

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



**TEAM ARMY**

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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**06 April 2016**

**Wednesday**

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

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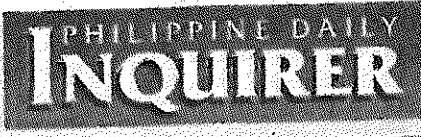
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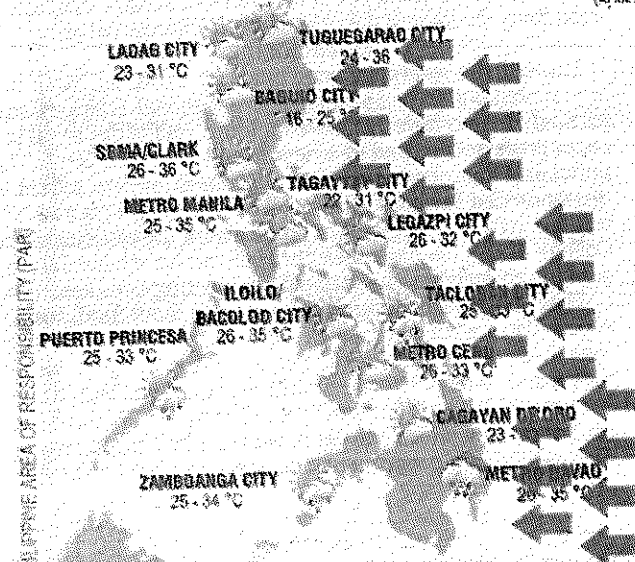


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**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 6, 2016 | WEDNESDAY**

**EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (APRIL 5, 5:00 PM)**




PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

<b>SUNRISE</b>	<b>SUNSET</b>
5:48 AM	6:09 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b>	<b>MOONSET</b>
4:48 AM	5:01 PM
<b>LAST QUARTER</b> MAR 31 11:17 PM	<b>NEW MOON</b> APR 7 7:24 PM
<b>LOW TIDE</b> MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 3:40 AM -0.02 Meter	<b>HIGH TIDE</b> 8:34 PM 0.81 Meter

Partly cloudy skies  
Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	APR 5	APR 6	APR 7	APR 8	APR 9	APR 10
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	25-35°C	24-35°C	22-32°C	21-32°C	25-33°C	25-33°C
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	24-36°C	25-37°C	26-32°C	26-32°C	23-32°C	23-31°C
<b>LAOAG</b>	23-32°C	23-33°C	25-33°C	26-33°C	25-34°C	25-33°C
<b>BAGUIO</b>	16-25°C	16-25°C	25-35°C	26-35°C	25-35°C	24-34°C
<b>SBMA/CLARK</b>	25-36°C	25-36°C	26-32°C	26-32°C		
<b>TAGAYTAY</b>						
<b>LEGAZPI</b>						
<b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b>						
<b>ILOILO/BAGOLOD</b>						
<b>METRO CEBU</b>						
<b>TACLOBAN</b>						
<b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>						
<b>METRO DAVAO</b>						
<b>ZAMBOANGA</b>						

Watch PANAHON TV everyday at 5:00 AM on PTV (Channel 4).



**AIR 21**

**SABOT KO, PARALA MO!**

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## SAF 44: Purisima, Napeñas indicted

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

The Office of the Ombudsman has found probable cause to file criminal charges before the Sandiganbayan against former Philippine National Police chief Alan Purisima and former PNP Special Action Force chief Director Getulio Napeñas for their roles in the Jan. 25, 2015 Mamasapano operation that left 44 elite SAF commandos dead.

Probers said Purisima and Napeñas should be held liable for violation of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and usurpation of authority under Article 177 of the

Turn to Page 8

## SAF

From Page 1

Revised Penal Code.

The ombudsman said the complaints against the other PNP officials - Fernando Mendez Jr., Noli Taliño, Richard dela Rosa, Edgar Monsalve, Abraham Abayari, Raymund Agustin Train, Michael John Mangahis, Rey Ariño and Recaredo Marasigan - were ordered dismissed.

Based on the complaints filed by the Office of the Ombudsman's Field Investigation Office (FIO), Purisima was charged for usurping official functions and for violating the chain of command when he actively participated in the mission planning and execution of Oplan Exodus despite serving a preventive suspension order over a different case.

Napeñas, on the other hand, was considered as the former PNP chief's cohort for taking orders from a suspended official without the knowledge and approval of then PNP officer-in-charge Leonardo

Espina.

The 44 SAF commandos were part of a police anti-terror unit dispatched to Mamasapano, Maguindanao to arrest Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, alias Marwan, and his cohort Basit Usman in Barangay Tukanalipao.

Marwan was killed in the operation but the 44 commandos were killed during the encounter with members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and private armed groups in Mamasapano.

During the investigation, Purisima claimed "during his preventive suspension, there was never any explicit representation that he was acting as the chief, PNP."

Napeñas, for his part, told ombudsman investigators "Oplan Exodus was a high-combat operation incapable of perfect execution."

Ombudsman Conchita Carpio Morales, in her 40-page de-

cision, ruled "during the period of Purisima's suspension, he had no authority to perform the duties and functions, much less supervise and/or participate in the conceptualization, mission planning and execution of a high risk police operation."

She said, "Purisima was sending the unwritten yet visible message that he was, albeit he was not authorized to act and function as chief, PNP."

Morales added that "if Purisima had an iota of respect for the PNP chain of command, he should have informed, at the very least, the details of the Plan Exodus during the turnover of his duties and functions to OIC-PNP chief Espina."

As for Napeñas, the Office of the Ombudsman ruled that "by taking orders from the suspended Purisima, [it] can be construed as an act in agreement to commit the crime of usurpation of official functions with Purisima."

"[Napeñas'] justification to heed such order - that Purisima was the Commander-in-Chief's most trusted man and

was allowed by the President to participate in the planning and execution of the Oplan — does not lie," Morales said.

The Office of the Ombudsman said the charge for violation of Section 3(a) of RA 3019 stands "as Purisima wielded his power and influence as chief, PNP to induce Napeñas, who willingly allowed himself to be so induced, to violate the PNP chain of command, by giving instructions to, receiving recommendations from and approving the actions of Napeñas."

Records of the probe show that based on documents and evidence reviewed by the panel of investigators, the PNP-SAF submitted to Purisima the concept of operations for Oplan Terminator I and II, targeting bomb expert Marwan, in November 2014.

The following month, the Office of the Ombudsman issued an order directing Purisima's preventive suspension effective from Dec. 9, 2014 to June 10, 2015 relative to the WERFAST courier service

contract anomaly in connection with the delivery of gun permits.

Despite his preventive suspension, Purisima, along with Napeñas, coordinated a top-level meeting with officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines relative to Oplan Exodus with the planning proper starting on Dec. 23, 2014.

In January 2015, Napeñas allegedly sent a text message to Purisima requesting a meeting to discuss the report on operations and on Jan. 9, Purisima and Napeñas proceeded to Malacañang to provide the President with mission updates and a new concept of operations.

Four days later, on Jan. 13, 2015, Napeñas sought Purisima's approval of the secondary date for the conduct of operations scheduled from Jan. 23 to 26.

