

# The Men the MED

Inspiring the Recipient to Greater Achievements, Medals Are a Recognition of the Heroism or Meritorious Work of the Individual of Certain Organization, Encouraging Others to Follow in the Same Spirit of His Example

**M**EDALS are instruments of honor and distinction. They symbolize the heroic or meritorious achievements performed by individuals of certain organization. Aside from being a reward or a souvenir, a medal, by its color and shape, inspires the recipient to achieve more. In turn he encourages others to follow in the same spirit of his example.

### Earliest Medals

The first form of medals to commemorate war service were recorded by Josephus in his "Antiquities of the Jews". It reveals that in the 3rd century B.C. Alexander awarded Jonathan a golden button for successfully leading the Jews in battle. The award was given as an honorary reward accompanied by a testimony of his worth "in accordance with the custom of the King's kinsmen".

# Behind

# ALS

by First Lieutenant Horacio D. Buño

Later Jonathan received another golden button for similar service.

The earliest medal in existence, for war service, was awarded to John Kendal, an Englishman, in 1480. His medal is now in the British museum. A prior of the English Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, Kendal relieved Rhodes in 1480. From then on, the issuance of medals has been maintained by the rulers of England for service in naval, air or land battles. For gallant service the most famous award is the Victoria Cross, instituted in 1856. It carries with it a pension.

Other countries throughout the world have their own medals. Some have a common medal, the Victory World War I medal which was adopted by them as victorious Allies and associated Powers (i.e., Great Britain and her allies, France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, U.S.A., Japan, etc). This medal is generally issued to all who went into a theater of war in any ca-

capacity between the first declaration of war in 1914 and the date of the Armistice, Nov. 11, 1918. Another common medal was adopted for the victory in World War II.

## P. I. Medals

In the Philippines, medals were awarded for pre-war service. Today most of them are awarded for participation in World War II, the Korean, Anti-Dissidence and Jolo Campaigns; the latter two campaigns fall under the peace and order drive in the country. In all these periods individual decorations covered by General Orders have been awarded. The rest of the veterans or personnel in the active service, after having met the required length of time for a service or campaign, are issued service or campaign medals, ribbons or badges.

Of great interest are the decorations usually given for heroic service. They are (1) *Medal for Valor* — for action involving actual conflict with an enemy, distinguishing the doer conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty; (2) *Distinguished Conduct Star* — for acts of conspicuous courage in the face of an armed enemy; (3) *Gold Cross* — for gallantry in action not warranting the award of Medal for Valor or the Distinguished Conduct Star.

## World War II

When the Japanese Forces landed in the Philippines the heaviest fighting remained for a number of

months in Bataan. A few years later the American Liberation Forces came and the enemy established a stronghold in northern Luzon. In both of these places, the Filipino troops had demonstrated exemplary heroism as the following examples will show:

*Distinguished Conduct Star.* — Lt. (then S/Sgt.) Jose Calugas, PS, was a USAFFE member in the defense of the Abucay Line in Bataan on January 16, 1942. His battery having retired to a gully behind its former position after an intense enemy shelling which put all of its guns out of commission and resulted in numerous casualties, Lt. Calugas, without regard for his life, reconnoitered the abandoned position, formed a gun crew with two officers, repaired one of the guns and with it continued firing and succeeded in delaying the enemy advance.

Meanwhile, the whole area was heavily shelled and continuously bombed by the enemy. Through sheer determination and extraor-

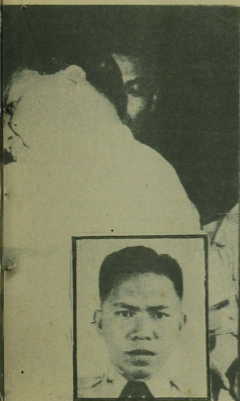


Capt. Conrado Yap (inset). The medal was received by Mrs. Aurora Llana Yap, the captain's widow, from former President Elpidio Quirino in Malacañang.

dinary heroism, he was able to destroy about 60 Japanese vehicles and kill 2000 troops. The delaying action of this handful of die-hard USAFFEs working efficiently and mechanically, lured the Japanese into believing that they were up against a potent force. This action gave the USAFFE forces a breathing spell to reorganize successfully their already shattered lines and subsequently to stage a terrific counter-attack, which contributed to the delay of



Lt. Jose Calugas

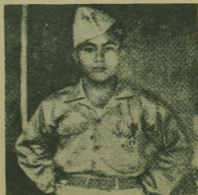


the surrender of Bataan, thereby enabling the Allies to establish their stronghold in the South Pacific, and return with victory.

