

FilAmVets

Filipino American Veterans, Inc.

3405 Glendale Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90039, USA

Tel (323) 666-9232 . Fax (323) 913-0069

filamvets@hotmail.com . patulotcesar@yahoo.com

Testimony of Brigadier General Tagumpay A. Nanadiego Armed Forces of the Philippines (Ret)

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, Good Afternoon:

I am Tagumpay A. Nanadiego, a retired brigadier general of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, 83 years old, permanently residing at 6716 East Canyon Ridge, Orange, CA 92869, and now the National Commander of the Filipino American Veterans, Inc. (FilAmVets), based in Los Angeles, California.

I was a reservist age 22 years, private in the Philippine Army of the Commonwealth of the Philippines when I was inducted into the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) on December 16, 1941.

Typical of young Filipino soldiers who answered the call, and ordered into the service of the Armed Forces of the United States under a Military Order issued by President Frankling Delano Roosevelt on July 26, 1941:

I fought alongside with Filipino and American soldiers in Bataan Peninsula, Philippines from late December, 1941 to April 8, 1942. We numbered about 78,000 - 12,000 Americans and 66,000 Filipinos.

On April 9, 1942 on orders of General Edward King and in the agony of defeat, we surrendered to the enemy, and in the afternoon of the same day, I started to walk the infamous "Death March".

Seven thousand to 10,000 perished in that "Death March" either were bayonated to death by our heatless captors or died on the wayside for hunger and exhaustion under the blistering April sun.

We were incarcerated in Camp O'Donnell, Tarlac, and were treated like pigs. We rested on plain bamboo floors without mat, no pillows and mosquito nets to ward off mosquitoes at night and swarms of flies during the day. I wrote an article on the inhuman treatment given to us by our captors in an article entitled, "Camp O'Donnell: A Four-Month Nightmare in the Philippines" for The Stars and Stripes of April 8-14, 1996.

In the concentration camp, we numbered about 70,000 on the first day. Malaria, dysentery, and beri-beri took the lives of about 200 prisoners every day, which reduced our number to half.

I was released on April 29, 1942. Sick and emaciated, I was a horrible sight to see, so much so, that my father who met me at the Capas railroad station could not recognize me nine feet away. The Japanese authorities released me to my father in August, 1942 who brought me home where I managed to recuperate.

I joined the guerrillas, was attached to the Alamo Scouts in 1944, and was recognized Captain by the 6th Army, U.S.A. in 1945.

Today, because of my disabilities as an Ex-Prisoner of War, I had been awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs under Claim No. 30 154 101 the following monthly pensions, to wit: \$47.40 effective April 1, 1988; adjusted to \$48.00 on December 1, 1998; to \$98.00 since October 27, 2000; to \$101.00 on December 1, 2000; and finally to \$103.00 effective December 1, 2001.

I have no complain about the \$103.00 monthly pension which I have been receiving because I feel that I am blessed, blessed because I was inducted into the service of the USAFFE as a lowly private, but came out as a guerrilla captain when I was released to the Philippine Army in 1946; fought alongside with Filipino and American troops, surrendered to the enemy in the agony of defeat; walked the 65-miles "Death March"; starved

and mistreated during my incarceration in Camp O'Donnel, and came out thru the horrors alive; released to the Philippine Army and commissioned in the Reserve Force as 2nd lieutenant, and rose thru the military ladder to become a brigadier general after thirty three years of faithful service. But I care about my fellow Filipino WW II Veterans, particularly those who have chosen to remain Filipinos to live and die in the Philippines. As the existing laws and bills focus on more benefits to Filipinos who became Americans or decided to live permanently in the United States, I am reminded of the words of the late President of the Republic of the Philippines Ramon Magsaysay who often said **"those who has less in life should have more in law". The Filipino World War II Veterans in the Philippines have less in life.**

I have been privileged to serve as Head of the Office of Veterans Affairs and as Special Presidential Representative in the Philippine Embassy in Washington D.C. I was tasked with a mission to work for the restoration of full benefits that were taken away from the Filipino WW II Veterans by the Rescission Acts of 1946. It is a matter of common knowledge and are borne by the records that the Rescission Acts of 1946 were enacted because the Filipino WW II Veterans were over 300,000 and the cost of funding the benefits was estimated at \$3.2 billion then. It is a matter of common knowledge also that the Filipino WW II Veterans have dwindled to about 40,000 - 50,000 now, and the fund requirement will not cost billions now. In other words, the reason for the enactment of the Rescission Acts of 1946 is no longer there.

Guided by the Filipino American Veterans, Inc. (FilAmVets), and complying with their wishes, I urge that the Rescission Acts of 1946 should now be repealed, and the benefits enjoyed by their American counterparts and the 116,000 who joined the United States Army should now be made available to the Filipino WW II Veterans regardless of their present citizenship and residence.

I plead that the aging Filipino WW II Veterans now in the eighties be made to enjoy what is due them by reason of their loyalty and service under the American Flag during World War II. In plain, that H.R. 491 be enacted by the 107th U.S. Congress - this Congress. It would be tragic if death, the inexorable leveler will end their claims for benefits. By then, it can be truly said and rightly so, that "justice delayed, is justice denied".

(Signed) **TAGUMPAY A. NANADIEGO**
Brigadier General, AFP (Ret)
Canyon Road
National Commander

June 13, 2002
6716 East
Orange, CA 928-69
U.S.A.

