

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 67



Introduced by Representative **JOEY SARTE SALCEDA**

AN ACT
DECLARING SEPTEMBER 2 OF EVERY YEAR AS A
SPECIAL NON-WORKING HOLIDAY IN THE PROVINCE OF ALBAY
TO BE KNOWN AS "SIMEON OLA DAY"

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to declare September 2 of every year as "SIMEON OLA DAY".

Simeon Ola y Arboleda was a Bicolano revolutionary hero and known as the last general to surrender to the American forces during the Philippine-American War.

He was born in September 2, 1865 to Vicente Ola and Apolonia Arboleda. At an early age, he entered the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary and studied Philosophy, but did not finish his course. As member of the local branch of the Katipunan, he actively engaged in revolutionary activities. He used his position as *Teniente de Cuadrillos* and a trusted confidant of the local parish priest to recruit men, smuggle arms and raise funds for the revolutionary army.

His gallantry in battle and excellent leadership skills earned him successive promotions in the field. In April 1898, he was promoted captain during the Battle of Camalig by General Vito Belarmino, the Zone Commander of the Revolutionary Forces in the Bicol Region. On January 23, 1900, he was again promoted to the rank of Major after leading an ambush which resulted in the capture of three Americans.

Despite overwhelming odds, Simeon Ola, always with unflagging and unbowed spirit, valiantly fought the superior Americans forces. As leader of his own outfit, he figured prominently in various battles throughout the Province of Albay, including encounters with enemy forces in the towns of Guinobatan, Ligao, Jovellar and Oas. Because of his revolutionary activities, Simeon Ola became a marked man to the Americans. He exhibited extraordinary talent in leading men with meager arms but using to his advantage natural features and terrains, including forests and caves to assault and elude the enemies. He also gained overwhelming support of his fellow Albayanos. In order to trap him, the enemies resorted to the reconcentration system to the detriment of even innocent civilians.

Failing in this regard, the Americans turned to negotiations to lure him into surrendering. While initially rejecting all peace overtures by the Americans, Ola soon realized that his battle weary troops could no longer continue prosecuting the war and still win.

On September 25, 1903, Ola laid down his arms and surrendered to Governor Bette and Colonel Bandholtz. He surrendered over one year and five months after General Miguel Malvar surrendered in Batangas to Gen J. Franklin Bell on April 13, 1902.

Charged with sedition, Ola was sentenced in 1903 to 30 years imprisonment. However, he was granted executive clemency and was released from prison a year later. In 1910, he entered politics and won as town mayor of Guinobatan, which he served until 1919.

Simeon Ola survived two revolutions and two World Wars: against the Spaniards, the Americans and the Japanese. He died on February 14, 1952.

Over the years, Simeon Ola became a symbol of the Albayano tenacity in fighting overwhelming oppressive forces and has proven that wars could be fought not by defeating the enemy but by winning the hearts of his fellowmen.

The Province of Albay and the Municipality of Guinobatan have been celebrating Ola Day since 1996 through a Provincial Executive Order. This bill seeks to honor a genuine Filipino hero who offered himself as a selfless sacrifice to fight against tyranny for the sake of his people.

Hence, the passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. September 2 of every year is hereby declared to be a special nonworking public holiday in the entire Province of Albay including the cities therein in commemoration of the birthdate of Simeon A. Ola and to be known as "Simeon Ola Day".

SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,
