



# **ARMY**

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

**[oacpa.army2014@gmail.com](mailto:oacpa.army2014@gmail.com)**

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

**14 April 2016**

**Thursday**

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

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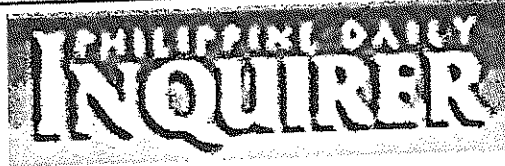
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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

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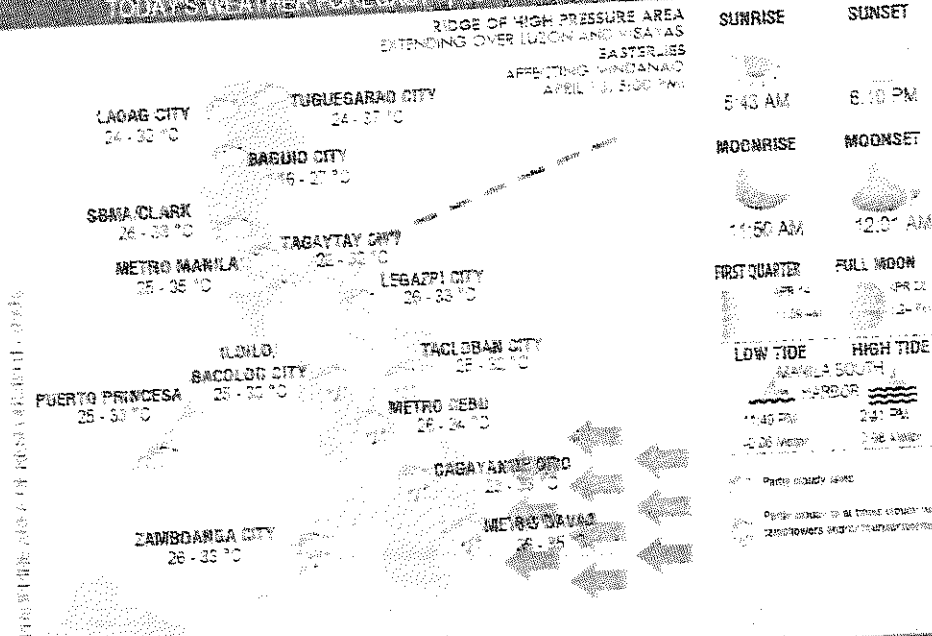
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**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 14, 2016 | THURSDAY**



**SUNRISE** 5:43 AM  
**SUNSET** 6:10 PM

**MOONRISE** 11:50 AM  
**MOONSET** 12:01 AM

**FIRST QUARTER** APR 14  
**FULL MOON** APR 22

**LOW TIDE** 11:40 PM  
**HIGH TIDE** 2:41 PM

Partly cloudy with  
Partly cloudy to 50% chance of rain  
20-30% chance of rain

|                        | APR 14   | APR 15   | APR 16   | APR 17   | APR 18   | APR 19   |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| <b>METRO MANILA</b>    | 25-35 °C | 26-36 °C | 26-32 °C | 27-32 °C | 26-35 °C | 26-35 °C |
| <b>TUGUEGARAO</b>      | 25-37 °C | 25-38 °C | 26-32 °C | 27-34 °C | 26-35 °C | 26-35 °C |
| <b>LACAG</b>           | 25-33 °C | 25-33 °C | 25-34 °C | 26-33 °C | 26-35 °C | 27-36 °C |
| <b>BAGUIO</b>          | 16-26 °C | 16-26 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 26-34 °C |
| <b>SBMA/CLARK</b>      | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C | 25-34 °C |
| <b>TAGAYTAY</b>        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>LEGAZPI</b>         |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b> |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>ILOILO/BACOLOD</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>TACLOBAN</b>        |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>  |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>METRO DAVAO</b>     |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>ZAMBOANGA</b>       |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| <b>METRO CEBU</b>      |          |          |          |          |          |          |

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**AIR 21**  
**SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!**

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# Still a four-way race for president – Pulse

By JANVIC MATEO

Despite the recent surge in survey ratings of presidential candidate Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, an executive of pollster Pulse Asia still believes that the upcoming elections will be a tight race.

Pulse Asia research director Ana Maria Tabunda noted the fluidity in the survey results of the presidential bets since the start of election season.

She also noted that the other bets have trained their guns on Duterte in recent days and this may affect his numbers.

"We don't know how his supporters will take it, especially the ones who have recently shifted" support, said Tabunda. "A lot of things can happen."

Duterte solidified his lead in the latest Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations (SWS) surveys released this week.

The tough-talking mayor obtained the lead with 27 percent in the March 30 to April 2 SWS survey released on Monday.

He was followed by Sen. Grace Poe with 23 percent, Vice President Jejomar Binay with 20 percent and Liberal Party candidate Manuel Roxas II with 18 percent.

Turn to Page 10

## Still From Page 1

In the March 29-April 3 Pulse Asia survey commissioned by ABS-CBN and released on Tuesday, Duterte led with 30 percent, followed by Poe with 25 percent.

Binay and Roxas are statistically tied for third place with 20 percent and 19 percent, respectively.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago trailed in both surveys, obtaining three percent in SWS and two percent in Pulse Asia.

In recent days, Duterte's rivals, particularly Binay and Roxas, have pounded on his track record, particularly the allegations of extrajudicial killings thrown at him.

### High turnout in overseas voting

While fluidity is observed

in pre-election surveys, there is a high turnout in the first three days of overseas absentee voting (OAV) for the May 2016 elections, according to the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Comelec Commissioner Arthur Lim said 32,364 Filipinos, mostly from Middle East and Asia Pacific, cast their votes as of 7 a.m. yesterday.

Filipinos in the Middle East and Africa registered the highest number of those who cast their votes so far at 14,453, followed by voters from Asia Pacific with 13,081, Europe with 4,485 and the Americas and Canada with 345.

"We have a very good number and this is an indication or

signal that come May 9 we will be able to surpass or breach the 50 percent mark of total registered overseas absentee voters," Lim said in a press conference.

He also said many Filipino overseas voters are encouraged to participate because of the tight battle for the presidency as well as the Comelec's dissemination of information about OAV.

"Because this is a close fight among presidential candidates, it is but natural for candidates and their supporters to give their utmost attention not only locally but also abroad, because the votes from the more than one million overseas voters can affect the results of the elections," he explained.

"As you may have observed, all the presidential

candidates went to campaign in Hong Kong and Singapore and this could be one of the factors why many have already cast their votes," he added.

Lim also admitted that there were minor hitches such as reports of vote counting machines (VCMs) bogging down, voters with deactivated records requesting to vote and reports of cheating.

Comelec recalled the malfunctioning VCMs and deployed 25 replacements for contingency. The poll body also set up hotlines to assist voters.

Comelec Office for Overseas Voting director Jane Valesa said the poll body is checking reports that some registered overseas voters in Hong Kong were unable to vote.

She said some voters

were not able to vote because their names could not be found in the official list of registered voters, while others were listed but were not able to vote in past two elections so their registration was deactivated.

"The Comelec cannot just allow those who are claiming that they are registered voters to vote because we will be opening the floodgates to flying voters," Lim explained.

Regarding reports of cheating spreading online, Lim said it was not true but the Comelec would initiate an investigation.

"There is no truth to such report so we will ask the law department to investigate so that appropriate charges can be filed against those who are trying to spread false infor-

mation and undermining the credibility of the elections," he explained.

"Elections should be taken seriously and not be treated as a joking matter in social media," Lim said, noting those behind such activities can be charged with election offense punishable by imprisonment.

The Comelec also put in place security features to ensure the credibility of the OAV. Lim said there are CCTV cameras in the polling precincts and each political party has its own watchers to prevent tampering of ballots.

Valesa said both the ballots and the envelopes being used in manual voting have serial numbers to ensure that these would not be tampered with.

- With Mayen Jaymalin



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## P-Noy says sorry to families of dead, wounded soldiers

By Julie S. Alipala, *Inquirer Mindanao*  
and Nikko Dizon

ZAMBOANGA CITY—After four days of silence on the slaughter of 18 Army soldiers by Abu Sayyaf bandits, President Aquino flew to Edwin Andrews Air Base (EAAB) yesterday and apologized to their families demanding an explanation for the worst

government loss in the antiterrorist campaign since the Mamasapano massacre 15 months ago.

"He said, 'Sorry' He said he was here to say sorry and to give assistance," said Rosalinda Dominguez, aunt of Pfc. Doreen Aspurias, after the meeting with the President.

P-NOY/A15

# P-Noy says sorry to families of dead, wounded soldiers

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Dominguez said most of the families who met with Mr. Aquino in the base were seeking answers to why reinforcements took so long to rescue troops of the 44th Infantry Battalion dispatched to track down kidnapers holding two Canadians and a Norwegian for a P1-billion ransom since last September and threatening to behead them.

In addition to the 18 killed in the ambush in Tipo-Tipo in Basilan province across the channel from Zamboanga, 50 soldiers were wounded in the incident that happened on Saturday while the nation was celebrating the Day of Valor, commemorating the heroism of soldiers who fell in Bataan and Corregidor at the outset of World War II.

Dominguez said the President told them that the rescue came late because fighting was continuing. "They're still fighting up to now," she quoted the President as saying in Filipino. The woman said she accepted Mr. Aquino's "sincere apology"

"The Abu Sayyaf has been our problem for the longest time. They have brought suffering to so many lives. I want to end this," Mr. Aquino said during the meeting with the grieving widows and relatives of the slain soldiers.

"We are facing a war and our soldiers are the ones who are fighting the enemies of the country. Our soldiers are those in the front lines who are securing peace in our land," the President added.

A family member asked the President why there was a high death toll in the encounter, according to Peter Paul Galvez, spokesperson of the Department of National Defense, who recounted to reporters the private meeting with the families in the multipurpose hall at the base.

Gen. Hernando Iriberry, chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, replied for the President. He said the military was looking into the incident, but that any investigation would have to wait until after the operations in Basilan.

