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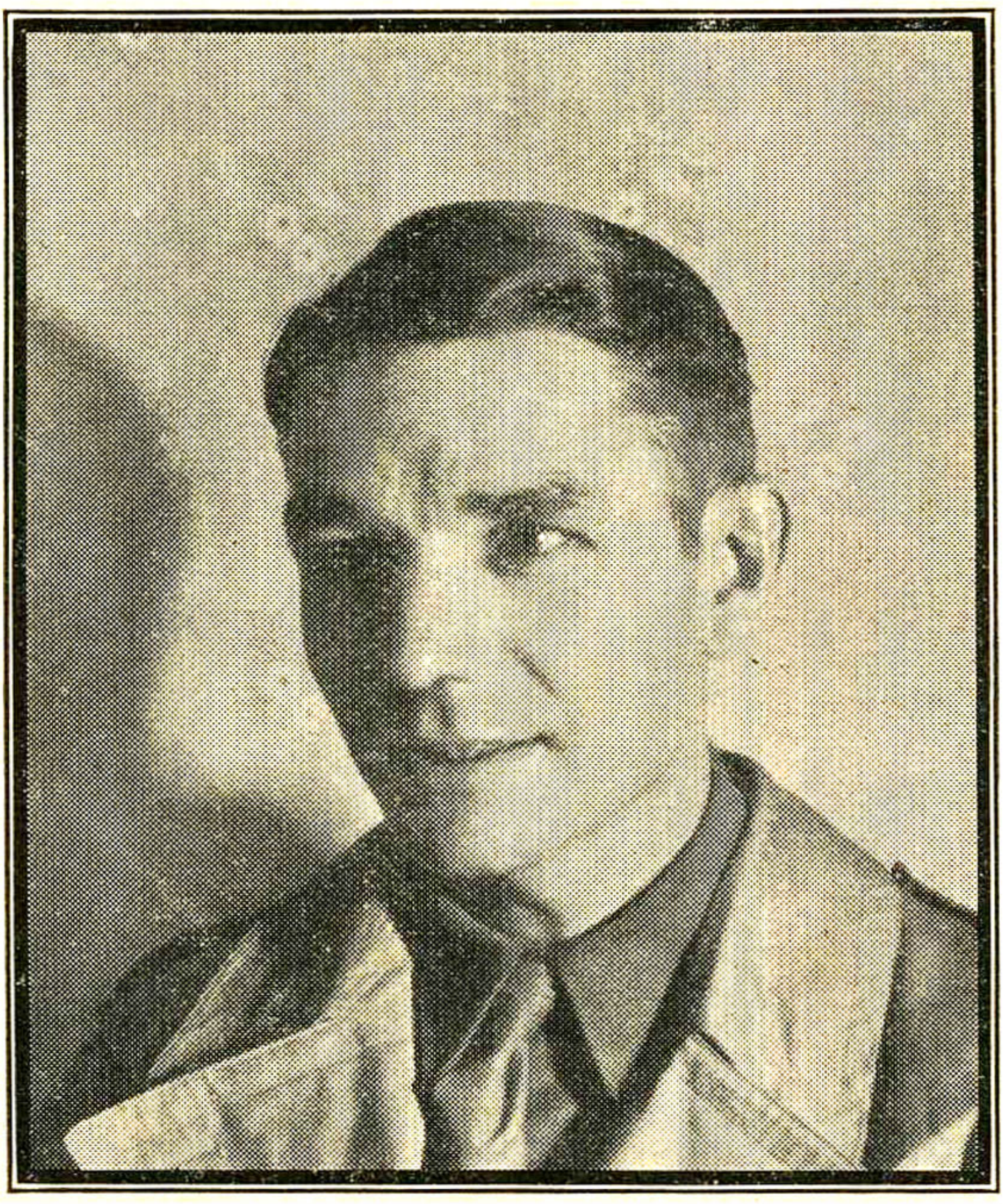
Back From Bataan

It was late afternoon of April 13, on the beleaguered island of Mindanao. Bataan had fallen. Word had come that 12,000 Japs were near by. Deep in a stuffy dugout a reporter sat pecking out a message to his paper, The New York Times: "Guess I'll take to the hills. You probably won't hear from me again for two or three years." Absorbed, he didn't notice an athletic figure's catlike approach. A finger touched his shoulder. "Want to go to Australia? We're pulling out tonight."

The speaker was Brig. Gen. Ralph Royce, whose thirteen bombers—there were twelve now—had played hob with Jap bases on the Philippines for two days. The reporter was Nat Floyd. Last week Floyd, first American correspondent back from Bataan, arrived in New York and told NEWSWEEK the story of his escape.

Floyd fled Manila Dec. 31, just ahead of the Japs. For 70 days he lived with MacArthur's men on Bataan; sharing their shallow foxholes, their scant rations, their two cigarettes a week.



Nat Floyd stowed away at Bataan

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Bataan

One day he noticed extra drums of fuel being lashed on a small torpedo boat. Sniffing news, he sneaked aboard and hid in the engine compartment. He was wedged between exhaust pipes and when the boat put out he was nearly broiled alive. He had stowed away on one of four boats with which General MacArthur was running the Jap blockade.

When they reached Mindanao—where planes later took the MacArthur party to Australia—Floyd hid out to escape the general's wrath. He spent a week among Moro tribesmen and arranged to join them again if the Japs cut off his escape.

After General Royce's bombers got him to Australia he sent The Times a 4,000-word story of Bataan which they front-paged. Then he came to America on the Army transport that brought the Quezons

In New York he was amazed and embittered to hear people talking of what we can do in 1943, while the Japs help themselves to what they want in 1942. "The idea of winning with production for 1943," he comments, "is a variation of the Maginot complex. To win, we have to kill Germans and Japs—plenty of them—and now."

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