



They fought America's first  
major ground battle of  
World War II.

Half of them died in battle  
and as POWs.



They are America's  
**FORGOTTEN SOLDIERS**

A documentary film about the  
United States Army's Philippine Scouts

Produced and Directed by Donald Plata  
Written by Chris Schaefer  
Narrated by Lou Diamond Phillips

A PLATINUM MULTIMEDIA LLC PRODUCTION

## Synopsis

When the Japanese launched their Pacific attack, General Douglas MacArthur's United States Army Forces in the Far East included U.S. National Guard units, a regiment of Marines, ten divisions of newly recruited and poorly equipped Philippine Army soldiers, and one U.S. Army infantry division with supporting units--the Philippine Scouts.

MacArthur told his men to hold their ground at all costs, to fight to the death if necessary as they began America's first major battle of World War II, the Battle of Bataan.

The top brass in Washington promised to send reinforcements, planes, naval support and supplies...but months went by and the reinforcements never came.

The Filipino and American soldiers fought and held off the enemy from December 1941 through March 1942, surrounded and constantly bombarded by the powerful Japanese army and navy. As their ammunition, medicine and food supplies dwindled they went on half rations, then one-third rations. They were starved out--victims of malaria, dysentery and a variety of tropical diseases. After four months of almost constant combat, after every other Allied stronghold in the Pacific had fallen, Bataan commander General Edward King finally surrendered his surviving troops to the Japanese rather than see any more of his men slaughtered by the enemy.

As Prisoners of War the survivors of Bataan suffered one of the worst atrocities in military history--the Bataan Death March. Thousands of men died on the Death March, thousands more in horrible Japanese prison camps. In combat and as POWs, more than half of these brave men died at the hands of the Japanese Army.

Even after the horrors of the Japanese prison camps, Philippine Scout survivors continued their resistance as guerrillas and, with liberation of the Philippines, prepared to participate in the invasion of Japan. Scouts who survived World War II went on to serve in the U.S. Army in Korea and in Viet Nam.

In this award winning documentary movie narrated by Hollywood actor Lou Diamond Phillips, ten survivors tell their story on-screen and describe the action over photographs, reenactments and actual footage of the events. Much of the footage is film captured from the Imperial Japanese Army at the end of the war, including sequences of the Bataan Death March and scenes shot live inside Japanese prison camps.

In the years since World War II the heroism and achievements of these soldiers have slipped into history and few Americans today are even aware of the existence of this unique military organization. They were the U.S. Army's Philippine Scouts. America's Forgotten Soldiers.



Thank you for accepting the feature documentary film “Forgotten Soldiers.” It is the story of a group of regular US Army soldiers who made tremendous sacrifices during World War II and succeeded in holding up the Japanese advance through the Pacific during the early part of the war.

Of the twelve thousand soldiers in those units, half of them died in action and as prisoners of war. However, for years their heroic story has been brushed aside or even deliberately ignored, perhaps because they were Filipino-American soldiers serving in regular US Army units.

Many of the soldiers who survived the war settled in the United States. A handful of them are still alive today. Their sons, daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, and a considerable part of the American community, await this film--a tribute to those brave soldiers who served their countries so well.

As we commemorate the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their valor, I hope that you will show this film to as wide an audience as possible, and help recognize these men for their faithful and heroic service.

Thank you very much,

Donald A. Plata  
Producer/Director

**Producer & Director – Donald A. Plata**

**Scriptwriter – Chris Schaefer**

**Narrator – Lou Diamond Phillips**

**Editor – Donald A. Plata**

### **About the Director**

Although his work and undergraduate degree were in the field of aviation, Don Plata became interested in filmmaking, started making instructional and aviation training videos, and began to record a series of interviews with former Philippine Scouts. Initially he intended these films to be used by family members and the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society to preserve stories of the men's experiences during the battles of Bataan and Corregidor, and as Prisoners of War. As his interest in filmmaking grew, Don took courses in videography, script writing, directing, and special effects; he became a Field Producer at Montgomery Access Television, and he resolved to make a documentary movie that would tell the story of the early months of World War II, and specifically the heroic achievements of the Philippine Scouts.

