

AN ACT CREATING A COMMISSION TO DISPOSE OF ALL UNSETTLED CLAIMS OF FILIPINO VETERANS.

REPUBLIC ACT NO. 1889, June 22, 1957

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WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 21 of President Osmena, dated October 28, 1944, declared all persons who were actually serving in military forces in the Philippines under a commander who has been appointed, designated or recognized by the Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area to be entitled to all the rights and privileges of members of recognized guerrilla organizations;

WHEREAS, the said Executive Order was subsequently embodied in Circular No. 100 of the USAFFE headquarters dated November 17, 1944, and its provisions partly implemented by the United States Government;

WHEREAS, there are still a great number of Filipino veterans who, during the last war, actively served in military forces in the Philippines under a commander duly appointed, designated or recognized by the Commander in Chief of the Southwest Pacific Area but who have not been extended the rights and privileges by members of recognized guerrilla organizations;

WHEREAS, at the time the R. P. D. (Recovered Personnel Division) which was established by the United States in the Philippines for the purpose of processing and deciding upon the merits of claims presented before said organization and directing payment thereof was closed, there were around 5,000 claims involving the amount of P70,000,000 which have already been processed and approved but without any known justified reasons were not paid; and

WHEREAS, according to our knowledge and belief many other claims similar to the 5,000 claims referred to in the preceding paragraph were also unjustly denied by the R. P. D.;

NOW, THEREFORE, in fairness and in justice to Filipino veterans who have been unjustly denied the benefits due them,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION. 1. There is hereby created a Commission to process, determine, screen and adjudicate all unsettled claims of Filipino veterans to work and make negotiations for more benefits for Filipino veterans from the Government of the United States in conjunction with such diplomatic or other agencies of the Philippine Government working in favor of the veterans.

SEC. 2. The Commission herein created shall be known as the Veterans Claims Commission under the officer of the President and shall be composed of one Chairman and two Members to be appointed by the President with the approval of the Commission on Appointments. The Chairman shall receive an annual compensation of twelve thousand pesos and each Member, ten thousand pesos. The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:

- To appoint its own personnel and fix their compensation;

- To prescribe rules and regulations to carry into effect the provisions of this Act; and
- With the approval of the President, it may establish a branch office in Washington, D. C. or send representatives to the United States to work for benefits to Filipino veterans.
- Request the government of the United States directly or through the President or the Ambassador of the Philippines in the United States to turn over to the Commission all the papers, evidences, or certified copies thereof, of Filipino veterans whose claims have been filed with the R. P. D. but denied.

SEC. 3. The members of the Commission shall at the time of their appointment be citizens of the Philippines: Provided, however, That at least one member of the Commission shall be a veteran of the last world war of good standing; and another a member of the bar who has practiced law for at least five years prior to his appointment or held during a like period an office in the Philippine Government requiring admission to the practice of law as an indispensable requisite.

SEC. 4. Any person who shall file, in whole or in part, a false claim, or certify to such claim knowing the same to be false, shall be imprisoned for a period of from six to twelve years.

SEC. 5. All claims of veterans shall be disposed of by the Commission within the period of three years from the date of the approval of this Act. All records of the defunct Screen Board shall be turned over to the Commission.

SEC. 6. The sum of three hundred thousand pesos is hereby authorized to be appropriated out of any funds in the National Treasury not otherwise appropriated to carry out the provisions of this Act. The Commission should render report within a year from the approval of this Act stating the amount needed to pay in cash or in certificates the claims of the veterans and their widows and orphans the claims of the necessary amount may be included in the annual Appropriation Act.

SEC. 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved, June 22, 1957.

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