



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

11 April 2016

Monday

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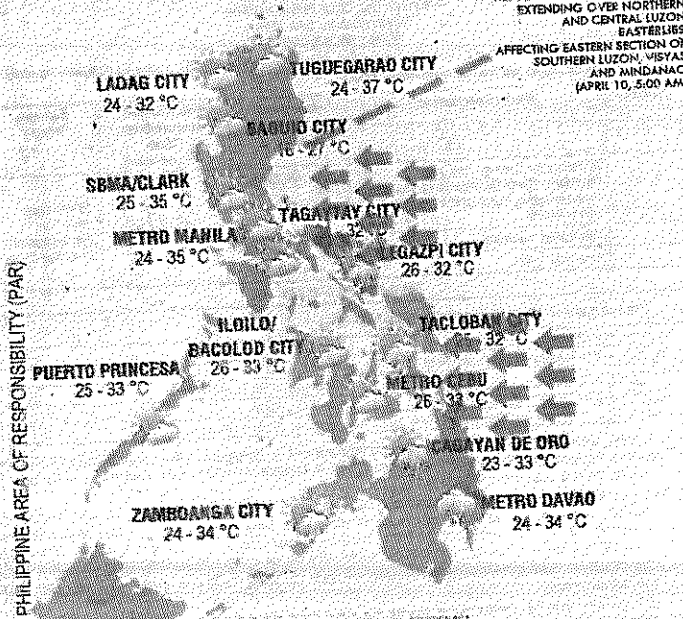
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 11, 2016 | MONDAY

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)



Weather Data:

- LADAG CITY: 24 - 32 °C
- TUGUEGARAO CITY: 24 - 37 °C
- BAGUIO CITY: 16 - 27 °C
- SBMA/CLARK: 25 - 35 °C
- TAGAYTAY CITY: 24 - 35 °C
- METRO MANILA: 24 - 35 °C
- LEGAZPI CITY: 26 - 32 °C
- ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY: 26 - 33 °C
- TACLOBAN CITY: 25 - 32 °C
- PUERTO PRINCESA: 25 - 33 °C
- METRO CEBU: 26 - 33 °C
- CAGAYAN DE ORO: 23 - 33 °C
- ZAMBOANGA CITY: 24 - 34 °C
- METRO DAVAO: 24 - 34 °C

Weather Summary:


RIDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA EXTENDING OVER NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF SOUTHERN LUZON, VISAYAS AND MINDANAO (APRIL 10, 5:00 AM)

SUNRISE	SUNSET
5:45 AM	6:09 PM
MOONRISE	MOONSET
9:03 AM	10:10 PM
NEW MOON	FIRST QUARTER
APR 7 7:24 PM	APR 14 11:59 AM
LOW TIDE	HIGH TIDE
8:10 PM -0.15 Meter	12:17 PM 1.03 Meter

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

CITY	APR 11	APR 12	APR 13	APR 14	APR 15	APR 16
METRO MANILA	24 - 35 °C	25 - 35 °C	21 - 33 °C	22 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 37 °C	25 - 37 °C	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	23 - 33 °C	24 - 32 °C
LADAG	24 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 26 °C	16 - 27 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 34 °C	25 - 33 °C	24 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 34 °C	24 - 35 °C	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C		
TAGAYTAY						
LEGAZPI						
PUERTO PRINCESA						
ILOILO/BACOLOD						
METRO CEBU						
TACLOBAN						
CAGAYAN DE ORO						
METRO DAVAO						
ZAMBOANGA						

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



AIR 21

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

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Pinoy to Manny: You've done us proud

People in cinemas, gymnasiums and military bases across the country burst into applause and shouts yesterday as they watched Manny Pacquiao floor American Timothy Bradley before regaining the WBO welterweight crown in Las Vegas.

Shortly after Pacquiao bested Bradley, Malacañang led the nation in sending congratulatory messages to the Filipino boxing icon.

"Manny Pacquiao has done the Filipino nation proud again by winning decisively against Timothy Bradley. We applaud and thank him for demonstrating anew that the Filipino has the courage and skill to compete in the global arena," Presidential Communications Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said.

Pacquiao did not disappoint his legions of fans watching the match in the Philippines, knocking down Bradley twice and dominating the fight as all three judges scored it 116-110 in his favor.

The fight in Las Vegas is Pacquiao's last

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Pinoy's From Page 1

bout before retiring from boxing.

With his retirement, Pacquiao, a congressman of Sarangani, is looking forward to winning a seat in the Senate in the May 9 elections.

"We are truly happy because our prayers that Manny will win were answered," James Morena, a 67-year-old retiree said.

Vice President Jejomar Binay hailed Pacquiao's victory over Bradley.

"I join the nation in congratulating Manny Pacquiao in his victory against Timothy Bradley," Binay said.

"Manny has again shown the Filipino

traits – determination to face life struggles, ability to rise against the odds, and win over trials,” Binay said in Filipino. Pacquiao is running under the United Nationalist Alliance (UNA) with Binay as its standard bearer.

Binay’s rival, Davao Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, congratulated Pacquiao for an “emphatic win.”

“I am congratulating Manny Pacquiao for his emphatic win over Timothy Bradley. Manny did the Filipinos proud once more,” he said.

Duterte also wished Pacquiao well in his political career.

“I hope he will find time to concentrate on his political career,” he said.

Duterte added Pacquiao has nothing to prove any more with his achievement in boxing.

“He is a true champion in the hearts of the Filipino people,” Duterte added.

Manila Mayor Joseph Estrada also joined the nation in congratulating Pacquiao.

“On behalf of all Manileños, I extend my congratulations to our Pambansang Kamao, Manny Pacquiao, for another very convincing win versus Timothy Bradley in their just-concluded bout in Las Vegas, Nevada,” Estrada said. Congressmen-colleagues of Pacquiao also congratulated him yesterday for his latest victory over Bradley.

“Pacquiao has solidified his legend as our country’s greatest boxing icon. Yet, it is his humility and generosity that make him larger than life to our people,” Speaker Feliciano Belmonte Jr. said.

Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II said Pacquiao’s newest win “will further inspire Filipinos to persevere in life.”

“Congratulations to him. He makes us very proud of our race,” he said.

Senators also congratulated Pacquiao on his victory.

Sen. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said Pacquiao’s win “has given the Filipino people a new radiating source of honor and pride.”

“The deeper meaning of his win over Bradley is a message of our ability to prevail once we put our heart, mind, and soul to whatever test we are facing,” he said.

Sens. Nancy Binay and Juan Edgardo

Angara said Pacquiao is leaving a legacy that makes every Filipino proud of his roots.

“As he exits the ring for possibly the last time, we thank Manny for the thrills and excitement he provided us in the sport which made him well-known,” Binay added.

Morale booster

On the other hand, Pacquiao’s comrades in arms in the military did not lack in enthusiasm while watching the Sarangani fighting congressman floor Bradley twice during the bout.

Shouts of “Pacquiao pa rin! Manny! Manny!” were heard from the 400 troops and officers watching the bout at the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Gymnasium and Wellness Center.

AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberrí and the senior staff were not around at Camp Aguinaldo to watch the fight.

Iriberrí led the top brass in flying to Zamboanga City yesterday to oversee the military operation in Basilan that left 18 soldiers dead and 53 wounded.

“We only watched the last three rounds of the fight because we are busy attending to our ongoing operations,” said Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año.

Año said everybody was jubilant over Pacquiao’s defeating Bradley yesterday. He also suggested to the congressman and military reservists to focus on teaching other Filipinos the sport, with Pacquiao as trainer upon his retirement.

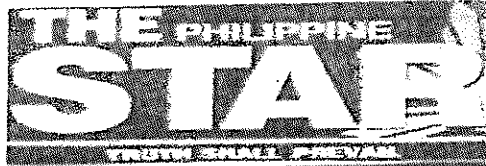
Col. Benjamin Hao said Pacquiao’s victory further boosted the morale of troops despite what happened in Basilan the other day.

“The Philippine Army expresses its happiness on the win of Army reserve Lt. Col. Manny Pacquiao that at least compensates for the loss of our troops in the Basilan operations,” Hao said.

Some of the troops said Pacquiao has lost his killer instinct and only won because he was able to knock down Bradley twice.

But just the same, everybody was happy for Pacquiao, with the Philippine Army taking pride in his latest boxing performance. –With Reuters, Delon Porcalla, Jess Diaz, Helen Flores, Jose Rodel Clapano, Edith Regalado, Jaime Laude, Christina Mendez, Perseus Echeminada

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18 soldiers, 5 Abus killed in Basilan clashes

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – At least 18 soldiers and five Abu Sayyaf members, including a Moroccan terrorist, were killed in a battle that grew so close since Friday it included hand-to-hand combat at a village in Tipo-Tipo town, Basilan province, a military spokesman confirmed.

Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) spokesman Major Filemon Tan Jr. said that some soldiers were beheaded, but he declined to give the exact numbers as ground forces continue to validate the allegation. He

noted, though, that the clash wounded 56 soldiers and 20 Abu Sayyaf members.

The battle erupted after 120 Abu Sayyaf terrorists ambushed troops sent for an offensive at Sitio Bayoko in Barangay Baguindan, he added. The gunfight lasted 10 hours.

"Naunahan sila," Tan said, explaining that the terrorists initially had the upper ground and were using high-powered weapons and explosives to stop the troops whose mission was to capture Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon.

The first volley, he reported, immediately left several soldiers dead.

Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Hernando Iriberry confirmed that Moroccan bomb expert Mohammad Khattab and Ubaida Hapilon, son of the Sayyaf leader, were among those killed.

Khattab is an Islamic jihadist who was unifying the Abu Sayyaf with international terrorist groups. His companion, Malaysian jihadist Mohammad Najib Hussein alias Abu Anas, was killed by the military

last Dec. 15.

The military has yet to officially release the names of the fatalities pending notification of their next of kin. Tan said they were from the 44th Infantry battalion, 4th Special Forces battalion and 4th Cavalry troops.

Although craters were seen on the ground, he explained that these were not caused by land mines but by mortars and M203 rounds fired by the Sayyaf fighters led by Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama.

"But the troops managed

to retaliate and repel the Abu Sayyaf militants from seizing the momentum," Tan said.

He added that military

operations continue as the terrorist groups withdrew and splintered into smaller factions to evade pursuing troops. – With Jaime Laude

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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18 soldiers killed in Sayyaf ambush

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Government forces battled Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Basilan on Sunday, a day after the bandits who had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) jihadist group in Iraq

and Syria killed 18 soldiers and wounded at least 56 others in a clash on the island.

Gen. Hernando Iriberry, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, ordered nonstop operations against the Abu Sayyaf after Saturday's clash, which

18 SOLDIERS / A9

From page A1

came after an April 8 ransom deadline set by the bandits, who had threatened to behead three Westerners and a Filipino woman they had been holding hostage since September last year.

"Even as we speak, there is an encounter going on in the same place," said Iriberry, who flew to the military's Western Mindanao Command base in Zamboanga City on Sunday with Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin to visit the wounded and assess the situation.

