

February 8, 1959
24th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PHILIPPINE FLAG

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL FLAG

The people's fierce desire for liberty gave birth to the Filipino flag and the country's history evolved its final colors and design.

Prior to the Revolution of 1896, the Filipinos had no flag that could be truly called national. Whenever a sector of the country rose against oppressive Spain, each rebel group carried a banner different from those of other contingents. It was not until 1896, then, the one emblem stood for the whole country: this one was Bonifacio's flag for the *Katipunan*. A substitute for the war standard of 1892, it consisted of a red rectangular field with a sun in the middle and the three *K*'s beneath.

Bonifacio's flag served until October 1896, when Aguinaldo adopted another. The new one similarly consisted of a red rectangular field with a white sun, but the sun now had 8 rays specifically and the letter *K* in ancient Tagalog script was printed in the middle of the sun. This emblem, however, was modified anew at the Naic Assembly of March 17, 1897, by the revolutionary leaders. At the center of the red rectangle, they placed a white mythological sun with eyes, nose and mouth. This flag was used until the conclusion of the Biak-na-Bato Pact.

As provided for in the Pact, the rebel leaders went in exile to Hongkong. Here at 535 Morris Hill, the present flag was sewed, upon request of Aguinaldo, by Mrs. Marcela Agoncillo, assisted by her daughter Lorenza and by Miss Delfina Herbosa, a niece of Rizal.

Its design based on former standards, the present flag, colored red, white and blue is rich in patriotic symbolism. The sun stands for Liberty, its eight rays the first eight provinces to rise against Spain. The three five-pointed stars represent the country's geographic groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

On Aguinaldo's return from Hongkong in 1898, he brought the flag with him and for the first time unfurled it in public on May 28 to commemorate the Filipino victory in the Battle of Alapan. Officially it was first hoisted during the proclamation of Philippine Independence at Kawit, Cavite on June 12, 1898.

The Bureau of Posts for the first time, is issuing two denomination stamps, February 8, 1959, depicting the Philippine National Flag, in conjunction with the 23rd anniversary of the approval of the Philippine Constitution. Designed by the philatelic designer Nemesio Dimanlig, Jr., the Stamps were printed in three colors by Heliogravure process.