Mr. Aquino arrived at 10 a.m.

and proceeded to the wake of Cpl. Rodelio Bangcairin in his home in Barangay Ayala in Zamboanga. He then spent an hour at Camp General Navarro Hospital where he spoke with the wounded soldiers. All the President's engagements here were off limits to journalists. The President also did not issue a public statement.

Mr. Aquino was in Zamboanga on Jan. 24, 2015, when 44 Special Action Force commandos were massacred in Mamasapano, Maguindanao province, on a mission to take out Malaysian bomb maker Zulkifli bin Hir, alias Marwan, who was killed in the operation.

Galvez said the President handed to the families checks from the Armed Forces.

The President also told the families that government was ready to help them, but asked them to be specific in their requests so that government can also respond to them quickly.

Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said the President came to "personally sympathize" with the families. "He

also came to pay tribute to the widows of the soldiers and to extend his help," the general said.

Barrientos said the families will each get P250,000 from the Office of the President, a remuneration of their base pay (roughly about P180,000), P50,000 from the MBI (Mutual Benefit Association Inc.), P100,000 from the insurance and P80,000 as burial assistance.

"A team from the Presidential Management staff is talking to the families, writing down their other concerns and needs," Barrientos said.

After meeting with the soldiers' families, Mr. Aquino had a brief working lunch at the EAAB before he proceeded to Laguindingan in Misamis Oriental province for a ceremonial switch on of a sitio electrification program.

The President then went to Cagayan de Oro City to campaign with administration standard-bearer Mar Roxas, vice presidential candidate Leni Robredo, and their candidates for senators.



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

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# Aquino visits wounded, attends wake of soldiers in Zamboanga

By **NONGYE E. LACSON**

**ZAMBOANGA CITY**—President Aquino visited the wounded soldiers confined in two military hospitals in this city amidst the ongoing military operations being conducted by the military against the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Tipo-Tipo where 18 soldiers and 13 ASG were killed and several others were wounded from both sides.

The President also extended his condolences to the families of two Army soldiers who were among the fatalities in the encounter. Upon arrival in this city yesterday morning, the President went directly to the wake of Philippine Army Corporal Rodelio Bancayrin in his house at the village of Ayala, and then to the wake of Army Corporal Rakib Kadil in the village of Recodo in this city.

He then proceeded to Camp Navarro General Hospital where 38 wounded soldiers are confined and to the Edwin Andres Air Base (EAAB) hospital where six soldiers are recuperating.

He also met with the fami-

lies of the slain soldiers at the EAAB Multi-Purpose Hall but details of their conversation were not made available to reporters.

Meanwhile, the Western Mindanao Command reported yesterday that they have recorded several encounters with the fleeing ASG since Monday in the forested areas of Barangay Baguindan and Silangkum in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan province.

As this developed, more than 200 families living near the area of hostilities fled their homes Sunday for fear of their safety and are now staying in some school buildings and campuses in Tipo-Tipo.

Army Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command, said government troops continued to hunt the fleeing ASG and its leader, Furig Indama, who has been reported as wounded and is in serious condition now.

The military operations in Tipo-Tipo will continue until after we can account all the ASG responsible for the ambush of our soldiers, Tan said.

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The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

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## Aquino visits injured soldiers

PRESIDENT Benigno Aquino III on Wednesday met with relatives of soldiers who died in the battle with Abu Sayyaf extremists in Basilan on April 1 and extended financial assistance to the families of 18 soldiers killed in action.

The President planed in around 10 a.m. and immediately proceeded to the wake of Cpl. Rodelio Bangcain in Barangay Ayala, 16.50 kilometers west of City Hall.

From Ayala, President Aquino motored to the Camp Navarro General Hospital of the Western Mindanao Command where 38 wounded soldiers are still undergoing treatment.

Aquino proceeded to the Edwin Andrews Air Base hospital and visited the other six wounded soldiers.

The rest of the wounded soldiers were admitted in two private hospitals in this city while six at the Victoriano Luna General Hospital in Quezon City.

After the hospital visit, Aquino met with the families of the 18 soldiers who were killed during the clash in Basilan province.

"He came here to personally pay respects to the slain soldiers and condole with their families," Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos, Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division commander, said in an interview.

Barrientos said the financial assistance included the following: P250,000 from the Office of the President; P180,000 cash remuneration (which is six times of the soldier's basic pay); P50,000 from the Armed Forces of the Philippines Mutual Benefit Association Inc.; P80,000, burial expenses; and, P100,000 from Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative.

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**Malaya**  
The Nation's Newspaper

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## Noy visits wounded soldiers in Zambo

**BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR  
AND VICTOR REYES**

PRESIDENT Aquino flew to Zamboanga City yesterday and personally extended his condolences to the families of 18 soldiers killed in clashes with the Abu Sayyaf in Basilan over the weekend.

Aquino first visited the wake of Cpl. Rodelio Bangcainin in Barangay Ayala in the city and

talked with his family before meeting with the 17 other families at the Edwin Andrews Base.

Five of the 18 slain soldiers have been buried while eight were en route to their hometowns.

Prior to the meeting, Aquino also visited 38 of the 53 soldiers who were wounded in the clashes, and are now confined at the Camp Navarro General Hospital inside the Western

Mindanao Command in Zamboanga City.

Aquino also went to Edwin Andrews Air Base Hospital to meet six soldiers who are confined there. The others are confined in private hospitals in the Zamboanga City and some others were flown to V. Luna Hospital in Quezon City. Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos

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### NOY

Jr., First Infantry Division commander, said in an interview after the President's meeting that Aquino handed financial assistance to the families, and reassured them of the financial aid from the Office of the President, the Philippine Army Mutual Benefit Association's License, and the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative; burial assistance and scholarship grants, among others.

The military is pursuing the Abu Sayyaf group that the troops encountered in Tipo-Tipo town last Saturday. Last Tuesday, the military started shelling Abu Sayyaf positions in the town.

Yesterday, three Abu Sayyaf men were reported killed in fresh fighting with pursuing troops, said Maj. Filemon Tan, spokesman of the military's Western Mindanao Command.

Tan said the encounter means

government forces have not lost track of the remnants of the Abu Sayyaf.

He said forces from the Army's 104th Brigade clashed with undetermined number of Abu Sayyaf men at around 10:45 a.m. in Barangay Baguindan, the same barangay where the fighting last Saturday broke out, leaving 18 soldiers and 53 others wounded.

The Abu Sayyaf initially had five dead but the fatality count rose to 24 yesterday, including those from succeeding firefights.

Barrientos belied reports of a failure of intelligence.

"This is war, my friend. You cannot expect na sa giyera walang casualties. Nagkataon na mayroong casualties so you cannot find an army in the world that will go to war without casualties," he said.

### ISIS LEADER?

The Philippine National Police said the police intelligence

community has not yet established the presence of Islamic State in Iraq and Syria terrorists in the country amid reports that Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon is the leader of the ISIS in the country.

Rohan Gunarata, described as a Singapore-based international terrorist expert, said Hapilon was appointed ISIS leader in the country last year after four groups unified and pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, leader of the terror group Islamic State.

Several groups have been linking themselves to the ISIS and other terror groups like the Jemaah Islamiyah.

"No validated information received by the PNP as to the presence of ISIS in the country. Our intelligence units continue to monitor and gather information on threat groups operating especially in the Southern Philippines," said Chief Supt. Wilben Mayor, PNP spokesman.  
— With Raymond Africa

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## Gov't to continue manhunt for terror groups

The mobility of terror groups operating in the south has been constrained and government troops would continue to run them down, Malacañang said yesterday.

"The bandits have been driven to the remote areas by the significant improvements in infrastructure, aside from the impact of the government's social development projects. Their capacity to instill fear and to commit crimes has been greatly diminished. Hence, they are constrained to operate within a greatly reduced area where they are now being engaged by government troops," Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said in a statement.

The military said government troops were closing in on more than 60 Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan following last weekend's bloody clashes that left 18 soldiers dead and 56 wounded.

Troops killed three suspected Abu Sayyaf gunmen yesterday as sporadic firefights resumed as government forces closed in on the extremists in Tipo-Tipo.

The military said a total of 27 bandits were killed in the clashes with government troops since the fighting erupted Saturday.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., des-

ignated ground operation spokesman, said the troops are under orders to cautiously advance to the bandit group's known defensive positions.

"The operation has been ongoing and there is no letup. We are always careful in our advance because these remnants are already in defensive positions," Tan said.

About five battalions and additional companies of strike forces have been dedicated in the offensive operation against the bandit group led by Isnilon Hapilon and Furuji Indama, who was reportedly wounded.

### 'We are facing a war'

President Aquino, on the other hand, flew to Zamboanga City yesterday to condole with the families of the 18 fallen soldiers.

Aquino also visited 36 wounded at the Camp Navarro General Hospital and had a brief chat with each of the soldiers.

The President assured the families of full government assistances and benefits.

He said there would be an investigation into the incident, according to a military official.

However, the President asked the families to allow the military to continue its operations against the Abu Sayyaf

By AUREA CALICA

before an investigation.

A wife of a soldier who was among those killed in Basilan told Aquino that she is volunteering her son to replace his slain father in the service.

Aquino appreciated the widow's offer and said he salutes such good mindset.

One of them asked why many were killed and wounded, according to information provided to the media.

AFP chief Gen. Hernando Iriberri said this would be investigated. He then explained to the families that soldiers are still in the battlefield and thus could not be interviewed or questioned at the moment.

Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos Jr., commander of the Army's 1st Infantry Division, said that despite the various speculations surrounding the April 9 attack in Basilan, their efforts were also appreciated by the families of those wounded and killed.

Barrientos said the President told the families that the military is at war with the Abu Sayyaf and their atrocities must end.

"We are facing a war," Department of National Defense spokesman Peter Galvez also quoted the President as telling the families of the slain soldiers during their meeting.

"This has been a problem for so long. A lot of lives have

been destroyed. I want to finish this," Aquino said.

Barrientos also said the "war" would continue in hunting the bandits who were also holding hostages. Barrientos stressed the policy remains that they would not negotiate with these hostage takers.

