

# THE SENATE OF TEXAS



*Proudly welcomes*

*Heroes of the Bataan Death March,  
which began April 9, 1942,  
sixty-three years ago this week.*

*These brave heroes of World War II  
traveled from all over the state  
to join the Senate*

*on*

*Wednesday, April 6, 2005*

*Photos and biographical information unavailable for:*

**BILL ADAIR**

*Dallas, Texas*

**BEN ALPUERTO**

*Grand Prairie, Texas*

**EULALIO ARZAGA**

*Killeen, Texas*

**ARTHUR CAMPBELL**

*Rockwall, Texas*

**LYNN COSGROVE**

*Amarillo, Texas*

**OSMUNDO NUNEZ**

*El Paso, Texas*

**JOHN OLSON**

*San Antonio, Texas*

**ALFRED QUIJANO**

*San Antonio, Texas*

**FRANK RAMIREZ**

*Killeen, Texas*

**HARRY STEEN**

*El Paso, Texas*

## **MAR G. ARRADAZA** *Garland, Texas*

Mar Arradaza was among the first to organize Filipino veterans' fight for full equity. After retired from the US Army in 1963, he returned to the Philippines to organize the national Philippine Scouts Association of America, now called Philippine Scouts Heritage of America, which is still active.

After the fall of Bataan to the Japanese, Mar was captured and forced to join the infamous Death March. He marched several days without food and water. He saw many of his comrades die from starvation and injuries. His back was severely injured because a Japanese soldier repeatedly struck him with a rifle butt.



He escaped the Death March through the help of a Filipino woman refugee. He pretended to be a civilian refugee carrying the woman's old child. He returned to the Philippines where Japanese soldiers could no longer see them. He was running and hiding, barefooted and without water, for almost two weeks before he was reunited with his other comrades.

He served as a demolition specialist with Co. B, Engrs. (Combat) Philippine Scouts. He was captured and imprisoned three times. He escaped after ten days. He was imprisoned for the third time on Oct 18, 1944, during the Leyte bombing for the liberation.



He was captured again on April 13, 1944 at Lamao. He was captured again on February 18, 1944 and escaped after one month. He was captured again on September 18, 1944 and escaped after one month. He was captured again on September 18, 1944 and escaped after one month. He was captured again on September 18, 1944 and escaped after one month.

He stayed in the US Army until 1963 when he was granted full retirement while at Killeen, Texas. He receives a pension from the US Army. More than 60 years after Bataan Death March, he still suffers from the back injuries he sustained from punishment given him by his captors. He goes to the VA hospital for treatment.

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At age 81, Mar maintains his hopes and confidence in the US Government whom he serves well.

Mar lives with his wife, Evangeline, in Garland, Texas, a suburb of Dallas. He has six children, ten of them still alive, and has 22 grandchildren. His living children, all in the United States, are named Mar Junior, Lourdes, Freddie, Arthur, Pinky, Editha, Melissa, Gabriel, Sil and Bridget. He keeps himself busy by tending to his vegetable garden and by keeping abreast of the debates in the US Congress on veteran matters.

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## BEN AUSTRIA

### San Antonio, Texas

Benjamin C. Austria, a native of the Philippines, entered the service there at Fort William McKinley on July 29, 1940. After completing basic training at Fort William McKinley, he remained there with the 12<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion, Philippine Scouts, and served with the Battalion during the Battle of Bataan in World War II. The Japanese forces captured Master Sergeant Austria, together with his father, a Medical Service Corps Officer. While on the Bataan Death March, Master Sergeant Austria escaped and served with the Philippine Guerrillas. When the liberation forces entered Manila, he joined the 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division and was later assigned to the 11<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division, where he served as a Combat Medic liberation of the Southern



From April 1945 until April following assignments: 8<sup>th</sup> Philippine Scouts (AUS), master and Chief Medical Manila, until July 1950; NCO, 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, 1950; was hospitalized until Tripler General Hospital, Student, Clinical Technician General Hospital, until May Medical Assistant, Brooke

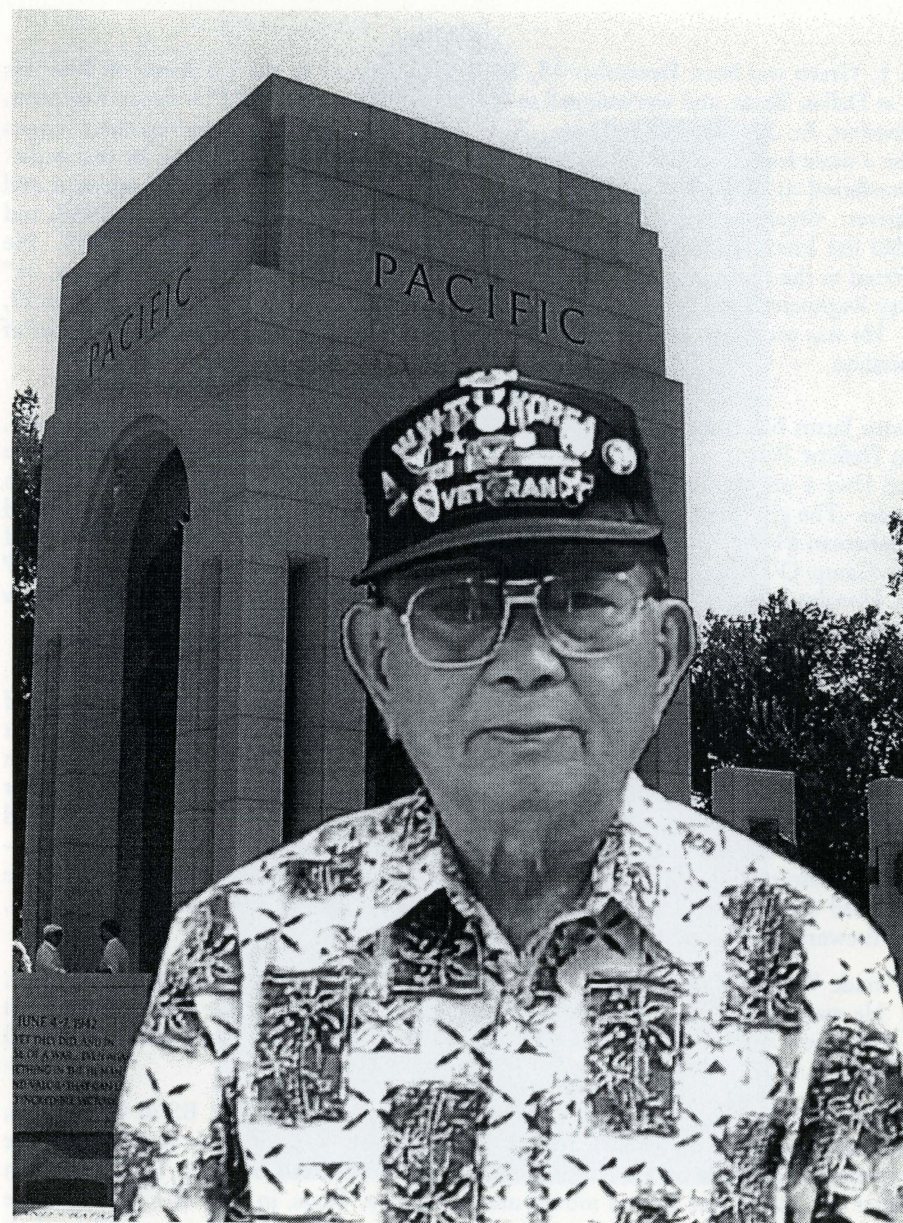
Houston, Texas, until March 1962; Platoon Sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, Korea, until April 1963; Platoon Sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, until September 1964; Student, AMEDS NCO Course, Medial Field Service School, until December 1964; Platoon Sergeant, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, Fort Hood, Texas, until December 1965; Medical Instructor, Nursing Science Branch, Medical Training Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, until January 1966; Chief Ward master, Brooke General Hospital, until August 1967; Ward Master, 37th Ambulance Train (rail), Germany, until September 1969; and Chief Ward Master, Main Hospital, Brooke General Hospital, the position he held upon retirement.

