



Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

31 August 2016

Wednesday

NEWS HEADLINES

31 AUGUST 2016



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

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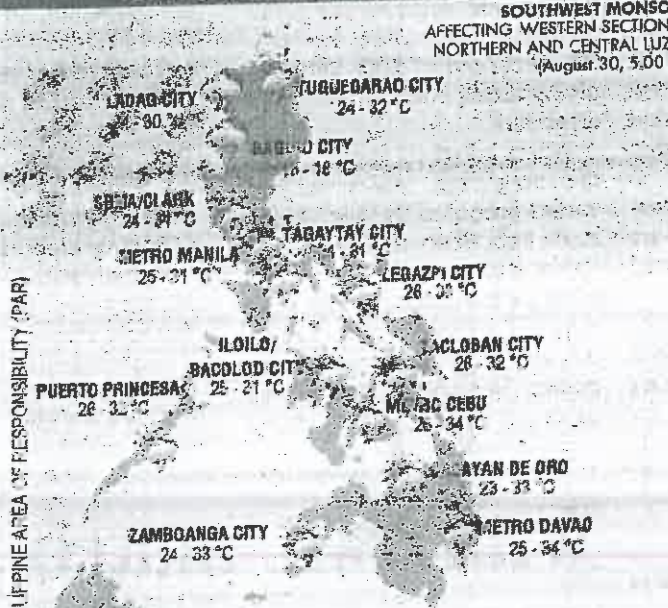


PanahonTV

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | AUGUST 31, 2016 | WEDNESDAY

SOUTHWEST MONSOON AFFECTING WESTERN SECTION OF NORTHERN AND CENTRAL LUZON (August 30, 5:00 PM)



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE
6:44 AM

SUNSET
6:09 PM

MOONRISE
4:52 AM

MOONSET
5:22 PM

LAST QUARTER
AUG 29 11:41 AM

NEW MOON
SEP 7 12:57 PM

LOW TIDE
6:10 PM

HIGH TIDE
12:32 AM

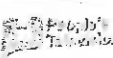


MANILA SOUTH HARBOR


Partly cloudy to overcast with occasional showers and/or drizzle

Cloudy skies with occasional showers and/or drizzle

METRO MANILA		TAGAYTAY		TACLOBAN	
25-30°C	26-30°C	24-31°C	24-31°C	26-32°C	26-32°C
TUGUEGARAO		LEGAZPI		CAGAYAN DE ORO	
23-31°C	23-33°C	27-34°C	26-32°C	23-31°C	23-31°C
LAOAG		PUERTO PRINCESA		METRO DAVAO	
23-30°C	24-30°C	27-33°C	27-32°C	25-34°C	25-34°C
BAGUIO		ILOILO/BACOLOD		ZAMBOANGA	
16-18°C	16-19°C	25-32°C	26-32°C	23-32°C	23-32°C
SBMA/CLARK		METRO CEBU			
24-31°C	24-30°C	25-33°C	25-33°C		

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



SABOT KO, PADALA MO!

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31 August 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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MOTHER LOSES SON Mila Falcasantos weeps over the loss of her son, Pfc. Jison Falcasantos, who was among the 15 Army soldiers killed by Abu Sayyaf bandits in an ambush in Patikul, Jolo province, on Monday. She had received reports to her text messages (right photo) from her killers informing her about her son's beheading.

'We beheaded your son'

Abu bandits kill 15 soldiers in Patikul

Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

AMBOANGA CITY—When the news broke out Monday afternoon that 15 soldiers had been killed in Jolo's forested Patikul municipality, Mila Falcasantos sent a text message to her son Jison, a private first class in the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion.

"Son musta jan?" (Son, how are you there?) said the text she sent at 6:40 p.m. on Monday.

The mother of seven, who is in her mid-60s, anxiously waited for an answer, but it did not come. She became deeply worried of her third child and barely slept that night.

At 6:44 a.m. on Tuesday, her cell phone beeped.

"Patay na ang son mu, wala

na ang ulo nya, pirutulan na namin ng ulo kahapon (Your son is dead, he has no head now, we cut off his head yesterday)," said the message from the son's number.

Stunned, Falcasantos texted back: "Wala kayong konsensya (You have no conscience)."

The reply came back: "Talaga wala kaming konsensya dahil nagpunta sila dito sa lugar

WE BEHEADED / A7

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namin pati ikaw puputulan din kita ng ulo (Indeed, we don't have qualms because they were the ones who came to our area. I will cut off your head, too)."

The woman telephoned a relative, a military officer in Jolo, who confirmed that Pfc. Jison Falcasantos was one of the 15 soldiers killed at Sitio Kan Jalul in Patikul on Monday afternoon and that her son had been beheaded.

"He saw my son's body, and two other soldiers, including an officer, had also been beheaded," the mother told the INQUIRER.

She said President Duterte must end the Abu Sayyaf menace so that no more lives would be wasted.

She admitted that she knew the risks soldiers faced but the beheading of her son was unexpected. "I did not raise him so he would end that way," she said.

Army offensive

The Army mounted an offensive in Patikul last week against the Abu Sayyaf after the bandits ignored pleas by the President to release hostages the group had kidnapped for ransom.

At least 16 foreign hostages and five Filipinos are held captive by the Abu Sayyaf.

By Tuesday, the Army had lost 15 dead, according to Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command.

At least 21 Abu Sayyaf men were reported killed in the clashes.

Tan denied reports that soldiers had been decapitated by the bandits. "There is no truth to the beheading of our soldiers," he told the INQUIRER via text message.

The other slain soldiers were identified as 2nd Lt. Ernan Gus-to, S/Sgt. Ruel A. Catubay; Sgt. Jay Elwin I. Almohallas; Corporals Omar M. Raddulan, Elid E. Ismael and Saik H. Mandangan; Privates First Class Nestor B. Bacaling Jr., Geral A. Yubal, Dhen-do A. Dujo, Roselito A. Arnoco, Glend C. Resma, Ronald Gal-loniga, Rogelio Vincoy Jr.; and Pvt. Jonas A. Lumayan.

Ten other soldiers were wounded in clashes that involved some 70 Abu Sayyaf bandits under Badulan Sabiron.

21 bandits killed

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines public affairs office, said 21 bandits had been killed and scores had been wounded, including a deputy leader identified as Jamiri Jawong Jauhan, in Army-initiated encounters four days ago.



FALCASANTOS CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"As we gaze at the national flag that flies at half-staff anew, soldiers knew that one too many hero among them has again offered his life—that others may live," Gen. Ricardo Visaya, AFP chief of staff, said in a statement issued at headquarters.

Visaya said the military was determined to "tid our country of the menace this Abu Sayyaf brings to the world" but he acknowledged that "there may still be casualties along the way."

"We have all the time. Keep the pressure on the enemy until they wear out. Just ensure they won't be able to leave the island and we will be triumphant in the end," Visaya said.

More troops deployed

"It is unfortunate that a number of our troops have already lost their lives," said the President's spokesperson, Ernesto Abella.

"However, as Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said on Aug. 29, we are going full force and [on] all-out operation against them," Abella said in a press briefing at Malacañang.

He said five battalions, or some 2,500 troops, would be sent to Sulu province to go after the bandit group that had been tagged as responsible for kidnappings and beheadings.

The President, he said, is focused on ensuring that the threat posed by the Abu Sayyaf is "terminated as soon as possible."

As for the timeline for getting rid of the bandit group, Abella said it should be done within a "reasonable period."

"In other words, it should not be an extended engagement," he added.

Mr. Duterte earlier ordered the military to "destroy" the Abu Sayyaf following the beheading of an 18-year-old hostage. Earlier this year, the group beheaded two Canadian captives.

Speaking in Malacañang on Monday night, the President said he knew there would be some reprisals, but added that he was ready for that.

With a report from Leila B. Salaverria and Cynthia D. Balana in Manila

31 August 2016



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Duterte meeting with Obama, Putin

Aussie, India,
Japan talks
also set

By ALEXIS ROMERO

If everything goes as planned, President Duterte will be meeting with at least five heads of state, including US President Barack Obama and Russian President Vladimir Putin, on the sidelines of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit in Laos next week.

Duterte is also expected to meet with Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his counterparts Narendra Modi of India and Shinzo Abe of Japan, Foreign Affairs Secretary Perfecto Yasay Jr. told The STAR during the Japan-ASEAN Media Forum in Mandaluyong last Monday.

Reports yesterday quoted White House Deputy National Security Adviser Ben Rhodes as saying that the meeting between Duterte and Obama would be held on Sept. 6.

Rhodes said Obama is expected to raise human rights and security issues, including the South China Sea dispute, during the meeting.

Putin had skipped last year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Manila.

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Duterte

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Duterte had earlier told the ambassadors of Australia and the United States to shut up after they criticized his remarks on the rape of an Australian woman held hostage and then killed in a Davao prison riot when he was the city mayor.

Recently, Duterte, his speech laced with expletives, also called US Ambassador Philip Goldberg a "gay" whom he disliked. The remarks prompted the US State Department to summon the Philippines' chargé d'affaires in Washington.

Duterte has not apologized to either Goldberg, who is ending his tour of duty in Manila, or to Australian Ambassador Amanda Gorely.

The US State Department has expressed "deep concern" over the spate of killings of suspected drug offenders in the Philippines, as it cited the need for the Duterte administration to uphold the rule of law.

The comment, however, did not sit well with Duterte, who reacted by reminding the US of the killing of African Americans by US law enforcers.

The Philippine leader has also accused the US of "importing terrorism" to the Middle East and even called US Ambassador Philip Goldberg "gay" and a "pest."

The leaders of Australia, Japan, and India - all dialogue partners of ASEAN - have also expressed interest in holding bilateral meetings with Duterte, the foreign affairs chief added.

Asked if Duterte would also meet with Chinese leaders, Yasay said: "There is no request from the Philippine side and none also from China for bilateral meetings."

"Perhaps the Chinese premier may see and shake hands with President Duterte in a photo opportunity," he added.

Yasay said the President has no definite plans yet to visit China, which is hurring from an international arbitral court ruling invalidating Beijing's

massive territorial claim in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea.

"We must first create an environment conducive to trips," Yasay said.

"There are no firm plans yet but we would like to see these trips happen. We're working hard to make it happen," the country's top diplomat added.

China, Indonesia visits

But at the House appropriations committee hearing yesterday, Yasay said China and Indonesia are the first countries that Duterte intends to visit as head of state.

He told the committee chaired by Davao City Rep. Karlo Alexer Nograles that the Jakarta trip would take place after the ASEAN summit in Laos next month.

He said there is no date yet for the Beijing visit but it would signal the start of formal bilateral talks on rekindling ties affected by the arbitral ruling.

However, before the start

of formal talks, the Philippines would want Beijing to allow Filipinos to fish in Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, also called Bajo de Masinloc.

"Under the arbitral court ruling, Scarborough Shoal is the traditional fishing ground of Filipinos as well as the Chinese and Vietnamese. Before the bilateral talks, we want to have a provisional agreement that would allow our citizens to fish in this area," he said.

Zambales and Pangasinan fishermen tried to return to Panatag after the court handed down its decision last July but they were driven away by huge Chinese coast guard patrol vessels.

Over the weekend, Duterte appealed to China through its ambassador in Manila to treat Filipinos "as friends, not enemies."

The President said any talks or arrangements with China would be in accordance with the arbitral court ruling.