"We are mourning. The whole armed forces is mourning," Iriberry told reporters, referring to the deaths of the 18 soldiers, one of the military's biggest battlefield losses in a single day in recent years.

He said Saturday morning's clash with the Abu Sayyaf in Baguindan village, Tipo-Tipo town, lasted for 10 hours.

At least four soldiers were reportedly beheaded in the fighting, which involved about a hundred Abu Sayyaf bandits led by Isnilon Hapilon, for whom the US state department has offered a bounty of \$5 million, and Furuji Indama.

But Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesperson for the Western Mindanao Command, denied reports that the soldiers were beheaded, explaining that the soldiers' heads were blown off by the bandits' heavy firepower.

Tan described the fighting as close-quarter combat, with the government troops and the bandits just 10 meters from each other.

There was no immediate statement from the Abu Sayyaf, a small but violent group known for extortion, kidnappings for ransom, beheadings and bombings in the south.

Ambushed

The spokesperson for the military unit involved in the clash said the soldiers were on their way to attack an Abu Sayyaf hideout when they were hit.

"Our group was heading to attack them. On the way, they were ambushed," Col. Benedict Maniquis told radio station dzRH.

"The enemy had the high ground so no matter where our soldiers fled to seek cover, they could still be hit by the heavy firepower and improvised explosive devices of the members of the Abu Sayyaf group," he said.

But Iriberry said the troops, from Charlie Company of the 44th Infantry Battalion, were in an encounter and were not ambushed.

"It was really an encounter," he said, but added that details remained unavailable because the fighting was going on.

"We cannot get a clear picture of what happened, but rest assured that once everything is settled, we will give a statement," he said.

Iriberry praised the soldiers for their gallantry in battle.

"Despite heavy enemy resistance and advantage, with their familiarity with the terrain in Basilan, our troops fought gallantly. We salute our troops, as they displayed the finest traditions of soldiery and bravely fought the bandits with utmost valor," he said.

But the accounts of two survivors suggested the government forces were ambushed by the bandits.

Sgt. Erico Paglinawan, one of the wounded, told the INQUIRER from his hospital bed that about 30 soldiers from the Charlie Company of the 44th Infantry Battalion, supported by troops from the

4th Special Forces, were going through Baguindan on foot at about 7 a.m. Saturday when somebody in the frontline stepped on a landmine, setting it off.

Five soldiers were killed outright in the explosion, Paglinawan said.

Then fighting broke out and Paglinawan said he was hit in the chest. "Blood was oozing from my wound. It was like water coming from a faucet," he said.

He said that while waiting to be evacuated, which did not happen until three hours later, he drank his own blood, thinking this would prevent him from dying due to loss of blood.

Capt. Kilbas Mauricio, who was hit in the left leg, said the fighting started with an explosion then "followed by a ball of fire," indicating an ambush.

The fighting went on for hours and among the troops who were wounded were the commander of the 44th Infantry Battalion, Col. Tommy Crosby, and three other officers.

Moroccan bombmaker

Major Tan said five bandits, including a Moroccan, Mohammad Khattab, and Ubaida, son of Hapilon, were killed in the fighting.

He said 20 other bandits were wounded in the fighting.

Iriberri said Khattab was an instructor in making improvised explosive devices and an "Islamic jihadist preacher."

"He wanted to unify, organize all kidnap-for-ransom groups to be affiliated with an international terrorist organization," he said.

Iriberri would not identify the international group Khattab was working for, but he could be referring to IS, to which the Abu Sayyaf pledged allegiance last year.

IS has captured vast areas of Iraq and Syria since its rise more than a year ago. It is believed to be recruiting fighters in Asia.

Besides the Abu Sayyaf, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, a splinter of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the largest Muslim rebel group in Mindanao, has also pledged allegiance to IS, although the military believes the militant groups are only riding on the increasing popularity of IS in the jihadist community.

Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año, Philippine Army chief, said Khattab had been in the Philippines for three years and had been under military surveillance for a year until his death on Saturday.

"He was serving as the Abu Sayyaf's conduit, trying to link them up to a Middle East international terrorist group," Año said without identifying the international group.

Iriberri said the operation against the Abu Sayyaf, which had been going on since December last year, was aimed at preventing further kidnappings for ransom.

The bandits are believed to be behind the kidnapping in recent days of foreigners in the southern waters.

They are still holding Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipino Maritess Floz, whom they seized from a resort on Samal Island, Davao del Sur province, in September last year.

Last month, they threatened to kill the hostages unless ransom of P1 billion for each was paid within 30 days. *With reports from Julie M. Aurelio and Inquirer Research in Manila, AFP and Reuters*

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AFP chief orders sustained combat vs Sayyaf

By JAIME LAUDE

As the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) grieves for its fallen comrades, Gen. Hernando Iriberry ordered his field commanders to sustain operations against the bandit group Abu Sayyaf.

Iriberry, AFP chief of staff, also instructed Joint Task Group-Basilan chief Col. Rolando Bautista to take care of more than 50 wounded

soldiers and the needs of the families of the 18 who were killed.

Along with Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, Iriberry flew to Zamboanga early yesterday to assess the situation and salute the wounded and slain fighters for their gallantry.

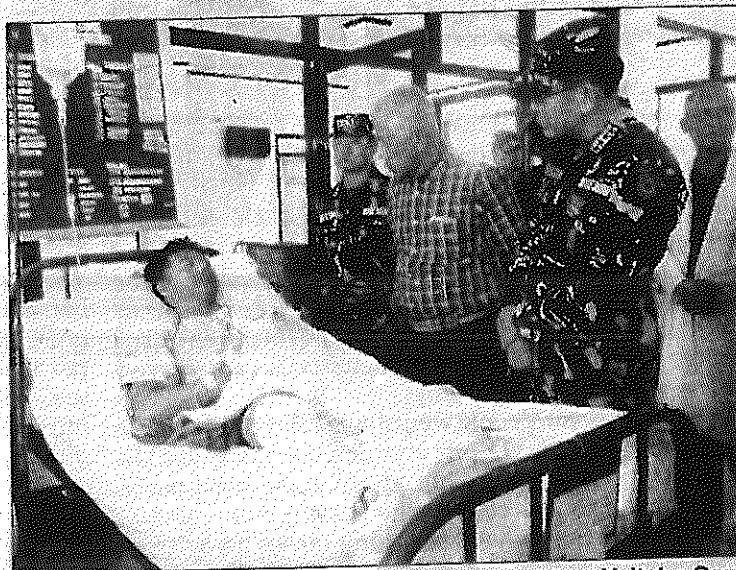
All the wounded soldiers

were transported to Camp Navarro Hospital inside the Western Mindanao Command headquarters in Zamboanga City.

The AFP chief said the soldiers fought gallantly and displayed the finest traditions of soldiery with utmost valor despite all the odds along their way.

"We shall continue the fight. We will take inspiration (from) their exemplary service. Our soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice so that the people of Basilan will be free from terrorists," Iriberry declared.

Col. Noel Detoyato, AFP public affairs office chief, said the fatalities were either from Zamboanga, Pagadian,



Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano, Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry visit one of the wounded soldiers at a military hospital in Zamboanga City yesterday.

ROEL PAREÑO

Basilan or Jolo.

"All those who were killed are from Mindanao. Some of them are our Muslim brothers," Detoyato said in Filipino.

The military has been

launching focused military operations in a bid to rescue the hostages still held by the Abu Sayyaf, including two Canadians, a Norwegian, a Filipina, four Malaysians and 10 Indonesians.

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Wounded soldier sips own blood to survive during clash

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Fearing he might bleed to death, a soldier wounded while battling the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan sipped his own blood.

Sgt. Erico Paglinawan of the 44th Infantry Battalion narrated that while waiting for medical help to arrive, he saw blood oozing from a wound in his left chest. Worried about hemorrhage, he began sipping the oozing blood.

Paglinawan disclosed this after his right hand was seen still stained with blood while confined at the Camp Navarro General Hospital in the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom). He was in the hospital along with 50 other soldiers wounded in the fierce gun battle on Saturday in Basilan.

He disclosed that they were pursuing a high-value target when their lead pla-

toon hit a landmine set up by Moroccan bomb expert and jihadist Mohammad Khattab in Barangay Baguindan, Tipo-Tipo town.

The landmine exploded at about 7:55 a.m., immediately killing five soldiers and wounding several others.

The explosion was followed by a volley of gunfire and M203 grenades that filled the soldiers' routes with smoke. This vulnerable posi-

tion led to the wounding of more soldiers, including Lt. Remigio Licena.

Paglinawan said he was wounded after he was hit by direct fire in his left chest.

"I saw blood oozing. I was afraid I might succumb to hemorrhage, so I sipped my blood," Paglinawan said.

He added that despite his wound, he still managed to fight and repel the Abu Sayyaf group from completely

obliterating them.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., Westmincom spokesman, said despite being wounded, Lt. Licena still managed to fend off his attackers before he died.

"It was almost a close-quarters combat since the firefight occurred about 10 meters away," Tan said, citing accounts from the wounded soldiers.

Another wounded soldier,

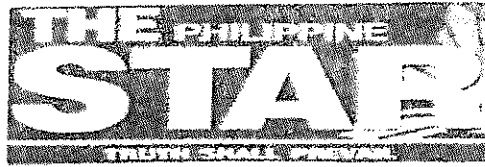
Staff Sgt. Eduardo Capalac, said the attackers were already positioned even before they approached the area.

"We were met by several snipers and the attackers were already in C formation as shown by the volley of fire coming from all the sides of our approach," Capalac said.

He said that the hail of bullets mowed down the soldiers even before they could retaliate.

– Roel Pareño

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Gov't assistance for fallen soldiers sought

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Independent presidential candidate Sen. Grace Poe yesterday called for justice for the 18 soldiers who were killed in clashes with Abu Sayyaf bandits in Basilan.

Poe also urged the government to provide financial assistance to the families of the fallen soldiers.

"This incident highlights the importance of giving prior-

ity to the needs of soldiers and policemen," she said.

Poe condemned the Abu Sayyaf for the latest attacks against the military.

She called for counter attacks by the military and police against the Islamic militants.

"We condemn the Abu Sayyaf and its supporters in the strongest terms for the murders of the soldiers who

were on legitimate military operations in Basilan," she said.

Poe described the Abu Sayyaf militants as "terrorists."

"We call on the public to be vigilant in reporting to authorities those groups and individuals, including public officials, who support and coddle the Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups for their selfish gains

at the expense of peace and security. They should be exposed and answer for their criminal acts," she said.

Eighteen Army soldiers were killed and 50 others were wounded in clashes with Abu Sayyaf bandits in Basilan on Saturday.

Five militants were killed, the military said.

The Army was reportedly targeting an Abu Sayyaf commander who has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group.

Meanwhile, Sen. Ralph Recto urged President Aquino to make his remaining days in office worthwhile by finishing off the Abu Sayyaf.

"Finishing off the Abu Sayyaf is President Aquino's last job

and the next president's first," Recto said, adding the issue should be included in the last presidential debate.

Recto said the next presidential debate should include a question on how to end Abu Sayyaf's terrorism.

He said Aquino's successor should go after the Abu Sayyaf, which still holds at least 14 hostages.