Records allegedly reveal that Purisima gave the intelligence packet to Napeñas and tasked the SAF to conceptualize the Marwan operation and also directed Napeñas to brief

the President regarding Oplan Exodus.

Purisima likewise approved the final date of operation, constantly received pre-operational updates from Napeñas, monitored events and relayed crucial information to Napeñas during that fateful date, and sought updates on the ground.

Aside from criminal indictment, the Office of the Ombudsman said Purisima and Napeñas were also found administratively liable for grave misconduct, gross neglect of duty and conduct prejudicial to the best interest of the service.

However, since Purisima was ordered dismissed from the service in June 2015 and Napeñas retired in July 2015, the alternative penalty of fine equivalent to their salary of one year was imposed.

They were also meted the accessory penalties of perpetual disqualification for reemployment in government service, forfeiture of retirement benefits and cancellation of eligibility.



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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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## High court throws out DQ pleas

By Tarra Quismundo

BAGUIO CITY—It's final: Sen. Grace Poe can run for President.

Removing the legal impediment to Poe's candidacy, the Supreme Court yesterday decided with finality to allow the senator to seek the land's highest post, throwing out reconsideration pleas that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) and critics had filed to push for her disqualification.

During its first summer en banc session here this year, the high court junked all three motions for reconsideration against the high court's March 8 ruling that had upheld Poe's qualification as a presidential candidate, a court source told the INQUIRER.

The separate pleas, filed by the Comelec, a joint appeal by former Government Service Insurance System chief legal counsel Estrella Elamparo, former University of the East law dean Amado Valdez, former Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad, De La Salle University professor Antonio Contreras, and third one filed solely by Valdez, were all thrown out.

IT'S FINAL / A22

# [t's final: SC says Poe can run

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Court spokesperson Theodore announced in his press briefing yesterday that the court could make an official announcement on the motions on April 9, exactly a month before the May balloting. The court is so expected to release separate opinions that the justices will write on the final ruling by that time. However, he did not disclose details of the decision.

Poe's critics and legal experts have been calling for a speedy resolution of the case, given the consequences on the electoral process.

Yesterday's ruling permanently voided Comelec's resolutions that canceled the certificate of candidacy (COC) filed by Poe, who has been consistently topping pre-election surveys.

While details of the ruling have

yet to be released, the denial of the motions for reconsideration meant the high court had opted to uphold the majority decision, which said the Comelec had committed grave abuse of discretion in canceling Poe's COC.

It has yet to be clear whether the justices held a revote on the merits of the case, particularly the thorny citizenship and residency questions that had hung over Poe's candidacy.

In the March 8 landmark ruling penned by Associate Justice Jose Perez, the court said Poe "is a qualified candidate for President in the May 9 elections," as she is natural-born and met the 10-year residency requirement for presidential candidates.

The court ruled that Poe, while a foundling of unknown parentage, was natural-born, as the 1935 Constitution had intended to include abandoned babies un-

der this class of citizens despite the lack of an explicit provision on such inclusion.

Born in 1968, Poe is covered by the prewar Constitution.

The court also ruled that Poe, who became an American citizen in 2001 but reacquired her Philippine citizenship in 2006 and then renounced her US allegiance in 2010, had satisfied the 10-year minimum for the domicile of a presidential candidate, saying the reckoning date of her return to the Philippines should be May 24, 2005.

Poe had returned to the Philippines on that day, fully intent at reestablishing domicile in the Philippines and uprooting her family from the United States, the court ruled.

Poe's critics contended that Poe may not be considered a natural-born citizen, and that she fell short of the residency re-

quirement, having declared in her 2012 COC for senator that she reestablished domicile in the Philippines only in June 2006.

The respondents also cited the lack of a clear majority in the high court ruling, given separate votes on the citizenship and residency issues.

While the court voted 9-6 to cite Comelec in grave abuse of discretion, seven justices voted to declare that Poe is natural-born, five dissented, and three did not take part.

The court also voted separately on the residency question, with seven in favor and six against affirming that Poe had satisfied the residency requirement.

Only a majority vote—or eight out of the 15 high court magistrates—makes a ruling a legal precedent, the respondents had asserted.



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## HONORING THE VETS

Petals rain on the Tomb of The Unknown Soldier at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in ceremonies led by Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, marking Philippine Veterans Week on Tuesday.

MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

04 April 2016

MANILA BULLETIN  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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# Comelec sees no election hotspots in Western Visayas

By TARA YAP

**I**LOILO CITY – The Commission on Elections (Comelec) said to date, it has not identified any election hotspots in Western Visayas when it concerns the synchronized local and national elections on May 9, 2016.

Atty. Rafael Olaño, Regional Director of the Comelec in Western Visayas (Comelec-6), said no locality in the region has so far been included in the poll body's election watch list areas (EWAs).

Olaño made this assessment during a meeting yesterday of the Regional Joint Security Coordinating Center in Region VI (RJSCC-6) represented by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Philippine National Police (PNP) and Comelec.

According to Olaño, to date, no election-related violent incident has occurred in the region which is



**COMRADE IN UNIFORM** – Soldiers belonging to the Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) welcome their counterparts in the United States Armed Forces who have arrived for the joint civil military operations that is part of the 32nd Balikatan Exercises at Camp Peralta in Jamindan town, Capiz province last Monday, April 4, 2016. This is the second time the Balikatan is being held on Panay Island. (Tara Yap)

made up of the provinces of Aklan, Antique, Capiz, Guimaras, Iloilo provinces, and Negros

Occidental.

While no area has yet been identified as an election hotspot

in Western Visayas, Comelec-6 continues to stand by while the Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) and the Police Regional Office in Region VI (PRO-6) continue to monitor the situation.

In the May 2013 elections, 43 localities in Western Visayas with a history of violence perpetrated by camps of warring politicians were included in the Comelec's EWA list

Days before the May 13, 2013 elec-

tions, the husband of Mayor Ligaya Apura of Lemery town in Iloilo province was killed. Along with his driver, John Apura was campaigning for his wife's reelection as mayor.

Aside from a history of private armed groups, another criteria for inclusion in Comelec's EWAs list is the presence of insurgent groups like the Communist Party of the Philippines' armed ally, the New People's Army (NPA).

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The Manila Times

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## Soldiers kill boy in Davao

**ZAMBOANGA CITY:** Government soldiers killed an 11-year boy who was hunting wild animals and birds for food in a village in Davao City on Monday.

The victim – Daniel Ferrer – was with another companion when soldiers fatally shot him in the village called Sibulan in Toril district.

His family is seeking justice for the boy and sought the help of the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

The Philippine Army and the Eastern Mindanao Command did not give any statement about the killing of the hapless boy, but media reports have identified the perpetrators as members of the 2nd Scout Ranger Battalion.

A photo of the boy's body – which already went viral on social media – showed a huge hole in the chest. It was not known whether he was shot from behind and the bullet exited in the chest.

**AL JACINTO**

66 April 2016

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## Sulu Army task force chiefs relieved after series of abductions

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE CHIEF of the Joint Task Group Sulu was relieved of his post yesterday, following a series of daring abductions in Mindanao suspected to have been carried out by the Abu Sayyaf extremist group.

Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado himself announced his relief in a post on the Joint Task Group Sulu's Facebook page.

