

14 September 2014

BATAAN DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE

WELCOME - EDWIN H. WALKER IV -

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

GOOD AFTERNOON, HONOURED GUESTS, MEMBERS OF
THE COLOR GUARDS AND THE RIFLE SQUAD, MEMBERS OF
THE U.S. NAVY CEREMONIAL BAND, GREAT LAKES, WHO
HAVE JUST CONCLUDED A STIRRING CONCERT OF
MILITARY MUSIC UNDER THE DIRECTION OF CHIEF MUSICIAN
RICHARD LINDBERG.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, WELCOME TO THE 72ND ANNUAL
BATAAN DAY MEMORIAL SERVICE.

NEARLY 74 YEARS AGO - IN NOVEMBER 1940 - THE MEN OF

TANK COMPANY "B", NEWLY FEDERALIZED TROOPS OF THE ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD, MARCHED FROM THE OLD ARMORY AT MADISON STREET AND GREENWOOD AVENUE TO THE NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD STOP AT 5TH AVENUE AND ST. CHARLES ROAD - THE NORTHWEST END OF MAYWOOD PARK - WHERE THEY BOARDED A TRAIN TO TAKE THEM TO THE U.S. ARMY'S ARMOR TRAINING CENTER AT FT. KNOX. KENTUCKY. THERE THEY JOINED COMPANY "A" FROM JANESVILLE, WISCONSIN, COMPANY "C" FROM PORT CLINTON, OHIO, AND COMPANY "D" FROM HARRODSBURG, KENTUCKY TO FORM THE 192ND TANK BATTALION.

ONLY ½ OF MAYWOOD'S BRAVE SONS WERE DESTINED TO SURVIVE THE HORRORS OF THE BATAAN DEATH MARCH IN APRIL 1942 AND THE SUBSEQUENT "HELL SHIPS" AND JAPANESE PRISONER OF WAR CAMPS.

MAYWOOD HAS A PROUD TRADITION OF MILITARY SERVICE, DRAMATICALLY ILLUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT OVER 10% OF MAYWOOD'S POPULATION OF 30,000, ACTIVELY SERVED IN THE MILITARY DURING WORLD WAR II.

DURING THE VIETNAM WAR, IN WHICH I SERVED DURING THE TET OFFENSIVE, OUR OLDEST MAYWOOD VETERAN & HONORARY BOARD MEMBER OF THE MBDO, LEON CONNER, LOST HIS YOUNG SON, PFC THOMAS CONNER, USMC, AND IN 2010, HIS OLDER SON, RALPH W. CONNER, FORMER MAYOR OF MAYWOOD, FROM A HEART ATTACK. LAST THURSDAY, PATRIOT DAY, ON THE 13TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEADLY ATTACK BY THE MILITANT ISLAMISTS ON THE TWIN TOWERS IN LOWER MANHATTAN, NEW YORK CITY, WE REMEMBERED THE OVER 3,000 INNOCENT CITIZENS, KILLED IN THE FIRST ATTACK ON

AMERICAN SOIL IN OUR HISTORY.

TODAY WE GATHER TO HONOUR, REMEMBER, AND
CHERISH THIS PROUD TRADITION AS WE PAY TRIBUTE,
NOT ONLY TO THE VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF THE
BATAAN DEATH MARCH (ONLY THREE REMAINING FROM
CO. "B"), BUT ALSO TO ALL THOSE MEN AND WOMEN, WHO
HAVE COURAGEOUSLY SERVED OUR COUNTRY FROM THE
DAYS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR TO THE IRAQ WAR, AS
WELL AS TO THOSE PRESENTLY FIGHTING IN
AFGHANISTAN.

WE THANK ALL WHO HAVE GATHERED TODAY TO
PARTICIPATE IN THIS SOLEMN EVENT. LET US
REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO ALWAYS REMEMBER THE
GREAT SACRIFICES MADE BY ALL THOSE WHO HAVE
SERVED IN THE ARMED FORCES OF OUR COUNTRY TO

ENSURE OUR FREEDOM FROM TYRANNY BOTH AT HOME
AND ABROAD.

AND SO WE PROCEED TO REMEMBER ALL OF OUR FALLEN
HEROES AS WE RECITE THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND
SING OUR NATIONAL ANTHEM.