Yasay said Philippine Coast Guard ships would escort Fili-

pinos to Panatag Shoal "so they would be protected."

"But we do not want a shooting war. We will exercise maximum restraint. We will pursue the diplomatic processes that we have been using. Any adverse action on the part of China will be strongly protested. That is all that we can do for now," he said.

Duterte has appointed former president Fidel Ramos as his special envoy to Beijing.

Ramos recently met in Hong Kong with two Chinese officials. They discussed allowing Filipino fishermen in Panatag Shoal.

China has welcomed the possibility of formal talks with the Philippines but insisted it doesn't recognize the arbitral court ruling.

The Philippines controlled Panatag Shoal until 2012 when the Chinese seized it after a standoff with the Philippine Navy.

Before he stepped down last June 30, former president Benigno Aquino III revealed

China did not honor a US-brokered face-saving deal that called for Philippine and Chinese Coast Guard vessels to leave the contested area.

The shoal is about 120 nautical miles from Zambales and three times that distance from China.

In its ruling, the arbitral court said three disputed areas, including Panganiban (Mischief) Reef and Recto (Reed) Bank, are within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

The Chinese have built military fortifications in Panganiban Reef, while it has resisted Philippine efforts to explore for oil and natural gas in Recto Bank.

The Department of Energy has suspended an oil and gas exploration contract with a private company in the area.

Recto Bank in Palawan is farther away from China than Panatag. It is believed to have more natural gas and oil deposits than Malampaya, which is supplying a large part of the fuel requirements of power plants in Luzon. Malampaya will dry up in a few years.

- With Jess Diaz

<http://idwdd.com.ph/>

MOBILITY ENHANCEMENT | 4ID receives new military vehicles

Marycel Necio Batara



CAMP EVANGELISTA, Cagayan de Oro City — The 4th Infantry "Diamond" Division, Philippine Army received a total of 43 KM450 1 ¼ Ton Troop Carrier Trucks and Ten KM 451 Ambulance that will be issued to the units under 4ID. This is part of the modernization program and the continuing mobility enhancement program of the Army and is a product of a Government-to-Government procurement between the Republic of the Philippines and South Korea.

A ceremonial blessing of the vehicles issued to Army units based in Region 10 was held at the 4ID Grandstand in Camp Evangelista, Patag, Cagayan de Oro City at 10 a.m. today, August 30, 2016. Meanwhile, those vehicles to be issued to units based in CARAGA region will be blessed and subsequently issued to the units after a similar ceremony at the 4th Infantry Division Advance Command Post in Butuan City.

The issuance of these vehicles suits the mobility requirements of the subordinate units of 4ID. These vehicles can withstand the terrain and weather in the 4ID AOR, Northern Mindanao and Caraga regions, where troops are being deployed in the hinterlands and mountainous area for the Bayanihan Team Activities and Rescue and Relief Operations.

"The 4ID is very grateful for the arrival of these new military vehicles that will definitely support the accomplishment of the Command's mission especially in undertaking peace and development and disaster response activities. We are thankful for the support of our Commander-In-Chief, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and the leadership of DND-AFP and the Army in the continuous effort for the AFP modernization program and the Army Transformation Roadmap." Maj. Gen Benjamin R Madrigal Jr, 4ID Commander said.

Prior its distribution to the end users, a technical inspection has been made to ensure the completeness of parts and accessories to ensure that all are functioning and will not compromise the safety of our troops and the success of every mission.

"These military vehicles will be used in the campaign for peace and development in the AOR. Rest assured that our taxpayers, the people we are protecting in this part of Mindanao, will be glad to have an Army that is well equipped and could better serve them in any way necessary", Maj. Gen. Madrigal added.

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3ID to take in IPs as soldiers

From the Philippine Information Agency (Aug 30)

The Philippine Army's 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) officially opens its door of opportunity to Indigenous People (IP) for the succeeding training cycles of Candidate Soldier Course (CSC) at the 3rd Division Training Unit (3DTU).

The move was in line with the request of the Office of the Panay Indigenous People's Organization (PIPOL) as embodied in its approved Resolution No. 2016 – 006 which asked for a quota of the IPs particularly Panay Bukidnon and Ati in the Philippine Army.

"They are more than welcome to be part of the Philippine Army," 3ID commander Gen. Harold N. Cabreros said in a Division news article, noting that there are already IP soldiers in the army service.

IPs will constitute 10 percent of the total number of trainees in the CSC's next succeeding training cycles to address the concern of the PIPOL.

Cabreros added that the response of 3ID was aimed "to empower IP communities, recognize their rights and reduce marginalization in the area."

Interested applicants for the CSC must be 18 to 26 years old, earned at least 72 units in college, not less than 5 feet in height, mentally fit and no pending case in any court to be able to qualify for the course.

However, for high school graduate applicants, they must possess a certified skill needed in the military service.

Applicants are required valid identifications, original transcript of record and diploma, birth certificate from the Philippine Statistics Authority, pencil #2 and a long folder.

The interested IPs must take and pass the Armed Forces of the Philippines Service Aptitude Test (AFPSAT) scheduled in various dates and venues in the Visayas to proceed to becoming a soldier.

Tabak commander extols 1CAV squadron on its 40th anniversary

From the Philippine Information Agency (Aug 30).

True to its mandate to serve the people and secure the land for four decades, the commanding officer of the 1st Infantry (Tabak) Division extolled the soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Squadron (Tagapanguna) Battalion, Mechanized Infantry Division (MID), Philippine Army (PA) for their remarkable achievements.

Speaking before officers and enlisted personnel of the 1st CAV during its 40th Founding Anniversary on August 22 at Camp Jacobo Zobel, MGen. Gerardo Barrientos, Jr., in a message read by Col. Casimiro Tamparong, acting chief of staff, said the 1st Infantry Division is more than proud of the unit's high caliber performance.

The 1st Cavalry Squadron is a combat support unit that extends support in the implementation of Internal Peace and Security Operations in the area of operations of the Philippine Army's primary infantry unit to win the peace and keep an environment conducive to sustainable development.

"The discipline, dedication and cooperation of every member of your squadron completed the successful action and heavy fire support during the time of exigency and other ground operations," Barrientos announced.

It can be recalled that one of the regiment's greatest achievements was the success of the Zamboanga operation in September 2013 where they have shown their extreme act of bravery and courage. This resulted to the rescue of more than 100 hostages and the neutralization of some 500 rebels during the siege.

Barrientos said the 1CAV provides strong deterrence against armed elements which hinder peace and security in the division's area of responsibility.

"I encourage each and every member of 1CAV to move forward with the people. Let us continue to be united to overcome every obstacle that stands in the way towards peace, security and development," Barrientos added.

The good general likewise urged the 1CAV to maintain their good record and surpass their previous achievements.

Meanwhile, LtCol. Charlemagne F. Batayola, Jr. congratulated the officers and enlisted men for another year of an outstanding performance.

"My heartfelt congratulations to all Tagapanguna troopers as I commend each one for a job well done for the past years," Batayola said.

Batayola also acknowledged the meaningful involvement and active participation of key stakeholders in the implementation of the Internal Peace and Security Plan (IPSP) "Bayanihan" campaign of the AFP.

"I congratulate most of all our local government units and all the peace and development stakeholders and partners under the 1CAV area of operations for your active support. We could not have done this without you," Batayola concluded.

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BPATs, CVOs, MNLFs join hands to conquer Abu lairs in Basilan

From the Philippine Information Agency (Aug 25)

The success of the government forces in overrunning Abu Sayyaf lairs in the hinterlands of Basilan recently is attributed to the support and expertise of local peace action teams, civilian volunteers, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the local populace.

1LT Ron Villarosa, Public Affairs Officer, 4TH Special Force (SF) Battalion said that utilizing the elite 12-man team to conduct mass base operations and harness popular support, the operators effectively earned the trust of the masses to support military operations.

The Barangay Peace Action Teams (BPATs) and members of the Civilian Volunteer Organization (CVO) from the municipalities of Albarka, Akbar, Tuburan, Maluso, Lantawan and Hadji Mutamad (Pilas) totaled to some 150 personnel. As the joint team pledged allegiance to the government's Special Forces, the 12-man unit effectively turned into a formidable force.

"Leading the local militias to secure vital supply lines and deny the enemy use of communities as safe havens, the Airborne Troopers waged an unseen warfare that delisted the enemy of the mass base support system they once enjoyed. Utilizing the locals' complete mastery of the terrain and familiarity of the enemy's tactics, the BPATs/CVOs led by the Special Forces were able to seize and secure hill 497 – a gateway to the ASG's defensive complex stretching from the municipalities of Albarka, Tipo-Tipo and Ungkaya Pukan – just within days of the offensive," Villarosa narrated.

He said that this was the first outpost captured from the enemy since the start of the relentless operation.

Next to fall was the Hill 332 at Brgy Bohe Piang, Albarka which gave the operating troops a window to the infamous Baguindan complex of hilltops where the enemy outposts and defensive positions are strategically constructed. Several face-to-face dialogues likewise were conducted to dissuade the local populace from providing support to the ASGs. Within a week after the unit was deployed, reports on the ASG's diminishing supplies surfaced as communities refute the enemy of resources and rally their support to the government troops.

LTC Andrew B. Bacala Jr, commanding officer of the 4TH Special Forces Battalion, noted the operation as a "liberation" for the populace of Baguindan, Tipo-Tipo and Bohe Piang of Al-Barka. Since last month, Special Forces have infiltrated strategic communities in the area, extending into three municipalities.

Villarosa revealed that in return for the MNLF's alliance, the 4th Special Forces Battalion facilitated the enrollment of 263 MNLF dependents under the unit's "Education4Life" project.

Under the program, qualified MNLF dependents are given full scholarship in accordance with the partnership that was formalized in a MOA signing between the 4TH Special Forces Battalion, Furigay Colleges Incorporated (FCI) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Such focused civil-military operation (CMO) projects enable the unit to harness the LGUs, civilians and the MNLFs for the conduct of an Integrated Territorial Defense System (ITDS), bringing a popular uprising against the Abu Sayyafs.

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Project B.O.S.S, Phil. Army conduct free surgical mission in Tandag City

From the Philippine Information Agency (Aug 26)

The Project B.O.S.S or Brotherhood Operation Sweet Smile, a non-government organization supported by the Philippine Army is holding a three-day free surgical mission to adult and children with cleft lip/palate from August 26-28, 2016 in Tandag City, Surigao del Sur.

All Surigaonons, dependents and relatives of military personnel and civilian employees of the Philippine Army who have cleft lip/palate patients are encourage to avail of the free surgery and medicines.

Project B.O.S.S has provided doctors in Tandag City who will perform the operation/surgical mission to adult and children with cleft lip/palate. X-Ray films, anesthesia and other medial supplies needed, including pre and post operation medicines will also be provided.

According to Captain Reggie Go, Civil Military Operations (CMO) officer of 402nd Brigade, Philippine Army, this is the first time that the Project B.O.S.S. held their free surgical mission in Tandag City.

"As of reporting time, we have already some 54 individuals in the list who have started availing this free surgical mission, and we are still expecting more as the operation will continue until Sunday, August 28, 2016," disclosed Go.

Go then called on other Tandaganons/Surigaonons to avail the free surgical mission that will give better perspective in life to the beneficiaries.