*Distinguished Conduct Star.* — Pfc. Alejandro N. Arciga, Balaoan, La Union, PA, at the age of 15 years participated in the operations against the Japanese in their stronghold in the mountain of San Fernando, La Union. In the final phase of the attack, the assaulting platoon of USAFFE riflemen were pinned down and forced to

dig in by unusually heavy enemy fire. To advance the platoon any farther was deemed disastrous as the only route of approach was covered with concentrated enemy fire; nor was it feasible to attack the flanks of the enemy positions as these were precipitous portions of the terrain.

At 9 A.M., March 9, 1945, seeing the predicament of his platoon, Pfc. Arciga left his foxhole, climbed the precipice and cleared his way to the left flank of the enemy. After creeping cautiously to the rear and top of a cave position, he lowered himself inside, killed all the occupants and emerged with two carbines. Making his way to a nearby foxhole, he killed the enemy soldier inside and captured a machine rifle. Taking along the captured weapons, he went to the rear area to get a 5-gallon can of gasoline. With this load he crept back to the Japanese cave positions and set them on



Pfc. Alejandro N. Arciga

fire.

From a cave whose occupants were not previously accounted for by Pfc. Arciga, four enemy soldiers with their uniforms afire, emerged but three were instantly shot to death by his companions. When small arms ammunition began to explode inside two burning caves, Pfc. Arciga, taking advantage of the confusion, dashed back to his platoon with a light machine-gun and two booby traps he picked up along the trail.



Pvt. Dionisio Sadang

*Distinguished Conduct Star.* — Sgt. Virgilio Milana, PA, saw action at Dain, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur, at about 0100 hour, May 22, 1945, an enemy force of approximately 120 troops was observed following the trail leading to Dain, a barrio situated on an upland and roughly 1800 yards WNW of Cervantes town. This enemy force, at about 0200 hours, opened fire with trench mortars, rifles and several automatic-weapons. Because of the limited visibility, however,

Sgt. Milana, Section Chief of the Cal. 50 MG, guarding the trail, held his fire until he could ascertain from an exposed portion of the trail that several enemy troops were already 150 yards near his emplacement.

He ordered his security of six riflemen to fire at the approaching enemy and at the same time opened fire with his MG, killing instantly four enemy troops and forcing the rest to withdraw. An assault wave of 15 enemy troops rushed towards Sgt. Milana, during which he relieved his gunner and with the aid of his leader attacked this second assault wave, killing two enemy troops and forcing back the others.

The enemy continued to fire from distant unobserved positions. Ten minutes later, after the second assault wave was repelled, 30 troops, who had in the meantime crept about 100 yards close to the MG emplacement, stood up and, protected by knee mortar and automatic-weapon fire, they rushed and threw hand grenades in the direction of Sgt. Milana. Holding on tenaciously to his ground, he again forced this assault wave to withdraw in utter confusion. He ordered his riflemen to take vantage points farther to the left and right of the MG emplacement. A fourth assault wave of 50 troops rushed again but its leading elements were accounted for by the greater and deadlier intensity of machine-gun fire from Sgt. Milana.

Hostile fire from a more distant position increased to a new fury. Sgt. Milana stood his ground until the fourth assault wave was driven back. One enemy troop, however, who was able to get through the minimum range of the machine-gun, shot Sgt. Milana through his right bicep before being shot to death by one of the latter's security riflemen. Despite his wounds Sgt. Milana kept close vigil of the enemy.

