

Major John Reyna Tapia, PhD. JD



Major Juan Reyna "John" Tapia (US Army retired), JD, PhD, 90, died Tuesday, August 28, 2012, of cardiac arrest following surgery at Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center in Phoenix.

He was born January 29, 1922, in Ajo to Genero & Guillerma Tapia and grew up in the old Mexican Town neighborhood.

As a youth, he witnessed the crash near Ajo of Captain Emilio Carranza, the "Mexican Lindbergh", three months before the pilot perished in a crash in a storm during a non-stop return flight to Mexico City from New York City in 1928. He participated in many memorial services for Capt. Carranza over the years and wrote several articles about him.

His niece Emily Vansant remembered growing up in Ajo with her favorite uncle. "There was a big hole near the old house, and when it rained the whole neighborhood would come over and we'd go swimming in it," she said. "One time after it rained, John got in a big galvanized tub with a paddle and he sank to the bottom. He must have been in high school. I was really little back then, and he made me laugh."

After graduation from Ajo High School in 1942, he was hired to work at the Ajo Army Air Base as a diesel operating engineer. He worked nights and was responsible for water purification.

He married his childhood sweetheart, Bertha Alicia Velasco Cervantes.

The couple lived in 45 homes in 30 countries during his 22-year career in the US Army. He served as an infantry rifleman in the European Theater during World War II. He fought at D-Day and the Battle of the Bulge before going on to serve in Korea as the platoon leader of the 70th Tank Battalion Company. Dr. Tapia was awarded three Bronze Stars, seven Purple Hearts, and more than 20 medals and five neck medals. A sergeant during the Korean Conflict retired with the rank of major.

He earned a bachelor's degree from West Virginia State College, a Juris Doctor from the Blackstone School of Law, and master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Utah.

He had a long academic career, teaching at Western Michigan University, Southern Illinois University, Ft. Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, and at Yavapai College in Prescott. Dr. Tapia, well known as a lecturer, published several books of poetry and Hispanic folklore in English and Spanish and served as poetry editor for *The Durango Herald* of Durango, Colorado.

He was awarded the Order of Don Quixote by Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society.

He was active in the Republican Party in leadership positions.

He was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Class of 2005. The Prescott Military Order of the Purple Heart 608 Meritorious voted to name the chapter in his honor, and he was an active charter member of the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars as well as volunteering at the Bob Stump Veterans Administration Medical Center in Prescott.

In November 2007, the Prescott City Council honored Dr. Tapia with the Veteran John R. Tapia Hall of Fame Medal Recipient Appreciation Day.

Dr. Tapia is survived by his wife of 70 years, Bertha Alicia Velasco Cervantes Tapia, of Prescott; and by many other family members.

A memorial service with military honors was held September 8 at the Veterans Administration Medical Center Chapel in Prescott. Burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery.

Jessie Moreno



Jessie Silva Moreno, 72, of Peoria, died September 9, 2012, in the Phoenix area.

She was born May 31, 1940 in San Fernando, California, to Matiana and Mateo Silva.

Mrs. Moreno lived in Ajo from 1972 to 1983 and still has family here.

As a social worker for the State of Arizona, Mrs. Moreno devoted her working career to helping countless families and children.

"She loved to sing and laugh," said her family. "She was always smiling and doing silly things. She was smart, and strong, and spicy, and stubborn, and independent." She is remembered, they said, as a woman who enjoyed a wonderful and full life surrounded by family and friends.

Mrs. Moreno was preceded in death by her sisters Irene Baldwin and Aurora Mora.

She is survived by her husband Louis Moreno; by her sister Josephine Delgado of Casa Grande; by her brother Joseph Silva of Riverside, California; by her children Janette Cronin, Donald Yslas, and Monica Backman; by her grandchildren Stephanie Herrera, Danielle Cronin, Connor Ward, Darian Yslas, Devon Yslas, and Kamrin Backman; and by her three great-grandchildren Aiden Burnett, Saige Burnett, and Liam Herrera.

Services were held at Best Funeral Home in Peoria on Thursday, September 13.

Antonio C. Perez



Antonio C. Perez, known to family and friends as Tony or Cholla, died in El Paso, Texas, on August 23, 2012. He was 69.

He was born April 7, 1943, in Ajo to Miguel G. & Sara C. Perez.

He was graduated from Ajo High School. He served in the US Navy as an airman apprentice.

On November 15, 1969, he married Ana Elia Muñoz in Sonoyta, Sonora, Mexico.

They left Ajo in 1984.

An electrician certified in Arizona and Texas, he was last employed by White Sands in New Mexico, retiring in 2006, though he always found work after his official retirement.