"Orders have been issued for my relief as commander, Joint Task Group Sulu, and the relief of Brig. Gen. Jose Cabanban as deputy chief," Arrojado posted.

He did not say why he was being relieved of his post.

The removal of the two offi-

cers took effect yesterday. Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos Jr. will replace Arrojado as commander of the joint task force.

However, Arrojado will remain the commander of the 501st Infantry Brigade.

Arrojado's relief came after a series of daring kidnappings believed to have been perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf whose strongholds are in Sulu and Basilan.

The Abu Sayyaf is believed to be holding their captives in Sulu, for whom they have demanded ransom.

Last year, the terror group beheaded one of its Malaysian hostages, prompting President Aquino to order intensified military operations in Mindanao.

04 April 2016



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## Joint Task Group Sulu commander sacked

By Mario J. Mallari

Amid the spate of kidnappings of foreigners in southern Philippines, military Joint Task Group Sulu commander Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado was relieved from his post effective yesterday.

Arrojado's relief was announced in a post over the Facebook page of JTG Sulu yesterday afternoon.

Arrojado confirmed his relief but would not comment on why and where is his next assignment.

The relief of Arrojado came following the kidnapping over the weekend of four Malaysians from Sabah. The victims were reportedly brought to Sulu.

The military has not confirmed that the Malaysians were sneaked into southern Philippines but admitted there are ongoing coordination between the Philippine and Malaysian authorities regarding the abduction.

Last March 28, 10 Indonesian crew members of Jakarta-registered

tugboat *Brahman 12* were intercepted off the waters off Tawi Tawi. Their vessel was recovered along Languyan Island two days later.

The tugboat, with a sister boat loaded with 7,000 tons of coal, was en route to Batangas when intercepted at high seas.

Reports tagged the group of Abu Sayyaf sub-leader Abu Misaya as responsible in the kidnapping of the Indonesians. The bandits have reportedly demanded P50-million ransom.

However, the military said it is still validating such report.

The spate of kidnappings happened while the military is continuously conducting focused military operations against the Abu Sayyaf band of Radullan Sahiron in Sulu and Isnilon Hapilon in Basilan.

No less than President Aquino ordered the intensified combat operations against the Abu Sayyaf last November after the bandits beheaded Malaysian captive Bernard Then in Jolo.

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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## 8 hurt in Lanao town hall clash

Richel Umel  
Inquirer Mindanao

AUSWAGAN, Lanao del Norte—Stones and metal pellets flew as followers of two rival politicians clashed anew in front of the municipal hall on Monday, resulting in injuries to at least eight people.

Soldiers and policemen recovered at least 100 sharpened bamboo poles, three bladed weapons and a slingshot inside the municipal building after the melee, said Lt. Col. Galileo Goyena Jr., commander of the Army's 5th Mechanized Battalion.

The fight began when newly installed Mayor Florante Capitan arrived to formally assume his duties and responsibilities following a Supreme Court ruling that disqualified his predecessor, Rommel Arnado, from running in the 2013 elections.

Arnado's supporters, who have been camping outside the

town hall, prevented Capitan from entering the building, prompting the new mayor's supporters to come to his aid. Soon after, a melee erupted.

A 16-year-old leukemia patient, who was accompanied by her mother to seek treatment at the municipal health center, was among those hit by wayward stones.

Capitan blamed Arnado for the violence on Tuesday, saying he had been feeding those who were manning the barricade. He claimed that six of his followers were among those injured.

But Dean Quijano, one of Arnado's lawyers, said his client had no hand in the violence and that his supporters had acted on their own.

"What we are probably seeing here is the natural reaction of the people. They might have believed that they were also deprived of their right to choose when Arnado was unseated," Quijano said. He denied that the food rationed to the protesters came from the ousted mayor.

He said Arnado, whom the Supreme Court unseated for repeatedly using his US passport even after winning the 2010 elections as mayor, had already stepped down and gave way to Capitan's assumption.

In January, at least three civilians were wounded when armed men, allegedly led by Arnado, fired at tents set up by Capitan's supporters outside the town hall. The shooting

happened about an hour before the Commission on Elections implemented the gun ban.

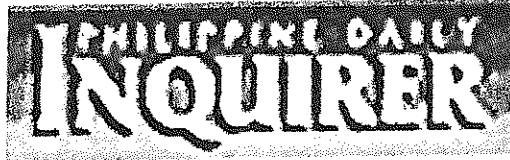
Two days later, seven persons were injured in a clash between followers of the two politicians. Capitan's group, backed by the camp of Casan Maquiling, another Arnado rival, tried to enter the town hall, claiming that Capitan had already been installed as mayor.

Soldiers have been deployed to prevent more violence from occurring. Capitan said he would wait for more police forces before formally assuming his post.

Lt. Col. Leomar Jose Docutero, commander of the Army's 15th Infantry Battalion, urged the camps of Arnado and Capitan to respect the rule of law. "We don't take sides and I am calling on the supporters of both camps to avoid confrontation and violence to prevent bloodshed," he said.



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## 2 soldiers, 4 cops held by rebels

By Jigger J. Jerusalem  
*Inquirer Mindanao*

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—Communist rebels seized four policemen and two soldiers at checkpoints they set up in certain areas in Bukidnon, Misamis Oriental and Agusan del Norte provinces on Sunday morning.

"We are establishing a communication channel [with the abductors] to have the police officers released," said Supt. Surki Sereñas, spokesperson for the police in Northern Mindanao.

In an e-mail, the New People's Army (NPA), military wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines, identified its captives as SPO1 Warren Hansol Coñales, PO3 Edwin Castor, retired PO Orlando Magamay, SPO4 Rene Rombo, Pfc. Glenn Austria and Pfc. Diven Abion Tawide.

The rebels put up roadblocks in Barangays Capitan Bayong in Impasug-ong town, Santiago in Manolo Fortich town, and Ticalaan in Talakag town, all in Bukidnon; Barangay Mandahilag in Talisayan, Misamis Oriental; and Carmen, Buenavista and Las Nieves towns in Agusan del Norte province.

They left with their captives after 30 minutes.

The NPA's North Central Mindanao Region said in a statement that Coñales, who is stationed at the Impasug-ong municipal police, and Castor, who is assigned to Wao, Lanao del Sur province, were captured in Capitan Bayong. Coñales' 9mm Glock pistol was confiscated.

In Barangay Santiago, the NPA's Eastern Misamis Oriental-Northeastern Bukidnon Subregional Command flagged down motorists passing through the provincial road and handed out reading materials on the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Rombo, who is assigned to the Kinoguitan municipal police, was taken at the roadblock in Mandahilag. His 9mm and .45 cal. pistols were seized.

Magamay was abducted in the same area but was released due to health reasons through the help of a barangay official, according to Sereñas.

In Buenavista, the rebels took Austria and Tawide, both belonging to the Army's 23rd Infantry Battalion.

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# 6 sawmill operators kidnapped in Lanao Sur

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Suspected militants reportedly affiliated with the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah have kidnapped six sawmill operators in Butig, Lanao del Sur, an official said yesterday.

The victims were identified as Tado Honaboas, Buloy Hanobas, Gabriel Hanobas, Makol Hanobas, Adnois Mendez and a certain Isoy.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command, said reports reaching his office showed that the gunmen swooped down on sawmills in Purok 4, Barangay Sandab around 11 a.m. on Monday and took the victims at gunpoint.

