



Serving the people. Securing the land.

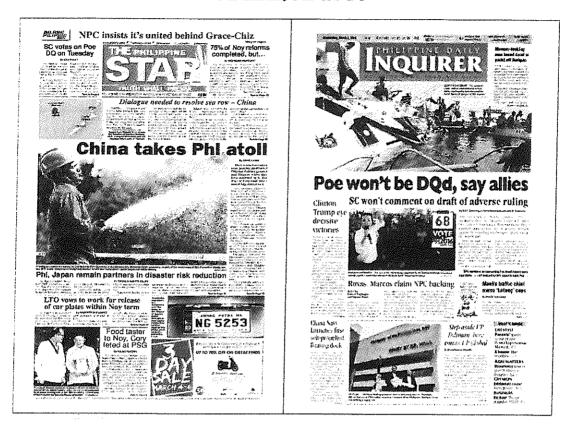
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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

02 March 2016

Wednesday

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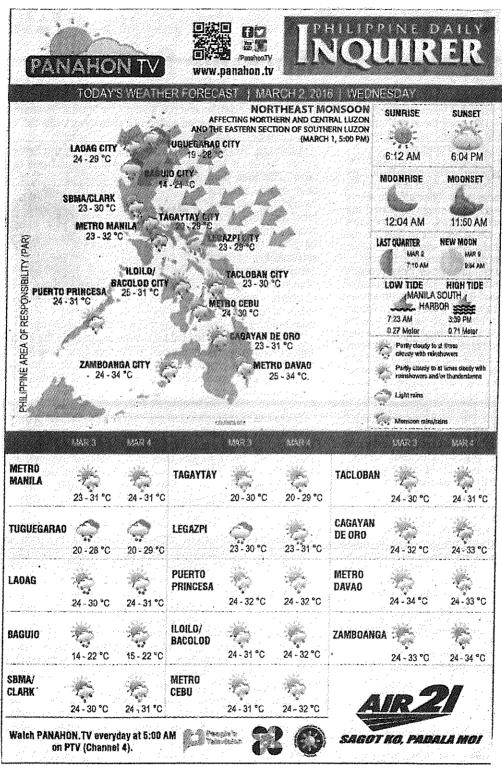
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75% of Noy reforms completed, but...

By RICHMOND MERCURIO

frastructure, creative industries, telecommunications and mining attention by the govtivities, foreign business groups in the Philip- kada Philippines. pines said yesterday.

The Joint Foreign

Agribusiness, in- Chambers (JFC), the largest coalition of foreign investors in the Philippines, made should be given greater the assessment based on recommendations ernment as part of its from local and foreign continuing reform ac- groups originally published in 2010 in Arang-

The JFC said it was Turn to Page 10

75% of Noy From Page 1

happy to report that nearly three fourths of the reforms pushed by business and investors groups in 2010 have been addressed by the government as of last year.

"The public sector is the enabler of job growth, while the private sector is the engine. The two must work in parallel for inclusive growth and job reation," the JFC said.

"The private sector is dong its share and is ready to lo more to improve inclusive growth through investing. Various firms generously support a wide range of socially esponsible and economically riented activities, especially in ducation, health, housing and lisaster relief and recovery," it idded.

The JFC lauded the naional government for major mprovements in the Philipine economy over the past ive years but said a number of binding constraints still renain which prevent the counry from achieving inclusive rowth.

The Arangkada assessment or 2015 showed 74.50 percent r 333 of the 462 recommendations are active and moving, an verall improvement from the 1.44 percent in the first assessment in 2011.

It was a slight improvement

happy to report that nearly from the 74.22 percent posted three fourths of the reforms in last year's assessment.

"There has been great progress, not enough, but great progress. Philippine economy is doing very well but it can do better," American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines senior advisor John Forbes said.

"A lot is continuing to progress. The economy is moving, these recommendations are being put into part but not 100 percent of what we originally suggested in 2010," he added

The Arangkada assessment 2015 identified the sectors of business process outsourcing, infrastructure, manufacturing and tourism as having benefited much from policy and economic reforms.