It can be recalled that the Project B.O.S.S or Brotherhood Operation Sweet Smile (a non-government organization) has partnered with the Philippine Army in 2011.

The mission was first held at the 1st Infantry Division in Zamboanga with 82 patients successfully operated. The team also conducted 3 other activities again in the 1st Infantry Division, 4th Infantry Division in Cagayan de Oro City, and Army General Hospital in Fort Bonifacio.

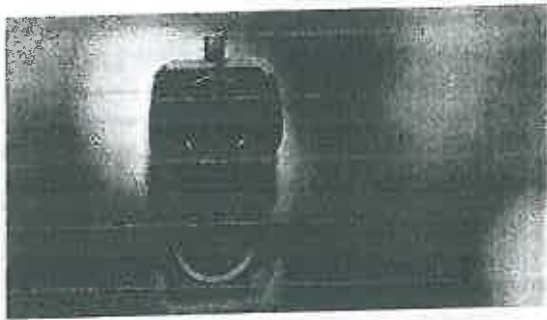
The sweet smile project has already benefitted some 308 individuals.

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www.interaksyon.com/national

Mt Province rebels kills 'military agent' on first day of ceasefire

By: Aldwin Quitasol, InterAksyon.com
August 30, 2016 10:51 AM



BAGUIO CITY, Philippines -- Communist rebels in Mountain Province said they killed a militiaman that said was also working as an Army intelligence agent on August 21, soon after the start of a seven-day unilateral ceasefire their national leadership declared for the formal resumption of peace talks with government.

Magno Udyaw, spokesman of the New People's Army's Leonardo Pacsi Command, said Junjun Angtan, alias Dadpaas, a native of Barangay Bantaugan, Bauko town and a member of the 77th CAFGU Active Auxiliary Battalion of the 5th Infantry Division, was meted the "death sentence" for "crimes against the revolutionary movement and the people."

Angtan, said Udyaw, "overzealously and continuously monitored the movements of NPA units operating in the western side of Mt Province and directly reported to his superiors in the 54th IB (Infantry Battalion) since 2010," when he acted as lead scout of a massive military operation on the borders of Tadian, Bauko, Besao and Sagada that led to the discovery of a rebel camp and a subsequent battle on Mount Alipiniw.

The NPA spokesman said the operation was mounted after hearings by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau on mining activities in the area.

Following this, Angtan "regularly reported" to the 54th IB in Bontoc and accompanied military agents on operations and in setting up networks, going with the unit when it transferred its headquarters to Paracelis town in 2012, where he "continued his nefarious activities in eastern Mountain Province and eastern Ifugao," he added.

Even before the 2010 military operation, Udyaw said the NPA had repeatedly warned Angtan against his intelligence work and advised his relatives to dissuade him.

However, Angtan ignored the warnings.

Udyaw said the death of Angtan should "should serve as a warning" to Igorots "not to become traitors to the tribes and communities they come from by working as devout paid agents of the oppressors."

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Scholarships promised for AFP, PNP men

By YAS OCAMPO

DAVAO CITY – President Duterte promised wounded soldiers that he will initiate a program that would provide scholarships for children of uniformed personnel from kindergarten to college.

President Duterte made the statement in front of wounded soldiers of the encounters at V. Luna and Cotabato at a dinner he hosted at the Malacañang, Aug. 29 evening.

He said that the children of the AFP and PNP personnel will be accommodated at the nearest state university or national high schools.

Duterte added that students with exceptional intelligence could be used by the country.

"So they will enjoy scholarship. So long-term iyan. Ipasok ko na iyan ngayon mentras ako pa ang Presidente. So iyan ang masasabi ... so libre ang edukasyon – kindergarten hanggang college," he said.

The President said he would need the help of the Senate for this to happen.

"Well, ang importante kasi,

what bothers you lalo na kayong mga may pamilya [ay] anak ninyo. Alam ko iyan. Maski sino. Tayo, one day in our lives, ganun na, nandyan na iyan eh," Duterte said.

"Kung mabuhay ka, mabuhay, mag-abot ka pa ng Valor diyan kung ginusto ninyo. But ang inyong problema is ang pamilya. So alam ko iyan. May programa ako sa lahat."

Duterte added that if it were up to him, he would promote everyone on the spot.

"In the sight of the Filipino people, you are all generals," he said.

The president also facilitated the rehabilitation of a soldier who was blinded by an encounter.

He said that the soldier is now learning Braille.

"But I am not a soldier, I don't know kung saan ako papunta, pero ganito iyan. Lahat naman tayo eh, lahat tayo may sinusunod. Whether you like it or not, there is always a day for you. So kayong medyo lumusot, it means to say, fight again. But this I can assure you, my presidency will take care of you. Wala kayong dapat alalahanin."

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Bodies of pilot, mechanic recovered from crash site

By RUDY SANTOS

Rescue teams have recovered the remains of a helicopter pilot and his mechanic from the crash site in Bulacan near its boundary with Quezon yesterday.

The remains of captain Miguel Logronio and engineer Jay Gregorio were recovered by members of the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion in Barangay Kabayunan, Dofia Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan.

The Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) and the Philippine Air Force (PAF) said the victims' bodies were brought to Villamor Airbase at around 11 a.m.

The victims were on a light helicopter

of the Macroasia Air Taxi Service, which was reported missing on Aug. 22.

The crash site was located on Saturday afternoon.

The two were on their way to pick up and rescue stranded engineers and miners at the Sumag River diversion tunnel in General Nakar, Quezon province when they crashed.

Bad weather had hampered efforts to locate the crash site and rescue the victims.

A PAF rescue team tried but failed to reach the area on Monday due to strong winds.

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Duterte hosts dinner for 64 wounded soldiers

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

President Duterte treated 64 wounded soldiers to dinner at Malacañang on National Heroes Day to pay tribute to their bravery in the campaign against terrorism and insurgency.

Duterte invited the soldiers confined at the Heroes Ward of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Medical Center to the Heroes Hall of the Palace.

One of the soldiers was Army 2Lt. Jerome Jacuba, who was rendered totally blind after a landmine exploded during the Army's clearing operations at Datu Salido in Maguindanao on March 2.

In his testimonial, Jacuba said he was grateful to the

President for inspiring him to regain his confidence after his visit last month at the AFP Medical Center.

"You are our hero, sir. You gave us life. You uplifted us soldiers. You are the only president who makes rounds in the camps," Jacuba said in Filipino.

"You are the leader with a heart, a sincere one. We cannot give you material gift. All I can say is we will fight until the last drop of our blood under your leadership," he added.

Duterte said he will "reinvest" Jacuba, telling him to learn how to read braille and possibly pursue a law degree despite his condition.

Cpl. Ralph Divino, on

the other hand, received an electric wheelchair from the President, which increased his mobility.

Duterte reiterated that the military and the police will have his full support. He hopes that additional benefits for them will be ready in December.

Duterte also handed over laptops to some injured soldiers, and each of the 64 soldiers will be given a new side firearm.

"I have imparted to the military and the police very clearly, you will have my support, you will have all the things you need to fight criminals. Do not worry, in the pursuit of law and order,

pursuant to my direction, you do not have to worry. I will go to the prison for you. I take full legal responsibility," Duterte said.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, AFP chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III and other top military officials were also at the dinner.

Malacañang instructed the departments of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Health (DOH) and the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to provide assistance to the families of the soldiers killed or wounded in military operations.

Mae Fe Ancheta-Templa, undersecretary for Institu-

tional Development Group, said DSWD's Protective Services Fund Management Office has forwarded the list of the slain and wounded soldiers, including information on their dependents, to DSWD's field offices where the soldiers' families live.

The status of the families will be subjected to assessment and eligibility for the various programs of the DSWD.

"We have an existing system to deliver the most apt and suitable services for the dependents of the soldiers, and this system is implemented through the swift coordination between the DSWD Central Office and Field Offices," Templa said.

DSWD's social workers will

visit the homes of the soldiers' families to determine their needs and assess what services and interventions can be provided to them.

"At the onset, the assistance that we can immediately provide are educational, livelihood and employment opportunities through skills training for the dependents. If the soldiers have senior citizen parents, we can enroll them in the Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens," Templa said.

She also said that four of the soldiers were assessed as beneficiaries of conditional cash transfer program and their families will receive one sack of rice per month.

- With Pia Lee-Brago

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

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15 soldiers killed; gov't goes 'full force' vs Abus

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

President Duterte has ordered the military to go "full force" against the Abu Sayyaf amid the mounting casualties among troops fighting the bandit group since last week. The bandits killed 15 government troops in fierce fighting late Monday in Patikul, Sulu.

Initial reports said the fatalities included two soldiers who were beheaded by the bandits in Barangay Maligay. This, however, was denied by the military, saying the gunmen used the cell phones of the slain soldiers and sent text messages to their families about the purported beheadings.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella said five more battalions would be deployed to the theater of operations. "We are going full force in all-out operations against them. We are adding five battalions or about 2,500 people and they'll only be in Sulu," Abella said.

Abella said it was unfortunate that 15 soldiers were killed by the bandits in the government side's largest single-day combat loss.

The military's setback came after troops killed at least 22 Abu Sayyaf gunmen, including an influential commander, in the jungles of Patikul on Friday and Saturday in assaults that followed the heading of a hostage.

Duterte ordered troops to shut down and destroy the militants in their jungle bases last week after the extremists beheaded a kidnapped vil-

lager whose family was too poor to pay ransom.

"That's why I sent the troops," Duterte said, adding he can no longer tolerate the Abu Sayyaf's barbaric activities.

Informed of the mounting casualties among the troops, Duterte said he is ready to accept the drawbacks of launching an all-out military campaign.

"I know that there will be some reprisals, I'm ready for that. There's always a drawback there but you know every time you do that, it's a slap on the face of government," Duterte said.

Abella said the President is bent on destroying the Abu Sayyaf down to the last man.

"Definitely the President is focused on making sure that the threat from the Abu Sayyaf should be terminated as soon as possible," he said.

Abella said the current military actions are manifestations of the President's campaign against the Abu Sayyaf.

"I believe the President is simply calling our attention to the fact that we should all be vigilant, especially because for example there are groups like terrorist groups like the Abu Sayyaf and he is concentrating full force against these," Abella said.

On top of the 5,000 troops already based in Sulu and 2,500 in Basilan, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has pulled out troops from the Visayas, Luzon and

other areas of Mindanao and deployed them to the two island provinces with the specific mission to seek and destroy the Abu Sayyaf.

The military's Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) issued a statement on the deployment of additional troops.

"What you see is just the tip of the iceberg, more troops, more equipment and more firepower will be committed to destroy the Abu Sayyaf," the Westmincom said.

Deadly text message

Westmincom spokesman Maj. Filemon Tan Jr. said two bandits were killed in last Monday's encounter that also left 15 troops dead.

Five other soldiers were wounded in the nearly two-hour gunbattle.

Tan denied reports that two soldiers were beheaded by the bandits.

"All the military fatalities were accounted for and there is no truth to the claims of the Abu Sayyaf they beheaded some of our troopers," he said.

Tan said a bandit used the cellphone of Pfc. Jison Palcasantos, one of the slain soldiers, and sent a text message to the victim's family that they had beheaded him.

He added the troops have not sighted any of the hostages during the encounter in Patikul.

"The hostages were not sighted but knowing the

group was there, there's a high possibility that the victims were there," he said.