Sources said the victims were brought to Camp Darul Iman, an enclave of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Barangay Sandab.

Lt. Col. Benedicto Maniquis, First Tabak Division acting public affairs office chief, said they were talking with the Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities with the MILF for the release of the hostages.

Col. Roseller Murillo, commander of the 103rd Infantry Brigade, said the gunmen belong to a group led by the Maute brothers, who were behind the attack on a military detachment in Butig in February that triggered a series of clashes, which displaced thousands of villagers.

Government troops overran the main camp of the terrorist group after almost two weeks of military operations.

– With Jaime Laude

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## 3 hurt in Cotabato college blast

COTABATO CITY – Three persons were wounded when an explosion ripped through a state college in this city on Monday night.

Musical band members Neil Borja, Dondon Bangis and Tyrone Jore were preparing to leave the Cotabato City State Polytechnic College after the graduation ball when the bomb exploded. They suffered shrapnel wounds in various parts of the body.

Responding police and Army bomb disposal experts said the improvised explosive device (IED) could have been detonated when the party was ongoing, but the blasting mechanism malfunctioned, delaying the explosion.

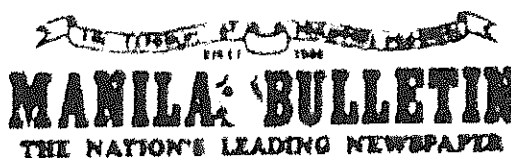
Two hours later, a military bomb disposal team defused an IED left near a waiting shed near the entrance of the Maguindanao Airport and the Army's Camp Siongco in Datu Odin Sinsuat town.

A passerby who saw the IED reported the matter to the police.

Personnel of the Datu Odin Sinsuat police and intelligence unit of the 6th Infantry Battalion are investigating the incidents.

– John Unson

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# BIFF bomb expert nabbed at Cotabato hospital

**C**OTABATO CITY (PNA) – A bomb expert and guerrilla operations tactician of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) was arrested by government authorities recently as he underwent medical treatment at a hospital here, police said Monday.

Zainudin Kawilan, who was facing a double murder case, was arrested by soldiers and police officers at the Cotabato Regional and Medical Center (CRMC) over the weekend, according to Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (CIDG-ARMM) officer-in-charge Chief Insp. William

Santos.

Santos said Kawilan did not resist when confronted by lawmen at CRMC where he sought treatment for gunshot wounds, and even readily admitted that he was a BIFF member.

Kawilan is known among police and military intelligence operatives as a field commander of the BIFF Special Operations Group, involved in bomb making and guerrilla operations against elements of the Sixth Infantry Division (6th ID).

He was also believed to have been one of the BIFF members who eluded arrest after government forces triumphed over the outlawed group in

a spate of skirmishes in Datu Salibo, Maguindanao last February.

Santos said a tipster alerted the police and CIDG-ARMM about his presence in the hospital where he sought medical attention for several gunshot wounds.

Kawilan was included in the 6th ID intelligence watch list for his involvement in the series of road side bombing against soldiers and civilians in Datu Salibo and nearby municipalities of Maguindanao.

While most of the BIFF forces are concentrated in Maguindanao's interior villages, Kawilan has been monitored to be frequenting Cotabato

City and Tacurong in Sultan Kudarat where bombings have occurred during the first quarter of 2016.

Police intelligence information also showed Kawilan was also a gun for hire and offered his services to politicians.

For more than a month, the Army's 6th ID, through its Task Force Central, launched in February air and ground assaults against the BIFF after it harassed workers of a flood control project in Datu Salibo.

Five soldiers were killed and 26 others were injured during the operation. The military could not say how many BIFF fighters were neutralized during the operation.

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## No extension for retiring AFP chief

By JAME LAUDE

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry is looking forward to his retirement in the third week of this month, dousing talk of possible extension of service through the May 9 elections.

AFP Public Affairs Office chief Col. Noel Detoyato said over the past weeks, Iriberry has been visiting field military units, a military tradition of saying farewell to the troops, also known as an exit call.

"He is focused on retiring on April 22," Detoyato said, referring to Iriberry's 56th

birthday and the mandatory retirement age in the military.

No one yet has been appointed to replace Iriberry. The AFP Board of Generals has yet to come up with the list of contenders that the Department of National Defense (DND) would be endorsing for President Aquino to pick Iriberry's replacement.

There have been reports of possible extension for Iriberry since President Aquino is barred from appointing or designating any official before and after the elections under the Omnibus Election Code.

Iriberry's scheduled retirement from the service is 17 days ahead of the elections on May 9.

Detoyato, however, dismissed the reports, saying Iriberry is not that presumptuous and in fact is now preparing to return to civilian life.

A graduate of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1983, Iriberry is bowing out and leaving a number of his classmates still in the active service.

All of his classmates are highly qualified to assume the

top military post.

Meanwhile, two senior military officers were reassigned and assumed two key military posts at the AFP headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo.

Army Brig. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno assumed the post as commander of the AFP Civil Relations Service (CRS) on Monday, replacing acting commander Marine Col. Edgard Arevalo who initially took over from Brig. Gen. Joselito Kakilala, who retired last week.

Air Force Maj. Gen. Salvador Mison assumed as the AFP

deputy chief of staff last Friday, the post vacated by Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina who was recently designated by President Aquino as the new commander of the Philippine Air Force (PAF) following the retirement of Lt. Gen. Jeffrey Delgado.

As this developed, two senior anti-terror officials based in Sulu were ordered relieved of their posts effective yesterday.

The relief of Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, commander of Joint Task Force-Sulu, came as a surprise as the military and other law enforcement agencies still have their hands full running

after the Abu Sayyaf.

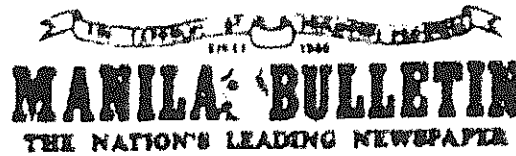
Relieved without any explanation with Arrojado is his deputy, Brig. Gen. Jose Cabanban.

The relief order was relayed to the two senior officials by the Zamboanga City-based Western Command (Wescom).

Arrojado would only say "no comment" after confirming his relief.

Currently, Joint Task Force-Sulu is conducting operations in the island province to locate and rescue foreign and local hostages held by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

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# AFP brands NPAs as 'cowards'

By ALEXANDER D. LOPEZ

DAVAO CITY – The Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) slammed the New People's Army (NPA) for its "cowardly acts" after it set up lightning blockades in the provinces of Bukidnon, Agusan del Norte and Misamis Oriental, and abducted five government security personnel last Sunday.

"These are cowardly acts for an armed group pretending to fight for the rights of the people," said Eastmincom acting spokesperson Maj. Ezra Balagtey who maintained that the checkpoints were "just forms of intimidation and coercion that victimized the peace-loving residents in the area."

"It is a contradiction of what the CPP (Communist Party of the Philippines)-NPAs are claiming that

they are fighting for the rights of the people," Balagtey said.

