is not in a heart, it is natural to be cruel. I read in my Bible that while those who crucified Jesus had beaten Him, and spit upon Him before He was nailed to the cross, on the Cross He tenderly prayed in His moment of excruciating suffering, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

And now, from the depths of my heart, I too prayed for God to forgive my torturers, and I determined by the aid of Christ to do my best to acquaint these people with the message of salvation that they might become as other believing Christians.

With His love controlling my heart, the 13th chapter of First Corinthians took on a living meaning: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things. Love never faileth."

A year passed by, and during that year the

memories of the weeks I had been permitted to spend with my Bible grew sweeter and sweeter day by day. Then, one day as I was sitting in my solitary confinement cell I became very sick. My heart was painning me, even as my fellow prisoner had told me his was painning him just before he died of starvation.

I slid down onto my knees and began to pray. The guards rushed in and began to punish me, but I kept right on praying. Finally, they let me alone. God in that hour revealed unto me how to endure suffering.

At last freedom came. On August 20th, 1945, parachutists dropped onto the prison grounds and released us from our cells. We were flown back to our own country and placed in hospitals where we slowly regained our physical strength.

I have completed my training in a Christian College, God having clearly commanded me: "Go, teach those people who held you prisoner the way of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ," and am now back in that land as a missionary, with the one single purpose to lead me—to make Christ known.

I am sending this testimony to people everywhere, with the earnest prayer that a great host of people may confess Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.

Signed:
Jacob DeShazer

For additional copies, write to:



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Box 477, Columbus, Ohio 43216