

## Memorial Day Address by Maria Westervelt • May 30, 2016

- I. Memorial Day Address
- II. Introduce myself and my family: Mother – Augusta Evans (Alicante) and Father – Marcos M. Alicante.
  1. Met in Corvallis in 1920-22 (master's degree)
  2. Married shortly after and went to Illinois (graduated with a doctor's degree in science (agricultural science), soil conservation)
  3. They went to Hawaii and father worked and helped in sugar cane plantations. My oldest sister was born in Hawaii in 1923 (Catherine Alicante).
- III. We went to the Philippines. Father worked for the Philippine government at the Department of Soils, Department of Agriculture. He traveled in the Philippine Islands a lot helping the country in agriculture.
- IV. We lived in San Juan, Rizal, about 45 minutes away from Manila (capital of Philippine Islands).
- V. My sister, Theresa, was born in 1926. I was born in September 1930 and my brother was born in 1935.
- VI. I studied at the Assumption Convent in Manila (private girls' school run by nuns). Later, my brother studied at Ateneo (Jesuit school) in Manila.
- VII. On Dec. 7, 1941, we learned that Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was bombed by the Japanese. My sister, Theresa, was having several of her friends over for her birthday party.
- VIII. Several hours later (10 hours later), the Japanese bombed Manila. It was in the evening that we heard the bombing in Manila. It was so earth-shattering. My father said we are at war and took us down to the trapdoor to the basement. I was so frightened I could hardly go down the trapdoor I was shaking so badly. It was so fearful. I still remember those days when the siren sounded and the heavy bombing continued. There was dog-fighting by U.S. planes and Japanese planes, fighting in the sky. The bombing continued for days.
- IX. Manila was taken over by the Japanese shortly after 1942.
- X. My father was working for the government before the Japanese occupation and was able to have my mother (an American citizen) under his Philippine citizenship. All the Americans were put in concentration camps in Manila. My mother was able to stay out.
- XI. My father took very good care of us; built an air-raid shelter under the front porch that was tile and cement; brought lots of canned goods and sacks of rice and corn. After the Japanese occupation, my father was able to work at his office in Manila. Our car was taken shortly after and he continued to go to work in a horse-drawn carriage. I stayed home with my brother and older sister (she helped with our tutoring at home). My other sister, Theresa, went to school (even had to study Japanese. She went to school for about a year or so.

- XII. Times were quite hard, but our family managed. Shortly after the occupation, the Japanese inspected the houses in our neighborhood. They came in looking for short-wave radios and other American goods. My older sister, Catherine, had a radio and would listen to short-wave stations off and on. She hid this radio (where I don't remember). The soldiers inspected our home but did not stay long and did not harm us. The Japanese were over us for about four years. We managed on what we had and did the best we could. My older sister, Catherine, was a writer and even had one of her plays on the radio. She gathered a bunch of neighbor children and grown-ups and gave entertaining plays. My brother and the neighborhood children enjoyed making slides and sliding down on the hillside.
- XIII. Our yard had lots of fruit trees – mangos, guava, papaya, bananas, duhat (berry) and chico. Later on my father planted corn, tomatoes, radishes, spinach and potatoes on the empty property next to our home.
- XIV. Toward the last year of the war (May 19, 1944), my dear sister, Catherine, passed away from lupus. I loved her dearly (she was like a second mother) and missed her a lot.
- XV. Toward the end (last year of the occupation), the Japanese took our home and three other houses in our neighborhood. The officers needed to stay in the area near the hillside behind our home and over the hill was an empty building. Later on after they left, I heard that tunnels were built in the hillside. My father moved us to a friend's house nearby and we stayed in their basement. He would have taken us to his office in Manila and thank goodness we did not move there because toward the end of the war, the Americans bombed that place (including my school nearby).
- XVI. We managed staying in our friend's basement for several months until the end when the Japanese left our house and disappeared. We had hardly any food except for vegetables.
- XVII. Toward the end of the occupation, I remember quite clearly that we were at church services at this old Spanish church near our home up on the hillside. We were at mass (mother, sister, brother and myself). We were kneeling down and the priest and altar boy were at the altar saying the mass. Suddenly, we heard a commotion outside and soon a Japanese officer and soldiers came into the church and the officer walked right up to the communion rails and told the priest to stop. The priest continued saying mass.
- XVIII. The Japanese officer continued to tell the priest to stop. The priest continued saying mass. The Japanese officer turned toward the people (around 50 or so) and told us to stand up and look at him. In the meantime, there were around six soldiers on both aisles facing us. We

stood up and looked at the officer as he told us to look at him and to listen to him. He spoke English quite well. He stated that the Americans were on the islands down south but they will not conquer the Imperial Japanese Army. We are very powerful. He spoke just a few sentences and said no more and walked out with the soldiers following him. A miracle just happened. At that time,

there were massacres happening in Manila. Thank goodness we were in the countryside.

- XIX. Soon after (early 1945), the Americans came back and saved us. But before that, there were air raid sirens and heavy bombing and air fights. The war has come to an end none too soon.
- XX. These war days are embedded in my mind forever. I pray for peace forever and ever.



Courtesy photo by Andrea Switter

The Color Guard for the Memorial Day Ceremony includes (l to r) Stan Werth, Kevin Goodell, Ed Ben, Tony Molina and Alfred Lane Jr.

Courtesy photo by Cynthia Farlow

Little Miss Siletz Halli Lane-Skaug, Junior Miss Siletz Felisha Howell, Shirley Walker and Maria Westervelt, who gave the Memorial Day address

