



VETERANS' UPDATES

"SERBISYO SA BETERANO, SERBISYO SA BAYAN."

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Pres. Benigno Aquino addressing the veterans & other guests during the 2011 Leyte Gulf Landings (Source: PIA RO8).

President Aquino Honors War Veterans, Affirms PVAO's Role in Making Veterans' Sacrifices More Meaningful

President Benigno Aquino III honored the country's war veterans during the 67th Anniversary of the Leyte Gulf Landings on October 20, 2011 in Palo, Leyte and affirmed the role of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) in making their sacrifices & heroism more meaningful by upholding the obligations the nation owes them.

"Our Philippine Veterans Affairs Office has been very active in their Pensioners' Revalidation Program, making certain that their list of pensioners is updated and accurate. Fraudulent pensioners are the ultimate show of disrespect to those who have served their countries valiantly; and we are ensuring that a few greedy individuals do not pocket funds set aside for our heroes," the President said. He also acknowledged the agency's hospitalization programs and stated, *"We have likewise*

improved the medical care available to our veterans. The Veterans Memorial Medical Center has widened veteran access to hospitalization services by accrediting 562 government hospitals as of August this year. And the VMMC subsidizes the hospital bills not merely of veterans, but also of their qualified dependents." On the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation claims before the US Department of Veterans Affairs, the President said, *"Our officials are also hard at work in appealing the denied claims of some of our veterans in the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Act of America. Just a few months ago, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario met with USDVA Secretary Eric Shinseki to appeal for a more liberal system in processing the claims of Filipino veterans. The PVAO is also in discussions with the USDVA for the grant of payments to the heirs of the deceased veterans who have approved FVEC claims, so that checks will not be forfeited just because spouses of late veterans are absent."*

Administrator Ernesto G. Carolina who attended the affair also addressed the concerns of the veterans & beneficiaries from the Central Visayas region (Reg. 8) during the medical mission sponsored by the Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP) - Sons & Daughters Association, Inc. (SDAI) that was held thereafter at the DepEd Compound, Palo, Leyte. He was assisted by Ms. Teresita C. Cuevas, Chief, Veterans Memorial & Historical Division and the personnel of PVAO Field Service Extension Office No. 8 composed of Nenita C. Brazil, Paul Harry Lobrigo, Ivan Vincent Bajarias, Floriza Brazil, Crisma Abenir & Alfonso Capilo.

The Leyte event was not the first time the President singled out the agency for its accomplishments & continual efforts of PVAO to enhance its services to the veterans. During the National Heroes Day celebration last August 30, 2011 at the *Libingan ng Mga Bayani*, President Aquino also underscored the expanded hospitalization benefits PVAO provides to veteran and their dependents.

"Sa pangunguna ng Philippine Veterans Affairs Office o PVAO, pinabuti na po natin ang serbisyong pangkalusugan para sa ating mga beterano sa pagbibigay ng akreditasyon sa halos tatlong daang hospital na mangangalaga sa inyong lahat. Asahan ninyong puspusang isasakatuparan ng gobyerno ang mga programa para sa inyo, upang suklian ang walang humpay ninyong paglilingkod sa bayan," he said.

Meanwhile, the House Committee on Veterans Affairs and Welfare, under the leadership of Hon. Herminia B. Roman, continues to pursue a legislative agenda supportive of PVAO initiatives to upgrade the benefits and services for the veterans, including the increase of burial assistance from P10,000 to P20,000 and monthly pension from P5,000 to P10,000. ■



Administrator Carolina discusses the concerns of pensioners from the province of Leyte prior to the Joint VFP-SDA Medical Mission. (Source: Ivan Bajarias, FSEO#8)

HELP US JAIL THE FIXERS!!!

Claims Fixing, which victimizes our defenders who have devoted their lives in serving the country is an unforgivable offense! Borrowing Pres. Aquino's words, it is the **"ultimate show of disrespect to those who have served their countries valiantly."** We are seriously cleansing our ranks to weed out these criminals – insiders and outsiders alike. We enjoin the public to report all claims fixing cases to the **Office of the Administrator** at (02) 912-4526 / 0919-5924814.



Full Text of the Speech of His Excellency, Benigno oAquino III, President of the Philippines During the 67th Anniversary of the Leyte Gulf Landings

[Delivered at the Macarthur Landing Memorial National Park, Leyte on October 20, 2011]

*Maupay nga aga nga iyong na tanan. Nakailang balik na ho ako dito; alangan naman walang natutunan.
Good morning po sa inyong lahat.*

Sixty-seven years ago, a promise was fulfilled here on Red Beach. An American general by the name of Douglas MacArthur held true to his word and returned to the Philippines, with the country's rightful president Sergio Osmeña by his side, wading ashore on these very waters. This signaled not merely the end of fascism on our shores, but also the closing chapter of a long and agonizing war, one that claimed the lives of many of our people.

