



## This month in NCO History: January 16, 1942

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**J**ose Calugas Sr., born in the Philippines when it was a territory of the United States, joined the Philippine Scouts of the U.S. Army in 1930. Trained as an artilleryman, he was serving as a mess sergeant in B Battery, 88th Field Artillery, as U.S. troops were withdrawing from the Bataan Peninsula in January 1942.

While preparing a meal, he realized that one of the batteries' guns had fallen silent. Discovering that Japanese shelling had killed or wounded its entire crew, Calugas dashed across more than a half-mile of shell-swept terrain to the gun's position, where he organized a volunteer squad of 16 to return it to action. After combating an hours-long onslaught of Japanese artillery fire, Calugas returned to his kitchen duty.

Though he was recommended for the Medal of Honor, he had not been awarded it by the time American troops in the Philippines surrendered to the Japanese in

April 1942. Calugas, along with 15,000 American and 60,000 Filipino prisoners of war, were forcibly marched to POW camps — the infamous Bataan Death March in which thousands died under brutal mistreatment by Japanese troops.

Calugas remained imprisoned until January 1943 when he was released to work at a rice mill. There, he secretly set up a guerrilla spy network until the Philippines were liberated in 1945, when he finally was presented with the Medal of Honor by Gen. of the Army George Marshall. He was the only Filipino to receive the award for actions during World War II.

After receiving the award, he was offered U.S. citizenship and accepted a direct commission. He retired as a captain in 1957 and died in Tacoma, Wash., in 1998 at the age of 90. ■



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