Arangkada Philippines is a major advocacy launched in 2010 by the JFC. It is funded by a \$1-million grant from the US Agency for International Development and is administered by the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, foreign business groups appeared unimpressed by the business platforms presented by representatives of presidential aspirants at yesterday's Arangkada Philippines forum. The

candidates did not show up and only sent their representatives.

Former finance secretary Gary Teves represented Jejomar Binay, vice presidential candidate Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano showed up for Mayor Rodrigo Duterte, Valenzuela Mayor Rex Gatchalian came for Sen. Grace Poe and Marikina Rep. Romero Quimbo represented Manuel Roxas II. Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago had no representative

"I was not satisfied with the answers the candidates gave as to addressing the vast array of the protectionist restrictions and regulations in the government and other regulatory agencies," Canaddian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines president Julian Payne said.

"We've heard what we wanted to hear. The issues have never changed, they remain the same. What I want to hear is how do we get there," said Ryan Evangelista, executive director of the Australia-New Zealand Chamber of Commerce in the Philippines.

The issues brought up by the candidates include pursuing economic growth, addressing corruption in the government, improving infrastructure and tax reforms.

"Reforms have begun. What we want to see is a continuation of the reforms done in recent years, even in the previous administration, and build on that. The country has great potential. We have many ideas. What we need is more rapid implementation," Forbes said.

The foreign chambers of commerce in the country are urging the next administration to initiate bolder measures to steer the Philippine economy to greater progress over the next decade.

"2016 is a crucial year for the Philippine economy. The results of the May elections will serve as an opportunity for newly elected leaders to build on the success of the Aquino administration but at the same time chart a long-term vision that cuts across the typical six-year planning cycle to adopt bolder reforms that will spur inclusive growth," the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines said.

"For the Philippines to make growth more inclusive, the incoming administration and future leaders should undertake reforms that sustain and increase GDP growth," it said

"This will require continued good governance, political will to undertake more structural reforms, better infrastructure, a fair regulatory regime and lower business costs, among others."

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SC votes on Poe DQ on Tuesday

By EDU PUNAY

The Supreme Court (SC) is set to rule next week on the disqualification case of Sen. Grace Poe in the presidential race

A court insider revealed the justices decided yesterday to deliberate on Poe's petition questioning her disqualification by the

Commission on Elections (Comelec) in their next regular session on March 8.

The source said the voting was set after the justice-in-charge submitted a draft decision, but the other magistrates asked for more time to come up with

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SC votes From Page 1

their respective concurring or on such contentious issue, the dissenting opinions.

"The draft decision was already circulated... (Justices) will vote next week," the source told The STAR in a text message.

The insider revealed the draft ruling upholds the Com-^lelec decision disqualifying Poe for material misrepresentation in her certificate of candidacy by claiming she had met the 10-year residency requirement before the May 9 elections.

It was also learned that the 'draft decision was silent on the issue of eligibility of Poe as a natural-born citizen for being a foundling.

The justice-in-charge believes the SC can resolve the case without the need to rule source pointed out.

The source, however, explained that other magistrates are expected to disagree with this opinion on the belief that the senator is eligible for the presidency and would meet the required residency.

The opinions due next Tuesday are also expected to differ on the issue of whether Poe is a natural-born citizen as a foundling

Since the high tribunal has not actually deliberated on the draft ruling yet, the insider reiterated there is no truth to reports that they have already voted 9-6 or 8-7 in favor of Poe.

Earlier, observers said among the probabilities is a "middle-ground ruling"

that would declare Poe as a natural-born citizen despite being a foundling but affirm her disqualification in the presidential race for lack of 10-year residency as required under the Constitution.

In that case, Poe would be able to run for president in the next general elections in 2022.

If a majority of the justices, however, decide to grant her petition on both citizenship and residency issues, there will be no more legal obstacles for Poe's presidential bid in May.