Mr. Perez is remembered as fun-loving and knowing how to make a person smile and laugh. He enjoyed carpentry and golf. He loved to go camping and, after retirement, he and his wife often visited relatives in Sonoyta. They also enjoyed driving to different towns just for fun. He loved his children and grandchildren, talked about them often, and most Sundays had a cook-out for family at his home.

He was a lifetime member of VFW Post 3578 and insisted on visiting the post every time he came to Ajo.

Mr. Perez was preceded in death by his father, Miguel G. Perez.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 43 years, Ana Elia Perez of El Paso, Texas; by his mother, Sara Caraveo Perez of Ajo; by his sons, Javier & Miguel; by his daughters, Sarai & Irasen; by his brothers Ricardo "Rick" Perez, Andres "Andy" Perez, and Raymond Perez; by his sister Yolanda Huerta; by his maternal aunt, Belia Espinoza of Ajo; and by his five grandchildren.

Obits still free in Ajo Copper News

As more and more community newspapers begin charging for obituaries that do more than list the name of the deceased, date of death, and service information, the Ajo Copper News continues to print them at no charge.

"We do have a style and format we follow," said editor Gabrielle David, "and occasionally we have to edit what families have written, but we regard obituaries as important community news. We have no plans to start charging for them."

The newspaper has forms people may fill out to make sure nothing important is forgotten. Request a form by stopping by the office at 10 Pajaro, mailing a letter to Ajo Copper News, P.O. Box 39, Ajo, AZ 85321; calling 520-387-7688; or sending an e-mail to cunews@cunews.info with Obituary in the subject line.

<h3>Church Directory</h3> <p>Provided as a public service by Ajo Copper News</p>	<h3>Ajo Church of Christ</h3> <p>Meets at 1351 N. Sartillon 8:30 a.m. Sundays Contact 387-8450</p>
<h3>Ajo Calvary Baptist Church</h3> <p>740 Rocalla, Phone 387-8242 Sunday Services Bible Study Hour.....8:30 a.m. Morning Worship.....10:45 a.m. Evening Worship.....8 p.m. Wednesday Service.....8 p.m.</p>	<h3>St. Titus Church & Institute</h3> <p>1211 N. 2nd Ave., Ajo, AZ 85321 602-680-0288 Dr. Gary Stacy Worship.....Sun., 10 a.m. Fallid Men...1st & 3rd Sun., 4 p.m. Community Bible Study...Mon., 8 p.m. Ladies Bible Study...Tues., 10 a.m.</p>
<h3>Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses</h3> <p>1540 Walsey St. Sun.10 a.m. Thurs.7:30 p.m. No Collection - Everyone Welcome 387-8814</p>	<h3>Ajo Church of God</h3> <p>1998 N. 2nd Ave 387-3537 Sunday School.....8:30 a.m. Sun. Morning Worship...10:30 a.m. Sun. Evening Worship...8:00 p.m. Wednesday Service...6:30 p.m.</p>
<h3>Immaculate Conception Catholic Church</h3> <p>Father Peter Hwachukwu 161 Rocalla Office 387-7649 Factory 387-8561 Sat. Mass.....8 p.m. Sun. Mass.....8:00 a.m. Sun. Mass.....10:00 a.m. Confessions....Sat., 6-6:30 p.m.</p>	<h3>The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints</h3> <p>881 N. Cedar Street 629-387-8751 Sacrament Meeting.....10 a.m. Sun. School/Primary...11:29 a.m. Pleasantwood Relief Society/Primary.....12:10 p.m. Grant K. Peterson,</p>
<h3>The River</h3> <p>630 Palo Verde Non denominational bible teaching, children's classes and a time of worship. An outreach of Calvary Chapel Gila Beach Caleb Kester Home 387-4927, Cell 629-888-8882 Sunday.....10 a.m.</p>	<h3>First Assembly of God "The Rock Church"</h3> <p>858 N. Cameron George F. Kraft, Pastor Church 387-7183 Sun....9:45 & 10:45 a.m., 8 p.m. Wednesday.....7 p.m. Thurs. Youth Meeting....8-8 p.m.</p>
<h3>Ajo Federated Church</h3> <p>101 Lumila Avenue 387-8938 Pastor Jeannia Morago Sunday Worship.....10 a.m.</p>	<h3>Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church</h3> <p>USA 400 Palo Verde Church 387-7374 Home 387-7088 Bible Study - The Rev. Robert Johnson Adult Bible Study Sun. 9:45 a.m. Sunday Service.....11 a.m.</p>

Ajo Copper News

Serving Western Pima County Since 1916

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