

BUILDING PERMITS

Building permits in the amount of \$7,288,286 were issued by the Los Angeles building department in August. This compares with \$5,818,951 in July, and with \$3,208,796 in August, 1944.

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A GREAT SHOW!
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STARTS NEXT WED.

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CONNECTICUT"

ALSO

"WITHIN THESE

WALLS"

TORRANCE THEATRE

PHONE TORRANCE 132

NOW ENDS SAT.

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LADY"

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SUN. MON. TUES.

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EVERY WEDNESDAY

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Two Features

ACTION — THRILLS

— FUN

Lt. Louis Zamperini, Local Hero, Enroute Home From Jap Prisons, Says Writer

(Continued from Page 1-A)

exposure and thirst and the Japanese torture except that his weight is down from a normal 160 to 143 pounds. But when Japanese fishermen captured him and Phillips in the Marshalls he weighed only 87 pounds.

Flow Jinx Plane

Phillips took off from Kuaola Airport on Oahu Island, Hawaii, on May 27, 1943, to search for a B-25 reported down 200 miles northwest of Palmyra. They took a jinx plane that no one liked to fly. The eager co-pilot asked Phillips to exchange seats with him and the latter did. For that reason the co-pilot is dead and Phillips lived.

At 2 o'clock that sunny day the plane reached the area where the B-25 had gone down. Zamperini warned the crew to be on the lookout and was about to report to the pilot when the two port engines died. The plane turned to the left and slanted into the sea, nose down. There was a terrific explosion and Zamperini found his neck pinned beneath a machine-gun mount and coils of wire around his waist and legs holding him down.

He already had grabbed a life raft. This and the University of Southern California ring on his finger saved his life. The plane dipped beneath the waves as it exploded. The part where Zamperini was shot back to the surface.

Then the plane dove again. Zamperini, trapped, felt pressure in his ears, then his head became one vast ache and he began swallowing water. He yanked the cord inflating his Mae West life belt. This and

the buoyancy of the raft pulled him upward, badly wrenching his neck and tearing flesh from his legs and body as the gun and wires reluctantly let him go. His ring caught on the window casing, badly gashing his finger, but now he knew in the subterranean darkness that he had one hand on the window. He wrenched it open and shot to the surface.

The water was covered with gasoline. The half-drowned Zamperini saw two rafts and Phillips and McIntyre struggling in the sea. Zamperini clambered in with him. Then he took the aluminum paddles and rowed 40 feet to the other raft, where he placed McIntyre after lashing the two frail rubber boats together.

Bleeding Halted

Phillips had a great triangular cut in his head and other gashes. The raft was half full of mixed sea water and blood. Remembering his physical education course at Southern California, Lt. Zamperini worked the pressure point on Lt. Phillips' body for six hours until the bleeding stopped.

The rations in rafts consisted solely of six pounds of chocolate. He gave some to Phillips, half as much to McIntyre and took none himself. That night the rest of the chocolate disappeared. The emergency water cans gave each man a few swallows for two days, then that was gone.

After that the adventure followed the usual raft story pattern, except that it eclipsed them all in endurance. Phillips appointed Zamperini as captain of the rafts. Then they hungered, thirsted and suffered from sun and salt water until their upper lips pressed against their noses and their lower lips like raw welts hung slack "like the under lip of an African savage," Zamperini said.

Water From Squalls

"Little squalls gave us about one mouthful of water about every seven days," he continued, "although once we went 10 days without drinking."

They caught two tiny fish, and once Zamperini grabbed a two and a half foot shark by the tail and ripped out its liver with a pair of pliers—their only implement of any kind. Three small birds and four albatross lit on the raft to rest, they caught these by the legs—being badly bitten on the hands—and ate them. That was the sum of their sustenance for 47 days.

On the 27th day they saw their third plane. All planes brought tragedy to the raft. On the second day, a B-25 flew by at 8000 feet and two miles off, failing to notice the flames and dye markers on the water. On the third day, a plane passed directly overhead at 3000 feet, despite the dye markers and the flames that Zamperini fired in front of and behind it.

Raft Machine-gunned

On the 27th day the rafts

were under Japanese air lanes and the third plane was a "Betty," a two-motored bomber that dived to 300 feet and mercilessly raked the raft with its machine guns.

"The bullets missed us all by hairbreadths," Zamperini declared.

Time after time, with machine guns spitting, the Japanese pilot flew over the rafts, and finally gave it up. The rafts were riddled.

Young McIntyre was by now a bearded skeleton. He had periods of mental derangement that Zamperini always cured by threatening to report him, "whereupon" Army discipline reasserted itself.

Youth Given Truth

On the 33rd day, the starving youth knew he was going to die.

"How long will I last?" he asked in a whisper.

