

# Maywood Bataan Day Organization

## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Maywood Group To Mark Bataan Death March With Solemn Ceremony

MAYWOOD, IL – In the fall of 1941, several dozen National Guardsmen from the suburb of Maywood returned home to say good-bye to girlfriends, families and friends.

All able-bodied members of Maywood's famed 33<sup>rd</sup> Tank Company had been called into Federal Service, rechristened Co. B of the 192<sup>nd</sup> Tank Battalion, and they were headed for an unknown destination in just a few weeks.

Little did they know that they were destined for "Bataan and Immortality." That is how this near west suburb of Chicago remembers the men who ended up fighting the first land battle of World War II, and eventually, three years of imprisonment, abuse, and slave labor. More than half of those who boarded the troop ship in 1941 did not return.

On September 13, 2015, at 3pm, in Maywood Veterans Park at 1<sup>st</sup> Ave and Oak St. in Maywood, interested members of the local community, community leaders, veterans, and descendants of veterans will gather again, as they have every year since 1942, to remember these men. The service will include music from the Navy Ceremonial

Band, Great Lakes, as well as color guards from various Veteran Groups and guest speakers.

Master of Ceremonies will be MBDO Vice President, Edwin H. Walker IV. Colors will be presented by several area American Legion, VFW, and ROTC Color Guards. In past years color guard units from Maywood, Melrose Park, Berwyn, Hillside, Des Plaines, Chicago, Palatine, Elmhurst, Frankfort, Mokena, River Forest, LaGrange, Northlake, and many other Chicago and suburban cities have participated. A Rifle Squad Gun Salute will be provided by the American Legion Post #974 in Franklin Park, Illinois, Adjutant, Randy Thomas. Preceding the service will be a concert by the Navy Ceremonial Band, Great Lakes, led by MUCS Jason P. Gromacki, beginning at 2:30 p.m.

Keynote Speaker will be Maywood Bataan Day Organization Director, Stephen E. Gibson, son of Maywood's own Captain Emmett F. Gibson, HQ Co., 192<sup>nd</sup> Tank Battalion, who survived the Battle of Bataan. Stephen visited the battlefields of Bataan in the Philippines this year and shares the story of his father's struggles on Bataan, as well as his triumphant return home as guest at the first Maywood Bataan Day in 1942.

The ceremonies will also include, as guest speakers, Wayne Wagner, Past Department Commander, American Legion of Illinois, as well as Alena Grace S. Borra, Consul, Philippine Consul General in Chicago, and Maywood Mayor Edwenna Perkins. Other highlights of the Memorial Service include the Monument Ceremony by the DuPage Chapter of VietNow Color Guard and a Wreath Laying Ceremony, featuring members of all branches of our Armed Forces, as well as related community organizations.

Additional special guests scheduled to attend include members of the Village of Maywood Village Board of Trustees and other invited local community leaders.

Col. Richard A. McMahon, Jr., President of the Maywood Bataan Day Organization, extends an invitation to the entire community, saying, “On the occasion of the 73rd anniversary of the Maywood Bataan Day Annual Memorial Service, it is important to confirm our sacred vow to remember the heroes of the United States.

The Maywood Bataan Day Organization is dedicated to preserving the memory of Bataan Day and perpetuating the observance of Maywood’s Bataan Day on the second Sunday of September. Our modern mission includes supporting veterans of all wars and providing educational resources through our archives and our website (<http://mbdo.org>). The organization is a non-profit 501(c)(19) organization, that is supported by donations of time and money from the community, as well as relatives and friends of those who have served their country.

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If you would like to schedule video interviews or additional photos of the service participants, or would like additional information on this ceremony or the Maywood Bataan Day Organization, please contact Edwin Walker at 708-345-7077.