In the close to seven decades that have passed since then, it is good to see that the wounds of war have healed. Today, on this beach, Filipinos, Americans, Canadians, Australians, and Japanese can gather in solemn commemoration, no longer divided by enmity. All of us here, Filipinos and foreigners alike, are able to recall our veterans and their sacrifices, while renewing our commitment to never again allow aggression and war to destroy lives.

In the three generations since the War, our respective governments have tried to make the sacrifices and heroism of the War Years meaningful, by upholding each nation's obligations to their veterans. I am proud to say that, under our watch, we have done our part.

Our Philippine Veterans Affairs Office has been very active in their Pensioners' Revalidation Program, making certain that their list of pensioners is updated and accurate. Fraudulent pensioners are the ultimate show of disrespect to those who have served their countries valiantly; and we are ensuring that a few greedy individuals do not pocket funds set aside for our heroes.

We have likewise improved the medical care available to our veterans. The Veterans Memorial Medical Center has widened veteran access to hospitalization services by accrediting 562 government hospitals as of August this year. And the VMMC subsidizes the hospital bills not merely of veterans, but also of their qualified dependents.

Our officials are also hard at work in appealing the denied claims of some of our veterans in the Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Act of America. Just a few months ago, Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario met with USDVA Secretary Eric Shinseki to appeal for a more liberal system in processing the claims of Filipino veterans. The PVAO is also in discussions with the USDVA for the grant of payments to the heirs of the deceased veterans who have approved FVEC claims, so that checks will not be forfeited just because spouses of late veterans are absent.

The freedom our country enjoys now—where this country finds itself at present—is a result, in large part, of the efforts of our veterans; and we are making sure that they get what they deserve for the sacrifices they have made for this country. President Osmeña in his time pointed out that the Filipino people were as one in aspiring to live and, if need be, die for their country; where they differed was in the manner and the means. Yet time, too, has healed these divisions sown by the war, and all Filipinos today can look back to a common heritage of patriotism and bravery in the face of national adversity.

Whether civilians or soldiers, the generation that fought in Bataan, Corregidor, and in countless guerrilla actions, vowed to prove the Filipino was second to none in valor, and time and again proved that limitations in equipment could be overcome by the true grit of our fighting men and women. But bravery can only get one so far. A nation whose sovereignty and independence were assured by dedication in peace and ultimate sacrifice rendered in war must realize the necessity of giving its present and future generations the means to defend its own, and to maintain the peace and integrity of its borders.

With this in mind, our government has been modernizing the equipment and training available to our soldiers. Just a few months ago I saw the arrival of our first Hamilton Class Cutter from America, a ship that will enhance our capabilities in overseeing our waters. And we are also improving the capabilities of the Philippine Coast Guard through enhanced cooperation measures with Japan, which will include visits by Japan Coast Guard (JCG) patrol vessels to conduct trainings for Philippine Coast Guard personnel.

These are indeed important symbols of our solidarity with these countries—that whatever our history was, they have become our staunchest allies—helping our economy, and helping us protect our sovereignty.

For our soldiers, we have also acquired arms, patrol crafts, and other equipment worthy of their honor and bravery. To improve the livelihood of our soldiers and to sufficiently compensate them for what they give to our country, our administration has also embarked on its plan to build 21,800 housing units for our men in uniform. And likewise, we've doubled combat duty pay for our soldiers from 240 to 500.

Clearly, the lessons of the past are not lost on us. The bravery of our soldiers must be matched by giving them sufficient equipment and compensation so that they may do their jobs to yield the best possible results, without having to worry as much about their families and livelihood.

May today be a reminder to all of us: there is no greater tribute to our heroes than showing them the fruits of what they have fought for. And that is what our administration has set out to do. We strive to maintain peace, because we learned in War of the toll that wartime takes on every country involved. We strive to instill integrity, accountability, and transparency in governance, because we learned in past years how deception and corruption in government thus indeed harm a society. This is truly why we are gathered here today—not merely to look at the past, but to review the lessons it taught us, and to use them to guide us forward.

I do not have to tell you that these days, the battle has moved fronts. We live in a time of relative peace, and yet there remain challenges we must face head on. What oppresses our people now are poverty, lack of education, and lack of proper health care. But the resolve required of all of us to attend to the needs of our people has not changed; and today we gather to rediscover that. So it is good to see us here today, in solidarity, no longer divided by the past, and ready to confront the problems of the present and the future. Surely, if we hold strong, and if we pursue our shared aspirations where once we were divided, then we can move our respective countries forward and enjoy a large measure of mutual success.

Let us remember the war is over; the peace needs to be won completely.

Thank you and good day. ■