

BONIFACIO G. DE GRACIA

8th President of the
Veterans Federation of the Philippines



PHILIPPINE VECONAC REPORT

BRIEF HISTORY

On October 15, 1957, leaders convened and took the first step to unify all veteran organizations in the country. Less than two months later on December 9, 1957, twenty two (22) leaders representing nationally recognized veteran organizations signed an “instrument of unification” later to become the “declaration of principles” of the Federation. President Carlos P. Garcia approved Republic Act 2640 creating the Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP) as a public corporation on June 18, 1960.

MISSION:

“To unify all Filipino Veterans under the umbrella of the Federation, uphold their interests and render utmost care to all veterans, their spouses and orphans through its member-organizations; perpetuate their heroic deeds, foster patriotism and love of country among our people; and defend our democratic way of life, help preserve peace and order, and inculcate civic consciousness among its members”.

VISION:

“By 2022, the VFP is a unified community of Filipino veterans adhering to the principles of good governance that has ensured the social and economic well-being of all veterans of member-organizations, and is a strong partner in nation building”.

OBJECTIVES:

To unify all veterans under the Federation;

To perpetuate and memorialize the heroic deeds of our veterans and inculcate to the youth love of country and patriotism; and

To provide quality, responsive and accessible services to the veterans.

VFP's CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

The Federations Constitution and By-Laws (CBL) was ratified and adopted during its First General Assembly at Manila Hotel on March 15, 1958 and later acknowledged by the country's Securities and Exchange Commission on February 9, 1959. Cognizant of the evolving realities of the times, a revised CBL crafted by a committee on constitutional amendments chaired by Veteran Gregorio N De Guia, was adopted during the 7th Annual General Assembly Held at Manila, Philippines on April 25, 1964. From 1965 to 2006, the CBL has since then undergone 29 amendments via the Executive Board, approved by the Supreme Council and adopted by the Federation's membership. This CBL may be amended or repealed, in whole or in part, by a vote of at least two thirds (2/3) of the members of the Supreme Council (SC) present at any of its regular meetings or in a special meeting specifically called for the purpose with a proviso that SC members are provided with the text of the proposed amendment at least thirty (30) days prior to meeting. The power to amend this CBL may be delegated also by the SC to the Executive Board provided that any power delegated to the EB is considered revoked whenever a

majority of the SC members shall so vote at a regular or special meeting.

LEADERSHIP

From its creation in 1960, VFP has been led by eight (8) presidents starting from Jesus Marcos-Roces, followed by Jose Razon, Alfonso Arellano, Dionisio S Ojeda, Simeon C Medalla, Romeo C Espino, Emmanuel V De Ocampo and currently by (yours truly) Bonifacio G De Gracia.

ORGANIZATION AND COMPOSITION

As of January 2016, 9 Charter, 10 Affiliate, 15 Regional, 182 District and 1,078 Post Veterans Organizations actively operated under the VFP umbrella. Each regional organization is composed of districts and posts organizations. Memberships are veterans and surviving spouses residing in the same province or congressional district and cities and/or adjacent towns. The numbers of the active district and posts fluctuate because scores of very senior war veterans succumb either to natural attrition and others due to illnesses accompanying old age. With the influx of post war veterans however, new found leadership is expected to resuscitate regional, district and post memberships. A very sincere campaign is in the offing to welcome Armed Forces of the Philippines retirees in this regard.

MEMBERSHIP

As membership is the primary requirement to participate in the Federation's privileges, membership dues are collected at the rate of PhP 500.00/year from members receiving Old Age Pension. P 250.00 of which is deducted in January and the other PhP 250.00 in July of each year. A membership fee of PhP 100.00/year is required for younger retirees below 65 years old. The membership dues collected

are further apportioned to different levels of the VFP organizational structure as follows: 50% is remitted to Posts, 25% to the Districts, 15% to the Regions while only 10% is retained by the National Organization. Charter and Affiliate Organizations retain 90% while 10% is again retained by the National Headquarters.

