

## Finally, Alms Money for the FilVets? - MabuhayRadio

Written by Jesse Jose

Friday, 13 February 2009 11:11 - Last Updated Friday, 13 February 2009 11:12

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**I think it's alms money. And all Filipinos should be ashamed of it. After six decades of begging to America for that money that the FilVets earned *daw* for fighting for their own country, it might be doled out finally.**

**In one big lump sum of – hold your breadth now: \$15,000 for each recipient! I think that's a lot of money. *Parang tumama ng jackpot sa sweepstakes, o kaya, sa casino.***

□

**It totals \$198 million. It's money that many senators as well as print and TV pundits have railed against, including Sen. John McCain and Lou Dobbs of *CNN* ... because that money will come out from that stimulus package, whose purpose is to stimulate the U.S. economy. □**

□

**The payment is now in the “final version” of the bill, which President Obama hopes to sign Monday next week. This compensation was NOT in the House version of the stimulus bill. It was only INSERTED *daw* by Sen. Daniel Inouye of Hawaii when the bill reached the Senate.**

At this point, *hindi pa rin sigurado*. Because the House will still have to agree to the final version. The House and the Senate will have to be in complete agreement of this bill.

President Obama, *kung ayaw niya*, can also veto it. *Kaya, tagilid pa. Pero*, there's a strong possibility *na lulusot na.*

**Editor's Notes:** Readers may want to visit again Jesse Jose's recent column entitled, [The Dishonor of Having to Beg](#) and Bobby Reyes' article, [RP Must End Its Participation in the "Alms Race" \(Part 6 of "Filipino Psyche" Series\)](#)

So, *kung lulusot na at sigurado na ang pera, mga tatang, balato naman.* Don't spend it all in one place. And don't forget to give *balato* also to those Fil-Am leaders who fought each other so hard in getting the recognition as to who should be the anointed one to lead the begging for this cause.

**SIX DECADES OF BEGGING:** This 60-year begging for this money stems from Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt's decision in July 1941 -- when Second World War broke out and the Japanese invaded the Philippines -- to integrate 140,000 Filipino soldiers into America's armed forces in the Philippines. The Philippines was then an American colony.

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A year later, the U.S. Congress passed a law allowing those Filipino soldiers to become U.S. citizens, with full military benefits. But after the war in 1946, President Truman signed two bills RESCINDING the citizenship and full military benefits to those Filipino soldiers. Thus, the begging begun.

**TWO VIEWS ON THE FILVETS EQUITY:** This exchange of views began when an editorial, in a mass e-mail, extolling the generosity of America to the world, pop out on my screen a couple of weeks ago. The article contends that Americans are the most generous and possibly the least appreciated people on earth. Germany, Japan, and to a lesser extent, Britain and Italy were lifted out of the debris of war by the Americans who poured out in billions of dollars and forgave other billions in debts.

I responded:

“If America was so generous, how come it never gave those alms to the FilVets that our Fil-Am leaders have been begging for so long? *Hanggang ngayon namamalimos pa rin ba ang mga Filipino?* This FilVets Equity has only brought SHAME to all Filipinos. *Kailan matatapos ang kahihyan na ‘to* ?”

Then, I hit “reply all.” Lourdes Ceballos, a noted Fil-Am leader in Chicago, quickly fired back this answer:

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**Hi Jesse,**

□

**Interesting exchange of views on Uncle Sam's "generosity" or lack of it. □ As a U.S. veteran yourself (navy?), you might be able to explain for us laymen some gray areas. □ For instance, what about a comparison of the benefits other ordinary U.S. vets get compared to what the Filipinos' "Equity" demands as their "rights." □ You see, our kababayan vets are clamoring for "justice" as to recognition of their military service and the money equivalents entailed. □ As a writer, veteran and Filipino American, you would provide us with a unique opinion worthy of disseminating to our community.**

**Last Saturday evening, a friend's husband, a veteran of World War II, said how lucky our FilVets would be if they one day do get the Equity or similar privileges, compared to his kind, who just received \$20 upon leaving the army!**

□

**Lourdes**

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F or a week or so, I parked Lourdes' email. Then I drafted this answer:

**Hello Lourdes,**

□

**First, I'd like to apologize for this late response to your email.**

□

**I think you know my stand on the FilVets Equity issue. I've said it many times to friends and foes alike. I've written about it many times in my column. I've sent letters about it many times to several U.S. congressmen. And many times, I've gotten hate mails and threats for it.**

□

**The FilVets don't deserve what they have been asking for. It has become a begging now actually, that it has shamed Filipinos and Fil-Ams alike. *Para sa akin nakakahiya ang ginagawa ng mga Fil-Am leaders natin,* who continue to perpetuate this shame.**

□

**These Fil-Am leaders who have been riding on this issue for so long should face the truth of the matter. The FilVets are NOT U.S. Vets. They don't deserve that so called "EQUITY." It's not the place of the U.S. government to give them compensation. And I don't think the U.S. government will ever give them the money. And rightly so. That money belongs to the wounded U.S. Vets coming home from the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. It belongs to their families. It belongs to those homeless U.S. vets ...**

□

***Hindi nakakaawa ang mga FilVets natin as we pictured them to be. They get all kinds of benefits: Social Security; Medicare/Medicaid; welfare money, food stamps; subsidized housings ... da □ whole works, ika nga. They get much more than those homeless U.S. vets we see panhandling on city street corners. Perhaps, even much more than what you and I get as senior citizens of this country, who have honestly, labored all their lives pursuing the American Dream. Sulit na at sobra pa ang naibigay na ni Uncle Sam sa mga FilVets natin.***

□

**I really think the FilVets Equity issue has brought DISHONOR to you and me and to all Filipinos and Fil-Ams alike ... because □ it has turned us into hard-lined mendicants, the kind of mendicants who have learned how to manipulate the welfare system of this generous country. □**

□

**Jesse**

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After drafting that letter, I hit “reply all.” I didn’t hear a word from anybody. Not even from Ms. Lourdes. I suppose my different opinion on this matter is like that so-called lone voice in the wilderness. **JJ** ☐

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