



## Mr. Damon Conrad Alberty

August 8, 1924 - January 3, 2016

Mayodan -Damon Conrad Alberty, 91, finished his earthly march on January 3, 2016, entering the more immediate presence of his Savior. He leaves behind a legacy of a deep faith in God, love of family, survival, a tenacious spirit, heroism, and a heart for the less fortunate.

Conrad was born August 28, 1924, in Greensboro, NC, to William Fewell and Mary Sue Glidewell Alberty. He lost his mother to pneumonia before his 2nd birthday, with his father succumbing to the same fate when Conrad was 9, leaving him to be raised by his oldest sister. He was also predeceased by his loving and devoted wife of 43 years, Ethel Mooney Alberty; son-in-law Russ Walton; and seven siblings, including his very special sister and friend, Frances Alberty Barham.

His childhood was filled with many friends with whom he camped, explored woods and creeks, and constantly got in trouble from harmless pranks (usually pulled on lovely young ladies). At 16, Conrad and a friend decided to stash their textbooks under a bush en route to school one day and enlist in the US Army, lying about their ages. On April 8, 1942, 17-year-old Conrad was captured by the Imperial Japanese Army on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines, and the next day was forced to march 60 miles on what became known as the Bataan Death March. For the following 3 years and nine months, he lived a life of beatings, solitary confinement, starvation, burial detail, and numerous diseases as a prisoner of war. At some point, he and the other prisoners were transported to Japan in the hulls of the infamous "hell ships" and forced to work in coal mines. After the dropping of the first atomic bomb, Conrad and his fellow captives were released and returned to the states to recover from their experiences.

His post-POW years included a tour in Italy, where he patrolled the Vatican as a military policeman and lived in the palace of former dictator Mussolini. He returned to Japan to testify in the war trials and watched former Japanese Prime Minister and Imperial Japanese Army General Tojo hang. Later, Conrad was stationed at various Army posts where he trained officers on survival techniques. He was a recipient of the Purple Heart,

Bronze Star, and numerous other medals and decorations. He traveled extensively throughout Europe, Asia, and the US; and he willingly shared his war experiences with news reporters; archivists; civic, church, and school groups; and anyone who was interested. His story as a Death March survivor and POW is included in the University of Florida-produced documentary "I Just Wanted to Live!"

Eventually settling in Mayodan, Conrad became a prominent face in the community, especially with his involvement in the Republican Party, and served on the Mayodan Town Council and the Recreation Commission for many years. He also served Mayodan Moravian Church as an elder, Sunday School teacher, superintendent, and Men's Chorus singer. Devoting nearly two decades to directing the church's Storefront Ministry, Conrad helped those in need in Rockingham County and mentored many community service workers. He also spent countless hours helping young adults who had substance abuse problems, openly sharing his faith and his own story of overcoming alcohol abuse. His family was the joy of his life, and he was especially proud of his grandsons, to whom he became a father figure after their father was killed.

Conrad is survived by many loving friends and family, including his daughter, Amy Walton, of Virginia Beach, VA; two grandsons, US Army Captain (Major-select) James Damon Walton and wife Melissa of Hohenfels, Germany, and Rhett Walton of Virginia Beach, VA; two great-granddaughters, Shelby and Piper Walton, of Hohenfels, Germany; many wonderful nephews and nieces; and his very special and dedicated caregiver and friend Joyce Mabe Lephew and husband Eddie of Mayodan.

The family offers its deepest gratitude to the staff and residents of North Pointe Assisted Living for making Conrad's last years bright and to Rev. Zachary Dease of Mayodan Moravian Church for his visits, conversations, and providing Conrad with Holy Communion on a regular basis. A special thank you is extended to Dr. Donald W. Moore for his diligent and loving care of Conrad.

A service celebrating Conrad's life will take place at 2:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 9, 2016, at the Mayodan Moravian Church with the Rev. Zachary Dease officiating, followed by burial with full military honors at the Mayodan Moravian Graveyard. The family will receive friends from 12:30 p.m. until 1:45 p.m. at the church.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial contributions be made to Mayodan Moravian Church, 104 S. 3rd Avenue, Mayodan, NC 27027, or to the American Defenders of Bataan & Corregidor Memorial Society (a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit), c/o Judy Pruitt, Treasurer (please make checks payable to "Descendants Group"), 23 Elwell Road,

Jamaica Plain, MA 02130.