Over a five year period Don filmed scenes and battle reenactments in the Philippines, Hong Kong, California and Virginia, did aerial photography of battle sites, and perused hundreds of hours of historic footage at the U.S. National Archives and other sites. He poured his heart into the project, enlisted the aid of Chris Schaefer to write the script and Lou Diamond Phillips to narrate the story. In *Forgotten Soldiers* Mr. Plata has captured the agonies the Scouts endured during their years in battle and in captivity, as well as their remarkable achievements.

### **About the Scriptwriter**



Chris Schaefer writes books and articles, and now a screenplay, about World War II in the Pacific. He is an Associate Instructor at the Osher Learning Institute at the University of Utah where he teaches World War II and Middle East history. He served as Public Relations Officer for the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society. His first book, *Bataan Diary* is about a group of American soldiers left behind in the Philippine Islands during the Japanese occupation.

Chris started his career as a historical researcher and author after working twenty-two years as an Information Technology consultant and software developer, with clients across the United States, Canada, Mexico, Europe, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong. He is a former U.S. Army reconnaissance pilot and he holds a Bachelor's degree in History and a Master's degree in Computing Sciences from Texas A&M University.

## About the Narrator



Golden Globe and Tony Award-nominated actor Lou Diamond Phillips brings the advantages of an experienced narrator, actor and widely recognized Hollywood personality to *Forgotten Soldiers*. His participation increases the appeal of the film to young viewers who are not familiar with the combat and sacrifices that took place in the Pacific in the early months of World War II.

Lou received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Texas at Arlington, and began his successful film career as rock star Richie Valens in the bio-pic *La Bamba*. He has gone on to starring roles on Broadway, television and film, and currently hosts *An Officer and a Movie* on the Military Channel.

Lou Diamond Phillips has special connections to this film. He was born at Subic Bay in the Philippines where his father was stationed in the U.S. Navy, his mother is Filipino and he is named after a legendary Marine war hero. He is an outspoken advocate of the Filipino Veterans Equity Act--federal legislation to provide the same benefits to Filipino veterans who served with the United States as have been available to other U.S. World War II veterans.

### **Recognition for *Forgotten Soldiers*:**

Beloit International Film Festival—Power of Film Award (festival top prize)

Television, Internet and Video Association (TIVA), Washington D.C.:

Peer Gold Award—Best feature-length Docudrama

Peer Gold Award—Wardrobe

Peer Bronze Award—Directing

Peer Bronze Award—Editing

International Film Festival Manhattan—Mount Hope Award

Los Angeles Underground Film Festival—Honorable Mention, Documentary Feature

Freedom Award—the Filipino-American Veterans and Families Organization

Filipino-American History Achievement Award, Los Angeles

Certificate of Recognition—U.S. Senator Dean Heller

Certificate of Recognition—U.S. Congressman Joe Heck

Certificate of Recognition—City of Los Angeles

Certificate of Recognition—California State Senate

Commendation—County of Los Angeles

Coin for Excellence—Commanding General, White Sands Missile Range

Command Sergeant Major's Coin—New Mexico National Guard



Movie stills from Forgotten Soldiers:



Preparing defensive position at the Abucay line.



National Guardsman from the 200th Coast Artillery.



A Japanese Banzai charge.

