

CBHS Class of 1943

**Manuel Raimundo**

After 91 selfless years and many months of struggle with the things that finally did him in, Manuel Raimundo passed away on August 7. His family is grateful for the remarkable attention and care he received from Dr. Scott Stringer and the staff of ACC Nursing Home. What "Ma" Raimundo bore with such grace is more than many could have endured. Born in Sacramento in 1924, he was captured in the Battle of the Bulge in WWII, marched for six days through freezing snow into Germany and crammed into a boxcar for another five, all without food or water. Manuel came out of Stalag IV-B five harrowing months later - 55 pounds lighter and plagued with demons that would torment him for decades. He spent his 21st birthday in a POW camp and his 22nd in Sacramento as the father of a one-week-old child. How disorienting and challenging that must have been. Hardened by that war, he still loved and raised three children - Karen Strobach and Tom and Jeff Raimundo. Much of the credit, of course, goes to his high school sweetheart, Jeannette Cummings Raimundo, who married him one month after the end of the war and who survives him. His family saw Manuel soften forever after the birth of his seven grandchildren. Ice cream for breakfast, vacations in Hawaii, a Dough Boy pool erected in his backyard - he pampered them to the core. He was thrilled to enjoy the company of six great-grand-children in recent years. Manuel was an active member of Sacramento's substantial Portuguese community. His parents emigrated from Portugal in the second decade of the 20th century, moving to Sacramento, where Manuel was born and attended Christian Brothers High School. Following his wartime service, he worked for the State of California Division of Architecture for more than 55 years. When his eldest grandson was paralyzed in an accident, "Grandpa Ma" pitched in more than anyone to help provide care - from building a wheelchair ramp into his grandson's home to assisting with his daily physical needs. He devoted the same sometimes back-breaking support to his own brother and sister, to an elderly friend in his final years, to his sister-in-law, to his wife and to many others known only to him. The hours, the dollars, the bruises, the weight of it all is immeasurable. And he did it without ever complaining. His psychological salvation came about two decades ago when he met a group of former wartime prisoners - the proud members of the 49er Chapter of American Ex-Prisoners of War - who guided him through the liberation of his demons. Once again, he turned to helping others - former POWs who were sorting through their financial or personal or post-traumatic stress ordeals. His family and those he helped were blessed that he was in our lives. A Rosary will be recited for repose of his soul at 7 p.m. Thursday, preceded by visitation at 6 p.m. at George L. Klumpp Chapel of Flowers, 2591 Riverside Boulevard in Sacramento. A funeral Mass will be held at 10 a.m. Friday at St. Anthony Church, 860 Florin Rd, Sacramento, followed at 2 p.m. Friday by military services at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, 5810 Midway Road, Dixon, CA. In lieu of flowers, please consider donations to EWTN Catholic TV Network ([ewtn.com](http://ewtn.com)), to Cottage Housing Inc. homeless service agency ([cottagehousing.org](http://cottagehousing.org)) or to the Wounded Warriors Project ([woundedwarriorproject.org](http://woundedwarriorproject.org)).

**Funeral Home**

George L. Klumpp Chapel of Flowers - Sacramento  
2591 Riverside Boulevard Sacramento, CA 95818  
1-916-443-7917

Published in The Sacramento Bee on Aug. 12, 2015

## Manuel M. Raimundo - CBHS Class of 1945

This is his account of his WWII service

1. WHEN THE WAR STARTED (DEC. 7 1941) I WAS WORKING AT THE AIRPORT FOR W. J. BROWN WHO WAS AT THE TIME TRAINING COLLEGE STUDENTS (WHO QUALIFIED FOR PRE-FLIGHT PILOT TRAINING PRIOR TO ENLISTING IN THE ARMY AIR FORCE). I WAS WORKING FOR W. J. BROWN AFTER SCHOOL & WEEKENDS. HE PAID ME \$10<sup>00</sup> A WEEK AND 2-HOURS FLIGHT TRAINING TIME PER WEEK. THAT'S WHERE I LEARNED TO FLY. THAT SUNDAY MORNING (DEC 7<sup>TH</sup> 1941) I HAD BEEN FLYING A PIPER CUB AIRPLANE. WHEN I LANDED, EVERYONE WAS TALKING ABOUT THE ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR. AS I RECALL IT WAS JUST BEFORE NOON. AT THIS TIME I HAD NO CONCEPTION AS TO HOW THIS WOULD AFFECT MY LIFE. I WAS LIVING AT THE RANCH, GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL, CHRISTIAN BROTHERS, AND I WAS ONLY 17 YEARS OLD. I KNEW THERE WAS A WAR ON BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BE SO IMPORTANT AT THE TIME. IT ALL BECAME MUCH MORE IMPORTANT TO ME AS I GOT CLOSER TO GRADUATION. I WAS 18 YEARS OLD AND ELIGIBLE FOR THE DRAFT.
2. I HAD DECIDED TO ENLIST IN THE AIR FORCE WHICH I DID JUST BEFORE GRADUATION.
3. THE AIRFORCE RECRUITER HAD ME SIGN ENLISTMENT PAPERS AND TOLD ME THAT I WOULD RECEIVE A LEAD OR ACCEPTANCE WITHIN A FEW WEEKS.

