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**PCG New York, FILVETREP Honor Filipino WWII Vets Anew**



*Philippine Consul General to New York Claro Cristobal (5<sup>th</sup> from left) and FilVetRep Chairman MGen. Antonio Taguba (8<sup>th</sup> from left) join the 10 next of kins of WW2 veterans honored during a US Congressional Gold Medal Award Ceremony in New York. (Photo courtesy of Carol Tanjutco).*

New York, 19 December 2019 – The Philippine Consulate General in New York, working in close partnership with the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project (FILVETREP) presented the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) to ten Filipino World War II veterans in a ceremony held at the Kalayaan Hall of the Philippine Center in New York on 03 December 2019.

The ten veterans who were honored were Capt. Juan R. Bacani, Carlos C. Calub, Isidro G. Dela Torre, Pelagio A. Fariñas, Benjamin F. Gonzales, Sr., Capt. Enrique S.D. Manaois, Arcadio R. Nepomuceno, Cirilo F. Ofilada, Basilio T. Toledo, and Johnson S. Villanueva. Of the ten awardees, Mr. Nepomuceno is the only one who is still alive, but

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because of his advanced age, could not attend the ceremony. Family members represented all the veterans and received the medals on their behalf.

The Congressional Gold Medal recognizes the valor and sacrifice of the Filipino soldiers and recognized guerillas who fought alongside American troops during that war. The grant of the medal was the result of many years of lobbying by the veterans and their supporters. The law granting the award was passed in 2015, 70 years after the end of the war.

In his speech during the ceremony, MGen (ret.) Antonio Taguba, FILVETREP Chairman, recounted the struggle of his father, also a World War II veteran, who, after enlistment and after having fought in the war was given his pay of \$22.80. This unfairness is what drove Gen. Taguba to work tirelessly to make sure that the veterans are recognized, no matter how many years have passed.

Gen. Taguba travels all over the United States, working closely with the Filipino community and the Philippine Consulates to find opportunities to present the award to Filipino Veterans. Gen. Taguba emphasized that, with the march of time, it is also imperative to preserve the stories of the bravery and struggles of the veterans, before they all pass and in order for present generations not to forget their sacrifices.

Philippine Consul General to New York Claro S. Cristobal thanked the family members of the veterans for “braving the cold brought by the first snowfall” and expressed hope that the “patriotic acts of those veterans being honored tonight will bring a sense of warmth and camaraderie to those who are present.” Citing that the CGM award ceremony is the second time being held during his term, Consul General Cristobal said that “we will further reach out to those who have yet to be honored.”- END