



PHILIPPINE CONSULATE GENERAL
P R E S S R E L E A S E

PR-CBR- -2008

24 April 2008

**STATEMENT OF AMBASSADOR WILLY C. GAA ON THE
PASSAGE OF SENATE VETERANS BILL**

After over sixty years, the Filipino nation is overjoyed that the U.S. Senate has finally voted to pass a veterans bill which corrects the injustice done to Filipino WWII veterans.

Along with the recognition of their bravery and their invaluable contribution in the fight for freedom and democracy in World War II, Filipino veterans living in the United States will receive benefits in the same amount as that of their U.S. counterparts, whereas their comrades living in the Philippines will be receiving monthly pensions of US\$375 for veterans with spouse; US\$300 for single veterans; and US\$200 for surviving spouses, reflecting the variance in the cost of living in both countries.

This is indeed a momentous occasion and a historical moment, a vindication for our long suffering veterans whose tremendous patience and fortitude have finally been duly rewarded. I wish to express my utmost appreciation for their faith and trust in our efforts to aid them in their cause.

I wish to thank the Filipino American community for coming together on this issue. Their support and the advocacy have been a key component in the effort to correct this injustice to our veterans.

Finally, on behalf of the Philippine Government and the Filipino people, I would like to thank our friends and supporters in the U.S. Senate for once again demonstrating America's commitment to the ideals of justice and equality.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her administration are fully committed to the cause of our veterans, and we acknowledge the invaluable support and assistance provided by Senator Richard Gordon and Rep. Ma. Carissa Coscolluela, whose efforts led to the passage of a law providing for continued Philippine government support to our veterans even in the event that they should receive benefits from the U.S. government. The recent visit to Washington of members of the House Veterans Committee, led by Chairman Antonio Diaz, Vice-Chairman Rozzano Rufino Biazon and Rep. Roman Romulo, was also instrumental in our discussions with U.S. legislators on the issue.

With this development, we look forward to a similar development to happen at the U.S. House of Representatives, as we move closer to finally achieving justice and equity for the Filipino WWII Veterans.