



Jose Vela Garza

January 10, 1918 - October 15, 2012

Jose V. Garza was born January 10, 1918 in Alice, Texas. "Pepe" or Joe, as he was lovingly known by family and friends, entered into eternal rest October 15, 2012 at age 94. He is joined in heaven by Alice Sanchez Garza, his beloved wife; Esteban and Rafaela Garza, his parents; Esteban Garza, Jr., brother; Paula Martinez and Esmeralda Cisneros, sisters; and, Reynaldo "Guy" and Aurora Ortiz, stepson and step daughter-in-law. He will be sadly missed by Dolores A. Garza and Roseline Howes, his daughters; David Howes, son-in-law; Antonio Montelauro, Michelle Mata David, and Laura Ortiz, grandchildren; fourteen great-grand children, one great-great-grandchild, and numerous nieces and nephews and a multitude of friends. He has a surviving half-sister, "Mayo" Garza. As a young child, his family moved to San Antonio, Texas, where he remained the rest of his life except for serving 6 months 1937-1938 in the Civilian Conservation Corps CCC at Lone Pine, California and Mimbres, New Mexico, and spending 4 years in service to his country in the U. S. Army, 9th Infantry Division, during World War II where he attained the rank of Tech Sergeant with the position of Platoon Sergeant. He was wounded three times in battle, March 18, 1944, August 2, 1944 and August 31, 1944. For courage and bravery in the face of the enemy, he was offered a battlefield commission, which he humbly declined, because he felt that his 5th grade education was not enough for such a high honor. He was awarded the Bronze Star for "outstanding and especially meritorious service" for the following incident as noted in his Certificate of Commendation: "On

March 25, 1943, in the area of Maknassy, Tunisia, Corporal Garza, with utter disregard for his own personal safety, went through a sector that was being machine gunned by the enemy, to help carry wounded men out of a wadi. His efforts enabled all the wounded to be removed saving the lives of many. Such bravery and devotion to duty are worthy of commendation." Battles and campaigns include Algeria, French Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland and the Ardennes. Among his decorations and citations are the Combat Infantryman Badge, European EAME Campaign Medal with 7 Bronze Stars and 1 Bronze Arrowhead, Good Conduct Medal, American Defense Service Medal, a Purple Heart with 2 Oak Leaf Clusters. More recently, in March 2011, by decree signed by the "the President of the French Republic," he was awarded the French Medal of Honor, which is specifically designated as a "Chevalier" of the Legion of Honor for merits and accomplishments during WWII and "as a sign of France's gratitude" for his "contributions towards its liberation." After the war, being previously trained as a printer, he worked at Artes Graficas for twenty-two years; at Clegg Company for six years; and ultimately retiring after fourteen years, at age 65, from the San Antonio Express News where he was a supervisor printer, a job he loved, in a place where he was greatly esteemed and admired. Pepe thoroughly enjoyed his retirement. His love of God, patriotism, work ethic and devotion to family confer great honor and pride to his entire family. He will be remembered for his loving and caring thoughtfulness, his delightful quick wit, his cheerful joking ways, and that lovable twinkle in his eye, which was the hallmark of his smile. May the light of God's love shine perpetually on Pepe Garza, who will always be considered having been a "good man" in the full sense of that description. Donations in his memory may be made to the Wounded Warrior Project at www.woundedwarriorproject.org.