

Rohal, John R.

Four Local G-I's Battled Japs Until Surrender Came on Mindanao

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WITH THE 31ST INFANTRY DIVISION IN MINDANAO (Special)—Four Bethlehem men in the 31st Division's 155th Infantry Regiment were among the few infantrymen in the Pacific who fought the Japs right up until the moment peace was officially announced.

The men, whose regiment helped clear Mindanao's Sayre Highway of Japs last May, were in the mosquito-infested Agusan Valley in north central Mindanao when word of the Jap surrender was broadcast. The night before their outfit had received an attack by 100 Japs, had killed 17 of the enemy and repulsed the remainder.

The swampy battleground west of Mindanao's Agusan River was dubbed "Gruesome Valley" by the battalion of infantrymen who reached it after an 80-mile inland water voyage on LCM's and barges. By occupying this valley, the Bethlehem soldiers denied to the Japs a place of refuge after they had been driven out of Mindanao's rich Bukidnon Province plateau. These men and their buddies were the first white men to enter the uncharted swamps.

The local men are S/Sgt. John R. Rohal, husband of Mrs. M. N. Rohal, 656 Hayes Street; Pfc. John F. Stahl, son of Mrs. H. M. Stahl, 131 East Garrison Street; Pfc. Michael S. Stackno, son of Mrs. A. Stackno, 624 Shield Street, and Pfc. Richard H. Diehl, son of Henry H. Diehl, 913 High Street.

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