

The 6th Rangers

THE 121 picked men who engineered the jail-break for the release of 510 American POWs from Cabanatuan No. 1 on Luzon were of the 6th Ranger Battalion.

Commanded by Lt. Col. Henry A. Mucci of Denver, former Honolulu Provost Marshal, the battalion was formed in New Guinea at the suggestion of Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, 6th Army CG. The outfit was then a pack field battalion. Col. Mucci took command and trained the battalion for six months over the dusty hills of Port Moresby.

The Rangers grabbed outlying islands on Leyte Gulf on A minus 3 of that landing, took Santiago Island at the northwestern tip of Lingayen Gulf in the Luzon show.

Company C, reinforced by one platoon, drew the assignment for the Cabanatuan prisoner snatch. Armed with M1s, a few bazookas, pistols and knives, the Rangers took off for the prison, then 25 miles ahead of our frontlines.

The rescue was originally planned for the evening of the 29th. The Japs picked that evening to send a motor convoy through Cabanatuan. The Rangers lay low, and struck the next night.

Within 25 minutes after their raid, the Rangers and the prisoners were headed home. The Rangers, aided by a force of some 300 guerrillas, accounted for more than 500 Japs on the raid. Their own losses were one killed and one wounded; the guerrillas lost 26 and two.

For their night's work the enlisted men of the Rangers were awarded Bronze Stars, the officers Silver Stars, Col. Mucci, who was on the raid, the DSC. Of the raid Gen. MacArthur said, "No incident of the campaign has given me such personal satisfaction."

