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By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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M AYWOOD, Illinois (*jGLi*) – A United States-born Japanese, who returned to Japan, to attend the burial of his grandfather shortly before the outbreak of World War II, was barred from returning to the U.S.

Instead, he was ordered to join the Japanese Imperial Army as part of the invading forces in the Philippines. The Japanese soldier, who came to be known only as “Sgt. Harada,” was befriended by a Filipino prisoner-of-war (POW), Second Lt. Samson Sol Flores, who along with two other Filipino prisoners, “were loaded into a truck and driven out of the prison camp.”

Mr. Flores “thought of the possibility that they would be executed once outside of the prison barbed wire fences. Instead, a few miles down the road, they were set free. Somehow, Sgt. Harada had been able to arrange for Samson’s release, along with the two other Filipino POWs.”

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This friendly profile of a Japanese soldier was detailed in a self-published book, "The Old Timers Most Memorable To Me," written by Joseph Mapalo Dacanay (2012), who read excerpts from his book of the war exploits of Mr. Flores, the first cousin of his wife, Dee Dacanay, during the 70th Platinum Anniversary celebration Sunday, Sept. 9, of the Maywood Bataan Day Annual Memorial Service. Mr. Dacanay, a Chicago-born-and-raised Filipino American civil engineer was introduced by another Chicago-born-and-raised community leader, Estrella Alamar, director of Maywood Bataan Day Organization (MBDO).

The memorial service is an annual tribute by the residents of this Chicago's southwest suburb, to their 89 young high school students who were shipped to the Philippines in October 1941. Only 43 of these young men would return to Maywood, the rest mostly died during Bataan Death March, killed in action, died on board Hell Ship, burnt alive at Palawan and at prison camp and as Japanese slave labor.

JAPANESE WAS FROM SEATTLE, WASHINTON

A Bataan Death March survivor, Flores said in the book, "In their earliest conversations, Harada let on that he was a Christian. Then, it was Samson's turn to let on that his father was a Baptist minister.

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In another conversation, Samson vowed that, when the war was over, he would continue his education to be dentist.”

Samson Flores’ father, Felix Flores, was an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ Disciples while Samson, himself, later became a lay minister in the Baptist Church in Chicago’s suburb of Evanston

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Illinois

Dacanay said Harada was a resident of Seattle, Washington, when he visited Japan to pay his last respect to his grandfather, who died. But when World War II broke out, Harada was no longer allowed to return to the U.S.

Dacanay also disclosed the atrocities of WW II when he said his maternal uncle, Alfredo, was tortured and beheaded after he was captured by the Japanese.

When he was freed, Flores enrolled and attended classes for dentistry at the National Universit

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and completed his degree in 1944. But war was still going on and as an ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) cadet, he was ordered to join the 15th Infantry Regiment at Batac, as Battalion Dental Surgeon, and assigned at the 1st General Hospital at Camp Murphy in Quezon City until Aug. 1945, when WW II ended.

In the fall of 1946, Flores boarded a troop transport ship (U.S.S. Meigs) to continue his advanced training at the University of Illinois in Chicago and specialized in Prosthodontics as a G.I. Bill recipient. After two years (1948),

Flores

was asked to teach at

UIC

's

College

of

Dentistry

. He earned his Illinois Dentistry license in 1953 and retired as Head of the Department of Prosthodontics in 1997 at the age of 75.

Born in Cabugao, Ilocus Sur, in the Philippines, the 90-year-old dentist still holds office once or twice a week as Head of the Department of Prosthodontics, whose \$3-Million laboratory was named after him and his wife, Cecilia Tolentino Flores, for his "contributions to the furtherance of (the dental) profession."

Dr. Flores has been a volunteer during the last 58 years at the Pacific Garden Mission Health Services' Dental Division, which provides free dental services "to indigent, the street people, the most needy people in the Mission District in Chicago."

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U.S. HAS “ALAMO,” PHILIPPINES HAS “TIRAD PASS;” THE 2 COUNTRIES SHARE “BATAAN”

In remarks that drew a lengthy applause during the anniversary, Deputy Consul General Orontes V. Castro of the Philippine Consulate of the Midwest in Chicago said, “Americans have their “Alamo,” Filipinos their “Tirad Pass.” Together, they have “Bataan.” “Bataan” is the eternal link of two peoples – Filipino and American – with a common commitment to freedom and the ideals of democracy.”

