

Juan B. Mendez
Biography
Member #103214617



Juan Bautista Mendez De Jesus was born on September 2, 1908 in a part of Ponce P.R. called "La Playa de Ponce". He was born to Vidal Mendez and Rosa De Jesus. He is the 3rd of 9 children, 5 boys and 4 girls. He studied at Emeterio Colon elementary school on Concordia St. until the second grade. Since he needed to make money to eat, he delivered coffee or lunch to the workers at the docks near his house. He earned 5-10¢ a week. When he was 10 years old he navigated a small boat that took workers to and from their ships. He was now earning \$3 a week.

In 1924, when Juan was 16 years old, he started sailing on ships with the Merchant Marines as part of their maintenance crew. He still tells stories about traveling to Haiti, Cuba, Panama and different parts of the United States. Juan sailed during World War II from February 24th to March 31st 1944.

Juan married Francisca Mejias on November 29, 1940 when Juan was still with the Merchant Marines. They had 5 children, 3 boys and 2 girls. Francisca died on February 2, 1992. So far Juan has 18 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren and even has a great-great-grandchild. Juan still takes care of his own house, cooks and enjoys working in his back yard.

Juan is one of the oldest living American Legion Members. He has been a member of the **Luis Pacheco Lespier Post 125** in Ponce, P.R. for 20 years.