Chief Justice Ma. Lourdes Sereno, for her part, gave assurance the SC ruling on Poe's case would be released in due

"There will be no delay," Sereno told reporters following a business forum in Pasay City.

Sereno also vowed to vote based solely on the merits of

the case.

"I have never considered personal issues in deciding on cases," Sereno said.

Disinformation campaign

Poe and running mate Sen. Francis Escudero slammed the reports, saying there are efforts to preempt the SC in its decision.

Poe said she also wanted the cases resolved so she can determine her fate in the run for the presidency, but expressed confidence that she will not be disqualified.

Asked about reports of the SC decision, Poe said she and some of her colleagues have heard of various versions of the outcome or even drafts of the SC decision but nothing is final.

"There are others who said it was the decision but still there are others who differed in their opinions regarding this case. We should wait for the official ruling, "she said.

Escudero said there are apparent disinformation efforts aimed at ruining their campaign.

Escudero did not discount that some groups have resorted to conditioning the minds of the public.

He also thinks there are groups hoping to douse the support given by the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) for their tandem.

Sen. Vicente Sotto III also downplayed reports about the draft SC decision.

"I also saw another draft which says otherwise," he said.

Sotto said many NPC stalwarts have decided not to support any presidential candidate in case Poe is disqualified. But Sotto expressed belief that Poe will remain in the running

Senate President Franklin Drilon reiterated his call for the SC to expedite its decision on Poe's disqualification cases.

Drilon, also vice-chairman of the ruling Liberal Party backing the presidential bid of Manuel Roxas II, noted Poe has been vigorously campaigning despite the uncertainties.

Malacañang, for its part, kept its distance from the reports

"Out of respect for the SC's independence, we prefer to await its decision on Sen. Poe's qualifications and will therefore refrain from commenting on its deliberations and decision making processes," Secretary Herminio Coloma Jr. said.

- With Delon Porcalla, Christina Mendez, Sheila Crisostomo

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Beheading of Army corporal condemned

By ALI G. MACABALANG

OTABATO CITY – Moderate Muslims in Lanao del Sur have condemned the beheading of Army Corporal Engel Cubillas by a local terrorist group with Islamic State (IS) leanings, asserting that the extremists were wrong in applying "self translation" of the teachings of Qur'and the Prophet Mohammad.

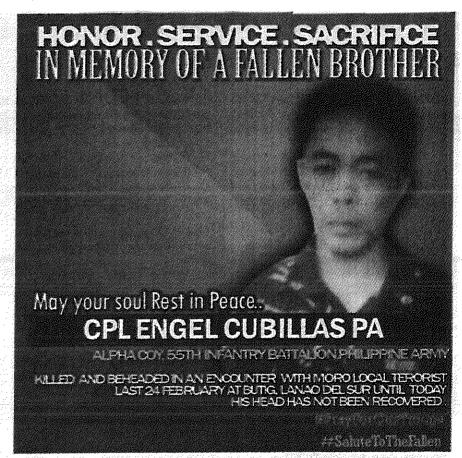
This was the sentiment of faculty members of the Mindanao State University (MSU) system, many of them converts to the Muslim religion, who also warned that "unless appropriate remedies are done, such heinous act will be repeated in the cycle of retaliation."

Their comments came as reports of Cubillas' beheading at the height of the encounter between the military and a terrorist group with links to IS in Butig, Lanao del Sur

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) had earlier claimed that its troops had overran a camp maintained by the jihadist group in Barangay Poktan, and was ready to return control of the area to the municipal government.

But as this developed, comrades, family members and friends of Cubillas have made an appeal on social media, asking for the return of the soldier's decapitated head.

In the Facebook page of #Salute to the Fallen, Cubillas was remembered for his "honor, service and sacrifice" even as it also confirmed that the Army corporal was "killed and beheaded" last February 24 in Butig, Lanao del Sur.



APPEAL – This poignant poster that has been posted on the Facebook page of #SaluteToTheFallen confirms the grim fate that befell on Army Corporal Engel Cubillas at the height of the encounter between the military and a local terrorist group in Butig, Lanao del Sur.

