

*Army Vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride*



# **ARMY**

**Serving the people. Securing the land.**

**[oacpa.army2012@gmail.com](mailto:oacpa.army2012@gmail.com)**

## **OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**04 April 2016**

**Monday**

*Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

04 APRIL 2016

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1-2	Weather Forecast		www.pagasa.dost.gov.ph
<b>ARMY RELATED NEWS</b>			
3	Army troops fight Mt. Apo fire	Dennis Santos	PDI p.A18
4	Authorities tighten security for Ecija Balikatan exercises	PNA	Standard Today p.A5
5	NGO restores Death March landmark	Romeo Dizon	Standard Today p.A5
6	NPA killed in Comval clash	Alexis Romero	Phil Star p.A-27
7	Top Negros pols sign peace covenant	Danny Dangcalan	Phil Star p.A-27
8	NPA rebel found dead at encounter site in Com Val	Alexander Lopez	Mla Bulletin p.14
9	NPA killed in Compostela Valley clash	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B2
10	Ralista sa kidapawan, positive sa gun powder residue-PNP	BRT	Bulgar p.3
11	BIFF field commander arestado	Aaron Recuenco	Tempo p.4
12	Photo- Newbies	Mel Caspe	Standard Today p.A5
<b>AFP RELATED NEWS</b>			
13	400 kilos of ice poured on Mt. Apo fire	Edith Regalado	Phil Star p.A-27
14	2 more Hueys tapped to fight Mt. Apo blaze	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B31
15	Balikatan to test Phl's new military assets	Alexis Romero	Phil Star p.4
16-17	Fort Magsaysay beefs up security for Balikatan war exercises	PNA	Business Mirror p.A4
18-19	US plans 3 <sup>rd</sup> patrol near disputed South China Sea	Reuters	Mla Bulletin p.1
20	Japanese sub, warship dock in Subic	Bebot Sison	Phil Star p.A-27
21	China it may invite reporters to disputed isles	Estrella Torres	PDI p.A11
22	Palace still verifying kidnap of 4 Malaysians	Delon Porcalla, AFP	Phil Star p.7
<b>EDITORIAL / OPINION / COMMENTARY</b>			
23	Z. Gloria Morales: 'A Soldier's Tale'	Ramon Farolan	PDI p.A15
24	Mendiola, Luisita , Kidapawan	-	Mla Time sp.10



















































































Republic of the Philippines  
Department of Science and Technology  
**PHILIPPINE ATMOSPHERIC, GEOPHYSICAL AND ASTRONOMICAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION (PAGASA)**  
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






**24-Hour Weather Forecast and Extended Weather Outlook for Selected Cities:**

ISSUED AT: 5:00PM 03 APRIL 2016

VALID BEGINNING: 5:00 PM TODAY UNTIL 5:00 PM TOMORROW

CITIES	24-Hr Weather, Winds and Sea Condition Forecast <i>from 5PM today until 5PM tomorrow</i>			Extended Weather Outlook <i>Duration: 5PM until 5PM of the following day</i>			
	03 APR			04 APR	05 APR	06 APR	07 APR
Metro Manila	 23°C 35°C	Light to Moderate East Manila Bay: Slight to Moderate		 24°C 34°C	 23°C 34°C	 23°C 34°C	 24°C 35°C
Tuguegarao City	 22°C 36°C	Light to Moderate East - Southeast		 23°C 33°C	 24°C 35°C	 24°C 35°C	 24°C 36°C
Laoag City	 22°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East - Southeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 23°C 32°C	 24°C 32°C	 23°C 32°C	 23°C 32°C
Baguio City	 16°C 24°C	Light to Moderate East - Southeast		 15°C 25°C	 16°C 25°C	 15°C 25°C	 15°C 25°C
SBMA (Olongapo) / Clark Zone (Angeles City)	 25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate East Subic Bay: Slight to Moderate		 25°C 35°C	 25°C 35°C	 25°C 34°C	 25°C 35°C
Tagaytay City	 21°C 31°C	Light to Moderate East		 22°C 32°C	 22°C 32°C	 22°C 31°C	 22°C 31°C
Lipa City	 23°C 33°C	Light to Moderate East		 22°C 33°C	 23°C 33°C	 23°C 32°C	 23°C 33°C
Legazpi City	 25°C 31°C	Moderate East Coastal Waters: Moderate		 25°C 32°C	 25°C 32°C	 25°C 32°C	 25°C 32°C
Puerto Princesa City	 25°C 33°C	Light to Moderate East-Northeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 25°C 34°C	 25°C 33°C	 25°C 33°C	 25°C 33°C
Iloilo City / Bacolod City	 25°C 32°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 25°C 34°C	 25°C 34°C	 25°C 35°C	 25°C 35°C
Metro Cebu	 25°C 33°C	Light to Moderate East Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 24°C 33°C	 25°C 32°C	 24°C 33°C	 25°C 34°C
Tacloban City	 25°C 33°C	Moderate East-Northeast Coastal Waters: Moderate		 25°C 33°C	 25°C 33°C	 25°C 33°C	 25°C 33°C
Cagayan de Oro City	 23°C 32°C	Light to Moderate East - Northeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 23°C 32°C	 24°C 32°C	 23°C 33°C	 23°C 33°C
Valencia City	 20°C 32°C	Light to Moderate East - Northeast		 19°C 33°C	 20°C 32°C	 19°C 33°C	 19°C 33°C
Metro Davao	 25°C 36°C	Light to Moderate East - Northeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 26°C 35°C	 25°C 35°C	 25°C 36°C	 25°C 35°C
Zamboanga City	 25°C 34°C	Light to Moderate Northeast Coastal Waters: Slight to Moderate		 25°C 35°C	 25°C 34°C	 24°C 35°C	 24°C 35°C

