



## **Americanism**

### ***March 2025***

It's time for my annual "advertisement" for one of the most important memorial events held in the great Southwest by and for our veteran community, and it happens right here in my own hometown of Las Cruces, New Mexico. I know this is a repeat, but this event gets bigger every year for good reason, and for those who have never attended or supported this commemoration, I feel compelled to put out information about its historical significance once again. Here goes: During the month of March here in Southern New Mexico, we gear up for the annual Bataan Memorial Death March at White Sands Missile Range. This event is a great opportunity to remember and recognize those prisoners of war from New Mexico who were a part of the 65-mile march forced upon captive U.S. and Filipino soldiers by the Japanese in WWII. The march began in April of 1942, and went on for several days in devastating conditions. Approximately 10,000 men died on this march, and the survivors still had many hardships ahead, as they spent much of the remainder of the war in prisoner of war camps, where many more died. New Mexican families were heavily impacted, as 1,816 men from our state were fighting in units from NM, and of these, 829 never returned to their homes, losing their lives in battle, on the brutal march, in prisons, or after liberation. If you would like to know more, information on the annual march and its history can be found at <https://bataanmarch.com>.

The memorial march in New Mexico will be held this year on Saturday, March 22nd, and it is the 36<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this important and inspiring memorial event. A virtual event will be available online at the same website, as well. I consider this to be a "lesser-known" patriotic commemoration to honor those who showed incredible bravery and perseverance as they suffered unthinkable trials for our country and our allies during WWII. From the above-mentioned website: "Marchers participate in the Bataan Memorial Death March for many reasons: personal challenge, the spirit of competition, or to foster esprit de corps in their unit. Some march in honor of a family member or a particular veteran who was in the Bataan Death March or who was taken as a prisoner of war by the Japanese in the Philippines."

Other days of recognition in March include:

March 13<sup>th</sup>: K-9 Veterans Day

March 21<sup>st</sup>: Rosie the Riveter Day

March 25<sup>th</sup>—Medal of Honor Day

March 29<sup>th</sup>—National Vietnam Veterans Day

March 30<sup>th</sup>—Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

And, incidentally, Mardi Gras is March 4<sup>th</sup> this year. Happy Fat Tuesday!

Don't forget: March is also the month to send in your Program Award entry for Americanism!

The deadline for submitting entries is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Oh, and may the Luck of the Irish be with you on St. Paddy's Day and all month long!

Yours,

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