

Portland Radio Man Dodges Japanese On Island Of Guam Until Return Of Americans

By Frank Tremaine
United Press Correspondent
Pacific Fleet Headquarters,
Pearl Harbor, July 15.—(U.P.)—After more than two and a half years of dodging Japanese in the hills of Guam since that island fell to the enemy Dec. 11, 1941, Chief Radioman George Ray Tweed, 42, Portland, Ore., escaped early in July of this year, it may be revealed today.

(All organized Japanese resistance ceased on Guam Wednesday, Admiral Chester M. Nimitz announced Thursday.)

Tweed told correspondents today how he escaped from Agana administrative center of Guam, under Japanese machine gun fire after approximately 8,000 enemy troops poured ashore to overwhelm the tiny American garrison of 200 marines.

31 Months On Run
He told how he lived 31 months in caves or without shelter while the Japanese put a price on his head and carried out a series of determined searches for him.

(Guam is only 30 miles long, four miles wide at the northern end, and eight and a half miles long at the southern end.)

Tweed said he had given up hope of surviving until the Americans began attacking Guam in June.

The story of how he finally escaped from Guam aboard a combat ship during the Saipan campaign may not now be fully told.

Tweed now is en route to the United States to see his wife, Mary Frances, and his children, Ronald Eugene, 9, and Robert Edward, 13, for the first time since October, 1939.

Starting New Life
"It feels as though I am beginning life all over again," said Tweed.

He believed his wife is now with his mother, Mrs. W. H. Sudderth, Santa Paula, Cal., although "it's been so long since I've seen them I'm not sure where they are."

Tweed did not reveal many details of his life on Guam under the Japanese regime.

He is short and slight. He said he lost about 20 pounds during the 31 months he spent on the island between the Japanese occupation and the American reconquest.

Tweed said he experienced brief illness. The most noticeable effect of the ordeal appeared to be in his voice. He had some difficulty in speaking because he had not used his voice for long periods of time when he was alone on the island.

Arrived In 1939
Tweed was assigned to Guam Aug. 10, 1939, for duty at the naval station. His tour of duty had only two months left to run when war started. In October, 1941, the governor of Guam evacuated all American women and children, except one woman because of the apparent imminence of war. Tweed said the personnel at Guam at that time felt war was coming soon.

"About 5 a. m. Dec. 8, 1941 (E.T.), I was awakened and told to report to the communications office because the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor and Manila. I reported and asked what to do, but there seemed to be no organization, no plan for defense because there was no defense at Guam."

"At 9 a. m. the first Jap planes came over. They proceeded directly to Sumay and bombed the Standard Oil tanks and barracks of civilian workers."

Sent To Hill
"Later I was sent to a post on the hill with a portable radio to maintain communications with the naval communications office in town because the telephone lines had been destroyed."

"While I was there, Japanese bombers bombed and strafed the area for an hour and 25 minutes without scoring a bomb hit on any target. No buildings were hit and no personnel were injured."

Tweed said he returned again to Agana at 2:30 p. m. and found only one bomb hit in town—and that was on his own house.

"The second day was practically a repetition of the first, except that the hospital was machine-gunned and one more house was bombed. Bombs landed in the governor's garden, but they didn't cause damage."

"Before dark that night, ships were sighted in the horizon. They were taken to be Japanese landing forces, but that information was not spread widely. I knew nothing about it."

"I stayed at the communications office until nearly midnight, and then went home to bed. I had pulled my bed into the rear of the house under what was left of the roof."

Land At Midnight
Tweed said the Japs made their first landing about midnight but he was not awakened until 2 a. m. when he heard machine gun and rifle fire.

"I was so sleepy I was in a fog and didn't realize what it was. Somehow I got the impression the marines were practicing. I swore a while and then went back to sleep."

"But two hours later the Japs brought in field artillery. That brought me up."

Tweed dressed immediately and went to the communications office. There he found only a handful of marines, plus a few hundred members of the native and insular force available to oppose 8,000 Japanese.

But he reported that 50 marines, stationed on Cabras island at the mouth of Apra harbor, actually repulsed the Japanese until their ammunition was exhausted and they were forced to surrender.

He said the marines refused to give up to the Japs even though one of their few machine guns—which during the two-day pre-invasion aerial bombardment had helped keep the attacking planes a little higher—had been knocked out.

Marines Captured
"I don't know how many marines were killed but I know that quite a number were taken prisoner. When the Japs reached the center of Agana, they set fire to a house to provide illumination. Then they set up field guns and shelled the government house at point-blank range."

"I had gone to government house. There I learned the island was to be surrendered."

"So I decided to go into the bush, because I expected the Americans to come back and take the place away from the Japs."

Tweed said he and another radioman took his car for the getaway. Shortly after they left his house they made a right turn onto a road ascending a hill outside town, but the Japanese had set up a machine gun on the left side of the turn.

"As we turned onto the road, the Japs opened fire. Bullets whistled all around the car, but we got away. We went about 11 miles southeast of town to the other side of the island where we ran the car off the road and hid in the bushes."