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MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Freed Italian hostage now at Zambo hospital

ZAMBOANGA CITY (PNA) - The Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) has transferred the newly-released former Italian priest to a military hospital in this city.

Maj. Filemon Tan, Westmincom information officer, disclosed that Rolando del Torchio arrived around 7 a.m. Saturday at Camp Navarro General Hospital (CNGH).

Tan said Del Torchio was transported by the Navy's Multi-Purpose Attack Craft (MPAC) from Jolo, Sulu.

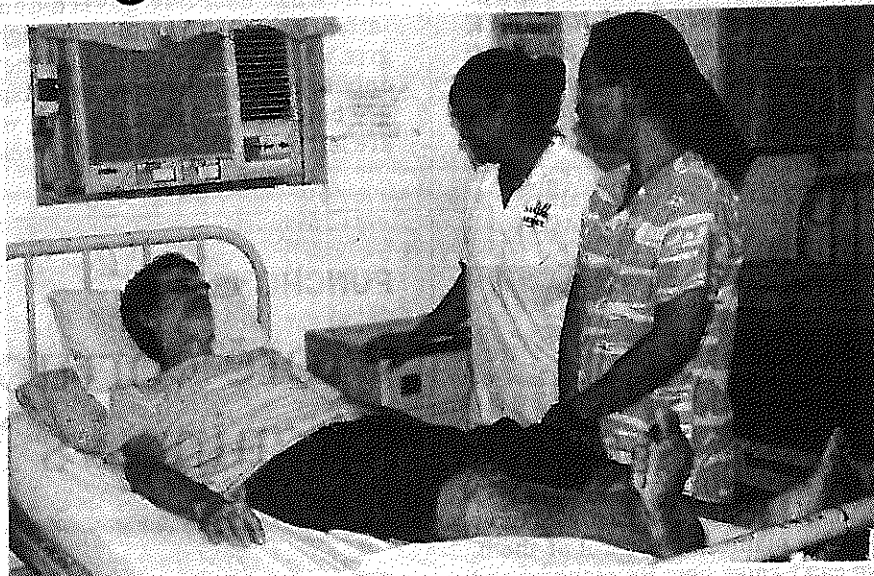
"He (Del Torchio) was transferred to Camp Navarro General Hospital this morning for medical and psychological check-up and was later found to be in good health by the attending doctors," Tan said.

He said the former priest will be handed over later to the Philippine National Police' (PNP) Anti-Kidnapping Group (AKG) after physicians give him a clean bill of health.

Del Torchio was released late Friday by his captors who are suspected by be members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, after six months and one day in captivity in the hinterlands of Sulu.

Government operatives recovered Del Torchio around 7:30 p.m. Friday aboard M/V Beatrice, which was set to sail to Zamboanga City from the port of Jolo, Sulu.

Tan said the operatives decided to bring Del Torchio to Camp Gen. Teod-



IN GOOD HANDS - Former Italian priest Rolando Del Torchio is shown talking to hospital personnel at the Trauma Center in Zamboanga City in this photo provided by the Western Mindanao Command after his release from suspected Abu Sayyaf kidnappers in Jolo, Sulu last Saturday. Del Torchio was abducted from his pizza restaurant in Dipolog City last October 7, 2015. (AP)

ulfo Bautista Trauma Hospital in Barangay Busbus, Jolo "due to assessed poor medical health and was taken cared of by military doctors."

Kidnap-for-ransom-group gunmen seized Del Torchio on Oct. 7, 2015 while the victim was attending his pizza parlor, Ur Choice Bistro Café, at Quezon Avenue, Barangay Miputak, Dipolog City, the capital of Zamboanga del Norte.

Tan identified Del Torchio's kidnap-

pers as the Muloc Group led by Julmin Muloc alias Commander Red Eye. They later handed over Del Torchio to the group of ASG sub-leader Idang Susukan.

Del Torchio, who was born in Angera, Italy, was ordained as a priest in 1984. He served as a missionary of the Vatican's Pontificio Instituto Missioni Estere (PIME) or the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions.

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Gazmin files libel raps over AFP helicopters

By JAIME LAUDE

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin has filed three counts of libel against an employee of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) who had accused him and other defense and military officials of graft.

Gazmin filed charges against Rhodora Alvarez, the BIR employee who claimed the defense chief and other defense and military officials rigged the bidding for the purchase of helicopters from a US dealer in 2013.

Alvarez made the statements at an interview with ABS-CBN on May 22, before a televised Senate investigation on the issue on July 7, and a news article in December last year.

Aside from Alvarez, Gazmin also filed a case against Thach Hoang Nguyen, the agent of Rice Aircraft Service Inc. (RASI), for falsification of documents in connection with the bid submission for the contract of the UH-1H helicopters.

Alvarez testified last year in a

Senate investigation on alleged irregularities surrounding a P1.2-billion contract for the supply of 21 "Huey" helicopters.

She accused Gazmin and the military officials of violating the Government Procurement Reform Act and the Revised AFP Modernization Program.

Alvarez filed the complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman, asking it to further investigate Gazmin and the other respondents for the administrative offense of gross dishonesty.

"When the news came out regarding the alleged irregularities, as head of agency, I ordered an investigation. The result of the investigation showed that the Department of National Defense-Armed Forces of the Philippines (DND-AFP) personnel who handled this project, in various stages, complied with the mandated procedures and no irregularities were committed," Gazmin said.

1 April 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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Gazmin files libel raps vs accuser

By Julie M. Aurelio

DEFENSE Secretary Voltaire Gazmin has filed libel and other charges against a former country representative of the company supplying helicopters to the military who had accused him of rigging the P1.2-billion contract to purchase the 21 refurbished Huey choppers.

Gazmin filed three counts of libel against Rhodora Alvarez, who is also a Bureau of Internal Revenue employee, in the Quezon City prosecutor's office last Friday.

Gazmin's charges stemmed from Alvarez's statements made in a live radio interview on May 22, 2015, a televised Senate

hearing on July 7, 2015, and in an article published on Dec. 13, 2015, in the Manila Times.

Alvarez had accused Gazmin and other defense and military officials of rigging the contract to purchase the 21 Bell UH-1 helicopters in 2013.

She said the officials violated the Government Procurement Reform Act and the Revised Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Program.

Alvarez filed a plunder complaint against Gazmin and several others in the Office of the Ombudsman last month.

In his libel complaints, Gazmin maintained that no irregularities were committed in the acquisition of the helicopters as shown by the investigation he himself ordered.

"When the news came out regarding the alleged irregularities, I ordered an investigation.

The results of the investigation showed that the personnel who handled this project, in various stages, complied with the mandated procedures and no irregularities were committed," he said.

Gazmin also charged Alvarez, and Rice Aircraft Services Inc. (Rasi) agent Thach Hoang Nguyen, with falsification and use of falsified documents.

This was for the submission of alleged fake or otherwise spurious documents in the bid of Rasi and Eagle Copters in 2013 to supply 21 UH-1 helicopters, including spare parts.

Gazmin said he stood by the defense and military officials who were just doing their duty and advancing the AFP Modernization Program.

"We know that public service entails a lot of sacrifices, even being exposed to untruthful

and malicious accusations," Gazmin said.

Alvarez's accusations stemmed from the purchase contract entered into by the Department of National Defense with the Rasi and Eagle Copters.

The contract called for delivery of all 21 helicopters to the AFP within 180 days up to Sept. 21, 2014, but the contractor delivered only 10 choppers.

Of the 10 units, the AFP accepted only two because the others had defective engines and lacked spare parts and accessories. The DND ended up terminating the contract for failure to deliver the units on time.

During a Senate hearing, Alvarez alleged that DND officials intended to favor one of the suppliers, Rice Aircraft Services Inc., in exchange for a 7-percent commission.

April 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 4

US rocket launchers won't stay in Palawan

By ELENA L. ABEN

The two M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) airlifted in by the American military for "Balikatan 2016" (BK16) will not stay in Palawan after the exercise, but could come back if needed.

Earlier, reports quoting unnamed sources said that after the BK16, the HIMARS would be retained at the Antonio Air Base in Palawan and "would form part of the repositioning of troops and assets of the US in the country under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA), other than aiding the military against China's aggressive military activities in the South China Sea."

However, U.S. Marine Lt. Col. John Lehane, inspector instructor with 2nd Battalion, 14th Marine Regiment, US Marine Corps Forces Reserve, stressed that the rocket launchers are in the country purposely for the on-going

interoperability training between Filipino and American troops.

"At the conclusion of Balikatan Exercise... both the HIMARS launchers that we have here in the Philippines are going back to the US," he told reporters in an interview during the BK16 static display in Clark Air Base, Pampanga.

Lehane said: "HIMARS is a 21st century artillery for the US Marine corps and so it's important for us to be able to bring that system out here and demonstrate its capability to our Filipino brothers in arms."

He said US troops are showing members of the Philippine armed forces the capabilities of the system, as well as its limitations, and what it could do if there is ever a conflict.

Another member of the US Marine Corps interviewed by the Manila Bulletin also said the HIMARS will go back to Oklahoma City in the US immediately after BK16.

|| April 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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US defense chief opens Asia trip to talk defense

WASHINGTON—US Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter headed Saturday to India and the Philippines for talks on increasing regional defense cooperation, after calling off a planned trip to China amid tensions over Beijing's expansionist ambitions in the South China Sea.

Carter will fly out of Washington and travel to India and then the Philippines, where he is scheduled to meet with President Aquino and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin.

China lays claim to almost all of the South China Sea, which is important to international shipping and is believed to

hold valuable mineral and energy deposits.

Neighboring countries and Washington fear China could impose military controls over the entire South China Sea, and Beijing has in recent months built massive structures, including radar systems and an airstrip over reefs and outcrops.

The Philippines is among several regional countries that have claims to the strategic zone.

"Almost all the nations there are asking us to do more with them... bilaterally and multilaterally," Carter told the Council on Foreign Relations think tank in New York on Friday.

"Many of those countries are reaching out anew to the United States to uphold the rules and principles that have allowed the region to thrive."

In India, where Carter will stay through Wednesday, he will discuss new partnerships and modernizing old alliances, according to the Pentagon.

"We are now doing things that could not have been imagined 10 years ago," a senior US defense official said.

In the Philippines, Carter will visit the Antonio Bautista Air Base on the island of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea and the islands claimed by Beijing.

The Philippine base is part of five that the US military can use temporarily to rotate soldiers, following a military cooperation agreement that came into effect in January.

No China stop

Access to the five bases will "enhance our ability to operate within the Philippines... and in the South China Sea—and of course, reinforce our deterrent message," a senior US defense official said.

The agreement marks a return of the US military to the Philippines, which was a US colony from 1898 to 1946. Until 1992 the Philippines was also home to Subic Bay Naval Base and Clark Air Base, two of the largest US military bases abroad.

Carter, however, chose to not stop in China during his Asian tour, even though he had earlier accepted an invitation to visit.

The decision to skip China was made just a few weeks ago, highlighting tensions between Beijing and Washington over the South China Sea.

