

# PRESS RELEASE

## Department of Foreign Affairs

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### HONOLULU'S FILIPINO COMMUNITY MARKS ARAW NG KAGITINGAN, 65<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF FALL OF BATAAN AND CORREGIDOR

19 April 2007 – Consul General Ariel Y. Abadilla of the Philippine Consulate General in Honolulu, USA reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that the Filipino-American community in Hawaii marked 'Araw ng Kagitingan' and the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fall of Bataan and Corregidor with a solemn ceremony at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific (NMCP) followed by a memorial program at the Filipino Community Center (Filcom) on 15 April 2007.



Filipino-American veterans of WWII and Philippine Consul General Ariel Y. Abadilla (center) commemorated Araw ng Kagitingan with a solemn ceremony and floral offerings at the Filipino-American marker at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific. The marker, crafted from a rock sourced from Malinta Tunnel in Corregidor, was placed by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during her 2006 visit to Hawaii.

Hundreds of participants filled the Filcom Center's ballroom to attend the memorial program entitled, "Balik-Tanaw: Remembering Bataan and Corregidor." Among the prominent personalities who attended the event were Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hanneman with other Hawaii state government officials, high-ranking U.S. military officials, Filipino-American Veterans' groups, various student groups and leaders and members of the Filipino-American community as well as a cross-section of the general public.

Prayers, a bugler playing Taps and floral offerings by the Consul General Abadilla and Mr. Artemio Caleda and Mr. Felix Cabangon of the Filipino-American veterans associations in Hawaii highlighted the ceremony facing the memorial marker at the NMCP. The memorial marker to honor WWII Filipino-American veterans, especially the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, was crafted from a rock sourced from the Malinta Tunnel, and was inaugurated by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo during her 2006 visit to Hawaii.

The memorial program at the Filcom consisted of a wreath-laying ceremony, a photo-exhibit on the Fall of Bataan and the Battle of Corregidor, the awarding of Philippine Liberation Medals, a film showing of a PBS documentary entitled "Bataan Death March and Rescue." A panel discussion among the Filipino community was also conducted and updates on the Filipino Veterans' Equity Bill were disseminated.

Consul General Abadilla said the ceremony was geared towards creating community awareness, especially among the Filipino-American youth about the historical significance of Bataan and Corregidor, and the plight of Filipino veterans. He led the awarding of Philippine Liberation Medals by Consul General Abadilla to 10 Bataan Death March survivors for their participation in the liberation of the Philippines.

United States Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie A. Kenney was a special guest at the memorial program and participated at the wreath laying ceremony and the awarding of medals.

In her remarks, Ambassador Kenney stressed the importance of the Philippines to the United States as its longest standing friend and ally in Asia. "As a daughter of a World War II veteran, I understand the plight of the Filipino-American veterans and I consider them all as heroes in their own right."

The Ambassador also mingled with the members of the Filipino-American veterans associations, and viewed the photo-exhibit on the Fall of Bataan and the Battle of Corregidor which was set up by students from the University of Hawaii. END