

# **Ruby Grace Bradley**

## **Col, USA Nurse, Retired**

### **1907-2002**

**America's most decorated military woman.**

**Ruby Grace Bradley was born in Spencer, West Virginia on December 19, 1907. Her parents were Fred O. and Bertha Welch Bradley.**

**Ruby grew up on a farm and started her working life as a teacher. In 1933 she became a nurse. A year later she joined the Army Nurse Corps as a surgical nurse.**

**When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, Ruby was serving as an administrator at Camp John Hay on Luzon Island in the Phillipine Islands. She became a POW there just before Christmas in 1941.**

**In September 1943 she was transferred to Santo Tomas in Manila. Ruby became one of a group of imprisoned nurses who provided nursing care to the other prisoners. On short rations themselves, the nurses often smuggled food to children who were there with their interned parents. When rescued by American troops, Ruby had shrank to 80 pounds in weight.**

**With over ten (10) years service with the Army Nurse Corps, Ruby decided to make a career of army nursing. Just five (5) years later she would find herself in Korea with a field hospital when the Chinese joined that war. With her hospital about to be overrun, orders from Hqs in Japan was to get her out of there immediately. Hqs feared her capture in Korea after she had survived over 37 months as a POW of the Japanese.**

**During the evacuation Ruby managed to stay away from the brass until she was sure all of the patients were safely on their way to Japan. At the last minute she boarded one of the last planes as the Chinese were firing on the airfield. While taking off she recalled seeing her jeep destroyed by an enemy shell.**

**Back in Japan she was put in a job that was responsible for the assignment of about 5,000 army nurses in the Far East Command.**

**Col Bradley was one of the first Army Nurses to be promoted to the rank of full Colonel. When she retired in 1963, she was know as America's most decorated military woman. Having served in combat during two (2) wars, Ruby had been awarded two (2) Legion of Merit Medals, two (2) bronze Star Medals, the Army Commendation Medal and many service ribbons.**

**Col Bradley returned to her home in West Virginia and served her community as a nurse for many years. She received several honors in recognition of her service to her nation, her state and her local community. She was particularly proud of honorary doctorate degree conferred on her by West Virginia University. The Mountaineer Chapter of WV Korean War Veterans was to proud to make her an honorary life member.**

**Most of us who were fortunate enough to meet her were very impressed by the dignity with which she presented herself.**

**Colonel Ruby Grace Bradley died at age 94 on May 28, 2002. Her death was a great loss to our nation.**