**LEGEND:**

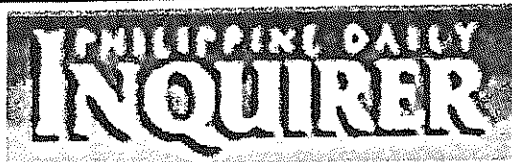
	Clear skies		Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Occasional Rains		Rains with Gust - Winds
	Partly Cloudy Skies		Cloudy skies with Rainshowers and/or Thunderstorms		Monsoon Rains / Rains		Stormy
	Partly Cloudy to at times Cloudy with Rainshowers		Light Rains				

END OF FORECAST

PREPARED BY: MAIGGE

CHECKED BY: GIMQ

04 April 2016



Page: A18

# Army troops fight Mt. Apo fire

**By Dennis Jay Santos  
and Orlando Dinoy**  
*Inquirer Mindanao*

DAVAO CITY—Philippine Army soldiers on Saturday climbed Mt. Apo to help volunteers and firemen put out the fire that has been burning sections of the country's highest peak for more than a week now.

The blaze, which started on March 26, had engulfed more than 300 hectares of forest and grassland as of Sunday.

Authorities said some campers may have unwittingly triggered it when they failed to put off fire they used for cooking when they left a camping ground along the Kapatagan trail in Digos City. The fire earlier spread to the North

Cotabato side of Mt. Apo, but this was contained after volunteers built fire lines.

The blaze, however, continues in the Davao del Sur side of the mountain.

Maj. Ezra Balagtey, acting spokesperson of the Philippine Army's Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom), said a company size unit, composed of 112 soldiers from the 10th Infantry Division, arrived in Kapatagan town in Davao del Sur province early morning Saturday and started scaling the mountain. They were expected to reach areas hit by the fire later that day and assist volunteers there.

The soldiers were sent to Mt. Apo a day after Maj. Gen.

Leonardo Guerrero, commander of Eastmincom, alerted all disaster response units to prepare for possible deployment to Mt. Apo to help contain the fire.

Balagtey said the Philippine Air Force has been using a helicopter, rigged with a large bucket, to scoop water from a lake to douse the fire. It is also used to carry sacks of crushed ice that are dropped into affected areas in an attempt to stop the blaze from spreading.

Balagtey said another helicopter is used to ferry volunteers and supplies.

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council has appealed for donations of food and water for volunteers.

Harry Camoro, spokesperson

of Incident Management Team in Davao del Sur, said they also needed more volunteers to replace those assigned in the area earlier.

The drop-off areas for donations are the Incident Command Post in Barangay Kapatagan in Digos, Davao del Sur; Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office in Digos City; and DENR regional office in Lanang, Davao City.

Mt. Apo has an elevation of 2,954 meters above sea level, making it the highest peak in the country. It was declared a natural park in 2004.

Sections of the mountain belong to the provinces of Davao del Sur and North Cotabato.

04 April 2016

The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: 45

# Authorities tighten security for Ecija Balikatan exercises

*FORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija—Authorities have tightened security measures in this camp as hundreds of American and Filipino soldiers arrived here for the annual 32nd joint Balikatan war exercises.*

Army Capt. Rozelle Ticar, spokesperson of the 7th Infantry (Kaugnay) Division based in this military camp, said that they are ready to receive American soldiers for the war exercises amid security concerns with measures have already been laid out inside the camp as part of the routine.

"Everything is much under control and preventive measures

were laid out," Ticar said, adding that series of planning and coordination were conducted as per instruction of commanding general, Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon.

Last year, four American soldiers lost their belongings to thieves who gained entry inside the camp.

Army Staff Sergeants Scotty Wilson and Dwayne Massey

and Lieutenants Patrick Tierney and Thomas Dunne lost their belongings consisting of army boots, wallet containing \$2,000, an undetermined amount of pesos and other personal belongings.

They were part of the 700-soldier contingent who plunged into the war exercises inside this military camp along with 900 Filipino soldiers.

A report said that unidentified suspects gained entry into the unlocked building by boring a hole beneath a perimeter fence.

Said belongings were recovered. "I am assuring that the said theft incident will not happen anymore. Our soldiers stepped up

for all preventive measures for the activity," he said.

This camp was one of five areas identified last March 18 by the US and Philippine governments that will be utilized by American troops under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement which they signed in April 2014 as political tension rose between the Philippines and China due to disputes in the West Philippine Sea.

Aside from Fort Magsaysay, the deal also allows rotating US military presence at the Antonio Bautista Air Base, Basa Air Base in Pampanga, Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro and the Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu. **PNA**

04 April 2016



Page: 4-27

## NPA killed in Comval clash

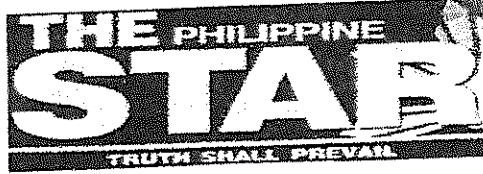
A suspected communist rebel was killed in an encounter with government security forces, which also resulted in the recovery of 12 firearms in Compostela Valley on Saturday.

