

which, by 1924, numbered 22,000 members throughout the country. She founded the Home Extension Service, sending hundreds of her H.E. demonstrators to teach barrio housewives better homemaking, childcare, meal planning, food preparation and preservation, poultry- raising, home and gardening techniques and handicraft to augment their income. Her famous Palayok Oven was conceived for housewives who could not afford electricity.

As a war heroine, she devised a process of canning food for the guerrillas. As war dragged on, she made nutritious food substitutes from traditional ingredients. Her "magic food", made from nutritious soy beans, fed starving people and guerrillas.

Maria did not survive the war. Despite pleas from her family and friends and an order from her guerrilla superiors to evacuate the city, she refused to leave her post as chief of Agricultural Utilization Division of the Bureau of Plant Industry. A captain with Marking's Guerrillas, she sent food to the soldiers, as well as American, British and other foreign internees in concentration camps, hospitals, including the Americans in UST, religious communities, the Jesuits among them, many of whom would have perished from malnutrition. A nationalist, freedom fighter and humanist to the end, she felt it was her civic duty to continue working. Her heart was struck by shrapnel from the bombings in Manila.

At the Maria Y. Orosa Memorial Hall in Diliman, Bureau of Agriculture Extension Building, the plaque reads:

***"Dedicated to the memory of Maria Ylagan Orosa (1892-1945)  
pharmaceutical chemist, home economist, humanitarian, guerrilla worker  
and organizer of home extension in government, died in line of duty, 13  
February 1945."***

This year marks the diamond anniversary of the death of Maria Y. Orosa.