

# PRESS RELEASE

## Department of Foreign Affairs

2330 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City, Philippines

Tel. No. 834-4000

www.dfa.gov.ph



SFA-AGR-907-07

### FIRST PUBLIC SCREENING OF THE WWII DOCUMENTARY FILM "A MORAL DEBT"

17 December 2007 – Philippine Consul General to San Francisco Marciano A. Paynor, Jr. reported to the Department of Foreign Affairs that the consulate general held the first public screening of the World War II documentary "A Moral Debt" produced by the San Francisco-based Vivo Media Group. The event was attended by Filipino World War II veterans, district representatives of US congressional leaders, and officials of the San Francisco War Memorial Commission, the Filipino Veterans Equity Center, and the National Federation of Filipino American Associations (NaFFAA).



WWII Veterans sing the United States and Philippine national anthems

The film contains interviews of US Congressman Bob Filner, US Congressman Tom Lantos and US Army Major General Antonio Taguba, Jr. It also features Ms. Dorothy Dowlen, a US Army nurse who witnessed the execution of her British father and Filipino mother in the hands of Japanese soldiers in the Philippines, as well as Ms. Magdalena Leones, the only Filipina World War II veteran who was awarded the Silver Star medal for bravery. Surviving Filipino WWII veterans in San Francisco were also featured in the documentary.

The film was made to raise awareness on the continuing struggle of Filipino World War II veterans for recognition of their military service to the United States. Its aim is to generate public support for the proposed Filipino Veterans Equity Bill which remains pending in the US Congress.

Consul Wilfredo Santos, speaking in behalf of Consul General Paynor, Jr., assured the Filipino WWII veterans that the Philippine Government remains committed to ensuring the passage of the Equity Bill. "The Philippine Embassy in Washington DC together with all our Consulates General in the United States continues to meet personally with US Congressmen and US Senators or their representatives to advance the interests of our veterans, particularly in securing their long overdue recognition and benefits. We hope our efforts, along with those of our Filipino-American community, will pay off as we vigorously pursue the passage of this bill," he said



Atty. Marilyn Castillo of the Philippine Consulate along with Bernardo Bernardo, Ms. Elaine Diza, and Mr. Rudy Asercion, Commissioner at the San Francisco War Memorial Commission

Consul Santos also took the opportunity to announce the online petition of the Filipino Veterans Equity Act and encouraged the audience to help in gathering more signatures to endorse the bill by logging in at [http://www.petitiononline.com/mod/\\_perl/signed.cqi?EquiAct&1](http://www.petitiononline.com/mod/_perl/signed.cqi?EquiAct&1).

"Our veterans fought with courage and made sacrifices to ensure the freedom that we all enjoy. Without their sacrifices and valor, we would not be living in the world as we know it today. We owe it to our veterans a lot. This film and the online signature campaign in support of the Filipino Veterans

Equity Act is one way for us to honor them and the memory of their comrades who already passed away,” he added.

Ms. Elaine Diza of the consulate and stand-up comedian Bernardo Bernardo, now a professor of Philippine Studies at the University of San Francisco, entertained the audience with several musical numbers. The program ended with a short Q&A portion following the film showing. Consulate officials and those of the San Francisco War Memorial Commission and the Veterans Equity Center gave updates on the Equity Bill and answered queries from the audience. END

[/gary](#)