Decorations Received: Master Sergeant Austria has been awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Bronze Star with Oak Leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Good Conduct Medal with seven loops; American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, Asiatic-Pacific campaign Medal with Bronze Star, World War II Victory Medal, National Defense Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Korean Service Medal with Bronze Star; Philippine Defense Ribbon, Philippine Republic Presidential Unit Citation, Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation, United Nations Service Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation with two Oak Leaf Clusters and Prisoner of War Medal.

Master Sergeant and Mrs. Austria and their children, Maria, George, Leonida, Celia, Alicia, and Leticia reside in San Antonio, Texas.

liberation forces entered Cavalry Division and was Airborne Division, where he and Point Man in the Provinces of Luzon.

1971 he served in the Military Police Battalion, until May 1947; Ward NCO, 20<sup>th</sup> Station Hospital, Rifleman and Medical Korea, until September May 1951; Medical NCO, Hawaii, until April 1955; Course, Walter Reed 1956; Senior Hospital General Hospital, Fort Sam



# SMITH L. GREEN

## *Benbrook, Texas*

Smith L. Green was born December 13, 1916. He enlisted in the US Army on May 10, 1935, at Dallas, Texas, and was assigned to Headquarters Company, 23<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Ft. Sam Houston, Texas. After recruit training within the regiment, Green became a mule leader, wire layer, switchboard operator, and radio operator, in that order. He transferred to 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Company in 1936, and there became tank radio operator and tank driver. Green reenlisted in 2<sup>nd</sup> Tank Company as a Corporal in March 10, 1938, and attended the Infantry Communications Course at Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1939. He transferred to the Philippine Department and was assigned to Headquarters Company, 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment, Philippine Division, in 1939. Green arrived in Manila on October 27, 1939. He was promoted to T/Sgt. in fall of 1940, and became Communications Chief of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion.

War with Japan began in the Philippines on December 8, 1941 (difference in time zones). Bataan Defense Forces were surrendered by General King on April 9, 1942. Green's group reached Hwy 1 on Manila Bay on April 10, 1942, and began the march northward to San Fernando. The group entered Camp O'Donnell on April 14, 1942. Green was transferred to Cabanatuan #1 POW Camp on June 2, 1942. About 1400-1500 American POWs had died at Camp O'Donnell by that time. Green was then transferred to Hirohata POW Camp, Honshu Island, Japan, on September 18, 1943. He left Manila on the *Taga Maru* September 20, 1943, and arrived at Hirohata on Moji, Japan, on October 5, 1943.

Green worked at Seitetsu Steel Mill until Japan surrendered August 15, 1945 (Japan time). He broke up slag under the furnace, shoveled coal and iron ore on ships and rail cars, and handled pig iron. Green returned to the US via the Philippines on October 15, 1945. That was six years and eleven days after departing the U.S. for a two-year tour. He reenlisted in the Infantry after several months' recuperation, and was transferred to the USAAF after reenlistment leave. His first assignment (by choice) was to the Fort Worth Army Airfield (later Carswell AFB), at Ft. Worth, Texas, where he was an Airborne Radio Operator on B-29s. He had aspired to such duty after seeing B-29s high overhead in Japan in 1945, where he witnessed them destroying Himeji, a few miles away, on the nights of July 3-4, 1945. What a fireworks for Independence Day!

Green made Warrant Officer, Junior Grade in 1951, and arrived at Seoul in December, 1952. He was assigned as OIC of 1st Radio Squadron Transmitter Site (Rear), Taegu. In April, 1953, he was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer. Green retired from Biggs AFB, El Paso, Texas, in 1957.