Barrientos said the families were emotional but managed to recover and were appeased by the fact the military leadership were attending to their needs.

Galvez, for his part, said the

President opened and ended the dialogue with the soldiers' families with an expression of sympathy for their loss and said he felt for them.

Galvez said Aquino also cited their bravery and gallantry and their mission was a major step in curbing terrorism.

Aquino also detailed the benefits for them and other assistance that could be provided by the government.

Galvez said the President personally handed checks to some of the family members.

Barrientos added an inves-

tigation would come but they would have to focus first on the operations against Abu Sayyaf and the welfare of the families left behind by the soldiers killed last Saturday.

He said the investigation was standard operating procedure and every incident was being looked into by the military's Board of Inquiry.

Coloma earlier said it would be inappropriate to conduct an investigation into the killing of the 18 soldiers amid the ongoing military operations against the bandit group.

### Rebel integrees

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the military has coordinated its operations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) whose camp is located near the scene of fighting.

Padilla gave assurance that no MILF fighters were involved in the operation, saying the Muslim rebel group withdrew their forces to allow the military to pursue the Abu Sayyaf.

Government peace panel chair Miriam Coronel Ferrer lauded the military and the MILF for coordinating efforts against the Abu Sayyaf under the ceasefire agreement mechanisms. - With Jaime Laude, Roel Pareño, Jose Rodel Clapano



President Aquino meets the families of the 18 soldiers killed in an encounter with Abu Sayyaf bandits at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City yesterday.

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## Abu supporters resort to diversionary tactics

By Mario J. Mallari

Sympathizers of the terrorist Abu Sayyaf group are now resorting to diversionary tactics, exploding a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) at a videoke house in Lamitan City, Basilan Tuesday night.

Senior Insp. Gean Gallardo, Lamitan City police chief, said that the explosion erupted at around 10:30 p.m. at a videoke house in Barangay Kulay Bato.

"The said explosion occurred along the highway going to Lamitan port, an alleged IED was placed on the videoke house owned by a certain Nelly Gardo," said Gallardo.

"No person was harmed after the explosion but part of the videoke house was damaged," the official added.

Gallardo tagged the so-called auxiliary urban terrorist group identified with the Abu Sayyaf as behind the explosion.

The official said that the motive was "to divert attention because there is ongoing operation."

Gallardo said that the explosion site was far from the ongoing military operations in Tipo Tipo but by launching such attack the terrorists "can really get attention."

"They want the troops operating in Tipo Tipo to be diverted," said Gallardo.

However, Gallardo said that the Basilan provincial police office immediately deployed augmentation troops to Lamitan City.

Last Saturday, 18 Army troops were killed after a 10-hour clash with Abu Sayyaf group, led by Isnulon Hapilon and Furuji Indama.

Fifty-three other government troops were wounded.

On the other hand, 24 terrorists, including Moroccan Mohammad Khattab, were killed while around 20 others were wounded. Indama was reportedly among those critically wounded.

As of yesterday, focused military operations are still continuing in the outskirts of Barangay Baguindan in Tipo Tipo.



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Pahina. 2

## Pamilya ng mga biktima ng bakbakan sa Basilan pinulong ni PNoy

**PERSONAL** na nakipagpu-  
long kahapon si Pangu-  
long Benigno Aquino III sa  
pamilya ng 18 sundalo na  
nasawi sa labanan sa Tipo-  
Tipo, Basilan noong na-  
karaang Sabado, Abril 9.

Subalit, bago ito ay binisi-  
ta naman ni Pangulong Aqi-  
no ang mga sugatang sunda-  
lo sa Camp Navarro General  
Hospital WESTMINCOM,  
Zamboanga City.

Ang mga pasyente sa  
Ward No.1 ay sina SSg. Ar-  
nel Macasling; SSg. Victor  
Montalbo; PFC Rhandy San-  
tiago; PFC Ernesto Marzan;  
PFC Alvin Alarcon; Cpl.  
Ryan Rey Ladiero; SSg. Do-  
mingo Cuaresma; Sgt. Fran-  
cisco Baguiwan; PFC. Almer  
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mad; Cpl. Taha Misuari; Sgt.  
Rommel Pargas; SSg. Ger-  
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Cpl. Dahrel Labarda; PFC Er-  
win Marquez; Cpl. Anderson  
Sicat; Cpl. Martiniano Sabumi-  
do Jr.; PFC. Ian Magsayo;  
Sgt. Erico Pagunawan; Cpl.  
Rio Ancajas at PFC. Roberto  
Dua.

Sa Ward No.2 naman ay  
naroon sina Pvt. Nurjamir  
Julpi; Cpl. Tahir Alian; PFC.  
arvel Perez; Pvt. Benhur Anog;  
Cpl. Brian Garcenila; Cpl. Bey  
Jaji Mohammad; Sgt. Julfred  
Ibno; PFC. Ruzle Lloyd Kin-  
dan; Cpl. Kullam Saribban;  
PFC. Daniel Remasog; PFC.  
Joemar Montero; Pvt. Richard  
Magdalam at Pvt. George  
Sumile.

Samantala, umabot naman  
sa 22 ang bilang ng mga mi-  
yembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group  
na nasawi rin sa labanan sa  
Tipo-Tipo Basilan.

Ayon kay Armed Forces  
of the Philippines spokesman  
Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla,  
kabilang sa mga napaslang  
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mad Khattab

Ipinaliwanag ni Gen. Pa-  
dilla na marami rin ang nala-  
gas sa hanay ng mga sunda-  
lo dahil marami ang mga rebel-  
deng grupo na nag-pon-pon-  
sa lugar na nakasagupa ng  
44th Infantry Battalion. **KJ**

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## Wanted: Strong leader to fight Abu Sayyaf

THE country needs true leaders to be able to fight terrorism, said vice-presidential candidate Sen. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. as he condemned the killing of 18 soldiers by suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan Sunday.

Five Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members were also killed, including a Moroccan national identified as Mohammad Khattab, when government forces belonging to the 44th Infantry Brigade clashed with the alleged local terrorists.

"It is incumbent upon our leaders to show they are sincere in protecting the people through decisive actions especially in the fight against terrorism," said Marcos.

He said that President Benigno Aquino, being the highest official of

the land, has "a moral and social obligation to assure the people that they have a leader in charge of the situation and is doing everything that needs to be done to defeat the enemy."

"The President has to show he is on top of the situation and he is doing everything to quell terrorism or at least (send) a message that the people should not worry because he is taking care of it. There is no need for silence at this point when our soldiers are being killed by terrorists," he said.

He said that a true leader "should be able to show that he or she is on top of the situation not only to boost the morale of the members of the Armed Forces but also give the Filipino people a sense of security that something is being done to protect them."

**Bernadette E. Tamayo**

14 April 2016



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## 2 kidnapped sawmill workers beheaded

LANAO DEL SUR – The remains of two of six sawmill workers kidnapped by suspected militants in Butig, Lanao del Sur last week were recovered yesterday.

Police found the headless bodies of siblings Salvador and Jaymart Janobas in Barangay Bayabao, said Col. Roseller Murillo, commander of the Army's 103rd Infantry Brigade.

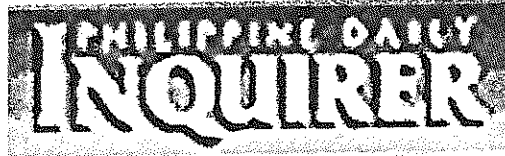
"Their severed heads were found in another spot," Murillo said.

Four other sawmill operators – Julieto Janobas, Alfredo Anoos, Gabriel Permites and Adones Mendez – were released upon the intercession of local officials early this week.

The kidnappers were led by the Maute brothers, who reportedly have links with the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiyah. They reportedly demanded a P20-million ransom for the release of the beheaded victims.

– John Unson, Jaime Laude

14 April 2016



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## 2 hostages beheaded in Lanao Sur

ISLAMIST extremists that want to ally with Islamic State (IS) jihadists have beheaded two local hostages, police said yesterday.

Police recovered the decapitated corpses of the two men on Tuesday, nine days after they were taken, said the police chief of Lanao del Sur.

“Salvador Hanobas and Jemark Hanobas were beheaded by their abductors,” Senior Supt. Rustom Duran told reporters by telephone. “Locals brought the heads and the torsos to the mayor’s office.” It was unclear if the two victims were related.

Duran said the kidnappers belonged to an Islamic group that battled government forces for a week in February, leaving three soldiers dead and forcing 20,000 people to flee their homes.

Police found black flags identical to those flown by IS jihadists in Iraq and Syria in the fighters’ hideout in the remote Mindanao town of Butig.

Duran said the group had also abducted six workers at a local sawmill on April 4, accusing them of being military informers. Four were freed unharmed on Monday.

News of the beheadings came after the Abu Sayyaf, another Islamic militant group, released a retired Italian priest held hostage for six months last week.

A major firefight broke out in Basilan on Friday, leaving 18 soldiers and more than two dozen Abu Sayyaf gunmen dead.

The military said skirmishes were still continuing with Abu Sayyaf fighters on Wednesday, and the toll of dead rebels had risen to 28.

Among those killed were a Moroccan bomb expert called Mohammad Khattab.

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AFP Securing the land.

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Army Core Purpos

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## 2 hostages beheaded by copycat jihadists

COTABATO CITY - The military yesterday confirmed that two of the six sawmill workers held hostage in Butig, Lanao del Sur were beheaded by local jihadist militants on Monday.

Col. Manolo Samarita, deputy commander of the Marawi City-based 103rd Infantry Brigade, said the bodies and severed heads of Salvador "Tado" Hanobas and Makol "Macky" Hanobas were recovered on Tuesday.

Samarita said there was no immediate reasons why the Hanobases were beheaded by their captors.

But civilian sources said the captors calling themselves soldiers of Dawlah Islamiyah, which is trying to mimic international jihadist group Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Lanao del Sur, resorted to the "inhumane" option allegedly after the government did not release a 13-year-old comrade named Ayman.

