

Service, Sacrifice Mark History of Sugar Land

The onset of World War II was deeply felt in Sugar Land. Not only were members of the community fighting for the country's freedom, but Imperial Vice President and Treasurer Herbert Kempner successfully fought for the company's survival.

The Wartime Shipping Administration limited the shipment of any refined product outside designated zones. Imperial was on the list of refineries to be closed by the government, but Kempner ensured the company's survival by lobbying the government to create a zone that included Texas. He later resigned from the company to assume a U.S. Navy post in Washington, D.C. Joining Kempner's call to duty were various members of the company town's founding families, including William T. Eldridge, III, William Randle Eldridge and widow Abbie Eldridge Green's new husband.

Among those honored for service during the war was U.S. Army Sgt. Macario Garcia, of Sugar Land. President Harry S. Truman presented Garcia with the Medal of Honor at a ceremony in the White House on Aug. 23, 1945. Garcia's citation read:

Staff Sergeant Macario Garcia, Company B, 22nd Infantry, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy in the vicinity of Grosshau, Germany, 27 November 1944. While an acting squad leader, he single-handedly assaulted two enemy machine gun emplacements. Attacking prepared positions on a wooded hill, which could be approached only through meager cover. His company was pinned down by intense machine-gun fire and subjected to a concentrated artillery and mortar barrage. Although painfully wounded, he refused to be evacuated and on his own

initiative crawled forward alone until he reached a position near an enemy emplacement. Hurling grenades, he boldly assaulted the position, destroyed the gun, and with his rifle killed three of the enemy who attempted to escape. When he rejoined his company, a second machine-gun opened fire and again the intrepid soldier went forward, utterly disregarding his own safety. He stormed the position and destroyed the gun, killed three more Germans, and captured four prisoners. He fought on with his unit until the objective was taken and only then did he permit himself to be removed for medical care. S/Sgt. (then Pvt.) Garcia's conspicuous heroism, his inspiring, courageous conduct, and his complete disregard for his personal safety wiped out two enemy emplacements and enabled his company to advance and secure its objective.

Sugar Land American Legion members (like those pictured) and Veterans of Foreign War posts have a rich history of recognizing the service and sacrifice of the Sugar Land's heroes. That tradition continued on Monday with the City's first annual Memorial Day Ceremony in association with Fort Bend Salutes America.

The ceremony at Sugar Land Memorial Park included a benediction by various religious leaders, a 21 gun-salute, presentation of colors and other tributes. In addition to the ceremony, educational and commemorative activities filled the park, including a war artifact exhibition where families learned about the various histories of many different wars, a static display of military vehicles, a military jet flyover, donation booths and much more.

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