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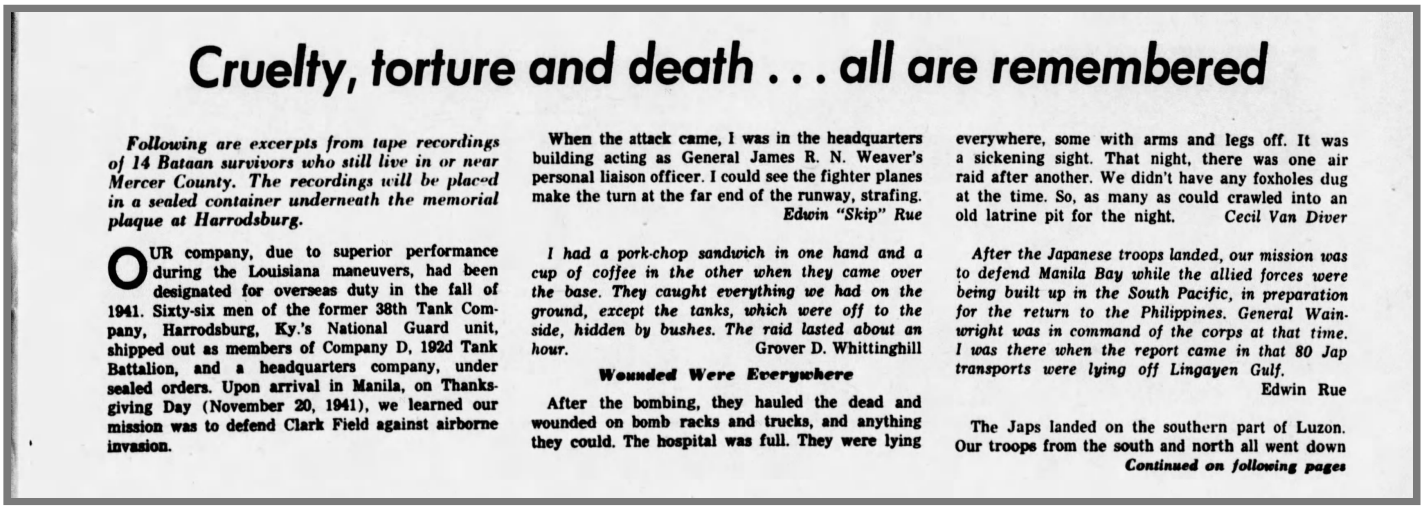

Cruelty, torture and death . . . all are remembered

Following are excerpts from tape recordings of 14 Bataan survivors who still live in or near Mercer County. The recordings will be placed in a sealed container underneath the memorial plaque at Harrodsburg.

OUR company, due to superior performance during the Louisiana maneuvers, had been designated for overseas duty in the fall of 1941. Sixty-six men of the former 38th Tank Company, Harrodsburg, Ky.'s National Guard unit, shipped out as members of Company D, 192d Tank Battalion, and a headquarters company, under sealed orders. Upon arrival in Manila, on Thanksgiving Day (November 20, 1941), we learned our mission was to defend Clark Field against airborne invasion.

When the attack came, I was in the headquarters building acting as General James R. N. Weaver's personal liaison officer. I could see the fighter planes make the turn at the far end of the runway, strafing.

Edwin "Skip" Rue

I had a pork-chop sandwich in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other when they came over the base. They caught everything we had on the ground, except the tanks, which were off to the side, hidden by bushes. The raid lasted about an hour.

Grover D. Whittinghill

Wounded Were Everywhere

After the bombing, they hauled the dead and wounded on bomb racks and trucks, and anything they could. The hospital was full. They were lying everywhere, some with arms and legs off. It was a sickening sight. That night, there was one air raid after another. We didn't have any foxholes dug at the time. So, as many as could crawled into an old latrine pit for the night.

Cecil Van Diver

After the Japanese troops landed, our mission was to defend Manila Bay while the allied forces were being built up in the South Pacific, in preparation for the return to the Philippines. General Wainwright was in command of the corps at that time. I was there when the report came in that 80 Jap transports were lying off Lingayen Gulf.

Edwin Rue

The Japs landed on the southern part of Luzon. Our troops from the south and north all went down

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into Bataan. We set up defense lines, but the Japs had us way outnumbered. There were over a million of them on the island. On April 9, 1942, we were ordered to destroy all of our equipment and surrender at dawn.