Ayman was allegedly arrested by state troops following their capture of the local jihadists' fortress in Butig after eight days of fierce fight with the extremist guerrillas last February. (Ali G. Macabalang)

## HERO18 II Army Dragon Warriors offer wins to Basilan troopers

Jun 14, 2018 | Contributor: ArmyDragonBoatTeam | GMA HERO18



Photo from Phil Army Dragon Boat Team FB Page

**FORT BONIFACIO, Taguig City** – The Philippine Army Dragon Boat Team, also known as the Army Dragon Warriors, offered their four golds and a silver medal won in the 10th International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) World Club Crews Championships to the Army soldiers who died in Basilan.

*"We are dedicating our win to our fellow soldiers who offered the ultimate sacrifice in Basilan,"* said Staff Sgt. Usman Anterola, Team Captain of the Philippine Army Dragon Boat Team – Mighty Sports.

Lt. Gen. Eduardo M Año, Commanding General of the Philippine Army, commended the team for proving once again that Army soldier-athletes are world-class.

*"The whole country is very proud of you, but most especially the Philippine Army,"* said Lt Gen Año.

*"Although meron tayong labanang nagaganap ngayon sa Basilan, your win Australia will bring up the morale of our troops. Congratulations from the bottom of our hearts. Keep up the good work,"*

The team, composed of 20 members, won the gold medal in the 2,000-meter Men's Small Boat, 500-meter Mixed Small Boat, 200-meter Mixed Small Boat, and 200-meter Men's Small Boat; while winning the silver medal in the 500-meter Men's Small Boat.

The Philippine Army fielded female soldier-athletes to participate in mixed events in this year's world championships.

For Cpt. Francis Mirabelle T Samson, who has been with the Philippine Army Dragon Boat Team for three years now, the 10th IDBF Club Crews Championships was her first international competition.

*"It is an honor to be part of a world-class Army team,"* said Samson. *"We are very happy to win the golds and bring honor to the Philippines."*

[www.dwdd.com](http://www.dwdd.com)



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

## Army commits anew to peaceful, orderly May 9 polls

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 13): Army commits anew to peaceful, orderly May 9 polls

**The Philippine Army in Samar province reiterated their stand to stay non-partisan this election season while ensuring peaceful and orderly polls in remote communities.**

**Col. Perfecto Rimando, the Army's 801st brigade commander based in Hinabangan, Samar said that they recently initiated a peace covenant among candidates in the province as part of soldier's effort for clean and honest elections.**

**"Being your Army in Samar province, we will do our mandated task for this political exercise to ensure orderly and peaceful elections. We will abide all the regulations set forth by Commission on Elections as a deputized law enforcement agency," Rimando said.**

The army official told candidates during the signing of peace covenant on Monday that soldiers will remain apolitical and committed to ensure the safety of candidates and help civilians freely exercise their political rights.

"We are here to protect the voting public so that they will cast their votes without intimidation on May 9, 2016," Rimando added.

**The Army have been stepping up their watch against rebels and private armies, whose strength may be used by politicians to threat voters.**

**The Army-initiated peace covenant signing is backed Comelec, Calbayog Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church, Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Philippine National Police, and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting.**

**Samar is the only province in Eastern Visayas that is under the election watchlist area of the poll body.**

Running for top provincial position are incumbent Samar Gov. Sharee Ann Tan-de los Santos who is seeking re-election for third term under Nacionalista Party.

Her opponent is former military intelligence officer Emil Soza of the ruling Liberal Party.

Both candidates were present at the peace covenant signing. This is the first time that they were seen together in a same event since they filed their candidacy.

Other candidates who attended the peace covenant signing were Vice-Governor Stephen James Tan, younger brother of Gov. Tan and their mother, Samar 2nd district representative Milagrosa Tan.

Congressional bets in the 1st district Edgar Sarmiento and Calbayog City Councilor Raymund Uy were also present during the peace pact signing

Bishop Isabelo Abarquez urged the military and police to be the guardian of peace, adheres allegiance to flag and people and defend the life of the citizenry.

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

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

"Credible election will create a credible government," Abarquez added.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php?idn=2&sid=&nid=2&rid=875868>

## **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE II Army releases Php 3.2 million for soldiers killed in Basilan**

Lui April 13, 2016 0 Comment

**FORT BONIFACIO, Taguig City** – The Philippine Army releases the Special Financial Assistance (SFA) to the families of the 18 soldiers who were killed in the recent encounter in Tipo Tipo, Basilan province. The Army has released a total of Php 3,289,254.50 to be given personally to the bereaved families of the slain troopers according to Col. Benjamin L. Hao, chief of the Army public affairs office.

"The SFA of the Philippine Army is computed based on their (18 soldiers) individual monthly earnings. This is an immediate monetary assistance which will be given to a soldier who were killed or died in line of duty," said Hao.

"Based on the service records of the 18 soldiers, the family of the late 1Lt. Remigio B. Lecenia, an Army officer killed in the encounter will receive Php 282,303.95, while the family of late Private First Class Done Mark Gil A. Saldivar, the most junior personnel will receive Php 145,074.10," Hao added.

Other assistance to be received by the families of the slain soldiers includes Php 50,000 cash from the AFP Mutual Benefits Association, Inc. (AFPMBAI); Php 100,000 cash from the Philippine Army Finance Center Producers Integrated Cooperative (PAFCPIC); Php 80,000 funeral services support; and scholarship grants to their children.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Army expressed its sympathy and condolences to the families of the slain soldiers and gave its assurance to continue to provide necessary assistance.

The Army will also give full military honors especially funeral honors, vigil, arrival and departure honors to the slain soldiers.

"Appropriate military honors is the least the Army can do for the men who fought gallantry for the country", said Hao.

[www.dwdd.com](http://www.dwdd.com)

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14 April 2016

# PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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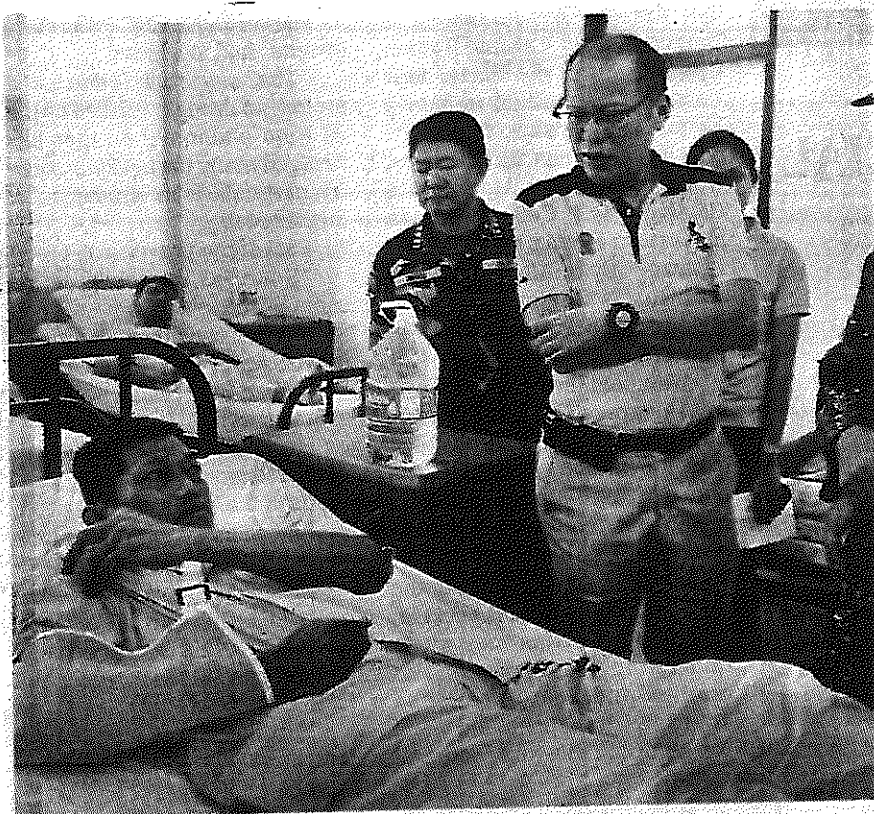


**WITH THE WOUNDED** Four days after Abu Sayyaf bandits ambushed soldiers in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan, President Aquino visits the wounded at Camp Navarro General Hospital in Zamboanga City. Eighteen soldiers died and 52 others were wounded in the 10-hour gun battle. JOAN BONDOC

14 April 2016

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

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**VISITING THE TROOPS** — President Aquino visits a wounded soldier at the Camp Navarro General Hospital Wednesday in Zamboanga City. The soldier was among those wounded after a fierce 10-hour encounter between the military and the Abu Sayyaf Group in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan last April 9. Story on page 4. (Malacañang Photo)

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**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