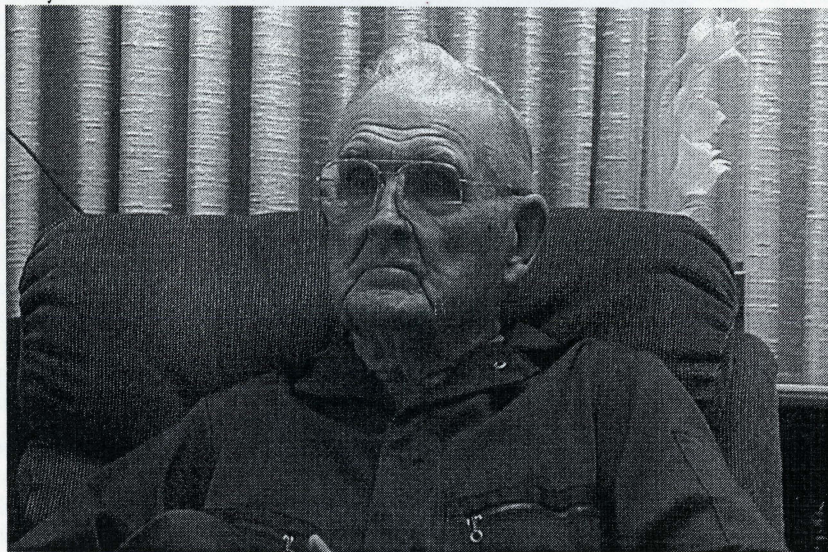
He graduated from Texas Christian University in May, 1961, with a BS in Commerce, Magna Cum Laude. Green married Marie on December 4, 1964. He retired from the Texas State Department of Health as Finance Officer, Bureau of Long Term Care, on December 31, 1983. The Greens moved near Granbury, Texas, in May of 1984, where he cleared land, chopped wood, and gardened until July, 1999, when they moved to their present address.



## CLEM KATHMAN

### *Brenham, Texas*

In April of 1942, the Japanese army, under the command of Lt. General Masaharu Homma, completed the conquest of the Philippine Islands by capturing both Filipino and American soldiers stationed on the southern tip of the Bataan Peninsula. In the ensuing Death March, some 1500 American soldiers would die, and thousands of others were hospitalized or unaccounted for. The associated atrocities and inhumanity is only now being understood completely.



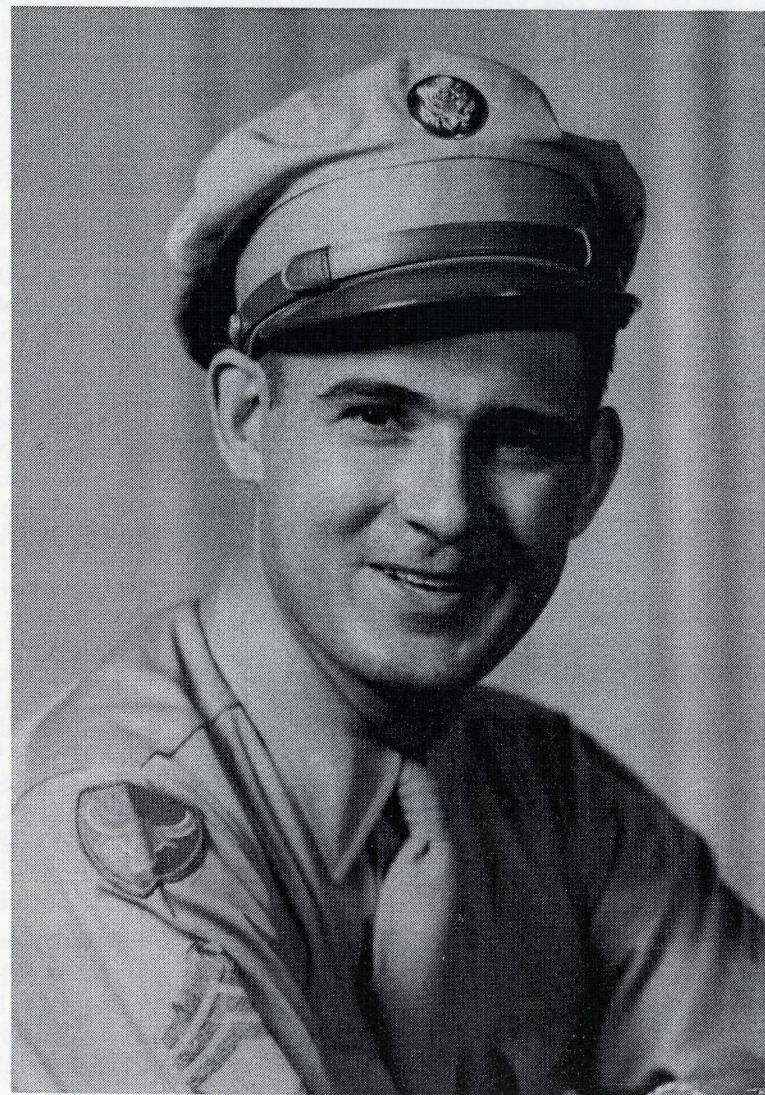
About 1200 survivors are alive today. Clem runs a Website that recollects the experiences of such soldiers, who lived the Death March. His experiences are chronicled in his new book. As an octogenarian, he is one of the few who is still here, to tell his story, *I Was There, Charley!*

Clemens A. Kathman, 88 (better known as Clem), is a product of the "great depression," who worked his way through college, only to have Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo foul up his best laid plans. He was drafted in March 1941, assigned to the 200th CA(AA), which was sent to the Philippines in September 1941.

On December 8, 1941, the Japanese bombed Clark Field after earlier destroying Pearl Harbor and Clem was in a shooting war. After Bataan, the Death March and 3-1/2 years as a POW, he was liberated in September 1945.

Fourteen Months hospitalized and almost two years later, in July, 1947, he was discharged, married and resumed work in the newspaper. Here he moved through the transition from hot type metal printing to digital and photo-composition. Clem retired in 1981 and lost his first wife of 42 years in 1987 to emphysema. He remarried in 1988 and his second wife died in 1992 of heart and lung disease.

Bachelorhood and Masonic fraternity filled his next ten years. He met his present wife c Internet and they were married in July, 2002. They live in Brenham, Texas. Both dab writing. *I Was There, Charley* is his first book.