"We looked for a place to hide."

Fugitives Separate
"Two months later the other radioman left me and proceeded off by himself. Later he was killed."

"Americans who were taken prisoner were held at Guam for 30 days. The Japs announced during that time that any American in the bushes who voluntarily surrendered merely would be placed with the other prisoners."

"At the end of the 30 days they were taken to Japan. Then the Japs announced that any Americans who left the bush would be killed."

Two months after the war started, Tweed said, two Americans were caught and killed. Six weeks later, two more were slain.

"The Japs were searching for me frantically. After the first year I gave up hope. I prayed all the time, but I felt that sooner or later I would be caught. But I was determined to do my utmost to postpone that day as long as possible."

"Several times the Japs learned where I was hiding, but each time I managed to escape—once by less than a minute."

"They permanently detached a 50-man search party which hunted almost two years for me."

Listed As Dead
"The Japs officially pronounced me dead April 1944."

Sometimes he hid in caves or took other shelter when it was available. But sometimes he was forced to sleep on the ground.

"When the Americans made their first bombing raid on Guam, I was highly elated. I knew I hadn't much longer to wait."

He said he eagerly watched succeeding raids from good vantage points. He said he "figured" there had been a landing on Saipan when United States planes started coming in from the north instead of the southeast, indicating that the fleet was operating around Saipan, 111 miles to the north.

He also saw Japanese bombers, heavily loaded, take off northward. One day he waved at a flier in what he thought was an Aircobra fighter (it resembled the picture of one in an old copy of a magazine) although it actually was another type of U. S. fighter.

Escape Details Veiled
The pilot apparently realized that the shirtless figure below was a white man. He blinked his landing lights.

This was all that Tweed could tell about his actual escape:

"I made my escape to a United States vessel off the coast."

As soon as he arrived aboard the warship, he was taken to the wardroom for food.

"The first thing I reached for was a piece of bread and butter. I had dreamed about it for two years."

Santa Paula, Cal., Aug. 11.—(U.P.)—When George Ray Tweed, 42, who escaped from Guam after eluding the Japanese for two and a half years, arrived home, she didn't recognize him his mother-in-law Mrs. W. H. Sudderth said today.

Mrs. Sudderth said Tweed knocked at the door one evening about two weeks ago.

"I looked at him but I hardly knew him—he was so thin and he was almost gray-haired," she said.

Democratic Nominee Up For Speech Has "Nothing to Unload"

Omaha, Neb., Aug. 11.—(U.P.)—George W. Olsen, Plattsmouth, democratic nominee for governor, appeared before the state convention last night and said:

"Fellow democrats."

"I feel just like I did when I was 16 and took a load of apples to Nebraska City and got stuck in the mud. I decided to unload, but the endgate was gone and so were the apples. There I was, stuck and with nothing to unload."

"I feel the same way here tonight."

"Thank you for what you are still going to do for me. Good-bye."

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SWEDEN MAY CUT RELATIONS WITH BERLIN, IS VIEW

Stockholm, Aug. 11.—(U.P.)—Swedish circles speculated today that Sweden may sever relations with and perhaps declare war on Germany before the end of the European war.

Authoritative Swedish sources acknowledged that a break with Germany was possible, but said such action depended upon developments in the Baltic and Arctic war theaters.

At least two potentialities were foreseen that would bring Sweden into diplomatic or military conflict with Germany:

1—If the Germans occupy Finland's Aland islands, midway between Finland and Sweden at the entrance to the Gulf of Bothnia.

2—If the Germans should attempt to withdraw their troops from Finland across Sweden to Norway or Germany.

While German occupation of the Alands alone probably would not provoke an immediate Swedish declaration of war, it would worsen relations and could lead to a diplomatic break.

Germany could pull her troops out of Finland by land only through Sweden and Swedish observers were confident the government never would permit the Nazi forces to cross the frontier, except for internment.

An evacuation by sea also was becoming increasingly difficult as the Russians extend their control of the Gulf of Finland and approach the Baltic in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

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DEMOCRATS MEET
Sacramento, Aug. 11.—(U.P.)—California democrats assembled in their annual party convention here today with William M. Malone, San Francisco, the most prominently mentioned candidate for succession to the party chairmanship.

Use Mail Tribune Want Ads.

Pinnacle No. 1 OPENS THURSDAY

Pinnacle Packing plant No. 1 will start operations Thursday at 1 p. m., and Pinnacle Packing plant No. 3 will start Friday afternoon at the same hour. It was announced today. Other packing plants will start on and after mid-week, according to reports.

Harvesting of the Red Gravenstein apple crop was started today by Charles A. Wing, who operates one of the few remaining apple blocks in the valley. The Red Gravenstein is one of the earlier varieties, is fair eating and preferred for pies and sauce, according to Assistant County Agent C. B. Cordy. Yellow Transparent apples, the earliest local variety, have already been picked.

Closing time for Classified ads 9 a. m. — Too Late to Classify, 12:30 p. m.

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Friday, August 11, 1944 MEDFORD MAIL TRIBUNE—FIVE

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