

The Veterans' Lobby Is No NaFFAA's Parable - MabuhayRadio

Written by Bobby Reyes

Tuesday, 29 May 2007 13:15 - Last Updated Thursday, 31 July 2008 23:14

There is the lobby in Washington, DC, to obtain full benefits for the American veterans of Filipino descent and Filipino veterans (domiciled in the Philippines). The lobby efforts have reached only the first base, if it were a baseball game. But there are already several Filipino-American leaders who have been crowing “full victory” and proclaiming themselves the individuals most-responsible for the supposed success of the lobbying efforts.

There is that Fil-Am self-proclaimed most-influential (*kuno*) Republican-Party Asian leader who claims to be the top banana in the lobby efforts. All he did for the veterans was really to write

perrytales

(sic) in a newspaper column that few people read in the first place. Actually, this guy is like the banana that needs to be fried (like the

maruya

), as it is already over-ripe.

Then there is that Fil-Am lawyer cum president of a community college in the Bay Area, who has been issuing opinions about, and strategies for, the veterans' lobby. This lawyer does most of his talking (sic) also in a newspaper column that fewer readers care to browse. This lawyer and his associates have been labeled by Col. Frank Quesada (ret.), a legitimate World War II veteran of a leader, as the modern-day “Makapilis” (quislings, to borrow the words of the colonel).

And there is the “lobbyist,” nicknamed the “Milk” (as in the Spanish *leche*), who has been accused of turning the lobby into a milking cow (pun intended). Wags say that WWII veterans who paid him \$20 per month per head as his compensation now address him as “Leche ka . . .”)

All of the three characters are identified with the National Federation of Filipino-American Associations (NaFFAA), which supposedly spearheads the lobbying efforts in Washington, DC. The FilVets' Lobby, as some people like to use as a term, reminds me of an Irish proverb that my literary idol, Max V. Soliven (now deceased), used to quote liberally. The adage says, "Victory has many fathers while defeat is an orphan."

The NaFFAA actually has some regional leaders who have worked painstakingly in helping do the FilVets' Lobby – without boasting about their efforts.

There is the NaFFAA chairman of Pennsylvania, Ernie Gange, who was the first community leader to suggest the convening of a FilVets' Summit last year. H.E. Amb. Willy C. Gaa, the Filipino envoy to the U.S.A., listened to Mr. Gange's suggestion and called for a summit that was held at the Philippine Embassy on Dec. 6-7, 2006

. Nope, the summit was not the original idea of the “perrytale” writer.

For the record, I was one of the first to back up the call of Mr. Gange but I decided not to attend the summit, as the “perrytale” writer, who was supposed to cochair it on behalf of the NaFFAA, sent a memo that said that in no instance would he allow me to talk during the conference at the Philippine Embassy.

There is no love lost between Mr. Gange and this writer. In fact, I have never met him face-to-face in my whole life. Although in 1993-4, I tangled with him online. I then protested the giving of the Pearl S. Buck Foundation's Award for Woman of the Year to former Philippine President Cory Cojuangco-Aquino. My friends and I even threatened to stage a demonstration at the United Nations' headquarters in New York City where the awarding was to take place. But we listened to Mr. Gange's plea not to embarrass the Philippines and the Filipino-American community and we did not proceed with the picket line. At that time, Mr. Gange was a member of P. S. Buck Foundation's Board of Trustees.

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There is also the NaFFAA chair for Massachusetts, Rudy Hermosa, who has been dishing out without the self-serving publicity his opinion about military pensions. Mr. Hermosa is a U.S. Navy retiree. He dissented from the position of that San Francisco-based lawyer-college president, who insisted in his writings that Fil-Am WWII veterans are entitled to military pension.

There is also Jerry Clarito, a NaFFAA's official in Illinois, who has worked without the usual PR-staged announcements, for the veterans' lobby. And the NaFFAA Region-3 chairman, Ed Navarra, has been doing the homework assigned to him for the FilVets' Lobby.

There is also the NaFFAA's regional chair for the Southeast Region, Ernesto Ramos, of Florida. Dr. Ramos has labored silently and diligently from the House of Representatives, as he works for his district's congressman in Washington

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DC

. There are other decent and hard-working NaFFAA regional officers who have been working without any publicity for the FilVets' Lobby. Space limitations will not permit me to enumerate their names.

Much of the credit really has to be given to an alliance bannered by a Filipino retired post-war colonel, Romeo Monteyro, of San Diego, CA. He has been working with Rep. Bob Filner (D-San Diego), the champion of Filipino veterans' rights in the House of Representatives. Colonel Monteyro, Colonel Quesada and Atty. Lou Tancinco of San Francisco

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CA

, have been representing the Veterans' Federation of the Philippines in the lobbying efforts in the United States

. Their group has been in the forefront of the FilVets' Lobby and none of its members has claimed to be the "supremo" of the veterans' efforts to obtain justice and equality. Remember when a NaFFAA cofounder once demanded that the WWII Filipino vets proclaim him as the "supremo" (supreme leader) of their lobbying efforts?

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One can read more of Atty. Tancinco's group modesty in its lobbying efforts in this article, <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/203/51/>

You can read also my earlier essays on the truth about the veterans' lobby by clicking on these links:

<http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/41/51/>

<http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/40/51/>

<http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/39/51/>

And don't forget the views of Jesse Jose, another American (post-Vietnam War) military retiree in his column, "Over a Cup o' Kapeng Barako," in this link <http://www.mabuhayradio.com/content/view/74/90/>

So what else is new? There is nothing new really to write, except the tons of grandstanding in the FilVets' Lobby.

Has the lobby become a NaFFAA parable that does not bring any lesson to our community? “***NaFFAA-ka lungkot na naman, Kuya Eddie*** .” # # #

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