4. Yes, there was something unusual about my enlistment. Before I received any word from the Air Force I received notice that I was drafted and that I was to report to the Classification Center in Monterey, this happened in March of 1943. I notified the Air Force recruiter of what had happened and he told me that I should go to the Classification Center and that the enlistment in the Air Force would catch up with me. By the time the Air Force finally caught up to me it was Sept. 1943. In the time frame between March & Sept I had been sent to Missouri for basic training and then attached to the 75th Infantry Division in Fort Leonard Wood Missouri. One day the Battalion Command sent for me and told me that I was to leave for the Air Force Classification Center in Miami Beach Fla. That was one happy day. The difference between the Army & the Air Force was awesome. The Air Force had taken over all of Miami Beach, hotels, restaurants, convention halls and every facility imaginable. I did my Air Force basic training there. We slept in the fine hotels and ate at some great restaurants.

5. MOM & DAD KNEW THAT I WOULD EVENTUALLY BE DRAFTED. WHEN I ENLISTED IN THE AIRFORCE THEY SEEMED RESIGNED THAT I WAS DOING THE RIGHT THING
6. THE WAR CHANGED EVERYONES LIFE. FIRST OF ALL THEIR SON AND BROTHER WAS LEAVING THE FAMILY UNIT FOR AN EXTENDED TIME FOR THE FIRST TIME. FOR AN UNCERTAIN TIME. THERE WOULD BE ONE LESS HAND TO WORK ON THE RANCH. THE WAR BROUGHT ON MANY INCONVENIENCES. FOOD RATIONING GAS RATIONING. SACRIFICE FOR THE WAR EFFORT. THEY PROBABLY WORRIED ABOUT MY WELL BEING SINCE I HAD NEVER BEEN AWAY ON MY OWN BEFORE.
7. YOUR GRANDMA JEANNETTE AND I WERE HIGH SCHOOL SWEETHEARTS WHEN THE WAR STARTED. WE WERE SO CLOSE AND HAD SUCH A GOOD TIME WITH EACH OTHER THE WAR PUT AN END TO THAT. THE DAY THAT I HAD TO LEAVE WAS THE SADDEST DAY OF MY LIFE. I REMEMBER THAT DAY WELL. JEANNETTE AND I WERE HOLDING ON TO EVERY MOMENT. IT WAS AT THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT ON I STREET. MOM & DAD AND HERMAN & VERA WERE THERE. IT WAS A SAD

TIME FOR EVERYONE. Jeannette and I WROTE TO EACH OTHER ALMOST EVERY DAY. IT WAS A REAL UPPER TO RECEIVE LETTERS FROM HOME. ESPECIALLY FROM ONE'S GIRLFRIEND

8. SER # 6

9. I DID MY BASIC TRAINING IN MISSOURI. FORT LEONARD WOOD. BIVOUACS, PUP TENTS, RUNNING, K. P., LATRINE DUTY, LONG HIKES WITH FULL FIELD PACK. A MISERABLE 3 MONTHS.

10. AFTER BASIC TRAINING I WAS WITH THE 75<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION, STILL IN FORT LEONARD WOOD. THEN IN SEPT. 19 I WAS SENT TO MIAMI BEACH AND THE AIR FORCE. THERE I SPENT 3 MONTHS IN AIR FORCE BASIC TRAINING. IN DEC. 1943 I WAS SENT TO OSWEGO STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE. I WAS AN AIR FORCE CADET THEN. THE COLLEGE WAS IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK. THERE WE STUDIED FOR 3 MONTHS IN PREPARATION FOR CLASSIFICATION IN AIR CREW, PILOT, NAVIGATOR, BOMBARDIER ETC.

ONE OF THE FUN THINGS WE DID WHILE AT OSWEGO WAS THE PILOT TRAINING WE RECEIVED AT THE FULTON AIRPORT. WE FLEW PIPER CUBS FITTED WITH SKIS BECAUSE OF THE DEEP WINTER SNOW.