SOURCE OF FUNDS

By virtue of Presidential Proclamation 192 signed on April 4, 1967, government reserved for the Veterans Center site purposes a 50 hectare parcel of land under the administration of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines. This parcel of land was developed via the Build-Operate-Transfer scheme into an Industrial complex and has since then become the source of the administrative and operational expenses through a budget approved by the Supreme Council of the Federation. Although a Government-Owned and Controlled Corporation, the Federation do not receive budget from government. Earnings from the Industrial Complex is the Federations life support system.

GOVERNANCE SUPREME COUNCIL

The Supreme Council is the governing body of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines. In accordance with Section 7 of RA 2640, the number, qualifications, and manner of election and terms of office of the members of the Supreme Council are prescribed by the VFP Constitution and By-laws. The Supreme Council is composed of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, all Regional, all District, all Charter and all Affiliate Organizations Presidents.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of 19 members is in turn composed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and all the Regional and Charter and Affiliate Organizations Presidents.

VETERANISM AT ITS BEST

As a member of the VFP, we shun whatever title we got while in the service of the AFP. We now call ourselves VETERANS. This means that even if a member retired as an NCO he stands on equal footing with any member retired an Officer. It is therefore every member's duty to be an officer of the organization and take part in running the affairs of the Federation.

CURRENT BENEFITS CONVEYED BY THE FEDERATION TO ITS MEMBERS

Health Benefit. Last year 2015, the Federation started granting PhP 3,000.00 hospitalization assistance to members. Starting January 2017, the assistance will increase to PhP 5,000.00.

Burial Benefit. From PhP 1,000.00 in 2014, burial assistance was increased to PhP 5,000.00 on January 2015. Starting January 2017, the assistance will increase to PhP 10,000.00.

Centenarian Cash Gift. Starting January 2017, the Federation is conveying PhP 50,000.00 for veterans reaching the age of 100 years old.

Regional Assembly Support. The Philippine Archipelago is composed of fifteen (15) regions. Each region is required to conduct a regional assembly once a year and from a PhP 60,000.00 financial support in 2015, support have been increased to PhP 70,000.00 per assembly. During these assemblies a medical mission is also held and maintenance medicine and vitamins good for three months in 2015 increased to six months' supply for veterans, their surviving spouses

and sons and daughters, too this current year 2016. A recent innovation is the clustering of districts in an effort to reach out to more veterans in the provinces. A Region may opt to cluster adjacent districts and for an average of 3 districts per region, the region may opt to have two clusters and each cluster is supported PhP 50,000.00 with same arrangement for medicine during the accompanying medical missions.

FUTURE PLANS OF THE FEDERATION

The Supreme Council have already confirmed the Executive Board approved plan to construct a national headquarters that will house satellite offices of the regions, charter and affiliate organizations of the federation. Apart from the offices, the headquarters will also have facilities for a theater-like convention hall with a 1,000 seating capacity, a recreation and wellness center, an adjacent out-patient clinic and offices of other agencies whose clientele is the senior citizen population of the country. The regional offices will soon also rise replicating the conveniences offered at the national headquarters on a limited scale.

The Federation is also considering the grant of educational scholarships to veteran descendants, also on the drawing table is the plan to support cooperative initiatives of posts, districts and regional levels. A home for the elderly veterans is also being considered. The Federation is also looking for other models for replication and fine tuning when available and will readily share experiences once fruitful in application.

As a result of last year's attendance, the Federation is proud to report that it actively taking part in the disaster preparedness drills by both local and national governments and the national office sends employees to attend fire and earthquake and natural and manmade calamities preparedness trainings.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

In order to improve some more on administration and operations of the Federation, with the help of the Department of National Defense, its defined supervising agency, the Federation has embarked on the crafting of a new Organizational Structure and Staffing Pattern with the end in view of streamlining operations with the calls of the time. From almost zero liquidity some decade ago, good governance improved liquidity of the Federation by half a billion Philippine Peso as of this report.

Thank you and Mabuhay!

BONIFACIO G DE GRACIA
President