

Pfc. Elbert French Escapes Enemy Trap On Luzon

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With the 40th Infantry Division in The Philippines — Into an enemy trap and safely out again is the story of Pfc. Elbert G. French, son of Mr. and Mrs. John R. French, Route 1, Newton, Illinois.

With the 185th Regiment of the 40th Infantry Division he served as lead scout on a patrol into Jap held mountain fortifications. The time was mid-April on the island of Negros. Few paths led to the tree covered peaks and these were well guarded by the enemy.

As the small patrol climbed one of these winding paths they were fired upon from two sides by Jap machine-guns. Heavy 90 mm. mortar shells poured in and the group pinned down.

This firing disclosed enemy positions which were later knocked out. During a lull in the firing the patrol withdrew and joined their unit. French then came back to help deliver the knockout blow on these positions.

On Luzon he was with the group which placed the first American flag atop the mountains overlooking Clark Field, on the road to Manila. It was on the crest of a 1700 foot ridge, after a bitter fight, that these men lashed Jap shovels together for a flag pole. From this bald peak the flag waved defiance to nearby Japs.

French was among the first to enter the capitol cities of Iloilo, Panay, and Bacolod, Negros. In addition to the three Philippine campaigns he also is a veteran of jungle fighting on New Britain.

The by-word for his platoon is, "Japs to the right of us, Japs to the left of us; is that good or bad?"