A number of hostages are still being held by the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu, including Norwegian Kjartan Sekkingstad, Indonesian sailors and Dutch birdwatcher Ewold Horn who was kidnapped in the high seas off Tawi-Tawi in February 2012.

Tan also explained the high number of troop casualties was due to the difficult terrain.

"The Abu Sayyaf group has mastery of the terrain and they knew the fields of fire and were on the edge of the terrain," he said.

Tan said troops from the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion initially clashed with 70 Abu Sayyaf gunmen led by senior leader Radullan Sahiron.

However, the bandits grew in number up to more than 120 gunmen as the fighting continued.

Tan stressed the government casualties were not just from a single encounter but from the series of clashes with the bandits that dragged on for almost two hours.

Tan said the Abu Sayyaf had 30 casualties and 11 wounded while the government suffered 15 killed and 29 wounded in clashes since Thursday last week.

According to Tan, the troops were running after 81 Abu Sayyaf gunmen who were identified by validated reports.

AFP Public Affairs Office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said the military has enough troops to enforce the President's order to crush the Abu Sayyaf.

Asked if the soldiers were outnumbered in last Monday's fighting, Arevalo only said combined troops from the Army's 21st and 35th Infantry Battalions encountered a big number of heavily armed bandits in Patikul.

He said the Abu Sayyaf are using the terrain to their advantage, engaging government troops from higher ground.

"We are not facing ordinary enemies. We definitely have the superiority of training, superiority in armaments but they are not giving our soldiers an easy fight," Arevalo said.

Arevalo cited field reports that some of the bandits were

high on drugs when they engaged the troops in a firefight in last Monday's clashes.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the fighting resumed yesterday with the troops on a mission to launch an all out offensive and further decimate the Abu Sayyaf.

"To date, 30 Abu Sayyaf gunmen have been killed to include those slain in this morning's (yesterday) fighting," Padilla said.

Westmincom warned any group of civilians found to be aiding the Abu Sayyaf will be included in the military's target list.

"The momentum is on our side and we will continue this fight until we accomplish the mission. Those who are aiding the Abu Sayyaf will be dealt with by the AFP," Tan said. - **Roel Pareño, Jaime Laude, Perseus Echeminada**

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AFP chief tells troops: Wear out Abu Sayyaf

BY VICTOR REYES

FLAGS flew at half staff yesterday at the military's headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo and other military camps as the Armed Forces mourned for soldiers killed in clashes with the Abu Sayyaf in Patikul town in Sulu Monday.

Sporadic fighting was ongoing yesterday.

An updated number of military casualties showed 15 fatalities and 10 wounded. Initial reports on Monday night said there were 12 dead and five wounded.

The military vowed to bounce back from the "temporary setback." Before the Monday clash, the military had the upper hand in the intensified operations against the kidnap-for-ransom group as it had killed 21 bandits in clashes since Thursday last week, without incurring any fatality.

On the Abu Sayyaf side, the military counted 30 dead, including six from the Monday clashes.

The death of the 15 soldiers is the largest in a single encounter since April 9 when 18 soldiers were killed during an assault on an Abu Sayyaf camp in Tipo-tipo town in Basilan.

The Basilan operation resulted in the capture of the camp. The military said 38 bandits died in the operation, including a Moroccan terrorist, but only a few enemy bodies were recovered by soldiers.

AFP chief Gen. Ricardo Visaya said the tragedy will not stop the military from pursuing its mission of defeating the Abu Sayyaf, which the military has around 480 members.

He asked ground commanders to keep the pressure on the Abu Sayyaf.

"We have all the time. Keep the pressure on the enemy until they wear out. Just ensure they won't be able to leave the island and we will be

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AFP

triumphant in the end," he said.

The latest fighting broke out in Sitio Kan Jalul at around 4:30 a.m. Monday, National Heroes Day. The clash involved troops from the 35th and 21st Infantry Battalions and about 120 Abu Sayyaf men led by Radulian Sahiron.

"This is just temporary setback," said Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP public affairs office. "We will continue (with the operation), we will press on, we will employ all assets of government, of the Armed Forces."

"We have fresh troops. The enemy will grow tired and weary and probably run short of ammunition, manpower in due time. The Armed Forces have those... We are hopeful, and we should be, in the end the one victorious," said Arevalo.

Tan said two other armed encounters with the Abu Sayyaf took place last Monday. The first occurred at around 1:50 p.m. against 30 Abu Sayyaf men in Sitio Kugan, Barangay Bakung also in Patikul.

The 30-minute firefight left two Abu Sayyaf men dead and several severely wounded, including sub-leader Jamir Jawong Jauhari, said Tan.

The second clash occurred at around 3:42 p.m. against 80 bandits in Barangay Kuttong in Talipao town. The 30-minute clash left four Abu Sayyaf men dead and two soldiers wounded.

Tan said the Abu Sayyaf suffered 24 dead during last Thurs-

day's encounter in Patikul, up by three from last Monday's figure.

Tan said this brought to 30 the number of Abu Sayyaf men slain during the renewed campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, including the six terrorists who were killed in last Monday's clash.

FATALITIES

The slain soldiers included 2Lt Ernan Gusto, platoon leader at the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion. The others were S/Sgt Ruel Catubay; Sgt. Jay Erwin Almohallas; Corporals Omar Raddulan, Ronald Galoniga, Elid Ismael, Salik Mandangan; Privates First Class Nestor Bacaling, Jison Falcasantos, Gerald Yubal, Dhendo Dujo, Roselito Arnoco, Glend Resma, Rogelio Vincoy; and Pvt. Jonas Lumayan.

Arevalo said the 15 died in an engagement, downplaying talks the soldiers were ambushed.

"It's really an encounter. It's just that they clashed with a large group (of Abu Sayyaf men). The report that reached us is they clashed with 120 fully-armed ASG terrorists," said Arevalo.

"We have been saying that the enemy is not an ordinary enemy. We definitely have the superiority of training, superiority of armaments but they are not giving our soldiers an easy fight," said Arevalo.

Arevalo said government troops remain determined in the fight against the Abu Sayyaf which is keeping around 20

foreign and Filipino hostages in Sulu. The previous Aquino administration also tried, but failed, to defeat the Abu Sayyaf.

President Duterte has said he wants the Abu Sayyaf destroyed during his term.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella yesterday said President Duterte wants the Abu Sayyaf Group "terminated as soon as possible."

"Well, definitely the President is focused on making sure that the threat from the Abu Sayyaf Group should be terminated as soon as possible," he said but said no definite timeline was set.

Tan said "more troops, more equipment and more firepower will be committed to destroy the ASG."

CLOSE-QUARTERS BATTLE

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla belied insinuations the troops were ambushed.

"Hinahabol kasi nila (yung Abu Sayyaf), eager yung mga tropa natin na maka-score uli dahil sunod-sunod yung score natin. E ang problema, nabanga kasi nila yung malaking grupo na. Hindi nila na-anticipate yun," said Padilla.

On whether there was a lapse on the part of the troops, Padilla said "That is the subject for the field commanders to check, not us (in Camp Aguinaldo)."

Pressed if there is already an ongoing investigation into the incident, Padilla said it is not the time to find fault. — *With Jocelyn Montemayor*

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The Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

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Davao, Cebu also Sayyaf targets — Defense chief

By John Paolo Bencito
and Florante S. Solmerin

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said Tuesday the government is preparing for any attacks that the Abu Sayyaf might launch in urban centers as diversionary tactics but played down the need for emergency powers for President Rodrigo Duterte to quash the terrorist group.

In an interview, Lorenzana said that they have received reports that there might be terror attacks on major cities.

"That's what we are preparing right now. We know they might do diversionary tactics in Manila, Cebu, or Davao, metropolitan centers—that is what the President is fearing, the diversionary actions [that they might do] in urban centers," Lorenzana told the *Manila Standard*.

Lorenzana also warned against paying ransom in exchange for any hostages being held, as this

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id only strengthen the terrorist P.

Lorenzana said with local government units joining the anti-terrorist, there was still no need to grant President Duterte emergency powers.

At least three senators—Panfilo Lacson, Paolo Benigno Aquino IV and Vicente Sotto III—have expressed support for granting Duterte

additional emergency powers to stop the ASG after a series of kidnappings and beheadings in Mindanao.

Such powers would help Duterte more effectively with the terror threat as well as with other serious problems such as illegal drugs, the senators said.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Ricardo Binalag said they would not stop until the ASG is eradicated.

There may still be casualties along the way as we advance this mission duty to eradicate these bandits

and terrorists of 25 years, but we will not stop until we rid our country of the menace this ASG brings to the world," Visaya said.

The Palace on Tuesday vowed to relentlessly pursue the Abu Sayyaf after 15 soldiers were killed in an encounter in Sulu.

"It is unfortunate that a number of our troops have already lost their lives," Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said in a press briefing.

"The President is focused on making sure that the threat from the Abu Sayyaf Group should be terminated as soon as possible," he added.

Abella echoed the statements of Lorenzana that the government is going "full force" on the ASG, adding that the series of offensives against the Abu Sayyaf are "manifestations" of Duterte's campaign against the bandit group.

On Tuesday, the military confirmed that at least 15 soldiers and four Abu Sayyaf members were killed in a series of encounters in

Sulu on Monday after the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion and 21st Infantry Battalion fought around 120 members of the ASG.

The firefight also wounded 10 soldiers, while the number of casualties on the Abu Sayyaf side had yet to be confirmed.

Maj. Felimon Tan Jr., spokesman of the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said on Tuesday one of the slain was an officer.

He said the soldiers were conducting pursuit operations when they encountered the ASG's main body led by sub-leader Radullan Sahiron.

All the slain and wounded soldiers were recovered and suffered no mutilation by the terrorists.

He said not a single gun or bullet was lost to the terrorists.

Tan said casualties on the side of the ASG were undetermined.

Those who died in the Monday encounter in Sitio Kan Janul, Barangay Maligay were 2nd Lt. Eman Gusto, 33, a resident of Isabela; Staff Sgt. Ruel

Catubay, 39, of Zamboanga Sibugay; Sgt. Jay Erwin Almohallas, 38, of Lanao del Norte; Cpl. Omar Raddulan, 41, of Lanao del Norte; Cpl.

Ronald Galoniga, 33, of Lanao del Norte; Cpl. Elid Ismael, 49, of Sulu; Cpl. Salik Mandangan, 31, of Lanao del Norte; Private First Class Nestor Bacaling, 26, of Lanao del Norte; PFC Jison Falcasantos, 28, of Zamboanga City; PFC Gerald Yubal, 29, of Zamboanga Sibugay; PFC Dhendo Dujo, 32, of Zamboanga Sibugay; PFC Roselito Arnoco, 29, of Zamboanga del Sur; PFC Glend Rasma, 24, of North Cotabato; PFC Rogelio Vincoy, 28, of Zamboanga del Norte; and PFC Jonas Lumayan, 23, of Zamboanga del Sur, all members of the 35IB.

Those wounded in the same battle were Cpl. Edgar Andales, Cpl. Ahmad Nuroh, PFC Vinjie Colaljo, PFC Relindo Paglinawan, PFC Rogen Revira, PFC Sabeniano Bercasio, PFC Juvelito Bulhano, PFC Effen Espenesin, PFC Jemar Maictin, and PFC Johnrel Alalag.