Grover D. Whittinghill

'Last Communion'

We dumped our ammunition into our last tank, poured gasoline over it and set it off. Then our company commander took us back into the jungle for our last communion, consisting of pineapple juice and light bread. That was the last of our organization. From then on it was every man for himself.

Cecil Van Diver

We marched along a newly made road to join another company of the 192d Tank Battalion, stopping to kill a mule. It was the strongest thing you ever tasted and the toughest to chew! That's where the Japs showed up.

Grover Whittinghill

The Death March

The Japanese officer made his inspection, and then they took our jewelry and everything we had. They made us kneel in the hot sun with our hats off for half a day. Then the Death March started, at a little town called Mariveles. We marched all night the first night. We marched on for days; it seemed endless. They would tell us food at the next stop, but there wasn't any. My mouth swelled up and my tongue burst open. When we came to water, the Japs would post guards around the water holes and wouldn't let us have it.

Cecil Van Diver

If any man would stop, the Jap guards would bayonet him and roll him over to the side. One boy had dysentery; they stuck a bayonet in his stomach until he was dead.

Lawrence Martin

I fell out one day under a big tree. Bland Moore (from Harrodsburg) and another boy from Oklahoma got me up, half dragged me between them, until the Japs put us up for the night. It was just plain hell. It was death every day, all around us. Each day, the Japs would take some boys off; we'd hear a rifle shot, and those boys wouldn't come back. One major said, "I can't stand it another step." Before we could stop him, he jumped off a bridge and buried himself in the mud.

Cecil Van Diver

'Died Like Flies'

We marched to San Fernando. My feet had commenced swelling over my shoes. I had beri-beri. They loaded us on boxcars, 50 to 60 men to a car. They died like flies with dysentery and yellow jaundice.

Lawrence Martin

The Filipinos would try to help us. One woman tried to slip us some rice wrapped in a banana leaf. The Japs saw her and knocked her down. She was pregnant. They jumped up and down on top of her until she died. A Filipino man raised his two fingers in the V for Victory sign. The Japs stopped, laid his hand down on the road, and cut off the two fingers with a bayonet. Cecil Van Diver

I didn't feel quite able to surrender on Bataan. I was weak from malaria and fever. About 18 or 20 of us went down, across the bay from Corregidor, walking along the narrow ledges like mountain climbers, until we found a boat in a water-filled cave. We thought we would go to Australia. We loaded our canned goods, four barrels of gasoline, and planned to travel by night. But the Japs were already shooting at us. Their navy had Manila Bay blocked. Our boys were clinging to gasoline drums, anything that would float, trying to get to Corregidor.

Maurice "Jack" Wilson

Screaming Japs

I waited out in the ocean with the water up around my neck until we could get on a boat. When I finally got across, they put me in the Marine Corps. Over in Bataan, the Japs

...ors to be honored . . .

...ipal of a ...anville, Ky.

CHARLES REED now operates a Bluegrass farm near Danville.

EDWIN RUE travels out of Harrodsburg, selling restaurant supplies.

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who fell behind

began shooting at us. Then they came across to Corregidor as thick as sardines, screaming like Indians. *Earl Fowler*

The Japs came over one night; we gave up the next day. Corregidor was surrendered May 6, 1942. Claude Yeast

Shot Like Hogs

They took us to Bilibid prison and Cabanatuan in the Philippines. One day four of my buddies told me they were going to escape. I said, "Boys, I don't think you can get through." They went on and escaped that night. They were gone about two days. The Japs brought them back, tied them to fence posts, and left them out in the hot sun for three days without water or food. No one was allowed to talk to them.

The Japs had placed a piece of wood between their ankles just behind their knees and made them stoop down so that all their weight rested on the wood, which cut into them. Finally, they were blindfolded and led over to a big hole which the Japs dug. Their blindfolds were taken off.

The Japanese firing squad backed off and shot them. The boys fell back in the hole. They squealed—like a pig that hadn't had a good job done on the hog. Then the Japs ran up and shot down on them again. Most of our men had gone back into the barracks. But I watched—because those four boys had asked me to escape with them. *Maurice Wilson*

After that, they put us in squads of 10. We had to sign a paper agreeing that if one man escaped, the other nine would be killed. *Earl Fowler*

The Ace Hole

A fellow named Tyler went off mentally. They caught him under a tree, eating oranges. They brought him back to our camp and put him in the ace hole (the guardhouse). He couldn't lie down; there was just room enough for one man to sit up. After a few days they put him in a larger building. We could hear

Continued on following pages

AMONG the Americans at this prisoner-of-war camp in Japan is Maurice "Jack" Wilson of Harrodsburg. A prisoner bought a camera and made the photo after the first atom bomb fell and Japanese guards ran away.