Carter "did officially accept an invitation to travel to China in the spring," said Pentagon spokesperson Bill Urban. However, "scheduling problems" prevented that visit from happening.

"We are actively looking" for another date to visit "this year," Urban said. **AFP**

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\$40-M US military aid lauded

By **EFREN MONTANO**

MALACANANG cheered yesterday the \$40-million military aid to the Philippines to further beef up our intelligence sharing, surveillance and naval patrols in the wake of the tension in the West Philippine Sea.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Sonny Coloma Jr., however, said that the Palace hopes to await of-

ficial confirmation from the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of National Defense.

“...anumang tulong na ipaaabot ng Estados Unidos na ating strategic partner ay tiyak na makapagpapatas sa antas ng kakahayan ng Sandatahang Lakas pagdating sa aspeto ng national defense at humanitarian assistance at disaster response, alinsunod sa mga prinsipyo ng Mutual Defense Treaty, Visiting Forces Agreement at En-

hanced Defense Cooperation Agreement sa pagitan ng Pilipinas at Estados Unidos,” Coloma said.

US Defense Secretary Ash Carter is saying that the United States will send about \$40 million in military assistance to the Philippines to strengthen intelligence sharing, surveillance and naval patrols.

The aid comes amid increasing tensions with China over undeveloped islands and shoals in the region.

Carter tells the Council on Foreign Relations that the aid will take the alliance to a new level. Officials recently announced that the U.S. will get access to five Philippine military bases to house American forces that will rotate in and out of the country for training and other missions.

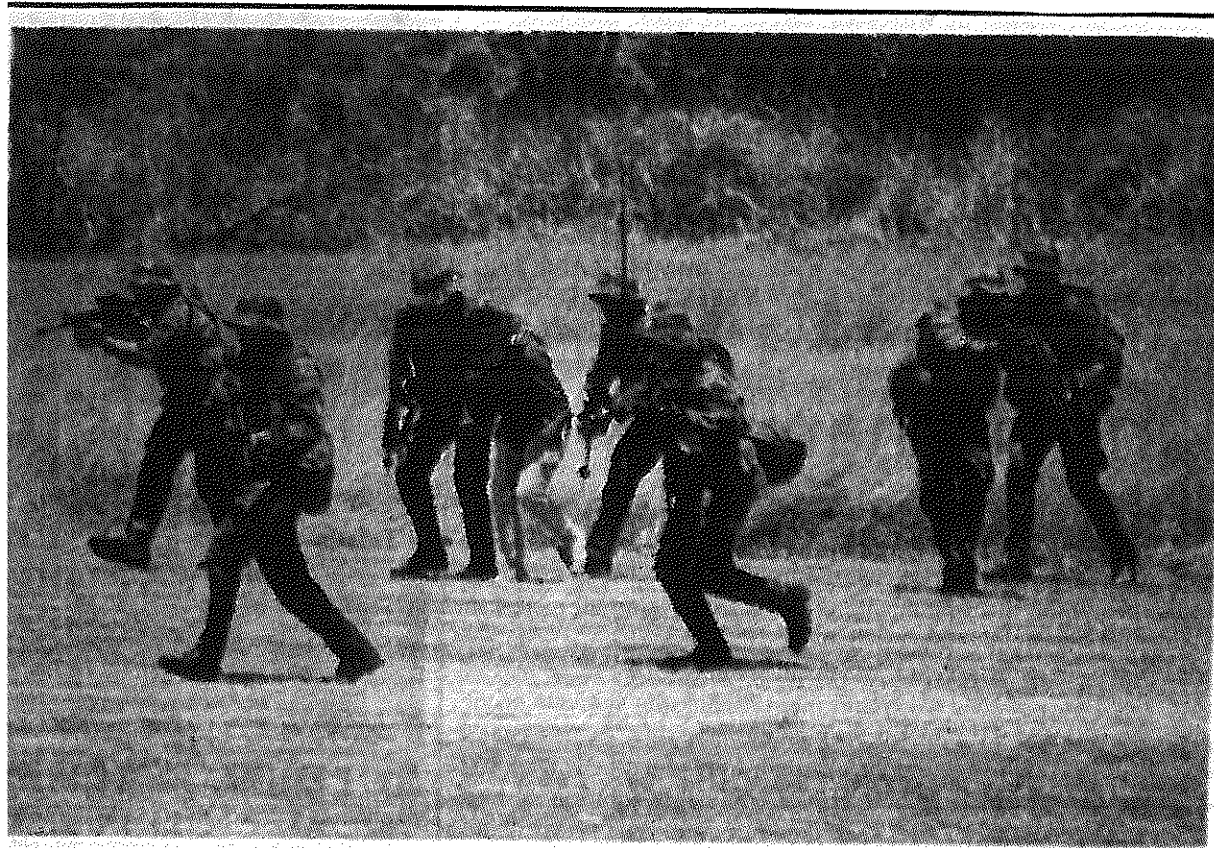
The new aid will include an enhanced information network for classified communications, sensors for patrol vessels and an unmanned aerostat reconnaissance airship.

In the Philippines, Carter will visit the Antonio Batista Air Base on the island of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea and the islands claimed by Beijing.

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The Manila Times

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HEROES RECOGNIZED

The Philippine Marines give a demo of its hostage rescue operations in Corregidor. The demo was witnessed by those who participated in the wreath laying activity at the Filipino Heroes Memorial in Corregidor Island in commemoration of the 74th Araw ng Kagitingan and Philippine Veterans Week on Saturday. PIA

// April 2016



Page. 3

Panalo ni Pacquiao, konsolasyon sa AFP

NI ELENA L. ABEN

Pinuri ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) ang tagumpay ng Pinoy world boxing champion na si Manny Pacquiao laban sa Amerikanong si Timothy Bradley, Jr. kahapon, sinabing ito ay "most welcome news, a consolation and a source of comfort for many of our battle-hardened warriors."

Tinalo ni Pacquiao si Bradley sa unanimous decision sa Las Vegas kahapon, isang araw makaraang 18 tauhan ng Philippine Army ang nasawi, bukod sa 56 na nasugatan,

sa engkuwentro sa Abu Sayyaf sa Basilan nitong Sabado, Araw ng Kagitingan.

Nagtungo kahapon sa Zamboanga City sina Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin at AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberry, kasama si Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Año at iba pang matataas na opisyal ng militar, upang bisitahin at kumustahin ang mga sundalong nasugatan sa labanan, kasabay ng pakikiramay sa pamilyang naulila ng mga nasawing sundalo.

"We were in Mindanao when Lt Col. Manny Pacquiao's victory

was passed on to us. It was a most welcome news, a consolation and a source of comfort for many of our battle-hardened warriors," ani AFP Spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla.

"Just like Manny, our warriors determination and tenacity in seeking the enemy and prevailing over the forces of evil are clearly manifest in their undeterred operations against the enemies of the state," dagdag niya.

Si Pacquiao ay reservist ng Philippine Army at may ranggong Lieutenant Colonel.

April 2016



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Military official: Pacman win 'a source of comfort' for battle-hardened soldiers

By Mario J. Mallari

Amid its setback in Basilan on Saturday, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) yesterday branded as "a source of comfort" the victory of Sarangani Rep. Manny Pacquiao who dominated American Timothy Bradley en route to a unanimous decision win.

Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla Jr., AFP spokesman, said that Pacquiao's victory came as a comfort to "battle-hardened" soldiers following the killing of 18 government troops and wounding of 53 others during a clash with the terrorist Abu Sayyaf group in Basilan.

An Army reservist with the rank of lieutenant colonel, Pacquiao floored Bradley twice during the 12-round bout and scored 116-110 in all of the three judges.

"We were in Mindanao when Lt. Col. Manny Pacquiao's victory was passed on to us. It was a most welcomed news, a consolation and a source of comfort for many of our battle-hardened warriors," said Padilla.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hernando Iriberry and other senior military officers were in Zamboanga yesterday to monitor the ongoing military operations

against the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan.

"Just like Manny, our warriors' determination and tenacity in seeking the enemy and prevailing over the forces of evil are clearly manifest in their undeterred operations against the enemies of the state," said Padilla.

For his part, Army chief Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ano, who was also in Zamboanga, expressed elation over Pacquiao's victory.

Ano said that since Pacquiao is seeking a Senate seat, the Army would have to wait until after the elections to recognize him for his dominant performance against Bradley.

"He is a political candidate and we are ban from doing it. Perhaps we can recognize his feat and success after the election period," Ano said.

Army spokesman Col. Benjamin Hao echoed Padilla's pronouncement expressing hope that Pacquiao's win would somewhat bring comfort to the soldiers.

"The Philippine Army expresses its happiness on the win of Army Reserve Lt. Col. Manny Pacquiao," said Hao.

"We are proud of him. We hope that this will at least compensates the loss of our troops in the Basilan operation that happened during the Araw ng Kagitingan," he added.

11 April 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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Deafening silence from the President on Basilan tragedy

DO we still have a President?

More than 20 Filipinos died Saturday in a clash between government forces and the terrorist group Abu Sayaf in Barangay Baguindan Tipo-Tipo in Basilan.

As I was writing this piece at 5 am.

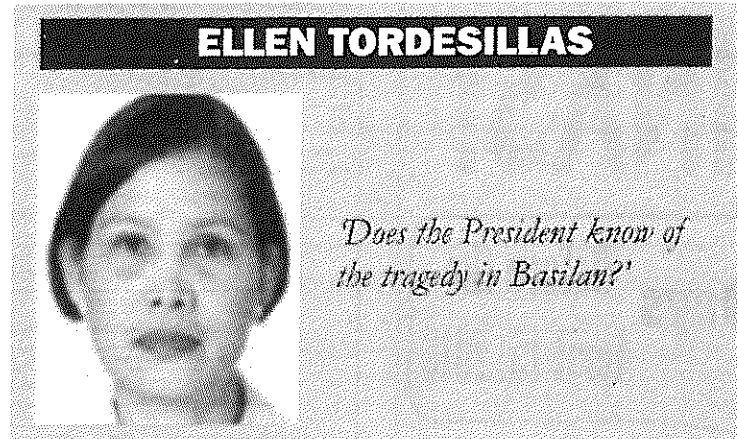
Sunday, there was no statement from the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. I texted his spokespersons but didn't get any reply.

I opened the TV for the vice-presidential debate and I saw the President endorsing Mar Roxas as his successor and Leni Robredo as vice president.

Does the President know of the tragedy in Basilan?

An ABS-CBN report quoting Western Mindanao Command spokesperson Major Felimon Tan said at least 23 were killed and more than 70 others were wounded when the 44th Infantry Battalion and the 4th Special Forces Battalion engaged in a 10-hour gun-battle against at least a hundred armed members of the Abu Sayyaf group.

Tan said of the 23 dead, 18 were soldiers while 53 others were wounded. At least five bandits were killed including a Moroccan-based terrorist identified as Mohammad Khattab, as well as one of the sons of ASG top commander Isnilon Hapilon, identified as Ubaida Hapilon.



Will this be another April 1 Kidapawan tragedy where three farmers died and many were wounded including policemen when the latter tried to disperse farmers rallying for rice because of poor harvest due to El Niño that was met by a deafening silence by the President.