"Until today, his head has not been recovered," a poster that was posted on the FB page said.

But a Maranao Islamic cleric downplayed the military's triumph in Butig. "As usual the military option (in Butig) displaced thousands of civilians and caused deaths in both rebel and government sides...But the capture of

the IS camp did not mean the government won the war," Ustaz Hamid Tampi told the Bulletin in the vernacular over the phone.

Like Ustaz Tampi, Maranao members of the Mindanao People's Caucus, said the government should initiate a cohesive campaign on the "true meaning of Islam" because the "wrong ideology already implanted among some Muslim youth by the Maute brothers and their cohorts can never be suppressed through the barrels of gun."

In separate phone interview, Lanao del Sur Gov Mamintal Bombit Jr. said he would ask his pool of technical advisers to immediately set up a series of dialogs with Arabic schools (madaris) operators in his province for the implementation of "corrective" measures in their academic curricula.

The ideological campaign will form part of government long-term activities, Adiong said, explaining that his field workers embarked on full-scale dispersal of relief aids to affected residents, burial of fatalities, freatment of injured victims and other rehabilitative actions in Butig

Local relief workers have already served more than 4,000 evacuees sheltered in different places, the governor said, correcting TV news reports that over 40,000 people had fled Butig. The town has only 22,456 total population.

Lanao-based peace and rights groups were also validating claims by military and rebel camps that each side had killed more than 50 enemies, saying that "propagandizing deaths" would only promote public outrage.

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Army hoists RP flag over ex-terrorist lair

By Mario J. Mallari

After weeks of massive military operation, the Army yesterday raised the Philippine flag at a former terrorist lair in Lanao del Sur where two barangays previously considered as strongholds of Omar Maute's terror group were turned over back to local government officials.

Maj. Filemon Tan Jr., spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom), said that Maj. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos led the military officers attended the joint flagraising ceremony at the former

houses and bunkers of Maute.

At the same time, Tan said that symbolic turnover of barangays Poctan and Ragayan both in Butig town to local government officials was held.

Also present during the ceremony was Butig Mayor Ibrahim Macadatu and representatives of Lanao del Sur provincial government, police and local and national media practitioners.

Tan said than Barrientos cited the role of local government officials in addressing the threat posed by Maute's group which attacked a military detachment last Feb. 20 - triggering weeks of intense clashes that resulted in dozens of terrorists killed, including Maute and Indonesian Mohammad Muktar.

Barrientos also attributed the successful operation to the use of the full military might made available to the 1st ID by higher authorities.

The military deployed OV10 Bronco bomber planes, MG520 attack helicopters and armored assets that bombarded enemy positions and allowed ground troops to push the terrorists out of their lairs.

"The use of full military might

led to the immediate neutralization of the threat," Tan, quoted Barrientos as saying.

Relatedly, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expressed concern over the safety of civilians in Central Mindanao due to the conflict.

"We are worried about the fate of civilians caught in the fighting. We call on all parties to the conflict to strictly abide by international humanitarian law (IHL)," said Dominic Earnshaw, head of the ICRC office in Cotabato.

"In particular, we remind them that they should take all measures to avoid indiscriminate attacks that may harm civilians. We are deeply alarmed by incidents involving roadside explosive devices that have resulted in injuries and deaths."

To help treat all weaponwounded - without any distinction - the ICRC donated emergency kits and medicines to health facilities in Maguindanao, Cotabato City and Sultan Kudarat.

A field assessment conducted by an ICRC team on 24 February showed that the displaced population in Maguindanao and North' Cotabato have already benefitted from initial assistance provided by the local authorities. "The ICRC will continue to monitor the situation of the affected population in order to identify any gaps in humanitarian assistance, in coordination with the authorities and the Philippine Red Cross," Earnshaw added.

In addition, armed clashes erupted in Butig, Lanao del Sur, in last week.