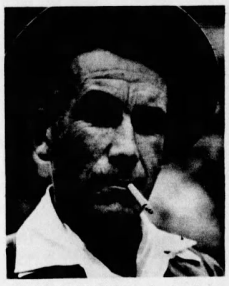
Two of the survivors moved to Louisville

THE 37 Harrodsburg survivors were all disabled to some degree. Several receive 100 per cent disability compensation. Some of their faces are among those in the prison-camp photo above. All their names appear on the plaque on the opposite page.

Each has received many medals. Several Purple Hearts went automatically to those wounded or injured in prison camps.

Three men are living in Lexington, George Edward Chumley, Lyle C. Harlowe and Morris S. Collier. Living in Louisville are Grover C. Brummett, 2605 Parklawn Drive, and Field M. Reed, Jr., 3647 Kelly Way. William Gentry, who led the initial tank-vs.-tank encounter, is working for Corning Glass, and lives in Vienna, Wa. Va.

Nineteen live in Harrodsburg, Danville and Burgin. The remainder are scattered throughout the United States. Several men remained in service. Joe Anness recently retired after 20 years in the Army. Morgan French is stationed at Fort Knox, an instructor in the Armor School. Campbell K. Sadler is at Fort Benning, Ga., and expects to retire in June. Charlie Quinn is stationed in Germany. Two are hospitalized. Two have died since returning.



WILLIAM PEAVLER works for Tates Creek Country Club at Lexington.

LAWRENCE MARTIN is still a bachelor. He is living on a farm.

MARCUS LAWSON also gets 100 per cent disability compensation.

CLAUDE YEAST is a painter. His brother was slain by the Japanese.

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Wild onions and a dog's liver made a feast

him screaming all night. They beat him to death with a wet bath towel soaked in salt water. Then they threw him into a pit. *Marcus A. Lawson*

We couldn't even give our buddies a decent burial. They put all the bodies, 50 to 100, in one grave, which the sick prisoners had to dig. I tried to lay Williams, my friend, in a special place. A Jap guard pushed me into the hole, piled other bodies on top of me, and told me if I ever tried that again, he would bury me alive. **Cecil Van Diver**

30 Below Zero

They loaded us on prison ships, some bound for Japan, others for Manchuria. I went to Mukden, Manchuria. It took 30 days. We were packed in the hold like sardines, eaten up with lice, and always afraid that American submarines would sink our ship, which was not marked "Prisoner of War." At Mukden, we walked three miles to work and back, picking up rocks, unloading sacks of cement and carloads of coal. It was 30 degrees below zero. *Earl Fowler*

We had one bucket of coal a night to heat a barracks with 1,500 men. Many died from exposure in Manchuria. Once a day we were issued rice and pickled grasshoppers. We would steal whatever we could when the guards weren't looking. One night I couldn't believe my nose; I smelled liver and onions cooking. Some of the boys had found a wild onion patch; they cooked a dog's liver. Cecil Van Diver

Low-Calorie Diet

They gave us fish heads to eat. Sometimes those fish eyes would roll around in your mouth like pebbles of corn. The burrs on the grasshopper's legs scratched your throat like steel wool. An old cat rubbed up against my legs every night for awhile. One day I missed my cat. I found two sailor boys eating it. *Maurice Wilson*

MAURICE WILSON is shown in 1943 when a prisoner in Japan.

