

# BATAAN'S 98 DAYS A TERRIBLE ORDEAL

Defenders Overwhelmed in 15  
Days of Ceaseless Battle—  
Nurses Stood By to End

By **FRANK HEWLETT**,  
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**CORREGIDOR**, April 9 (De-  
layed)—This rocky fortress com-  
manding the entrance to Manila  
Bay still fights on, its begrimed  
gunners determined to avenge  
their comrades of Bataan.

The American and Filipino  
fighters on Bataan's jungle battle-  
front surrendered today to impos-  
sible odds after having fought to  
the end of their resources. More  
were killed by disease and malnu-  
trition than by Japanese bullets.

The Americans and Filipinos and  
the American nurses who stood by  
to the end were overwhelmed after  
fifteen days and nights of ceaseless  
battle that climaxed ninety-eight  
days in which they suffered the  
tortures of hell.

They were pounded in those last  
fifteen days by thousands of fresh  
Japanese shock troops, the pick of  
the Mikado's armies. They were  
hammered hour after hour by dive  
bombers and level bombers that  
blew the American field hospital  
sky high, with more than 100  
casualties. They were battered by

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MAY HAVE YIELDED

The Americans and Filipinos fought as long as they did only on their courage and fortitude, not on food and ammunition.

The Japanese, in the pride of their power and their triumph, can not fail to credit our troops with courage and fortitude. American endurance was almost superhuman. They stood up without flinching under hopeless odds.

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massed tanks and artillery that chewed up the fox-holes of Bataan.

All of those blows they stood unflinchingly. Then fever, hunger and fatigue cut down their strength. But even in the final showdown the remnants of that gallant little army swam and rowed across the four-mile watergap to bring nurses and the wounded to Corregidor Island.

I have followed the American and Filipino forces on Luzon Island since the first blow was struck in the Philippines. I lived and ate—often not enough—with them, and watched them in action at times when courage seemed too weak a word to describe their conduct.

Nurses, wounded when the enemy blasted our base hospital, lay uncomplainingly in foxholes while men from the front were given medical attention. Engineers and sailors fought and worked to hold back the overwhelming enemy forces and speed the rescue of as many as possible to Corregidor.

And in a last defiant moment the trapped men on Bataan touched off the pitifully small store of ammunition still left. The red glare was like a signal through the night to those on Corregidor. They were beaten, but it was a fight that ought to make every American bow his head in tribute. It was America's Bataan that had fallen but it should live forever in American history.

Already, as I write this dispatch, the Japanese have started a furious long-range gun bombardment of Corregidor from the Bataan coast.

Throughout last night and this morning tired and haggard troops have been arriving here, four miles out in the bay from the Bataan Peninsula, in a steady stream. One Engineer Corps boat commanded by Lieutenant James Seater of Anchorage, Alaska, made four trips.

### White Flag Halts Evacuation

When the white flag was raised on Bataan this morning the evacuation was halted.

The Navy also worked heroically in handling the evacuation of personnel and equipment from Mariveles, at the southern tip of Bataan, where the last bitter stand of the broken army was made. Navy boats throughout the day have been picking up from the bay the dauntless men who, in order to continue the fight, came swimming out to this fortress.

The foe in his final attack made sure that he would receive no more of the humiliating defeats that had seen his overwhelming superior numbers thrown back and had caused the suicide of a Japanese commanding general.

It seems incredible to me, as I write now, that five miles away American Army officers are advancing with a white flag to discuss surrender terms with the Japanese generals. But I know why. The Bataan army crumbled like the one-horse shay.

### Here's what happened:

First, the Americans and Filipinos had fought for fifteen long days and nights without a pause, with the dive-bombers shrieking down on them in droves and the heavy bombers pulverizing their rear level.

Second, the Japanese brought in an abundance of long-range artillery which laid down long and unbelievably terrific barrages.

Third, fresh troops only recently brought to the Philippines were thrown against the Americans and Filipinos at key points, with the attack concentrated on the center of their line.

Fourth, tanks were used in masses to dislodge our dug-in forces from their foxholes.

Fifth, malaria and malnutrition put more soldiers out of action than did the Japanese.

### Last Supplies Destroyed

All last night and all day today I watched the arrivals from Bataan and listened to the stories they had to tell. They told of the tragic grandeur of the destruction of the pitifully small last stores of Bataan's ammunition and other supplies during the night, while the men up front fought ceaselessly to hold back the ferocious charges of the enemy. American Army men on Bataan carried out the scorched-earth policy to the ultimate, bitter end.

The one bright spot on this tragic day is that most of the women nurses were brought here, along with the doctors and male hospital attendants. To the last, until they were ordered out, the men and the women had remained under fire at the field hospitals, caring for the wounded and the seriously ill, expecting any moment that the enemy would break through upon them.

Most of the nurses, led by Chief Nurse Lieutenant Josephine Nesgit of Kansas City, Mo., crossed into the bay to Corregidor late this morning aboard a small craft, which on its voyage survived savage enemy dive-bombing attacks. On the way the boat picked up three civilian nurses whom a young artillery captain was rowing to Corregidor.

Other nurses were at a hospital near Mariveles, and they arrived at Corregidor before dawn.

Nurse Lieutenant Inez McDonald of Tupelo said:

"The last two days have been a nightmare. The Japs bombed us twice. I thought the end had come when bombs exploded in the ward next to mine, but I am okay and I'm ready for duty."

### Full Story Not Told

Bataan yielded to superior force and numbers, and not even now is the full story known of the heroism and endurance of the men—Filipinos and Americans—who fought so stoutly in jungle fastness and along the rugged coast.

They stood up without complaint under constant furious fire for more than three months. They were besieged by land, blockaded



Major Gen. Edward P. King Jr., who, according to Tokyo, surrendered Bataan. This picture was released yesterday by the War Department in Washington, but there was no confirmation of the report.

Associated Press Wirephoto

by sea, cut off from all sources of help in the Philippines and America—and they knew it, but that made them fight only the harder.

The men of Bataan have done all that human beings could do. They were sustained every day of their fight by something more than physical endurance. They had faith that was unconquerable, and they were conquered physically only when they could no longer stand up and fight.