

William Henry Gentry, World War II hero

HERALD-LEADER STAFF REPORT

A memorial service for William Henry Gentry, a World War II hero who survived the Bataan Death March, will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Harrodsburg United Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Gentry, a Harrodsburg native who was living in Blacksburg, Va., died April 25 at Roanoke Memorial Hospital in Roanoke, Va. He was 81.

Mr. Gentry was in the National Guard unit from Harrodsburg, Company D of the 192nd Tank Battalion, which was deployed to the Philippines in November 1941. Sixty-six members of the battalion, most of them from Mercer County, were called to active duty and sent to the Philippines. Only 37 were alive at the end of the war.

Mr. Gentry was stationed at Clark Field when the Japanese bombed it just hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked, and when they invaded in early 1942.

American soldiers surrendered to the Japanese after six

months of intense fighting, and were sent on the torturous Bataan Death March.

"I saw him at prison camp. I was bathing some of the men with malaria who were unable to bathe themselves, and Gentry came by and wanted to know if I needed any help," said Edwin "Skip" Rue of Lexington, another Bataan survivor.

Mr. Gentry received two Silver Stars, a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and other unit commendations.

He was a retired employee of Corning Glass Co. and the widower of Katherine Poor Gentry.

He is survived by a daughter, Harriet Gentry Cobb of Savannah, Ga.; two sons, William H. Gentry II of Blacksburg and James Walker Gentry of Lacoochee, Fla.; a sister; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Ransdell Funeral Chapel in Harrodsburg is in charge of arrangements.

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