

F.F.A. Boys Were on Bataan

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• When Bataan fell to the Japs, April 9, 1942, eight former F.F.A. boys, members of Company D, 192nd Tank Battalion, Harrodsburg, Ky., were among the heroic American troops forced to surrender. Excerpts from letters, received by their families, reveal thoughts of home and little sidelights of life "over there."

HERE are parts of two letters from Staff Sgt. Judson Simpson:

Philippine Islands.
Dear Mother and All: Dec. 19, 1941.
I am getting along just fine. I hope you received my telegram. Don't worry about me, because I will make out all right. How is everything around home and how are



Judson Simpson



Lewis Cummins

the children getting along? This will be the first Christmas that I have been missed at home since I can remember.

Two months later:

I do not know when you will get this. You all know the conditions. So the mail will get a little later. I guess Dad is getting ready to raise another crop. Sure would like to be there to help him. There is a lot I could write about, but you know how it is. I hope to see you all soon. Be sure to answer. Love to all,

Your son, Judson

Lewis Cummins experienced a bit more boat-riding than he cared for:

Dear Mother and All:

I have been getting along fine. It has been 11 days since we left the Hawaiian Islands, due to arriving here. Sure guess I'll get to mail this there. We had a convoy with us since we left Hawaii. We have blackouts every night. Will write again as soon as I can, so bye, bye.

Love, Lewis.

From Fort Stotsenberg, (Manila):

Dear Mother and All:

I guess you thought I never was going to write but I just haven't had a chance. We got into the Philippines on Thanksgiving Day, and have been so busy. I haven't been



"Jack" Wilson



Bland Moore

where I could mail a letter. We have Filipino boys to do just about anything you want them to do for a dollar a month. Answer soon, love to all.

Lewis.

And from Maurice ("Jack") Wilson, March 1, 1942:

I'm thinking about the good dinner I had at home last year. When I get back home I won't want to travel around any more as I have seen all I want to see. Mamma, I hope you have been well this winter.

Albert Bland Moore writes:

Dearest Mother, Dad and All:

We arrived safely. The last lap of the trip it looked like most anything could happen. I sure got sick the second day out. C. W., Jr., and I saw Alcatraz Prison. We stopped at Honolulu Sunday, and also in Wake and Guam for supplies.

I worry about you all a lot on account of war being so close. We are living in tents. Papa, how are you? I sure would like to be there to help strip tobacco. I hope your crop is good. I sure hated to leave you and all the rest of my folks. I hope to hear from you all soon. Love, Bland.

Then from Bataan Feb. 20, 1942:

Dearest Mother, Dad and All:

Hope you are in good health. We are on a real maneuver now. But don't worry

about me. I sure miss you. I haven't heard from you since I left Angel Island and that has been a long time. This is one heck of a place. I sure would like to hear from you but it is impossible.

Lots of love, Bland.

Staff Sgt. Wallace Denny is the only married member of the McAfee chapter. No letter available.

("Billy") Gentry wrote at sea and after he went into action:

Aboard the Hugh L. Scott.

Dear Mother:

Well today I am twenty-three years old but I don't suppose I will ever have another birthday at sea. Every day we look at the water and exclaim, "Why we went by here yesterday!" It all looks alike. I would not take any amount for my voyage but wouldn't give a dime for another. Will



Wallace Denny



Billy Gentry

write as soon as I know what our new address will be.

Your loving son, Bill Gentry.

The following letter was written just one day before U.S. dispatches carried the story of the tank attack

Dear Family:

Mail is going out, I will endeavor to put in a few words many thoughts. I am giving the Japs plenty, and have much more to pour out. Ed was killed the other day. It was a sad bit of news to me. The general awarded me a silver star medal for gallantry in action. I am sure hungry for some good American food. Lots of love to all, Bill.

Oscar Dean had already seen action when he wrote:

The Philippines, Feb. 5, 1942.

Dear Mother and All:

How are you all getting along? Fine, I hope. I am still all right, and hope to be this way when I see you again. I have seen a little action here and there. Did you get my telegram I sent you Christmas?

With love to all, Oscar.

Oscar was quite impressed with "wrong-way" customs:

Friday, Nov. 21.

Dearest Mother and All:

We made the trip in 23 days, and were in Hawaii for four days. Mother, everything over here is backwards from the way we do



Oscar Dean



Vernon Bussell

it back home. They drive on the wrong side of the streets, and even the steering wheel is on the right side of the car.

I will close with love to all. Oscar.

Vernon Bussell's letter was undated:

Dear Mom and All:

How is everything back home? I weigh around 165 pounds and never felt better. Tell Grandpa that I'm really going to put his back down on the grass when I get back. From your loving son, Vernon.

P. S.—All radio men that do any operating must have a personal sign. Mine is "CJ." Get it? They are the first letters of your and Daddy's name.

*Bland Moore
love in Danville, Ky.
could be of help
about Hg Co.*

But and ove reb spu

my

Wm

D.