

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 18, 1996

Dear Friends:

Yesterday the President signed a proclamation honoring the Filipino Veterans of World War II. Enclosed please find a copy of the Proclamation text.

Since the birth of our nation, we have proudly honored the men and women who have served in our nation's armed services. When President Roosevelt called members of the Philippine Commonwealth Army into service with American troops, they served courageously and without question, as one with our armed services against the enemy forces in the Pacific.

Some of the many men who fought along side American troops in some of the most brutal battles of World War II, joined the President as he signed the proclamation.

This proclamation is the result of arduous work and dedication by the Filipino American community. They, along with the President and his Administration, and the Congress have worked hard to ensure that the service and courage of these individuals is recognized. It is a pleasure to join the President, and all Americans, in honoring these soldiers' heroic deeds.

Sincerely,



Doris O. Matsui
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Deputy Director of Public Liaison

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THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 18, 1996

HONORING THE FILIPINO VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

During the dark days of World War II, nearly 100,000 soldiers of the Philippine Commonwealth Army provided a ray of hope in the Pacific as they fought alongside United States and Allied forces for 4 long years to defend and reclaim the Philippine Islands from Japanese aggression. Thousands more Filipinos joined U.S. Armed Forces immediately after the war and served in occupational duty throughout the Pacific Theater. For their extraordinary sacrifices in defense of democracy and liberty, we owe them our undying gratitude.

Valiant Filipino soldiers fought, died, and suffered in some of the bloodiest battles of World War II, defending beleaguered Bataan and Corregidor, and thousands of Filipino prisoners of war endured the infamous Bataan Death March and years of captivity. Their many guerrilla actions slowed the Japanese takeover of the Western Pacific region and allowed U.S. forces the time to build and prepare for the allied counterattack on Japan. Filipino troops fought side-by-side with U.S. forces to secure their island nation as the strategic base from which the final effort to defeat Japan was launched.

This month, as we mark the anniversary of General MacArthur's return to the Philippines, we acknowledge the important role Filipino soldiers played in turning back aggression, defending liberty, and preserving democracy, and we extend to them our abiding thanks.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 20, 1996, as a day Honoring the Filipino Veterans of World War II. I urge all Americans to recall the courage, sacrifice, and loyalty of Filipino veterans of World War II and honor them for their contributions to our freedom.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

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