



Juan R. Gonzales

May 14, 1931 - July 18, 2016

Juan R. Gonzales, age 85, died July 18, 2016. Gonzales is survived by his beloved children and their spouses: John R. Gonzales Jr. and wife Ashley Gonzales, Jacob Gonzales and wife Belia Gonzales, and Joann Loera. He also leaves behind 10 Grandchildren, 8 Great Grandchildren, and 1 great great grandson.

Gonzales began his Marine Corps career as a private first class at age 19. He served his country proudly while fighting in the Korea War at The Battle of Chosin Reservoir. He seldom spoke about his experiences, but one in particular he agreed to revisit; the hostile experience in Korea. He recalled sleepless nights, shivering temperatures, relentless climbing, and digging foxholes to take cover from the enemy. On November 27, 1950, Gonzales and his 1st Marine Division comrades were surrounded by hundreds of Chinese soldiers. As they began advancing upon him, Gonzales as his comrades described it as, "A nightmare, they were shooting at us left and right, a few of them were carrying bushel baskets full of grenades while another person would throw them at us. For a second there we had nowhere to go."

Gonzales was one of 12, 000 Marines ambushed by 60, 000 Chinese. "As we shot back, we retreated to the mountains; the sweat and blood perspiring from our bodies immediately turned to ice. We were prepared for the fight, but

weren't prepared for the weather." The 1st Marine Divisions lost 4, 385 men to combat and 7, 338 to the cold that night. Gonzales explained how he and the other men carried the dead and wounded with them as they recoiled up the mountains. Gonzales was then transported from the battlefield where he suffered severe frostbite to his feet.

The 1950 Lanier High School graduate was later discharged on a medical disability. He then retired in 1993 from the Defense Mapping Agency at Fort Sam Houston. He was a dedicated life-member of the VFW post 9186 Post Commander 1996-97; VFW District 20 All-State District Commander 2002-03; Active member of the American Legion post 485; Korean Chosin Few Marines Alamo Chapter; and Korean War Vet Association Alamo Chapter.

Visitation Services are open to the public for Gonzales on Sunday 5:00- 9:00 pm at Mission Park Funeral Chapel South. Prayer service begins at 7:00pm. Funeral service is at 12:00pm at St. Lawrence Catholic Church on Monday July 25th. Interment will be conducted at Ft. Sam Houston National Cemetery at 1:45pm