

**Remarks by Ambassador Harry K. Thomas, Jr.**  
**(As Prepared for Delivery)**  
**Veterans Day, Nov 11, 2010**  
“Honoring the Sacrifices”

Distinguished (VIPs), Honored Veterans and family members, (more Greetings):  
*Magandang umaga sa inyong lahat at mabuhay.*

Thank you for joining us on this eleventh day of the eleventh month, at the eleventh hour as we remember the courageous men and women – Filipino, American, and from allied nations – who have fought to defend our freedom, protect our nations from aggression, and, in the words of our American Founding Fathers, “secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.” Today we honor all who have served, and we remember those who died for this noble cause.

Ninety-two years ago on this same day at this same time, the armistice that ended World War One was signed. The world rejoiced at the war’s end – in hope that it really had been the war to end all wars. Yet ninety-two years later, we stand here again, honoring millions more soldiers, sailors, marines, and aviators who gave their lives in subsequent wars.

We remember those who defended Bata’an and Corregidor, and those who liberated Manila. *Masaya ako sa pagkakataong makita kayo muli* (it’s great to see some of you here again).

We remember Guadalcanal, Peleliu, and Iwo Jima. The very ground we stand on is consecrated to the memory of those who died here in the Philippines and in the entire Asia-Pacific theater in World War Two.

On this hallowed ground, we also remember succeeding generations of Filipinos, Americans, and our allies who fought to liberate South Korea, South Vietnam, and Kuwait, and who have fought to liberate Iraq and Afghanistan from violent tyranny.

Jon Skelly tells me that the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has an expression: “Regardless of what one may think of the war, we all honor the warrior.”

As we honor the warrior, so too do we honor the warrior’s family. Their wives, husbands, sons, daughters, mothers, and fathers also sacrifice so that we can live free.

Today, and always, let us honor the sacrifices. Let us give thanks for the freedom and liberty we enjoy. Let us strive to be worthy of those sacrifices. Let us strive to be, in the words of St. Francis of Assisi, “instruments of (God’s) peace.”

*Maraming salamat sa inyong lahat.*

And now I have the privilege of introducing our guest of honor and keynote speaker. Lt. General Carolina is a man who has served his country and his fellow Veterans with honor and distinction. While an active duty soldier he achieved the rank of Lt. General as an infantryman, commanding battalions, brigades and eventually becoming the Commanding General of the

Philippine Army's 7th Infantry Division. A member of the Philippine Military Academy class of 1970 and a "top notcher" at the AFP Command and General Staff College, he culminated his active duty career as Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Rather than retire to a life of rest and reflection on an extraordinary career in soldiering, General Carolina chose to continue serving his country and fellow Veterans, serving in a multitude of roles including Under Secretary for Civil, Veterans and Reserve Affairs. He has led the successful Philippine Defense Reform Program and has helped his fellow citizens through numerous calamities as Chairman of the National Disaster Coordinating Council. He has been an invaluable friend and partner to our Embassy and to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in welcoming our guest of honor, the current Administrator of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, General Ernesto G. Carolina.