

# Abandoned Filipinos Sue U.S. Over Child Support

CPM Founder Cotchett represents women and children  
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## Attorneys

Joseph W. Cotchett

Next to her son James, what Lucia Villegas Hill prizes most may be a handful of documents identifying his father as an American sailor at the United States Navy base that shut down here last year.

"He's so far away now," she said, handing over a crinkled 1975 marriage certificate and a faded photograph of a man whose features bear some resemblance to her son's. It has been years since Mrs. Hill's husband wrote or sent money, and she clings to a scrap of yellow paper with his last known address and phone number, in Port Orchard, Wash.

For centuries, women in diverse lands and cultures have been left to raise children alone after being abandoned by foreign soldiers.

But Mrs. Hill and thousands of others in this town next to the former Subic Bay Naval Station have taken a novel approach. Instead of pressing individual paternity or child-support suits, they have filed a \$68 million lawsuit arguing that the United States has a legal responsibility to educate and provide medical care for an estimated 8,600 Amerasians in Olongapo.

The suit, filed as a class action in March in the Federal Court of Claims in Washington, argues that the Navy effectively fostered and regulated an elaborate night-life and prostitution industry, live-in arrangements and marriages here in which servicemen fathered thousands of children.

### Sporadic Support Payments

Mrs. Hill, for example, says she met her husband, also named James, in the Shamrock Club, a popular night spot.

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"I'm very sad because of what happened," she said. "But I still have hope, and No. 1 is for my boy to meet his father."

Many mothers subsisted for a time on sporadic payments from the fathers, pressuring Navy officials when payments lagged. But the financial support began drying up in 1991, when the Philippine Senate barred the renewal of United States leases on the sprawling naval base and other installations in the Philippines. The United States had already decided that year to abandon Clark Air Base, its other major military site in the country, after it was damaged by a volcanic eruption.... *(To read the entire article, please click [HERE](#))*