



MARK R. FLETCHER/HOBBS NEWS-SUN

Arnold Ross Clanton looks at some of the pictures of his father who was a Bataan Death March survivor.

# A son's memorial

## Clanton sets out on 83-mile trek to honor Death March survivor

MARK R. FLETCHER  
HOBBS NEWS-SUN

Arnold Ross Clanton II doesn't remember much about his father; he says he hardly knew him when he was alive.

His father, Arnold Ross Clanton Sr., died in 1970 just after his son returned from Vietnam. Clanton recalls his father, a veteran of the Pacific War and Bataan Death March survivor, telling him that he didn't have anything to prove.

"When I was going off to Nam I went by and he told me you don't have to prove anything, you don't have to do this," Clanton said.

Ross Clanton went to Vietnam and served there in 1968 and 1969. When he returned he had not even stopped to visit his father yet

when he received a call from the Police Department telling him they had found him dead in his



home.

Now 31 years after his father's death, and nearly 60 years after the Bataan Death March, Ross Clanton wants to help keep the memory of his father's sacrifices in World War II alive. Sunday, April 1 - which would have been Arnold Clanton's 85th birthday - he began walking from his father's grave in Artesia to his home in Hobbs. Clanton expects the walk of more than 83 miles to take him six days.

"Bataan was about 83 miles and they marched it in six days, so I'm going to try to coordinate it with that," Clanton said.

Clanton said part of his motivation in making the walk across country is to try and draw attention to attempts to seek compensation from the Japanese companies that used the American POWs as labor in their factories. If the suit against the companies ever goes through, Clanton hopes his mother can benefit

See MEMORIAL, Page 2

from PAGE 1

from it.

"My mom is still alive; I'd like to see that deal get done while she's still alive and maybe enjoy it," Clanton said.

Clanton also compares the suit against the Japanese corporation to the money paid to the Japanese interned in the United States during the war.

"We paid the Japanese people for putting them in camps, so I don't see why they can't pay the American people back," Clanton said.

While he hopes news of his walk will draw attention to the suit, Clanton says he wants to complete the walk alone and hopes the experience will help him understand his father a little more.

"I'm hoping in the back of my mind it might, but number one I'm doing it in recognition of his memory," Clanton said. "Whatever I get out of it will be great."

He also plans to avoid the highways between Artesia and Hobbs, and cut across country.

"I'm going to cut right straight across country ... not going to go by any highways or any towns," Clanton said. "I'm taking all my provisions; there won't be any vehicles involved."

He also says he plans to keep a diary along the route.

What little he knows about his father's wartime experiences are neatly packed into a single envelope.

"Right there, that's all I've got," Clanton said pointing to a small envelope of pictures and letters.

Clanton has, however, learned one bit of history about his father's unit, the 200th coast artillery corps, an anti-aircraft artillery unit.

When they were deciding which of two units, the 200th and another anti-aircraft artillery corps, would go to Alaska and which would go to the Philippines, the decision was made by coin toss. The 200th won the toss and elected to take the Philippines.

"At that time the Philippines wasn't in any danger, so everybody wanted to go to the Philippines because it was tropical, and the beaches and the seas and all that," Clanton said. "But in the long run the 200th really lost."

Like many front-line combat veterans, Arnold Clanton didn't talk much about his experiences in Bataan or as a forced laborer in the Japanese factories.

"There's so many things. He didn't talk a lot about it, it hurt him to talk about it," said Ross

Clanton's mother Ann Lane.

Lane said when Arnold Clanton returned from the war; he was in very bad health. During his confinement he contracted Malaria and Beriberi.

"He was a big man at one time, at the end of the war he weighed 60 pounds," Lane said.

She added that Arnold Clanton would spend the rest of his life, up to the time he died, in and out of hospitals.

Lane also said Arnold Clanton was forced to work in a factory that produced metal, and was a scant 200 miles away from Hiroshima when the bomb was dropped on it.

"It was a horrible, horrible experience," Lane said.

Lane says she is glad that her son wants to help keep the memory of Bataan alive, and says this is typical of her son.

"He's a very patriotic man, (and) he's doing this as a memorial to his dad," Lane said. "I think he wants people to know."

Contact Hobbs News-Sun reporter Mark R. Fletcher at 397-4556, ext. 133, or via e-mail at city@leaco.net, or markmrf@hotmail.com

Tuesday, April 3, 01  
HNS