11. I FELT THAT IT WAS MY DUTY TO THE COUNTRY TO ENLIST & GO TO WAR. OF COURSE AT THE AGE OF 19 I DID NOT KNOW WHAT I WAS GETTING INTO. I STILL FEEL THAT THE 3 YEARS I SPENT IN THE ARMY AND THE AIR FORCE WAS A GREAT EXPERIENCE BUT AFTER I WAS DISCHARGED I KNEW I WOULD NEVER WANT TO DO IT AGAIN.
12. THE BEST PART OF THE WAR FOR ME WAS THE 13 MONTHS I SPENT IN THE ARMY AIR FORCE. THE TRAINING & FLYING AND THE TRAVEL. I THOUGHT THIS WAS GOING TO BE MY JOB IN THE WAR. BUT THIS ALL CAME TO AN END IN MARCH 1944. BECAUSE OF "D" DAY (JUNE 6 1944) AND THE FACT THAT I WAS TRAINED IN BASIC TRAINING IN THE INFANTRY. I WAS SENT BACK TO A CAMP IN INDIANA, CAMP ATTERBURY, & THE 106<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION. I WAS ASSIGNED TO A MEDICAL UNIT AS AN AMBULANCE DRIVER.

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THE MEDICAL UNIT TRAINED THERE UNTIL WE WERE SENT TO ENGLAND IN MID OCTOBER 1944. WE ENDED UP IN A PLACE CALLED CHELTENHAM. IT WAS DENSE FOG WHEN WE ARRIVED THERE AND IT WAS DENSE FOG WHEN WE LEFT FOR FRANCE. WE NEVER SAW THE SUN ONCE WHILE WE WERE THERE. ABOUT 32 DAYS.

13 DUCK ASS PRIVATE

14 WE LEFT ENGLAND AND ENDED UP IN A PLACE CALLED ST VITH IN BELGIUM. WE SET UP HQTS. THERE AND WERE IMMEDIATELY SENT TO THE FRONT LINES TO PICK UP THE WOUNDED. THIS WAS DEC 15 1944. MY QUARTERS WAS IN THE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR OF ONE OF THE LOCAL HOUSES THAT HAD BEEN SELECTED AS PART OF HQTS. THERE WERE ABOUT 6 OF US IN THIS PARTICULAR FLOOR. THE WAY THE ARMY WORKED THIS OUT WAS WE TOOK THE 1<sup>ST</sup> FLOOR OF THE HOUSES AND THE FAMILIES LIVED IN THE UPPER FLOORS. IT WAS VERY INTERESTING. I REMEMBER OPENING A DOOR OFF THE KITCHEN AND THERE WAS SEVERAL PIGS, A COW AND SOME CHICKENS IN THIS ROOM

15. WE WERE JUST A FEW MILES FROM THE ARDENNES WHICH AT THE TIME WAS THE FRONT LINES. I WOULD DRIVE THE AMBULANCE TO THE FRONT LINES, PICK UP THE WOUNDED AND BRING THEM TO THE HOSPITAL THAT WAS SET UP IN ST VITH. THOSE OF US WHO DROVE AMBULANCE DID THIS ON A ROTATION BASIS. THE WOUNDED WOULD BE TREATED IN ALL BOXES (ABANDONED FORTRESSES) AT THE FRONT LINES UNTIL WE WOULD PICK THEM UP BY AMBULANCE AND TAKE THEM BACK TO THE FIELD HOSPITAL. LATE ON DEC 19, 1944 A VOLUNTEER WAS NEEDED TO PICK UP SOME WOUNDED BECAUSE GERMAN TANKS WERE RAISING HELL IN OUR SECTOR. GUESS WHO VOLUNTEERED. YOURS TRULEY. WHEN I ARRIVED AT THE FRONT LINES I WAS TOLD THAT I COULD NOT RETURN TO ST. VITH BECAUSE THE GERMANS HAD CUT OFF THE WAY BACK TO ST. VITH. THIS WAS THE BEGINNING OF THE BATTLE OF THE BOLGE.

WHEN IT GOT DARK WE COULD HEAR MORE AND MORE ARTILLARY COMING IN FROM THE GERMAN SIDE OF THE LINES.



