

Hillside Funeral Home

Alfredo G. Dovalina

(August 08, 1915 - February 20, 2017)

Alfredo G. Dovalina, a decorated veteran of World War II, a member of a legendary Laredo baseball family and the oldest surviving retired firefighter in Laredo, died Monday, February 20, 2017 at the age of 101.



He was a quiet, gentle man who rarely talked about his life's exploits, but in his own way, sometimes merely by his presence, he battled racism in the military and baseball, and by his stand on principle, he prevented the murders of two German prisoners of war at the hands of American soldiers, persuading them that other Nazi soldiers would not surrender if they knew that the Americans were not honoring their rights.

In 2015, on the occasion of his 100th birthday, part of his story was told in a front-page feature in the Laredo Moring Times. At the party given to him by his family, relatives, and friends told other stories about him, and Dovalina became the star of his own party by singing the Mexican mariachi /ranchera classic "El Rey".

In the 1930's he and his brothers Fernando and Lazaro dominated many of the baseball stories in Laredo, and they made their mark elsewhere, too. Alfredo was known as "Lefty" Dovalina, a recognition of his awe-inspiring left-hand pitches.

"Lefty" played professional baseball for both Texas and Mexico baseball teams. He and his Comintra Group team barnstormed cities in Mexico, and he also played for The Aguila de Veracruz, Alijadores of Tampico and Monterrey. Dovalina also played with several regional teams in Texas, including the Lockhart Lions, The Dilly Wolves, and teams in Rio Grande Valley. He also played for the Fort Worth Cats of Texas League against Memphis, Little Rock, Texarkana and other teams. In Texas, he and his teammates often had to live in segregated parts of the cities where they played.

Nephew Larry Dovalina recalled in the LMT story that "In Lockhart, they paid for his room and board and paid him five dollars a week. He'd send

four dollars home to his mother and keep one dollar for himself for the week”.

For his baseball accomplishments, Dovalina was inducted into the Laredo Latin American Hall Fame and the Rio Grande Valley Baseball Hall of Fame.

Dovalina enlisted in the U.S. Army and served throughout Europe during the Great War. He landed at Omaha Beach with Company B, 1st Battalion 413th Infantry Regiment, of the 104th Infantry Divisions, also known as the Timberwolf Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Terry de la Mesa Allen Sr. For his services, Dovalina was awarded the following medals: Army of Occupation with Germany Clasp, Presidential Unit Citation, Combat Infantry Badge, World War II Victory Metal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with three Bronze Service Stars, American Campaign Metal, Army Good Conduct Medal, Honorable Service Lapel Pin and Bronze Star.

Like so many WW II veterans, he rarely talked about his service. The story of how he saved two POWs did not surface until 2015 when he was interviewed for a history project at the University of Texas.

After the war, Dovalina moved back to Laredo and became a firefighter, serving 32 years with the Laredo Fire Department, retiring as Fire Marshall. He was a great marketing proponent of Fire prevention activities in all of the schools of Laredo, Texas.

He was a devout practicing Catholic, living his faith until our Lord Jesus Christ wrapped him in His arms and took him to heaven. He was able to receive the last rites from the Rev. Hector Flores and was fortunate to have lived in the “Cursillo” retreat which deepened his faith through the rest of his life. He was a volunteer with the Evening Lions Club and served in different leadership positions to enhance different charitable events fostered by this group of men.

He loved the outdoors, especially working at his ranchito in Zapata County, enjoying carne asadas with family and friends, raising and taking care of his cattle.

His greatest joy in life was his friendship with all of his nephews and nieces whom he considered his extended family. Our Tio Alfredo and Tia Amelia were not able to have any children of their own, so the adopted all of the Dovalina, Salinas, Garcia, Rodriguez, and Moreno children as their own.

He is direct descendant of the founding families of Laredo, Don Tomas Sanchez de la Barrera on his father’s side and his mother was directly

related to Lazaro De La Garza, the first county judge of Webb County, and Dario Gonzalez, a well-known sheriff and politician.

Dovalina was preceded in death by his parents, Lazaro V. and Maria Gonzalez Dovalina; his wife, Amelia; siblings Celia, Ernesto, Fernando, and Lazaro Dovalina, and Olivia Rodriguez and Esther Moreno; brothers-in-law Alejandro Moreno, Clemente Salinas, Raul Rodriguez; sisters-in-law Angelina Rodriguez Dovalina, Anita Trevino Dovalina; nephews, David Dovalina, Adriana Salinas, Javier Salinas, Raul Rodriguez Jr., and Eduardo Rodriguez.

He is survived by his sister Alicia D. Salinas and numerous nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

The family thanks Guadalupe "Lupita" Martinez, his caregiver for all her care and friendship; and the staff members at Laredo Nursing and Rehab Center for their support and care of our uncle since May of last year.

Singing and baseball were his life, his favorite song was "El Rey", and he will live forever in our hearts.

A vigil will be held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at 7:00 p.m. in the Hillside Funeral Home Chapel. A visitation will be held from 5:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

A funeral service will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2017 from Hillside Funeral Home to depart at 8:30 a.m. to St. John Newumann Catholic Church. A mass will be celebrated at 9:00a.m.

Interment will follow at the family plot of the Calvary Catholic Cemetery.

If you would like to sign the guestbook or send private condolences, you may do so at www.hillsidefuneral.com.

Arrangements are under the direction of Hillside Funeral Home, 310 Hillside Road.