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Since 1983

**Malaya**

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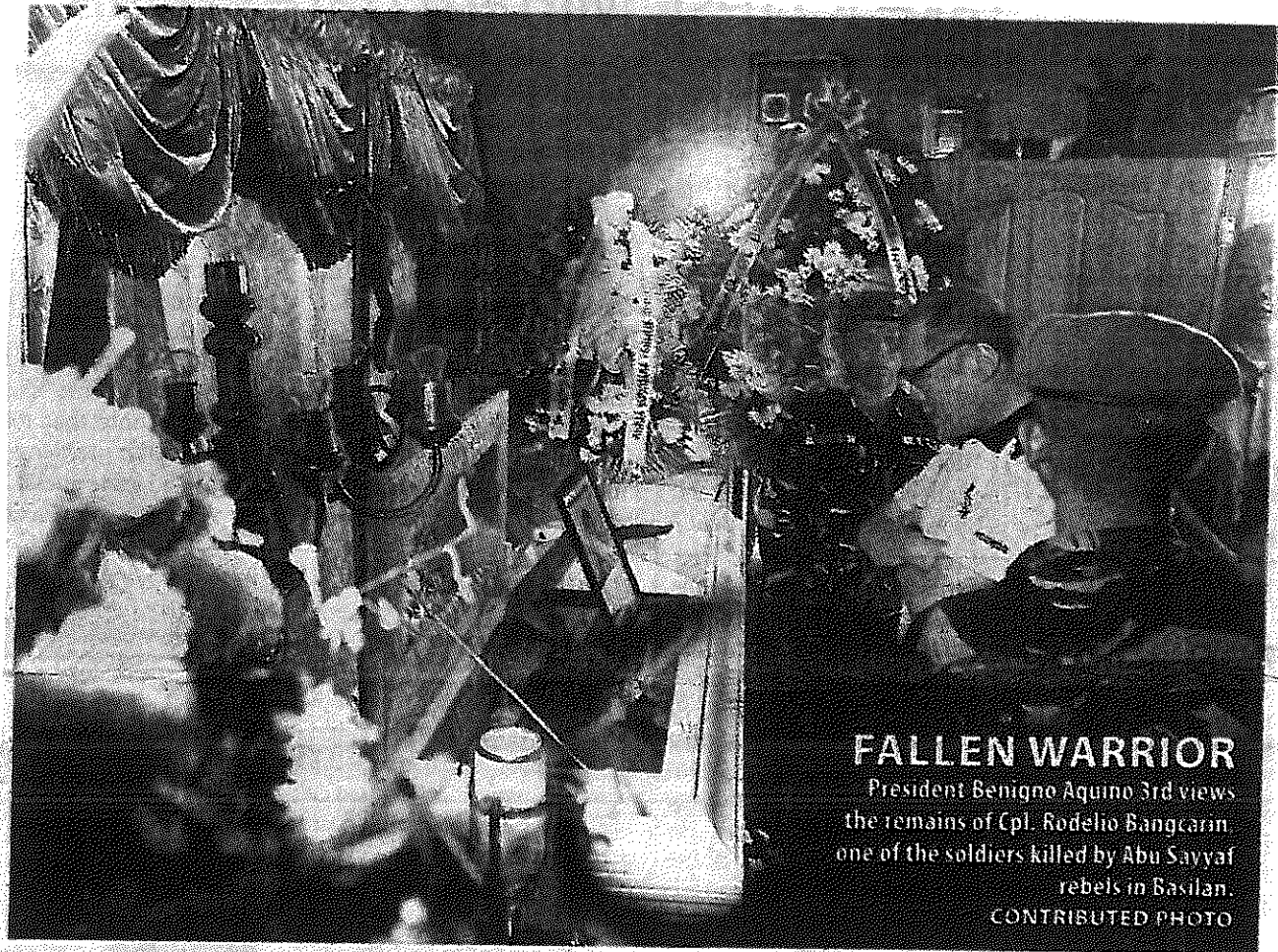
er too late. Four days after the earthquake between government troops and the Armed Forces of Eritrea, President Isaias Asef Ali secured victory. Confined at the General Hospital in Zambalela, the President is recovering from his injuries. The President is recovering from his injuries. The President is recovering from his injuries.



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# The Manila Times

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## FALLEN WARRIOR

President Benigno Aquino 3rd views the remains of Cpl. Rodelio Bangcarin, one of the soldiers killed by Abu Sayyaf rebels in Basilan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



14 April 2016



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## Balikatan: US soldiers, Pinoy cops figure in bar brawl

By JAIME LAUDE

Five American servicemen participating in this year's Balikatan joint exercises are facing a probe for figuring in a brawl at a girlie bar in Puerto Princesa City last April 2.

Capt. Alex Lim, Balikatan spokesman for the US, said the US servicemen got involved in a brawl with three policemen, one of them the deputy commander of the Puerto Princesa police.

Lim said the five American servicemen would face investigation by their mother unit after the conclusion of the joint exercise.

"Any potential misconduct of US service members is completely unacceptable and not compatible with US military standards. Appropriate actions, which will be at their command's discretion, will be taken at their home stations," Lim said.

Lim did not identify the five Americans involved in the brawl, but the Filipino policemen were identified with the group of Superintendent Ariel Celino.

The Americans figured in a melee with Celino and his men at Club 54, a girlie bar in Puerto Princesa City.

Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesman Chief Superintendent Wilben Mayor said Celino and his colleagues, Sr. Insp. Winner Paguio and SPO2 Jimmy Dalumpines, have been relieved and will face investigation over the incident.

The three policemen reportedly introduced themselves in the bar as part of ongoing anti-drug surveillance operations.

The incident was kept under wraps until a video was uploaded to social media and went viral.

The video showed an unnamed American serviceman tapping the bottle of beer he was holding on the beer of one of the Palawan policemen, who appeared to be asleep at another table.

This apparently angered another policeman, who confronted the American.

At the height of the confrontation, another po-

liceman entered the scene and punched one of the American servicemen.

The uploaded video also showed that one of the Americans moved closer and disarmed one of the policemen of his service pistol before he was able to draw it.

Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, Balikatan spokesman for the Philippines, said no Filipino soldiers were involved in the brawl. He was informed about the incident by his US counterpart.

### FA50 jets join live drill

In the Balikatan exercises, the Philippine Air Force will showcase its newly purchased FA50 fighter jets during today's live fire drill at the Crow Valley firing and gunnery range in Capas, Tarlac.

"The two FA50s 'Fighting Eagles,' aside from other air and ground assets, will be participating in the joint air and ground maneuvers," Sayson said.

Sayson could not say if the two FA50s would fire their weapons during the exercise.

On the other hand, the US Marines would be firing High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) today, marking the culmination of the 15-day joint military drill.

Sayson said static targets, representing entrenched enemy troops, would be engaged in today's course of joint mock military maneuvers.

The other day, combined Filipino and US servicemen stormed the beaches of Antique in a mock assault to retake the province from foreign invaders.

Sayson said US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter is likely to attend the live fire drill in Capas. However, Carter would not be attending the exercises at Crow Valley as he would be paying a courtesy call on President Aquino at Malacañang today.

Carter arrived in Manila last night to observe the Balikatan exercises.

– With Jennifer Rendon, Rudy Santos

14 April 2016



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## US to test fire missiles in Balikatan war games

The United States is ramping up its muscle-flexing against China amid the South China Sea conflict as it plans to test fire a long-range missile system during the Balikatan joint exercises between Philippines and American military forces that will be witnessed by US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter, the *New York Times* (NYT) reported.

The NYT report said joint military exercises this week and the arrival of Carter this week will allow the two countries to show off their cozy relations and will include events rich in "military symbolism."

NYT said Carter is scheduled to observe the firing of a long-range missile system, one that could cover all the

Philippines' maritime claims in the South China Sea if needed, though the United States has not confirmed that the missiles will be deployed here.

"Analysts say the resurrected American presence here could tilt the balance of power in this part of the South China Sea," it added.

Carter said last week that the United States would also provide about \$40 million in military aid to the Philippines to be used in part to improve the country's patrol vessels, as well as to operate unmanned surveillance blimps that can watch over the islands controlled by the Philippines in the South China Sea, the NYT added.

An Armed Forces of

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**From page 1**

the Philippines (AFP) official said it is considering acquiring the US military's tactical ballistic missiles system which will be tested during the joint exercises now under way.

Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Santiago, assistant exercise director of the Balikatan (Shoulder to Shoulder) military drills, said the war games using the M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (Himars) would benefit the Philippine armed forces.

Tactical ballistic missiles have a range of several hundreds of kilometers and are different from long-range rockets that could reach surface targets more than a 1,000 miles away.

The US military will be holding a demonstration of the capabilities of the Himars at the Crow Valley Range in Tarlac, Northern Luzon.

"If the Philippines has a requirement for such rocket systems, then Himars could be an alternative, which is not that expensive in the long run," he said.

Priced at \$3.48 million (Dh12.78 million) per launch unit - which comprises a truck launch platform and

missiles each with a range of up to 300km - the Himars could help in deterring possible aggression by China against islands it holds in the South China Sea.

US Marine Lt Gen John Toolan, who is in charge of US forces in the Balikatan exercise, said Himars had never been used in previous military exercises between the two allies.

"This will be the first time that we have brought out this weapon system in the Pacific. The Philippines offers great opportunities to go ahead and experiment, testing, shooting," Toolan said.

The missiles that will be used are "inert" meaning they will not have explosive warheads.

Aside from US and Philippines military, this year's Balikatan exercise involves the participation of Australian Defence Forces.

"We welcome the participation for the first time of the members of the Japan Self Defence Forces as observers in this exercise. And we are much pleased to see the delegations in our 'Balikatan' 2016 international observers programme from eight other countries - Brunei, AFP Chief of Staff General Hernando Iriberry said.

China the other day slammed the Philippines for being "hypocritical and inconsistent in word and deed" after reportedly preparing to renovate its military airport at an island in the disputed South China Sea.

The Philippines hypocritically claimed to have stopped construction on Zhongye Island while brazenly continuing to upgrade facilities such as an airport on the island, which the Philippines occupies illegally, Lu said during a press briefing.

Lu's comment comes after media reports on Tuesday said that the Philippines seemed to resume its upgrade of a military airport on Zhongye Island (Pagasa island) in the South China Sea after the country twice claimed it had halted the airport upgrade in 2014 and 2015. The Philippine air force has carried substantial amounts of materials including stones, sand and gasoline by planes to the island recently, Chinese government news service *Xinhua* reported quoting an unnamed source.

Lu added that it exposed the arbitration lodged by the Philippines as political provocation under the cloak of law, *Xinhua* reported.

Since the 1970s, the Philippines has illegally occupied

some islands and reefs of the Nansha Islands (Spratly Islands) by force, violating international laws including the UN Charter, and the basic norms of international relations. The Philippines engaged in construction work and arming on the islands and reefs it illegally occupied, according to Lu.

Lu urged the Philippines to respect China's territorial sovereignty and rights and interests, and abide by international laws including the UN Charter, the basic norms of international relations and the Declaration of the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC).

In 2013, the Philippines unilaterally filed an arbitration case against China at the Hague tribunal, a move that China considers a violation of the DOC.

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) also formally accepted the offer to service one of the two Lockheed C-130T "Hercules" cargo aircraft acquired from the US through the Excess Defense Articles Program.

Officially, there are now four C-130 aircraft in the Philippine Air Force (PAF) inventory.

