



511th PIR



Letter written by Division Recon's Cpl. Terry Santos to Sgt. Martin L. Squires re: Los Baños Raid

Written 1984

*Note: **Cpl. Terry Santos** was born in Honolulu, Hawaii on 10 October 1921. Upon joining the Army, he underwent basic training at Fort Ord, California. Upon completing basic he volunteered for paratrooper training. After graduating from jump school, he volunteered for special warfare training which comprised training in special weapons, Morse code, semaphore, and sailing. Completing the course, he reported to Ft. Benning, Georgia where he was assigned to the 11th Airborne Division. He then volunteered to serve with the Alamo Scouts and received jungle training, hand-to-hand combat training and all infantry weapons training. He then rejoined the 11th Airborne Division for the Leyte and Luzon campaigns.*

***Sgt. Martin L. Squires** was a member of the 511th PIR's Easy Company before joining 11th Airborne Division's famous Provisional Reconnaissance Platoon, or "Ghost Platoon". Martin and his fellow Recon Men participated in the famous Raid on Los Baños on February 23, 1945 in which 2,142 civilian internees were rescued from behind enemy lines. Martin later married one of the liberated civilians, Margaret.*

For more information on the history of the 11th Airborne, please read, ["When Angels Fall: From Toccoa to Tokyo, the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment in World War II"](#)

To any outlets, historians, reenactors, etc. who use the information in these letters, please credit www.511pir.com – Jeremy C. Holm

Letter from Terry to Martin:

Q: Do you remember a race to the arms rack?

A: Yes, that was Lt. Skau's primary mission upon disposal of the guard.

Q: Did Lt. Skau do any advance scouting of the area?

A: No, because we relied upon information supplied by Pete Miles, Ben Edwards, etc.

Q: How did your approach meet with mine?

We approached from the northerly direction through the deep ravine and our job was to attack the outpost with six guards and two dirt pillboxes. However, as we emerged from the ravine to the pillbox area machine guns opened up from the hills from the western side of the camp. Those were the first shots fired. We did not initiate the firing. We were attempting to dispose of the guards and the pillboxes surreptitiously. However, due to the machine guns firing upon us from the hills, this alerted the guards who

opened up on us with rifle and machine gun fire from the pillboxes (these pillboxes **lsicl** were the ones I guided B Company to "take care of.") I didn't know if the machine guns from the hills or the machine guns from the pill box wounded Vince Call in the shoulder and Larry Botkin in the nose. However, judging (later) from Vince Call's shoulder wound it appeared that the angle indicated it was from the machine guns in the hills. I covered Vince Call's withdrawal to the compound area (through the barbed wire) and went back to assist Larry Botkin. After Larry was safe in the ravine I turned my attention to the pillbox. I don't remember using all my grenades (three frags and three w.P.), but I must have thrown them all at the pillbox. By this time the troopers from B Company had dropped and I hoped for their appearance on the scene within a short period of time. (I carried two bandoliers (16 clips) and 10 clips in my ammo belt. I was down to 10 clips in my ammo belt. I hadn't realized I had fired as many rounds and had thrown as many grenades (all).

I noticed a group of B Company troopers running along side of the double barbed wire fence and a sgt. recognized me from Laiti **lsicl** (Do you remember when we escorted Captain Jim Brady of B Company and his group to Manarawat?) Anyway, I recall giving B Company the information about the pillbox and they said they could get some mortar fire on it. At this point I went through the barbed wire, into the compound, and started rounding up the internees who were milling about. Within a short period of time the Amtracks came into the camp and we started loading the women and children into the amtracks. Then somebody started burning the buildings. Shortly thereafter you and I linked up and we started moving the men capable of walking towards Laguna de Bay. We acted as rear flank guards during the march to the Bay.

(Postscript by Martin) We were the last to leave the Bay for New Bilibid where the internees were assembled.