On the same day but in a different firefight in Barangay Kutong, Talipao, Cpl. Gregg Jinggoy Banog and Cpl. Joel Laman were also wounded.

Last week, the military stepped up operations against the ASG on orders by President Rodrigo Duterte to eliminate the terrorists.

Duterte has expressed exasperation over the beheadings that the ASG has inflicted on their hostages once their families fail to pay the ransom.

The military said the first series of firefights last week killed at least 21 ASG terrorists, although only six bodies were recovered.

Thousands and thousands of soldiers poured into Sulu and Basilan with the objective of finishing off the ASG scourge.

Duterte has ordered Visaya to finish off the ASG in six months.

In Camp Aguinaldo, the military said they mourned the death of their fellow soldiers and placed the flag at half-staff in their honor. With PNA

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Abu Sayyaf bandits using illegal drugs?

The military is not discounting the possibility that some of the Abu Sayyaf bandits being pursued by the military in Sulu are under the influence of illegal drugs.

Marine Col. Edgard A. Arevalo, the chief of the AFP Public Affairs Office, made the revelation following a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Arevalo said that based on intelligence reports they have gathered, some of the ASG bandits who fought against troops of the Army's 21st Infantry Battalion and 35th on Infantry Battalion were high drugs.

"It's an encounter talaga. There was intense firefight between the two sides. It's just that may kalakihan ang kanilang numero. Ang report sa atin ay 120 fully armed ASG terrorist ang nakaharap nila ang ating mga sundalo ay talagang nakipagbakbakan," Arevalo said. "Ang impormasyon pang naririnig

natin, sa ating mga operating units o sa ating mga intelligence operatives some of them are even under the influence of drugs when they faced our soldiers."

The terror group are said to be actively moving from one place to another now that the soldiers are making an intense pursuit to pin them down.

"They are trying their best to avoid our operating units. These initial contacts indicates Number one that we are, we have the right human intelligence. We can attribute this to the people of Sulu na nakakakita, na nakakaramdam ng pangangailangan na matapos na ang problema sa Abu Sayyaf," Arevalo said.

"Arevalo also said based on information coming from Army Brig. Gen Arnel dela Vega, the commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, no soldiers were violated after the encounter. (Francis T. Wakefield)

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POLICE FILES

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AFP nagpadala ng 2,500 sundalo sa Sulu para durugin ang Abu Sayyaf

MAGPADALA na ang Department of National Defense (DND) ng limang baryahe o dalawang ubo at limang maang sundalo sa Sulu.

Isa sa mga baryahe ang bandidong Abu Sayyaf Group.

Avon kay Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, nakatungkol na nasa-gaan ang pamahalaan ng labinglimang sundalo matapos makipagbarkaban sa ASG.

Sa ngayon ayon kay Abella, pursigido ang pangulu na pulbustin ang bandidong group.

Samantala ipinag-utos haman ni Aranda Pantes of the Philippines (AFP) chief of Staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya ang pagtatipak na hindi makalabas ng ASG.

Ayon kay AFP Western Mindanao Command (Westmcom) spokesperson Maj. Felimon Tan, dinala kahapon sa Zamboanga City ang mga bangkay ng 15 sundalo na napatay sa barkaban sa Sulu.

Kabilang sa casualties ng makalat ang pangkomisyal habang nasa 14 sundalo, ang suga sa nasabing engkwento.

Nakasagupa kamakalawa ng hapon ng mga operating troops ng 35th at 21st Infantry Battalion ang nasa 120 at 100 ng bandidong Abu Sayyaf sa pamumuno ni ASG leader Raduan Sahiron.

Mensahe naman ni Visaya sa kamayang mga tropa sa Sulu, pangunahin ang focus henerasyon sa ma-pressur ang mga bandidong at tuluyan na itong mapulbos.

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'Maute' jailbreak puts Northern Mindanao cops on heightened alert

By JIM MACABALAN

CAMP EVANGELISTA, Cagayan De Oro City — The police regional command in Northern Mindanao on Monday ordered heightened intelligence operations in the region after 23 inmates in Lanao Del Sur bolted jail Saturday.

Chief Supt. Noel Constantino, police regional director in Northern Mindanao, said that eight of the prisoners were members of the "Maute Group," a local terrorist group that has pledged allegiance to international terror organization ISIS.

He said that most of the 15 other inmates who bolted the Lanao Del Sur provincial jail were facing murder charges and were considered equally dangerous to remain at large.

"The escapees pose serious threat to public safety and must be prevented from sowing further terror," Constantino said in a statement released to the local media here.

He said that he has instructed the police on the ground to conduct checkpoint to constrict the possible entry of the "Maute group" in Northern Mindanao.

This developed as local authorities admitted that current investigations into the daring attack by the Maute group, an IS-leaning jihadist Maranao sector, could hardly proceed because there have been no witnesses willing to come out openly and testify about the incident.

"No one is willing to come out and help us build a case against the gunmen behind the daring attack," a member of the Lanao del Sur inter-agency provincial peace and order council was quoted as saying.

During Saturday afternoon's attack, more than 50 armed Maute group militants disarmed jail guards, sprang eight members detained since their capture here last August 22 for possession of an improvised explosive device (IED) and firearms, and freed 20 other inmates facing various criminal charges.

The outnumbered jail guards failed to put up resistance against the raiders, who pulled off the rescue attack in just 10 minutes, initial investigations said.

The raiders took hostage one jail guard but freed him later at the lake shore of barangay Callocan here where they boarded some motorized bancas and fled to still unknown directions.

The armed men also seized an M16 rifle, an M14 assault rifle, and the patrol car assigned at the Lanao Del Sur Provincial Jail, the police report said.

Constantino said that the eight members of the Maute Group sprung free by their comrades were earlier intercepted in a military checkpoint in Lumbanayague in Lanao Del Sur on board a vehicle loaded with ammunition, improvised explosive device and high powered firearms, and hauled to jail.

The police report reaching here alleged that the group was on a mission to assault the Army camp in Marawi City and on a bombing mission in key cities in Northern Mindanao, including Cagayan De Oro City.

Constantino has reminded the public to be extra vigilant as he sought the people to rally behind the PNP and the military in the fight against all forms of terror attacks.

"Rest assured the police in Northern Mindanao is doing its best in coordination with the AFP [Armed Forces of the Philippines] and other government agencies to neutralize this terror group in the region," he said. (With a report from PNA)

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All-out war vs Abus on: 30 bandits, 15 troopers dead

By Mario J. Mallari
and Ted Tuvera

The number of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits killed in the ongoing focused military operations in Sulu has climbed to 30 as five more bandits were reported killed in Sulu yesterday.

Fifteen soldiers, including a junior officer, were killed while 12 others were wounded during "raging clashes" between government troops and the terrorist Abu Sayyaf band or Badullan Sahiron on the outskirts of Sulu province on Monday, the military said yesterday.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff Gen. Ricardo Visaya immediately ordered all military camps to fly the national flag at half mast to honor the fallen troops.

The killing of the 15 soldiers is the first major setback suffered by the military under the administration of President Duterte who ordered the AFP to destroy the Abu Sayyaf Group.

The setback happened while the AFP continued to pour more troops in Sulu and Basilan, that now stand at more than a dozen battalions, to finally defeat the ASG, which

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has an estimated strength of 100 fighters.

"As we gaze at the national flag that flies at half-mast, all soldiers knew that one too many heroes among them has offered his life – that others live," said Visaya.

In a press briefing, Col. Ed Arevalo, AFP-Public Affairs Office chief, said that three separate clashes – which coincided with observance of National Heroes Day – happened in Sulu on Monday – two in Patikul and one in adjacent Talipao.

Arevalo said that the clash that caused the lives of 15 troops and wounded 10 others erupted around 4:30 p.m. along Sitio K. Jahul, Barangay Maitigay in Patikul.

He said that composite elements of the Army's 35th Infantry Battalion and 21st IB engaged more or less 120 heavily-armed Abu Sayyaf terrorists in a "raging firefight."

"Fifteen soldiers, including an officer, were killed in action while 12 were wounded in action," said Arevalo.

"The extent of casualties on the bandits' side is undetermined," he added.

Arevalo maintained that the clash was "meeting encounter" between the government troops and the terrorists – downplaying reports that the soldiers were ambushed.

At the same time, Arevalo said that while the ASG currently enjoys the advantage of familiarity with the terrain, that will not be for long. Our soldiers will eventually equate that.

Earlier, at around 1:50 p.m., Army forces, under Lt. Col. Presco Lobos, encountered more or less 30 fully-armed terrorists, under ASG sub-leader Jamiri Jawong Jauhari, along Sitio Kugan, Barangay Bakung also in Patikul.

Arevalo said that two terrorists were killed during the 30-minute clash while no casualty reported on the government side.

At around 3:42 p.m., another encounter erupted between government forces, under Lt. Col. Samuel Manzano, and about 80 Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Barangay Kuttong in Talipao, which is adjacent to Patikul.

Two more ASG bandits were killed during the Talipao clash while two soldiers were wounded.

In total, Arevalo said that at least 25 Abu Sayyaf terrorists had been killed since Thursday when the military intensified combat operations in compliance to the directive of Duterte in the aftermath of the beheading of hostage Patrick Almogova last Wednesday.

Five more ASG members were killed as of presstime, bringing the death count of the ASG at 30.

Arevalo stressed that while the killing of 15 soldiers is saddening for the entire AFP troops are more than committed to finish off the Abu Sayyaf group.

The soldiers grieve for their fallen comrades. But instead of

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waning, the soldiers pressed on in the fight. That the ultimate sacrifice and acts of gallantry become their driving force to hit back once again on the terrorists," said Arevalo.

Last April 9, while the country was observing Valor Day, 17 government troops were killed during clashes with Abu Sayyaf terrorists in Basilan province.

Visaya, however, maintained that the military will relentlessly pursue the terrorists.

"As much as every soldier, sailor, marine, or airman know that laying down one's life is all part and parcel of their job, we in the AFP vow to pursue this battle to conclusion," said Visaya.

"There may still be casualties along the way as we advance this solemn duty to eradicate these bandits and terrorists of 25 years, but we will not stop until we rid our country of the menace this ASG brings to the world," he added.

War not yet declared, but ongoing

The all-out war against the terrorists-cum-bandits Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) has not been declared as yet by President Duterte. But the series of state offensives against the ASG in Sulu province speaks of the all-out war against the Abu Sayyaf bandits.

The death toll of the ASG members has reached 30 as of press deadline, with five more ASG bandits killed, while the death toll of the military troopers fighting it out with the ASG has hit 15, with 12 wounded.

The additional deployment of five Army battalions or about 2,500 combatants, Presidential Spokesman Ernesto Abella said, is a manifestation of the "heightened campaign" against the Islamic bandits.

"We are going full force and all-out operations against [the ASG in Sulu]. The President is focused on making sure that the threat from the Abu Sayyaf Group should be terminated as soon as possible," Abella told reporters yesterday in a briefing at the Palace.

"[These] are manifestations of his campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group," the Palace spokesman said in reply to the question on whether the government is already waging what Duterte bills as the "reckoning" or whether it is already an "all-out war."

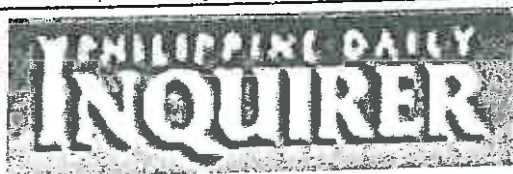
Abella said that although state forces are not required to follow a timeline, the military is tasked to cut the activities perpetrated by the kidnap-for-ransom bandits.

