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I was stationed at Mugil as the Parish priest in 1946 when the American ship, the Boston, went ashore on the coast near the village of Bonu, just some miles of the Mugil Plantation.

The skipper of the Boston had miscalculated the set of the tide and hit the rocks on the shore line. This happened between 5:00 and 5:30 AM.

A report was immediately brought to me by a native who was much perturbed and thought the Japs were making a landing to assault the village.

When I arrived at the scene, the crew members and some of the Army personnel were trying to get ashore by jumping from rock to rock. They did not know where they were and were extremely frightened of the natives, who were watching them from behind the coconut trees. They were completely astonished when I approached them and told them I was an American, a Catholic priest and assured them they were in good hands.. By this time, the Boston was being knocked around. Some of the officers went ashore for some sort of equipment. The natives, of course, had come into the open upon my arrival. I had the Americans meet the natives and everyone seemed happy.

The Natives wanted to go aboard the ship and take out all the supplies but Captain de Santo, the skipper, refused saying that he would not want to be responsible for the death of any native. The Captain declared the Boston abandoned. Then the party of eighteen men came to my house for whatever lunch I could give them.

Immediately, I sent a runner to the Kiap in Madang with a message for the U.S.A. Authorities in Guam. In about two days a small boat arrived in the Mugil Harbour. It was the small skip, Pius, owned by the Catholic Mission in Alexishafen.

The Americans were brought to the Government headquarters in Madang. Within a day an American plane, I think it was a B 25, landed with great difficulty in Madang, after having paid their respects to me by flying over my residence in Mugil.

I recall the plane was loaded with cigarettes. I was told American cigarettes were being smoked by Europeans and natives all over Madang.

I may be of interest to know some of U.S. Military personnel knew friends of mine from my China days with the Marines in Peking.

Some weeks later an American party from Manila visited the scene of the wreck, handed me a letter or commendation and told me no one was allowed to investigate the wreckage, which at the time was in ten fathoms of water.

I recall later of some gentleman wanted to explore the wreck, but the Government (Australian) refused permission. However, I cannot vouch for it.

Over the years, I have kept in contact with members of the crew and several officers, in particular Captain de Santo, a native of Boston.

As far as I remember, the Boston was about 500 tons, carrying office equipment and files from Sydney, Australia to Manila.

Some years later a rumour reached me that this was a put up job, because some of the files were detrimental to some prominent U.S. personnel. However, I would not like to repeat this in print (sic)

The Americans were always grateful for the help I was able to give them and I am sure Mugil and the days they spent there will never be forgotten.

To add a religious note to this missive, I shall tell you a touching incident that came out of this wreck.

After the Americans came to my house, I suggested we have a Mass of Thanksgiving to God for their rescue. I naturally invited the Catholics among them to attend, at the same time extended the invitation to the Protestants, too. All to a man showed up at the services.

Among them was a fellow, Doris by name, the chief engineer, a really tough, big man, who had shipped all over the world. Religion made no impression upon him whatsoever; but he said he might just as well join the boys at Mass.

About seven years ago, I received a note from the Sister Matron of a San Francisco Hospital telling Mr. Doris had died. Before he died, to the amazement of all the Sisters, nurses, and everyone else in the hospital, he called for a priest. When the priest arrived, he asked to be instructed hurriedly in the Catholic Faith and be baptised before he died.

Later the sister in charge asked Doris why he had made this unexpected decision. His only answer was that Mugil did it.

Evidently, there was something that took place within him at Mugil. Was it the kindness of the natives, perhaps of me. Was it the attendance at Mass? Anyway, God moved him some way, somehow. We shall never know in this life, but perhaps in Eternity.

I had many notes on the Boston episode; however about twelve years ago when I was stationed at Annaberg, Ramu, a fire destroyed my residence and with it all my belongings.

Sometime in the near future, I shall visit Madang and supply you with some interesting side lights of the Boston incident.

The U.S. Navy divers told me the Boston was projecting on a ocean ridge about ten fathoms below. However if the Boston were to topple over this ridge it would fall many fathoms more. The divers also told me there were molested by "gropers". I believe that's what they called the fish.

As I write these lines, I cannot help but recall with the greatest delight the days I spent with the Boston crew. Our trips through the Mugil bush. The stories and simplicity of men who had tasted of the crude things of life. Their utter concern that no native would be inconvenienced by their presence among them. Then there was their exemplary behaviour in their association with the natives.

About three months ago, I revisited Mugil and reminisced with the older natives the day on which the Boston was wrecked.