The Japanese had an ammunition factory near there. When the American planes came in, they bombed the main camp. One bomb fell short, killing 19 American prisoners. The Russians came in one night at 7 o'clock. They lined up all the Japanese, made them lay their rifles with bayonets in a pile, then handed a rifle to each American. We made the Japs fill up the foxholes they'd made us dig and work for their food. The Chinese burned the Japs alive in their straw huts. Then the Americans came in. Earl Fowler

The Scene Shifts

We were shipped like cattle to Japan. I left September 18, 1943, and arrived October 4th. We were quartered in the hold in bins just 3 feet tall. You couldn't stand up and had only 12 to 14 inches of space to lie down. At first, our only toilets were lard cans. Halfway across, they put one on top deck. Off Formosa, they kept all 1,200 of us in the hold with the hatch closed for 5 hours because American ships were in the area. *Maurice Wilson*

In October of '44, our convoy was attacked by American submarines off Hongkong. Three ships were sunk. The rest got through to Formosa. On Formosa, I worked in the sugar mills, then moved to Japan and worked as a stevedore, in the steel mills, drained lakes, and worked a little farm. By the time I got to Japan, we had lost 2,644 soldiers in Philippine prison camps, on prison ships, and then more died in Japan. ***Ralph Stine***

Beri-Beri Strikes

All suffered from hunger and malnutrition. Dry beri-beri started on the prison ship. It's a painful experience. The attacks begin with a tingling of the toes; the pains move from the instep to the ankles, up the legs, then back down again. First, the only relief was walking. Then we lay, rubbing each other's feet. Finally, we could stand nothing touching us. At that time, it was difficult to live at all. *Edwin Rue*

They took me to a steel mill 35 miles south of Osaka. Out of 480 men, only 80 could walk around that winter. The worst beating I got was for giving a boy a light on a cigarette one night. The Jap guards would check us six times a night. They caught us. One little guy flung both fists in my eyes, judoed me, then put me in the guardhouse with the windows wide open, so that the freezing wind would blow in on me. Snow was deep on the ground and lying heavy on the roof tops. Kenneth Hourigan

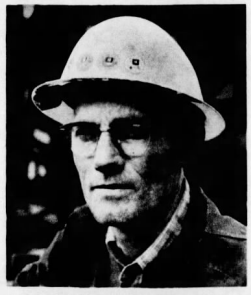
SHE KNOWS THEM

Mary Waters, who wrote for us recently about her Egyptian travels, works for a Harrodsburg radio station. She knows most of Harrodsburg's veterans of Bataan, and had no difficulty in persuading them to record their memories.

More Bataan survivors who recorded their memories . . .

KENNETH HOURIGAN is a Mercer County deputy sheriff these days.

MAURICE WILSON looks a bit different now than in the photo above.



RALPH STINE gets disability pay but also works for Kentucky Utilities.

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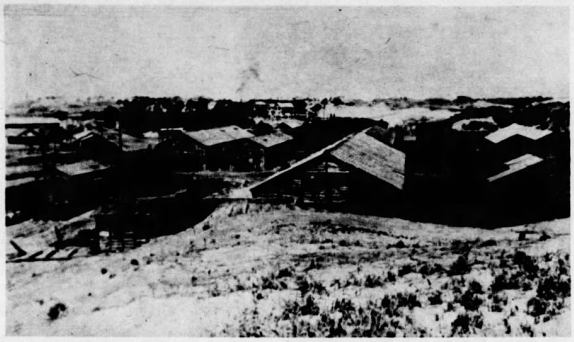

HERE'S an over-all view of the Japanese prison camp where Wilson spent two miserable years. He weighed only 115 pounds on his Jap diet, but he's a rather hefty gent now.

Many of the men landed at Moji from the hot Philippines in just a shirt and undershorts or shoes and shorts. I arrived on August 4, 1944, but when the next group arrived on a snowy day in February of '45, I could recognize my friends only by their voices. Their features had altered that much! They were living skeletons. *Cecil Sims*

As long as you would abide and try to do what they wanted, they weren't too harsh on you.

There were some good Japanese. I remember that when one boy died of dysentery, they buried him in a garden. At the moment they were putting him into the ground, tears came to the eyes of the Japanese doctor who had seen him suffer.

Hob-Nailed Stomp

We had one Nip guard who wore hob-nail shoes. When he'd wake you up, he'd come right down through your face and tear you all to pieces. One morning, as he came across the bay, an American mine blew up, tearing off his arms and legs. Some of the Nips seemed as happy about it as we were. *Charles Reed*

If it hadn't been for the American Red Cross parcels with quinine, I wouldn't be alive today. *Cecil Sims*

'Big Block-Buster'

I was in a hospital with a broken cartilage from my shoulder to my breast from carrying 220-pound sacks on my back, when the American planes began bombing. Navy planes dropped a big block-buster right in the middle of a textile mill, killing 127 Japanese women and children. *Marcus Lawson*