WE BEGAN TO GET RADIO REPORTS OF MORE & MORE ENEMY ACTION AND ACTIVITY. WE FINALLY RECEIVED ORDERS TO GET OUT ASAP. THE COLONEL WHO GAVE THE ORDER WAS MORTALLY WOUNDED AND WE PUT HIM IN THE AMBULANCE WITH 3 OTHER WOUNDED AND STARTED TO TRY TO GET OUT. IT WAS PITCH BLACK AND <sup>WE</sup> DID NOT WANT TO USE LIGHT FOR FEAR OF GIVING OUR POSITIONS AWAY. SO A COUPLE OF SOLDIERS, ONE ON EACH SIDE ACTED AS GUIDES TO KEEP US ON THE MUDDY ROADS. WE FINALLY HAD TO STOP BECAUSE IT BECAME TOO DIFFICULT TO CONTINUE. WHILE WE WERE STOPPED WE COULD HEAR SOLDIERS DIGGING FOX HOLES NEXT TO US. WE FOUND OUT THE NEXT MORNING THAT THEY WERE GERMAN SOLDIERS. JUST A STONES THROW AWAY JUST AT DAWN'S BREAK WE SAW THAT WE WERE ON A BLUFF, NO ROADS. THE OFFICER IN CHARGE DECIDED THAT WE SHOULD GET OFF THE BLUFF AND GET TO THE VALLEY BELOW. ONE COULD BARELY SEE. THERE WAS NO ACTIVITY AROUND US. THOSE GERMAN SOLDIERS DUG IN AROUND US MADE NO MOVE.

By the time we reached the valley floor it was dawn. It was cold and snow was on the ground. We stopped and relaxed and started to eat some "C" rations. We thought we were in no real danger. During the night the Colonel had died. We tried to make the other 3-wounded more comfortable.

(FOOTNOTE - MY WRITING IS GETTING BAD)

At about 2 AM I was up front in the cab of the ambulance with another medic when the distinct sound of mortar fire hit us from all sides. I opened my door and dived for the ground and cover. There only cover was a small tree with a trunk about 4" in diameter. There were two of us lying side by side trying to find protection by this small tree.

They opened fire on us by machine gun and kept up the mortar fire. All the while the ambulance is being hit by machine gun fire. The tires are flat and there are dozens of holes on the sides of the ambulance. I remember thinking about the three wounded soldiers in the ambulance.

JUST AS I WAS THINKING THIS THE SOLDIER NEXT TO ME TOOK A BULLET IN THE BACK THAT BULLET CAME FROM THE BLUFF ABOVE US, MISSED ME BY INCHES AND HIT HIM. HE WAS PARALYZED. WE WERE OUT OF MORPHINE. FINALLY AFTER ABOUT AN HOUR AND MANY DEAD AND WOUNDED THE LIEUTENANT WAVED THE WHITE FLAG OF SURRENDER. THE SHOOTING STOPPED AND WE WERE CAPTURED, PRISONERS OF WAR. GUESTS OF HITLER. ABOUT THE WOUNDED IN THE AMBULANCE TWO OF THEM MANAGED TO GET OUT OF THE AMBULANCE AND THE THIRD SOLDIER COULD NOT GET OUT AND EVEN THOUGH THE AMBULANCE WAS RIDDLED WITH BULLETS HE WAS NOT HIT ONCE. THE NUMBER OF CAPTURED G.I.'S WAS 1300

WE WERE LINED UP AND SEARCHED. THEY TOOK OUR WATCHES, JEWELRY, ETC. THEY TOOK OUR AMERICAN DOLLARS AND BURNED THEM IN A LARGE BARREL. THE GERMANS THAT INTERROGATED US WERE DRESSED IN G.I. UNIFORMS AND SPOKE PERFECT ENGLISH. THAT WAS PART OF THE BATTLE PLAN. THEY SEEMED TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT US.

16. Yes I made many friends during  
 & my time in the Army. And yes I saw  
 17. many of them later. My best friend  
 was Tom Bouton whom I met when I  
 was taken from the Air Force and  
 attached to the 106th Infantry in Camp  
 Atturbury. We met as we got off  
 the train and became instant  
 Army buddies. We were attached  
 to the same Army unit. We were  
 both Catholic and attended Mass every  
 week end. In fact a lady attending  
 Mass noticed that Tom & I were at  
 Mass every Sunday and asked us to  
 come to her home one Sunday  
 for dinner. That became a regular  
 thing for us every Sunday. She  
 had a disabled brother and a sister  
 and a niece. They were a great  
 loving family.