Some residents had to leave their homes to avoid being caught in the fighting. The ICRC is closely following the situation, including the humanitarian consequences of these incidents. It stands ready to provide assistance to the affected population if needs are identified.

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Soldiers, NPA clash; 2 hurt

By LIEZLE BASA IÑIGO

AN MARIANO, Isabela — Two army troopers were wounded in action following an encounter with New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Barangay Tappa, San Mariano town, this province, early yesterday morning.

Initial reports reaching the Isabela Police Provincial Office (PPO) said the clash broke out around 4:30 a.m.

The PPO said a 1st Lieutenant Alog and a Private First Class Abing Binuya were both slightly wounded and had sustained either a fractured left arm or left leg.

Moreover, the army side lost five backpacks with issued items such as tactical maps and a Yukon tracker (night vision binoculars), the PPO said.

The gun battle ended in the retreat of the undetermined number of rebels in the north and northwest direction, police said.

As of press time yesterday afternoon, government security forces have been deployed to go after the NPA rebels while the wounded troopers were recuperating at an undisclosed hospital.

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Quezon bets turn to Army for protection

LUCENA CITY—Several local candidates in Quezon province have turned to the military for protection as they continue to receive demands from communist rebels asking them to pay permit to campaign (PTC) fees in guerrilla-controlled areas, an Army official said.

"We are now receiving queries from some candidates on how we can protect them during the campaign. They don't want to pay PTC fees anymore," said Brig. Gen. Rhoderick Parayno, commander of the Army's 201st Infantry Brigade based in Calauag town.

Parayrro said they expected more politicians to seek their help in the run-up to the start of the campaign period on March 25.

The military's information was confirmed by two local candidates in the Bondoc Peninsula (third congressional district) and Lamon Bay (fourth congressional district) areas. These candidates had paid PTC fees to members of the New People's Army (NPA) in previous elections.

"I've already received a demand letter asking me to pay. But I'm not sure if I'm dealing with a real NPA emissary. Besides, my fund is too tight; I will not pay them this time," said one of the politicians who asked

not to be named for security reason.

The candidates said they have no idea what kind of security measures they will get from the police and military during the campaign.

"I don't want to jeopardize the safety of my campaign workers. They are also afraid that they would be caught in the crossfire," said the other candidate.

Parayno clarified the military would not give candidates individual security escorts. Soldiers, he said, would only clear the campaign site of any threat from communist rebels or other armed groups.

"The general guidance is we won't be acting as bodyguards or personal security [aides]. But if our assessment [shows] there is clearly a threat, we can coordinate with the police and be ready... just in case," he said

Lt. Col. Angelo Guzman, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Command (Solcom), said some politicians in Occidental Mindoro and Camarines Norte provinces have approached military officials to arrange security measures during the campaign.

Guzman said the Bicol candidates sought their help as they cited how the security arrangement provided by government forces to public works projects in the area worked.

Lt. Gen. Ricardo Visaya, Solcom commander, reiterated his call to all candidates not to give in to the rebels' demand.

"There is no more reason to be afraid of

the NPA," he said in an earlier interview.

Parayno reminded candidates who would pay PTC fees that NPA rebels would return to ask for more concessions once they win.

"It is a continuous cycle of extortion," he said.

In past elections, rebels sought from candidates not only cash but goods like rice, other foodstuff, medicine, communication equipment and even mobile phone load credits, military and local officials said.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Leyte now has 16 rebel-free towns – Army

By FELIX N. CODILLA III

ORMOC CITY, Leyte – The neighboring town of Kananga has been declared insurgency-free after the Philippine Army (PA)'s 19th Infantry Battalion (IB) and the municipal government declared this former stronghold of the New People's Army in northern Leyte a Stable and Internal Peace and Security Area last Monday, Feb. 29.

Kananga is the 16th town declared insurgency-free in Leyte. Other towns in the province similarly given Stable Internal Peace and Security status are Matag-ob, Palompon, Tabango, Barugo, Babatngon, San Miguel, Leyte, Pastrana, Tolosa, Dagami, Calubian, Sta. Fe, Alangalang and Tunga.

