



## CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES CHICAGO

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### PCG CHICAGO COMMEMORATES ARAW NG KAGITINGAN (DAY OF VALOR)



*From left to right: Cultural Officer Noly Dulay, Consul Ryan Pondoc, Consul and Acting Head of Post Ryan Francis Gener and Consul Melvin Almoquera.*

Chicago, 09 April 2021 – The Philippine Consulate General in Chicago held a wreath-laying ceremony at the Bataan-Corregidor Memorial Bridge in Downtown Chicago in commemoration of the *Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor)* on 09 April 2021. Attending the event were Consul and Acting Head of Post Ryan Francis Gener, Consul Ryan Pondoc, Consul Melvin Almoquera and Cultural Officer Noly Dulay.

Also known as the State Street Bridge, the first bridge on this site was built in 1864. The current structure was completed and opened on 28 May 1949. It was named the Bataan-Corregidor Memorial Bridge by then Chicago Mayor Oscar Hewitt in memory of the American soldiers from the Chicago area who fought in Bataan and Corregidor during World War II.

On 09 April 1998, on the occasion of *Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor)* and in commemoration of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Philippine Independence, this same bridge was rededicated by former Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in honor of all Filipino and American veterans who fought side by side during the fall of Bataan and Corregidor in 1942.

According to historical accounts, Major General Edward King Jr., commander of Luzon Force Bataan, surrendered more than 76,000 of his starving and disease-ridden troops (64,000 Filipinos and 12,000 Americans) on 09 April 1942. As prisoners of war, the soldiers were forced to endure the infamous 140-kilometer Bataan Death March from Mariveles, Bataan to Camp O'Donnell in Capas, Tarlac for six days. Along the way, thousands passed away. It is believed that only 54,000 of the 76,000 prisoners were able to reach Camp O'Donnell. The prisoners who survived were only rescued in early 1945.

Under Republic Act 3022 which was passed and signed into law in 1961, the *Araw ng Kagitingan (Day of Valor)* was officially proclaimed as a Philippine holiday.

Our commemoration of the sacrifices and heroism shown by Filipino and American veterans during World War II is also significant since the Philippines and the United States celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

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