

Mack King Davis

Prepared by Judy Hansen

Born April 2, 1916

Lehi, Utah

Son of Ira Mitchell Davis and Laura King Davis

Inducted into US Army Feb 21, 1941

Salt Lake City, Utah

Served in the Pacific Theater

Died 7 Sept 1944 at sea on the ship Shinyo Maru as
a prisoner of war by the Japanese

off coast Mindanao, Philippine Islands

Executed, Died in Ship's Sinking or Result of Ship
Sinking, Shot While Attempting Escape



Taken from the journal entry of Jackie A. Johnson written on July 17,
1997

Jean told me about her first husband, Mack Davis. Mack knew he was going to be drafted (World War II) so he wanted to get married. They were very much in love. The laws in Utah required a long wait for blood test results so Jean's parent's Loren Croft Larsen and Eva Bertha Elizabeth Ericksen Larsen drove them to Idaho where they were married by a Justice of the peace at 1:30 am in the morning. Five days later he was shipped out to Hawaii. On Thanksgiving Day, 1941, he was sent to the Philippines. On Dec 7, 1941 the Japanese attacked and bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. On December 10, 1941 Japan attacked the Philippines. In April of 1942, large numbers of the American troops stationed there in the Philippines surrendered to the Japanese, although a smaller group held out until May. Most of the American and Philippine soldiers became prisoners of war, but some escaped to the mountains and continued to resist the Japanese throughout the war.

Mack was captured. He was put to work in the rice fields building a landing strip for Japanese planes. Later he was put on a "Hell" ship. The prisoners were put in the lowest decks to run the ship. Because the ship was unmarked it was torpedoed by one of the Allied ships. Those prisoners who tried to escape from the lower decks were sub machine gunned down.

Jean had several letters from Mack and some of hers reached him, probably before he was captured. Most of her letters were sent back. She was told he was "missing in action", then that

he was dead. Only recently (1997) has she learned this story. She knew a code word, "plum". She would address his letters with this word. Recently (1997) a man wrote an article about the war and mentioned this word. Jean knew he had served with her husband and she and the man corresponded. The man and Mack Davis had been together on the island of Midanao in the Philippines.

A book comes out this year (1997) titled "We Were Next to Nothing". Mack's name is mentioned in it, so is Jean's name.

Taken from an interview by Sherwin Allred found in the book,
"Recording the Cultural History of Lehi" pg 33.

Mac Davis, another Fellow here in Lehi volunteered for the draft and another fellow by the name of Morris Fox was drafted with me the same day. We had to go to Fort Douglas to ship out. Morris and I (Sherwin) went to Fort Lewis, Washington. Mac got to stay in Salt Lake. And I felt kind of bad because I had a girlfriend here and if I got to stay in Salt lake I would have got to see her some more. But I got shipped for Fort Lewis. And eventually Mac got sent to California and eventually to the Pacific. And he was captured and taken prisoner and put on a ship to go to Japan. And the ship was sunk by a United States Destroyer. That's how he lost his life."

From Google Shin'yo Maru incident

On September 7, the *Shinyō Maru* was sailing for Manila in convoy C-076 with seven other vessels, including two torpedo boats, two tanders, and four other medium and small cargo ships. They were sailing two to three miles off the Lanboyan Point of Zamboanga Peninsula on the island of Mindanao, when the USS *Paddle* found them. A few days previously, American intelligence had reported the *Shinyō Maru* to be carrying Japanese soldiers, so they assigned *Paddle* to search for it. The *Paddle*, under the command of Captain Byron Nowell, was 10 miles away when the Japanese were first spotted, so Nowell maneuvered forward to attack with torpedoes. A spread of four was then released in the direction of the *Shinyō Maru*, which was the leading ship in the convoy. Two of the torpedoes struck, both in the hold, and a few moments later the *Paddle* was lined up against one of the cargo ships. It, too, was struck by two torpedoes, so her commander grounded her on the nearby shore to prevent the ship from sinking. Just after the *Shinyō Maru* was hit, the guards opened fire on the prisoners with captured Thompson submachine guns, though several of the men fought their way out of the hold, with their fists and improvised weapons, and abandoned ship.

The men of the convoy then began launching boats to pick up Japanese survivors and kill all of the remaining prisoners. A machine gun mounted on the grounded cargo ship and a second on the *Shinyō Maru* were also opened up on the Allied personnel. Marine Corps Sergeant Onnie Clem later reported the following; "Up on the bridge there was a machine gun spraying the hatch. A burst of machine-gun fire caught all three of us and knocked us back down in the hold. We'd all been hit. I got plowed in the skull. Another bullet chipped out my chin. Nevertheless, I was able to work myself back up on deck, and I was eyeing that bridge when I came out that

time. The gun was still there, but the gunner was laying out on deck. Somebody had apparently got up there and killed him. At this time I found out that we were out in the ocean about two or three miles from shore. All I had was a loincloth." Fifteen or 20 others were recaptured and taken aboard one of the torpedo boats, where they were executed by firing squad as punishment for trying to escape. One of those men was able to free his hands which had been tied behind his back, and he successfully escaped by jumping overboard again. The Japanese dropped 45 depth charges and other explosives on the American submarine over the course of two hours, and the ship sustained some light damage, but nobody was hurt. After that, she surfaced and began patrolling the area again.



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