

**From Bataan To Solomons**

**They Call It Pacific**

**By Clark Lee**

Continued from Page One  
south shore of Lingayen Gulf is strongly protected with barbed wire, trenches, and heavy field artillery. We have a flock of tanks at Stotenberg. It is a defense in depth."

I said, "I'm going up to Clark Field anyway and have a look at our Air Field, if any, and try to find out what chance we have of stopping them. If we don't have any planes left, we haven't got a hope in hell."

Carlos and Juan and I finally got away shortly after noon. Just as we stepped into the car the air alarm sounded. We debated momentarily whether to stay and cover the raid or get going. We decided to go on. We drove out Rizal Avenue at fifty miles an hour, passing the cars and horse-drawn vehicles which had pulled over to the side of the street and left the wailing men behind. We saw the dive bombers plunging low over Zablán Field, and then circling in strafing runs above it. The Japs were wasting bombs and bullets, because as we already knew there were no planes left at Zablán.

Manila ended abruptly, except for scattered homes and small factories. We stopped outside the city and fastened a big cardboard placard with the word "PREPS" to the radiator with adhesive tape. For the wind soon blew the tape loose and we didn't bother to put it on again. The road headed straight north, through level rice fields. Up on the right loomed Mt. Arayat, with the mountains of Zamboales on the left. That was the country of the Ilog Negritos, whose king had brought in three trussed-up Japanese soldiers to Stotenberg a few days before and had sworn a blood feud against the enemy.

Those mountains looked reassuring. "The Japs can't land on the west coast there and climb over those mountains," I said. "They'll have to come right down the middle from Lingayen, through this flat country and the plains of Pangasinan Province, and squarely by into our defenses."

The Filipino along the road had heard news of the landing at Lingayen and they apparently thought we were reinforcements for the front, because they waved at us and held up their hands, with their first two fingers separated in the V-for-Victory sign. There were Filipino sentries every few miles along the road, and air raid warnings in each village. Numerous times they stopped us by blowing whistles, and we got under the trees or sheltered in ditches as Jap planes passed overhead. The Japs attacked narrow parts of the road throughout that day, but we missed all the attacks.

In an hour and a half we reached Tarlac, capital of Tarlac Province and the biggest Luzon city north of Manila. We drove down the wide main street and I telephoned Cronin from the Tarlac exchange. All the other public phones along the road had been closed and most of the buildings in Tarlac, like those in the villages, were boarded and closed.

"The telephone lines to the north have been cut but I'm going on up," I told Ray. "You probably won't hear from me for a few days but I'll get the story in as soon as possible. Where we go will depend on how things look ahead. We'll probably spend the night in Baguio. I've always wanted to see it."

"Okay, but you better look out," Ray said. "Baguio is past our extreme right flank. Army communications seem to have broken down and we have no news here up in now."

We drove on, expecting momentarily to come to our third line. I expected to see trenches like those in France in World War I. But there were no lines and only a few sentries. One of them stopped us a few miles north of Tarlac and we showed him our press cards and went on, wondering how when we would come to our second line.

Cara from the north were speeding down the road. We saw one that had stopped to repair a flat tire and went over to talk. An American woman, with a baby in her arms, was weeping. "We went up to Baguio when the war started," she said. "Thinking we would be safe. But they have been bombing all around us. Last night we heard the noise of big guns, over at Lingayen Gulf, all night long. This morning the Japs bombed Camp John Hay at Baguio again. We seem to be surrounded. What shall we do?" I advised her husband to keep going until he got to Manila.

Trucks were loaded with

beds and chairs and all the people who could crowd aboard. Filipino families told us they had seen the Jap ships in Lingayen Gulf that morning, and the planes had come over, and many people had been killed in Lingayen City and the other towns along the south shore. We reassured them. "Our army is fighting them now. Within a short time you will be back in your homes."

Traffic to the north was sparse and we noticed that the nearer we got to Lingayen, the slower it was moving. Traveling fast, we overtook a few Jeeps and Army trucks and motorcycle riders. Some of the occupants were Americans.

Approaching the gulf at about five in the afternoon we reached a fork in the road. The left-hand road led out to Da Morita, four miles away from Lingayen Gulf. The right-hand one went to Baguio. We could see the waters of the gulf, but no ships. The Japs were further over to the west. An American soldier rode up and stopped his motorcycle. "Those Japs are pretty smart,"

he said. "They made a feint at landing on the south shore of Lingayen, where we have strong defenses. Then they sent their main forces along the eastern beach from Da Morita, over here to Bausang, which is about twenty miles north. The 26th Cavalry is fighting them a couple of miles up this left-hand road." He advised us to turn back and then rode on, slowly, toward the fighting. We had about two hours of daylight left and had to decide fast.

Juan wanted to take the soldier's advice. Carlos was neutral. "Let's go on up to Baguio, where headquarters for this area are located," I said, and find out what the score is. I want to see Baguio, and this might be my last chance. We'll have a good sleep in the cool air and get going in the morning."

Juan objected, "But the Japs may cut this road in the night." I said, "Hell, amigo, they are fighting the American Army now and the American Army will hold them on the beach forever. Rito's boys will die right where they land."



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