

PREFACE

This biography is dedicated to Cisilio R. Gonzales, to his life and times and the service of one man to his country. The country that he so dearly loved. His bravery and valor was outstanding during the European Campaign's of World War II, 1941-45. This humble young man from central Texas, stood up to be counted on when our country needed these young men and women to secure freedom and the arm resistance against oppression. This writer, once asked Cisilio Gonzales what was his motivation to enlist during the war, he stopped the task he was doing, looked directly at me and said, " It was a honor and privilege to serve my country".

Cisilio R. Gonzales was born in Ballenger, Texas, on December 5, 1921 to Juan and Maria Gonzales. He was one of six children. The family moved to Lubbock, Texas during the late 1930's of the Great Depression. The family was looking for a better life and better opportunity and moved to central Texas.

At the opening of War World II, December 7, 1941 Cisilio was then living in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Away from the farm and rural life style of central Texas. Away from segregation, cultural indifference, and poor economic hardships for most men and women as well, at that time in our history. As a true American second generation, and son of the lone star of Texas, he did as many young men and women of the United States and territories of the United States, took up arms in defense of our great and wonderful country, the country that Cisilio Gonzales loved so dearly.

He enlisted in Pueblo, Colorado on December 26, 1942. Pvt. Cisilio Gonzales was posted at Camp Carson, Colorado for basic training. During the summer of 1943 Pvt. Gonzales was transferred to Camp Campbell, Kentucky. In the fall of 1943 Cisilio married the love of his life Rosa Juanita Romero in Clarksville, Tennessee on October 3, 1943. During his combat training at Camp Campbell, he was assigned to Btry. C, 413th Arm'd Bn. (Armored basic training 521).

By July 23, 1944, Pvt. Gonzales had taken a Trans-Atlantic troop ship and now stationed at Maxwell, England in preparation to enter the European Theater of Operation (E.T.O.). Here he began his combat training as a Demolition Specialist (7533). 1. (A) Demolition Specialist — Clear fields and building of mines and traps. Also helped blow up bridges and other ground installations. By October 5, 1944 Pvt. Gonzales received his certification of qualification from parachute jump school and was signed to the 82nd Airborne Division, All American (AA), 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Regimental HQ, HQ.

On September 17, 1944, on a beautiful Sunday afternoon about 3:00 o'clock, Allied paratroops jumped into Holland, the campaign became to be known as "Market Garden". On that afternoon it took ninety minutes for a C-47, a trooper transport to fly from England to Holland and to their drop zone northeast of the town of Groesbeek, Holland and their objective, the Nijmegen Bridge on the Wall River, one of five bridges [held by soldiers of] the Rhineland of Germany.

Allied paratroopers were engaged almost immediately by German troops with light combat scimmages at first, but the next few days and weeks would see some of the heaviest engagements of the war. Allied trooper were up against some of Germany best battle hardened, seasoned troops, SS Panzer Divisions, SS Troop Divisions, and Paratroopers.

However, the 82nd proved to be their match. The "Red Devils" as the German troops called the paratroopers of the 82nd was due to their valor, courage and bravery throughout the campaigns in the Netherlands.

On November 14, 1944 the following month, the entire regiment was ordered to Camp de Sissonne, France for much needed R&R.

However, on December 16, 1944, "The Battle of The Bulge" began. During the Ardennes Offensive the 82nd was ordered to Werbomont, Belgium, the northern shoulder of the German offensive. This position was taken, defended and held until January 1945. In February the counter attack began into the Rhineland, of the heart of Germany, and elements to the 82nd pushed into Germany.

By mid-February the regiment returned to Camp de Sissonne, France and posted in reserve. In early April the 82nd was ordered to a position near Chartres, [France] on a contingency mission to liberate P.O.W. camps in Germany. However, the war ended in early May 1945. The 508 Parachute Infantry Regiment, was redeployed to Frankfurt-Am-Main, Germany for occupation duty and to serve as Honor Guard to General Eisenhower's SHAEF Headquarters, July 18, 1945.

By this time, Pfc Cisilio Gonzales had served in the European Theater of Operation (E.T.O.) for a period of eighteen months as a paratrooper, and demolition specialist. A list of campaign and battles are as follows:

- (1) Market Garden Campaign-Holland
- (2) Rhineland Campaign-Holland
- (3) Battle between the Salm River and the Ourthe River-Belgium
- (4) Battle of the Bulge, Ardennes-Alsace Campaign-Belgium
- (5) Central Europe Campaign-Germany

In mid-December 1945 Pfc. Cisilio Gonzales, was once again on a Trans-Atlantic troop ship returning to the United States.

On January 6, 1946 he was posted at Fort Logan, Colorado for separation from the service. He returned to Lubbock, Texas in early February 1946, to reunite with family and friends but within the year moved to Los Angeles, California with his Rosa Juanita, they had four sons all born in Los Angeles, between 1947-1954. Cisilio was a machine operator / sheet metal worker. Cisilio continued to live in the Los Angeles area until his beloved wife's death in February 1978. Cisilio R. Gonzales passed away on January 14, 1983.