

## In Memoriam

WILLIAM A. BLUEHER, D.D.S.

Early on October 12, 1976, William A. Blueher passed away, a victim of cancer. To all who knew him he was Bill Blueher, respected, dedicated to the dental profession and to his specialty of orthodontics. He was always a gentleman and continually interested in other people.

Bill was one of the few "natives" of his home town of Albuquerque, New Mexico. He completed high school at New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell graduating in 1933. He took his pre-dental work at the University of New Mexico. In 1940, he received his dental degree from Baylor University. After a brief time in practice in Albuquerque, he was drafted into the Army in March 1941, where he was assigned to the 200th coast artillery (A.A.) unit of the New Mexico National Guard, stationed at the time at Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas. His commission in the Dental Corps had not arrived when the guard unit was ordered to Clark Field in the Philippines. The commanding officer asked Bill to "come on along" which he did although it was not necessary for him to do so since he was awaiting his commission. That was a fateful decision for him. Just before his unit left Fort Bliss, his commission as first lieutenant in the Dental Corps arrived.

Bill arrived in the Philippines in August of 1941. After the Japanese invasion he was among those who retreated to the Bataan peninsula and were captured when Bataan fell. Subsequently, he spent two years in the prison camp at Cabanatuan on Luzon. Then he was shipped to Japan where he spent another two years in a camp near Nagasaki. Bill has related that apparently our intelligence knew where the prison camp was located for no bombs fell

near the camp and the day after the war ended, food and medical supplies were parachuted to the camp along with orders to stay put until rescue teams arrived.

In 1946, Bill enrolled in the graduate orthodontic program at the University of Illinois. When he finished in 1947, he stayed on in Chicago for a year in association with Dr. Allan G. Brodie and as an instructor in the orthodontic department at Illinois.

Bill returned to New Mexico in the fall of 1948 to begin his orthodontic practice. He was the first formally trained orthodontist to locate in New Mexico and also was the first in New Mexico to be certified by the American Board of Orthodontics. In 1950, he was joined in practice by Elbert W. King. They practiced together until Bill's health forced his retirement in October 1975.

Bill was always active in dental society and orthodontic society affairs being president of the local and state dental associations as well as serving three terms as secretary-treasurer of the state association.

In orthodontics he has served as president of the Rocky Mountain Society, as delegate and as trustee. He was a charter member of the Southwest Component of the E. H. Angle Society.

In late August of 1976, the Rocky Mountain Society met at Tamarron, Colorado. The meeting was dedicated to two outstanding members, Bill Blueher and Ernie Klein. Although it was an effort to do so, Bill came to Tamarron for the opening banquet. When he was honored, he said a few words in response, even with a note of humor about his situation.

He will be missed by family, friends, and dental colleagues.

E.W.K.