NPA rebels, in full battle-gear, simultaneously set up road blockades on Sunday in three different locations, namely, Barangay Rojas, Carmen, Agusan del Norte, Impasug-ong town in Bukidnon, and in the town of Talisayan in Misamis Oriental.

The PNP personnel who are now under the insurgents' custody were identified as SPO1 Warren Hansol Coñales, PO3 Edwin Panis Castor, and SPO4 Rene Rombo, while the soldiers were PFCs Glenn Austia and Diven Abion Tawide.

Coñales was captured at an NPA road block at Sayre highway of Sitio Patulangan in Barangay Bayong in Impasug-ong town, Bukidnon; Castor at a checkpoint in Wa-o town in Lanao del Sur; and at an Rombo at an NPA checkpoint in Talisayan town, Misamis

Oriental.

Austia and Tawide were captured by the NPA at a checkpoint established along the national highway in Rojas, Carmen town, Agusan del Norte.

"This is a dastardly act of projecting an image of strength at the expense of peace-loving communities," Balagtey emphasized, adding that the putting up of the checkpoints was just "a desperate move of the NPAs after experiencing setbacks due to intensified law enforcement operations of government troopers and the withdrawal of support of a number of their members and supporters in Northern and Southern Mindanao."

"With this, Eastmincom will exert its effort to rescue the abducted PNP and Army personnel without compromising the rule of law, respect of human rights and adherence to International Humanitarian Law."



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# MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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## Poe reminds PNP, AFP to be non-partisan

By HANNAH L. TORREGOZA

Presidential aspirant Senator Grace Poe yesterday reminded officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to remain apolitical

and refrain from engaging in partisan politics during the May 2016 elections. Poe made the call after reports circulated that Liberal



## Poe reminds PNP...

Party (LP) standard bearer and former Secretary Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, one of her rivals in the presidential race, met with active military and police generals in Quezon City.

"Pakiusap ko lang, siyempre, sa PNP at sa military, hindi lamang dahil kandidato ako kundi dahil ito'y naaayon sa ating batas na sila ay dapat maging neutral, lalong-lalo na sa araw ng halalan at sa panahon ng kampanya (My appeal to the PNP and the military, not because I am a candidate, but because under the law they are required to be neutral especially during the day of the elections and during the campaign period)," Poe said at the sidelines of a political rally in Valenzuela City.

"Sapagkat ang una nilang responsibilidad ay tiyakin ang kaligtasan ng lahat at hindi lamang ng ilang partido (Because their primary responsibility is to ensure everyone's safety and not just selected political parties)," she said.

The reports alleged that a Roxas staff member was spotted meeting with four police officials in civilians clothes. The four police generals were identified as Director Generoso Cerbo Jr., head of the Directorate for Intelligence; and Chief Superintendents Renier Idio, Bernardo Diaz, and Ronald Santos.

Idio is the regional director of the Cagayan Valley police, while Diaz heads the Western Visayas regional police of-

fice. Santos is deputy regional director for administration for Calabarzon.

The closed-door meeting happened at the Novotel Hotel at the Araneta Center owned by the Roxas family. The four police officials were also reportedly seen in the company of retired police official Marcelo Garbo Jr., former PNP deputy chief for administration.

The group allegedly met to discuss measures to ensure the conduct of the May 9, 2016 elections would be orderly and peaceful.

"Well, I do hope so that that what they discussed is for everyone's benefit. I really do not know what the meeting was all about, but I really believe that police and military officials must refrain from getting involved in anything related to campaign and elections, unless it is only to ensure that the exercise would be fair, clean and safe," she said in Filipino.

Poe said she hopes the Aquino government would heed the Commission on Elections' (Comelec) warning that uniformed personnel are also barred from campaigning for or against particular candidates.

"Not only the President, but everyone in government. Just because they are the ones in power doesn't mean they should hold them under their influence for their own benefit," she said.

"Because their mandate is not to serve themselves but the people," she stressed.

### 'Don't meddle in politics'

Meanwhile, in an interview, Escudero challenged PNP chief Director General Ricardo Marquez to be non-partisan and to stay away from politics.

"My appeal to PNP Chief Marquez, don't meddle in the election. He does not have the right to meddle and favor any candidates. He took an oath to ensure that this election will be fair and most of all, credible," he said in Tagalog.

Escudero also questioned the Liberal Party's silence on the alleged LP meeting with the generals.

"I wondered why they kept silent about this because even in a small issue, their spokesperson has always things to say, but in this serious and big matter, they are mum," he said.

Marquez had earlier directed a probe on the alleged meeting. He asked four of his generals to explain their presence in the meeting, which was attended by a certain Thea Reyes, a staff of former DILG chief and LP standard-bearer Mar Roxas.

Also sighted attending the meeting were Ret. Army General Reynaldo Ardo, Ret. PNP Deputy Director General Marcelo Garbo and was Maj. Gen. Oscar Lactao, the recently appointed inspector general of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Cerbo, Idio, Diaz, Santos and Lactao are members of Philippine Military Academy "Maharlika Class" of 1984 which adopted Roxas as honorary member. (With a report from Charissa M. Luci)

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# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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## US Marines fire practice rockets in Balikatan

By Julie M. Aurelio

US MARINES taking part in the Balikatan exercises have fired six reduced-range practice rockets using the high mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS) at the Crow Valley Range Complex in Tarlac.

It was the first time that the HIMARS platform was fired on Philippine soil. Balikatan is the bilateral war games between US and Philippine troops.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, Balikatan spokesperson for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, confirmed the launching of the practice rockets on Monday.

He added that Philippine troops were present to observe the firing exercise.

The HIMARS, or the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, is a light multiple rocket launcher mounted on a standard medium tactical vehicle truck frame.

In a video lasting three minutes and 44 seconds posted on [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net), six practice rockets were seen being fired into the air.

The practice rockets were fired by US Marines from the second platoon of the Fox Battery under the 14th Marine Regiment.

The video was posted by a certain Cpl. Jonathan Lopez.

The practice rockets have a maximum range of 15 kilometers and ballasted with nonexplosive material.

The HIMARS platform will be used again

during the Balikatan live-fire exercises in Crow Valley on April 14.

US defense secretary Ashton Carter has expressed interest in observing the live-fire exercises, the first time that the HIMARS platform will be used in the Pacific.

The firing of rockets using the HIMARS platform is seen as one of the highlights of this year's bilateral war games involving around 8,500 US and Philippine troops.

Earlier, Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Santiago, assistant exercise director for the Philippine troops, said the US military will be using inert rocket rounds in the live-fire exercises.

Rockets are said to be inert when stripped of explosives and other active materials.

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## US Marines test-fire rocket during Balikatan

By JAIME LAUDE

United States Marines participating in this year's Phl-US Balikatan 2016 joint military exercises test-fired one of their lethal weapons deployed at the gunnery range in Crow Valley, Capas, Tarlac yesterday.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, Balikatan spokesman for the Philippines, said US Marines from the 4th Marine Regiment delivered six rounds containing non-explosive rounds using two M142 High Artillery Rocket System.

"They fired six rounds yesterday using the HIMARS platform at a reduced range of 15 kilometers in preparation for the final exercises on April 14," Sayson said.

The testing, part of the ongoing joint war games, was

intended to find out possible interference during the conduct of live fire drills, which would be open to the media on April 14.

