

Last Hope Gone For Private Louis Mahan, Parents Told

3-7-45

All hope that their son, Private Louis Mahan, might be safe was lost this week when his parents received a letter from the office of the adjutant general stating that there was no further hope that the son had been saved when the ship on which he was being transferred was torpedoed and sunk on its way from the Philippines to the Japanese mainland.

Private Mahan was taken prisoner by the Japanese after the fall of Batavia and Corrigedor early in the war. He was kept on one of the Philippine islands until last September, when he and hundreds of other American prisoners were taken off the island to be transferred to Japan.

An American naval vessel, not known that the Jap ship carried American prisoners of war torpedoed and sunk the vessel on which Private Mahan and other soldiers were being transported. Only a few of the Americans were saved.

The letter from the adjutant general to Mr. and Mrs. Mahan follows: Feb. 19, 1945

Mr. Charles N. Mahan
Willow Hill, Ill.

Dear Mr. Mahan:

The War Department has now received the official list of prisoners of war on the Japanese freighter, which you were previously informed was sunk on September 7, 1944. It is with deep regret that I must now inform you that your son is among those listed as lost when that sinking occurred. The War Department regrets its inability to entertain a probability of his survival and must now consider him to have died in action September 7, 1944. The date of receipt of this final evidence was February 14, 1945, the date upon which his pay will terminate and his accounts be closed.

The information available to the War Department is that the vessel sailed from Davao, Mindanao, August 20, 1944 with 750 prisoners of war aboard. The vessel was sunk by torpedoes on September 7, 1944, off the western shores of Mindanao. The indi-

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PRIVATE LOUIS C. MAHAN

cations are that relatively few of the prisoners had opportunity to leave the sinking ship and of those who did many were killed by enemy gun fire. A small number managed to reach the shore and a close watch for others was kept for several days. The Japanese Government reports all of the prisoners as lost, indicating that no survivors are in the hands of that Government. There is no information as to what happened to the individual prisoners but known circumstances lead to the regrettable conclusion that all of the unaccounted for prisoners lost their lives at the time of the sinking.

It is with deep regret that I must notify you of this unhappy culmination of the long period of anxiety and suffering you have experienced. You have my heartfelt sympathy.

Sincerely yours,

J. A. ULIO

Major General

The Adjutant General.