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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Christopher Capozzola is Professor and Head of History at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At MIT, he teaches courses in political and legal history, war and the military, and the history of international migration, and in 2018 was named a MacVicar Faculty Fellow, MIT's highest honor for undergraduate teaching.

He is the author of *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen* and *Bound by War: How the United States and the Philippines Built America's First Pacific Century*, along with contributions to academic journals and periodicals such as the *Boston Globe*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Politico*, and the *Washington Post*. He is the Co-Curator of "The Volunteers: Americans Join World War I," a traveling exhibition on American civilians who volunteered in Europe during the First World War, and is the Academic Adviser for the Filipino Veterans Recognition and Education Project.

With support from the Carnegie Council on Ethics in International Affairs, he is beginning work on *Merchants of Death*, a history of U.S. Congressional efforts in the 1930s to investigate the influence of the defense industry on American foreign policy.

How Filipino Veterans Joined the Greatest Generation, 1945-2009

Christopher Capozzola

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Among the many provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was one that authorized one-time payments to certain groups of Filipino World War II veterans whose eligibility for naturalization and veterans benefits had been rescinded by the U.S. Congress in 1946. The national press hailed this legislative achievement as an important—but long overdue—recognition of the military service of a generation soon to pass into the history books. But to many veterans and their advocates, the reward was too little, too late. In a nation that has long linked citizenship and military service, in a contemporary political culture that has romanticized and generously rewarded the sacrifices of the so-called “greatest generation,” long-term exclusion of Filipino veterans seems extraordinary. Equally puzzling is the insistence of the U.S. Department of State that these veterans’ claims had already been rewarded. Simply put: what took so long?

The question cannot be answered from either the United States or the Philippines. Rather, this paper situates the Filipino veterans equity movement in a transnational context, as veterans pursued a politics of memory not only within a social movement that spanned the Pacific but also in dialogue with the memory politics of two states. Based on archival and oral history sources in the US and the Philippines, and drawing from my recently published book, *Bound by War: How the United States and the Philippines Built America’s First Pacific Century* (Basic, 2020), the paper traces specific changes in the post-Cold War period—cultural, demographic, and diplomatic shifts—that accelerated veterans’ long-overdue victory. It thus contributes to the conference inquiry into veteran politics and memory by suggesting the possibility of braiding military history together with the histories of empire and migration.