

First Word From Wake Island Is Received Monday

(Editor's Note: The following letter was received here Monday morning by Mr. and Mrs. Frank Polak, parents of John Polak, who is one of the five Wahoo men on Wake Island, captured by the Japs. It was the first letter written by John in pencil, his parents said. The letter, written on the 20th, was just three days before the Japs claimed to have captured the island).

December 20, 1941

Dear Mother and Dad:

Am writing this in hope that one of our planes will carry it to Honolulu and just to let all of you know, we are all okey, so far.

Wire Anna and tell her Gordon is okey. Leo Fraley and he are both holding up fine. Also wire Smazals that we are okey. All the 1000 boys included. Wire Glenville the news and include that Al Pay is okey. All Wahoo boys are safe.

We have been subjected to daily bombings, but are holding out so far and expect to have help any day. Expect to be evacuated as soon as this is possible.

Please do not worry about us too much and do continue your prayers. Am writing this in a dugout and the light is awfully poor. God bless all of you and may he reunite us all soon.

Love to all
John

Leo Fraley Pens Letter From China

Wahoo Man Sends Greetings
From Japanese War Pris-
oners' Barracks.

103 Days On Road

He Says They Are Being
Treated Very Well and
Not To Worry.

The following letter was received from Leo Fraley by his wife in Wahoo Saturday. It had been on the road from China 103 days. There were no paper stamps on it as a rubber stamp had been used to print the impression used for a stamp. The letter had evidently been drawn up by Mrs. Fraley's brother, John Polak, as he is good at printing and the slant to the letters indicated that he had drawn the letter up. The signature was genuine.

It will be remembered that Mr. Fraley and Mr. Polak were two of five Wahoo boys taken prisoners on Wake Island when civilian employees working there were captured. The others were John Hanson, John Dolezal and Floyd Snyder, Jr.

Shanghai War Prisoners Camp
May 30, 1942

Dear Bess:

Am happy to tell you that I am safe and well. I am hoping and praying that all of you at home are well too. I am praying everyday that I may go home soon.

We are being treated very well so do not worry about us. I want you to keep praying for me. Give our grandchildren a kiss for me. Tell mother and dad not to worry. God is just and John and I will be home and we will sure have a happy reunion. I hope Hazel is still working and that you are not having any financial worries. Say hello to all my friends.

Much Love from
Your Husband
Leo Fraley.

My address:

Leo Fraley, Barracks No. 5,
Shanghai War Prisoners Camp,
Japanese Field Postoffice 106,
Central, China.

LATER—Mr. and Mrs. Frank Polak received a letter Wednesday morning from their son, John. He is in charge of barracks and says the Japs are very friendly and that they are treated fine. Gordon Krysan, of Celmar, Iowa, grandson of the Polaks, is in another camp and he is fine. John and Leo Fraley are in the same camp. His letter was typewritten and the signature was identified as that of John.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dolezal received a letter Wednesday afternoon from their son John stating very much same contents as other letters. Also mentioned it was a long time between smokes and would appreciate a carton of cigarettes.

Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Snyder of Wahoo also received word from their son Floyd, jr.

First Word Wake Boys Is Received

Copy Of Cablegram Reaches
Wahoo On Tuesday
Evening.

Leo, John, Floyd Jr.

Are Prisoners at Shanghai;
No Word Yet As To
Other Two.

The first official information pertaining to the Wahoo boys who were working on Wake Island when the Japs took over arrived in Wahoo Tuesday evening when Clyde R. Worrall received an air mail letter containing a copy of a cablegram stating Leo Fraley is a Jap prisoner at Shanghai, China.

A copy of the letter we print below:

Clyde R. Worrall
Chairman Saunders
County American
Red Cross
Wahoo, Nebraska.

My Dear Mr. Worrall

We just received a cablegram from the International Red Cross committee which contains the following message for Mrs. Fraley:

"ACCORDING INFORMATION RECEIVED JAPANESE RED CROSS, LEO FRALEY PRISONER SHANGHAI"

Very truly yours,
Annie H. Lockett,

Director Inquiry Service.