Troopers of the Army's 25th Infantry Battalion and members of the local police were patrolling in Barangay

Mainit, Nabunturan town when they chanced upon a group of New People's Army guerrillas.

A 25-minute firefight ensued, forcing the rebels to retreat. They left behind their slain comrade, according to Capt. Rhyen Batchar, spokesman for the Army's 10th Infantry Division. – Alexis Romero

04 April 2016



Page: 4-27

## Top Negros pols sign peace covenant

BACOLOD CITY – Leading politicians in Negros Island who are running in the May polls signed on Friday a covenant for peaceful and orderly elections.

The ceremony was witnessed by key officials of the Philippine National Police and Philippine Army and Commission on Elections Commissioner Rowena Guanzon, who hails from Negros Occidental.

Among those who signed the covenant were reelectionists Negros Occidental Gov. Alfredo Marañon Jr., Vice Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson, Negros Oriental Gov. Roel Degamo and vice

gubernatorial candidates Lil- and Estacion and Jeffrey Ferrer.

Marañon, who is seeking a third term, is running unopposed. His runningmate is Ferrer.

Degamo's runningmate is Estacion.

Among those from Bacolod City who signed the peace pact were reelectionist Mayor Monico Puentevella and his rivals Rep. Evelio Leonardia and Wilfredo David.

Mayoral and vice mayoral bets from various towns and cities of both provinces attended the ceremony at the Bacolod Pavillon Hotel.

– Danny Dangcalan



04 April 2016

THE LOYAL 1946 1988  
**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 14

## NPA rebel found dead at encounter site in ComVal

DAVAO CITY – A member of the New People's Army (NPA) was found dead, while 12 high-powered firearms were found as elements of the 10th Infantry Division (10th ID) picked through an encounter site Saturday where they had earlier engaged combatants of the insurgent group in Compostela Valley.

The body of the still identified rebel was recovered by troopers of the 10th ID after a 20-minute skirmish with about 20 heavily-armed insurgents in Sitio Inupuan, Barangay Mainit, Nabunturan, Compostela Valley.

According to 10th ID chief information officer Capt. Rhyen Batchar, soldiers were also able to seize eight M-16 rifles; four AK-47 rifles; seven improvised grenades; one ICOM radio; medical paraphernalia; and subversive documents.

Batchar said the rebels were believed to belong to the Guerilla Front 27 of the NPA and was headed by a certain Commander Lipi.

In a statement to the media here, Lt. Col. Ismael Mandanas Jr., commander of the 25th Infantry Battalion (25th IB), lauded the efforts of the residents in the area in providing the authorities vital information that led to the successful combat operations.

"The desire of the people in the community to get rid of the NPAs who extort and make their lives miserable, resulted to this decisive encounter," Mandanas said.

He added that the incident manifested "what the collective effort of the people, the army and the PNP can achieve in winning the peace in the province."

Brigade 1001st commander Col. Macairog Alberto also commended the troopers of 25th IB and the PNP on the successful operation, saying that it was "a big blow to the communist movement whose numbers are steadily diminishing due to the relentless AFP-initiated operations."

Pursuit operations are still being conducted by the combined forces of the army and PNP in the area. (Alexander D. Lopez)

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Army Core Pur

1 – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

the land.



04 April 2016

**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

Page: 32

## NPA killed in Compostela Valley clash

GOVERNMENT forces killed a New People's Army rebel and recovered a dozen high-powered firearms after a firefight in Nabunturan town, Compostela Valley on Saturday.

Troops from the Army's 25th Infantry Battalion and the PNP's Compostela Valley Provincial Public Safety Company were conducting security operations when they encountered about 20 rebels in Sitio Inupuan, Barangay Mainit, said Capt. Rhyen Batchar, public affairs officer of the Army's 10th Infantry Division.

The communist rebels, led by one alias Lipi from the NPA's Guerilla Front 27, withdrew after a 20-minute firefight.

During clearing operations, troops recovered at the scene a body, eight M16 rifles, four AK-47 rifles, seven improvised grenades, an Icom radio, medical paraphernalia, and documents.

Police and military troops are conducting pursuit operations, Batchar said. – *Victor Reyes*

04 April 2016



Pahina. 3

### **Ralista sa Kidapawan, positive sa gun powder residue — PNP**

LUMABAS na ang resulta ng pagsisiyasat ng Scene of the Crime Operatives (SOCO) ng Philippine National Police (PNP) sa mga nasawi at nasugatan sa pagsasalpukan ng pulis at ralista sa Kidapawan noong Biyernes.

Ayon kay Chief Superintendent Wilben Mayor, 3 ang nasawi at sampung ralista ang nasugatan ngunit, malaki ang posibilidad na mas

marami ang nasugatan na hindi inireport.

Palaisipan naman ngayon kung bakit may bitbit na baril ang isang sinasabing ordinaryong magsasaka sa Kidapawan na 9mm ang standard-issue na gamit na baril ng kapulisan.

Sa panig naman ng PNP, 99 pulis ang nasugatan dahil sa pambabato ng mga ralistang pinaghihinalaang hindi tunay na magsasaka ngunit, mga militante.

Nahuli rin ang isang kumander ng New People's Army na nakahalal sa mga magsasaka.

Ikinagalit naman ng lokal na pamahalaan ng North Cotabato ang pangyayari sa kanilang bayan, lalo na't pinagsamantalahan umano ang mga kawawang magsasaka upang magamit sa plano ng mga makakaliwang grupo.