After a week, Aquino said he didn't know about the Kidapawan tragedy. No one told him, he said.

It is not funny. If Aquino is again doing a Mamasapano for the 18 dead soldiers, at least two presidential candidates issued statements of outrage over the massacre.

Sen. Grace Poe condemned the "the brutal and treacherous murder of our troops."

Even Mar Roxas, through his spokesperson, Rep. Barry Gutierrez, said something about the tragedy.

He noted that the tragedy happened as the entire country was commemorating the Day of Valor, (Araw ng Kagitingan).

"These terrorists should be immediately pursued and crushed by the full might of our military and police forces, with due regard for the safety of the innocent civilians," she said.

She also urged the public "to be vigilant in reporting to authorities those groups and individuals, including public officials, who support and coddle the Abu Sayyaf and other armed groups for their selfish gains at the expense of peace and security. They should be exposed and answer for their criminal acts."

Even Mar Roxas, through his spokesperson, Rep. Barry Gutierrez, said something about the tragedy.

He noted that the tragedy happened as the entire country was commemorating the Day of Valor, (Araw ng Kagitingan).

"The Daang Matuwid Coalition celebrates their courage, and wishes to extend our deepest condolences to the family and friends of our fallen soldiers. We are one with those who honor their sacrifice, grieve for their demise, and seek justice for their deaths at the hands of the bandits of the Abu Sayyaf. To all the soldiers who took part in the battle in Basilan, thank you for your service, your heroism will not be forgotten," Roxas statement said.

Vice-Presidential candidate Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. called on the AFP to disclose the details of the Basilan encounter.

"Here were go again. We are again in the dark of what happened," he said noting of the country's experience with the ill-fated Mamasapano operation which led to the killing of 44 members of the Special Action Force.

He said, "We need a full picture of the encounter. We should not hide these details. The Filipino people and most especially the families of the soldiers killed and wounded deserve to know the whole truth."

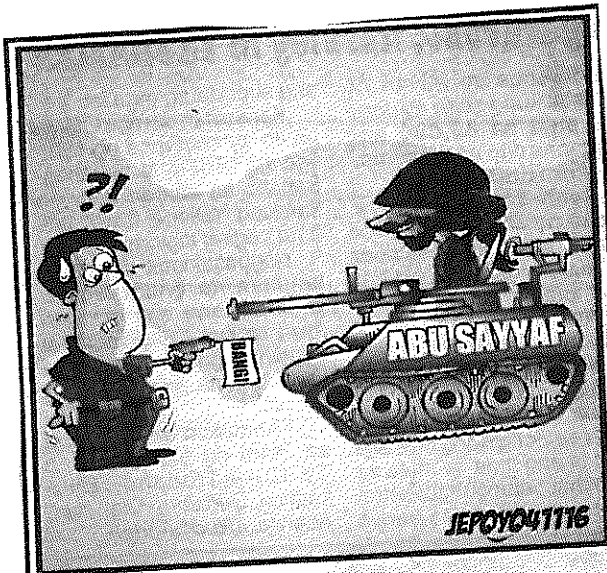
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April 2016

NGAYON
Diyaryong diwaite ng masang intelihente

Pahina. 4



Editoryal

Hindi kaya ng AFP ang Abu Sayyaf

DAPAT nang aminin ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na hindi nila kaya ang mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf. Ito ay sa kabila na sinasabi nilang kakaunti na lamang ang bilang ng mga mamamatay-tao. Kung kakaunti, bakit mas nalalagasan ang mga sundalo ng gobyerno. Noong Sabado, inambus ng tinatayang 120 Abu Sayyaf ang mga sundalong kabilang sa 44th Infantry Battalion, 4th Special Forces Battalion at 4th Light Armor Cavalry Troop na ikinamatay ng 18 miyembro at ikinasugat ng 56. Nagbigay agad ng medalya ang AFP chief at Defense Secretary sa mga nasugatan.

Ipinagmalaki ng AFP na napatay ang limang miyembro ng Sayyaf na kinabibilangan ng lider na si Isnilon Hapilon at militanteng Moroccan na si Furuji Indama.

Maipagmamalaki ba na nakapatay ng limang Sayyaf gayung ang kapalit ay 18 sundalo? Mas maganda sanang pakinggan kung 18 Sayyaf ang napatay at limang sundalo lamang ang nalagas. Hindi ito dapat ipagmalaki. Dapat mas marami ang casualties sa kalaban.

Tatlong dekada nang naghahasik ng lagim ang Abu Sayyaf sa Sulu, Basilan at Tawi-Tawi. Naging tatak na nila ang pangangidnap at saka hihingi ng ransom money. Karaniwang mga dayuhan ang kanilang kinikidnap at pinatutubos ng milyong dollar. Sa masamang paraan sila kumikita at naging hanapbuhay na nila. Halos sunud-sunod ang kanilang pangangidnap ngayong taon na ito.

Noong nakaraang linggo, 10 Indonesians ang kinidnap ng grupo habang naglalayag sa karagatang nasa pagitan ng Pilipinas at Indonesians. Hinarang ng sasakyan ng Sayyaf ang tugboat at barge ng Indonesians at sapilitang dinukot at dinala sa isang hindi matuntong lugar.

Makaraan ang ilang araw, muli na namang nangidnap ang grupo at apat na Malaysians na nakasakay sa tugboat at patungong Sabah ang dinukot. Ang pamamayagpag ng kidnappers sa Mindanao ang isang dahilan kung bakit bagsak ang tourism industry sa bansa. Sino ba ang hindi matatakot sa kidnap-for-ransom group?

Ipakita ng AFP ang kanilang bangis sa Abu Sayyaf. Kailangan ang walang patlang na opensi-ba hanggang sa madurog. Kapag tinigilan, muli silang babangon at maghahasik ng lagim.

4 April 2016



Pahina. 5

EDITORIAL

PATAYAN SA MINDANAO

DAPAT na hawakan nang matino ang mga patayan sa Mindanao upang hindi magbunga ang mga ito ng mga kalagayang hindi maganda para sa buong bansa.

Dalawang magkasunod na patayan ang gumising nang wala sa oras sa ating lahat sa mga araw na ito: ang Kidapawan massacre na may 3 biktima at mahigit 100 sugatan at ang 18 patay na sundalo at 5 miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf sa Basilan.

Pinugutan pa umano ng Abu Sayyaf ang apat sa mga sundalo sa Basilan.

Dahil sa pagiging seryoso ng mga ito, pareho ang mga patayang ito na umabot sa atensyon maging ng mga dayuhan.

Ang iba't ibang human rights organization na internasyonal, halimbawa, ay hindi matiis ang maglabas ng kanilang mga pagmamalasakit sa mga biktima ng massacre.

Itinuturing nilang paglabag ang massacre sa international law on human rights at malinaw na itinuturo nila ang pamahalaan na siyang may kagagawan nito.

Ang patayan naman sa Basilan ay konektado sa mga pangangidnap sa mga dayuhan nang may ransom.

Hindi lamang turismo sa Pilipinas ang apektado rito kundi maging ang kredibilidad ng pamahalaan sa pag-sugpo sa krimeng kinatatakutan ng lahat: ang kidnapping for ransom na may kasamang pamumugot sa mga biktima.

Subalit pinakamahalaga pa rin ang halos kawalan na ng pagpapahalaga sa buhay ng tao para lang maisulong ng pamahalaan o ng mga terorista ang kani-kanilang mga interes.

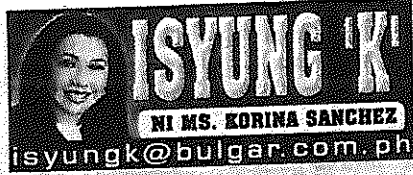
Saan man sulok tingnan, ang pamahalaan ang may pangunahing responsibilidad para tumino o madisiplina o mapigilan ang mga gumagawa ng mga krimeng ito.

Kung bigo naman ang pamahalaan, paano kumilos ang mga mamamayan para sa pagtutuwid nang lahat?

11 April 2016



Pahina. 3



Talupan ang 'supplier' ng armas ng Abu Sayyaf!

NAGKAROON ng labanan sa Basilan sa pagitan ng militar at mga kriminal na Abu Sayyaf noong Sabado. Wala pang opisyal na pahayag mula sa AFP hinggil sa labanang ito pero may mga ulat na 18 sundalo natin ang nasawi at nasugatan. Higit isandaang ASG ang nakalaban ng 44th Infantry Battalion na tumagal ng sampung oras. May ulat pa na may 2 pinugutan mula sa mga nasawing sundalo. Kailangan na lang hintayin ang mga opisyal na pahayag mula sa AFP hinggil sa labanang ito.

Pero malinaw na may kakayahan pa ang Abu Sayyaf na makipagsapalaran sa ating militar. Nakapagtatakang kung bakit tila malakas pa sila bilang isang kriminal na grupo. Sino ang tumutulong sa kanila at mas mahalaga, sino ang nagbibigay-suporta sa kanila sa pamamagitan ng armas?

Pinalaya na ang Italyanong pari pero ilang

bihag pa ang hawak nila. Hindi na nagkaroon ng katahimikan ang bansa mula sa mga kriminal na ito. Hangad natin na darating ang araw na wala nang Abu Sayyaf sa Pilipinas.

Kasalukuyang nagaganap ang taunang Balikatan, ang pagsasanay ng ating mga sundalo kasama ang militar ng Amerika. Ngayong taon, nakilahok din ang Australia at maraming nag-oobserba ng mga pagsasanay. Noong Sabado, nagkaroon ng display sa Clark Air Base ng mga eroplano ng Amerika at Australia, kasama ang ilang eroplano ng Philippine Air Force tulad ng S-211 at mga bagong FA-50. Marami ang namangha sa mga eroplano ng Amerika, partikular ang A-10 Thunderbolt, MH-53 Sea Stallion helicopter, V-22 Osprey at ang higitang C-17 Globemaster.

Kayanaman malakas ang ugong ng batikos mula sa China ngayon. Darating pa sa bansa ang Defense Secretary ng Amerika na si Ashton Carter, para pag-usapan ang tulong sa rehiyon sa harap ng tumitinding tensiyon sa pagitan ng maraming bansa at ng China. Lahat ng ito ay bahagi ng pagpapalakas ng ating relasyon sa ating mga kaalyado sa mundo. Nangako rin ang Amerika ng apatnapung milyong dolyar na tulong sa ating militar. Sana nga maayos ang paggamit ng pondong iyan para sa ikabubuti ng bansa. Mahirap kung mahawakan lang ng mga gahaman sa pera.

April 2016



Pahina. 4



Wagi ni Pacman natabunan

DAPAT sana ay banner headline ang panalo ni People's Champ Manny Pacquiao laban kay Timothy Bradley. Panalo na naman siya by unanimous decision matapos patumbahin ng dalawang beses si Bradley sa labang sinasabi niyang "panghuli na".

Kaso, may nangyaring trahedya na naman na kinasangkutan ng may 18 sundalo ng Armed Forces of the Philippines na lumusob sa kuta ng Abu Sayyaf sa Tipo-Tipo, Basilan sa tangkang sagipin ang mga dayuhang dinukot ng naturang bandidong grupo.

