



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

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PGMA TO SIGN FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETERANS PENSION AND BENEFITS ACT OF 2008, IN COMMEMORATION OF “ARAW NG KAGITINGAN”

IMO (and NY PCG) – In a fitting tribute to the brave men and women who risked and gave up their lives defending the cause of freedom in the last world war, Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will sign into law a new Republic Act that will increase the old age pension for Filipino World War II veterans from the previous P500 to P5,000 a month during ceremonies commemorating "Araw ng Kagitingan", 9 April 2008, sixty-six years to the day when US Major General Edward King surrendered the Allied forces to the Japanese Imperial army in Bataan.

The new Republic Act entitled "*An Act allowing Filipino World War II Veterans to continue receiving Philippine Government Pensions and Benefits notwithstanding similar Pensions and Benefits provided by the United States Government otherwise known as the "Filipino World War II Veterans Pension and Benefits Act of 2008,"* amends R.A. 6498 also known as "An Act Standardizing and Upgrading the Benefits for Military Veterans and their Dependents" which was signed in April 1990 during the term of former President Corazon Aquino.

Section 10 of the former R.A. allowed a veteran aged at least sixty-five (65) years old to be paid an old-age pension of Five hundred pesos (P500.00) monthly. Section 11 of the same R.A. allowed the same amount to be given to "the surviving spouse of a veteran who died after having received old-age pension."

The new R.A. (which has yet to be given its numerical sequence prior to its being signed into law by the Chief Executive) effectively increases to P5,000 (approximately \$120.00) the amount the pensioner or his spouse can receive monthly.

In signing the new R.A. into law, the President upholds the policy of the State to "recognize and reward the courage and heroism of Filipino WW II veterans by granting them pensions and benefits even when similar pension and benefits are already provided for by the United States Government."

It may be recalled that despite the Declaration of Philippine Independence in 1898, the country was treated as a US colony from the signing of the Treaty of Paris (1898) until 1946. Hence, Filipino soldiers were inducted and fought as part of the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) in the Pacific theater of World War II. Many historians credit the bravery of the Filipino people (soldiers and guerillas in the field as well as women and children) who supported the Resistance, for delaying the Imperial army's timetable, giving Allied forces time to regroup and emerge victorious.

Today, the Filipino veterans of World War II (whose benefits were stripped from them with the signing of the Rescission Act of 1946) continue to fight for just recognition of their courage and sacrifice. Bills for the restoration of benefits to the veterans are pending at both houses of the US Congress.

At 8:30 AM on 9 April 2008 the Philippine Consulate General will hold a special Flag Raising Ceremony followed by a screening of the documentary film "A Moral Debt" in commemoration of "Araw ng Kagitingan".