Ayon kay Gobernador Emmylou Talino-Mendoza, nakita ang partisipasyon sa

nagkalain-laing grupo – AnakPawis, Bayan Muna, Anak Bayan, League of Filipino Students, SPMC, RCPR or Religious Church Promotion

of Churches, Apo Sandawa Lumadnong Paghiusa, Gabriella Women's Party, women, children, indigenous people, ang mga mag-uuma.

Nagsimula ang pagbarikada ng mga ralista noong Marso 30, isang araw pagkatapos ng anibersaryo ng New People's Army.

Sakasaysayan ay madalas gumagawa ng pagkilos ang NPA malapit sa kanilang anibersaryo para ipadama ang kanilang humilit na puwersa. (BRT)

04 April 2016



Page. 4

## **BIFF field commander arestado**

Arestado ang isang field commander ng Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters dahil sa kasong double murder sa isang operation sa Cotabato City kamakailan.

Kinilala ni Director Victor Deona, hepe ng Philippine National Police-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, ang suspect na

si Zainudin Kawilan.

Naaresto ang suspect dahil sa mga impormasyong ibinigay ng mga impormante sa mga otoridad.

"He is a field commander of the Special Operations Group of the BIFF," sabi ni Deona.

Ayon kay Deona, responsable si Kawilan sa mga pambobomba,

ambush sa mga pulis at sundalo, at pagsalakay sa mga vital installations sa ilang bahagi ng Mindanao.

Idinagdag ni Deona na palagi si Kawilan sa Cotabato City kung saan isa siyang gun-for-hire. "We have reports that he is involved in gun-for-hire activities," sabi ni Deona. **(Aaron B. Recuenco)**

04 April 2016

**The Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: 45



**Newbies.** New soldiers of the 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division of the Philippine Army stand at attention during a ceremony. MEL CASPE

04 April 2016



Page: A-27

# 400 kilos of ice poured on Mt. Apo fire

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAO CITY – Instead of water, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) yesterday dropped some 400 kilos of crushed ice to put out the fire that has been raging near the peak of Mt. Apo.

Lt. Col. Jose Ritchie Pabilonia of the PAF said the first experimental operation was conducted after six days of continued forest fire.

Pabilonia could not immediately confirm whether the crushed ice experiment was successful.

"We have yet to confirm the effects of the crushed ice with the volunteers on the ground," he told journalists during a meeting with the provincial disaster management officials in this city.

The PAF's technical operations group 3rd air division has been conducting bambi-bucket operation, using a single Su-

per Huey helicopter in order to put out the blaze.

If effective, Pabilonia plans to drop more crushed ice over the area using a UH1H helicopter.

Liza Mazo, Office of Civil Defense-Region 11 director, said the ice was donated by the Solano and Davao ice plants.

Mazo suggested cloud-seeding to put out the fire.

Meanwhile, the US government will help put out the Mt. Apo blaze.

Philip Dizon, president of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines in Mindanao, told **The STAR** that US Ambassador Philip Goldberg has pledged to help put out the fire.

"The Americans will be sending help on Monday (today)," Dizon posted on his Facebook account yesterday.

04 April 2016

**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

Page: 133

## 2 more Hueys tapped to fight Mt. Apo blaze

**BY VICTOR REYES  
AND ANGELA LOPEZ DE LEON**

TWO more Huey helicopters will help contain the forest fire raging in the peak of Mt. Apo since March 26 and a foreign group has expressed interest in helping out.

Air Force spokesman Col. Araus Robert Musico said the two UH-1D helicopters were due in Mt. Apo late yesterday or this morning.

Two Huey helicopters have been sent to the area to help in the firefighting: a UH-1H and a UH-1D.

Musico said the UH-1H "Super Huey" has been dropping water on the fire, using a Bambi bucket and crushed ice donated by a volunteer group. The UH-1D, meanwhile, is more involved in the transport of supplies and logistics for the responders.

He said the UH-1H has so far dumped 50 buckets of water and around 400 kilos of crushed ice since March 29.

He said the two additional UH-1Ds will drop crushed ice and help in the resupply opera-

tion. He added the choppers are not designed for helibucket operations.

He said only one UH-1H Superhuey is using a Bambi bucket because the other one is being maintained.

"From what he told me, the aerial firefighting is effective because every time they drop water, the fire is put out," said Musico.

"But the problem is after the operations, especially at night since the Super Huey does not have night capability, the fire starts to spread again. That's why the Air Force is having a difficult time. The fire should be contained with a lot of effort from different sectors," he added.

Davao del Sur provincial disaster risk reduction and management council (PDRRMC) head Harry Camoro said authorities continued to watch three active fires spotted on the Davao del Sur side Saturday evening.

Camoro said the fires are still moving towards the forest area of Sta. Cruz town in Davao del Sur.

He said one fire was observed approximately 300 meters from the centuries-old Almaciga tree, a landmark along the Sibulan Trail in Sta. Cruz.

04 April 2016



Page: 4

# Balikatan to test Phl's new military assets

The Philippines' new military assets will be put to test during this year's Balikatan joint exercises with the United States, which kicks off today.

Among the new assets that will participate in the joint drills are the landing craft

heavy ships provided to the Philippine Navy by Australia.

The Philippines acquired five de-commissioned ships from Australia for P726 million. The first two ships arrived last August while the three others were delivered last month.

Two of the five ships are expected to join the mobility exercise.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, spokesman of the Philippine contingent to Balikatan, said the vessels would join a mobility exercise that seeks to enhance the security forces' capability to respond to disasters.