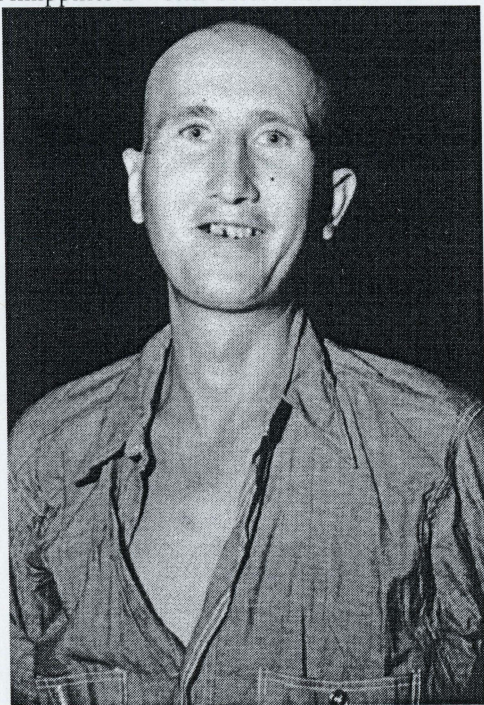


# JOSEPH LAJZER

## San Antonio, Texas

Pvt. Joseph O. Lajzer was born in Ohio in 1918. He attended high school for 3 years but left to support his family. Joseph was originally a member of 753rd Medium Tank Battalion and trained at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. He was trained as a tank driver and to work on machine guns. He was sent to Camp Polk, Louisiana with the 753rd in 1941. At Camp Polk, he volunteered to join the 192nd Tank Battalion. The battalion had been selected for overseas duty and needed replacements for men who had been deemed "too old" to go overseas. The 192nd's deployment to the Philippines was code named "PLUM."

Joseph arrived in the Philippines 2 weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor. He worked the ordnance, ensuring the tanks had the ammunition, food and gas. Joe and his friend sat outside their tent loading machine gun belts when they heard about Pearl Harbor, but they did not believe it. As they worked they heard friend looked up and saw planes. Since they all knew B-17s were suppose to be landing at Clark Field, Joe paid little attention to the planes. When he heard the sound of bombs exploding, Joe took cover. Two blocks from his tent, he dove into a partially dug ditch. He shared the trench with two Filipinos.



A British officer asked Joe and three other men if they could shoot a .45. Each took a turn attempting to hit Joe. The officer was the only one who made Joe his Bren-Joe was the only one who pulled out the sheets with the "Xs" would be killed. The officer who had given a break came by and asked what was going on. When he found out, he told the Japanese officer that Joe and the other POWs had been with him and would not be executed.

Joe was imprisoned in Bilibid for about a month. He left the Philippines on the "hell *Benju Maru* and spent 38 days in the hold of the ship on the way to Formosa, without the washroom for 15 days. The convoy left the Philippines with 15 ships but only got to Formosa. In Formosa, Joe was assigned to OKA Camp, where he performed labor, built runways, and worked on sanitation. Joe was one of 11 Americans held in camp.

Joe was next posted on a machine gun detail with two other members of the 192nd. They each worked a two-hour shift. One night, Joe was doing his shift when a sergeant told him of the surrender. He finished the shift and left the other men asleep. Not long afterwards, Japanese soldiers came through the clearing, searching for Joe and the others. The Japanese soldiers took the contents of Joe's pockets.

Joe and his company made their way to Mariveles. The men stayed there for a day. They were fed a spoonful of rice and a square piece of bacon. Joe and two other men pooled food so that they would each get a larger portion. Joe took part in the death march, the POWs had no food, no water and no rest. On the fourth day of the march, Joe and other POWs heard a rumor that the injured would be driven to the POW camp. Joe like he was lame. He began to fall behind his group. A guard looked at Joe and chased with his bayonet pointed at Joe. The prisoners marched well into the night. As they marched, they were unaware that they were marching on the bodies of the dead who had been run over by Japanese trucks.

At San Fernando, about 100 POWs were packed into a boxcar. Those who died remained standing until the car was emptied at Capas. The first camp Joe was held in was O'Donnell. In the Philippines, Joe was imprisoned at Capas, Lipa Batangas, Camp Mind and Bilibid Prison. Joe became so ill at Cabanatuan that he was put into "Zero Ward," he was surrounded by dying men. While mixing cement Lipa Batangas, Joe forgot to put the specified amount of cement in the mixer. He hid his mistake by sprinkling dry cement on the concrete that had already been poured. He was lucky and was not caught - had he been caught doing this, he would likely have been killed. As it turned out, one day a Japanese transport plane hit this spot when it was landing and went off the runway and crashed.

While building runways at Lipa Batangas, Joe and his fellow POWs had a rare humorous moment. The POWs had been working in the hot sun and wanted a break. Joe went to the Japanese officer in charge of the detail and in his gutter Japanese asked the officer for a break for the POWs. The officer did not respond. Joe returned to his fellow POWs and in English and Polish about the officer. Again, his fellow POWs convinced Joe to go to the officer and request a break. Joe again approached the officer and in his gutter Japanese asked for a break. When the officer did not respond a second time, Joe cursed in Polish English. The officer looked at him and said in perfect English that Joe was right and the men deserved a break. Joe felt pretty silly.

One day an American sergeant escaped. During the escape a Japanese soldier had killed. The Japanese had 40 Filipinos and seven GIs lined up. A Japanese lieutenant had a hat with 22 pieces of paper in it. He came up to Joe and the POWs and told each man to pull out a slip of paper. Three sheets of paper had "Xs" on them. He told them that the men who pulled out the sheets with the "Xs" would be killed. The officer who had given a break came by and asked what was going on. When he found out, he told the Japanese officer that Joe and the other POWs had been with him and would not be executed.

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Joe and the other prisoners had no idea how the war was going. The first hint something was happening was when they saw B-29s and P-38s over the island. The POWs were involved in dogfights with Japanese planes. Around September 1, 1945, the Japanese dropped to the POWs from planes. The Japanese gave each POW five cigarettes and a handful of peanuts. The POWs did not have to work that day. On September 6, 1945, the US Navy came to the island and liberated the POWs. Joseph was returned to the Philippines and then sent by troop ship to San Francisco. The photograph in this part was taken immediately after Joe was liberated from the POW camp on Formosa.

