

## Taguba's new battle cry: Stay healthy

Written by EDMUND M. SILVESTRE  
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**Retired U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba (center) marches with the AARP contingent at the Philippine Independence Day parade in New York on June 1. (Filipino Reporter photo)**

### ***Exclusive to the Filipino Reporter***

Retired United States Army Maj. Gen. Antonio Taguba will forever be remembered in history as a decorated military officer that probed and found substantive evidence of sadistic abuses committed by the U.S. military forces in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

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The 2004 "Taguba Report" led to the forced retirement a year later of the second Philippine-born U.S. citizen to be promoted to the rank of general in the U.S. Army, thus ending 34 years of a distinguished military career.

Taguba, also an advocate for breaking down racial and ethnic barriers in the military, has managed to put that chapter in his life behind him and opted not to talk about it anymore, especially in public.

"There's nothing more to say because it's now common knowledge even in the international community," he told the **Filipino Reporter**.

When invited to public gatherings nowadays, he enthusiastically talks about less controversial issues like promoting a healthy lifestyle for Filipinos and Filipino-Americans.

Among his many civic duties since returning to civilian life, Taguba currently serves as a spokesman for the non-profit AARP — formerly the American Association of Retired Persons that has grown to include all individuals aged 50 and above.

On June 1, the Alexandria, Virginia-based Taguba marched at the Philippine Independence Day celebration in New York City, along with some war veterans and AARP members, including his wife Debbie.

Taguba led the handing of AARP flyers and literature to parade goers.

Later at the street fair, where AARP had a booth, he also spoke about helpful benefits from joining the AARP at a mere \$16 per year.

In an interview with the **Reporter** two days prior to the parade, the 63-year-old Taguba said AARP offers its members, among other things, Medicare supplemental health insurance, discounts on prescription drugs and consumer goods, entertainment and travel packages,

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long-term care insurance and automobile, home and life insurance.

Taguba highlighted AARP's goal "to win back opportunity for those now in crisis, so thousands of vulnerable low-income Americans 50+ can regain their foothold, continue to serve as anchors for their families and communities, and ensure that their best life is still within reach."

As of April 2014, he said AARP has more than 37 million members, making it one of the largest membership organizations in the U.S.

In addition, Taguba also enjoy sharing his healthy lifestyle in order to stay fit — such as running in marathons, playing golf and eating proper diet.

"I'm a perfect example of how retirement can be fulfilling," he said.

"I just want our *kababayans* to realize that they could also do it."

"Filipinos don't exercise a lot and they love to eat unhealthy food with lots of sugar, fat, cholesterol," Taguba noted.

"Unless they want to go to the hospital all the time, they should change their lifestyle."

"It's their choice if they want to stay alive and live longer," he added.

"They must stay happy, healthy and active. Exercise and watch what you eat."

Aside from endorsing AARP, Taguba also chairs the Pan-Pacific American Leaders and

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Mentors (PPALM), where he mentors the new generation of young Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders.

He also volunteers for the United Service Organization (USO) and helps veterans with their benefits.

Additionally, he consults with small businesses and engages in public speaking on behalf of Asian-Americans, especially on the issue of benefits for World War II Filipino veterans.