Totoong "people's champ" si Pacquiao pero ang mga

sundalong ito na nagbuwis ng buhay ay mas dapat kilanlin ang kabayanihan. Tulad din sila ng SAF 44 na nagbuwis ng buhay sa ikadadakip ng napatay ng international terrorist na si Marwan.

Marami sa mga nasawi ay miyembro ng 44th Infantry Battalion at 4th special forces Battalion. Tila number ng kapighatian ang "44" ano?

Magkasabay ang pagluluksa at pagbubunyi ng AFP sa pangyayari. Bakit hindi? Si Pacquiao ay isang reservist official ng militar na bagamat naghatid ng karangalan sa bansa ay may nangyari namang malagim na trahedya kahapon. Bukod sa labingwalong namatay, may 53 na iba pang kawal ang sugatan samantalang ang mga namatay sa kampo ng Abu Sayyaf ay lima lamang.

Ayon kay AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla, tulad ni Manny ang mga mandirigmang sundalo na determinadong hanapin ang mga kalaban na naghahasik ng ligalig sa bansa.

Ang mga napatay na terorista ay kinabibilangan ng mga foreign terrorists tulad nina Moroccan Mohammad Khattab at ang sinasabing anak ni Isnilon Hapilon.

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

AKSYON NGAYON...

Mula pahina 4

Ubaida Hapilon. Ang mga sugatan naman sa panig ng Abu ay dalawampu kabilang sina ASG leader Radzmit Jannatul alias Kubayab.

// April 2016



Page. 7

Ending terrorism president's job

BY BERNADETTE
E. TAMAYO

FINISHING off the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) is this President's last job and the next president's first," according to re-electionist Sen. Ralph Recto.

Recto hopes that President Benigno Aquino and his successor will eventually annihilate the ASG terrorists who operate mostly in Sulu and Basilan.

He condemned the death of 18 Army soldiers and the wounding of 53 others when they clashed with around 120 ASG bandits in Tipo-Tipo town, Basilan, Saturday morning.

"We commend the bravery of our fallen soldiers. We condole with their loved ones, but above all, let us assure them that justice will be served soon," said Recto.

"They have bedeviled four presidencies and, if not stopped, is on track to confront the fifth Malacanang occupant in their almost quarter-of-a-century of mayhem and violence," he said.

Recto said that the next presidential debate on April 24 in Pangasinan should include a question on how to end Abu Sayyaf's terrorism and stop their expansion as an "ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) franchisee."

"What is clear is that ending their terror has become an important part

of the job description of the next president. What is also clear is that Abu Sayyaf's predatory attacks have been reduced by the current administration," he said.

Recto deplored, however, that they have gone on a "kidnapping spree," snatching 10 Indonesian fishermen, bringing the number of their hostages to 14.

The other four are Dutch Ewold Hurn, Canadians John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, and Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad.

"Before their hostages become a United Nations of kidnap victims, they must be stopped. We know the lessons of the past: Ransom payments fuel more kidnappings and finance more terror activities," said Recto.

April 2016



Page. 7

Bongbong to AFP Be transparent on clash with ASG

SENATOR Ferdinand “Bongbong” R. Marcos Jr. yesterday called on the Armed Forces of the Philippines to disclose the details of the encounter in Basilan with Abu Sayyaf forces which led to the killing of at least 18 soldiers and wounding of more than 50 others Saturday.

Marcos said the entire nation and most especially the families of the slain soldiers deserve full transparency in the military operation against the international terrorist group.

“We need a full picture of the encounter. We should not hide these details. The

Filipino people and most especially the families of the soldiers killed and wounded deserve to know the whole truth,” he said.

Marcos expressed concern about the silence of the AFP on the operation. Reports have shown that after the Western Mindanao Command’s report of 22 soldiers injured early Saturday, no official statement has been released about the clashes.

“Here we go again. We are again in the dark of what happened,” he said, noting of the country’s experience with the ill-fated Mamasapano operation which led to the killing of 44 members of the Special



Marcos

Action Force. It took several weeks before police officials made a public pronouncement on who ordered the operation.

Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin and AFP Chief of Staff Hernando Iriberry were said to have flown to Zamboanga City and Basilan province early yesterday to meet with ground commanders.

Marcos added the AFP has to make public who led the operation and the exact purpose of the operation in an area controlled by the armed group. “Who was in charge of the operation? What was the exact objective of the operation? We need answers because this is something that strikes a chord with every Filipino because of the Mamasapano incident a year ago,” he said.

According to reports, the 10-hour firefight happened Saturday, a day after Italian hostage, former missionary Rolando del Torchio, was released by Abu Sayyaf.

AFP sources were quoted as saying that the government forces were deployed to hunt down Abu Sayyaf commander Isnilon Hapilon who has been involved in several terrorist attacks.

Local media reports also indicated that about 100 Abu Sayyaf fighters were involved in the clash with government troops. Four soldiers had reportedly been decapitated.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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What's magnificent about withdrawal of US bases?

COMMENTARY

Hermenegildo C. Cruz

TWO ITEMS stood out in the March 19, 2016, issue of the INQUIRER—the report titled “US fears Chinese buildup on Panatag” (Front Page) and the column by Mahar Mangahas titled “The vindication of Jovito Salonga” (Opinion). Both items are related to the removal of US bases from the Philippines in 1992.

The 12 senators led by then Senate President Salonga who voted in 1992 for the removal of the US bases were thereafter referred to as the “Magnificent 12.” In the light of what has since happened in the West Philippine Sea, it is time we posed the question: What is magnificent about the ousting of US bases from the country? National survival is the primordial consideration in the conduct of a country's foreign relations. On this basis, the removal of US bases from the country is an unmitigated disaster.

In 1992, Panatag Shoal was a target range of the US Navy. Had the US bases not been removed, we would still be in possession of Panatag. Moreover, with the connivance of America, we could also have designated as target ranges all the areas on which China has built artificial islands. In 1992, nobody had effective possession of these disputed areas. They were *terra nullius*, and using them as target ranges would have amounted to effective possession by the Philippines.

Like all bullies, China picks on the weakest prey first. In the current dispute, China has bullied only the Philippines and Vietnam, and has not grabbed areas claimed by Taiwan and Malaysia. The major reason is this: Taiwan and Malaysia have modern weapons (“A neutral foreign policy will not work,” Opinion, 7/4/15). China would not have confronted the United States on this issue.

The most devastating outcome of China's construction of these artificial islands is the impact on the defense of our national territory. In 1992, the nearest Chinese airfield was 900 kilometers away, on Hainan island. Now, Chinese airfields are a scant 200 km away. The significance of this is that the distance of 900 km is not within the combat range of jet fighters. But that is not the

case at 200 km. Our problem will get worse the day China installs missiles on those islands. We will need batteries of Patriot missiles to defend our country, which of course we cannot afford.

The constant argument of those who worked for the removal of the US bases from Philippine soil was that the bases' presence was an affront to our national sovereignty. And yet we can, after due notice, always terminate the presence of US bases, which we in fact did in 1992. Instead, what we have now is China's permanent presence on our front yard, and the only way we can remove it is by waging World War III.

In 1992, the US bases provided employment for as many as 80,000 Filipinos. Conversely, a big number of our fishermen have lost their livelihoods; Chinese fishermen are exploiting the marine resources that our own fishermen used to harvest. On top of that, rare sea life which our Navy and Coast Guard had safeguarded for years are being harvested illegally by the Chinese. In due course, they will exploit all the natural resources of these areas.

We are not speaking here with the benefit of hindsight. These events are foreseeable. It is taught in any course in diplomacy that we live in a lawless world. A country must have adequate arms to defend its territorial integrity. A defenseless country invites aggression. When the 12 senators voted to oust the US bases in 1992, they should have taken the compensatory step of increasing the defense budget. Given our limited means, this would undoubtedly have caused a decline in our living standards. But then, we have a model on this issue.

When India started developing nuclear weapons, Pakistan said in response that it would do the same even if its people ended up eating grass. Pakistan got its nuclear arms, but at great

privation to its people. But Pakistan's officials who said this were true statesmen; they had the courage to tell their compatriots what it would take to preserve their national sovereignty.

We cannot say the same of the 12 senators who voted to oust the US bases. They constituted a majority in the Senate; it was within their power to increase the defense budget, although this would have meant cutting the outlays for education, health and social services. That would have been an unpopular move and they could have been voted out of office. In this respect, the “Magnificent 12” behaved as politicians: They were thinking of the coming elections, not the future of our country. Had they behaved as statesmen, they should have, like their Pakistani counterparts, increased the defense budget even if our people had to eat grass.

The problem is that we still see this happening in our country now. We see a considerable number of our politicians still calling for the abolition of the Visiting Forces Agreement and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement but without telling the public that this would require increasing the defense budget, which would in turn depress our living standards.

It is difficult to see how the removal of the US bases in 1992 constituted a magnificent episode in our history. In fact, this early it is evidently a catastrophe. From here on, we have to live under the shadow of Chinese weapons, including nuclear arms in due course. There is also something wrong when a country overlooks a failure in public policy, in this case the closure of US bases, and pass it off as a success.

Hermenegildo C. Cruz served as Philippine ambassador to the United Nations in 1984-86.

11 April 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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The great hoax on the Marcos burial

THE NARRATIVE has always been that the body in the glass coffin in Batac, Ilocos Norte, lying there since 1993, is yet to be buried because the state refuses burial. As a result, the body lies embalmed until God knows when. There is an irrelevant twist to it, sacrilegious even, that appeals to most cultural norms barring the desecration of the dead. In short, the message is: The state is cruel to disallow proper burial.

I have had two opportunities to visit the crypt of Ferdinand Marcos. The tourist gazer is usually led to an inner chamber inside the mausoleum just beside the family's "ancestral house." I enclose that in quotation marks because the house is anything but old; it is a new building designed to have fake, exposed "paletadas" so as to conjure antiquity; this is also part of the narrative. This first visit had an Imeldific air to it—the sound of choral cantatas filled the chamber.

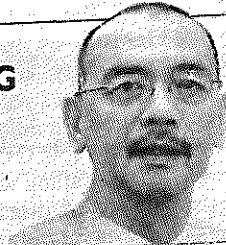
The second visit some years later was unexpectedly and surprisingly revealing. A close Marcos family friend escorted us to the crypt. There in the stillness of the chamber (no choral cantata this time), looking down on the finely chiseled body of the deposed president—you could clearly see the veins on his hands, or so I thought—the family friend whispered: This body is just a wax replica, the real corpse had already been buried underneath. End of the narrative.

It has become customary for most of those who have personally seen the Marcos crypt to say that "the body lies preserved in a refrigerated glass crypt" or "his body is on display in a glass case" because it is yet to be "interred in a manner befitting a former president."

It is time we disabused ourselves of that colossal lie. Marcos has already been buried and that is the truth. There is no more need of a burial. This issue comes on the heels of the last presidential debate held the previous month in Cebu. A novel feature of that debate was the "taas kamay" portion. The four candidates were asked if they were in favor of a Marcos burial at

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J.
Montalvan II



the Libingan ng mga Bayani. Jejomar Binay and Rodrigo Duterte raised their hands.