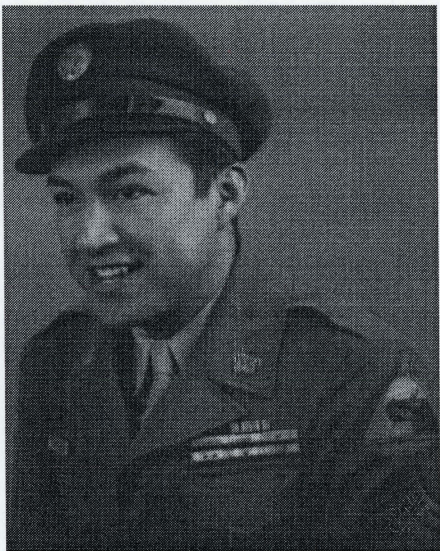
# ABEL ORTEGA

## San Antonio, Texas

Pvt. Abel F. Ortega was born one of six sons on August 22, 1919, in El Paso. As a child, Abel had two things he loved: drawing and history. It was history that resulted in his becoming a member of the 192nd Tank Battalion.

Abel was drafted into 1941. He was sent to for basic training and the 753rd Tank to Camp Polk, the commanding asked his men if any interested doing duty Abel's love of history Orient resulted in his volunteer.

Abel was reassigned Battalion at Camp battalion, Abel was off the coast of San for overseas duty. battalion arrived in Thanksgiving Day, to Fort Stotsenburg. dinner was a slice of



On December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, Abel and the other members of his battalion received the news about Pearl Harbor. The battalion was ordered to scatter its tanks and half-tracks around the perimeter of Clark Field.

At lunchtime, the "replacements" were ordered to stay with the equipment while the original members of the battalion went to eat. While guarding his half-track, Abel heard the sound of planes approaching. As he watched the sky, he felt good about the protection the planes provided. When he heard the sound of bombs, he realized that the planes were Japanese. Abel was on top of his half-track and firing his machine gun at the Japanese planes as they bombed Clark Field. He and the other members of Company A were now in a battle to buy time for the US and its allies so that they could reinforce Australia.

During the battle for the Philippine Islands, Abel was the driver for the communications command half-track of Company A. While doing this job, Abel took part in the engagement with the Japanese at "The Battle of the Points." It was for Company A's performance during this battle that the 192nd Tank Battalion would receive its Distinguished Unit Citation.

the army in March, Fort Knox, Kentucky, became a member of Battalion. He was sent Louisiana. One day, officer of the 753rd of them would be in the Philippines. and wish to visit the being the first man to

to the 192nd Tank Polk. With his new sent to Angel Island Francisco to prepare Leaving by ship, the Manila on when they were rushed Abel's Thanksgiving bread with gravy on it.

On April 8, 1942, Abel was given word that the Filipino and American Forces on B were about to be surrendered to the Japanese. Abel destroyed his half-track and equipment so that it could not be used by the Japanese. He felt sad because they had fought so hard and lost so many men. When he was finished, Abel knelt down and prayed to God to keep him alive. He also promised that if God kept him alive, he would help his fellow soldiers in what lay ahead. What lay ahead is known as "The Bataan Death March."

Abel was shocked by the way the Japanese treated the prisoners. They were marched without sense of direction, without food, and without water. Prisoners who tried to get food or water were shot, bayoneted or decapitated. If a prisoner fell out of ranks, he was mistreated. Prisoners who did not move forward were beaten the entire length of the march. If the man fell out again, he was shot or bayoneted. As he marched, Abel saw many bodies of prisoners lying along the sides of the road.

Abel witnessed a number of acts of cruelty by the Japanese. One night, when the prisoners were resting, the Filipino soldier next to Abel tried to build a fire to cook some rice for himself. A Japanese guard bayoneted the man to death for this. In a separate incident, Abel witnessed the guards tie five Filipino prisoners to a haystack and set the stack on fire. Abel remembered their screams as they were burned alive. Another incident involved an American soldier. As the POWs were marching, one POW fell from the ranks. A Japanese truck ran over the prisoner, flattening him into the ground. The driver had plenty of time to swerve and avoid the man.

On the fifth day of the march Abel received his first food. It was a handful of steamed rice. On the sixth and seventh day of the march, Abel received about a half a mess kit full of food. He estimates that the total amount of food he received during the twelve days it took to complete the march was the equivalent of three full mess kits.

Abel arrived at Camp O'Donnell on April 27, 1942, and watched as a great number of prisoners died from disease. Abel was never really sure how many men died per day because during his interment there, Abel was often exhausted, dazed and unaware of what was going on around him.

On May 7, 1942, Abel was transferred to another camp near Calauan under the command of Captain Wakamori. The men in this camp received good treatment when compared to other camps, and the food in the camp was good and adequate. The men were fed rice and soup each day. The prisoners on this detail were given the duty of repairing the bridge roads destroyed during the Battle of Bataan.

On September 8, 1942, Abel and the other POWs were sent to Cabanatuan. As a prisoner here, Abel worked in the camp farm. This was where the "Blood Brother" rule was enforced. Each of ten men was responsible for each other. If one man escaped, the other nine would be executed.

On January 28, 1943, Abel was transferred to a work camp at Lipa in Batangas, where he built runways for the Japanese. The usual meal was rice and soup. The prisoners were allowed to work but could not do much beyond this. On this detail, Abel worked with John Lajzer, a member of Company B, 192nd Tank Battalion.

At Lipa, Abel witnessed a Japanese guard beat an American officer because he did not salute him. The guards lined the POWs up at attention and called the officer out. The officer was made to get in the "pushup position." He was beaten by the guard with a long tree branch. The man fell to the ground, but the guard would not stop until he returned to the upright position on his hands and toes. The beating lasted ten minutes. When the guard was satisfied, he allowed the officer to rise. He was able to walk, but he was very weak and

staggered. Abel believes that had the beating not stopped, the POWs may have attacked the guards. The Japanese made them watch the beating but had forgotten to take away their picks and shovels.

On March 26, 1944, Abel was transferred to Camp Murphy, a work camp where he once again built airports. Here, the prisoners were frequently beaten with pick handles. At this camp, Abel was punished severely. One morning, Abel and two others were the last to fall in formation. The three men were made to stand at attention while a guard walked past them slapping them hard on the left side of their faces with the flat side of a bayonet. After this the men were made to kneel. A stick, about two inches in diameter, cut from a tree with small stubs sticking out of it, was placed behind the knees of each man. This made kneeling extremely painful. As they knelt each man was punched in the face by the guards. The guards also began jumping on the legs of the men so that the sticks would dig into their legs. This beating lasted about twenty minutes.