"The mobility exercise will train our soldiers to move logistics on a massive scale. It will be the first time we will conduct such an exercise with our US counterparts," Sayson told **The STAR** in a phone interview yesterday. – Alexis Romero



04 April 2016

**BusinessMirror**

Page. 44

# Fort Magsaysay beefs up security for Balikatan war exercises

**F**ORT MAGSAYSAY, Nueva Ecija—Authorities have tightened security measures in this camp as hundreds of American and Filipino soldiers arrived here for the annual 32nd joint Balikatan war exercises.

Army Capt. Rozelle Ticar, spokesperson of the 7th Infantry (Kaugnay) Division based in this military camp, said that they are ready to receive American soldiers for the war exercises amid security concerns, with measures already laid out inside the camp as part of the routine.

“Everything is much under control and preventive measures were laid out,” Ticar said, adding that series of planning and coordination were conducted as per instruction of commanding general Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon.

Last year four American soldiers lost their belongings to thieves who gained entry inside the camp.

Army Staff Sergeants Scotty Wilson and Dwayne Massey and Lieutenants Patrick Tierney and Thomas Dunne lost their belongings consisting of army boots, wallet containing \$2,000, undetermined amount of pesos and other personal belongings.

They were part of the 700-soldier contingent who plunged into the war exercises inside this military camp along with 900 Filipino soldiers.

A report said that unidentified suspects gained entry in the unlocked building by boring through a hole beneath a perimeter fence and carted away the belongings.

However, the said belongings were recovered.

“I am assuring that the said theft incident will not happen anymore. Our soldiers stepped up for all pre-

ventive measures for the activity,” he said. This camp was one of five areas identified on March 18 by the US and Philippine governments that will be utilized by American troops under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, which they signed in April 2014, as political tensions rose between the Philippines and China due to disputes in the West Philippine Sea.

Aside from Fort Magsaysay, the deal also allows rotating US military presence at the Antonio Bautista Air

Base, Basa Air Base in Pampanga, Lumbia Air Base in Cagayan de Oro and the Mactan-Benito Ebuen Air Base in Cebu.

Ticar said the main organizers of this year’s war games have been informed of the calendar of activities for the four-day war games.

Last year part of the exercises were a community outreach in nearby areas where Filipino and US troops performed medical and dental operations, haircuts, feeding program, circumcision and

distribution of Bibles.

It also marked the first time three modern attack helicopters of the US forces showcased their air-assault capabilities in the first known mock air assault inside the sprawling military reservation.

These involved Boeing CH-47 Chinook helicopters and Black Hawk aircraft.

Chinook helicopters are twin-engine, heavy-lift military aircraft used for troop movements, artillery placement and battlefield resupply

because of its wide loading ramp at the rear of the fuselage and three external-cargo hooks.

The advanced, multi-mission helicopter contains a fully integrated digital cockpit management system and cargo-handling capabilities.

The said helicopters were also used in some other countries, like the United Arab Emirates, South Korea, Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Japan, Italy, Greece and Spain. **PNA**

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IN this May 10, 2014, file photo, Filipino soldiers fire their weapons at a mock target during a live-fire exercise with their US counterparts at a joint US-Philippines military exercise dubbed Balikatan 2014, at the Philippine Army training camp at Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. AP

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64 April 2016

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**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

# US plans 3rd patrol near disputed South China Sea

By REUTERS

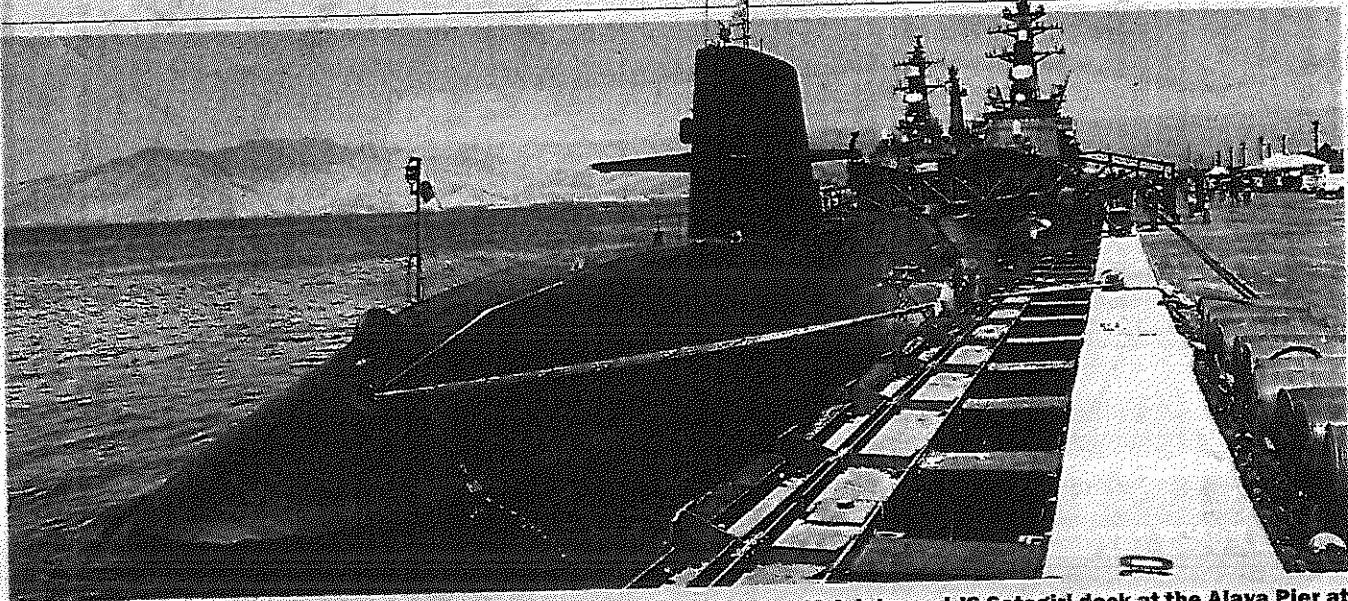
The US Navy plans to conduct another passage near disputed islands in the South China Sea in early April, a source familiar with the plan said

