

## Knox GI Helps Blast 500 Jap Guns, Mounts

Pfc. Willard E. Johnson, husband of Mrs. Yuanita Johnson of Knoxville, is among Army forces credited with destroying 500 Jap gun emplacements on the road to Manila.

It was a 28-day operation, covering 120 miles of jungle mountains, during which Willard and his buddies smashed fanatical resistance so rapidly that Jap forces were completely off balance and disorganized.

"In one position," said Willard, "we were caught within the cross-fire of three five-inch Jap naval guns. The Japs had removed a lot of arms like this from sunken ships and had mounted them in covered concrete emplacements with walls seven feet thick."

"We knocked out all three without getting hit," Willard said. "One of our tank destroyers would draw the fire while the others put their shells point blank into the emplacements' eight-inch openings."

Willard's platoon spearheaded an infantry company's attack to free prisoners held by the Japs and the assault was so rapid that it demoralized the guards and every prisoner was freed unharmed. Japs fled to the hills.

"If we figure five Japs were killed in each one of these gun emplacements," Willard deduced, "that makes 2500 for us. Not a bad score. We lost only three guns the whole time, two of them by land mines."

Pfc. Willard E. Johnson, son of Mrs. Cassie Johnson, 3304 Reagan Street, has been awarded the Bronze Star Medal on Luzon. He was a member of the crew of a self-propelled assault gun which supported airborne assaults against Jap fortifications south of Manila. Pfc. Johnson repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire in order to keep the gun in a position where it could give the best support. "As a result of Pfc. Johnson's heroic efforts, numerous enemy strong points were destroyed, thereby greatly facilitating the advance of the assault unit," the citation read in part.