Abel was transferred to Bilibid Prison in Manila. He was there only a few days before being put on the Japanese freighter, *Hokusen Maru*, bound for Japan. The trip to Japan on this "Hell Ship" was the worst experience Abel had as a POW. Five hundred prisoners were placed in a 45' X 45' hold and fed once or twice a day. The hold was extremely hot and men suffered from heat prostration. Eight or nine men died and a number of other men went insane. Since there was no room to sit down, the men stayed in a half-sitting position most of the time. The only times the men were permitted on the deck was to go to the latrine. Only one man was permitted on the deck at a time and only for a few minutes.

Abel's convoy was attacked by US submarines and a number of the prisoner ships were sunk. Four prisoners from a ship that was sunk were placed on his ship. One of these men died when the ship reached Formosa. After the submarine attack, Abel's ship went to Hong Kong instead of Japan. The ship remained in the harbor for eleven days and was bombed by American planes. None of the bombs hit Abel's ship. The ship next went to Formosa.

On Formosa, Abel was sent to a work camp and out on work details. Even though the work was not that hard, many of the POWs died of malnutrition. Abel would remain on Formosa from November 1, 1944 until January of 1945, when he was sent to Japan.

Abel arrived in Japan on the 14th or 15th of January and was sent to Camp Osaka. There he did stevedore work in the port for the Kamiguni Company. Abel recalled that the prisoners were still beaten; but, by this time, they were so used to it that it did not bother them.

Around March of 1945 Abel was sent from Osaka to Camp Maibara 10-B. This was somewhere in the interior of Japan. There he worked building canals and draining lakes. This was near the end of the war so the treatment of the POWs had improved.

One day a British POW entered the camp and told the men that the war was over. The prisoners decided to test this information. The guards were nearby, but their guns were leaning against a building. The POWs rushed the guns and so did the guards. After a short struggle, the guards let go of the guns and left. To the POWs this was proof that the war was over. When American planes dropped supplies, the prisoners' belief was confirmed.

On September 10, 1945, the POWs made contact with American troops. Abel was sent to Yokohama, Japan to be deloused, shower and receive new clothes, and returned to the US at the end of October.

Today, Abel resides in San Antonio, Texas, and his fishing buddy is Joseph Lajzer, of Company B, who had been a POW with him. Abel also enjoys giving presentations about his experiences as a POW.

## *MENANDRO B. PARAZO*

### *El Paso, Texas*

Menandro Parazo, 84, was born in the Philippines. He retired as an Air Defense Air instructor in 1971 from Ft. Bliss, Texas. He and his wife live in El Paso.

At 23, Menandro left the University of the Philippines and entered the US Army in Feb 1941. He was assigned to the 26th Cavalry Regiment, stationed at Fort Stotsen Philippines, the only mounted U.S. horse cavalry in WWII.

While Japanese troops were sweeping into Southeast Asia, seemingly invincible determined force of Americans and Filipinos, including the 26th Cavalry Regiment, held on the island of Corregidor and the Bataan Peninsula. For four months, their efforts down Japanese troops and equipment bought the time needed for the US to rebuild its

"The heroes of Bataan and Corregidor," President Roosevelt wrote to Philippine President Quezon, "are effectively assisting the war effort by gaining invaluable time, and time vital factor in reinforcing our military strength." With little hope that reinforcements would arrive, the fighting went on. Finally, on April 9, 1942, tens of thousands of American Filipino soldiers surrendered to Japanese forces. Two days later, Menandro was prisoner by the Japanese and forced to join the infamous 65-mile "Death March." starved, diseased, and beaten Army was denied food and water, robbed of personal possessions and equipment, forced to march under the hot sun, and halt in areas where the most primitive sanitary facilities were lacking. Stumbling along, they might be clubbed any moment by a gun butt, beaten by a wrench or bamboo pole, or bayoneted by Japanese conquerors. Several hundred of them died each mile of the way, and by the end of the trek, more than 600 Americans and 10,000 Filipinos had died.

Survivors then encountered the hardships of a prisoner of war camp. Menandro escaped camp and joined the Guerilla Resistance Organization. The guerillas conducted hit and runs on the Japanese. Guerilla duties included constructing tank obstacles, trenches, and emplacements, stringing wire, and preparing demolitions. Preparations for sustained guerilla warfare included large-scale movement of goods, supplies, and weapons in and around jungle areas. Secret caches were established in remote and inaccessible places.

In March of 1943, Menandro was recaptured and brutally tortured at the Japanese Military Intelligence Unit in Manila. Miraculously, he later escaped, again, from the Japanese and rejoined his guerilla unit. During the liberation of the Philippines, he rejoined the US and participated in the Battle of Manila in 1945. After the liberation, he was sent to the US with the US occupation forces.

His decorations include: the Prisoner of War Medal, two Bronze Stars, American Defense Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Service Medal, Philippine Defense Service Medal, Philippine Guerilla Resistance Medal, Combat Infantry Badge, three Presidential Unit Citations, United States Occupation Medal, Korean Service Medal, WWII Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal. Menandro is an active member of several organizations, including the Philippine-American National Historical Society and the Philippine-American National Leaders Advisory Council.

## *LOUIS B. READ*

### *Dallas, Texas*

Louis B. Read was born April 30, 1920, at Gorman in Eastland County, Texas.

Louis finished high school in 1939 and joined the regular US Army having served in the Texas National Guard while in high school.

During WWII, Louis was in the 31st Infantry Regiment (US) on Bataan, in the Philippine Islands.

He writes,

We fought for four months and the command was surrendered by General King. After the Bataan Death March, one third of my regiment died in the first six weeks at the first prison camp (O'Donnell). I spent the rest of the war as a prisoner, winding up working for Mitsubishi in an underground mine in Northern Japan.

After the war, Louis attended Southern Methodist University and earned a B.S. and an M.S. degree, worked for a Scientific Instrument manufacturer, and retired in 1985.

