

Fact Sheet – Filipino Veterans Fairness Act of 2022

Background

- During World War II, the Philippines was a U.S. possession, becoming independent in 1946.
- Before independence, the Philippines had several military components:
 - The Regular (“Old”) Philippine Scouts were a formal part of the U.S. Army.
 - Other Filipinos served in the separate Commonwealth Army of the Philippines (PA), organized guerilla forces, and the New Philippine Scouts. While these were not formally part of the U.S. Army, they were trained by and under the command of U.S. Army officers during the war, and they participated in the same types of combat and support operations as the Regular Philippine Scouts.
- All types of Filipino forces under U.S. command had a significant impact on the U.S. war effort.
 - According to the Department of Defense, “In addition to the effective combat roles played during the liberation of the Philippines by some guerrilla forces, the guerrilla forces called into the PA and the service of the U.S. Armed Forces effected huge savings of U.S. Army manpower during the campaign. ... Without the combat and support contributions of the guerrilla forces, both before and after the re-entry of U.S. forces into the Philippines in October 1944, the task of liberating the islands would have been vastly more costly to the United States in terms of time, money, manpower, and casualties.”¹
- Even though all these Filipino servicemembers lived in a nation that, at the time, was controlled by the United States, served under U.S. commanders, and made substantially similar contributions to the war effort, only the Regular Philippine Scouts receive full U.S. veterans’ benefits. Members of the PA, guerilla forces, and New Philippine Scouts receive partial benefits.²
- This disparate treatment is not justified by the historical record. Originally, all Filipino forces that served under U.S. command before independence were eligible for full veterans’ benefits, but Congress rescinded benefits for many Filipino WWII veterans in 1946 as a cost-cutting measure.³
- Official service records of Filipino forces are also incomplete because many were destroyed in the 1973 fire at the National Personnel Records Center.⁴

Summary of Legislation

- The Filipino Veterans Fairness Act would correct this historic inequity and treat all Filipino veterans who served in World War II under U.S. commanders equally.
- The legislation would authorize payment of a need-based death pension for survivors of Filipino veterans, a benefit that is currently offered to some, but not all, Filipino veterans of World War II.
- Additionally, the Filipino Veterans Fairness Act would direct the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to consider alternative military documentation when determining eligibility, removing a significant hurdle that has kept many deserving dependents from receiving their rightful benefits.
- There may be fewer than 10,000 WWII Filipino vets still alive, so time is short to correct this injustice.

¹ DoD Information Paper, “Filipino Service in World War II,” March 18, 2021, [[Information Paper - Filipino Military Service In World War II](#)].

² VA Fact Sheet of Benefits for Survivors of Filipino Veterans <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/factsheets/survivors/FilipinoSurvivors.pdf>

³ Christopher Klein, “Filipino Americans Fought with US in WWII, Then Had to Fight for Veterans’ Benefits,” *History.com*, November 12, 2019, <https://www.history.com/news/filipino-americans-veterans-day>.

⁴ *Ibid.*