US Ambassador to the Philippines Philip Goldberg handed to Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin the maintenance and operational records of the C-

130T plus the aircraft manuals.

Gazmin then gave the items to Iriberrri who then handed the documents to the PAF Chief Lt. Gen. Edgar Fallorina.

The defense chief said that the two C-130Ts were acquired from the US for about \$55 million, with the Philippines contributing \$20 million and the American \$35 million.

Originally, these two C-130Ts were configured for tanker missions and were later converted for transport missions before being acquired by the Philippines.

The fourth C-130 arrived 11:25 p.m. at Benito Ebuen Airbase, Mactan, Cebu last April 5.

It was flown by Filipino pilots headed by Col. Alejandro Baclayon, Lt. Col. Ian Earth Lamzon, Major Ian Dexter Danes, Major Anthony Amora, and Major Ramil Daet.

The second aircraft is expected to arrive by this September or October.

The aircraft took off from Tucson, Arizona early this week and made stopovers in California, Hawaii, Wake and Guam Islands before heading for the Philippines.

Arrival of these planes will boost the PAF's heavy lift capability.

"Remember if we need to move a big number of troops and supplies (especially) heavy

equipment for rapid deployment, it will be much easier as we have additional (C-130) aircraft," PAF spokesperson Col. Araus Roberto Musico earlier said.

Originally, these two C-130Ts were configured for tanker missions and were later converted for transport missions before being acquired by the Philippines.

Aside from the C-130s, the PAF has three Airbus Military C-295 medium and three Fokker F-27 transports for its logistics and lift missions.

As this developed, Gazmin called the visit of US Defense Secretary Ash Carter during the "Balikatan" exercises as a demonstration of the robust defense relations between the US and the Philippines.

"(This demonstrates) the iron-clad commitment of the US to the Philippines (in regards to security) as stated by President Barack Obama," he added.

Carter is expected to arrive in the Philippines this Wednesday. On the same day, he is set to witness the HIMARS live-fire drills in Crow Valley in Tarlac.

The "Balikatan" exercises started last April 4 and will formally end on April 16.

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## The Manila Times

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# US troops to have access to more PH camps

US forces will gain access to more military bases in the Philippines than the five already announced, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said Wednesday as he began a visit to the longstanding Asian ally.

Manila announced this year it would allow US forces to use five of its installations, including an air base close to the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

The agreement that went in force in January aims to strengthen the Philippines' defensive capabilities amid a tense maritime dispute with China, while helping the Pentagon pivot more of its forces toward Asia.

"They will be more, these are just the five initial sites for rotational presence" of US troops, Carter told reporters on his flight to Manila from India.

"The agreement provides for more sites in the future," he said.

Short-term rotations of US forces and equipment through these five facilities is "our favorite way of having a presence for US forces to operate in and out of the Philippines, in support of our allies, of our broader networks of friends and allies in the region," he said.

Carter is in Manila to attend Friday's ceremony marking the end of an annual large-scale joint military exercise between the two allies.

He is scheduled to call on President Benigno Aquino on Thursday.

Carter said he did not know at this

► **CampsA8**

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## ■ CAMPS FROM A1

# US troops to have access to more camps

time how many more Philippine military bases would be opened to US use.

"This is an evolving thing. We agreed to do these five with an understanding that they could be more and would be more, as we see what else and where else is significant," he added.

The five already approved by Manila include the Antonio Bautista air base on the western Philippine island of Palawan, which is just 300 kilometers east of Mischief Reef, an outcrop occu-

pied by China in the 1990s despite angry protests by the Philippines. US forces will also gain access to Basa air base, about 330 kilometers from Scarborough (Panatag) Shoal which was occupied by Chinese vessels in 2012, a major army training camp with its own airstrip in the north, and two air bases in the central and southern islands of the archipelago.

China claims virtually all the strategic and resources-rich South China Sea despite conflicting partial claims by Brunei, Malaysia, Viet-

nam, Taiwan and the Philippines.

Beijing has in recent months been asserting its claim by occupying more reefs and outcrops in these waters, and building artificial islands including airstrips on some of them.

The Philippines has warned the Chinese activity could be a prelude to Beijing declaring an air defense zone in the area.

Washington does not take sides in the territorial disputes, but has warned against attempts to disrupt freedom of navigation in international waters.

AFP



14 April 2016

The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: AS

# Pinoy cops, US soldiers figure in barroom brawl

**By Francisco Tuyay**

THE Philippine National Police on Wednesday relieved three of its personnel who figured in a scuffle with four American servicemen, who are taking part in the ongoing Philippine-US Balikatan exercise, inside a nightspot in Puerto Princesa City last Saturday.

PNP spokesman Chief Supt Wilben Mayor said the three cops could face summary dismissal proceedings.

The policemen were identified as Supt Ariel Celino, deputy police chief of Puerto Princesa City, Senior Insp. Winner Paguia, City police spokesman

and SPO2 Jimmy Dalumpines.

A videotape of the incident was posted over social networking sites and became viral showing a Filipino policeman being hit by an American soldier by a bottle of beer after the latter was irked at the cops' apparent improper acts.

The incident sparked tension after another policeman, who was displeased at the acts of the American soldier, stood up drawing other US soldier's attention. This prompted the policemen to draw their guns and aimed at the foreigners.

The bar's owner and his employees tried to defuse the

tension but failed and the incident escalated into a brawl between American soldiers and Filipino policemen. The Americans left the nightspot after the incident.

A US military official, meanwhile said that appropriate action would be imposed on the four US servicemen.

"Appropriate actions, which will be at their command's discretion, will be taken at their home stations. US military personnel appreciate the opportunity to experience the local culture while training in the Philippines and are expected to abide by an established liberty policy

at all times while doing so," he added.

"The US military demands high standards of conduct from service members at all times and takes all incidents involving potential misconduct very seriously," the US official said.

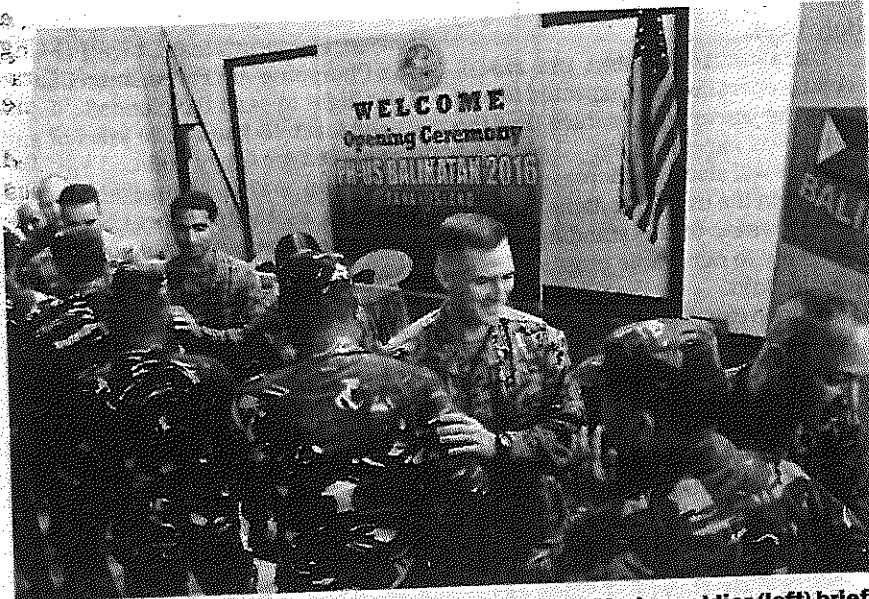
Capt. Celeste Frank Sayson, Balikatan spokesman for the Philippine side, said that those involved in the altercation settled their differences and no complaint was filed.

Around 5,000 US servicemen are currently participating in the Balikatan exercise being held in various parts of the country.

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MANILA BULLETIN  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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**BALIKATAN PARTICIPANTS IN ANTIQUE** — A Philippine Marine soldier (left) briefs soldiers belonging to the United States Marine Corps after the latter landed at the non-operational Evelio Javier Airport in San Jose town, capital of Antique province. The men in uniform are taking part in the 32nd Balikatan or joint Armed Forces of the Philippines and United States Armed Forces military exercises in the Visayas. (Tara Yap)

14 April 2016

# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Photo provided by the US Marine Corps shows Philippine Marines conducting an amphibious landing utilizing Philippine Navy logistical ships during the Balikatan exercise in Antique last Tuesday. Below, US Defense Secretary Ashton Carter arrives at the Agas Hangar in Pasay City yesterday. He will observe the joint exercises and visit one of the camps that will allow US military presence under EDCA. KRIZJOHN ROSALES

OFFICE

14 April 2016

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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# PH, Vietnam eye war games, joint sea patrol

DEFENSE officials from the Philippines and Vietnam will meet this week to explore possible joint exercises and Navy patrols, military sources said, shoring up a new alliance between states locked in maritime rows with China.

Ties have strengthened between the two Southeast Asian countries as China's assertiveness intensifies with a rapid buildup of man-made islands in the Spratly archipelago, to which Vietnam and the Philippines lay claim.

Both states are also on the receiving end of a renewed charm offensive by the United States, which is holding joint military exercises in the Philippines to be attended this week by US Defense Secretary Ash Carter.

### Meeting this week

The meeting between Vietnam's vice defense minister, Nguyen Chi Vinh, and Honorio Azcueta, the Philippine under-secretary of defense, is scheduled for Thursday and comes as the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague nears a decision in an arbitration case lodged by the Philippines questioning

China's massive territorial claims in the South China Sea region.

The ruling in the case, which seeks to clarify parts of a United Nations maritime law, could dent China's claim to 90 percent of the South China Sea, parts of which Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei also claim.

Vietnam and the Philippines would discuss patrols and exercises, but a deal this week was unlikely, a senior military official told Reuters.

### Initial talks

"These are initial discussions," he said. "These may take time but we would like to move to the next level."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. The information was confirmed by another defense department source in Manila.

Vietnam and the Philippines agreed on a strategic partnership in November to boost security relations as China expands its presence in the strategic waterway and deploys military equipment in the Spratly and Paracel islands.