A fifth assault wave of 50 rushed forward. A well-ranged and relentless hostile fire was now concentrated on the MG emplacement, and although already bleeding profusely from his gunshot wound, Sgt. Milana remained on his post and with usual calmness continued to fire at the onrushing enemy with greater intensity until finally, he was able pin to the ground this fifth assaulting force.

The enemy for a while was disorganized from making another concerted attack. Shortly after, two platoons of friendly riflemen arrived to reinforce Sgt. Milana and his men, and proceeded to chase the enemy, forcing the latter to withdraw from his position.

*Distinguished Conduct Star.* — S/Sgt. Gervacio H. Galvez, PA, encountered the enemy at Hill 99-W, Bessang Pass, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur in May, 1945. As platoon leader of "D" Co, 121st Inf., USAFIP, NL, he took the initiative of counter-attacking against the charging enemy troops. He took a squad of his men and, in utter

disregard of his own personal safety, dashed toward the enemy's assaulting force. When he had nearly exhausted the ammunition in his magazine, he jumped into an enemy foxhole and, with his remaining bullet, shot and killed its Japanese occupant.

He then grabbed the dead Japanese bayonet in order to arm himself, but at this juncture, another Japanese soldier jumped into the foxhole and grappled with him. As they were wrestling, an-



S/Sgt. Gervacio H. Galvez

other enemy rushed with a deadly bayonet charge. Sergeant Galvez was able to parry the thrust, thus causing the Japanese to lose his balance and fall to his death in the precipice. Meanwhile, Sgt. Galvez gained the upper hand in the wrestling. Three Japanese soldiers then charged at him, one at a time. By means of sheer physical strength he protected himself by using the enemy as his shield; the three Japanese, likewise, fell to their death. Although

seriously wounded, Sgt. Galvez still had the upper hand over his adversary.

In a short time, a fifth Japanese charged at him with a bayonet but he was able to pull the dead Japanese on top of him so that this human cover received the bayonet thrust. Almost simultaneously, he kicked the remaining Japanese down the precipice. Sgt. Galvez sustained 4 bayonet wounds, one on his forehead, one on his left leg, another on the middle finger of his left hand, and the last between the fourth and fifth fingers on his right hand. He killed 7 Japanese soldiers single-handedly. By this magnificent display of leadership in the most trying days of combat in the last strongholds of the Yamashita Line, his company was immeasurably inspired and fought its way to safety.

#### **Korean Campaign**

The defense of Korea resembles the defense of Bataan in that both were fought in a peninsula, the enemy was numerically superior, and the terrain is hilly. In Korea, the Philippine Expeditionary Force under the United Nations Command fought from 1950 to 1954. During the height of the UN offensive, the Filipino troops reached a point near the Yalu river in North Korea. Later, they met the "human sea" counter-offensive of the Communists.

*Medal for Valor (Posthumous).*

—Capt. Conrado D. Yap, Coast Artillery Corps, AFP, led his men

at Yultong, North Korea from 22 to 23 April 1951. As Commanding Officer of the Tank Company, Tenth Battalion Combat Team, Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea, at 2300 hours on 22 April 1951, he was executing a defensive action as an advance element of the frontline defense of the United States Army when overwhelmingly superior enemy forces assaulted the PEFTOK positions. Upon being informed by his most advance unit that the enemy was



*S/Sgt. Miguel Pastolero*

rushing in to overrun their hill position and that the leader of this unit, 1st Lt. Jose M. Artiaga Jr., 0-1966 Inf., was hit, Capt. Yap, determined to hold their position at all cost, reinforced the trapped unit of Lt. Artiaga and fought the enemy for one hour without success.

Receiving a personal report from a member of the trapped unit, who succeeded in extricating himself, that the enemy had already captured the position and

that Lt. Artiaga and many others were either killed, captured or wounded, Capt. Yap, in a desperate effort to rescue the lost unit, ordered for cover support from the other units under his command and personally led a furious counter-attack to rescue the trapped unit despite an authority that he may withdraw. He succeeded in recovering the body of Lt. Artiaga and that of three enlisted men when, not being satisfied with this and acting above and beyond the



T/Sgt. Juan Gabriel.

call of duty, he proceeded to assault an enemy emplacement about 300 yards away despite the hail of enemy fire until he fell dead from an enemy bullet.

