



Hilario Montano

December 18, 1923 - January 14, 2024

Hilario (Larry) Montano, 100, passed away peacefully at home on January 14, 2024, surrounded by family. He was born December 18, 1923, in Logan, NM to Juan Carabajal Montano and Elvira Maldonado Montano. He married Josephine Dominguez on October 19, 1942, in Dalhart TX. They were married for 69 years. She precedes him in death.

On March 3, 1943, Larry was drafted into the Army and was assigned to the 60th Infantry. He was dropped on the shores of Normandy on June 7, 1943, and was captured on September 17, 1943. He was held as a Prisoner of War and was Missing in Action for nine months. He was Honorably Discharged on September 17, 1945. He received 5 Bronze Stars for service; the European African Middle Eastern Campaign, the American Campaign, the World War II Medal, the Efficiency Honor Fidelity Medal, and the Honorable Service while a Prisoner of War United States of America.

After returning to the United States, he and Josephine lived in Dalhart TX where Larry worked as a mechanic. In 1953 they settled in Roswell, NM where they raised their 5 children. He became a barber under the GI Bill and worked at the Walker Air Force Base NCO Club from 1955 to 1962 until it closed. He then served the Roswell community at Plains Park and Wilshire Barber Shops from 1962 to 1995 when he retired. He proudly served in many roles for the VFW Post 2575 including Commander and District Commander,

the DAV, the American Legion, and the Roswell Veterans Honor Guard. In addition to his parents, he is predeceased by his sisters Obdulia Maldonado and Julia Montano, his brother Diego (Red) Montano, his beloved grandson Robert Blaze Nunez, and great-grandson Jared Analla. He is survived by brother Benny Montano and sisters Freda Allison, Clara Thomas, and Janie Contreras. His children, Lorine Torrez and husband Joe, Dolores Montano, Clara Bautista and husband Rick, Helen Montano, Larry Joe Montano and wife Esperanza. Grandchildren Leo Ray Vasquez, Michael Vasquez and wife Katrina, Nickie Louise Vasquez-Spicer, Melissa Gladden and husband Jerrod, Anthony Torrez, Robert Torrez and wife Stacie, Patricia Torrez, Connie Gonzalez and her husband Jerry, Eddie Ray Duran and wife Gloria, Annette Duran Analla, Loretta Duran, Barbara James, Jayme Tarin and husband Edgar, Jarrett Hipp and wife Rose, Joel Rodriguez, Emylio Rodriguez, Izael Rodriguez, 29 great-grandchildren, 15 great-great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Throughout his life, Larry enjoyed working on vehicles. He played the guitar and harmonica and was in a band in the 1940s. He had a passion for cycling and was always active and moving. He rode his bike to work for many years. He was soft-spoken and quiet but loved to crack a good joke and talk about what was happening in the White House. Mostly, he was a kind, loving, and ardent servant to his family. He was a wonderful and caring father, grandfather (Popo), brother, uncle, cousin, and friend. He will be greatly missed, and we will treasure our memories of him.

With gratitude we give absolute appreciation to Vero Quintana, Dr. Virgle Herrin, Dr. Robert A. Radar, and the attentive and caring clinical staff at Lovelace Regional Hospital for their compassionate and competent care.

Rosary will be held on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at 09:30 am with Mass to follow at 10:00 am at St Peter's Church 111 E Deming, Roswell NM. Burial will follow at South Park Cemetery. Pallbearers will be Jarrett Hipp, Michael

Vasquez, Leo Ray Vasquez, Eddie Ray Duran, Edgar Tarin, and Orlando Padilla.

By Orlando Padilla Life Member VFW Post 2575 Roswell NM February 06, 2010

Sometime in the fall of 1945, Hilario(Larry) Montano wife, Josephine, received a Western Union telegram, Preparing and fearing the worst, she opened the telegram and its contents said, "THE SECRETARY OF WAR DESIRES ME TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP REGRET" that your husband Pvt Hilario Montano has been reported missing in action since September 17, 1944, in Germany. If further details or other information are received you will be promptly notified. Dunlop Acting, Adjutant General". The official status as a Prisoner of War would not arrive until later.

Hilario (Larry) Montano was born in the small town of Logan NM on December 18, 1923, which makes him 86 years old at the time of this account. He says Hilario is his Spanish name and Larry is American his name. He presently resides in Roswell NM, making him a born and raised native New Mexican. Larry has been married to Josephine for 68 years and they have 5 children, Helen, Lorine, Dolores, Clara, and Larry Joe.

After his stint in the military, which changed his life forever, Larry went to barber school under the GI Bill. He worked as a barber for 46 years, from 1949 to 1995, even cutting hair at Walker Air Force Base NCO Club from 1955-1962 until they closed the base. Larry must have had his priorities straight using the GI Bill to obtain his education.