Transactional politicians are never far from a quid pro quo arrangement. Duterte makes no secret of his admiration for Ferdinand Marcos. Having come myself from that intimation of the Marcos family friend, Binay and Duterte raising their hands was a comical sight. They looked like poor ignoramuses.

The Libingan ng mga Bayani is the national pantheon provided by Republic Act No. 289 for departed former presidents and commanders in chief, secretaries of national defense, AFP chiefs of staff and general flag officers, active and retired military personnel of the AFP, veterans of the Philippine revolution of 1896, World War I, World War II and recognized guerrillas, government dignitaries, statesmen and national artists. The entitlement can also be extended to former first ladies.

Section 1 of that law avers the creation of the national pantheon: "to perpetuate the memory of all Presidents of the Philippines, national heroes and patriots for the inspiration and emulation of this generation and of generations still unborn." A despot deposed by a popular uprising does not qualify. Even in the absence of popular disapprobation or a chorus of consternation in this day and age of historical dementia, that fact of history alone disqualifies him from being an inspiration worthy of emulation.

Marcos' martial law statistics are chilling even when compared to the record of dictatorships elsewhere in the world. Its tally of 3,257 extrajudicial killings exceeds the 2,115 extrajudicial killings in

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Chile under Gen. Augusto Pinochet, or the 266 extrajudicial killings during the regime of the Brazilian junta. Some 2,520 or 77 percent of those killed were tortured, mutilated and dumped on a roadside for public display. A huge number, 70,000, were incarcerated, and those tortured numbered 35,000.

Alfred McCoy says that under Marcos, "Military murder was the apex of a pyramid of terror. Instead of an invisible machine like the Argentine military that crushed all resistance, the Marcos regime intimidated by random display of its torture victims, becoming thereby a theater state of terror. Seeing these mutilated remains, passers-by could read in a glance a complete transcript of what had transpired in Marcos' safe houses, spreading a sense of fear."

The 9,539 human rights victims who filed a class suit against Marcos already won \$2 billion in damages in a Honolulu court, later affirmed in 2011 by a ruling of a US circuit court in Hawaii. It is not about uniting a nation. It is, and continues to be, accountability for the errors committed in the pursuit of public trust.

At the Libingan's entrance, one finds the poignant words, "I do not know the dignity of his birth, but I do know the glory of his death," a quote from Douglas MacArthur taken from a speech delivered during his 1961 sentimental journey to the Philippines. A Libingan burial for the deposed dictator is an insult to the thousands of martial law victims who are the ones who deserve a Libingan burial.

We must also take note that of all the dead Philippine presidents, only Carlos P. Garcia, Diosdado Macapagal and Elpidio Quirino are buried at the Libingan. The graves of Sergio Osmeña, Manuel A. Roxas and Ramon Magsaysay are till this day at the Cementerio del Norte, and Jose P. Laurel's in Tanauan, Batangas.

While the grim reminder of the Marcos terror must remain, and while we know all these protocols about who gets to be buried at the Libingan, the script must be changed for the sake of truth: Marcos has already been buried in Batac. Let him rest in peace.

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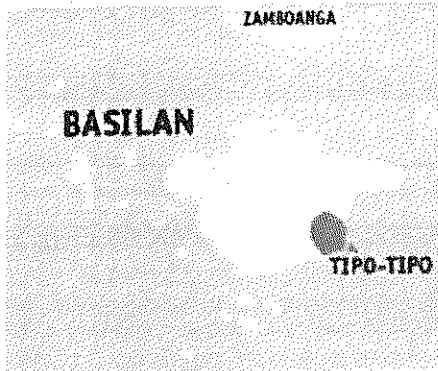
ONLINE NEWS

11 APRIL 2016

www.dwdd.com.ph

UPDATE II AFP mourns the death of 18 Soldiers Dead, 53 Others Wounded in Tipo-tipo Encounter

11 April 16 2016 10:00 AM (GMT+8) AFP Photo: Reuters



Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City – The Armed Forces of the Philippines mourns the death of 18 soldiers as the nation salute their bravery and heroism in paying the ultimate sacrifice in service to our country and our people.

The Western Mindanao Command (WesMinCom) says at least 18 soldiers and five militants have been killed during a clash between government troops and the Abu Sayyaf (ASG) on Saturday (April 9) in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

The following are the names of the fallen heroes:

- 1) 1LT REMEGIO B LICENA PA
- 2) SSg Makin B Jarani PA
- 3) Sgt Jayson Alani Inf PA,44IB
- 4) Sgt Paterno G Oquino PA
- 5) Sgt Akhad M Usman PA
- 6) Cpl Rodelio Bangcairin PA
- 7) Cpl Rodel Perolino PA
- 8) Cpl Dionisio L Labial PA
- 9) Cpl Rakib Kadil PA
- 10) Cpl Reezvi Arshcelo H Gandawali PA
- 11) Cpl Noel R Else PA
- 12) Cpl Darius Bulan PA

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- 13) Cpl Ibrahim Palao PA
- 14) Pfc Kevin Rey S Verano PA
- 15) Pvt Dunemark Gil Saldivar PA
- 16) Pfc Marjun Duhaylungsod Inf PA
- 17) Pfc Marjohri G Monte Inf PA
- 18) Pfc Doren A Aspurias Inf PA

Meanwhile, in a press briefing on Sunday morning (April 10), WesMinCom spokesperson Maj. Filemon Tan said more than 50 other soldiers were wounded in the nearly 10-hour gunbattle that resulted in one of the biggest casualties suffered by government forces in a single day in recent years.

A similar encounter in Al Barka, also in Basilan, in 2011 left 19 government troops dead.

Tan said the militants who were killed included a suspected foreign terrorist, Moroccan national Mohammad Khattab, and Ubaida Hapilon, the son of Abu Sayyaf senior leader Isnilon Hapilon.

"Soldiers of Joint Task Group Basilan conducting military operations in Basilan province encountered more or less 120 Abu Sayyaf bandits under Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama."

Full military honors will be accorded to these soldiers in line with the time honored tradition of the AFP. Also, all military camps will fly the flag at half-mast as the nation mourns their death and in recognition of their ultimate sacrifice for the country.

The AFP assured the families of the bereaved soldiers of the benefits that they will be receiving.

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6 sa 56 sugatang sundalo sa ASG enc., kritikal ang kondisyon

By Bombo Marilyn Delos SantosPosted in [Latest News](#) Sunday, 10 April 2016 14:53
ZAMBOANGA CITY - Pumalo na sa 56 na mga sundalo ang sugatan sa naganap na madugong enkwentro sa Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

Nananatili pa rin sa 18 ang nasawi sa panig ng pamahalaan kabilang ang isang Army official.

Naka confine naman ngayon sa isang pribadong hospital sa Zamboanga City ang anim na sundalo na kritikal ang kalagayan.

Habang ang nasa 50 iba pang sugatan ay kasalukuyang nagpapagaling sa Camp Navarro General Hospital sa loob ng headquarters ng Western Mindanao Command.

Tatlo sa 56 na mga sugatang sundalo ay mga opisyal at ito ay ang mga sumusunod:

- 1) Capt. Dexter R. Dantog
- 2) Capt. Mauricio P. Kilbas
- 3) 1LT Mark Genesis Robles
- 4) PFC Ryan U Tiate

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- 5) CPL. Anderson P Sical
- 6) Cpl Ryan Rey Cadiero
- 7) Cpl Martiniano S Saburnido jr
- 8) Cpl Mohammad A Jaji
- 9) Cpl Rio R Ancajas
- 10) PFC Ian H Magsayu
- 11) SSGt. Eduardo Gil Capalac
- 12) Sgt Roland T Suan
- 13) Pfc Redilo Tabo Tabo
- 14) Sgt Rommel G Fargas
- 15) Pfc Randy H Santiago
- 16) Tsg Robert M Dapon
- 17) Cpl Bryan Garcelina
- 18) Sgt Victor P Montalbo PA
- 19) Sgt Erico S Paglinawan
- 20) Pfc Erwin R Marquez
- 21) Cpl Albert C Mena
- 22) SSg Ferdinand A Cuaresma
- 23) Cpl Taha J Misuari
- 24) Cpl Daryl J Labarda
- 25) Pfc Ernesto L Marsan
- 26) Pfc Ruzlee Lloyd Kindan
- 27) Sgt Francisco B Baguiwan
- 28) Pvt Benhur J Anog
- 29) PFC Ryan C Canonigo
- 30) Pfc Alvin Alarcon
- 31) Pvt Elmas B Fuentes
- 32) Cpl Bontigas Rey
- 33) Sgt Julas Mad A Godrenier
- 34) Cpl Kullam M Saribban
- 35) Pfc Alvel T Perez
- 36) Pfc reynil S Dafon
- 37) Pfc John Montuert
- 38) Cpl Roberto Dua
- 39) Pfc Daniel S. Rimasog

Inisyal pa lamang ang listahan ng mga pangalan ng mga sugatang sundalo ang inilabas ng militar.

Halos lahat ng mga naging casualties ay miyembro ng 44th Infantry Battalion na siyang nasa frontline.

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ASG tinangkang pugutan ng ulo ang 2 sa 18 nasawing sundalo

By Bombo Anne SoberanoPosted in Latest NewsSunday, 10 April 2016 16:42

Aminado ang pamunuan ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) na tinangka ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf na pugutan ng ulo ang dalawa sa 18 mga sundalong nasawi sa naganap na madugong labanan sa Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

Ayon kay AFP spokesperson BGen. Restituto Padilla na may report silang nakuha mula sa field na dalawa sa nasawing sundalo ay tinangkang pugutan ng ulo ng mga bandidong Abu Sayyaf subalit ito ay naiwasan.

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Sinabi ni Padilla na kaagad narekober ng mga tropa ang cadaver ng mga ito.

Kinumpirma din ni Padilla, na nagpapatuloy pa rin ang operasyon ng militar sa probinsiya laban sa ASG.

Bagkus ngayong araw ongoing pa rin ang labanan sa pagitan ng militar at bandidong grupo.

Sinabi ni Padilla, nalungkot si AFP chief of staff General Hernando Iriberry sa nangyari kung saan nasa 18 sundalo ang nasawi habang 56 ang sugatan.

Dahil sa insidente, nagdadalamhati ngayon ang buong AFP bagamat kailangan din nilang ituloy ang kanilang misyon at trabaho lalo na ang pagtugis sa mga teroristang grupo.

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Mga sugatang sundalo sa Basilan clash pinarangalan

By Bombo Marilyn Delos SantosPosted in Latest NewsSunday, 10 April 2016 14:54

ZAMBOANGA CITY- Personal na ginawaran ni Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff General Hernando Iriberry ng wounded personnel medal ang 56 mga sugatang sundalo sa madugong labanan sa Barangay Baguindan, Tipo-Tipo lalawigan ng Basilan.

Isinagawa ang simpleng seremonya sa Camp Navarro General Hospital na nasa loob ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) kung saan naka-confine ngayon ang nasa 50 mga sugatang sundalo.

