

Hi Mom! Don't Cry...

Daytonian Loses 50 Pounds As Jap Prisoner

... I'm So Happy!

EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the first of two stories on the experience of Sgt. Charles Quinn of Dayton, prisoner of the Japanese for 23 months. He was freed Jan. 20 when American Bombers stormed Colson's prison camp on Luzon. The second story will appear in The Sunday Journal-Herald tomorrow.

By CELIA STEVENSON

A young soldier left Dayton three and a half years ago as a grinning, happy-go-lucky kid who wouldn't have known a Jap from a Filipino.

Today, at 25, he is a humble, weary man who can't make himself believe that he's actually back in the States.

There's not much laughter in Sgt. Charles Quinn's voice anymore. Bataan, Corregidor, the death march and a succession of 30 Japanese prison camps took care of that.

He's definitely not the same boy whose mother remembered that "he'd talk all the time about everything. Nobody was a stranger to him."

"Chuck" Quinn is still willing to talk. But to a humble, grateful nation—waiting to hear the story of the heroes of Bataan—he'd "rather not" describe the things that happened to him during the last 32 months.

He's not bitter, and presently there's no ship on his shoulder when you ask him about it. And in a telephone conversation with The World from San Francisco, pictured, little by little, in spite of himself, the days he spent on Bataan, the inhuman death march, the crushing of the Japs.

"I weigh 50 pounds now," he states-of-factly revealed. Before the white flag flew over Corregidor the five-foot, nine inch young sergeant tipped the scales at 145 pounds.

He started his story at the beginning—when he arrived in the Philippines Nov. 10, 1941, just 18 days before Pearl Harbor.

"My buddies—two first cousins, Bill and Franklin Salter of Harrodsburg, Ky., enlisted in the National Guard together. They made us regular Army and sent us to the Islands."

The three were inseparable—they went through the most bloody campaigns together, but with the surrender of the "Isles," the hand of fate, unconsciously guided by the Japanese, sent each on a separate path.

Charles went to Cabanatuan prison, Franklin to a concentration camp on the Japanese mainland. And Bill went to Cebu, Manila, Japan, etc.

Mrs. Salter doesn't know yet that her son is dead. Before Sergeant Quinn can come to Dayton for one of the happiest homecomings of this war, he has a tragic duty.

He must go to Harrodsburg and tell his aunt that her son will never come home.

Quinn was at Clark Field near Manila when the Japs bombed the Philippine capital Dec. 8, 1941.

"I was right in the middle of it with the 11th tank battalion," he recalled. "We were sitting near the field waiting for close (we hadn't heard about Pearl Harbor yet) when a big flight of planes started to come over. We thought they were ours and were pretty disgusted—we were tired waiting around to eat."

"Just for something to do we counted the heavy bombers. Somebody said it was 64. Somebody else said it was 35. That started an argument but it was soon settled when we saw the bombs start falling."

"There was no place for us to go so we just waited for them to finish," he remembered. "I was wounded myself but not very badly. After that we left the field and went to Manila, then to Batangas around Dec. 24. We didn't see many fighting planes."

Then Bataan. By that time the men weren't kidding themselves about their situation. After they reached the peninsula they knew it was hopeless.

"There were about 12,000 Americans and a number of Filipino scouts," Quinn explained. "The boys made their own morale. The fighting was pretty tough and we didn't get any supplies at all. Bataan kept floating around that we were going to be relieved or that some other agent was on the way and that would boost our spirits some," he reported.

"Bataan fell April 9," he continued. "It was every man for himself—those were our orders. So two other guys and myself decided to get away across to Corregidor. We found a little boat in a cove close to Marikina. We waited until almost dark—about 4 o'clock I think—before we left."

The trip proved three miles in the darkness until they came to the "Isles." But the trip was tragically brief for Corregidor fell a month and a half later on May 26.

"I remained on Corregidor for about three weeks after the surrender. The Japs kept us busy gathering up scrap iron to use for making bullets and guns. We had to pick up everything—we even cut up some of the large dormitories to get any metal out of it we could find. It certainly gave me a sick feeling—collecting Americans died so that the Japs could make ammunition to shoot at our guys."

From the very first, Jap treatment of their captives was "not so good," Sergeant Quinn disclosed.

"I'd rather not say much about it—but it was very rough treatment."

But those first few weeks on Corregidor were a picnic compared to what was to come. He was shifted with the other prisoners back to Marikina, from whence he had once sought escape.

Then the Japs decided to march their prisoners from Marikina on miles up the peninsula. The wounded, the sick and the dying were forced to walk in the moderate mid-day heat with nothing to eat, only a few drops of water to drink, no medical attention.

"We were surprised at the Japs at first," he confessed, refusing to reveal some of the

"I'M SO HAPPY. I'm so happy," sobbed his mother, Mrs. Carrie Quinn of 311 Merion avenue. He told her he'd be home in three or four days. (Staff Photo by Fawcett).

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horrors of those eight days, which constituted what the world has come to know as the awful "death march of Bataan."

"They were very cruel. They shot a man if he got sick. Even if they didn't, they wouldn't allow the American doctors to take care of him. A lot of men died of disease or starvation, a lot were shot. I saw a lot of guys beaten to death for no good reason—just cruelty. It was terribly slow—and all that time we didn't have anything to eat."

It's hard to believe but Chuck Quinn doesn't sound bitter about his captors.

"They're a funny people. You can't predict what they might do. They were cruel just to be cruel. One time I was ordered to fix a radio that was broken. I was working away on it when one of the guards started to strike me with a pick handle. He was just mad because the radio was broken . . . They're certainly a funny people."

(Read second story in tomorrow's Sunday Journal-Herald.)

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