

Harry Lee Payne, T-42

9 July 1923 – 21 March 1987

(Aged 63)



Three more Mid-Southerners in the armed forces were listed among the missing yesterday, two others were reported to be prisoners of war, while several more notified their families of their safe arrival in the various war zones.

One of them is Henry Lee Payne, 20-year-old, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Payne is missing in the Manila Bay area. A naval hospital apprentice, Mr. Payne enlisted in the Navy two years ago and was stationed in Shanghai until the outbreak of hostilities in the Philippines. He attended Tech High School and played in the band.

Information from The Commercial Appeal, Saturday, May 23, 1942.

NO RICE AND NO 'LIGHT OUT' LIBERATED MEMPHIAN IS HOME

Last night there were no "lights out" for Pharmacist's Mate 3-c Harry Lee Payne; he could stay up as late as he pleased. There was no rice for supper, and he hadn't had rice all day. And there was no knowledge in his mind, when he went to bed, that in the morning he would rise and greet another day as a Nip prisoner.

For Pharmacist's Mate ate and slept at the home of his mother, Mrs. Hershell Childress of 1693 Euclid, exactly five years and 13 days after he enlisted in the Navy at Memphis, almost three years of which were spent in Bilibid Prison in Manila.

RAN CENTRAL HOSPITAL

"Who says 13 is unlucky?" asked the young bronzed, good looking sailor, when reminded of the bearded superstition concerning that number.

"Treatment at the camp where I was staying wasn't so bad as at other places." Pharmacist's Mate Payne said last night, "We ran the hospital for all Jap prison camps in the Philippines."

He was serving with the Fourth Marine Division on Corregidor at the time of his capture and was still there when the Japs staged their infamous "March of Death."

SWAM TO WARDS

Pharmacist's Mate Payne arrived at Millington yesterday morning from San Francisco where he debarked April 3. With him were five other sailors and one Marine. He will return to Millington this morning, after a one-night liberty for a reunion with a tearfully happy mother.

Pharmacist's Mate Payne had just arrived at Olongapo P. I. from Shanghai, which the Fourth Marines had evacuated when the Japs pulled their sneak attack on Pearl Harbor and other American bases in the Pacific. He was captured when Corregidor fell May 6, 1942.

"The weather there fell into two categories," he said, "hot and wet. We had 29 straight days and nights of rain once. The water was so deep that I swam from one ward to another."

"There were a fine bunch of fellows there, too. If someone saw you sitting around with the blues because of the monotony, he would come up and snap you out of it by asking you to come play cards or join in a conversation with others. He knew it wasn't good for you. Conversation usually consisted of what happened before the war and what happen after the war."

The internees also spent some of their leisure time reading what books they had which were sent to them from the Red Cross in 1943.

HAD CHURCH SERVICES

They were permitted to have church services each week and occasionally they were entertained by vaudeville and minstrel shows written by other internees. More Tennesseans were in that Navy Medical group than from any other state.

Tobacco was especially scarce. The internees usually received a weekly ration of about 10 cigarettes "which lasted about three hours."

A day in the life of Pharmacist's Mate Payne from May 1942, until February 1945, when he was liberated while he was working in his ward, went this way:

Arose at 5:30 for "tenko," counting off to see if all were present.

Breakfast at 7:30 of "lauguo," a paste of rice and water.

After breakfast we reported to the ward for routine work, which consisted of treatment of patients and taking care of medications.

Lunch at 12 of steamed rice.

Routine work for the remaining of the afternoon.

Supper at 5:15 of - steamed rice again.

About two or three times a week, internees would get a half canteen cup of vegetable soup. "This amounts to about half a regular glass tumbler.

He then returned to his ward to work until 9, when he went to his quarters for "light off."

Looking back, Pharmacist's Mate Payne said it "was just a bad dream. And I still can't get over the fact that I am free again."

Information from The Commercial Appeal, Tuesday, April 17, 1945.