Habang 6 naman sa mga sundalo na nasa kritikal ang kondisyon ay inilipat naman sa pribadong ospital sa lungsod.

Si Iriberry ay dumating sa Zamboanga City kaninang umaga kasama si Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin at nakipagpulong kay WestMinCom Commander LtGen. Mayoralgo Dela Cruz kasama ang iba pang mga opisyal ng militar tungkol sa nangyaring matinding labanan.

Inihayag ni Iriberry, na nalulungkot ang buong hanay ng AFP sa pagkalagas ng marami nilang mga sundalo.

Sinabi ni Iriberry na bahagi na talaga ng kanilang sinumpaang tungkulin ang magbuwis ng buhay kaya dapat lamang na kilalanin ang mga kabayanihan ng mga sundalo.

"Our troops fought gallantly and we salute them as they displayed the finest traditions of soldiery with almost valor. We are truly better for their sacrifice and we will take inspiration from their exemplary service. After we grieve for our soldiers, we shall continue the fight to win the peace for our people. Our soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice so that the people of Basilan will be free from terrorists and secure a peaceful and bright future for their next generation," pahayag ni Iriberry.

www.philstar.com

Recto: Bets should discuss Abu Sayyaf in next presidential debate

(philstar.com) | Updated April 10, 2016 - 12:37pm



A still image captured from video footage of the kidnappers and their victims is shown in this SITE Intelligence Group video made available to Reuters in November. **File photo**

MANILA, Philippines - Presidential candidates should talk about how they plan to deal with the Abu Sayyaf group, Sen. Ralph Recto said Sunday, saying the bandits have "bedeviled four presidencies" and will be a challenge for a fifth unless stopped.

"The next presidential debate should include a question on how to end Abu Sayyaf's terrorism and stop their expansion as an ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) franchisee. What is clear is that ending their terror has become an important part of the job description of the next president," he said in a press statement.

The next and final round of the Commission on Elections-organized presidential debate will be held in Pangasinan on April 24.

The reelectionist senator said that the Aquino administration has reduced the number of Abu Sayyaf attacks, but that recent kidnappings -- including four foreign nationals who were grabbed from a resort on Samal island in the Davao region last September -- show they are still a threat.

In recent weeks, the group is also believed to have abducted 10 Indonesian and four Malaysian sailors in separate incidents.

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"Before their hostages become a United Nations of kidnap victims, they must be stopped. We know the lessons of the past: Ransom payments fuel more kidnappings and finance more terror activities," Recto said.

On Saturday, at least 18 soldiers were killed and more than 50 were wounded in a daylong firefight with from 100 to 150 Abu Sayyaf bandits in Al-Barka and Tipo Tipo towns in the island province of Basilan.

The Associated Press, citing security officials, reported that the soldiers had been deployed to kill or capture Abu Sayyaf commander Isnilon Hapilon, who has publicly pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group and has been hunted for years for his alleged involvement in several terrorist attacks.

"We commend the bravery of our fallen soldiers. We condole with their loved ones, but above all, let us assure them that justice will be served soon," Recto said.

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Sundalo sugatan sa encounter vs NPA

By Bombo Radyo Gen SanPosted in Latest NewsSunday, 10 April 2016 03:18
GENERAL SANTOS CITY - Sugatan ang isang sundalo matapos ang mahigit isang oras na encounter laban sa grupo ng New People's Army (NPA).

Sinabi sa Bombo Radyo ni 2Lt. Daryl Cansancio, spokesperson ng 73rd Infantry Battalion, hinarass ng 25 mga rebelde ang mga tauhan ng 512th Engineering Battalion sa ginagawang school building sa Sitio Akbual, Upper Suyan, Malapatan, Sarangani.

Hindi umano pinaboran ng mga rebelde ng paglagay ng paaralan sa lugar kaya't nirapido ang nagtatrabahong mga sundalo.

Kaagad nagkaroon ng firefight na tumagal sa isang oras at tuluyang tumakbo ang nasabing mga rebelde.

Nagpatuloy naman ang pagpatrolya ng mga sundalo sa kabundukang bahagi ng Sarangani at Davao Occidental para maitaboy ang mga rebelde lalo na at paparating ang halalan.

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US-Philippines Alliance to Reach 'New Level': US Defense Chief

Ash Carter offers praise for bilateral ties in a think tank speech ahead of a visit to Manila.



By Prashanth Parameswaran

April 10, 2016



US President Barack Obama gives remarks to national and international media in front of BRP Gregorio del Pilar as part of a maritime security event.

Image Credit: [Flickr/US Embassy Manila](#)

Recent progress in U.S.-Philippine relations will take the capability of the alliance to a "new level" not seen in decades, the United States' defense chief told an audience in New York Friday before departing for a trip which includes stops to the Philippines and India.

The Philippines, long belittled as one of Asia's weakest militaries and Washington's laggard regional alliance, has become a critical part of the United States' rebalance to the region with ratification of a new defense pact known as the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) in January as well as its involvement in a Pentagon capacity-building program known as the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative (MSI), which is just getting underway.

"EDCA and MSI will take the U.S.-Philippines alliance capability to a new level, one not seen in decades," U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said in a speech on Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), a New York-based think tank.

EDCA, which was inked in April 2014, but only upheld by the Philippine Supreme Court this January, gives U.S. troops and equipment wide access to Philippine military bases on a rotational basis. Carter said that the announcement of the initial slate of five locations under the agreement would allow U.S. forces to conduct regular rotational training, exercises and activities and better support the modernization of the Philippine military as well as mutual defense.

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"We recently announced an initial slate of five EDCA Agreed Locations for the alliance activities, locations arrayed throughout the archipelago that will offer the opportunity for increasingly complex bilateral engagements," Carter said.

As part of his trip to the Philippines, Carter is expected to visit two of the five locations next week – Fort Magsaysay and Antonio Bautista Air Base. EDCA, Carter said, would enable the allies to augment pre-positioned disaster relief supplies at Fort Magsaysay that had supported the response to Typhoon Haiyan, the deadliest typhoon ever recorded in Philippine history that killed over 6,300 people. New stocks would also be added to Bautista Air Base to enhance allied ability to respond to future disasters.

The Diplomat understands from officials that while initial efforts under EDCA will focus on areas like humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, over the longer term the agreement will allow the United States to station more troops, ships, and planes more frequently, thereby enhancing Washington's rotational presence in the region more generally amid a range of threats including China's growing assertiveness in the South China Sea.

Regarding MSI, a \$425-million-dollar, five-year maritime security capacity-building initiative for Southeast Asian states near the South China Sea, which Carter first announced last year at the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Carter said that most of the funding for the first year of the program would go to the Philippines.

"We have just released the first tranche of this money, nearly 80 percent of which is going to the Philippines," he said.

The funding, he said, will help modernize the technology and train staff at the Philippine National Coast Watch Center, enhance an information network to enable classified information sharing between U.S. Pacific Command in Hawaii and key Philippines maritime command centers, provide an aerostat reconnaissance platform, and outfit Philippine navy patrol vessels with better sensors.

This would be a much-needed boost for Manila, which has struggled to counter Beijing's assaults against it in the South China Sea, including the seizure of Scarborough Shoal in 2012 and the continued harassment of Philippine aircraft, vessels, and fishermen. The Philippines also has a pending South China Sea case against China with the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague, with a verdict expected in May or June.

"[O]ur having the initiative and the funding that goes with it that makes it possible, particularly for a country like the Philippines... it's a very positive thing," Carter told *The Diplomat* in response to a question on board Boeing 737-700 flight from New York back to Washington following his CFR speech.

Carter will also become the first U.S. defense secretary to observe the Balikatan exercises, the premier bilateral U.S.-Philippine military exercise that has grown to involve Australia as well as a number of additional observers this year including Japan. This year's exercise, which runs through April 15 and includes over 7,000 personnel from all military services from both countries, features a simulated oil and gas platform recovery raid in the South China Sea and the deployment of two units of the U.S. M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) for the first time.

"Balikatan signals our shared resolve. It enhances our shared capabilities. And it demonstrates, once again, America's dedication to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with the Philippines," Carter said, referring to the U.S. translation of the term Balikatan in the local Tagalog language.

Carter also reiterated U.S. President Barack Obama's statement that the U.S. commitment to the Philippines is "ironclad." Some continue to call on the administration to clarify its commitments under the U.S.-Philippine defense treaty as they might apply to the South China Sea to serve as a deterrent to Beijing.

www.update.ph

Korean manufacturer to provide PH Marines 8 new Amphibious Assault Vehicles

April 10, 2016 Grand Order

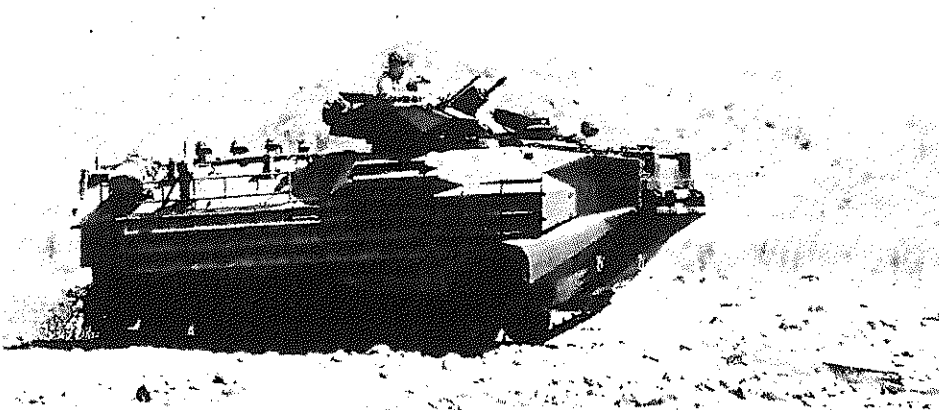
Hanwha Techwin, previously Samsung Techwin, was declared as the winning bidder for the Department of National Defense's Amphibious Assault Vehicle (AAV) acquisition project, according to MaxDefense. MaxDefense said that the Notice of Award was already provided.

The contract price for the acquisition of eight brand-new AAVs is PhP2.423 billion. These amphibious vehicles will render service to Philippine Marine Corps of Philippine Navy when delivered. Approved budget for the said acquisition was PhP2.5 billion.

South Korean Hanwha Techwin and American BAE Systems are producing AAV7A1 vehicles. Amphibious vehicles produced by the South Korean manufacturer are designated as KAAV7A1 (KAAV).

This project was among the seven multi-year contract projects that President Aquino approved. The approval also included two frigates, two anti-submarine helicopters for Philippine Navy; two long-range patrol aircraft, six close-air support aircraft, munitions for FA-50 and three air surveillance radars for the Philippine Air Force.

Meanwhile, units of Philippine Marines have conducted AAV familiarization training event with their American counterparts April 4, during the conduct of Balikatan 2016.



April 4, 2016. US Marines photo.

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

Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

Filipino Marines ride at the back of a US Marine Corps Amphibious Assault Vehicle with Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force at Crow Valley last week.

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