With a maximum range of 300 kilometers, HIMARS is considered among the newest mobile and land-based lethal weapons in the US Marines' inventory which they used during their Afghanistan campaign against the Taliban.

"It used non-explosive material and is safe," Sayson said, adding that this type of rounds will be used in the forthcoming live-fire exercises with the media around.

Aside from HIMARS, the US has committed a number of air and land assets to this year's Balikatan for the combined beachhead landing in

Antique province and other joint maritime, air and land exercises in Palawan, Zambales, Pampanga and at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija.

### Prevent armed conflict

Liberal Party presidential candidate Manuel Roxas II said the stationing of US troops in selected Philippine military bases under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) can help prevent an armed conflict over the West Philippine Sea.

He issued the statement as the Philippines and the US on Monday launched their annual Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) war games where

activities would likely include simulated responses in the event of a shooting war in the South China Sea or West Philippine Sea.

"For a nation, if we can't defend our rights through peaceful means – that's why we brought our case before the United Nations, to the (arbitral) tribunal – to find out if there's basis to the claims of China on these areas, which are closer to us than China," Roxas told reporters here.

"I'll defend our rights. I'll defend our territorial integrity and enter into treaties or alliances so that we can strengthen our defense of our territory," he said.

"What's important is we are under the security umbrella of

major allies because our rival in the West Philippine Sea is China, a giant and a nuclear power," he added.

He, however, maintained that he would not allow permanent foreign bases in country.

"Ask the people, the fishermen here in Zambales. They're being harassed by Chinese ships and they can't do their livelihood because they're being harassed," he said.

In Washington, a report released by the Stockholm International Peace Research showed the Philippines' defense spending substantially rising in 2015 in the face of Chinese aggressiveness in the South China Sea and the West Philippine Sea.

Heightened tensions with China over the South China

Sea were reflected in substantial growth in military expenditure in 2015 by the Philippines (25 percent), Indonesia (16 percent), and Vietnam (7.6 percent), the Stockholm International Peace Research said.

Japan also began to increase spending in 2015 after years of decline, signaling rising threat perceptions from both China and North Korea, according to the recently updated SIPRI military expenditure database.

China's spending also rose by 7.4 percent in 2015 to \$215 billion, or 49 percent of regional military expenditure, although the rate of increase is beginning to slow in line with weakening economic growth, SIPRI noted. – With Paolo Romero, Jose Katigbak/STAR Washington bureau

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## Refurbished C-130 plane from US arriving this month

By JAIME LAUDE

One of two refurbished C-130 Hercules planes that the United States government is handing over to the Philippines under its Excess Defense Article (EDA) project is on its way to Manila, the Philippine Air Force (PAF) said yesterday.

Col. Araus Robert Musico, newly installed PAF spokesman, said that the military cargo plane took off from California following its transfer to a contingent of Air Force personnel sent to bring home the aircraft.

"The plane has touched down in Hawaii and is due to arrive either last night or today in Manila," Musico said, adding that official acceptance of the aircraft is tentatively set on April 13.

A second C-130 plane is expected to arrive in September.

The US government handed over two C-130s Hercules planes to the Philippines to

bolster the airlift capabilities of the PAF, which once had only one C-130 plane in operation.

Currently, the PAF has three C-130 cargo planes, three C295 brand new medium lift aircraft to meet the lift requirements of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

"The two additional aircraft would provide what we call heavy lift capabilities for rapid deployment of logistics and troops," Musico said.

Prior to the flight to the Philippines, the C-130 aircraft underwent reconfiguration at a US air force facility in Tucson, Arizona and passed the test flights in the US.

Aside from bolstering its lift capabilities, PAF is also training additional fighter pilots using the newly delivered two supersonic FA50A lead-in fighter jets out of a squadron the Philippines has acquired from South Korea.

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## China: Nothing but disputes, distrust under Noy's watch

China censured President Aquino yesterday on the heels of the launch of the Balikatan US-Philippine military exercises, saying during Aquino's presidency, "bilateral relations have been marked merely by disputes and distrust while his nation was plagued with widespread poverty." **Turn to page 3**



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From page 1

In a commentary that appeared in state mouthpiece *Global Times*, China said "the upcoming military exercises caps Manila's recent attempts to involve outsiders in regional row."

The 12-day annual Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder) exercises that started March 5 included Australian and Japanese military contingents for the first time in the holding of the exercises.

"Held near the disputed waters of South China Sea, the joint maneuvers were widely seen as Manila's latest showoff of its military alliance with Washington, with the unprecedented participation with the US treaty allies," the commentary stated.

China also noted the Philippines allowed the United States to have military access to five bases near the disputed waters with China under the renewed defense pact with the United States.

"It also leased military aircrafts from Japan and obtained fighters and surveillance radars from South Korea. Australia, an irrelevant outsider, also presented unconstructive concern over the South China Sea issue," it added.

China, however, reserved its most stinging attacks on Aquino which it said under his watch, "the Philippines has been keen on making waves over the South China Sea issue."

Without notice or exchanges beforehand, it sued China over the legality of its territorial claims in the International Court of Justice in The Hague, while rejecting the offer of two-way talks, it said.

It added that "even China's construction of facilities on its islands, in an apparent bid to promote self-defense and navigation security in nearby waters, has fallen victim to the Philippines' malicious misrepresentation, and was labeled as part of China's militarization plan to impede sea lanes and scare off smaller claimants."

China said these unilateral provocations have fanned fears and disturbed the tranquility of the South China Sea, which had once been well maintained partly thanks to China's signing of the Code of Conduct with relevant regional parties, including the Philippines, in 2002.

"Manila's ambitions mesh well with the thinly-veiled designs of irrelevant outsiders," it added.

It cited some "specific nations" which, "eager to undercut China's mounting regional influence, take delight in sowing seeds of discord between China and rival claimants,

and boosting their military presences and patrols to thwart China in the name of safeguarding the freedom of navigation."

"Over his six-year presidency that draws to an end this year, Aquino has been unable or unwilling to change his disturbing China policy," it added.

It called on Aquino's successor to consider China's unswerving resolve to safeguard its territorial integrity and regional stability "before making a move."

"The settlement of the South China Sea issue demands a rational approach, good faith and considerable patience to engage in direct dialog between the nations concerned. But Aquino appears to lack all of these attributes when dealing with China," it added.

#### Military spendings up

Rising tensions worldwide helped push up military expenditure in 2015, the first increase after four years of declining spending, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) said in a report released yesterday.

For the full-year 2015, world military spending totalled \$1.67 trillion, a rise of one percent from the previous year.

The increase was attributed primarily to more expenditure in Eastern Europe, Asia and the Middle East, while the decline in spending in the West was leveling off, SIPRI said.

The United States remains in pole position as the country that spends the most on its armed forces, by far.

Washington's military spending budget of \$596 billion was down by 2.4 percent from the previous year, a smaller decline than in recent years.

SIPRI senior researcher Sam Perlo-Freeman said the United States now has "additional overseas contingency operations" (OCO) spending from the war against the Islamic State (IS) group.

The world's second-biggest spender, China, dished out \$215 billion, followed by Saudi Arabia which overtook Russia for third place at \$87.2 billion. Moscow spent \$66.4 billion.