Wednesday morning Mr. and Mrs. Charles Dolezal of Wahoo received the same information about their son John from their daughter in Omaha who had been working through the Omaha Red Cross. He, too, is a Jap prisoner at Shanghai, China.

Wednesday evening the same official report came in on the third boy, Floyd Snyder, Jr. He is also a prisoner at Shanghai.

It is thought now all five boys are prisoners at Shanghai and that information will be coming through shortly about the other two.

Word to the Dolezals was to the effect John was well and wanted to hear from home.

Inquiries about all five of the Wahoo boys were made in the same manner about two months ago but no official word has as yet been received about the other two who are John Polak and John Hanson.

1941

WAHOO MEN AT WAKE ISLAND

Pictured below are the five Wahoo men who are on Wake Island, reported taken by the Japanese.

—Story at right



John Polak, shown on boat which took him to the Island last year.



John V. Hanson



Floyd Snyder, Jr.



Leo Fraley



John Dolezal

JAP WAR TOUCHES PERSONAL NOTE SAUNDERS COUNTY

Eberhardt On Gunboat Wake Seized By Enemy 1941

The United States-Japanese War has touched the personal strings of county people reports from relatives here revealed.

Among the group are five Wahoo men who are employed by the Waterway Construction Co. formerly at Omaha and now of Iowa. The company has a construction contract with the government at Wake Island.

John Polak, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Polak is general manager of the construction firm. He left for the Island October 5, 1940.

Other Wahoo boys at Wake Island include: John V. Hanson, carpenter, son of Mr. and Mrs. Herman Hanson; Floyd Snyder, Jr., office employee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Snyder, Sr.; John Dolezal, office employee, son of Mr. and Mrs. Chas. Dolezal; Leo Fraley painter. They went to the Island sometime in May.

No Hint

Mr. and Mrs. Polak said they received a letter Monday morning from their son, who gave no hint whatsoever that trouble was expected. His letter, in part, read: "Enclosed is a little gift to help make this Christmas the happiest you have ever had. I only wish I could be with you, but I'll be thinking of you and praying that the child Jesus brings all of us blessings of health and happiness and especially to the grandest Mother and Dad a fella' could have. God bless you both."

Mrs. Hanson said she received a letter from John Monday which stated that blackouts were frequent. Mrs. Fraley said she also received a letter from her husband, but nothing in the message indicated anything in the air. Mr. and Mrs. Dolezal heard last from their son John last week Saturday. In most cases the letters were written sometime in November. The correspondence from the Wahoo men stated that all had to be finger printed; that new officers took over and that all letters were censored.

Eberhardt on "Wake"

Fred "Pitts" Eberhardt also of Wahoo, was on the United States communications ship Wake which was captured by the Japanese off the Shanghai waterfront. Eberhardt is the nephew of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Eberhardt, Wahoo. A sister, Mrs. Keith Snowden, lives in Omaha. Relatives here said he has been there about one and a half years.

Reports are that the Wake had no chance to fire. The Japanese, in a sudden attack as they took over the water front of the international settlement, off which the tiny gunboat was anchored, boarded it and forced its surrender. The Japanese flag was raised over the Wake.

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John Dolzal

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Langley Safe

Mr. and Mrs. George Smerin, Wahoo, expressed relief over the good news that the United States seaplane tender Langley was safe. Their son Randolph is machinist mate, second class on the ship. Naval sources denied reports that the seaplane tender was bombed during a Japanese attack on Davao Monday. They said the carrier was safe and carrying out routine duties.

Some concern was expressed over the fate of Ed Dokulil, who was radioman, third class, with the VJ2 squadron at Pearl Harbor. A check up with his brother Loyd Dokulil here brought the news that Ed had been transferred to heavier flight planes at Norfolk Virginia. This was about two months ago.

Cousin At Pearl Harbor

Mrs. L. J. Jensen's cousin, Lt. Raymond White, is a surgeon at Hickman Field. His wife is a nurse at the same Field. Mrs. Jensen said her cousin's home is at New Plymouth, Ida. Lt. White's two brothers, Ralph and Harold, are on Midway Island on some type of construction work, Mrs. Jensen said. Lt. White has been there about six months, but his two brothers have been working on Midway for about a year.