"We don't have a definite timeline. But for this to be done within a reasonable period. Dealing with the Abu Sayyaf should not be an extended engagement," he said.

Abella also lamented the killing of 15 soldiers in an encounter last Monday afternoon in San Randal Brgy. Maligay in Patikul town, Sulu. "It is unfortunate that a number of our troops have already lost their lives," Abella said.

The 15 combatants belong to the Philippine Army's 35th Infantry Battalion and 21st Infantry Battalion.

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Leila files suit vs Marcos burial

By Vince F. Nonato

SENATOR Leila de Lima filed a legal challenge against plans to transfer the remains of dictator Ferdinand Marcos to Libingan ng mga Bayani Tuesday, becoming the seventh petitioner against the move on the eve of the Supreme Court's oral arguments on the divisive issue.

De Lima, in her 38-page petition, said that "no President has the power to rewrite history."

She argued transferring Marcos' remains at the heroes' cemetery would go against the very spirit of the 1987 Constitution, which was

crafted precisely to prevent a repeat of the abuses committed under his two-decade regime.

While his departure to Hawaii foreclosed any possibility of conviction over criminal acts, De Lima said that "the Filipino's rejection of his leadership and the abuses committed by him and under his regime cannot be made clearer under the circumstances."

"It is thus incumbent upon all of us—senators, other government officials, and citizens of the Republic—to defend the Constitution against the greatest attack levied, not just against any particular provision thereof, but against its very

existence and integrity," De Lima's petition read.

De Lima said Armed Forces of the Philippines Regulations G 161-373 should be stricken down because it was issued with grave abuse of discretion.

The AFP rules provided "incomplete, whimsical and capricious standards" for qualifications and disqualifications for interment at the heroes cemetery, she argued.

She noted that the rules failed to abide by Republic Act No. 289's provision that heroes worthy of "inspiration and emulation" by succeeding generations should be buried at the cemetery.

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VIP GUESTS: Straight from Camp Siongco in Maguindanao and V. Luna Medical Center's Heroes Ward in Quezon City, soldiers wounded in action join President Duterte for a dinner of chicken sotanghon, eggplant salad, fish with coconut milk and mustard, grilled seafood, corn with crushed ice, cassava cake and durian tart at Malacanang's Heroes Hall on National Heroes Day the other night. Story on Page 10.

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

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posterity. President Duterte shares center stage with AFP officials, Senate President Aquilino Pimentel III, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esparon, Interior Secretary Ismael Suenir, and soldiers wounded in battle, during a fellowship dinner at Malacañang Monday.

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31 August 2016

MANILA BULLETIN

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FALLEN TROOPS – Soldiers carry the caskets of their comrades killed in the ongoing offensive against the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu. President Duterte had earlier ordered the military to wipe out the bandits after they beheaded an innocent boy recently. (Reuters)

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The Manila Times

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FALLEN Soldiers carry caskets containing the remains of their colleagues killed in an encounter with the Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group, into a C-130 cargo plane at Jolo airport in Sulu province on Tuesday. Abu Sayyaf fighters killed 15 soldiers as they were carrying out President Rodrigo Duterte's order to wipe out the terrorist and kidnapping group. **AFP PHOTO**

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The Standard

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WED

COMING HOME: Filipino troops
celebrate their return to the United States
with a parade in Manila. The soldiers
are being greeted by their families and
friends. The parade is a joyous occasion
for everyone involved.

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Casualties. Soldiers carry the caskets of their comrades killed in battle with the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu.

REUTERS PHOTO

August 2016



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Soldiers carry caskets containing bodies of colleagues killed in an encounter with the Abu Sayyaf, at the Jolo airport in Sulu yesterday.

AFP

31 August 2016



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Coming home
Soldiers load into a C-130 plane caskets containing bodies of colleagues killed in an encounter with the Abu Sayyaf Group. Fifteen government troopers were killed as they were carrying out President Duterte's order to wipe out the bandit group.

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SILANG MAGIGITING Nagpapagaling sa ospital ang mga sundalong nasugatan sa pakikipagbarkaban sa Abu Sayyaf Group sa Patikul, Sulu. **NICKEE BUTLANGAN/REUTERS**

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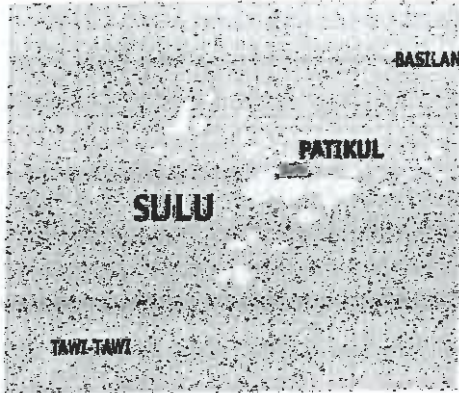
ONLINE NEWS

31 AUGUST 2016

<http://dwdd.com.ph/>

Heavy Skirmishes vs. ASG Terrorists Rages in Sulu

Marycel Necio Batara



CAMP AGUINALDO, Quezon City – Fifteen soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice while twelve others were wounded in action (WIA) as of 10:30 a.m. today, August 30, following a series of intense skirmishes in Sulu yesterday, August 29.

The following were Killed-in-Action 2LT ERNAN P GUSTO, 33, M, Isabela SSgt Ruel A Catubay, 39, M, ZSP Sgt Jay Erwin L Almohallas, 38, M, LDN Cpl Omar M Raddulan, 41, M, LDN Cpl Ronald M Galoniga, 33, M, LDN Cpl Elid S Ismael, 49, M, Jolo Sulu Cpl Salik H Mandangan, 31, M, LDN Pfc Nestor C Bacaling, 26, S, LDN Pfc Jison B Falcasantos, 28, S, Zambo City Pfc Gerald A Yubal, 29, S, ZSP Pfc Dhendo A Dujo, 32, M, ZSP Pfc Roselito A Arnoco, 29, S, ZDS Pfc Glend C Resma, 24, S, N. Cotabato Pfc Rogelio D Vincoy, 28, M, ZDN Pvt Jonas A Lumayan, 23, S, ZDS. Isabela-1, Jolo-1, Zambo City-1, N.Cto-1 ZSP – 3 ZDN – 1 ZDS – 2 LDN – 5

This is according to the reports of Joint Task Force Sulu Commander BGen Amel de la Vega to Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Ricardo R Visaya.

The heavy fighting began at around 1:50 PM yesterday when Army soldiers of the 21st Infantry Battalion led by LTCOL Presco Lobos encountered more or less 30 heavily armed Abu Sayyaf Group terrorists under sub-leader Jamiri Jawong Jauhari at Sitio Kugan, Brgy. Bakung of Patikul, Sulu.

In the fierce armed encounter that lasted for almost 30 minutes, two (2) ASG members were killed and a number of them severely wounded including their leader Jamiri Jawong Jauhari. The rest of them who withdrew southeast were pursued by the troops. The security forces meanwhile suffered zero casualties. Later, at about 3:42PM, combined elements from 4th Scout Ranger Battalion under LTC Samuel Manzano encountered more or less 80 ASG terrorists at Brgy Kuttong of Talipao, Sulu. After about 30 mins and sustaining two deaths, the bandits withdrew westward. The security forces suffered two WIA.

At 4:30PM, in Sitio Kan Jalul, Brgy. Maligay also of Patikul, Sulu the composite team of gallant soldiers from 35th IB and 21st IB suffered casualty in a raging firefight between them and more or less 120 heavily armed terrorists. Fifteen (15) soldiers including Second Lieutenant were killed in action while ten (10) others were wounded.

The extent of casualty on the bandits' side is undetermined.

Other soldiers operating in the area immediately rushed to the encounter site to pursue the withdrawing terrorists. Other Army units provide the blocking forces.

We are withholding the names of those KIA and WIA until their next of kins were duly notified.

The soldiers grieve for their fallen comrades. But instead of waning, the soldiers pressed on in the fight. That the ultimate sacrifice and acts of gallantry become their driving force to hit back once again on the terrorists

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who have suffered at least 25 killed and scores others wounded in army initiated armed encounters 4 days ago. As of this time, the sporadic skirmishes continue.

"As we gaze at the national flag that flies at half-mast anew, soldiers knew that one too many hero among them has again offered his life --that others may live.", said General Ricardo Visaya, AFP Chief of Staff.

"Much as every soldier, sailor, marine, or airman knows that laying down one's life is all part and parcel of their job, we in the AFP vow to pursue this battle to conclusion.

"There may still be casualties along the way as we advance this solemn duty to eradicate these bandits and terrorists of 25 years, but we will not stop until we rid our country of the menace this ASG brings to the world.", commits General Visaya.

His continuing guidance to the field commanders: "We have all the time. Keep the pressure on the enemy until they wear out. Just ensure they won't be able to leave the island and we will be triumphant in the end."

<http://news.abs-cbn.com/news>

15 soldiers killed in Sulu clash with Abu Sayyaf

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 30 2016 06:06 PM | Updated as of Aug 30 2016 06:46 PM



The remains of the slain soldiers arrive at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City on Tuesday afternoon

(2nd UPDATE) The Philippine military lost one officer and 14 enlisted personnel in a clash with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Sulu, the Armed Forces said Tuesday.

Armed Forces spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the soldiers engaged the bandits starting Monday morning, and suffered the casualties toward the afternoon.

"We have had a short period of jubilation following some very successful skirmishes with the enemy, but unfortunately, just yesterday, we lost 15 of our members to a very closely fought engagement period [sic] that begun early in the morning and moved on throughout the day until late in the afternoon," he said.

By afternoon, he said, members of the 21st and 35th Infantry Battalions were engaging the bulk of Abu Sayyaf in Patikul, and may have compromised their position.

"Initially, we were made to believe that there was a small group, but when they entered in another area, the number kind of swelled. Apparently, that was where they were hiding to escape the pursuing troops," he said. "Unfortunately, there was a small group of our members of the 35th IB who pursued a bigger group that was running away. And unfortunately, the mastery of the terrain was working to the advantage of the ASG who were in a higher ground," he added.

Padilla likened the encounter to an ambush, wherein no military personnel was closely shot by the enemy. "No member of our troops were bastardized or disrespected and we were able to recover them in due time. Many of them still getting to the medical lines alive, but because of their injuries, they succumbed later on," he said.

He reported also that the most recent number of Abu Sayyaf fighters killed was 30, possibly including one sub-commander.

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The following are the soldiers who died in the clash, according to the AFP:

- 2Lt. Ernan P. Gusto (33, Isabela)
- SSgt. Ruel A. Catubay (39, Zamboanga Sibugay)
- Sgt. Jay Erwin L. Almohallas (38, Lanao del Norte)
- CPL Omar M. Raddulan (41, Lanao del Norte)
- CPL Ronald M. Galoniga (33, Lanao del Norte)
- CPL Elid S. Ismael (49, Jolo, Sulu)
- CPL Salik H. Mandangan (31, Lanao del Norte)
- PFC Nestor C. Bacaling (26, Lanao del Norte)
- PFC Jison B. Falcasantos (28, Zamboanga City)
- PFC Gerald A. Yubal (29, Zamboanga Sibugay)
- PFC Dhendo A. Dujo (32, Zamboanga Sibugay)
- PFC Roselito A. Arnoco (29, Zamboanga del Sur)
- PFC Glend C. Resma (24, North Cotabato)
- PFC Rogelio D. Vincoy (28, Zamboanga del Norte)
- PVT Jonas A. Lumayan (23, Zamboanga del Sur)

An earlier statement from the Army said Abu Sayyaf leader Jamiri Jawong Jauhari was severely wounded in the encounter.

