

Ex-POWs gather in D.C.

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# Local woman recalls the fall of Bataan

By Kim Rice

All she could hear was the steady flow of bombs and shells as she bandaged and comforted soldiers in the tunnel. She never knew how close they were until she and the others were told they couldn't come out of the tunnel anymore.

"We were so busy with casualties that we just kept working during the surrender," said Edith Lloyd, a member of the Army Nurse Corps that was taken prisoner by the Japanese during World War II.

She was one of four female former prisoners of war from Southern California who were special guests at an observance of National POW-MIA Day at the Pentagon on April 7. The four joined 30 others representing the 60 survivors of 81 women taken prisoner on May 8, 1942 when the Japanese completed their takeover of the Philippines.

Lloyd, 69, was raised in Highland Park and has lived in South Pasadena for the past eight years. She was a member of the first graduating class at Burbank Junior High School, and a Franklin High School graduate.

"They kept telling us that a fleet of planes would be coming to get us out of the jungle hospital, but by the time Bataan fell, we knew we weren't going to be rescued," she said. "The one feeling that kept us going while we were



ON BATAAN before capture by Japanese troops was Edith Lloyd, former Highland Park resident, who later spent three years as prisoner of war. She is shown crawling out of foxhole dressed in size 42 mechanic's uniform.

prisoners was that at least we knew the states were still there and not being bombed."

Lloyd along with 68 other nurses worked in a small jungle hospital in Bataan, a peninsula in the Philippines. But when the Japanese captured Bataan, her medical unit fled to the island of Corregidor to a hospital set up in a tunnel.

"We didn't see many soldiers until later," she said. "Some came through

the tunnel, but there was no trouble. We were not allowed out of the tunnel until they moved us in June. First, they took us topside, and then we were transported with the patients to Manila.

"Then in July, we thought we were going with the boys, but we ended up in Santa Tomas University, an internment camp in Manila. I don't know where they took the patients."

The university was used to house prisoners. The nurses were separated 14 to a classroom on beds made of four slats of wood, a straw mattress and a mosquito net.

This was going to be their last move for the next three years.

"There were about 3,000 people held in Santa Tomas. In the beginning we had better food than we usually had," she said. "We were always served two meals a day, but that turned into slow starvation and no communication from home. And when we did get letters from home, they were a year to a year and a half old."

Lloyd said she was never injured by the soldiers, but that she could only speak of what she experienced.

"We never saw anybody get hurt because they were always taken out of the camp," she said, "but we did hear rumors. The trouble started when they wanted us to bow everytime we met a soldier. With 3,000 people in the camp that could get out of hand. I think the soldiers got more tired of it than we did."

Lloyd said the three years of being prisoner was hard, but she never gave up hope, even though she was discouraged many times by unconfirmed rumors.

"During the confinement, we tried to occupy ourselves with anything we could think of," she said. "We had a slogan for every year that went by, hoping that maybe this year would be the one."

"We heard a lot of rumors, but you got to the point where you'd listen and let it go in one ear and out the other. The only real thing we could count on