Castro said his late father was also a Filipino WW II veteran and was buried at the Libingan ng mga Bayani (National Heroes Cemetery) in the Philippines.

Castro, who was speaking for Consul General Leo M. Herrera-Lim, said, “Indeed, we are irrevocably cleaved together by the blood that was shed in the hollowed grounds of Bataan and

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Corregidor

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“Bataan is and shall always symbolize the Americans’ and Filipinos’ commitment to the cause of freedom and to the defense of liberty and the ideals of democracy.”

The guest speaker, Brig. Gen. Richard J. Hayes, Jr., director of the Joint of Staff of the Illinois National Guard, paid tribute to the young Proviso High School students, who became members of the 33rd Tank Company of the 33rd Infantry Division of the Illinois National Guard based at the Armory in Maywood. They were inducted into Company “B” of the 192nd Tank Battalion on Nov. 25, 1940

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“Without them, we would not be standing here today,” General Hayes said. “They fought, sacrificed and died for us. They helped hold the defensive lines as the Filipino and American soldiers (nearly 80,000 hungry and battle-worn troops) retreated in Luzon.”

The 192nd Tank Battalion was tasked with providing cover for the withdrawal operations in Bataan. They would be the last defenders into Bataan.

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although the young Americans were never given additional military training and fighting skills of the newly-mobilized Philippine forces when they arrived in the Philippines less than two months before the war.

4-HOUR WINDOW TO GO TO THE PHILIPPINES!

A nother guest speaker, James Opolony, a teacher at Proviso East High School in Maywood and project coordinator of school's Bataan Commemorative Research Project, said he learned that in the run-up of WW II when someone was "29 years old and in the Federal service or married, they were given opportunity to resign from the federal service and turn in their paper work to go the Philippines within a four-hour window. One turned in his paper work 15 minutes late and said goodbye. But many got married before leaving."

Mr. Opolony also recalled of a story of a young high-school student from Glenn Ellyn, Illinois, who was bayoneted by a Japanese guard during Bataan Death March after he relieved himself when he did not raise his hand. The guard bayoneted him for the second time to make sure he was dead.

Col. Richard A. McMahon, Jr., MBDO president, introduced the guests while U.S. Marine Major Edwin H. Walker welcomed the guests and acted as emcee.

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Village Manager William P. Barlow III spoke on behalf of Maywood Mayor Henderson Yarbrough, Sr.

The Philippine National Anthem (*Lupang Hinirang*) and American National Anthem (The Star-Spangled Banner) were played while Rev. Jacques A. Conway, Pastor of Neighborhood United Methodist Church of Maywood led the Memorial Prayer.

The ceremonies also featured the Monument Ceremony from DuPage Chapter of VietNow Color Guard Jeff Agonath, chair; Rifle Squad Gun Salute led by Howard H. Rohde of American Legion Post #888, Northlake; Wreath Laying by different organizations, including Army – Col. Robert F. Bracki; Navy – Commander Joseph E. Troiani; Air Force; Marine Corps – GySgt Leo Armwood, Cpl. Marcus Davis; Coast Guard; American Legion Filipino Post #509 & Auxiliary Philippine Campaign Survivors; Filipino American Historical Society of Chicago; Merchant Marine Veterans Association Chicago; Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County; Daughters of American Revolution; George Rogers Clark Chapter, River Forest; Village of Maywood and MBDO.

Filipino American Dr. Lourdes M. Ceballos and Ophelia Hendle recently retired as MBDO directors while another Fil Am Edward M. Brotonel became MBDO's new member.

Filipino POW Freed by Japanese During WW II Now a Successful U.S. Dentist - MabuhayRadio

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On Jan. 11, 1965, a joint U.S. Congressional Resolution fixed the Bataan Day celebration in the U.S. on the second Sunday of September. # # #

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Editor's Note: To contact the author, please e-mail him at: (lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net)

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