



New Mexico National Guard

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For Immediate Release

WORLD WAR II BATAAN VETERANS TO BE HONORED AT THE 79th COMMEMORATION OF THE FALL OF BATAAN

SANTA FE, N.M. - The New Mexico National Guard will host a ceremony honoring our Bataan Veterans at the 79th commemoration of the surrender of Bataan in the Pacific theater during World War II on Friday, April 9, 2021, 10:00 a.m. at the Bataan Memorial Building, 407 Galisteo Street, Santa Fe.

Because of the current public health crisis, attendance is limited. The commemoration will be streamed live via the New Mexico National Guard's Facebook page.

While being greatly outnumbered and poorly supplied, over 1,800 New Mexico National Guardsmen of the 200th and 515th Coast Artillery Regiments, who became known as "the Battling Bastards of Bataan," fought valiantly for four months and held back the Japanese Army who had orders to take the Philippines in four weeks - a timetable essential for the Japanese to take the Pacific before the United States could build back its forces, regenerate the fleet, secure the bases and reinforce Australia. Their bravery and sacrifice was a pivotal point in the war.

On April 9, 1942, many of these Bataan heroes were forced by their U.S. Command to surrender to the Japanese Army over the objections of the Soldiers themselves who preferred to fight to the end rather than surrender. Most of them went on to endure the suffering of a 65- mile forced march to prison camps, which became known as the Bataan Death March. About 900 New Mexicans survived the war and returned home.

To learn more about our Bataan veterans and other New Mexico National Guard's Soldiers who served in World War II, visit newmexicomilitarymuseum.com

The media is invited to attend. For more information, please contact Joseph Vigil at (505) 553-1427 or joseph.l.vigil2.civ@mail.mil

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