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INS reverses stand on naturalization of Filipino war veterans

By REUBEN SEGURITAN

Not all Filipino war veterans who served under the US Armed Forces during World War II will be recommended by the Immigration and Naturalization Service for naturalization, according to Lowell K. Palmes, INS deputy assistant commissioner, in a telephone interview with the **Filipino Reporter** last June 14.

Mr. Palmes was commenting on the INS Instruction issued May 24, 1978, which laid down the conditions that a Filipino war veteran must meet before getting a favorable INS recommendation.

The INS mentioned two categories of Filipino war veterans, namely, those who can establish that they attempted to file naturalization petitions before December 31, 1946, and those who cannot show proof

that they attempted to file their petitions before this date.

Only Filipinos war veterans under the first category will be given favorable INS recommendation for American citizenship. A Filipino under the second category would be denied such a recommendation, Mr. Palmes said.

This latest development is an apparent shift in INS policy. In November, last year, the INS withdrew its appeal in the **Matter of Petition for Naturalization of 68** Filipino war veterans, a case decided by Judge Charles Ranfrew in California. In the case, the federal court ruled in favor of the veterans. The INS appealed the case to the Court of Appeals, but when Commissioner Leonel Castillo took over, it withdrew the appeal.

From November, 1977 to May, 1978, the INS instructed its field offices to withhold the processing of the veterans' petitions. Public statements of Commissioner Castillo, however, indicated that all Filipino veterans who would be able to prove their service in the US Armed Forces during World War II and who would be able to come to the US may be given favorable INS recommendation.

Asked why the INS changed its position, Mr. Palmes said: "After reviewing the situation, we felt that only those veterans under the first category who had attempted timely filing of an application for naturalization were adversely affected by the lack of an immigration or nationality officer, during the validity of the expired naturalization statute."