Their closer ties mark a bold

step in a region where China's economic influence has made some countries reluctant to take a joint stand against its maritime maneuvering.

The South China Sea will figure in the talks between the two countries, as will bilateral exchanges, information-sharing, military logistics and defense technology, the sources said.

Vinh will tour Philippine

bases, including a major naval facility. Vietnam's state media has not reported the visit.

Two Vietnamese frigates made port calls to Manila in 2014 and a Philippine warship may do the same in Vietnam this June.

Troops from both sides have played sports together twice since 2014 on disputed islands they occupy.

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On Monday, Foreign Affairs Secretary Jose Rene Almendras was the first foreign dignitary to meet Vietnam's new prime minister, Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

### **Resolve issues**

Meanwhile, the Philippines and Singapore have agreed to exhaust all multilateral approaches, mainly through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, to resolve the issues surrounding the South China Sea during a visit to Singapore this week by Almendras.

Almendras, who ended a two-day visit to the city state yesterday, held talks with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his counterpart Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan.

"Both sides agreed that in discussing and resolving regional issues, including the South China Sea/West Philippine Sea, Aseans' solidarity, unity and centrality is fundamental as it is vital," said a statement issued yesterday by the Department of Foreign Affairs. *Reuters with Estrella Torres*

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

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## Palace orders abolition of AFP pension fund

Malacañang has ordered the abolition of the cash-strapped Armed Forces of the Philippines Retirement and Separation Benefits System (AFP-RSBS), the financial institution that caters to the pensions of soldiers, in an effort to curb inefficient public spending.

Memorandum Order 90 signed by Executive Secretary Paquito Ochoa Jr. said the interest liability of AFP-RSBS continues to grow and the government-owned and/or -controlled corporation (GOCC) now faces a depletion of its retained earnings by the end of November 2016.

The memorandum noted that the pension and benefits of retired AFP personnel continue to be funded through the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

**Turn to page 2**





**From page 1**

"The GCG (Governance Commission for GOCCs) finds the abolition of AFP-RSBS to be the best interest of the State in order to improve national productivity and reduce ineffective and inefficient spending of public funds," it stressed.

The government shoulders multiple pension packages for the military and other uniformed

personnel. Unlike other civil servants, military and uniformed personnel do not contribute premiums to a pension fund. Soldiers and policemen retire earlier at the age of 56, while civil servants retire at 65.

RSBS president and chief executive officer Norman Legaspi, however, has assured RSBS has sufficient funds and assets at its disposal to cover payments to refund soldier members within

three to four years period following its deactivation.

Its book value now is P16 billion compared to its liabilities of P12 billion.

The P12 billion is the pension fund contribution, including the six percent interest per year that RSBS is going to pay out to all members.

Pursuant to the liquidation of AFP-RSBS' assets, the memorandum approved the

privatization of its wholly-owned subsidiaries, namely Monterossa Development Corp. (MDC) and Southern Utility Management and Services Inc. (SUMSI).

The AFP-RSBS Board, which shall act as the Board of Liquidators subject to oversight by the Governance Commission, is directed to cease collecting members' contributions and accrual interest, and collect all liabilities due the AFP-RSBS.

The board shall continue corporate operating budget for the continuation of leasing services, refund of AFP-RSBS members' contributions as they fall due, and servicing of existing membership loan programs.

It shall also contract for the sale of real estate assets, golf and country club shares and all other personal properties.

Affected officers and personnel

of AFP-RSBS may avail the separation benefits in addition to retirement or separation benefits allowed under existing laws.

To implement abolition, the GCG shall be assisted by a Technical Working Group composed of representatives from the Departments of National Defense, Finance and Budget and Management; Privatization Management Office, AFP-RSBS and AFP.

PNA



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**Malaya**  
The National Newspaper

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## Pushing

**DODY LACUNA**

*'The remaining right foot, the hideous shoulder, the disfigured thigh... seem to shine more than the medals.'*

**T**HE predictable aggressive stance of Malacañang to pursue and finish off the Abu Sayaf bandits in Basilan after the deaths of 18 soldiers meant only - and God forbid - that more fatalities on the government side will surely follow.

After meeting with defense and security officials last Sunday evening President Aquino ordered no letup in the military campaign as if he has not learned anything from the dysfunctional war cries of his predecessors GMA and Erap.

Aquino echoed what the public had wanted to hear and little of what the military and intelligence officials had needed to at least prudently redirect their strategic and tactical dilemmas against the well-equipped and well-positioned insurgents. At the same time he had pushed the military leadership to try to reverse the huge news fallout of battle deaths with an equally devastating blow to the enemy and layered with saucy propaganda that the government and military have seized the upper hand in the on-going conflict.

A show of presidential bravado can only add undue pressure to ground commanders whose operations should not be subject to prompt "accomplishment" reports to mainly please their Commander-In-Chief. Nowhere in Malacañang's statements indicated the President had agonized over firing off renewed orders to send officers and soldiers to their deaths. Four days after the Basilan firefight it seems that he continues to struggle against himself on whether to provide a simple tribute for the fallen, an unbroken apathy not only for the cause of the brave and selfless in the military but also for the victims of natural disasters. Ramon Magsaysay would rather take regular chopper rides to join the then constabulary and military forces in their relentless campaign against the Huks until their back was broken. Some photos taken of the legendary "Guy" showed him helping carry stretchers of the wounded and injured from the fields of battle. Manuel Quezon shook off any regard for self and his presidency at Bataan. He was decided on joining the "bravest of them all" until the end prompting Gen. Douglas MacArthur to threaten him with arrest if he still refused to leave with him for Australia.

AFP chief of staff General Hernando Iriberri and Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin should pay frequent visits to the maimed and seriously injured at the "Heroes Ward" of the V Luna Memorial General Hospital. Most of them could not actively take part in combat operations and would be sidelined to office work which they found meaningless. Raring to do battle again and seemingly more fired up due to the deaths of several comrades, many find themselves occupied with thoughts of death and destruction in a new light. It seems sufficient for Malacañang and senior security officials that the patients in the special ward have been getting excellent hospital care and attention. But, to make regular visits there has seemed out of the question. They would not allow the soldiers to "brief" them on how to improve actual ground operations and minimize casualties and injuries in combat. It could not be denied something had gone wrong even before the Basilan bloodbath. Iriberri has just relieved the commanders of the Joint Task Group Sulu and Tawi-Tawi for their reported failure to break the capability of the ASG who everyone thought, as reported by the military itself, had become a dismal group. And in praising the soldiers for their gallantry, Iriberri has admitted the apparent failure of intelligence and deployment of unfamiliar troops to the area. He stated that "despite heavy enemy resistance and advantage in the familiarity with the terrain in Basilan, our troops fought gallantly." Military presence and intelligence have been in Basilan for the longest time and still the military leadership points to the unfamiliarity of terrain as a major hurdle for the beleaguered troops.

Gazmin himself may have an indirect hand on what has been slowly emerging as a bungled operation mainly due to the moronic inability of the Air Force to provide crucial air cover by strafing and bombing the ambushers of the forces. Of the 21 refurbished helicopters contracted by and delivered to the Department of National Defense for P1.2-billion, only two can fly. Gazmin has been accused by the former country representative, Rhodora Alvarez, of US aircraft manufacturer, Rice Aircraft Services, Inc. (RASI) of rigging the contract in exchange for a 7-percent commission. The AFP and Army spokesmen both point to a heavy cloud overcast over the area of hostilities that allegedly prevented clear visuals of the two battle positions. So much for global satellite positioning and other advanced and basic technology that the multi-billion peso AFP Modernization Program had funded!

If only the walls of V. Luna hospital could speak, countless episodes of operational incompetence and idiocy by regional and task force commanders would surface that, many say, have led to unnecessary grave injuries and fatalities. The "heroes" would rather be mum about the almost palpable disregard for their lives and limbs, but in their muted and lucid moments with family and close friends they would recount the tragic deployments and invalid intelligence. Many continue to weep for their "buddies" whose heroism they have lamented as "senseless" after falling victims to armchair, arrogant and reckless leadership. When visiting, the rest of us should not look for medals and ribbons at the "Heroes Ward"; the torn and warped arm muscle, the remaining right foot, the hideous shoulder, the missing left arm or the disfigured thigh seem to shine more than the medals.

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The  
**Standard**  
DEFINING THE NEWS

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## ANOTHER SAD DAY



**DUTY  
CALLS  
FLORENCIO  
FIANZA**

APRIL 9 was another sad day for our armed services. In a military engagement in Tipo Tipo, Basilan between the kidnap-for-ransom group Abu Sayyaf and elements of 44<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army, 18 men were killed and about 53 were wounded. About five of the Abu Sayyaf were also

reported to have been killed including a Moroccan by the name of Mohammad Khattab and Haipa Hapilon, the son of the current head of the Abu Sayyaf.

As of this writing, it is not altogether clear whether the military encounter was an ambush staged by the Abu Sayyaf or what we call a meeting engagement. The Armed Forces is up to this time keeping a tight lip as to what exactly happened. But interviews with the wounded personnel indicate that the

Abu Sayyaf was ready for the Army elements and had the upper hand. For one, it was reported that one of the lead soldiers stepped on an improvised explosive device that immediately killed some of the army operating personnel. It was also reported that the enemy occupied the high ground which meant that they were in a better position to inflict more casualties on our soldiers. The number of dead and wounded from the Army is high; we cannot afford to

**“  
A review of  
strategies  
is in order.  
”**

continue suffering this kind of casualty rate.

It is not only bad for the reputation of the country that the Abu Sayyaf continues to kidnap foreigners at will. It also affects the morale of our troops and therefore diminishes their ability to fight. This engagement was big, involving a large number of the Abu Sayyaf. Almost always, the members of the group are dispersed to avoid large encounters with the military or police. Marauding bands only get together when it's time to kidnap. They prefer foreigners because they are

more willing to pay ransom.