*Gold Cross (Posthumous).* — Cpl. Geronimo V. Naldoza Jr., acting squad leader of "B" Co., 10th BCT (PEFTOK), displayed conspicuous gallantry in action at Sang-gori North Korea, from 12 to 13 April 1951. Cpl. Naldoza, while leading his squad in an assault against a well-entrenched

enemy on a hill, received instant burst of small arms and automatic fire from all directions, but he refused to seek cover. He instead zigzagged his way to an elevated ground and made a personal hasty reconnaissance for a better position to observe the enemy emplacements. Through his keen and quick observation he spotted the exact enemy positions. He immediately deployed his squad and directed the fire by personally throwing hand-grenades which in a few minutes later completely destroyed the enemy pill boxes. Leaving many of their dead comrades, the enemy withdrew.

Again, Cpl. Naldoza, on April 13, 1951, with his squad, assaulted another enemy stronghold. This aggressive leader was on the lead as usual, inspiring his men to forge ahead with tenacity. Moments later, an enemy mortar shell hit him, causing his instantaneous death. His personal heroism, skill, initiative and calmness under fire, greatly inspired his men and made possible the successful rout of the numerically-superior enemy from his well-entrenched position. It also enabled the battalion to advance with the least number of casualties on its side.

*Gold Cross (Posthumous).* — Pvt. Dionisio Sadang, machine-gunner of 2nd Platoon, "B" Co., 10th BCT (PEFTOK), distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry in action against the enemy at Sangri, North Korea.





Cpl. Geronimo V. Naldozo, Jr.

On April 23, 1951, his company was in a defensive position against the massed attack of a numerically-superior enemy. Displaying great courage in the face of continuous and heavy enemy fire, Pvt. Sadang stubbornly held his machine-gun which was emplaced on the left flank of his company. Sensing that the greater bulk of the enemy forces was bent on destroying his machine gun, on his own initiative and at a great risk to his personal safety, he emplaced the gun on a strategic position at the rear and continued the fire with effective results.

During the height of the fierce and savage fighting, he was seriously wounded by an enemy bayonet thrust. In spite of his wound, he tenaciously clung to his machine-gun and continued firing, causing more enemy casualties. The indomitable courage displayed by Pvt. Sadang contributed in a large measure, to the rout of the enemy who abandoned his "hu-

man sea" advance.

### Peace and Other Campaign

Years before the Korean Campaign began, the Philippine Government was already engrossed in the worsening peace and order condition in many provinces. The country had just risen from the ravages of war when the problem posed by dissidents and outlaws endangered the lives of many. After almost nine years of operations, the government troops considerably weakened the enemy. In solving the dissident and outlaw problem it was necessary to apply the policy of all-out-friendship and all-out-force:

*Medal for Valor* — Lt. (then M/Sgt.) Francisco M. Camacho (Posthumous) Virac, Catanduanes and S/Sgt. (then Cpl.) Weene Martillana, Guinobatan, Albay. — These enlisted men, members of the 1st Scout Ranger Regiment, posed as civilians and befriended Eddie Villapando, notorious Huk Commander who terrorized Cavite for many years. With it Camacho as leader, the two Scout Rangers established contact with Villapando in September, 1955. They skillfully and at great risk to themselves, cultivated the confidence of Villapando, Commander Guevarra, and two Huk bodyguards. Then Lt. Camacho and S/Sgt. Martillana lured the Huks into taking ride with them in a jeep.

Lt. Camacho who was at the wheel, stopped at the vicinity of Barrio Tabon, Calauan, Laguna,

on the pretense that the jeep needed some oil. He got out of the vehicle to pour oil on the engine, while S/Sgt. Martillana followed presumably to help him. At a pre-arranged signal they immediately opened fire on the Huks and, with concentrated fire, they were able to kill Commander Villapando, Commander Guevarra and one Huk bodyguard. One of the Huks managed to shoot back, hitting Lt. Camacho, who died soon afterwards.