8 - See 15

9 - No letters from home - I was able to  
 send 2 or 3 letters home thru the Red Cross

10 - When we were captured we were marched  
 across Germany for seven days without

FOOD OR WATER TO A PLACE CALLED  
LIMBURG GERMANY. THE HOME OF LIMBURGE  
CHEESE. YOU COULD SMELL IT FROM MILES  
AWAY. IF YOU WONDER HOW WE MADE IT  
WITHOUT WATER - WE AT SNOW BUT  
IT MADE US SICK. ON THE WAY TO  
LIMBURG WE MARCHED THRU A PLACE  
CALLED COLOGN. THE ONLY BUILDING  
LEFT STANDING WAS THE GREAT CATHEDRAL  
OF COLOGN. THE ALLIED BOMBERS SPARED  
THE CATHEDRAL BUT EVERY OTHER BLDG  
IN THE CITY WAS DESTROYED.

AT LIMBURG WE WERE PUT IN BOX CARS,  
THE DOORS WERE LOCKED & 5 DAYS  
LATER WE WERE AT THE PRISON CAMP.  
"STALAG IV B"

21. STALAG IV B WAS SET UP JUST LIKE  
STALAG 17 ON THE TV SERIES. ONLY  
NOT AS MUCH FUN. THERE WAS MUCH  
DISCIPLINE - THE BRITISH SEEMED TO BE IN  
CHARGE SINCE THEY WERE THERE THE  
LONGEST TIME. SOME OF THEM WERE CAPTURED  
IN DUNKIRK - 5 YEARS BEFORE WE GOT THERE.  
WE WOULD GET UP FOR ROLL CALL AT 5 AM &  
GO BACK INTO THE BARRACKS, WASH UP IF  
YOU WERE BRAVE ENOUGH. ONLY COLD WATER.  
NO SOAP. NO TOOTHBRUSHES. IT WAS FREEZING

COLD WINTER. WE SLEPT IN 3-TIER HIGH BUNKS WITH STRAW AS A CUSHION - 2 MEN TO A BUNK. NO HEAT. IT WAS ALWAYS SO COLD. THE LATRINE BUDGS WERE SCATTERED THROUGHOUT THE CAMP. YOU HAD TO GO OUTSIDE TO USE THEM. SOME TIMES THE GUARDS WOULD BITE THE DOGS ON YOU JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT. THERE WOULD BE ABOUT 60 MEN TO EACH BARRACKS. EACH OF US HAD OUR OWN SPOT TO SIT AT AT EACH

TABLE. ONE DAY IN MARCH OF 1945 I WAS SITTING OUTSIDE THE BARRACKS WHEN 2 AIR FORCE P51'S STRAPPED THE CAMP. THEY MUST HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS A GERMAN ARMY CAMP. WE ALL DASHED FOR COVER! A NUMBER OF THE POW'S WERE KILLED. WHEN I WENT BACK TO MY PLACE AT THE TABLE THERE WAS A 50 CALIBER HOLE IN THE SPOT WHERE I WOULD HAVE BEEN SITTING. WE WERE FED ONE CUP OF POTATO SOUP A DAY. I WEIGHED 100 LBS WHEN WE WERE LIBERATED. THIS CAMP HAD 35,000 PRISONERS OF WAR. BRITISH, AMERICANS, RUSSIANS, DANES, FRENCH.

24. WHEN WE ARRIVED AT RISA GERMANY  
WE WERE HOUSED IN A VERY LARGE  
OFFICE BUILDING. WE WERE GIVEN  
MEDICAL ATTENTION AND FOOD. THE  
RUSSIAN FOOD WAS TOO STRONG FOR  
OUR WEAK STOMACHS. THE RUSSIANS  
WERE DELIGHTFUL BUT VERY ROUGH IN  
DEMEANOR AND ACTION. THE GREETING  
OF FRIENDSHIP USUALLY LEFT ONE WITH  
ACHES AND PAIN. WE WERE WITH THE  
RUSSIAN MILITARY FOR APPROX. 1 MONTH.  
WE WERE FLOWN TO FRANCE AND THEN  
TO HOME.

25. THE ARRIVAL HOME WAS THE MOST JOYFUL  
OF MY LIFE. THE FIRST PERSON I SAW WAS  
MY FATHER AT THE LISBON CAPE. WE  
HUGGED. THAT WAS THE CLOSEST I HAD EVER  
BEEN TO MY FATHER. IT WAS GREAT.  
WE DROVE HOME THEN AND THERE WAS  
JEANNETTE, MY MOM, FRANK & AGNES AND  
VERA. HERMAN WAS AWAY IN THE AIR FORCE  
A FEW DAYS LATER MOM AND DAD PUT ON  
A HUGE BARBECUE FOR ALL OUR FRIENDS  
THIS ALL HAPPENED ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF  
JUNE 1945. JEANNETTE AND I WERE  
MARRIED JULY 15, 1945