

Feb. 26, 1945  
Philippines

Dear Emelia,

Greetings to you and all the family in U.S. and Canada. I was liberated by those wonderful American boys Feb. 23, 1945. It was one of the most thrilling, adventurous, sensational piece of work I ever saw or read about.

We were almost dead from starvation and on the morning of the 23rd. at 7 A.M.-- they had planned to kill us all at the morning Roll Call. Remember I was not at Santo Tomas but out by a woods--Los Banos--that was the location of our internment camp. Fortunately some Filipino guerrillas heard of their plan to shoot us at 7 A.M. and they were able to notify the American army who immediately planned our rescue. At 20 minutes to seven the morning we were to be shot, parachute troops came down and we saw them and were we thrilled and they were a beautiful sight against the pink morning sky. The paratroops attracted the attention of the Japs who forgot us for the moment and at the same time Filipino guerrillas from the mountains and everywhere led by Americans surrounded our camp and with the machine guns, rifles, etc. worked very fast and at first we thought the shots were from the Japs because they came from outside the camp wall. Soon a fist poked through the sawall fence near my barrack window and this American voice said, "Where are the Japs" I said "Are you Americans," He said "Yes, we are." So you are real Americans," says I. He said "Yes, we are, are there any Japs inside?" Inside and outside of all the barracks they fired and fought. I lay flat under my bed. I was to happy and thrilled that I forgot to be afraid. Once in a while I poked my head out to see as I didn't want to miss any for it isn't every day that you are the center of interest in a battle and I took a chance and peeked out. Everything happened very very fast. They told us to pack a few things and to go out to the front gate as soon as possible. So I packed a few articles between shots and at 9:10 A.M. about two hours after the dear boys landed 2,300 were in amphibian tractors and off to our destination which is a military secret. Before leaving the Japs were firing at us and all the barracks were set on fire. It was grand to cross the lake in an amphibian tractor. We stopped once to fire at some Japs. Now we are in a fairly safe place. Subject to be transferred at any moment. We have loads of food now. Imagine seeing milk, bread, butter, sugar, meat and candy after all these years. The army is taking good care of us. I went down to 96 lbs, which is good weight for an internee. We nearly all died--lost practically everything. While in internment we ran out of clothes--wore wooden shoes--homemade. Anyway the important thing was to save our skins. I've just been here a few days and I think I've put on 5 lbs. My health is good and I am as happy as any one can be. God bless those dear boys who saved us. I am doing nursing duty. At the beginning of the war before the Japanese occupation I also took care of the wounded soldiers. I love nursing. Today a plane dropped by parachutes a lot of food and other supplies. It was a glorious sight, and dropped with such accuracy.

I have a piece of parachute that one of the boys used when he came to rescue us at Los Banos. I also have some empty shells from the shots that missed me or that I missed! I'll send the souvenirs after the war. Are any of the nephews in the service? Where is ~~John's~~ husband? Got your cable of Father's death Oct. 24, 1945. Many masses were said for ~~him~~.

Manila is almost entirely destroyed and many people were massacred. I'm heart broken over the number of friends that have been killed. I trust all the big family is well. Write, use address on envelope.

Love to all,  
Sister M. Clotilde

P.S. I picked weeds every day and ate them to keep alive. Do write often.