Zamperini felt it was as well to be honest with the boy who knew his death was near. It would have been unkind to promise the last further agony. "I think," said Zamperini softly, "you'll die during the night."

"Yes sir," the boy whispered. "I think you're right, Lt. Zamperini."

At 3 a.m., Zamperini heard a slight moan. Young McIntyre lay with his eyes closed, motionless. The lieutenant felt his pulse; there was none. He put his ear to the skeleton chest and heard no beat. The brave young heart was still forever.

As the sun broke above the rim of their lonely world, Zamperini said the Lord's Prayer, then eulogized the boy for half an hour, telling of the lad's frequent kindnesses and good deeds. Then to make the pathetic funeral more like the service of the Catholic Church, which was the boy's faith and Zamperini's, too, he extemporized a prayer. Finally, with one hand pushing and the other merely guiding, Zamperini gently slid the body into the sea.

Drift On and On

Suffering as few men have, Zamperini and Phillips drifted on and on. They saw Japanese planes about every other day. They knew they were drifting directly into the Japanese-held Marshall Islands.

The raft bobbed sickeningly in a storm. Once when it rose to the top of a mountainous wave Zamperini saw a patch of green.

"I had thought we'd go nuts if this happened," he asserted, "but actually I just turned around and remarked in a conversational tone, 'say, Phillips, there's an island over there.'"

All that day and night they paddled when they were able. By morning they could hear the surf breaking on the coral reef. Then it stormed, but they rode it out.

Awaken in Lagoon

Waking at 8 a.m., they found themselves inside a lagoon, encircled by a dozen islets. When they were about 300 yards from the beach, they saw what looked like another island with a single tree, then two trees. Then the second tree slid behind the first. It was a ship zigzagging in the lagoon as fishermen trolled.

The ship spotted the raft, straightened her course and overhauled it swiftly. Phillips threw up his hands and Zamperini waved. The Japanese, with a machine-gun and rifles ready, threw a rope and hauled the Americans aboard.

None of the 15 Japanese understood English. Cautiously, they tied the flyers' hands behind their backs and sat them against a mast. One threatened

Phillips with a revolver and another waved a bayonet back and forth past Zamperini's throat. Then the boat's captain made them stop such menacing horseplay and gave the captives a piece of hard tack and a cup of water—their first food and drink in eight days.

"It was delicious," said Zamperini.

Kindness at Wotje

After traveling 30 miles the Japanese transferred the prisoners and the raft to another boat. They were untied there, but were bound again and blindfolded as the boat reached an island the flyers later learned was Wotje. On Wotje the first order the flyers heard was an officer saying in English as well as Japanese, so his captives could understand, "they are American flyers. Treat them gently."

For three days on Wotje they were fed and cared for by a kindly Japanese doctor, slept on heavenly mattresses and received a ration of cognac. Then they were transferred to Kwajalein. To them, Kwajalein became another name for hell. Zamperini clenched his fists and his eyes glistered when this writer described the bombardment and invasion in which most of his persecutors died.

"I wish I could have seen it," he said, and he meant it.

"We were thrown into a three-room shack—Phillips and I in separate rooms with an empty room between," he declared. "Each room was two feet, three inches wide, seven feet high and six feet long. There was one window opening only onto a darkened hallway."

The flyers lived in this hell-hole 48 days, with little air or light and with the food consisting of a gob of rice "about midway between the size of a golf ball and a tennis ball" which the guards hurled at them three times a day, making them scramble like animals for the grains on the filthy floor.

On this and four tablespoons of soup with each "meal" they kept life in their bodies, wasted by 47 days' starvation. Every humiliation, every pain the Japanese could imagine in their sadistic minds was visited upon the American flyers, whose heroic survival alone had placed them in a small select company of history's men of supreme courage.

Next they were placed in an old 300-ton transport bound for Japan. Here they were fed "decently"—but we were always hungry," Zamperini said. They were treated well until they reached Truk.

Identified by Clipping

At Truk, the military searched them. Zamperini had in his wallet a prized clipping, one of the United States Treasury Department's War Bond "Believe It or Not" cartoons which showed him in running trunks and flying gear. In 1936, said the legend, Lou Zamperini ran on the United States team in the last Olympic Games in Berlin.

On Christmas Eve, 1942, he was a bombardier in the historic raid on Wake Island.

Half the Jap transport's crew had been on Wake that Christmas Eve.

Punched in Face

"They'd seen the bloody mess we left," Zamperini said, with a touch of pride. This clipping revealed who Zamperini was and what he had done to Wake and to them. Fired by alcohol, they rushed aboard the ship that night and crowded into the room shared by the two flyers.

One burly fellow asked Phillips: "Do you think Japan will win the war?"

Phillips answered, "No."