During the 10-year period from 2006-2015, the US military budget shrank by four percent, while China's soared by 132 percent. Those of Saudi Arabia and Russia also increased significantly, by 97 and 91 percent respectively.

France, which had the fifth biggest budget in 2014, fell to seventh place behind Britain and India.

Military spending budgets continued to decline across Western Europe, albeit less sharply than in recent years.

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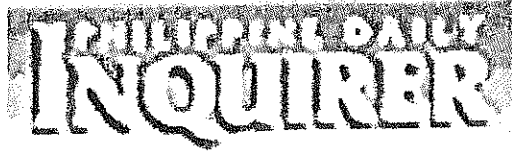
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Army, Core Purpose: Defending the Republic

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## Justice still eludes WWII veterans

THE WAR benefits US President Franklin D. Roosevelt pledged to Filipino soldiers who fought side by side with the Americans during World War II had proved to be very elusive for the longest time. Because that promise was rescinded by post-war President Harry S. Truman in the Rescission Act of 1946.

Nevertheless, pressure groups and politicians, like the late senator Daniel Inouye of Hawaii, took up the cudgels for the aging and infirm Filipino war veterans whose hopes in ever seeing the fulfillment of that promise all seemed lost. But hope was rekindled when US President Barack Obama signed the Filipino equity bill into law in 2009.

On hearing the news of the forthcoming "manana from heaven," rejoicing and celebration filled the air. Living Filipino soldiers of WWII were ecstatic. Unfortunately, a good number of them, thousands in fact, like my father, were again left out in the cold. For one reason or another, their claims were disallowed. And all their hopes were torn to pieces once more, only this time they were just too decrepit to pick themselves up. It was total surrender once more to the vagaries of life.

I took up my father's "fight" when he fell ill. He eventually died at age 103. For an old man expecting justice to be served after what seemed like an eternity, the denial of his claim due to technicalities and stringent rules so lacking in compassion must have been too much to bear. It was another battle waged and another battle lost.

I considered it a temporary setback, though. Thus I set out to do the logical thing: write a letter stipulating the reasons why I disagreed with the US government's decision. Emboldened by the testimonies of Lt. Col. Edwin P. Ramsey, commander of over 40,000 Philippine guerilla troops during World War II, shortly after the war, I dared to take on the behemoth that is the United States with all my heart and soul.

I felt I owed it to my father to carry on with his "battle," no matter the cost.

Relatives and friends based here and abroad

### HIGH BLOOD

*Romana F. Gella*

*WE'D also like to know the concerns of the six-tysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.*

were enlisted to help. I turned to print media hoping to generate the much-needed support ("Dad fought in Bataan but got no recognition," Front Page, 4/9/13). I sent out several letters to the offices concerned. We exchanged communications, the ones from their end mostly very discouraging.

The last denial letter I received made me more determined than ever. A lawyer I talked to, however, opined that my father's case, in the nature of a property claim, may have a good chance of winning if I bring it to US courts, BUT, whatever amount I would be able to collect might only be enough to pay for the lawyer's fees. Talk of a pyrrhic victory.

After some time elapsed, news came out that the rules had been a bit relaxed. I wrote again, inquiring as to what I could do to follow up my father's claim. I was not favored with a reply. I waited.

Lately, I read in a national newspaper that those whose claims were denied can file a notice of disagreement (NOD) with the proper office. My hopes soared once again. I continued to pursue my father's claim. This time however, as previous experience had taught me, I first made inquiries verbally.

The person I talked to told me in no uncertain terms that what was stated in the papers did not apply to my father inasmuch as he is already dead; that only a surviving spouse can file the NOD, something that, she continued, is not transferrable to the children. I countered that my fa-

ther was still living when he filed his claim and that I was just doing a follow-through of what he had initiated.

But the lady was adamant. All my arguments proved futile. Which made me stop and think: Considering my father's age, logic follows that his spouse would more or less be of the same age as he was if not just a bit younger, and generally speaking, was not expected to be alive up to the present time. Why then exclude the children?

I sensed that our conversation was going nowhere. There and then, I knew that it was over for me. I quickly ran through my mind other options. Nothing came close even to having a fighting chance. Much as I hated to admit losing, conventional wisdom dictated that one should know when to call it quits.

The click on the other end of the telephone sounded like a death knell to me. With finality, it signaled the end of my six-year personal crusade in pursuit of my father's "fight"—for a one-time pension from the United States government in recognition of his valor and sacrifices during WWII and in the Bataan Death March.

How do I "tell" my father now that I failed him? That all the time, effort and emotions that I have invested in that crusade were for naught? That our fight was all along a lost cause?

Defeat has many faces. Mine will be engraved forever on my father's tombstone.

But I write this piece not only to honor my beloved departed father. I am writing this, too, for all his comrades-in-arms, brave and selfless freedom fighters, who are still living and whose claims have been denied as well: Would that, in spite of your age, you will still find the resoluteness to fight with all your might for what rightfully belongs to you. You deserve it; above all, you've earned it. Who knows, you might be more fortunate than my late father?

*Romana F. Gella, 69, waged a personal crusade on her father's one-time war veteran US pension.*

## ONLINE NEWS

### 06 APRIL 2016

www.bomboradyo.com

#### **Rescue ops vs ransom deadline ng ASG sa Samal kidnap victims, patuloy**

By Bombo Marilyn delos SantosPosted in Latest News | January 05 April 2016 01:14 PM

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Mas pinaigting umano ng militar ang kanilang focused military operation sa Sulu para ma-rescue ang nasa apat na bihag mula sa Samal Island matapos ang binigay na deadline ng Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) sa Biyernes, Abril 8, para maibigay ang kanilang ransom demand.

Ayon kay Major Filemon Tan, tagapagsalita ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), ginagawa na nila ang lahat para maisalba sa lalong madaling panahon ang mga biktima.

Pangunahing concern umano ng militar ay ang kaligtasan ng mga bihag sa kanilang mga inilulunsad na operasyon sa mga bulubunduking bahagi ng Sulu na una na ring napaulat na pinagtataguan ng ASG sa kanilang mga nabibiktima.

Ito rin umano ang nagpapahirap sa militar na pasukin agad ang pinagtataguan ng mga bandido dahil baka mas lalong mailagay sa alanganin ang kalagayan ng mga biktima.

"WestMinCom continues to conduct focused military operations based on available information we have. The deadline set is the deadline of the Abu Sayyaf, for our side we will do our best to rescue the kidnap victims the soonest time possible as we also consider the safety as our primary concern," ang pahayag ng Tan.

Kung maaalala, base sa inilabas ng Abu Sayyaf nitong nakaraang buwan, nagbanta sila na pupugutan ng ulo ang apat na bihag kabilang na ang isang Pinay at lalaking tatlong banyaga kung hindi maibibigay ang kanilang ransom demand sa nabanggit na petsa.

Ang tatlong banyaga na sina John Ridsel at Robert Hall, mga Canadian national, ang Norwegian national na si Kjartan Sekkingstad at ang Pinay na si Maritess Flor ay binihag sa Samal Island sa Davao del Norte nitong nakaraang taon.

Lumalabas sa impormasyon na humihingi ng P1 billion ang mga kidnapper kada isang biktima para palayain nila ang mga ito.

