



KENTUCKY VETERANS of Bataan and Corregidor get together for a game of cards at Nichols General Hospital. From left, they are Sgt. Arthur Poynter, Cave City; Cpl. Roy Morris, Covington; S/Sgt. Paul Head, Owensboro; Cpl. Field M. Reed, Harrodsburg, and S/Sgt. Thomas J. Hudson, Manchester.

## Five Kentuckians From Corregidor And Bataan In Spotlight At Nichols

### Tell Experiences As Jap Prisoners

By GEORGIA CLARK.

Kentucky heroes of Bataan and Corregidor take the spotlight in Ward 30 at Nichols General Hospital.

In the ward there are five Kentuckians who called for the Philippines months before Pearl Harbor, and later were prisoners of the Japanese almost three years.

The group includes 20-year-old Ray Morris, Covington corporal, who enlisted in the Army at 15 and left the States a month later; Cpl. Field M. Reed, 25, Harrodsburg, one of the 66 Mercer County men captured by the Japanese on Bataan in May, 1942; S/Sgt. Paul Head, 22, Owensboro, who survived the March of Death; Sgt. Arthur Poynter, 24, Cave City, who already was a veteran of four years' service when the Japs captured him on Corregidor, and S/Sgt. Thomas J. Hudson, 35, Manchester, a veteran of 10 years' service, who went overseas with the Army Air Forces, and who, when there was no air power left, was assigned to the Marines.

#### Reed Sent to Cabanatuan.

Behind them are months in prison camps . . . Bilibid and Cabanatuan . . . Months when they were turned into human skeletons, men of the group over 6 feet tall dropping to 95 and 100 pounds. Months when they worked 12 and 14 hours a day on a diet of rice and fish soup. Months in hospitals for some too weak to labor for the Japs.

Reed, the son of Mr. and Mrs.

Field M. Reed, Sr., Harrodsburg, and husband of Mrs. Jo Anna Coleman Reed, now living at 1626 Berry Boulevard, dug emplacements and filled shellholes after his capture on Bataan, until September, 1942. Then he was sent to Cabanatuan, and in November was sent to Nichols Field, where he was forced to use a pick and shovel to level off the field and then with the help of one other prisoner cart the dirt away in one-ton mining trucks. The men worked from 3:30 a.m. until 7:30 or 8 p.m.

#### Holes Weren't Deep Enough.

It was at Nichols Field that Reed really got acquainted with the Japs. He has a back injury which won't let him forget those experiences. He was beaten with a pick handle.

"If the lower-ranking men had trouble with the higher officers, they took it out on the prisoners of war," he said. "We were drilling holes to dynamite, the day I got the worst beating. The holes weren't deep enough to suit the Japs. We had them as deep as one Jap wanted them, but not as deep as the others thought they should be. So about six of us got beatings."

"We got quite a few beatings, but I can't think of any that were worse than that one," he said.

"Quite a few of the men were beaten to death on work details." Reed has been in the Kentucky National Guard only a few weeks when his group, the 38th Tank Company, was inducted into federal service and became Company D, 192d Tank Battalion.

#### Families Wanted Information.

With the 192d, he and the other 63 Harrodsburg men fell into the hands of the Japanese were taken prisoner in April, 1942. As for the other Harrodsburg men with him, he can't say. The Army has asked him not to reveal any information.

"When I went home," he said, "it took me 2 to 3 hours to get down the street. Mothers, wives and sweethearts of the other men would stop me on the street to see if I knew anything about their men. But I couldn't tell them a thing."

Head, son of Mr. and Mrs. Forest Head, Owensboro, went overseas with the 17th Ordnance Company, and also was taken prisoner on Bataan. He doesn't like to talk about the March of Death from Bataan to Camp O'Donnell, but he well remembers

the banana stalks he had to eat. "We didn't get any food for three or four days," he said, "so we had to eat what we could find. We took the banana stalks and ate the inside, as it was sweet. I tried to do as I was told on the march, but the Filipinos caused trouble. They were up in front, and would refuse to do what the Japs told them."

The Owensboro soldier spent about 15 months as a stevedore at a port area. "Sometimes, we worked all day and all night loading and unloading ships," he said. "Then we would get half a day off."

The work and diet of rice, while weeds and camotes soon got him down, and the Kentuckian ended up in the hospital at Bilibid. He was a bed patient for months, and had been at the hospital about a year when he was liberated in February, 1945.

Hudson, whose mother, Mrs. A. A. Hudson, lives at Manchester, called for the Philippines in December, 1940, with the 17th Pursuit Squadron, and was with Headquarters Squadron of the Far East Service Command until he was attached to the Marines. He went to Corregidor after the fall of Bataan and was captured there. He was released at Bilibid last February after spending more than four years in the Pacific.

#### Men Kept Up Hope.

Poynter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Cann Poynter, Cave City, went overseas in August, 1941, and fought at both Bataan and Corregidor before his capture. He was at Bilibid and Cabanatuan, dug ammunition dumps at Clark Field and worked on roads and farms before becoming a patient at Bilibid. He has been in service almost seven years.

Throughout the entire ordeal, the men didn't give up hope. "We heard rumors about New York being bombed, Chicago being shelled by submarines, but we knew the Americans would be back," they said. "We knew it would be a long time, but we knew they'd come."

According to Head, rumors kept them going. "We would hear a rumor that the Yanks had landed in New Guinea," he recalled. "We'd sweat that out, and then we'd hear they were on Leyte. Our letters were usually a year and a half old when we got them, so we didn't get any news. We just sweated out one rumor after another. Rumors kept us going."



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