Louis is a past commander of the Dallas Metroplex Chapter of American EX-Prisoners of War and past commander of the Dallas chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Louis Read has been married 59 years, has two living children, and three grandchildren.

## *TILLMAN RUTLEDGE*

### *San Antonio, Texas*

Tillman writes an open letter on the Camp O'Donnell Monument [edited for length]:

Fifty-eight years ago on 15 April 1942, my group arrived at POW Camp O'Donnell, h started at Mariveles on 9 April 1942, the fall of Bataan. In about 40 days, nearly Americans perished here in this hellhole.

About 10 months ago The Battling Bastards of Bataan, BBB, led by Major Richard Go USA Retired, decided to build a Memorial to these American Military men. Without help from our government we obtained permission from the Filipino government to do Without outside help from any other veterans/civic organizations, the BBB raised the to accomplish this. Our Man in Manila, Jim Litton, put in thousands of hours over the construction, materials, research, etc. Without Jim's and Dick's devotion to this ar BBB our Memorial would be. Without the donations by a relatively few, we might not our Memorial.

At a very special ceremony, attended by a large crowd, on the morning of 7 April 200 Memorial was unveiled. The Cement Cross replica, (the original now rests at the Na POW Museum in Georgia), was unveiled by Major Gordon and Sgt. Phil Coon, both 1 March survivors and on the detail that built the original Cement Cross. Tears flowed f

Later in the Program the Wall was unveiled by me, MSgt Leroy Becraft, SSgt Oliver and Sgt. Humphrey O'Leary, all also Death March Survivors. Again, tears flowed f The Wall of Remembrance contains almost 1,600 names, two poems, the Story c Cement Cross, and short remarks by Major General King. It was all filmed by TV c from the UK, Carlton TV and BBC, and many reporters, none from the US!

Filipino people. I loved them at 17 before the War and found no change. I wa reminded how beautiful the Filipino women are. Small wonder they have more b pageants than any other country!! My friend and I stayed three extra days and had to down several dinner invitations.

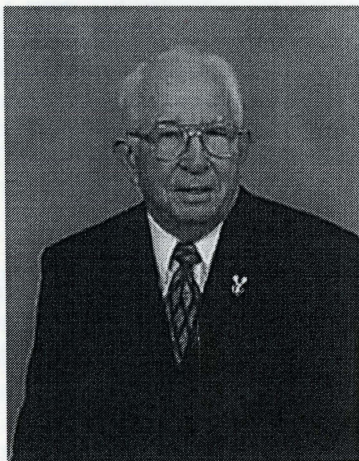
I spent almost three weeks in the Philippines. This letter is also about the Filipino p We four survivors from the US were treated royally. We attended several ceremonies d National Veterans Week. I spoke at Lamoia in place of Dick who had lost his voice what a great talk he gave at O'Donnell.

This trip was very emotional at times, cleansing, closure, satisfying and entertainin visited the sites of every POW Camp I was in with thoughts as to what we went th there, with tears running freely down my face, remembering my Buddies I lost there how I, also, nearly did not survive O'Donnell. Bilibid Prison, the New and the old. and was given a tour of most of the base. Cabanatuan and remembering the raw sur had there and more friends. Las Pinas, found by friends for me! Yes, a trip worth more what it cost and hard to adequately express my feelings. I thank God for the opportu the means and I did not go alone.

# HENRY STANLEY

## Garland, Texas

Henry Grady Stanley, a Georgia country boy, enlisted in the US army in March, 1941, because "the \$21 a month looked pretty good." He arrived in the Philippine Islands in November of that year, and was still there when Bataan fell on April 9, 1942. The American surrender to the Japanese led to the Death March of about 90 miles, and claimed 16,950 American and Filipino lives.



Grady writes,

I think one of the key points I my survival was the way I was born and raised. I was a country boy; my father died the year I was born. I worked hard on the farm from the time I was a little boy, right on up until I went in the Army. In fact, a good portion of these fellows that got back were small town boys, country boys, that were in good physical condition in the beginning. You had to continually keep in mind that you were going to come back. You could not lose faith. The ones that gave up didn't make it home.

For three and a half years, I was beaten, starved, and forced to live in animal-like conditions. I truly believe for that reason, I am more thankful for all my blessings. I'm especially thankful for good food, good water, and nice clean beds and oh, to be really free.

Time heals a lot of wounds and I have really come a long way since 1945. I really don't hold any bitterness that I was put in that situation. I don't mind talking about my experiences. As a matter of fact, talking about it has probably helped me. But, don't ask me to completely forget either.

My faith tells me that it was not just luck that brought me home – my God wanted me home.



## RAMON VILLA

### Victoria, Texas

Ramon Villa was captured by the Japanese army in 1942. He had enlisted in the US army on April 15, 1941. Ramon's first assignment was to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, and from there he was sent to Camp Wallace in Hitchcock, Texas, for 13 weeks of basic training. He spent about three months in El Paso at Fort Bliss as well.

Ramon was sent to the Philippines in September, 1941. The battalion was stationed at Clark Field Air Base with the 200<sup>th</sup> Coast Artillery. Ramon was on duty at Clark Field on Luzon Island when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, and then Clark Field. After that first attack, the field was bombed for about a week. Japanese troops landed on Luzon, and the Americans prepared to retreat. The battalion eventually reached the Bataan Peninsula.

After the surrender to the Japanese, Ramon and his battalion began the infamous "Bataan Death March." Ramon and the other prisoners marched to O'Donnell Prison. The brutality was such that many prisoners died. Malaria and dysentery plagued many of the POWs. Ramon was sent to Bilibad Prison in Manila. But the worst prison for Ramon was Cabanatuan. There, Japanese guards would hit prisoners with rifles and stab them with their bayonets. If a prisoner escaped, he was executed by firing squad or beheaded.

In October 1944, some 1,100 prisoners were shipped to Japan. The prisoners were placed in compartments full of coal. Because of the lack of space, many prisoners had to sit atop other prisoners. Prisoners were given one meager meal a day and rationed water. Men were known to have sucked their own blood for sustenance, and drank their own urine. The trip lasted 19 days. The ship left the POWs on Formosa where they remained for three months. The prisoners worked in the vegetable fields or the sugar mill. Ramon also spent a year at Las Pinas in the Philippines constructing an airfield.

