

United States Seems Unbelievable Paradise To Bataan Prisoner

Quinn Tells Of Cabanatuan Raid

(EDITOR'S NOTE—This is the second of two stories on the experiences of Sgt. Charles Quinn of Dayton, prisoner of the Japanese for 33 months. He was freed Jan. 30 when American Rangers stormed Cabanatuan prison camp on Luzon. The first story appeared in yesterday's Herald.)

By CELIA STEVENSON

The United States—any piece of it, any square foot of it—is “just plain heaven” to blond, blue-eyed Sgt. Charles R. Quinn.

He is fairly well qualified to know about such things. The 25-year-old sergeant, son of Mrs. Carrie Quinn, 311 Morton avenue, is in San Francisco after three years as a Japanese prisoner in the Philippines.

Behind him are the siege of Bataan and Corregidor, the horrible death march. Ahead of him, he told The Journal-Herald in a telephone interview, lie 60 days at home, into which he has to cram all the familiar people, places and things he hasn't seen for the last 36 months.

Sobered, subdued, decidedly not the laughing kid who left Dayton three years ago—but still able to crack a joke and grin—he is resting at Letterman General hospital and undergoing a rigid physical checkup.

He's regained most of the 50 pounds he lost and he still can't believe his luck—American nurses and doctors again, a trip home in three days.

The last time he had anything like decent medical care was on Corregidor.

“I hurt my knee and after the surrender American doctors operated on it. I went to a hospital for a while.”

But not for long. By virtue of his injury he escaped the worst of the death march of Bataan. But the Japs soon had their prisoners—sick and well alike—working ceaselessly to salvage American scrap iron for the emperor's war machine.

Built Jap Air Strips

“After about a year I was sent to Nichols Field, near Manila,” he recalled. “We were ordered to build air strips and if any of us stopped for a minute or if for no good reason the Jap guards got mad, they'd hit us with rifle butts, pick handles, anything they could find.”

The sergeant didn't sound bitter about the Japs and their treatment of him, though he admitted that he couldn't understand their nature and their love of cruelty.

“I even met some nice Japs. They were Christians and were

very human and understanding, even though they were fighting against us.”

“At Nichols Field we were asked to move a mountain more or less, clearing the land for Jap air strips,” Quinn said. “We worked in G-strings and straw hats, barefooted. Our officers were in charge of little units of men.”

The endless diet of rice—and very little of it—began to take its effect. Quinn got pellagra. Pretty soon his feet and legs were swollen with beri-beri. But he had to keep working. He had seen what the Japs did to some of his buddies who were sick and useless.

Sometimes he thought he just couldn't lift his hand, no matter how many Jap guards stood by with loaded guns.

Forces Himself to Work

“Then I'd think to myself, ‘I'd rather get back home than get killed,’ so I'd make myself work.”

Quinn described how, toward the last, his buddies used to carry him from his barracks to the field. They saw that their sickest fellow prisoners got the easiest jobs. The Dayton sergeant handled the sticks of dynamite used in blasting. That meant he could stay still most



SGT. CHARLES QUINN
Destination: “Mom's Kitchen”

of the time. Even sit down a little.

“After about 13 months they moved us to Billibid prison; we stayed there six days and I gained back almost 25 pounds.”

Suddenly he changed the subject.

“Do you know Dayton well?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know where the Royal Bowling alley is?”

“Yes.”

“Is it still there? I used to work on the second floor. Gee, I'd like to see it again.”

Once on the subject of home, Chuck Quinn couldn't stop asking questions for a few minutes. How was Mom? And his brothers? Had things changed much?

Hears Mother's Voice

He was very much surprised to learn that one brother, Walter, was in the Navy.

A few minutes later he was to talk with his mother for the first time in more than three years.

(See SGT. QUINN, Page 2)



THE QUINN KITCHEN CUPBOARD is well stocked today awaiting the homecoming of Sgt. Charles Quinn. The recently liberated Jap prisoner's mother, Mrs. Carrie Quinn, here takes a quick inventory to make certain there'll be plenty of food on hand.

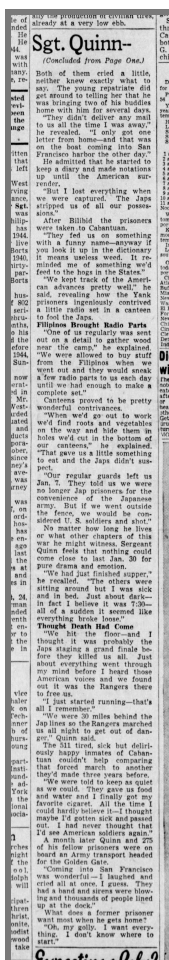
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