Larry was drafted into the US Army on Feb 24, 1943, the height of WWII. After boot camp he served as 57 MM Anti-Tank Gun Crewman, and was assigned to HQ Co., 3rd Battalion, 60th Regiment, 9th Infantry Division and sent to liberate Europe in the invasion of Normandy on D-Day. Larry Battalion landed on Normandy Beach and went ashore at Utah Beach. The job of the 60th

Regiment was to aid as much as possible the cutting of the Cotentin Peninsula. Larry did not go in the 1st wave on D-Day but waited offshore on the English Channel until he was called in as a reinforcement on the 2nd day of D-Day. Larry still recants the amphibious assault where he had to jump into the water and swim to the shore carrying all his equipment and receiving fire from the German pillboxes off the beachhead. On June 17-18, 1944, the regiment split into 3 battalions and proceeded to cut the peninsula. Larry 's 3rd battalion pushed into the town of Barneville-Sur Mer, providing the final cut into the Cotentin Peninsula. On the 6th of September, the 60th made first contact with the Siegfried Line, Hofen and Alzen fell also, but with heavy toll of prisoners. Larry, along with all his gun crew were taken as prisoner of war in Northern Germany on Sept 17, 1945. Back home, Larry's wife Josephine, received a letter from the governor of New Mexico comforting her about Larry's captivity, and at the same time informing her that her husband was also a prisoner of war. Josephine saved the letter and the local newspaper printed an article and took a photo of it.

Larry vividly recalls his time as a POW, feeling more comfortable talking about it now than before. Stalag II-A was located in Eastern Germany in Neubrandenburg, north of Berlin. It housed many nationalities, although separately. By December 1944, the numbers of POW's was overwhelming the Germans. Crowded conditions, inadequate rations, medical supplies, and sanitary facilities were all intensified by a nation crumbling under the pressure of war. The

Germans could scarcely take care of their own men never mind captured enemy soldiers. The POW's ate a very limited diet, mostly potatoes, rutabagas, and black bread. Larry remembers almost starving to death, getting only a bowl of soup and one slice of bread a day. Stalag II-A had approximately 50 various work camps, or Commando Camps, as Larry tells it.

The men were assigned various work groups working for the forest, farms, and railroads. Larry worked with the railroad crew.

He would unload coal from the train, but many times he would try and sabotage the train by putting coal dust in the wheel bearings causing the train to slow down because the coal dust could burn the bearing on the wheel, If he was caught he would be severely disciplined. He had seen how the Germans killed Jews and Russians for no reason recalling the ill-treatment of Jews by the German guards. The GI's always stuck together, when one Jewish POW did not return from work detail, his comrades sent word to the guards that "one day the war would end. That they would be held accountable...the GI returned shortly thereafter. The Germans so feared the Russian soldiers they were kept isolated in a separate compound and treated them very poorly. Larry tells the story of how they were liberated by the Russians, which surprised him how far east he was as a P.O.W. He recalls an American tank driven by a Russian soldier knocking the fence down all around the compound to free all the prisoners. Fifteen hundred to two thousand Russians, Indians, Italians, English, Czechoslovakians, and Americans were liberated on May 1, 1945, including Larry. A Russian POW made a cigarette case out of wood and gave it to Larry, which he still has. It's on display today along with other mementos he has brought to share with us. Larry received 5 bronze battle stars for 5 different battle campaigns, plus his Prisoner of War medal, so consequently he got to come home early. He also received numerous awards and decorations, too many to talk about today. I asked Larry about his decorations, and all he mentioned was that he wasn't interested in any of the medals at the time, he just wanted to get out, get home, see his family, go to work, and make a living. No one fully understands more so than his family of his sacrifice and pride to his country.

After the war in 1949, Larry Montano wanted to make things better for other veterans, knowing how blessed he was to have come back home. He became

a life member of the National Veterans of Foreign Wars, and later in 1960, he transferred his membership to the Roswell Post 2575. Along with his wife Josephine, who was actively involved in the ladies' Auxiliary, they contributed much time and efforts to the success of Post 2575 in Roswell. Later he became its Post Commander, District Commander, and participated in the state VFW team. Larry also belongs to the Ex-POW and Disabled American Veterans organization and up until recently, also served with the Veterans Honor Guard.

Previous Events

Rosary and Mass

JAN 23. 9:30 AM (MT)

St. Peter's Catholic Church
111 East Demming St.
Roswell, NM 88203
(575) 622-5092

Tribute Wall

CG

“ Larry,

Jesus Christ never forgot you. His hand was on you, through the turmoil's of war time, as your family's peace of mind was also taken in that dark time. But life with a hint of hope never left.

Your family and extended loved ones, you helped along the way are also rewarded in this celebration day. You heard the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matthew 25:21). Larry congratulations and Happy Birthday on your eternal salvation day.

I'm sure you and Conrad have already strummed a few melodies by now.

Thank you for the many years of friendship you shared.

Peace,

Eddie and Angie Gomez and Family

Conrad (Eddie) Gomez - January 24, 2024 at 05:16 PM

EB

“ Ericka Brady lit a candle in memory of Hilario Montano



Ericka Brady - January 22, 2024 at 07:26 PM

MC

“ *My deepest condolences to all the Montano family.Moe*

Maurice Catano - January 22, 2024 at 06:16 PM

GC

“ *To Larry Montano’s family,
I am saddened to learn of his passing. Larry was a very kind man
and loved his family so much. I pray that God and His loving Son
Jesus Christ comfort and bless each of you at this very difficult time.
My sincerest sympathy,
Gloria (Torres) Chavez*

Gloria Chavez - January 22, 2024 at 05:11 PM



“ *Antonia Olivas lit a candle in memory of
Hilario Montano*



Antonia Olivas - January 22, 2024 at 03:57 PM



“ *Larry Joe & Montano Family, my deepest condolences for your loss.
Reading this shows what an honorable man your dad was. You are
in my thoughts and prayers. RIP and fly high . PJ*

Antonia Olivas - January 22, 2024 at 03:56 PM