

[PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 359, December 30, 1973]

AMENDING PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 244 ISSUED ON THE 12TH DAY OF JULY NINETEEN HUNDRED AND SEVENTY THREE.

WHEREAS, in the continuing study being undertaken aimed at increasing the capacity of the government to provide adequate services for the benefit of Philippine veterans and ex-servicemen and their dependents it has been found that there is a need to incorporate certain amendments to Presidential Decree No. 244 issued on July 12, 1973 to boost the assistance potential of the government;

WHEREAS, said study has determined additional tangible and justifiable forms of assistance that can be extended to intended beneficiaries;

WHEREAS, said study likewise has determined necessary additional powers and funds of the Commission to enhance its effectiveness in carrying out its functions.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution as Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and pursuant to Proclamation No. 1081, dated September 21, 1972, and General Order No. 1, dated September 22, 1972, as amended, in furtherance of the program of assistance to Philippine veterans and ex-servicemen and their dependents do hereby order and decree the amendment of Presidential Decree No. 244 as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1 of the said Decree is hereby amended to read as follows:

"a. To carry out the purposes of this Decree, a Philippine Veterans Assistance Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, is hereby created. The Commission shall be a body corporate and politic and shall be composed of the Secretary of National Defense as Chairman, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as Vice-Chairman, the Administrator of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, the President of the Philippine Veterans Bank and three appointive members who shall represent the veterans group, to be appointed by the President. The term of the appointive members shall be for three years: *Provided*, That the terms of the first three appointive members shall be one, two and three years respectively. All vacancies, except through the expiration of the term, shall be filled for the unexpired term only. The appointive members of the Commission shall receive seventy five pesos *per diem* for each meeting actually attended by them: *Provided*, That no compensation shall be paid for more than one meeting a week.

"b. The Commission shall have under its general supervision an Administrator who shall serve as the Chief Executive Officer immediately responsible for carrying out the program and the policies of the Commission. The Administrator shall be a veteran who has had previous experience in technical and administrative fields related to the purposes of this Decree. He shall be appointed by the President and shall receive a salary to be fixed by the Commission with the approval of the President.

"c. The Commission, upon the recommendation of the Administrator, shall appoint all such other officers and personnel as may be deemed necessary, fix their compensation, prescribe their duties and establish such methods and procedures as may insure the efficient, honest and economical administration of the provisions and purposes of this Act; *Provided, however,* That the officers and personnel of the Commission shall, as far as possible, be qualified veterans and/or their dependents.

"d. Appointments to the Administrative and Research Staff or any position of responsibility in the Commission may be on a part-time basis, and shall be exempt from the requirements and restrictions of the Civil Service Law, rules and regulations on position-classification and salary standardization and section two hundred fifty nine of the Revised Administrative Code: *Provided,* That any government retiree employed in the Commission shall not be required to reimburse or refund any gratuity received from the government nor shall any pension or annuity to which he is entitled be suspended on account of his employment in the Commission.

"e. The Commission is authorized to call upon any all government offices, agencies, institutions and government-owned or controlled corporations for such assistance as it may need to carry out the purposes of this Decree."

SEC. 2. Section 2 of the same Decree is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 2. Purposes, Powers and Duties of the Commission:

a. To establish, maintain and make available for veterans and their dependents all such services necessary to provide them assistance for employment, medical care, education and other related services. To effectively and efficiently carry out this purpose, the Commission shall coordinate with all government offices, agencies, institutions, trustees, and foundations performing assistance and welfare activities for veterans.

The term "veteran" refers to veterans of the Philippine Revolution, World War II, Korean War as used by the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office and II such other veterans as may be determined by the Commission.

The term "dependents" refers to the spouse and legitimate, acknowledged, natural or adopted children wholly dependent upon and living with the veterans, who are not more than twenty three years of age or over twenty three years of age if they are incapable of self-support because they are mentally or physically defective or although over twenty three years of age and mentally and physically sound are, through no fault of theirs, jobless or students. The term "dependents" also covers parents of the veterans who are wholly dependent upon and living with them.

b. To manage, invest and otherwise deal with the funds and financial contributions transferred or made to the Commission by the Government and private persons such that the services to be provided under this Act