over the weekend, the third in a series of challenges that have drawn sharp rebukes from China.

Other US officials, speaking after Reuters reported the plan, disputed that such an exercise was imminent.

But they made clear Washington will continue to challenge what it considers Beijing's unfounded maritime claims.

The United States has conducted what it calls "freedom of navigation" exercises ►15



**JAPANESE GOODWILL** – Japanese submarine JS Oyashio and destroyers JS Ariake and JS Setogiri dock at the Alava Pier at the Subic Bay Freeport yesterday as part of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) that will engage the Philippine Navy in a series of confidence-building activities, shipboard tours, and goodwill football and basketball games. It was the first visit of a Japanese submarine to the country since 2001. Story on Page 9. (Jonas Reyes)

## US plans 3rd patrol...

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in recent months, sailing near disputed islands to underscore its right to navigate the seas. US Navy officials have said they plan to conduct more and increasingly complex exercises in the future.

"Our long-standing position is unchanged – we do not take a position on competing sovereignty claims to naturally formed land features in the South China Sea," a senior Obama administration official said on Saturday.

"We routinely conduct such operations throughout the world to challenge maritime claims that would unlawfully restrict rights and freedoms provided in international law. This applies to the South China Sea as well," said the official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The USS Stennis carrier strike group is currently operating in the South China Sea. The next freedom

of navigation exercise is unlikely to be conducted by a carrier like the Stennis, but rather by a smaller ship, the source said.

Experts predict the next US challenge to the various claims in the South China Sea could occur near Mischief Reef, a feature claimed by the Philippines and which was submerged at high tide before China began a dredging project to turn it into an island in 2014.

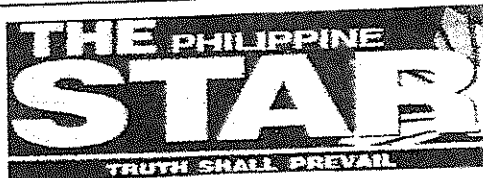
Mischief Reef is now the site of one of three military-length airfields China has built on man-made islands in the Spratly Islands archipelago.

US Navy ships regularly patrol the South China Sea, through which more than \$5 trillion of world trade travels every year. China claims most of the area, and Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan have rival claims.

In recent months, with tensions rising



04 April 2016



Page: A-27

## Japanese sub, warship dock in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT – Two Japanese destroyers and a submarine docked in Subic port yesterday near disputed South China Sea waters, where Beijing's increasingly assertive behavior has sparked global concern.

Manila is seeking to strengthen ties with Tokyo as tensions mount over the disputed waterway, almost all of which is claimed by China.

Japanese submarine *Oyashio* and destroyers *JS Ariake* and *JS Setogiri* are here for a routine visit at the sprawling former US naval base just 200 kilometers from a Chinese-held shoal.

"The visit is a manifestation of a sustained

promotion of regional peace and stability and enhancement of maritime cooperation between neighboring navies," Navy spokesman Commander Lued Lincuna said.

The *Ariake* is equipped with an anti-submarine helicopter, according to an AFP photographer at the scene.

The port call came on the eve of war games between American and Filipino soldiers, which is seen as a showcase of a long-standing military alliance that the Philippines is counting on to deter China.

Seriously outgunned by its much larger rival China, the Philippines has turned to allies like

the United States and Japan to upgrade its armed forces in recent years.

In February, Japan agreed to supply the Philippines with military hardware, which may include anti-submarine reconnaissance aircraft and radar technology.

Tensions in the South China Sea – through which one-third of the world's oil passes – have mounted in recent months since China transformed contested reefs into artificial islands capable of supporting military facilities. – Bebot Sison, Alexis Romero, Ding Cervantes, Ric Sapnu, AFP

04 April 2016

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Page: 411

# China says it may invite reporters to disputed isles

By Estrella Torres

CHINA'S Foreign Ministry said the situation in the South China Sea remained "stable on the whole" and it was considering inviting foreign journalists to see for themselves the islands and reefs on which it has built runways and other facilities.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hong Lei quoted Foreign Minister Wang Yi as saying that "when the condition is ripe, we will consider inviting foreign journalists to visit the islands and reefs."

This as the decision comes due of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague in the case filed by the Philippines questioning China's sweeping territorial claims and massive military buildup in contested islands in the South China Sea.

Hong, however, expressed concern over the joint military exercise being conducted by the Philippines and the United States in waters abutting the South China Sea.

"We hope the military-to-military cooperation between relevant countries can promote regional peace, stability and development instead of the contrary," Hong said in a press conference in Beijing on Friday, a transcript of which was posted on the foreign ministry's website.