*Distinguished Conduct Star (Posthumous).* — On or about 0730 hours, October 26, 1951, S/Sgt. Miguel Pastolero, after weeks of careful surveillance and employing all means of deception possible under the circumstances, succeeded in passing through dissident outpost guards and infiltrated right into an enemy headquarters where ranking officers of the HMB organization were in a conference at Sitio Taroytoy, Barrio Manica, Libacao, Capiz. S/Sgt. Pastolero and his men, unmindful of the suspicious glances of the dissidents and pretending to be members of the group, mingled with this enemy freely, but began placing themselves in commanding positions to be able to deliver the greatest volume of fire, if and when occasion for it arose.

The dissidents, in the meanwhile, were talking about the plan of reorganization and indoctrination of new members to replace those who deserted their ranks. The presence of the MIS Comman-



Lt. Francisco M. Camacho

do Team was finally detected and the dissidents began to fire at the members of the Team, killing instantly Agent Jose Pastorate and wounding S/Sgt. Pastolero. Recovering from the initial impact of the shot and in utter disregard of his personal safety, he loaded his Browning Automatic rifle and immediately fired at the dissidents, singling them out from the mass of humanity, then engaged in a mortal hand-to-hand struggle. S/Sgt. Pastolero was able to empty his magazine before he expired and in his dying moments accounted for eight Huks out of the 22 dissidents killed during the melee.

*Distinguished Conduct Star.* — On February 23, 1948, T/Sgt. Juan D. Gabriel volunteered as leader of a six-man team in Huk-infested territory of Candaba, Pampanga. Disguised as Huk Commander Maya, he presided over a barrio meeting where he revealed his plans to attack government troops, thereby winning the confidence of

a Huk supply officer who pointed out the headquarters of the Huks in the vicinity. In utter disregard of his personal safety, T/Sgt. Gabriel contacted and brought three Huk commanders and the supply officer, one after the other, to a certain pre-arranged place and killed them single-handedly.

The shooting of one of the Huk commanders with a carbine precipitated a retaliation by a strong Huk force of some 150 well-armed men. T/Sgt. Gabriel fought and held his ground from a lone advanced position until the Huks retreated with an additional loss of 12 men killed and 3 sub-machine guns, 1 Japanese machine-gun, 2 pistols, 1 typewriter and valuable enemy documents captured. By his ingenuity, tact and intrepidity, T/Sgt. Gabriel weakened the Huk forces, as well as put an end to the dissident activities of Commander Bundalian, who was responsible for 62 various crimes.

*Gold Cross.* — Sgt. Maximo Salazar led a squad of seven men against the numerically superior outlaw band under Kamlon at Suwa-Suwa, Luuk, Sulu on August 12, 1952. There being no reinforcements available at the time, Sgt. Salazar was forced to order his men to hold their ground in spite of the enemy's advantageous

position. At this critical point, Sgt. Salazar fearlessly fired his weapon, retrieved grenades hurled at them and threw these explosives back to the outlaw band, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and saving the lives of his wounded men whom he ordered to withdraw while he covered their withdrawal.

He also saved the life of one Private First Class Manalang, a Dog Trainer, who was mortally wounded, by evacuating him to the rear during the heat of the fight. Three days after the encounter, Sgt. Salazar returned to the Command Post, crawling on his belly, wounded at the back and foot. This daring feat performed by Sgt. Salazar was an inspiration to his comrades and has again demonstrated the sterling traits and qualities of the Filipino fighting men in the field of battle.

Whatever awards were given to the heroes of Bataan and Corregidor, the Korean and the Peace and Order Campaigns bring credit to them and the country as well. But more than just awards, is the spirit of love for country that the sacrifices of all veterans instill into the people. Those under lesser privations and risks are expected to follow in the same spirit of their example.

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The Armed Forces have the responsibility of molding their trainees into an effective fighting machine. In carrying out this responsibility, we must not forget that a serviceman's combat effectiveness is measured not only in physical fitness and military skill but in willingness to fight under the most disheartening conditions and to stick it out to the end.

—Major General John M. Devine