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Chinese American Citizens Alliance

~ National ~

1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California 94108 • Telephone/Fax (415)829-9332

National Lodge
ESTABLISHED 1895

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: July 22, 2020

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C.A.C.A. Remembers World War II Army Air Corps Veteran Henry Ong, Jr.

Phoenix, July 22, 2020 — The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) mourns the passing of World War II Army Air Corps Veteran and former member of C.A.C.A. Phoenix Henry Ong, Jr. He passed away on July 2, at age 98.

Born in Phoenix, Mr. Ong and his family relocated to Canton, China, in 1928 because his parents valued a traditional Chinese education for their children. Mr. Ong graduated middle school at Dr. Sun Yet-sen University, one of the most prestigious schools of higher learning in the city. When the war broke out between China and Japan, the family returned to the States, resettling in Phoenix in 1938. Mr. Ong continued his education and graduated from Phoenix Union High School.

In 1942 as the U.S. entered World War II, Mr. Ong was drafted into the United States Army Air Corps. He was a Technical Sergeant, and a Radio Operator/Gunner for B-24 and B-17 heavy bombers. His Air Force crew was sent overseas to Europe, taking part in various bombing missions, including the Normandy Beach invasion on D-Day, 1944.

On August 6, 1944, following 29 successful flying missions, the crew was scheduled for its 30th and last mission before returning to the U.S. for reassignment. Their plane was over Germany when it was suddenly hit by anti-aircraft fire and lost altitude. The crew was forced to bail out and they were captured by the German Army. Henry sustained shrapnel wounds and multiple cuts and bruises. He spent nearly nine months in a POW camp in Poland, surviving cold and deprivation and the eventual “forced march” of prisoners as the Germans liquidated the camps. He was liberated by British troops on May 4, 1945. He remains the only Chinese American in the state of Arizona captured as a prisoner of war. For his war efforts, Mr. Ong was awarded the Purple Heart, the Presidential Citation for meritorious service and the Good Conduct Medal.

Returning to Phoenix, Mr. Ong attended the University of California Los Angeles where he met his future bride, Priscilla (Pat) Fong, from Sacramento, California. Henry and Pat were married in 1947, and set up home in Phoenix, Arizona. He became a successful insurance and real estate broker. Mr. and Mrs. Ong had four children. She passed away in 2018 after 71 years of marriage.

As a former prisoner of war, Mr. Ong had a particular interest in Veterans organizations. He served as a past commander of the American Legion Thomas Tang Post 50, and was a lifelong member of the



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American Ex-Prisoners of War. He was vice commander of American Ex-Prisoners of War, Department of Arizona, commander of the POW-WOW Chapter (Ex-POWS) in Phoenix, and a member of American Ex-POW Stalag Luft IV. Mr. Ong was life members of the Caterpillar Club (members who were saved using the parachutes), and the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

At a future date, Mr. Ong will receive the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese American World War II veterans posthumously.

More information about the life of Henry Ong can be found at
www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/phoenix-az/henry-ong-9249624

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1044 Stockton St.
San Francisco, CA.

Web: www.CACAnational.org
Chinese American Citizens Alliance

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Greater New York (NY), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Orange County (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Sacramento (CA), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA) and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, and supports youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.