The Abu Sayyaf, known for kidnapping and beheading captives, has dogged successive Philippine governments, entrenching its network with vast sums of ransom money in what has become one of Asia's most lucrative kidnapping rackets.

Security experts say the members of the bandit group are motivated less by Islamist ideology and more by the tens of millions of dollars from kidnappings.

Two Canadians and a Filipino teenager were executed this year by the Abu Sayyaf. Last week, two Indonesians escaped captivity but there was speculation the Abu Sayyaf freed them after their families paid their ransoms.

Eight Indonesians, eight Filipinos, five Malaysians, a Dutch bird watcher, and a Norwegian resort manager are still being held by the Abu Sayyaf. It was not known if the hostages were in Patikul jungle when the assault began on Thursday.

Padilla vowed that the military will not cease its pursuit operations until they reach a "very decisive engagement with this group," and try to rescue the hostages.

"The primordial objective and concentration we are having is to closely ensure that the victims they hold will be safely rescued, but if we are not able to do that, it would be very unfortunate, but that's what we are trying to see," he said. --With reports from Reuters

<http://www.philstar.com/>

Philippine Navy blocking Abu Sayyaf reinforcement

(philstar.com) | Updated August 30, 2016 - 5:37pm



The military is trying to contain Abu Sayyaf Group fighters by blocking off strategic areas of Sulu in southern Philippines. Philstar.com/Bing Maps

MANILA Philippines (Philippines News Agency) — Philippine Navy units started blocking strategic areas of Sulu to prevent Abu Sayyaf Group sympathizers from resupplying and reinforcing their beleaguered comrades on the island.

Armed Forces spokesperson Col. Edgard Arevalo said on Monday the Navy units were also tasked to contain the areas to keep militants from escaping from their Sulu enclaves, which are now under heavy military pressure.

"While not sufficient large to support (all its commitment) it has sufficient assets to (carry out) the operation," Arevalo said.

Arevalo said the total Abu Sayyaf fighters in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi are placed at 481. The military, however, does not have exact figures on the group's sympathizers, supporters or operatives recruited through dubious means.

Total number of Abu Sayyaf bandits killed in the ongoing focused military operations in Sulu are placed at 25 along with an undetermined number of wounded.

Military losses, meanwhile, reached 15 fatalities and 12 casualties.

Operations against the bandits started on August 26 after the terrorists brutally beheaded 18-year-old Patrick Jhames Almodavar last August 25.

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Flags in military camps flown at half-mast to honor 15 troopers killed in fight vs Abu Sayyaf

From the Philippine News Agency (Aug 30)

Flags in all military camps nationwide were flown at half-mast Tuesday to honor the 15 troopers killed in the ongoing operation to neutralize the bandit Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

"(It is) part of our standard practice and tradition in the Armed Forces of the Philippines everytime our soldiers fell in battle doing their mission or constitutional mandate," AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said in Filipino.

Placing all flag at half-mast also indicates that the rest of the military is grieving with the loved and families of the slain troopers, he added.

"(All soldiers are well) aware of the inherent risk of their profession, they are aware they can get wounded or killed doing their mission," Arevalo said.

Aside from the 15 dead in Monday's 4.30 p.m. clash with the ASG at Sitio Kan Jalul, Barangay Maligay, Patikul, another 12 troopers were wounded the gunbattle that lasted until 6 p.m.

All of the fallen and wounded troopers were from the 35th and 21st Infantry Battalions and all were from Sulu and Mindanao, the AFP public affairs office chief said.

When asked whether President Rodrigo Duterte is planning to visit the fallen troopers, Arevalo said they would leave the matter to the Chief Executive and Malacanang.

"We would like to leave that to the President and to Malacanang, but so far, if you would look at his practice, (President Duterte is known) to visit, commiserate and condole with the families and relatives of those who are slain or who are killed in action while performing their duty. We supposed that he will be also doing the same this time," he added.

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Westmincom: Offensive against Abu Sayyaf continues amid death of 15 soldiers

From the Philippine News Agency (Aug 30)

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) through the Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) declared the death of the troops did not dampen the fighting spirit of the soldiers pursuing the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) brigands in Sulu.

Lt. Gen. Mayoralgo Dela Cruz, Westmincom chief, issued the statement Tuesday, a day after 15 soldiers, including a junior officer, were killed while 10 others were wounded in intense gunbattle against the ASG brigands in Barangay Maligay, Patikul, Sulu.

Dela Cruz said the slain troops were immortalized as heroes as they sacrificed for the love of country and to achieve peace and security for the future generation.

"Our forces fought gallantly, the firefight was intense and our troops sacrificed their lives to give the next generation the peace and security they truly deserve. We will mourn the loss of our brothers, but it will not dampen the fighting spirit of our troops," Dela Cruz said.

"The momentum is on our side and we will continue this fight until we accomplish the mission, kung sinuman ang humarang o tumulong sa ASG, sasagasaan kayo ng AFP," he added.

He said that more troops, equipment and firepower will be committed to destroy the ASG brigands, citing what they have seen "is just the tip of the iceberg."

The focus military operations have been ongoing against the bandit group since August 26, a day after the brigands beheaded 18-year-old Patrick Jhames Almodavar.

"It is just a matter of time. We appeal to every Filipino to pray for our troops, alam po namin ang peligro na hinaharap ng bawat sundalo, pero ni minsan hindi kami nagrereklamo sapagkat alam namin na ang pinaglalaman namin ay para sa Sambayanang Pilipino," Dela Cruz said.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/>

ASG death toll in Sulu focused military operations now at 30

MANILA, Aug. 30 (PNA) -- The number of Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) bandits killed in the ongoing focused military operations in Sulu has climbed to 30 as five more bandits were reported killed in Sulu Tuesday.

This was stressed by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla in message to the PNA.

"To date 30 ASGs are killed following this (Tuesday) morning's encounter," he added.

However, Padilla did not give specifics on where these bandits were killed.

Another 11 terrorists were reported wounded in the ongoing operations.

Government casualty count stands at 15 troopers killed and 12 wounded as of this posting.

Last Monday, four ASG bandits were killed in two separate operations in Sulu, bringing the total number of terrorists killed as of Monday to 25, AFP public affairs office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said.

The first clash took place 1:50 p.m. at Sitio Kugan, Barangay Bakung, Patikul when troopers from the 21st Infantry Battalion clashed with an estimated 30 ASG bandits led by sub-leader Jamiri Jawong.

In the 30-minute firefight, two of the terrorists were killed and an undetermined number, including Jawong, were wounded, forcing the ASG to retreat.

No losses were recorded by government troopers in this encounter, Arevalo said.

In the second clash at 3:42 p.m., an estimated 80 brigands were encountered by members of the 4th Scout Ranger Battalion.

In the ensuing 30-minute firefight, two more of the bandits were killed while two soldiers were wounded.

In focused military operations which started Aug.26, an estimated 21 ASG terrorists were reported killed.

The offensive was the offshoot of the bandit group's brutal beheading of 18-year-old Patrick Jhames Almodavar last week. (PNA)

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PPRD says peace with the communist and Moro rebels brings a window of opportunity

From the Philippine Information Agency (Aug 30)

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte cited the window of opportunity brought about by the current truce between the government and the communist rebels and the peace convergence between the government and the Moro rebels.

Speaking in the 10th Year Anniversary celebration of the Eastern Mindanao Command Friday (August 26) night, he said the current peace situation being experience in the countryside gives reprieve not only to all forces involved in the conflict but also to the Filipino people who have been suffering long.

Duterte said the government must use the peace as window of opportunity for it to strengthen its forces against possible external aggression in the future.

"We respect the truce with the left and the peace convergence with the Moro rebels. As we make peace with everyone, including foreign countries, we need to prepare," he pointed out.

He revealed that the Defense department has been asking 20,000 personnel to add to its ranks.

Duterte said it is only feasible to add 10,000 new recruits in the Armed Forces at the moment.

He said the government still needs to deal with extremism and the order to crush the Abu Sayyaf remains.

Duterte led the awarding of medals and plaques to deserving soldiers and non-uniformed personnel under the Eastern Mindanao Command ranging from gold cross medals for gallantry in action and plaques of appreciation with Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Visaya and Lt. General Leonardo Guerrero, commander of the Eastern Mindanao Command.

In a separate interview, Major General Rafael Valencia, commander of the 10th Infantry Division said his contingent has contributed two battalions of soldiers to Sulu Province to support the effort of government against all terrorist organizations in the area.

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Joma Sison off the European terror list

From the Manila Times (Aug 30)

PRESIDENTIAL Peace Adviser Jesus Dureza returned to Manila on Monday after the resumption of talks with communist rebels, announcing that Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) founder Jose Maria Sison has been removed from the European Union listing of terrorists.

But the CPP, its armed wing the New People's Army, and political arm the National Democratic Front (NDF) remain classified by the EU as a terrorist group, he said.

Nonetheless, Dureza is confident both sides will achieve peace given a "high level of confidence."

"In a peace process, every agreement is a foundation. It is a brick on a building that one must build from. Just like lovers, you have to build on that relationship, trust, and it takes time," Dureza said in a news conference at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Dureza, along with Angeles City Mayor Ed Pamintuan, arrived from the peace negotiations in Oslo, Norway aboard a Thai Airways flight.

Pamintuan, who is a government peace panel adviser, said Sison expressed a desire to conclude the negotiations in six months.

But the government expects the process to take eight months, he said.

Dureza cautioned that the peace process would have bumps along the way and there would be a lot of "sensitive issues."

The negotiating panels of the Philippine government and the NDF reached agreements on six major items, he recalled.

These are: reaffirmation of previous agreements, reconstitution of the list of NDF members covered by safe passes under the Joint Agreement on Safety and Immunity Guarantees, acceleration of peace negotiations, release of NDF consultants, a government amnesty proclamation for prisoners listed by the NDF, and an indefinite ceasefire.

Both parties agreed to resume talks on October 8 to 12 in Oslo.

The government panel is looking toward a final peace agreement with the NDF to end almost half a century of armed hostilities in the Philippine countryside.

<http://www.rappler.com/>

IN PHOTOS: Duterte dines with soldiers wounded in action

Pia Ranada

@piaranada

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President Duterte gives the soldiers electric wheelchairs and laptops, and says he wants to 'reinvent' them after their sacrifice for the country



LISTENING EAR President Rodrigo Duterte tries to comfort 2nd Lieutenant Jerome Jacuba during a fellowship dinner in Malacañang's Heroes Hall on August 29, 2016, National Heroes' Day. KING RODRIGUEZ/PPD

MANILA, Philippines -- To cap National Heroes' Day, President Rodrigo Duterte had dinner with soldiers wounded in action on Monday, August 29.

Sixty-four soldiers in their blue patient's garb were guests at Malacañang's Heroes Hall where they were served chicken sotanghon, grilled seafood, fish in coconut milk and mustard greens, mais con hielo, and other Filipino dishes.

