



Missouri State Society Daughters of the American Revolution

Jack T. Woodson--Patriot of the Month, April 1, 2007



Jack Woodson graduated from Oklahoma University at Norman, Oklahoma with a commission in the reserves as a second lieutenant. He was called to active duty in April of 1941 and sent to Fort Knox for training in tank maintenance. In August of the same year, Jack was one of 150 men who were assigned to the 17th Ordnance unit and sent to Fort Stotsenburg, north of Manila in the Philippines.

Only 10 hours after Pearl Harbor was bombed, Clark Field near Fort Stotsenburg was also hit. American forces retreated to Bataan and Corregidor. When General King surrendered the troops on Bataan in April of 1942, an estimated 76,000 troops, including 11,500 Americans, were marched nearly 63 miles to San Fernando. This march became known as the "Bataan Death March," in which it is believed, an estimated 2,200 Americans died. Surviving unspeakable war crimes, Jack relied upon a strong will and his favorite Bible verses to sustain him.

Jack volunteered to go to Japan and work in the Osaka shipyards in September of 1943. B-29 bombers flew over Osaka on their way to other targets, and, because the camp was not marked as a POW compound, was shelled by an aircraft carrier.

On August 15, 1945, American planes dropped food and notes on red, white, and blue parachutes. The POW's were freed and returned to the states on September 7, 1945. Jack eventually returned to Vinita, Oklahoma, where he was highly honored by his hometown.

Jack graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a degree in electrical engineering and worked for Amoco until he retired. Jack and his late wife, Margaret, have two children and six grandchildren. He is a member of American Ex-POW's, the Battling Bastards of Bataan, and the Blue Ridge United Methodist Church.

Today, in his 80s, Jack continues to speak to civic groups and at schools about his experiences as a POW for 3 ½ years. He does not want the world to forget.

R. Margaret Bellem and the members of Prairie Chapter proudly nominated Jack Woodson for Patriot of the Month.