

provide the necessary funding to achieve these goals.

Finally, the House also considers a bill to honor the military contribution of the Commonwealth of the Philippines during World War II. These Filipino forces were instrumental in helping the United States defend our democratic ideals during the war. We should be proud of all the contributions made by our Filipino neighbors on the Pacific front.

The contributions made by veterans during times of war, is what allows us to enjoy these times of peace. We must continue to support and honor our veterans. America will always be grateful to its veterans for the sacrifices made for this great Nation.

RECOGNIZING AND HONORING THE
FILIPINO WORLD WAR II VETER-
ANS

SPEECH OF

HON. PATSY T. MINK

OF HAWAII

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 29, 1996

Mrs. MINK of Hawaii. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of House Concurrent Resolution 191 which recognizes Philippine war veterans and the contributions and sacrifices they made to and for United States efforts during World War II.

The Philippines and the United States enjoyed a close relationship for nearly a century. This relationship was most clearly evident during the battle in the Pacific in World War II. The Philippine Independence Act of 1934 set a 10-year timetable for the eventual independence of the Philippines, but was delayed another 2 years because of the Japanese occupation. Under the act, effective in 1946, the United States President retained the right to call into the service of the United States Armed Forces all military forces organized by the Commonwealth of the Philippines. Due to its vital importance to the defense of the United States, President Roosevelt invoked an Executive order on July 26, 1941, bringing Philippine soldiers into the service of the United States Armed forces under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. Under this Executive order, Philippine soldiers who served in regular components of the United States Armed Forces and the Old Scouts were considered members of the United States forces.

In 1946 Congress passed the Rescissions Act which limited benefits these Philippine soldiers could receive, reneging on commitments to these servicemen. Despite their sacrifices and exemplary service, these Philippine soldiers were subjected to lesser status previously assured them by the United States. Although these veterans faced the same hardships and risks as their American counterparts, the passage of the 1946 Rescissions

Act stripped these veterans for recognition they rightfully deserved.

When President Roosevelt called on the Philippine military to join forces with the United States, they did so with honor and resilience. Without hesitation they courageously mounted a remarkable defense of the islands, particularly a Bataan and Corregidor. Their perseverance effectively resisted the enemy and ultimately led to the retaking of the Philippines. This heroic service prevented the enemy from conquering the Pacific and allowed United States troops, under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, to return to the Philippines. Their valor was instrumental in United States preparations for the final assault on Japan.

Today we have the opportunity to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of these Philippine veterans who bravely fought along side American forces in the battle in the Pacific Theater. House Concurrent Resolution 191 recognizes and honors these men who gave their lives for Freedom. We need to go further to grant full equity to these Philippine veterans by providing them all the benefits due United States veterans. Congress took the first step in 1990 to address this inequity by permitting Philippine veterans of World War II to apply for naturalization and to receive full benefits after May 1, 1991. I urge my colleagues to join in recognizing the contributions of these Philippine soldiers and vote yes on this resolution.