

PRESS ADVISORY

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Contact: Jan Thompson, President
janithompson@gmail.com; (618) 521-3654
<http://www.dg-adbc.org/>

PACIFIC WAR POWS TO BE IDENTIFIED AND HONORED AT THE PUNCHBOWL

Honolulu, HI, August 6, 2018/ American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society (ADBC-MS)/ -- A leading voice for Pacific War veterans and their families, the American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor Memorial Society (ADBC-MS) will dedicate a memorial stone on Wednesday, August 15th at 1:00pm at the Courts of Honor in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (Punchbowl), Honolulu, Hawaii.

The stone recognizes the 400 prisoners of war (POWs) of Imperial Japan who died January 1945 aboard two Japanese hellships, *Enoura Maru* and *Brazil Maru*, docked in Takao Harbor, Formosa [Taiwan]. These servicemen and mariners are now buried as “Unknowns” among 20 graves in the Punchbowl. This will be the first time for the men to be named and honored.

The POWs in the graves, in addition to Americans, include servicemen from Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Norway, and what is now the Czech Republic. They were among thousands captured by the Japanese in the Philippines in 1942. These men were being transported to Japan as hostages or slave laborers in the holds of unmarked ships whose conditions were so abysmal that they were known as “hellships.”

On January 9, 1945, planes from the carrier USS *Hornet* bombed the freighter *Enoura Maru* unaware of the Allied POWs aboard. The bombing killed approximately 300 POWs; another 100, aboard both hellships, died of starvation and disease. These 400 were buried in a mass grave near the harbor.

In 1946, the U.S. military retrieved the remains and sent them to Hawaii for re-interment. The memorial stone thus reminds us of the sacrifice made by these POWs and others, while establishing that they have returned home to American soil.

Governor of Hawaii David Y. Ige has proclaimed August 15, 2018 *Pacific Heroes Day* in their honor.

The ADBC-MS is the only sanctioned successor to the original American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor organization formed by surviving POWs of Japan in 1946. The mission is to preserve the legacy of the American POWs held in the Pacific during World War II.

The Memorial ceremony will be live-streamed, <https://www.facebook.com/ADBCMemorialSociety/> and will end with a fly-over of a Globe Swift by Honolulu’s Vintage Aviation. A former POW of Japan who fought on Bataan and Corregidor and survived a hellship to Japan plans to attend the event.

Please contact Ms. Jan Thompson, President, (618) 521-3654 or Ms. Nancy Kragh, Vice President, (206) 484-4719 to arrange interviews or for additional background. Ms. Thompson’s father survived the voyage; Ms. Kragh’s did not.

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