The joint declaration according rebel-free status on Kananga was

pursued upon the recommendation of 19th IB and subsequent legislation by the 20th Sangguniang Bayan through Resolution No. 20R-14-791.

Ormoc City Mayor Elmer C. Codilla considers the declaration an achievement, citing his administration's capability to address the needs of his constituents as a key factor in attaining the town's current state.

For his part, Col. Francisco Mendoza Jr., Commander of the PA's 802nd Infantry Brigade is optimistic that the declaration would attract investors to Kananga.

He added that the declaration is a clear indication that there is development going on in Kananga. Still, Mendoza said, despite the prevalence of peace in the town, he vowed that the authorities will not stop working to maintain stability in the area.

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Civilian casualties feared in fight vs terror group

COTABATO CITY—The International Committee on the Red Cross (ICRC) has expressed concern over the displacement of civilians by renewed hostilities in Mindanao.

The ICRC said "clashes between government security forces and armed groups in the Maguindanao province of Mindanao have continued into [their] fourth week, causing displacement and casualties."

"We are worried about the fate of civilians caught in the fighting," said Dominic Earnshaw, head of the ICRC office in Cotabato.

"We call on all parties to the conflict to strictly abide by the international humanitarian law," he said.

The ICRC issued the statement of concern amid armed conflict resurging in a number of villages in the Maguindanao towns of Datu Saudi-Ampatu-



HUEY helicopters disgorge more soldiers in Lumbatan town, Lanao del Sur province, as fighting between armed groups—supposedly belonging to the terrorist network Islamic State of Iraq and Syria—continues to rage in the province and other parts of Mindanao.

RICHELY UMEL/ INQUIRER MINDANAO

an, Datu Salibo, Shariff Saydona Mustapha, Shariff Aguak and Mamasapano.

At least 20,000 residents have also fled Butig in Lanao del Sur province to seek shelter in nearby towns amid clashes and intense artillery fire as military operations against the socalled Maute extremist group continued.

The international humanitar-

ian organization said it was also closely following the situation in Butig, including the humanitarian consequences of the fighting.

On Wednesday, outgoing

Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr. convened the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council into a Provincial Crisis Management Committee, to ensure the safety of civilians fleeing the sites of gunfights and the prompt distribution of relief to evacuees.

Earnshaw said he was appealing to soldiers and armed extremists to "avoid indiscriminate attacks that may harm civilians."

"We are deeply alarmed by incidents involving roadside explosive devices that have resulted in injuries and deaths," Earnshaw said.

"The ICRC will continue to monitor the situation of the affected population in order to identify any gaps in humanitarian assistance, in coordination with authorities and the Philippine Red Cross," Earnshaw said. Nash Maulana, Inquirer Mindanao

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en gather,

'We don't

want them

in our

place...

KIDAPAWAN CITY—At least 500 members of two militias being accused of attacks on "lumad" communities in several provinces in Mindanao converged in North Cotabato province over the weekend amid the military's continued denial of the militias' existence.

Datu Alim Bandara, a top leader of one of the militias that calls itself Alamara, said those who attended the gathering are tribal warriors and leaders from North Cotabato and two other provinces—Bukidnon and ' Davao del Norte.

Bandara, who is based in North Cotabato, said the gathering on Saturday, held in Barangay Kibia in Matalam town, was organized to enable the tribal warriors and leaders to renew

their loyalty to the armed tribal converted into agricultural groups that had sworn to defend ancestral domain.

"We will fight any armed group that wants to take away from us our ancestral domain lands," said Bandara.

"We will use our traditional arms to ensure the protection of our tribes," he said.

Bandara said at least 102 ancestral domain areas in Mindanao had already been occupied by the New People's Army (NPA) and the rebels are also using the lumad in their fight against the government.

He said the Alamara and another tribal militia, Bagani, will work hard to prevent the rebels from encroaching on more ar-

"We don't want them in our place," he said.

