

## History This Week

I am continuing my review of historical events that happened in February. The first Medal of Honor during WWII was awarded posthumously to Alexander Nininger for heroism during the Battle of Bataan. The day following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces invaded the Philippines. Within a month US and Filipino defenders of Luzon, where the Capital Manila is located, were forced to retreat to the Bataan Peninsula. Fighting continued until 9 April when the US and Filipino troops surrendered. The deadly Bataan Death March took place following the surrender. Interestingly, 11 February is the date celebrated in Japan as their founding date of the Japanese nation which occurred with the first Emperor in 660 BC.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution was ratified on 10 February 1967 clarifying the procedures for succession in the event of a disability of a sitting president. Included in the Amendment is a provision in which the vice president and a majority of the principal officers of the executive departments may declare that the president is unable to discharge the powers and duties of the office.

On 12 February 1999, the US Senate's impeachment trial of Bill Clinton ended with an acquittal on both impeachment counts.

Presidential birthdays in February include Ronald Regan on 6 February, William Henry Harrison, (who died after serving only 31 days) on 9 February, Abraham Lincoln on 12 February and George Washington on 22 February. February is also the birth month of Cyrus McCormick who invented the horse-drawn mechanical reaper. It changed forever how we harvest crops. Susan B. Anthony was born on 15 February 1820. Anthony was a writer, lecturer and abolitionist who became a leading figure in the women's voting rights movement.

The war in Europe was nearing the end with British and US planes began a massive bombing raid on Dresden, Germany. Germans claimed that Dresden was not a military city while the Allies identified Dresden as a major military transportation hub.

On 15 February 1898, the US Battleship Maine blew up while at anchor in Havana, Cuba and quickly sank with 260 crew members lost. This resulted in a war against Spain with the rallying cry of 'Remember the Maine'. Teddy Roosevelt resigned his post as Secretary of the Navy to lead the 'Rough Riders' in the war.

Apache chief Geronimo died on 17 February 1909 while in captivity at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Born in what is present day Arizona, he was a member of the Chiricahua tribe and spent much of his life fighting Mexican and US troops who were attempting to remove his people from their tribal lands.

Finally, here is an event for those who do not believe history repeats itself. On 15 February 1989, the Russian military completed its withdrawal from Afghanistan after nine years of unsuccessful involvement in the internal affairs of that country. Over 15,000 Russian soldiers were killed during the fighting.