



## CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES CHICAGO

PRESS RELEASE

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### **The Consulate General Honors Filipino WWII Veterans at a Congressional Gold Medal Presentation Ceremony**

The 76<sup>th</sup> *Araw ng Kagitingan* (Day of Valor) was celebrated on Monday, 09 April 2018, in Chicago by the Consulate General of the Philippines, members of the Filipino-American Community in Chicagoland, U.S. Officials, surviving World War II veterans and their next of kin (NOK).

The program started at 4:00 pm with a wreath laying ceremony at the Bataan-Corregidor Memorial Bridge at the corner of State Street and Wacker Drive.

The highlight of the event is the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony held at the Consulate General to present the medals (bronze duplicate) to the Filipino WWII veterans, five of whom were able to attend and seventeen (17) were represented by their next of kin (NOK). The ceremony was led by Major General Antonio M. Taguba, US Army Retired, and current Chair of the Filipino Veterans and Recognition and Education Project (FilVetRep), together with his co-presenters; Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin and Major General Richard Hayes, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard.

The Congressional Gold Medal is one of the two highest civilian honors the United States can bestow.

In her opening remarks, Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin said: "Today we recall and retell the stories of courage, bravery, and unfaltering sense of duty of Filipinos and American soldiers, who, as comrades-in-arms, fought for freedom in the fields of battle in the Philippines during the World War II. We shall honor the memories of sacrifices of our Filipino and American soldiers in Bataan and we shall ensure that Bataan shall be forever remembered."

MG Antonio M. Taguba, in his keynote speech, acknowledged the contributions of the Filipino WWII veterans as an important part of American military history. He also emphasized that their accomplishments deserve the foremost recognition from the U.S. government through the Congressional Gold Medal.

Illinois National Guard Adjutant General, MG Richard Hayes, extended his "warmest welcome" to the veterans, family members and next of kin (NOK). He expressed appreciation in participating in the event that offered the perfect opportunity to come together and pay tribute to the courageous veterans and survivors of the infamous Bataan "Death March."

Proclamations from Governor Bruce Rauner and Mayor Rahm Emanuel declaring 09 April 2018 as Bataan Day in Illinois and Chicago, respectively, were also read by their representatives. Letter-greetings from U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky and Senator Tammy Duckworth were also read.

The event concluded with a fellowship and a reception hosted by the Consulate General and the Chicago's Filipino-American Community. **END**

Chicago, 12 April 2018

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Wreath laying ceremony at the Bataan-Corregidor Memorial Bridge in Chicago (L-R) Mr. Alvar Rosales, Ms. Phoebe Doruelo, Consul Mechor P. Lalunio, Jr. Mr. Joey Erandio, MG Antonio M. Taguba (US Army Retired), Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin, MG Richard Hayes of the Illinois National Guard, Commander Clemente Rodriguez of the American Legion, Ms. Rose San Diego, Ms. Hazel Garcia, Mr. Gregory Wangerin, Mr. Thomas Choi and Ms. Abbey Eusebio. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Arnel Santiago)



Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin delivers her welcome remarks during Congressional Gold Medal ceremony at the 76<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of Araw ng Kagitingan held at the Consulate General. Seated from left is MG Richard Hayes and MG Antonio Taguba.



Major General Antonio M. Taguba delivers his keynote speech at the packed 70-seat capacity of the Kalayaan Hall of the Consulate General. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Arnel Santiago)



WWII Filipino veteran Mr. Emilio Garcera receives his medal (bronze duplicate) from Major General Antonio M. Taguba during the Congressional Gold Medal ceremony at the Consulate General. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Arnel Santiago)



Seated (L-R): Filipino WWII living veterans Mr. Emilio Garcera, Mr. Jesus Groyon, Mr. Fortunato Mallari, Mr. Reuel Nuñez and Mr. Dominador Ramirez after the awarding of the Congressional Gold Medals. Standing (L-R): Mr. Sean Conejos, MG Richard Hayes, Consul General Gina A. Jamoralin, NOK Ella Basilio, NOK Nel Caronongan, Ms. Severina Groyon, NOK Jerry Clarito, NOK Tess Claveria, NOK George Molina, NOK Primepare Pal and MG Antontio Taguba. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Arnel Santiago)



Seated (L-R): NOK Virginia Axibal, NOK Cheng Almonte, NOK Edel Alayon, NOK Lorna Alba, NOK Elisea Jamoralin. Standing (L-R): Sean Conejos, MG Richard Hayes, Consul General Gina Jamoralin, NOK Ella Basilio, NOK Anita Brotonel, NOK Edward Brotonel, NOK Myrna Calabas, NOK Remedios Cabagnot, NOK Dinah Ubaldo, NOK Virgilio Pilapil and MG Taguba. (Photo courtesy of Mr. Arnel Santiago)



Mr. Sean Conejos, National Public Relations Officer of the Philippine Scouts Heritage Society, shared memorabilia and uniforms of Bataan Death March survivors, which will be on display at the reception area of the Consulate General from 09 April 2018 until 20 April 2018.