Bandara, who spoke on behalf of the armed tribal groups, said some villages in the towns of Matalam, President Roxas, Arakan and Magpet in North Cotabato are in danger of being influenced by the NPA and the tribal militias want to stop it by fighting the rebels.

He said Alamara and Bagani warriors might not have powerful weapons against the rebels but they have spears, machetes, bows and arrows.

"We will defend our territory using traditional arms and with the blessing of our (deities)," Bandara said.

He said the tribal warriors could not just sit down and watch their ancestral domains fall into the hands of rebels and other groups, such as those, wanting the lumad out so that their lands can be

plantations.

Militants and human rights groups have blamed the Alamara and the Bagani for killings and increasing violence in indigenous peoples communities in several areas in Mindanao.

The human rights group Karapatan said the tribal warriors, which are being backed by the military, are responsible for killings occurring in tribal communities, such as the Sept. 1 murders of Emerito Samarca, director of an alternative school in Surigao del Sur province, and two others.

The military has consistently denied the existence of the tribal armed groups, which are known for their counterinsur-Williamor and. gency advocacy. Inquirer Min-Magbanua, danao

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PH, Japan seal military supply pact

By ROY C. MABASA

The Philippines and Japan have brought their security and political ties to new levels by signing an accord that will allow Tokyo to supply military equipment to Manila.

This is the first such defense pact that the Japanese government has entered into with a country which is also embroiled in a heated territorial dispute with China in the region.

Both the Philippines and Japan have existing territorial disputes with China – the former over the West Philippine Sea/South China Sea, while the latter over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.

According to the Japanese Embassy in Manila, Japanese Ambassador to Manila Kazuhide Ishikawa signed the agreement concerning the transfer of defense equipment and technology in behalf of Japan just the other day while Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin represented the Philippine government.

The Japanese embassy said the agreement establishes the legal framework for Japan and the Philippines to participate in the joint research, development, and production of defense equipment and technology, and for the handling of defense equipment and technology to be transferred between the two countries in order to enhance cooperation between the two countries in the areas of security and defense.

Specifically, the embassy said in addition to stipulating the procedures that determine the relevant transfers, this agreement establishes a joint committee as the organ for approving the defense equipment and technology to be transferred for the projects in the said pact. It also stipulates the regulations for the use of the transferred defense equipment and technology.

It noted that the conclusion of the agreement ensures appropriate control regarding the transfers to third parties and for extra-purpose use against the joint development and production of defense equipment and technology which Japan and the Philippines participate in, or the transfers of defense equipment and technology between the two allies to enhance their cooperation in the areas of security and defense.

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PAF to acquire long-range aircraft

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Philippine Air Force (PAF) is planning to acquire two Long Range Patrol Aircraft (LRPA) to boost its air defense capabilities

Air Force spokesman Col. Enrico Canaya made the disclosure after the government recently announced the bidding for two LRPA for P5.97 billion.

Canaya said the possibility of acquiring these military assets was a welcome development because it could help the PAF perform patrols in the country's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

"Iyung ganitong klaseng aircraft kasi we can perform maritime patrol just like any other country schedule their maritime patrol sa mga Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)," Canaya said.

"This type of aircraft has a longer endurance so this provide us our eyes and ears in the EEZ area, all around," he said.

At present, Canaya said the PAF was only using a C-130 aircraft, a Fokker plane, Nomad plane and S-11 fighter planes for its patrol operations.

"Kung minsan C-130 pero secondary role lang. Ginagamit din natin ang Fokker or even iyung Nomad plane," he said.

Canaya said having the new LRPAs will ensure that it won't sacrifice the primary mission of three of its C-130 to transport troops and cargo.

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Rougas

Page: Alo

Pension elusive for Aeta guerrillas

By Tonette Orejas Bamban, Tarlac

ADNESS, if it can be weighed, was heavy when Emiliano Sanchez spoke of a military pension he has yet to receive or enjoy. Considered to be one of the last three survivors in Aeta Squadron 30 based in Bamban town in Tarlac province, Sanchez said in Kapampangan, "Money has not been released."

