

# 400 Prisoners In Crossfire Aided by Native

## Tonawanda Lad Freed By British in Burma

How a young native saved 400 Allied prisoners of war has been revealed by Tech. Sgt. Edward



Sgt. Niland

lv 36  
F. Niland, 145 Elmwood Pk., Tonawanda, in Atlantic City, N. J., where he is awaiting a new AAF assignment.

The airman related that he had been held prisoner by the Japanese for a year near Rangoon. One day he heard rifle fire, steadily growing louder, which raised his hopes of liberation. But, then the bullets began flying around him.

"The British had put the Nips on a tough spot, but the Nips had us on an even tougher one," he said. "Bullets and shells were coming at us from the front and back. The British, in their drive to take Rangoon, had outflanked the Nips who were trying to evacuate us to Siam.

"Things got too hot for them and they sent us in a protective wedge between their lines and the advancing British, who didn't know we were there. The village we were near was a Jap tactical headquarters and the British were strafing and bombing it to shreds."

The ordeal ended for Niland and his fellow prisoners when they found a friendly native runner.

"He was a game kid," Niland said. "He sneaked through the Jap-infested jungles to get word to the British. Next day we were free men."

A Mitchell radio operator and gunner, Niland studied at Canisius College. He entered the Army in March, 1942. CE 2/2/45