

THE NEW BERN MIRROR

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HE WAS THERE

Inevitably our thoughts turned to Pete Cook last Sunday afternoon, when General Douglas MacArthur departed from the ranks of the living.

One of three kids we taught in Sunday school who didn't come back from World War II, Pete's life drained out in the cruel and bloody "Bataan Death March."

Thousands of American and Filipino prisoners were forced to walk more than 70 miles to prison camps, in keeping with an order issued by the Japanese commander, Lt. Gen. Masaharu Homma.

Hundreds of ailing and wounded died of thirst or starvation enroute. Still more were killed by their captors. Pete Cook was one of the victims of this torture.

For 98 heroic days, General MacArthur and his greatly outnumbered men beat back Japanese attacks on Bataan Peninsula. Cut off from all possible help, they were hampered by shortages of food, ammunition and medical supplies.

Rations for the soldiers were mule meat, wild pigs, water buffalo and a small amount of rice. Finally, 200,000 Japanese attackers broke through. The Americans and Filipinos withdrew to the very tip of the Peninsula, burning their abandoned military equipment as they went.

General MacArthur was ordered to report to Australia, but as he departed he solemnly promised, "I will return." And return he did, almost three years later.

His troops landed on southern Bataan, captured points on Corregidor, and opened Manila Bay. In 1954, President Ramon R. Magsaysay of the Philippine Republic issued an order making the battlefield areas of Bataan and Corregidor national shrines.

Such recognition for Pete Cook and others who made the supreme sacrifice, and for the no less heroic who lived to return to their homeland, was indeed fitting. This nation and the entire free world owes them a debt of lasting gratitude.

It seemed appropriate when the heavens wept last Sunday, as General MacArthur quietly passed into eternity. A proud man, whose dignity often brought him criticism, he was never more dignified than in his final hours on earth.

Pride and vanity are two different things. MacArthur undoubtedly had some of both. The exact proportions could be argued at great length by his admirers and enemies.

More important was his valor. MacArthur's severest critic would have a hopeless task trying to minimize his courage. His long military career had ups and downs, but first and last, MacArthur was a brave and good soldier.

Like a lot of Americans, the editor of The Mirror has always had mixed emotions about the MacArthur-Truman showdown. It was easy to understand the General's frustration when he had to pull his punches against the enemy.

On the other hand, MacArthur's disdain for the President's authority placed Truman in a position where he had no choice but to relieve the General of his command.

History will be able, perhaps, to evaluate and objectively analyze the occurrence and its end result. Those of us who are part and parcel of the era in which it transpired are probably too prejudiced one way or another to judge fairly.

One thing we may be sure of. A great American will be laid to rest Saturday at Norfolk. He was great as a leader, great as a conqueror, and greatest of all as a respected peacemaker.

And in his greatness he inspired kids like Pete Cook, who died a hero a long way from home.

Historical Gleanings

—By—
ELIZABETH MOORE

Account of Mrs. Esther Nelson, Guardian to Josephus Nelson, 1840-47.

1840. To A. Ayers for shoes and boots \$5.95, to E. R. Stanly for material \$1.79; to J. Goodell by N. N. Taylor for Clothing \$6.57; to William G. Hall for books &c \$2.79; to New Bern Academy for tuition for son Josephus \$4; to I. V. Blackwell by W. L. Higson for material \$.....; to John B. Blackwell for material \$14.75; To John Charlotte for material \$11.23; to E. R. Stanly \$2.40 for material; to T. L. Hargett for one palm leaf .75;

1841, to T. L. Blackwell for clothes \$12.04; to A. Ayers for boots \$9.35; to E. Hull and Company for Hat and boots \$3.62; to Turner and Hughes for school supplies \$4.58, receipt of Mr. McKeithan by R. E. Maddox; to Raleigh Institute, Mr. Gray for five months tuition for son Joseph, ending 14 Dec. 1841, \$15.00--school opens again on August 16th; to Wm. White for shoes \$1.25; To Catawba Springs by Rev. E. M. Forbes \$2.00 for Joseph Nelson; to Marian E. Allen for vest \$1.50;

To Oliver and Smith for making jacket and pantaloons \$4.00; to Wm. H. Mayhew for tuition for son Joseph \$3.75; to Oliver and Smith for making a suit \$4.00; to M. E. Hall for books and school supplies \$1.54; to Thomas Sparrow for 9 months and 17 days board of Joseph Nelson @ \$8.00 per month \$76.53; to E. R. Stanly for material for clothes \$12.50; to J. L. Wilkins \$10.00 for clothes; to Mrs. M. Brickell for board for Joseph \$85.00;

1843. To Thomas S. Singleton for board for self and son \$15.33; to James Ellison for mending shoes \$1.65; to Gulon Scott for shoes \$14.30; to Rev. E. M. Forbes for Jeremiah Murphy tuition for Joseph \$15.93.

1844. To Samuel S. Duffy for 2-1/2 yards of Gambroon; Cravat, buttons, Shirting \$8.80; to Wm. T. Willis for cutting jacket \$1.25; miscellaneous items, paper, quills, at Catawba Springs, pocket money, tuition, stretching hat, board &c; to Gulon Scott for shoes \$8.90; to R. N. Taylor material for clothes \$20.69; to Samuel Simpson for H. W. Jones \$8.92; to B. Lee Craft for shoes \$1.00

1845. To R. N. Taylor for clothes \$3.65; to M. Hoke for board for Joseph Nelson \$42.75; to Mrs. Patridge for making jacket \$1.10 to Maria E. Hall for two months 13 days board \$18.46; paid by Mrs. Esther Nelson for son Joseph for books to

Village Verses

A CALAMITY

Could mortal man be more distressed
In this life of woe and aches,
Than when he's rushing to get dressed
And one of his shoestrings breaks?
In deep despair, he'll fume and swear,
While deploring what Fate has done;
He'll fashion a knot that ain't so hot,
Then to that appointment he'll run.
Dignity never takes fleeter wing
Than at the snap of a worn shoestring.
—JGMCD.

Maria E. Hall \$4.93 1/2. to T. L. Hall for shoes \$1.50; to Alexr. H. Stanly by Emmett Cuthbert materials &c \$10.19; to Wm. G. Hall for school supplies \$6.35; to F. J. Prentiss for clothes \$17.50; to Joshua Scott for shoes \$2.30.

\$2.00; to T. L. Hall for clothes \$9.07.

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