### Resolving disputes

He said that while China was resolute about safeguarding its sovereign and relevant rights in the South China Sea, "we are committed to resolving relevant disputes through dialogue and negotiation and jointly maintain peace and stability in the South China Sea with the Asean countries."

China has said it would deal with the Philippines only in a bilateral dialogue to resolve their territorial disputes in the South China Sea, which the Philippines calls the West Philippine Sea.

The Philippines, however, is not keen on restarting bilateral

talks with China anytime soon following the latter's continuous massive military buildup on the disputed islands, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

DFA spokesperson Charles Jose said the last high-level meeting between the Philippines and China occurred during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Leaders Summit hosted by the Philippines in November 2015. This was at the level of then Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario and Foreign Minister Wang of China.

Chinese President Xi Jinping was at the Apec summit in

Manila but he and President Aquino did not meet. The last time the two held bilateral talks was during Beijing's hosting of the Apec Leaders Summit in November 2014.

A senior Filipino diplomat who is an expert on maritime affairs said that resuming bilateral talks with China "is very remote" due to Beijing's aggressive behavior in the South China Sea.

### Basis for negotiation

The diplomat who requested anonymity said the Philippines is willing to hold bilateral talks with China once the arbitral tribunal renders its decision and

China agrees to abide by it.

"The arbitration court's ruling should be the basis for the negotiations of the code of conduct between China and Asean," the official told the INQUIRER. "The ruling (on arbitration) is a way forward ... that's when we start bilateral negotiations with China."

Foreign Minister Wang earlier admitted that "for obvious reasons, current China-Philippines relations are at their lowest ebb since the establishment of diplo-

matic relations 40 years ago."

"This is not what the Chinese side wants to see. China is ready, through dialogue and consultation, to discuss and resolve all factors affecting the normal development of China-Philippines relations, including the maritime issue. China's door for dialogue is always open, and there is no such problem that bilateral dialogues have come to an end," Wang had said in a statement last November.

04 April 2016



Page: 7

## Palace still verifying kidnap of 4 Malaysians

News reports about a group of Abu Sayyaf bandits who kidnapped four Malaysian boat crewmen remain unverified, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

"We still don't have confirmation on this incident. We are still waiting for verification from the DFA and other authorities," Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said yesterday.

"Let us just wait and if there is an update we will disseminate it as soon as possible," he told radio *dzRB*.

But the Armed Forces of the Philippines confirmed last Saturday a report on the abduction of four Malaysian boat crewmembers off Sempornah,

Sabah by suspected Abu Sayyaf gunmen.

Officials, however, said that they were

checking the information as search operations have been launched in Tawi-Tawi and Sulu.

– Delon Porcalla, AFP



04 April 2016

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Page: 415

# Z. Gloria Morales: 'A Soldier's Tale'

FIRST OF all, my apologies to members of PMA Class 1964. In my last column, I mentioned that in the history of the PMA, only two cadets graduated as first captain (commander of the cadet corps) and class topnotcher. These were Aristeo Ferraren (Class of 1938) and Leopoldo Regis (Class of 1951).

On the same day the column appeared, Commodore Julito Casillan (Class of 1967) e-mailed me the information that Cadet Manuel Arevalo (Class of 1964) was both the class valedictorian and first captain. Casillan and Arevalo were not classmates but they belonged to the same cadet company.

A few days later, Navy Capt. Winston Arpon (Class of 1964) wrote to say that his classmate, Manuel Arevalo, was "baron" and topnotcher of the class. The two were roommates when Arevalo was the first captain and Arpon was on the regimental staff. Arpon would later become "Bravo" company commander.

There is an interesting story in connection with Arevalo's graduating as the class topnotcher. According to one of his classmates, three months before graduation, Arevalo's class standing was actually No. 2. At around the same time, the No. 1 cadet was involved in an honor violation that eventually led to his resignation. This turn of events put Arevalo at the top of his class, giving him the Presidential Saber as well as the AFP Chief of Staff Saber for being the first captain.

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Today, April 4, marks the 60th anniversary of PMA Class 1956. Jose C. Bello Jr., from Ilocos Sur, was the class valedictorian while Rodrigo B. Gutang of Cebu, was the first captain. Last Saturday, a *merienda cena* was held at the residence of Paul and Dolly Canalita in Antipolo, to mark the occasion. It was also Paul's 84th birthday.

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At age 96, my Air Force colleague, Lt. Col. Zacarias "Zac" Morales, has put together in a wonderful book the experiences of a lifetime—from his birth in San Francisco, Panaon Island, in Southern Leyte, to his retirement as a military officer and corporate executive in Davao City. Along the way, he joined the Philippine Army Air Corps (PAAC), fought on the battlefields of Bataan, participated in the Death March, and escaped from captivity with the help of kind strangers who gave him food and shelter.

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Mindanao in the 1930s was not an easy place to get an education unless one had wealthy parents. Elementary schools were established only in large municipalities while the high schools were generally located in the provincial capital. A high school diploma was considered quite an achievement.

Zac Morales went to school rather late in life. He was older than 7 years. As he explained, "We were made to extend our arms over our head and to reach the opposite ear. If one could not reach the ear, he was too young for enrollment. If he qualified, he went directly to Grade 1. There was no preschool or kindergarten."

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The National Defense Act of 1935 mandated the creation of a citizen army. All able-bodied male Filipino citizens 20 years of age, were to undergo compulsory military training for five-and-a-half months. They would then be part of the Philippine Army Reserve Force.

