



San Diego Chapter 1 Member Biography

Carlos Montoya

Carlos is a former POW and survivor of the notorious Bataan Death March. Originally from Albuquerque NM, he was sent with the 200th Coast Artillery to the Philippines before WW11 and was at Camp Stotsenberg when it was attacked by the Japanese immediately after Pearl Harbor

After fighting down the peninsula for four months, the defenders of Bataan, U. S. Army and Philippine Army soldiers were commanded to surrender to the Japanese.

Completely out of food and ammo, they reluctantly followed orders and were captured. Near the town of Marivales at the tip of the peninsula, the Japanese sent Carlos along with thousands of others through searing tropical heat and humidity with no water and no food and the psychotic Japanese beating and bayoneting as many men as they wanted to.

After five days of torturous marching, Carlos and the others were packed like sardines into tiny rail cars for a 20 mile stretch of track between San Fernando and Capas. The cars were so packed with men that many died before they reached the station at Capas; where they were unloaded from the cars and



marched the last six miles to Camp O'Donnell.

There was almost no water for the prisoners, and during his time there, Carlos became ill with dysentery and was left for dead in a room at the camp infirmary called "zero ward". He summoned the strength to crawl back to his unit and with some help from a friend, he was able to heal himself enough to volunteer for a work party.

He wanted to get out of the camp that he felt was a death trap. He worked through the summer on a road through the jungle and after 3 months, out of 300 men on the detail, Carlos was one of 48 who survived. He went from there to Bilibid Prison and then to Camp Cabanatuan before he was shipped to Japan aboard a freighter like cattle. In Japan he

was transported to the northwestern coast where he worked like a pack mule loading coal in the town of Niigata.

He spent the rest of the war in Niigata Camp 5B and there was a guard at the coal yard that singled him out for special beatings and torture. Carlos grew to hate this guard and in 1972, long after he was liberated, he returned to Japan with a pistol intent on revenge.

His revenge was denied him, however, and he couldn't locate the guard. He was also there for the '72 Olympics, so the trip wasn't a total waste. He now lives in San Diego with his wife Betty, alive and still kicking at 93 years.