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Filipino WWII vets claims are now twice the US estimate

by DYMPHNA CALICA-LA PUTT
AJPress

CLAIMS for compensation filed by Filipino World War II veterans have reached 32,795 or almost double the number estimated by the US government.

The US Department of Veterans (VA) had estimated only 18,000 World War II Veterans eligible for the Filipino Veterans Equity Fund.

A third of the claims, numbering 10,761, have already been approved. But a larger number has either been disapproved or is still pending, recent data from the Center for Minority Veterans at the VA showed.

Because of this, the National Alliance for Veterans Equity (NAFVE) has asked the VA to consider extending the February 2010 deadline for claiming compensation.

"Can the Department of Veterans Affairs work with Congress to increase the deadline to make sure that every veteran can be included," NAFVE national campaign coordinator Ben De Guzman told the VA in a letter.

"Given the limited number of veterans that are still alive...a deadline of 10 years would not be overly burdensome on the Department," he added in the letter.

De Guzman also said this would reassure the veterans that everyone will have a chance to apply.

NAFVE had met recently with VA officials to convey the concerns of Filipino World War II veterans to the US government.

The organization also wanted to get more detailed information on the disbursement of the lump sum payments that the Obama administration has allocated for Filipino veterans.

It was reported recently that a major concern of Filipino WWII veterans, whose ages range from 80 to 90 years old, is the slow process of the US government in disbursing these veterans' lump sum payments.

It has been five months since the US government authorized one-time lump sum payments of \$15,000 each to Filipino World War II veterans who are US citizens, as well as those residing in the United States. Veterans who fought in the same war, but are currently living in the Philippines were given a smaller amount of only \$9,000.

NAFVE is spearheading several Filipino-American groups that are working to give full equity to these Filipinos and their families and to bring other concerns to the US government.

Almost 60 years ago, Filipinos who fought with the American military against the Japanese in World War II were first promised military benefits by US President Franklin Roosevelt.

But in 1946, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act which stripped Filipinos of the benefits they were promised. Of the 66 countries allied with the United States during the war, only Filipinos were denied military benefits.

Since then, several bills have been introduced in Congress in an attempt to give full equity to these Filipino war veterans.

It was only last February, through the Obama administration's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, that the US government finally set aside \$198 million for benefits of Filipino veterans. Of over 200,000 Filipinos who fought alongside American soldiers 60 years ago, fewer than 18,000 are alive today. ■

Why charity begins...

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work. While CRS is working on an international level, NASSA gets to the grassroots. CRS-Philippines and NASSA work closely together to ensure that the donations reach those who badly need them.

To put it succinctly, Fr. Albert simplified the process by enumerating the steps involved in the system that they're working with. The process begins with donors bringing their relief goods to drop-off centers (Goldilocks stores and parishes). After donations have been collected, Goldilocks' trucks will deliver them to the warehouse, where processing begins. Here, donations are received, sorted and packed in these categories: men, women, boys, girls, food, shoes and linens. After the goods have been segregated and packed, they are loaded to 40 and 45-foot containers and shipped to CBCP-NASSA Caritas Filipinas Foundation, Inc. where they are dispatched and distributed to calamity stricken dioceses.

Of course, none of these efforts would be possible without the generous support of volunteers, donors and partner organizations. Major partners in this relief operation include Goldilocks, Sonny Santa Ines (President, Knights of Columbus, Southern California Chapter) Mr. John Bowen's Cerritos Warehouse, World Class Freight, Inc., LTH Logistics, Inc., Parishioners of St. Pancratius Church and St. Bernard Church, the Filipino Clergy of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Asian Journal and the Philippine Consulate General of Los Angeles.

Rest assured, Fr. Albert has gone through the due process of acquiring the required legal documents from the Philippine Consulate General's Office to legitimize their relief operations under Executive Order No.831 of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

To date, Fr. Albert's team has shipped the first batch containing 484 relief good boxes last October 14, for distribution to the following dioceses: Antipolo, Pasig, Malolos, San Pablo and Iba (Zambales). A second batch containing 573 relief good boxes of various sizes will be shipped on October 21, for distribution to the dioceses of San Jose (Nueva Ecija), Cabanatuan, Alaminos (Pangasinan), Lingayen-Dagupan, Tarlac, Baguio and Kalocan.

The relief aid will be put on hold after the second batch of donations are shipped. Organizations and sponsors who are interested to participate in relief drive for the Philippines may contact Fr. Albert at (562) 634-6111 or email fr.albert@yahoo.com.

Cash donations are also encouraged. Please specify that the donations are for: TYPHOON VICTIMS OF ONDOY AND PEPENG.

Make your monetary contributions payable to:
CBCP Caritas Filipinas Foundation Inc.
Account # 0034-00013827 (Dollar account)
Philtrust Bank
Philtrust Bank Bldg.,
1000 United Nations Building
cor. San Marcelino St.
Paco, Manila, Philippines
Swift Code: PHTBPHMM
via Wachovia Bank, N.A.
New York, NY USA
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Reach out a helping hand...

for the immediate relief efforts in the wake of Typhoon Ondoy that hit the Philippines recently.

Please donate generously. Your donations will help purchase relief supplies and ration packs for distribution to heavily damaged areas with the help of local officials and volunteers.

Guidelines:

- Donations can be received online via credit card or Paypal through www.abscbnfoundation.org or ondoyrelief.multiply.com
- Mail checks payable to:
ABS CBN Foundation - Sagip
150 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
- Pledges and inquiries can be made through the toll free number
1-800-527-2820

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BENEFIT EVENTS

Oct. 18 - Oakland CA
Oakland Raiders Mabuhay Fiesta
- Benefit for Sagip Kapamilya

Oct. 18 - Seattle WA
Fund raising at the Filipino Community in Seattle featuring Massive Monkees and Blue Scholars

Oct. 18 - Vallejo, CA
Brunch Fundraiser
at the Filipino Community Center

Oct. 24 - Redwood City, CA
"TINIG NG PINOY: Mas Malakas kay Ondoy"
- Fundraiser by ABS-CBN International employees

Oct. 30 - Berkley CA
Filipina Women's Network
100 Most Influential Filipinas Gala

Nov. 13-15 - Las Vegas, NV
Martin Nievera "For Always" Benefit Concert



**ABS-CBN
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SAGIP KAPAMILYA

The ABS CBN Foundation is a registered 501 (c)(3) organization in the United States. All donations for Sagip Kapamilya (Saving Family Members) will be used for immediate relief and rescue operations. Photo courtesy of the Associated Press