This legislation would be his passport to a career in the Armed Forces. From infantry training schools in Misamis Occidental, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga City, Morales would eventually end up with the PAAC in Zablan Airfield located within Camp Murphy (now Camp Aguinaldo). Morales was assigned with the 5th Photographic Squadron and his first commander was Lt. Jesus Villamor, the World War II ace after whom the Philippine Air Force base in Pasay City is named. Here he began to learn the rudiments of photography, ground and aerial. He was also taught how to develop film, how to print and enlarge pictures. In 1941, the PAAC would be the first military command to be inducted into the US Armed Forces in the Far East (Usaffe).

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When war broke out on Dec. 8, 1941, all units of the Usaffe, including the PAAC, were ordered to proceed to Bataan in accordance with War Plan Orange. The plan called for the concentration of military forces in one bastion for more effective resistance while waiting for support and reinforcements.

PAAC elements under Maj. Pelagio Cruz, a 1935 graduate of the PMA, occupied Sagsain Cove. Morales and his squad-mates were to defend the beach against enemy landings. Among other officers in the area was Capt. Augusto Jurado who, like Major Cruz, would one day serve as commanding general of the Philippine Air Force. As the situation deteriorated, rations started to dwindle. From small amounts of boiled rice with sardines, it became watery porridge with just a pinch of salt. Severe hunger and dehydration began to take a toll on the men.

Morales talks about starvation in the trenches: "Your belly is full of air and grumbles incessantly. Your body is sluggish and it is difficult to maintain your equilibrium. Your brain is slow to respond and memory fails. Your knees are weak, and walking is a great effort. Your vision deteriorates; even your hearing suffers."

On April 9, 1942, a messenger from the command post came with the news: We have surrendered. Weapons are to be destroyed and all ammunition dumped into the sea. The mile-long convoy from across the Pacific, that was supposed to relieve the defenders of Bataan and Corregidor, was simply a myth designed to maintain the morale of the troops.

Morales had this to say about the surrender: "I doubt that anyone in Bataan at the time, Filipino or American, knew that Washington had already decided to defend England first before the Philippines, and that the mile-long convoy never existed."

As the soldiers prepared for what would be known as the Death March, it was the steady and calm voice of Maj. Cruz who kept the men together, exhorting them to maintain their dignity in the presence of the enemy.

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After the war, Morales would marry the lovely Lily Caballero whom he had met in Cotabato in 1943. When she passed away after 63 years of marriage, it seemed that "the lights in his life went out."

It is to his children Liza, Dick, Gigi, Christine, Mike and Mark, all successful professionals, that the author dedicates his book:

"A man's most valuable asset in life is his children. Jewels in the vault, real estate, or life insurance, do not compare with his children when he reaches advanced age. A walking cane can be a treacherous support; it can even cause a slide that leads to a fatal fall. But a mature child's strong arms can steady a father's wobbling knees. What my children give me is what money cannot buy. It is deep, undiluted love for their father."

The book launch is scheduled for tomorrow evening at the Moron Bala Hotel in Davao City.

04 April 2016



Page: 10

# Mendiola, Luisita, Kidapawan

**O**N January 22, 1987, police and military forces opened fire on farmers marching to Malacañang from a rally at the Liwasang Bonifacio after an earlier demonstration at the Department of Agrarian Reform in Quezon City. They marched down Recto Avenue and reached Mendiola Street but got no farther as they were stopped by gunfire. Thirteen marchers were confirmed dead and many others were wounded in that incident which came to be known as the Mendiola Massacre.

Seventeen years later, on November 16, 2004, plantation workers at the Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac picketed the hacienda demanding fairer wages, increased benefits, and a commitment to land reform. Police and soldiers stormed the blockade and 12 picketing farmers and two children were killed.

These two incidents involving protesting farmers were recalled by leaders of the nation's farmers and several government officials after farmers in North Cotabato holding a protest rally in Kidapawan City were violently dispersed by security forces last Friday. The farmers and lumads from all over the province had gathered to ask for government aid in the form of rice for their families and seeds for their farms which had been affected by the ongoing drought. Officials said at least two were dead and dozens wounded in the gunfire that broke up the three-day rally.

As in the Mendiola and Luisita massacres, there were conflicting claims on who fired first. And as in those two earlier incidents, no investigation is likely to come up with any satisfactory answers anytime soon.

What is likely to happen is the government agencies concerned will now start working more assiduously on the farmers' complaints. An official of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said the farmers had been demanding the release of rice aid, as previously approved by the governor, but the National Food Authority reportedly told them that their demand was "under process." The local government, he added, also wanted to distribute the rice through the "food for work" program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The farmers and their families were in need of urgent assistance, but the government wanted to follow circuitous and bureaucratic processes, the KMP official said.

The drought caused by El Niño has already affected several provinces, including 18 in Mindanao. The heat has caused grassfires that razed hundreds of hectares around Mount Apo. Farmlands have dried up and the farmers have no means of livelihood in the coming weeks and months. The Kidapawan violence, it is hoped, will move the officials concerned to act with a greater sense of urgency on the needs of so many farmers like them all over the country.

As for the violent dispersal of the protest rally, the government should make a special effort to get to the bottom of the incident and not let this Kidapawan killing go the way of the Mendiola and the Luisita massacres. As Sen. Miriam Defensor Santiago commented after the incident: "It is vile enough that the administration has failed to support the farmers and lumads of Kidapawan during the prolonged drought in Mindanao. It is downright inhuman for them to shoot at the same people begging for help."