

Sergeant Edison

B. Clark Aids

*Mar. 6,
1945*

Philippine Battle

Is Member of Photo Reconnaissance Squadron Which Participated in the Conquest of Leyte

Headquarters, Thirteenth Army Air Force, Southwest Pacific.—With the first phase of the invasion completed, the Thirteenth AAF has disclosed the part played by its photo reconnaissance unit in spearheading the veteran air force's shattering blows against Japanese bases in the Philippines.

The reconnaissance unit, in which the two Illinois soldiers took part, brought back the first aerial photos of the Jap strongholds and airstrips knocked out by the Thirteenth AAF before the infantry landed on Leyte island, Central Philippines.

The two Illinois air force men are: First Lieutenant Max E. Powell of Hillview, a pilot-photographer in the photo unit of the Thirteenth AAF. Sergeant Edison B. Clark of Wheeler, crew chief of one of the photo reconnaissance planes.

While pilots flew their (censored) P-38 Lightnings through the Zero-filled Philippine skies to take the vital pictures, ground men and laboratory technicians battled equipment shortages and terrific heat to turn out the photographs that guided the "Fightin' Thirteenth's" fighters and bombers to the targets.

In Dutch East Indies

Moving into position for the Philippine assignment, Lieutenant Powell and Sergeant Clark's unit landed on a Dutch East Indies island where Japanese troops still fought and the nightly bombing raids made sleep and rest difficult.

Laboratories were set up before tents and put on a twenty-four hour schedule. When a water shortage threatened to hold up production, the men gave up their showers and used the extra water to turn out more pictures.

It was the toughest mission yet undertaken by the unit, veteran of Guadalcanal, the Northern Solomons, Rabaul and Balikpapan. In the latter campaign, the camera planes paved the way for the record-breaking 2,500 mile flights of the Thirteenth AAF'S bombers, which struck major blows at the Borneo oil center, source of thirty-five per cent of Japan's wartime fuel.

Played an Important Part

High ranking officers of the "Fightin' Thirteenth have declared that the latest mission, accomplished under extreme hardships, played an important part in the successful invasion of the Philippines.

Lieutenant Powell, son of Mr. and Mrs. George R. Powell of Hillview, has been on overseas service in the South and Southwest Pacific for more than ten months as a pilot-photographer. He has been presented the Air medal and has been authorized to wear three battle stars on his Asiatic-Pacific campaign ribbon. Prior to entering the Army he was a student at the University of Illinois.

Sergeant Clark, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry A. Clark of Route Two, Wheeler, has been overseas twenty-six months, all of which time he has been a mechanic on planes of the Thirteenth AAF in the South and Southwest Pacific. He has four battle stars on his campaign ribbon.