



WELCOME



Dear Veterans, Families, and Friends,

On behalf of the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project, it is with great honor that I welcome you to this historic celebration of the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal.

Congratulations to the Filipino Veterans of World War II – Filipinos, Americans, and Filipino Americans who have waited 75 years on your time of recognition. You deservedly earned this period in American and Filipino history for your loyalty to country, dedication to duty, and intrepidity in defense of the United States.

The awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal collectively to the U.S Army Forces in the Far East comprised of the Philippine Scouts, Philippine Commonwealth Army, 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment, 2d Filipino Infantry Battalion, 1st Reconnaissance Battalion, Recognized Guerrilla Forces, and New Philippine Scouts came because of the incredible ef-

forts of the many organizations and individuals who believed in the significance and importance of your story.

Our deepest heartfelt appreciation to the late Senator Daniel Inouye, and former Senator Daniel Akaka for championing the Filipino Veterans on their quests for recognition. Their undivided support of the veterans during their tenure in office finally made recognition a reality after 75 years of waiting.

We are deeply grateful to all of the elected officials who supported the legislation, and especially to Senator Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Senator Dean Heller (R-NV), Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), and former Congressman Joe Heck (R-NV) who sponsored the initial legislations in both houses of Congress and pushed eventual passage of S.1555 and HR 2737 respectively. It is also because of the tireless efforts of members of FilVetRep, partners, and sponsors for their grassroots campaign that eventually led to the passage of the Filipino Veterans of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2015 by the Senate on July 13, 2016, and by the House of Representatives on November 30, 2016, and the signing of Public Law 114-265 by President Barack Obama on December 14, 2016.

We are thankful to members of Congress, especially the Speaker of the House, Honorable Paul Ryan (R-WI), Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) for their support in hosting the Congressional Gold Medal Ceremony on October 25, 2017, at the Emancipation Hall, Capitol Hill, Washington, D.C. We are also grateful to the Military District of Washington and National Park Service for their tireless role in supporting this momentous event.

We are grateful for the valuable service of the volunteers, the generosity of financial and in-kind support of many corporations, foundations, veterans service organizations, charitable organizations, families and friends. They made it possible for the more than 600 veterans and their loved ones from across the country to gather in the Nation's capital, and take part in the presentation ceremony and dinner celebration.

The journey of many veterans and their loved ones to come here is long and tiring. But the enduring journey of having to wait and come to this historic day of recognition is well worth it.

This once in a lifetime experience has brought together comrades who have not seen each other since World War II. This reunion may be their last, but it will be memorable for all to experience.