Ray Funeral Home in Madison is serving the Alberty family.

# Cemetery

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## **Mayodan Moravian Graveyard**

104 South 3rd Avenue

Mayodan, NC, 27027

# Comments

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“ I learned about Mr. Damon Conrad Alberty from his grandson Rhett Walton. I've heard many story's of his struggle's, trial's and tribulation's. Still to this day the most inspiring story i've ever heard about a man. To experience what he did, and still continue through life living and loving is unbelievable and truly a miracle. True Love! His story help's me get through my hard day's. Wish I had got to meet him.



**Evan Galvin** - April 27, 2018 at 07:45 PM

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“ I am preparing to run in the White Sands, NM marathon, which is held in honor of the Bataan March participants and POWs. As I have been preparing for this run, I have read several books and articles about these individuals and the struggles and conditions they experienced. Truly amazing individuals. Mr. Alberty will be an inspiration to me to complete this run, and I will run it in thanksgiving and appreciation of his service.

Mary Shepherd  
Reidsville, NC

**Mary Shepherd** - January 09, 2016 at 02:18 PM

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“ I am deeply sorry about Conrad's death. I met him only once but have spoken with him many times by phone for the past seven years. In 2008, I and a colleague, Deborah Hendrix, made a documentary for the University of Florida's Oral History Program about four POWs held by the Japanese. Conrad was by far the most prominent speaker in the movie. This documentary is now in the archives of the Smithsonian's Veterans History Project, the National POW Museum in Andersonville, Georgia, the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas, the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, among a few other museums' educational resources. It was a privilege to make this film and an honor to have Conrad as a friend. For a copy of this DVD (short version: 30 min. & long version (55 min.)), contact [www.oral.history.ufl.edu](http://www.oral.history.ufl.edu)

Diane Fischler  
Gainesville, Florida  
[diane@proofinggrounds.com](mailto:diane@proofinggrounds.com)



“ Amy, sorry to hear that your father passed away, I know that he was a great father and grandfather, and that you must have been so proud of him. Your family will be in my prayers. T. Greeson

Tim greeson - January 08, 2016 at 06:07 AM

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“ To the family,  
I am very sorry to hear about the lost of your loved one. Mr. Conrad & Ms Ethel were sweet people. My thoughts and prayers are with you during this time. Ms. Evon

To my dearest family, some things I'd like to say...  
but first of all, to let you know, that I arrived okay.  
I'm writing this from heaven. Here I dwell with God above.  
Here, there's no more tears of sadness; here is just eternal love.

Please do not be unhappy just because I'm out of sight.  
Remember that I'm with you every morning, noon and night.  
That day I had to leave you when my life on earth was through,  
God picked me up and hugged me and He said, "I welcome you."



Evon Rumley - January 07, 2016 at 08:06 AM

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“ Conrad was a member of the Mayodan Moravian Men's Chorus for many years and we loved his humor. He was always saying, "One more and lets go home" or "Cut it, print it". I know he is singing in heaven today with all his friends and family. It was an honor knowing Conrad and being able to direct him in the Men's chorus.

Faye Webster - January 06, 2016 at 12:49 PM

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“ Amy and Family

You are in my thoughts and prayers on the loss of Conrad. He was great person and will be missed by many. Keep your memories close for those shall see you thru the future.

Melissa Rogers

Melissa Rogers - January 05, 2016 at 03:34 PM

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“ Amy and family, I am so proud to have known Conrad and been on the receiving end of his beautiful smile and kind words. I am so very thankful that he was helpful when my dad went to North Pointe and made his stay there more enjoyable. Conrad was a longtime friend to my dad, and my husband respects your father greatly for his amazing service to this country. Please know that you and the boys, grandbabies, family are in my thoughts and prayers. I love you so much, my friend. Lessa

Lessa - January 05, 2016 at 07:23 AM

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“ Amy - Please know our thoughts and prayers are with you during this difficult time. We would be there for you except that Jason lost his mother earlier this AM. We know what you are facing over the next several days. Please know we care and are praying for you all. Let me know if we can do anything for you. Jason & Tammy (Berrier) Ward

Tammy B Ward - January 04, 2016 at 09:17 PM