We could tell how the war was going by the way we were treated. If the American forces were doing well, the Japs would put us on an extra heavy work detail and beat us.
Cecil Sims

In September of '44, I went to the island of Kyushu to work in the mines. The Japs had a mine god. Every morning we had to bow to that gentleman so that he would hold up the ceiling for us. When we came out at night, we had to bow to that gentleman again, to thank him. One morning, as we were on our way to the mine, the air-raid alert blew. Four Navy fighter planes came over the mountain and started diving. We ran into the mine, which was filled with Japanese civilians. We didn't stop to bow to that gentleman that day.
Grover Whittinghill

The Atomic Bomb

The morning they dropped the atomic bomb, we were in the mess hall. It sounded like an earthquake. We saw an awful toadstool across the bay, towering up four or five hundred

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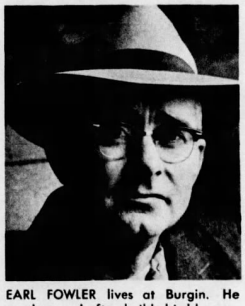
CECIL VAN DIVER now works in a linen room at a hospital in Danville.



EARL FOWLER lives at Burgin. He gardens and often builds bird houses.

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JAP GUARD Paddle Foot was sentenced to 30 years for cruelty to prisoners.

WHISKERS, boss of coal yard where prisoners worked, got a 25-year term.

JAP GUARD Brown Eyes got a 10-year-term at his War Crime Commission trial.

ALLEY CAT, another prison guard, got 40 years. GI's nicknamed all guards.

A-bomb blast turned rocks to powder

FOREVER FAMOUS Continued

feet. An old Jap told me that the Americans had a new weapon and it wouldn't be long before we were going home. The bombed area was off limits, but some of us wanted to see what the bomb had done.

We walked out in our Japanese clothes with our faces browned. Nobody stopped us. We saw railroad cars lying five or six blocks from the tracks. You could pick up iron pipes and break them in two. Rocks would crumble into powder in your hands. Where people had been sitting, without falling over, there were just carcasses with all the meat gone from their bones.

John Sadler

I was working 2,000 feet into the mountain in a lead mine the day the atomic bomb struck and thought nothing of the reverberation. The next day, the Japanese said it was a holiday. The rumors started flying that the war was over. The Japanese handed over their guns and walked out of the camp. We ate two horses in two weeks. One day I said, "Damned if there's not a sheep in the house," and, sure enough, there was that dude up there cooking away.

Claude Yeast

The Americans had dropped up chow by parachute, but they hadn't liberated us yet. And the Japs were bringing guns up into the mountains just like the war was still going on; so we decided to go to the Americans. We got 62 men together, even though they told us we would be court-martialed, and took off by train for Tokyo. We didn't see any Americans, just civilians.

Finally, we saw a jeep coming around the corner with correspondents for Yank magazine in it. They wanted to know what we were doing there since Tokyo hadn't been taken yet. We told them we'd been over there three and a half years and were waiting to find somebody to turn in to. They jumped out of the jeep, took pictures, and said we were the first American troops to walk down the streets of Tokyo in formation.

Marcus A. Lawson

We were liberated by the 68th Airborne. I wrote my Mom and Dad a letter, caught a plane, flew to Okinawa, then back to Clark Field. In eight days they called out my name. I was going home!

William Lee Peavler

Two generals say:

WITH broken heart and head bowed in sadness but not in shame, I report that today I must arrange terms for the surrender of the fortified islands of Manila Bay. Please say to the nation that my troops and I have accomplished all that is humanly possible, and that we have upheld the best traditions of the United States and its Army. . . . With profund regret and with continued pride in my gallant troops, I go to meet the Japanese commander.

General Jonathan Wainwright

Bataan, with Corregidor the citadel of its integral defense, made possible all that has happened since. History, I am sure, will record it as one of the decisive battles of the world. Its long protracted struggle enabled the United Nations to gather strength to resist in the Pacific. Had it not held out, Australia would have fallen with incalculable disastrous results. Our triumphs of today belong equally to that dead army. The Bataan garrison was destroyed due to its dreadful handicaps. But no army in history more thoroughly accomplished its mission. Let no man henceforth speak of it other than as of magnificent victory.

General Of The Army Douglas MacArthur

Wilson had to shove coal cars like this. He fell from a trestle once and was sent to a hospital, where his bed was space on the bare floor.

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