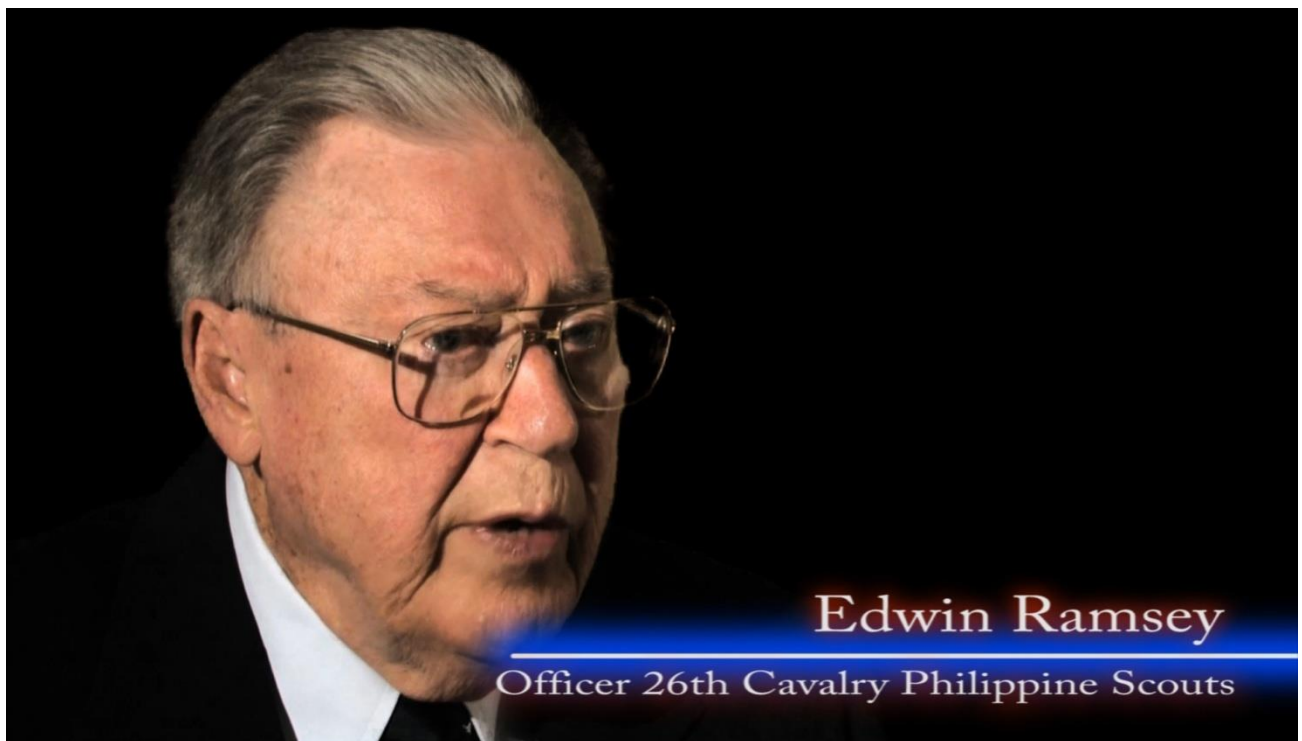


A counter attack by the 57th Infantry, Philippine Scouts.





Soldiers of the 26th Cavalry Regiment, Philippine Scouts.



Edwin Ramsey led the remnants of Troops E&F, 26th Cavalry, in the town of Morong, Bataan. It was the last horse mounted cavalry charge in the history of the United States Army.





Soldiers of the US Army's Philippine Scouts were the first to use the M1 Garand rifle in combat.



John Olson was a young officer of the 57th Infantry Regiment, he describes the Scouts as "Outstanding soldiers and excellent marksmen."





Tanks from the 192nd Tank Battalion, a National Guard unit from Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, and Wisconsin, support the withdrawal from Lingayen Gulf to the Bataan peninsula.



April 9, 1942 was the biggest surrender of US forces to a foreign power. The same day 77 years earlier, General Robert E. Lee came to Appomattox, Virginia to surrender his confederate force to union general Ulysses S. Grant.



A victim of the infamous “Death March.”



Menandro Parazo

26th Cavalry, Philippine Scouts

Menandro Parazo describes in detail the prisoners' experience during the Death March.