

Corregidor Island Background

Corregidor is a small rocky island in the Philippines about 48 kilometers west of Manila which is strategically located at the entrance of Manila Bay. This island fortress stands as a memorial for the courage, valor, and heroism of its Filipino and American defenders who bravely held their ground against the overwhelming number of invading Japanese forces during World War II.

Also known as "the Rock," it was a key bastion of the Allies during the war. When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in December 1941, the military force under the command of Gen. Douglas MacArthur carried out a delaying action at Bataan. Corregidor became the headquarters of the Allied forces and also the seat of the Philippine Commonwealth government. It was from Corregidor that Philippine President Manuel Quezon and General MacArthur left for Australia in February 1942, leaving behind Lt. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright in command.

Although Bataan fell on April 9, 1942, the Philippine and American forces held out at Corregidor for 27 days against great odds. On May 6, 1942, their rations depleted, the Allied forces were forced to surrender Corregidor to Lt. Gen. Homma Masaharu of the Japanese Imperial Army after having successfully halted the Japanese advance on Australia. It was only two years and ten months later in March 1945 when the Allied forces under the command of General MacArthur recaptured Corregidor ... making good his promise to return to the Philippines.

In 1942, Aggie Muster gained international recognition as twenty-five men, led by General George Moore '08, mustered during the Japanese siege of Corregidor. Knowing that Muster might soon be called for them, these Aggies embodied the essence of commitment, dedication, and friendship - the Aggie Spirit. They risked their lives to honor their beliefs and values. That small group of Aggies on an outpost during World War II inspired what has developed into one of the greatest Aggie traditions.