The Abu Sayyaf is the one criminal group that continues to give the country a black eye and a bad reputation. Yet, for one reason or another, we cannot seem to eliminate it. The big question is why. In the almost 25 years of its existence, the notoriety of the Abu Sayyaf has only increased. We are still digesting what really happened in that Tipo Tipo engagement. In the 10 hours of fighting, no

helicopters were flown nor artillery fired. These were only used in the follow-up operations. Evacuation of the wounded also took a long time. Control over the fighting elements was difficult and at times confusing.

The Abu Sayyaf is a band that has metamorphosed from a jihadist and militant organization to a kidnap-for-ransom gang. Based on intelligence reports, the band has never numbered more than 400. As

to the Tipo Tipo operation itself, there are questions being raised in some quarters including senior

*Continued on A11*

### Another... From A9

officers from the AFP. How is it for instance that the 44th Infantry Battalion planned an operation to surprise the enemy but ended up being the one surprised? Did the MILF or some of its elements inform the Abu Sayyaf when the AFP coordinated with them prior to the operations?

The latter is an intriguing yet a valid question to ask because based from the accounts of the participating soldiers, it would appear that the Abu Sayaf were well prepared. Was it wise for the Army to have coordinated with the MILF? Secretary Voltaire Gazmin in an interview said that coordination cannot be avoided since that is the rule and the AFP must abide by the rules. He was also reported to have said that the Army sacrificed a lot but got the Moroccan bomb-making instructor. This was the same refrain of the PNP in the Mamasapano encounter. They

lost 44 but got Zulkifli Abdhir, the Malaysian bomb instructor responsible for many bombing atrocities. Was it worth the sacrifice?

Some quarters are asking for a congressional inquiry. It is premature at this point because operations are still ongoing but a military board should be created at the soonest possible time to look at the planning and execution of the operation. Was the operation an independent stand-alone operation or part of a bigger operation as a result of the Indonesian and reported Malaysian kidnappings, not to mention the earlier kidnapping of Europeans in Davao? Some questions need to be answered—and answered fast.

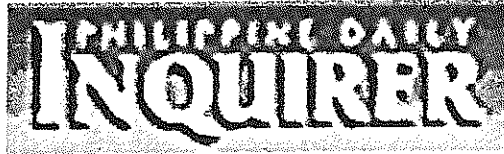
There is a lot at stake. The Bangsamoro Basic Law, the ISIS connection, the fighting reputation of our armed services, the reliability of the MILF as a peace partner, and others. The question as to whether the MILF gave the Abu Sayyaf advance information as a result of the

coordination made by the AFP is a crucial question that needs to be answered by the Board of Inquiry. It would appear that whether you coordinate or not as in Mamasapano, the result is the same—fighting.

As for our armed services, it is about time that this *mano-a-mano* type of operation is reviewed. Since we have a preponderance of resources like planes, armored personnel carriers, artillery and helicopters, it is time that the government use these resources more instead of relying on our foot soldiers to do the bulk of the fighting.

We cannot simply go on suffering huge casualty rates. During the first year of this administration, about 19 army soldiers were killed by the MILF for not coordinating. Then we had the Mamasapano operation that resulted in the killing of 44 SAF personnel. Now we just lost 18 and about 53 wounded, many seriously. A review of strategies is in order.

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## Corrections to commentary on Death March

IT WAS good of the INQUIRER to give ample space to the battle of Bataan on Bataan Day, April 9, 2016.

In particular the eyewitness account by Lt. Col. Federico Peralta ("POW No. 24 tells of cruelty, hunger, sickness in Death March," Front Page) exuded authenticity.

I cannot say the same about the commentary of Prof. Reynaldo Silvestre ("Bataan has fallen," Opinion, 4/9/16). For example, he says that Japanese Gen. Masaharu Homma expected to take Bataan in six months but did it in three.

My own research shows Homma was given 50 days to take the Philippines, which is why he disregarded the advice of his first chief of staff, Gen. Toshinari Maeda, to just starve the isolated Bataan garrison. But Homma per-

sisted in going on the offensive, and suffered two local defeats at the hands of the US Army Forces in the Far East (Usaffe) in February 1942—the Battle of the Capes (when Japanese landing parties attempting to take some western Capes were wiped out in the hundreds), and the Battle of the Pockets (when over 60 percent of a Japanese infiltrating force was eliminated).

To finish off Bataan, Homma had to be reinforced with veteran troops from Malaya and China, which struck along a very narrow sector when they had local numerical superiority.

Both articles have a rather common error: the "A" in Usaffe stands for "Army" not "Armed."

—BENITO LEGARDA JR.,  
otineb6291@gmail.com

## ONLINE NEWS

14 APRIL 2016

### 18 soldiers cited for valor after NPA clash

From the Mindanao Times (Apr 13): 18 soldiers cited for valor after NPA clash

EIGHTEEN soldiers from 25th Infantry Battalion received recognition from AFP Chief of Staff Hernando Iriberry for their bravery during a clash with the New People's Army.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar, spokesperson of 10th Infantry Division, said eight soldiers received gold cross medals, ten for military merit medals while twelve of them will be recommended for promotion

Gen. Iriberry, along with Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, the division commander, awarded the soldiers for their exceptional gallantry in action and contribution to their unit's accomplishments.

Iriberry also congratulated the troops involved during an armed engagement against the New People's Army at Sitio Inupuan, Barangay Mainit, Nabunturan, Compostela Valley last April 2.

The succesful operation led to the recovery of one slain rebel, 12 high-powered firearms, seven improvised explosive devices (IEDs), medical paraphernalia and several subversive documents.

Iriberry's visitation last week is also part on his retirement this month to thanked the troops for their support and cooperation during his term.

Iriberry has also served as Battalion Commander of 25th IB from December 2002 to November 2004; under his command, the unit similarly reaped outstanding accomplishments.

Under his leadership, the battalion recovered 87 assorted firearms, 30 of which were high-powered and neutralized 89 regular-threat group members, including key leaders.

Notably, there were no soldiers killed despite the unit's accomplishments.

<http://mindanaotimes.net/18-soldiers-cited-for-valor-after-npa-clash/>

## **Aquino apologized to families of soldiers killed in Basilan – witness**

By: Julie S. Alipala  
@inquirerdotnet  
Inquirer Mindanao

05:17 PM April 13th, 2016

ZAMBOANGA CITY — President Aquino apologized to the families of the 18 soldiers who were killed in an encounter with Abu Sayyaf bandits in Tipo-Tipo Basilan on Saturday.

"He said sorry. He said he was here to say sorry and to give assistance," Rosalinda Dominguez, the aunt of Private First Class Doreen Aspurias, said after meeting with the President inside the Edwin Andrews Air Base here Wednesday afternoon.

Dominguez said most of the families who met with Mr. Aquino asked why it took so long to rescue the members of the 44th Infantry Battalion.

She said the President told them that rescue troops could not immediately enter the battle site because of the intense fighting at that time.

"Kasi may bakbakan. Hanggang ngayon may bakbakan pa (Because there was fighting. Until now, fighting goes on)," Dominguez quoted the President as saying.

Dominguez said she accepted Mr. Aquino's "sincere apology."

Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, said the President came to this city to "personally sympathize" with the families of those who died.

"Pumunta rin sya para magbigay pugay sa mga naulilang asawa ng mga kasundaluhan. Ipinaabot din niya ang tulong (He came to express his condolences to and pay respect to the widows of the soldiers. He also extended help)," Bautista said.

According to Barrientos, the families of the 18 slain soldiers will each get P250,000 from the Office of the President, a remuneration of their base pay (roughly about P180,000), P50,000 from the MBAI (Mutual Benefit Association Inc.), P100,000 from the insurance and P80,000 as burial assistance.

"A team from the Presidential Management staff is talking to the families, writing down their other concerns and needs," Barrientos said.

President Aquino also visited the wounded soldiers at the Don Basilio Navarro hospital here. **SFM**

[www.newsinfo.inquirer.com](http://www.newsinfo.inquirer.com)

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## **FOCUSED MIL OPERATIONSII AFP's offensive against ASG continues**

Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, DWDD—The pursuit operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines against the Abu Sayyaf Group, in particular, the group led by Isnilon Hapilon continues. This is in line with AFP's focused military operations.

In an interview by DWDD with Major Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the AFP Western Mindanao Command (WESMINCOM), he stated that they are now getting closer to the location of the group of Hapilon and some 60 other members of the ASG who were left after the continuous offensive of the government since Saturday, April 9.

Currently, there are at least 24 reported casualties from the ASG. The number of wounded from the side of the ASG is also increasing. One of those who are wounded is Furuji Indama, left hand of Isnilon Hapilon.

There are also reports that the rebel group is now running out of medical supplies, because of this, the number of deaths from the side of the rebel group is expected to increase. The AFP also continues to monitor drug stores and pharmaceutical companies.

The pursuit operations are lead by the Philippine Army Special Forces, Scout Rangers, and Light Reaction Company. There are also stand-by forces which can readily be deployed in case additional men will be needed.

[www.dwdd.com](http://www.dwdd.com)

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### 3 Abu Sayyaf militants captured in Basilan

By Roel Pareño (philstar.com) | Updated April 13, 2016 - 3:17pm

ZAMBOANGA CITY - Government troops have captured three Abu Sayyaf militants as the military continued to close in on the terror group, said to be in defensive positions in the jungle of Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., designated ground operation spokesman, said the three militants were captured Tuesday.

"The three suspects, Abu Sayyaf members, were captured on the operational ground," Tan said.

The names of the three were not made available as they were placed under tactical interrogation.

Meanwhile, the troops are cautiously advancing to the Abu Sayyaf positions.

Tan said there were clashes but described it as sporadic, adding that no casualty was monitored on the ground.

"The operation has been ongoing and there is no let-up. We are always careful in our advance because these remnants are already in defensive position," Tan said.

About five battalions and additional companies of strike forces have been deployed in the offensive operation to pursue around 70 to 80 members of a group led by Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon and the reportedly critically wounded Furuji Indama. Tan, however, could not confirm reports saying that Indama has died due to serious injuries.

He also declined to comment if the US-trained Light Reaction Company (LRC) was among the unit deployed.

"I cannot confirm nor deny if the enemy will know that they will swing tactics," according to Tan.

But the military official said they have reserve forces that they could insert into the operation ground once needed.