

**John Paul Campbell, Jr.**  
**United States Army 3605759**  
**131st Field Artillery, 2nd Battalion**  
**E Battery "Lost Battalion"**  
**WW II**

[January 31, 1942. Transcript of letter and a telegram from John Paul Campbell Jr. to his parents from the Island of Java, Dutch East Indies. NOTE: Before the Japanese had conquered all of Java, most Allied forces had left Java for Australia, leaving the Second Battalion, 131st Field Artillery to "provide support for the locals." The unit earned the title of "Lost Battalion" because they were not evacuated with other military forces. The Dutch surrendered the islands to the Japanese on March 8, 1942. The Japanese imprisoned the Texans, along with 5,500 British and Australian troops, at a camp called TanJong Priok, near Batavia. On October 2, 1942, nearly 200 battalion members were marched on board ship and transferred to Singapore. Nine days later most of the remaining members followed, and the group was reunited at Changi Barracks POW camp, formerly a British army post, before being shipped to Moulmein, Burma, on January 11, 1943. The Texans traveled by train to Thanbyuzayat, Burma, and immediately began work on the Japanese "Railroad of Death," which ultimately connected Burma to Bangkok, Siam. The unit labored in various work camps on the railroad, including assisting on the famous "Bridge over the River Kwai," and suffered numerous casualties and deaths. **When the men of E Battery were captured, including John Paul Campbell Jr., they were imprisoned but generally sequestered from the rest of the unit. Nearly all of them were ultimately shipped to Japan to work in industrial projects and coal mines. John Paul Campbell Jr. was forced to work as a laborer for Mitsubishi shipyards in Nagasaki, building Japanese military ships. In 1945, he was transferred to work in the coal mines in Orio before the atom bomb was dropped on Nagasaki]**

*c/o U.S Forces in Java*  
*January 31, 1942*

*Hello Folks:*

*They have arranged for us to send mail once a week, and I'll attempt to have a letter in each outgoing mail. However, we've heard nothing about our incoming mail. I suppose they are doing everything possible to get it to us. It's been so long I'm really anxious to hear from you. If you received my last letter, there's been no change. We are continuing our usual training when possible and the remainder of the time taken up doing guard duty. We have an unusually good camp here and so far; our mission is to defend it. I mention again our rigid censorship. It's difficult to write when you are not at liberty to mention things of interest, and those facts that of interest would disclose our position. So, I'll only use my letters to let you know I'm still OK. I'm anxious to know if [brother] Wallace has been called back into the service and, if so, where have they sent him? It would be funny if he turned up in this part of the world. We must make these letters short. Use same organization as before: c/o U.S. Forces in Java.*

*I am Your Loving Son, Johnie*