Sixteen of the soldiers were those wounded in clashes in Cotabato. They were flown in the previous night by C130 so they could join the dinner.

One of the 3 soldiers who gave testimonials in front of the President during the dinner was Second Lieutenant Jerome Jacuba, who was blinded by an explosion during clearing operations in Maguindanao.

Jacuba was the soldier who cried and hugged Duterte when the Commander-in-Chief visited the Armed Forces of the Philippines Medical Center on August 2.

Duterte and the soldiers were joined by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP chief General Ricardo Visaya.

During the dinner, Duterte gave the soldiers electric wheelchairs and laptops. He said he wanted to "reinvent" them and even encouraged Jacuba to go back to school.

Duterte thanked the soldiers for making their sacrifice for the country. He joked that he would order Lorenzana to promote all of them to the rank of general.

"In the sight of the Filipino people, you are all generals. *Kaya ako, 'pag magsaludo ako sa inyo, wounded in action, sinasabi ko, nagsasaludo ako, so mauna kang bumaba sa kamay. 'Yan ang respeto ko sa inyo,'*" he told them.

(In the sight of the Filipino people, you are all generals. That's why I salute you, soldiers wounded in action. I say, if I salute you, you should be the first to put down your hand saluting me. That's how much I respect you.)

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Photo by Toto Lozano/PPD

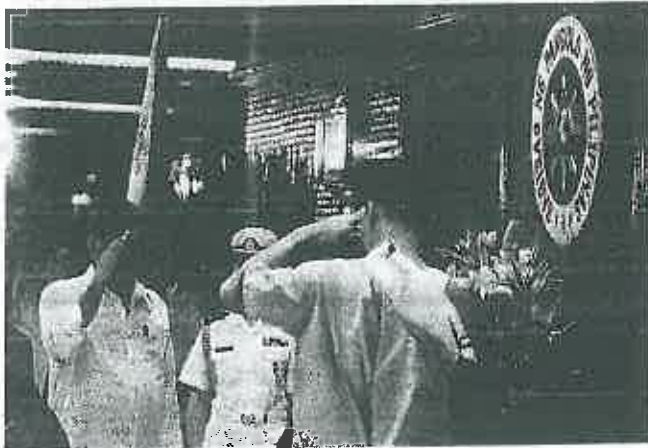


Photo by King Rodriguez/PPD



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War vets get P4.7B in benefits

By: Marlon Ramos

SURVIVING World War II veterans and their dependents have a billion reasons to smile. President Duterte on Monday ordered the release of P4.7 billion in unpaid benefits to war veterans and widows of soldiers who died defending the country from Japanese imperial forces.

It was a fitting tribute to the war veterans as the nation marked the annual National Heroes' Day.

The distribution of the cash benefits was earlier approved by then President Benigno Aquino III, but it was put on hold because of the election ban, according to Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana.

Mr. Duterte said part of the amount would be given to retired soldiers who were at least 80 years old. "It will be released as soon as possible," he said in a speech at a ceremony at Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig City.

He said P3.5 billion of the fund for the Total Administrative Liability (TAD) would be distributed to the veterans and widows while the remaining P1.2 billion would be intended for retired military officers.

"Be careful. If you are not loyal to your wife, she might be joining the widows (who will get) P3.5 billion. And if I were the wife, I would think again now. There's (money) waiting for me," Mr. Duterte said in jest.

The distribution of the cash benefits was stipulated under Republic Act No. 7696, which amended the law standardizing and upgrading the benefits for military veterans and their families.



President Rodrigo Duterte salutes before the tomb of the unknown soldier's monument during National Heroes Day rites at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Taguig City. **INQUIRER/ MARIANNE BERMUDEZ**

Mr. Duterte, the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, thanked Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Lorenzana for signing the joint implementing rules and regulations (IRR) for the distribution of the funds.

"I think he (Diokno) is the best ever budget secretary. And so publicly, I would like to thank you sir for accepting my offer to join the Cabinet. I really appreciate it very much," he said of Diokno.

As mandated by law, each beneficiary should receive P1,700 in monthly allowance upon reaching the age of 70 starting April 9, 1994.

However, many of the veterans had died before they were able to collect their TAD allowances.

In the joint IRR, all beneficiaries should receive the entire amount due them.

The Philippine Veterans' Affairs Office and the AFP were directed to process and facilitate the immediate distribution of the amount to all beneficiaries.

As of September 2015, there were 16,237 surviving spouses entitled to the TAD pension. **With a report from Inquirer Research**

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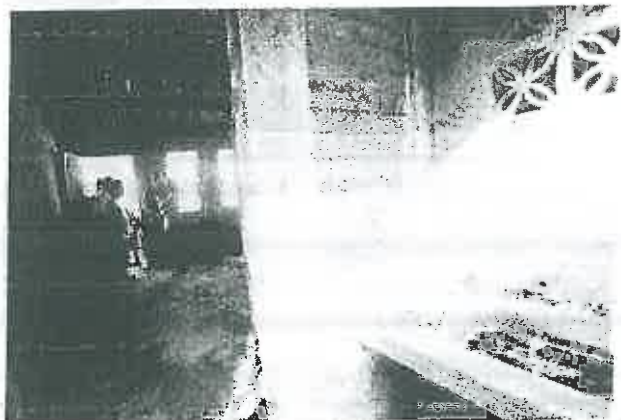
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80% of housing for military, police at Bulacan site left unoccupied

Patty Pasion

Only 800 out of 4,000 housing units for the military and the police in Bocaue, Bulacan are occupied. Residents also report problems with utilities at the housing site.



IDLE. Thousands of idle NHA houses were found in Bocaue, Bulacan. Photo from the Office of the Vice President

MANILA, Philippines – Thousands of housing units in Bocaue, Bulacan that were intended for police and military personnel were found to be idle.

During Vice President Leni Robredo's visit to the National Housing Authority (NHA) project for members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and Philippine National Police (PNP), she found that only 800 out of 4,000 units are occupied since most of the beneficiaries are on field assignments.

The housing facilities were built for soldiers and policemen earning lower salaries. (READ: Robredo: Gov't must build over 2,600 homes a day to beat backlog)

Robredo, who also chairs the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council (HUDCC), earlier mentioned that she found several housing projects for the PNP and the AFP that were not maximized like the ones in her home province, Camarines Sur.

Aside from unused units, occupants complained of the lack of utilities at the Bocaue site.

"This is just one of the areas I visited. And it seems the problems are all the same – lack of available jobs, poor utilities. The condition is very unfortunate," Robredo said.

The Vice President also relayed what one of the families told her during their consultation. "[Each] house costs P140,000 but there are a lot of problems like walls cracking so they spent 3 times more for the cost of repair," she said in Filipino.

Master plan

Robredo earlier ordered the inventory of necessary housing data for the HUDCC to craft a comprehensive housing plan in consultation with stakeholders such as private firms and marginalized sectors.

The HUDCC will conduct strategic planning on Thursday, September 1, with the goal of shifting its mindset from simply building homes to creating livable communities.

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Robredo, who has consulted with several communities and stakeholders in her two months in office, said they will use the feedback to create their master plan.

One key issue, said the housing chief, is the lack of jobs in resettlement areas, which are usually in provinces near Metro Manila.

Robredo said they will aim to make housing sites in-city so not to uproot people from their livelihood. But she is also looking into connecting the prospective occupants who are unemployed to the contractors of socialized housing projects, like in Thailand.

"Kaya iyong walang trabaho, puwedeng sila na ang workforce eh. Gaya ngayon, a few days ago kausap ko iyong asosasyon ng mga nasa socialized housing, sabi nila up daw ngayon iyong real estate business at kulang sila ng mga trabahador," the Vice President said.

(Those unemployed can be the workforce. A few days ago, I spoke with an association involved in socialized housing and they mentioned that the real estate business is booming and they need laborers.)

"Why not [source from] us, right? We have to do an inventory of skills. If the unemployed ones lack the skills, then they should be trained in that field," she added.

Robredo clarified that the proposed training would not entail additional budget for the HUDCC as she sees it as a partnership with other government agencies such as the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). – **Rappler.com**

www.interaksyon.com/national

Remains of two rescue chopper crash victims airlifted to Villamor Airbase

By: Richie Lopa, InterAksyon.com
August 30, 2016 2:18 PM



Capt. Mike Logronio, as a young man and later as an Air Force officer, backdropped by a Huey chopper, which he was skilled at flying. After a week of helping in a rescue operation at a collapsed tunnel in Quezon province, Logronio's chopper crashed, killing him and his aircraft mechanic. PHOTOS PROVIDED BY COL. EGAY MENDOZA

MANILA - The bodies of the two helicopter crash victims who died on a mercy mission in Quezon province was finally airlifted to Villamor Airbase Tuesday morning, three days after they were found in a mountainous area.

According to the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP), Capt. Miguel C. Logronio and his Aircraft Mechanic Engr. Jay Gregorio were airlifted by the 505th rescue group in a Sokol helicopter - an operation delayed for two days by bad weather.

The exact crash site is at Sitio Macua, Brgy. Kabayunan, Dona Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan near the boundary of Quezon province, according to rescuers on the ground from the 48th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army.

The helicopter, an AS350B2 type operated by Macroasia Air Taxi Services with registry number RP-C2688, had been engaged for a week in operations to extract miners from the Sumag diversion tunnel project by MWSS, when it crashed last Aug. 22.

The tunnel collapse happened Aug. 15 at the height of heavy, constant rains spawned by the southwest monsoon or habagat.

The weeklong rescue where Logronio and Gregorio figured had also been marred by constant rains; as had the efforts to find their chopper when it crashed; and to retrieve their bodies from the crash site.

The tunnel collapse survivors hailed Logronio's bravery and skills. He was remembered by former colleagues as among the best rescue helicopter pilots of the Air Force.

Fondly called Mike by his friends and batch mates at Fernando Airbase in Lipa City Batangas, Logronio was a retired Air Force Colonel.

Among his illustrious batch mates from PAF flying school Hinirang Class 1978 are (Ret.) Maj. Gen. Artemio
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Orozco and (Ret.) BGen. Egay C. Mendoza, who provided photos and anecdotes of Mike during his stints at the PAF.

Orozco, then a young Lieutenant, was part of the air force pilots who saw action in the 1986 People Power Revolution, while Mendoza, serves as the President and manager of Leading Edge Flight School based in Poro Point, San Fernando La Union, recalled that Capt. Mike was proficient in flying the Bell 214, 205 and UH-1H helicopters, and was assigned at the 505th strike wing, where he also piloted the P28 so-called "Tora Tora" aircraft for three years before his retirement.

They remembered an incident in the late 1980s when Col. Mike almost met his creator after his Bell 214 rotor got detached while flying, but he managed to maneuver toward a safe emergency landing.

Mendoza said that Mike was what they fondly called a "batang Nichols", a term used by PAF personnel for kids who grew up and studied inside the former Nichols air base, now Villamor Air Base.

The late Captain Mike Logronio is married to his wife Mel and blessed with three children: His eldest, Miguel Logronio Jr., a 2nd Lt. at the Philippine Army and member of PMA Class 2009, was a casualty in an ambush by NPAs in Bicol sometime May 2010. Another son Ony, the youngest, finish pilot training at Masters Flying School and now a pilot at Asian Aerospace. The second child, a daughter, is a registered nurse named Kat