The Bird followed Zamperini to Naotsu, the flea-ridden pest-hole 250 miles northwest of Tokyo on the western side of Honshu. Here the laboratories were indescribably filthy, with maggots crawling in the corruption of the floor. Many American officers stumbled from this gutted sewer, sickened. Japanese guards inspected their shoes, found the bottoms befouled and as punishment forced them to lick the soles with their tongues. Soon every man had diarrhea so severe that the pains of it made them scream.

The Bird put 98 enlisted men and five officers to work unloading coal from ships onto barges. He prefaced this with a wild scene on the docks where

itching, cracks between toes!

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Alan CURTIS Lois COLLIER

With JACK OAKIE — PEGGY RYAN

The Japanese punched him twice in the face. Then he asked the same question of Zamperini, who made the same reply. Now infuriated, the Japanese punched Zamperini's nose. He hit him four more times while the others cheered and waited for their turn to beat the flyers.

A guard stopped the beatings. Zamperini's nose was broken, but he set it himself by holding it in place with his fingers all day and much of the night for weeks. Although it was his fate to be beaten across the face many times again, his nose is not disfigured so patently and well did he perform his self-medication.

He still has his clipping, blacked now from years in a secret compartment of his billfold which the Japanese never suspected.

Zamperini learned how the Japanese in Japan treat a gallant captive foe when he arrived in Yokohama—Sept. 25, 1943. They put him in the jump seat of a Chevrolet sedan; his long runner's legs would not cramp into the space. A Japanese officer, irritated, struck him across his broken nose with a flashlight—six times.

At the Ofuna naval questioning center he was stripped and searched. An American Navy commander read him the camp rules, including one forbidding prisoners to "speak, whistle, talk to themselves or talk in their sleep" under pain of "severe Japanese punishment."

"This," the commander interpolated, "means beating with a club."

The cruelties at Ofuna were routine and hardly worthy of remark in view of what was to come for Zamperini at the Amomori camp. His year at Ofuna was marked only by the usual beatings, slappings, kickings and petty torments that Japan's military captives learned to take as mere daily annoyances of life, as other men regard unwelcome guests and the necessity of shaving.

At Amomori, Zamperini met "the Bird." This was Sgt. Watanabe, the husky frog-headed scion of a wealthy and prominent importing and exporting family. Watanabe was not a low-class Japanese by birth. However, he was, by the testimony of Lt. Zamperini and many others, a sadistic maniac whose narrow little eyes turned to burning coals of hate when he dealt more than a minute or two with an American. The captives learned that this tall tale change in Watanabe's eyes forewarned them of some frantic brutality to come—and quickly, without warning.

Genius of Evil

The prisoners called Watanabe "the Bird," because they did not dare speak his name aloud. He was the genius of evil who made Lt. Zamperini and others do "push-ups" across the unspeakable troughs that served as toilets. He made them do push-ups on their poor, wasted arms until they collapsed of exhaustion in the germ-laden human excrement, which was what The Bird intended.

The Bird filled a tub with water and told Zamperini he was going to drown him in it. When he thought he had reached the peak of exquisite torture with his threats and taunts, he said abruptly, "I've changed my mind. I'll drown you tomorrow, instead."

He wore a belt four inches wide with a huge buckle; this he loved to remove and use for beating prisoners about the face. Once he beat Zamperini on the head until his ears bled. He gave the flyer tiny bits of paper to staunch the flow; when the blood ceased to run, Watanabe remarked affably, "Oh, it stop, eh?" and beat Zamperini again.

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he drew his saber and raised it over Lt. Zamperini, screaming like an insane man: "You don't work, I'll kill you."

Officers Tormented

Watanabe hated officers. His favorite punishment—Zamperini underwent it many times—was to line up the officers and force each of the 98 enlisted men to walk down the line, striking each officer on the same side of the face with their fists. If the strength of the blow did not suit, The Bird he would hit the enlisted man with a club and make him punch the same officer again and again until his twisted little soul was satisfied.

"As each man struck an officer, The Bird would say, 'Next!' and that got to be the horrid chant which was all we heard or knew of what was going on," Zamperini declared. "Next, next, next—like the tramp of feet."

Soon, the officers learned to save themselves additional blows by urging their enlisted men to strike with all their might the first time and get it over.

Unconsciousness Came

"After all," said Zamperini, "we'd rather be struck by our own enlisted men than by those dirty Japs. It was worse to watch a beating than to take one, for eventually you fell unconscious and knew nothing about the prolonged beating and kicking of your senseless body."

The catalogue of crimes could run on and on. There was no limit to the inventiveness of the sadists at Naotsu. The Bird was gone when the surrender

came and the guards suddenly became solicitous and kind. Lt. Lou Zamperini is gone, too, but he and hundreds more will never forget.

Lt. Zamperini summed up his feelings today in a single sentence. He thought awhile before he said it, and then he spoke very slowly and seriously: "If I knew I had to go through these experiences again, I would kill myself."

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