Hindi rin masabi ngayon ng WestMinCom kung ano na ang tunay na kalagayan ng mga biktima.

Ilang beses na ring nagkasagupa ang militar sa grupo ang Abu Sayyaf na humahawak sa maraming mga biktima ng kidnapping mula sa iba't ibang mga lugar sa Mindanao.

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## **'Balikatan' humanitarian projects begin in Panay**

MANILA, April 5 (PNA) -- The humanitarian civic assistance component of the annual "Balikatan" exercises started in Panay island on Monday, with 333 Filipino and American troops as part of the contingent.

3rd Infantry Division public affairs office chief Lt. Col. Ray Tiongson said the HCA projects aim to improve Philippine-US military civic assistance inter-operability.

From April 5 to 8, "Balikatan" Cooperative Health Engagement Team will conduct series of lectures and practical exercises on Tactical Combat Casualty Care Course to 3rd Infantry Division personnel at Camp Peralta at Jamindan, Capiz province.

On April 6 to 8, training on Basic First Responder, Disaster Mental Health, Hygiene and Nutrition will be conducted by Filipino and American military medical personnel to around 400 participants coming from 30 different barangays in Jamindan composed of the local government unit officials, barangay tanods, health workers and other members of the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (MDRRMC) down to the barangay level committee.

Tiongson said the training aims to enhance disaster rescue, relief, recovery and rehabilitation efforts capabilities of the military and its counterparts in the civilian sector.

While both Armed Forces develop a more responsive partnership, the local communities are likewise empowered to take immediate response actions to save lives and prevent further damage during disaster.

Meanwhile, military engineering personnel from the Filipino and American military personnel are now working shoulder-to-shoulder in repairing three elementary schools.

The San Nicolas Elementary School in Tapaz, Capiz is now 83 percent completed, while Jaena Norte Elementary School in Jamindan, Capiz is at 65 percent and Matangharon Elementary School in Dingle, Iloilo at 41 percent. All school projects are expected to be completed on April 16. (PNA)  
JMC/PFN

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## **US defense chief Carter bibisita sa bansa; Joint military drill**

### **sasaksihan**

By Bombo Anne SoberanoPosted in Latest NewsTuesday, 05 April 2016 12:35

Kinumpirma ng RP-US Balikatan Exercises 2016 directorate na bibisita sa bansa kalihim ng defense department ng Estados Unidos para personal nitong saksihan ang joint military wargames ng mga sundalong Pilipino at Amerikano.

Ang pagsaksi ni US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter sa joint military drill ay siyang kauna-unahang pagkakataon sa kasaysayan ng RP-US Balikatan Exercises.

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

Ayon kay Lt. Gen John Toolan, director ng US Balikatan na nagpahayag ng interes ang kalihim para saksihan ang nasabing joint exercises.

Partikular na sasaksihan nito ay ang paggamit ng bagong rocket launcher ng Amerika na unang beses gagamitin sa Balikatan exercises dito sa Pilipinas.

Ito ay ang HIMARs o high mobility artillery rocket system na susubakan sa Crow Valley sa Tarlac.

Ayon pa kay Toolan, inaasahang sasakay din si Carter sa isang barkong pandigma para saksihan ang maritime security drill.

Sasamahan si Carter ng ilang mga opisyal mula sa Japan, Australia at Vietnam at ilan pang bansa sa Southeast Asia sa panood ng joint military exercises.

Kahapon opisyal nang nagsimula ang Balikatan exercises 2016 na magtatapos sa April 15, 2016.

Sinabi ni Toolan na nakikita kasi ni Sec. Carter ang kahalagahan ng nasabing joint exercises kung kayat nais nitong personal na masaksihan.

Ang balikatan exercises 2016 ay nakatutok sa territorial defense ngunit hindi ito nakatuon sa bansang China.

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

## **Roxas favors EDCA, says he is open to other treaties if elected**

By Cielito M. Reganit

OLONGAPO CITY, April 5 (PNA) — Administration standard bearer Mar Roxas on Tuesday said that he would continue the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) if elected president and added that he would welcome other such treaties with other friendly nations in order to defend Philippine patrimony.

In an interview during a campaign sortie held in Olongapo City, Roxas said that while he favors EDCA, he would definitely not allow the establishment of permanent American bases in the country.

Signed in May 2104, EDCA is a supplemental agreement to the Visiting Forces Agreement between the United States and the Philippines intended to bolster U.S.-Philippine alliance.

The agreement allows American troops to rotate troops into the Philippines for extended stays and allows the U.S. to build and operate facilities on Philippine bases, for both American and Philippine forces.

"Importante na nakasandal tayo sa security umbrella ng malalaking mga bansa, dahil katunggali natin ang malaking bansa na Tsina, isang nuclear power, dito sa ating hidwaan sa West Philippine Sea," Roxas said.

He cited how Zambales fishermen are being deprived of their livelihood as they are being constantly harassed by Chinese ships in the disputed waters.

With China aggressively asserting its claims over a large swath of the West Philippine Sea, the Team Daang Matuwid presidential bet said that he would welcome similar treaties like EDCA.

"Para sa akin, dedepensahan ko ang ating karapatan. Dedepensahan ko ang integridad ng lupa at teritoryo ng Pilipinas, at papasok ako sa mga treaties or sa mga kasunduan para lalong lumakas ang ating pagdepensa ng ating teritoryo," Roxas said. (PNA)  
RMA/CMR

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## **BGen. Rhoderick Parayno bagong AFP-Civil Relations Service commander**

By Bombo Anne SoberanoPosted in Latest NewsTuesday, 05 April 2016 14:29  
Itinalaga bilang bagong commander ng AFP-Civil Relations Group (CRS) si BGen. Rhoderick Parayno matapos magretiro sa serbisyo ni BGen. Joselito Kakilala noong nakaraang linggo.

Ayon kay AFP Public Affairs Officer (PAO) chief Col. Noel Detoyato na kahapon April 4, 2016 nag-assume na bilang group commander ng CRS si Parayno.

Sinabi ni Detoyato na kailangan talagang punan ng AFP ang ilang mga vital positions na binakante ng ilang mga opisyal.

Si Parayno ay miyembro ng PMA class 1985 at mistah nina AFP spokesperson BGen. Restituto Padilla at PNP spokesperson Police Chief Supt. Wilben Mayor.

Bukod kay Parayno nag-assume na rin bilang The Deputy Chief of Staff (TDCS) si MGen. Salvador Mison na binakante ni Lt Gen. Edgar Fallorina na itinalaga bilang Philippine Air Force (PAF) chief.

"These are two vital, the commander of the Civil Relation Service and The Deputy Chief of Staff are two vital positions that has to be filled up immediately kaya nung maapprove na yung mga appointments, pinatake effect kaagad ang pagtake over nila," wika ni Detoyato.

Ayon kay Detoyato na sa ngayon wala pang nag-take over sa position ni Mison na siyang Commander ng 2nd Air Division.

Pagbibigay-diin ni Detoyato na hindi nakailangan pa ng go signal mula sa Comelec ang pagtalaga ng mga bagong opisyal na binakante lalo na pag nag retiro sa serbisyo ang isang opisyal.

Pagtiyak ni Detoyato na alam ng Comelec ang naging galaw ng ilang mga AFP officials.