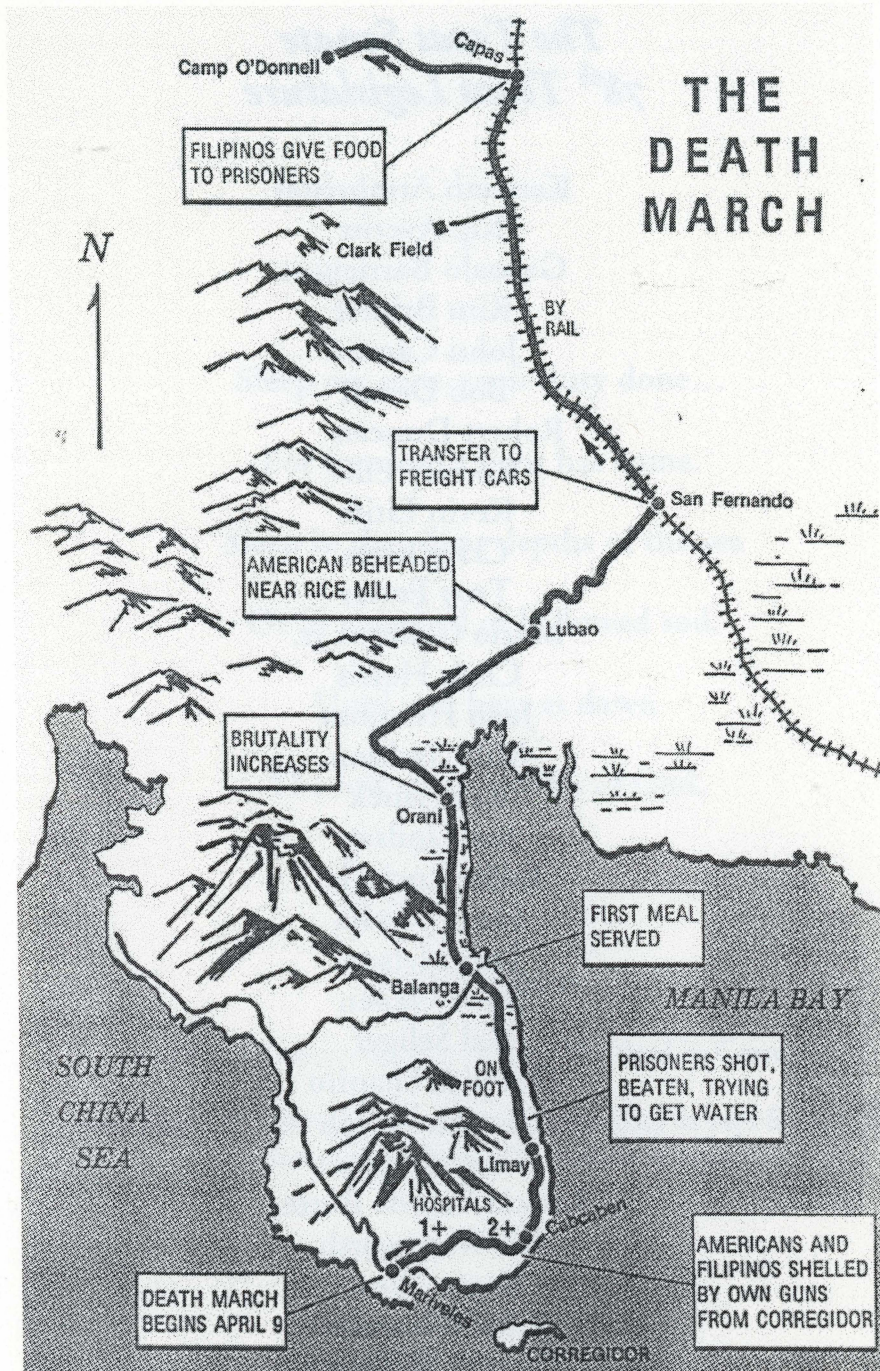
In February 1945, Ramon was sent to a Japanese prison camp. The trip to the prison camp took about two weeks and the POWs were given only one meal each day. Many of the starving prisoners, including Ramon, stole food from the Japanese guards. When the Japanese discovered the food theft, they did not feed the POWs for three days.

One day, the prisoners were on their way to a lake near the camp. The prisoners were greeted by five American soldiers, who informed them that the war was over and that they were free. The POWs went to town and celebrated all night.

The prisoners were sent to Yokohama in September 1945, then to Manila and finally to the United States. Ramon had weighed 180 pounds when he enlisted in the army; by the end of the war, his weight had dropped to 110. Still, he was happy to have survived.

March 23, 1946, brought Ramon's final discharge from the military. He had to spend time in hospitals and isolated because he contracted a tropical disease.

Ramon has been married to Ygnacia for almost sixty years. They have four sons and a deceased daughter. Ramon attended the job training program for veterans. In 1953, the Villas moved to Victoria, where he worked for Marshall Construction Company.



*The Texas Senate*  
*78<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature*

Kenneth Armbrister  
Kip Averitt  
Gonzalo Barrientos  
Kim Brimer  
John Carona  
Bob Deuell  
Robert Duncan  
Rodney Ellis  
Kevin Eltife  
Craig Estes  
Troy Fraser  
Mario Gallegos Jr.  
Chris Harris  
Juan Hinojosa  
Mike Jackson  
Kyle Janek  
Jon Lindsay  
Eddie Lucio Jr.  
Frank Madla  
Jane Nelson  
Steve Ogden  
Kel Seliger  
Florence Shapiro  
Eliot Shapleigh  
Todd Staples  
Leticia Van de Putte  
Jeff Wentworth  
Royce West  
John Whitmire  
Tommy Williams  
Judith Zaffirini

Sleep my sons, your duty done...

For freedom's light has come.

Sleep in the silent depths of the sea

Or in your bed of hallowed sod.

Until you hear at dawn

The low clear reveille of God.

Author unknown.

Inscribed on monument to Pacific War dead in Corregidor. .

Each May 6th, the sun is in such a position that its rays fall into the center of the monument, exactly at noon.