

Health Headlines

For Immediate Release

April 9, 2010



(Director Musumeci (L) and members of the Former POW Committee gather to celebrate life and liberty!)

James J. Peters VA Medical Center Commemorates National POW Recognition Day

On April 9, 2010, the patients and staff of the James J. Peters VA Medical Center gathered to commemorate National POW Recognition Day. The commemoration, established in law in 1984, is coordinated to commemorate and honor those who fell in the 1942 battle for Bataan and Corregidor in the Philippines. During that infamous WW II battle, 88 thousand American and Filipino combatants were taken prisoner and forced to march from the Bataan peninsula, to concentration camps further north and east into the Philippines. Several thousand did not survive the march and several thousand more died in captivity. The Bataan Death March, as it

came to be known, is still regarded as one of the most horrendous actions inflicted on captured Allied troops in the Pacific theatre.

“We come together twice a year, to recognize the extraordinary sacrifices of some very special veterans,” said Ms. MaryAnn Musumeci, Medical Center Director, as she addressed the POW veterans and the gathered staff. “This will be my 15th year here with you and, God willing, there will be many more. I know you all very well, I consider you my friends, as well as my special responsibility, and I want you to know how very much I admire you.”

Wade Hathaway, Social Worker and POW Coordinator at the JJPVAMC, noted the May 4th 2009 passing of Mr. Antonio Sinon. Mr. Sinon, a long-time member of the JJP EX-POW community, was a Filipino scout on Bataan, serving with the American Army. He survived the Death March by escaping into the Philippine jungle, during the third day of the march. He was highly regarded among his fellow POWs.

“Antonio Sinon exemplified the spirit and determination of our POW community,” stated Mr. Hathaway, “We all miss him and think of him often. As we gather here to celebrate life and liberty, let us recall his name, in honor of his service and sacrifice.”

For more information related to this story or the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, please contact Jim Connell, Public Affairs Officer, at 718.584.9000, Ext. 6620.

#####

Photos and caption:

Pictured above: L-R, MaryAnn Musumeci, Medical Center Director; Jacques Bloch, POW; Wade Hathaway, POW Coordinator; Marshall Siciliano, POW; John O’Brian, POW; Dominic Sgobbo, POW and Commander of the local American Ex-POW chapter; and Nick Christiano, POW

Addtl Photos follow:



(L-R, POW Commander Dominic Sgobbo, Chaplain Kelly Ray Meritt and Chaplain Charles Davidson)



Marine Veteran and Purple Heart recipient, Jose Baez, renders Taps at the end of the ceremony.