Sanchez said he wanted the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) to recognize him, his brother-in-law Roman Sanchez (Pan Paruman) and Mario Pamintuan (Pan Tulandit) as guerrillas who served in the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) during World War II, and to grant them pensions.

Their names appeared in the roster of the all-Aeta squadron, a list obtained from the US National Archives, according to Rhonie de la Cruz, founder and president of the Bamban Historical Society (BHS).

Professor Joel Regala of Holy Angel University in Angeles City called attention to the plight of the three men who spoke of their status in the course of a history research he has been conducting.

According to De la Cruz, the Aeta Squadron 30 consisted of more than 100 Aetas organized by Capt. Alfred Bruce in the subvillage of Mataba in Barangay Sto. Niño, Bamban, as well as in Flora and Kalangitan at the boundary of Bamban and Capas immediately after the fall of Bataan on April 9, 1942.

Bruce, a member of the Philippine Scouts based in nearby Fort Stotsenburg, the precursor of Clark Air Base, took orders from Lt. Col. Claude Thorpe of the 26th Cavalry, which was based at the fort before the war.

Bruce also led the Bamban Battalion, Capas Battalion, O' Donnell Regiment and Aeta guerrillas in the Capas-based Binyayan Company that were all under Thorpe's command in the Luzon Guerrilla Force that countered the Japanese Kembu group, De la Cruz said.

Bruce had command of the South Tarlac Military District, expanding this to the whole of Tarlac after the Japanese captured and killed Thorpe later in 1942.

Emiliano and Roman Sanchez could only say they are in their 90s now. They do not know the exact date of their birth, saying they were young men when Manuel L. Quezon was the Commonwealth President. They refer to that period as "peacetime."

Claims denied

Jet Fajardo-Rivera, deputy chief of PVAO's veterans records management division, said the claims of Emiliano and Roman Sanchez had been denied because they failed to establish their identities.

.9555 Local: 5285, 5295

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF.



3T. ALFRED D. BRUCE (center) being interviewed by an American telligence officer. On the right are two naval aviators who were rescued Aeta Squadron 30 after they were shot down over Clark Field.

"Their submitted documents ere analyzed and matched ith the military service records e have obtained from the [Ofce of the Adjutant General]. It's ue there were Pan Paruman id Emiliano Sanchez who rved under Bruce guerrillas it it was established that those policants were not the same ho owned the records," Rivera ld the Inourrem on Monday.

In particular, Rivera said the umbprints of the two Aetas ere "not identical" with those nerated in 1946 by a summacourt officer who was designted by the Philippine Army to epare and submit the service cords of Filipino guerrillas.

The thumbprints and service cords had presumption of gularity she assured.

It was not known how many Aeta guerrillas in Central Luzon or members of the Aeta Squadron 30 had received pensions. This was because veterans were not classified by tribes or linguistic groups.

The two Aetas have not appealed their cases with the PVAO, Rivera said, adding that no persons have collected pensions through their names or on their behalf.

Emiliano and Roman Sanchez said they were recruited by Pedro Margarito, Emiliano's uncle who worked as guide to cabalyerya (American troops on horses) who carved paths to a camp in O' Donnell in Capas.

"We took care of Bruce," Emiliano said, adding they secured the American and his compatriots in his headquarters in a cave in Bagingan in upper Mataba.

The Japanese failed to locate them even when the Allied Forces recaptured the Philippines in October 1944.

"We also planted rice, yam and sweet potato to sustain Bruce and other fighters," Emiliano said. "When supply ran out, we raided the *sentral* for rice," Roman said, referring to a granary of the Cojuangeo family in Bamban.

Emiliano said he also guarded the path leading to the Bagingan cave, instilling discipline among Aetas who he prohibited from making bonfire to prevent being detected by the Japanese.

Roman, who is blind now, said the squadron rescued a number of US pilots whose aircraft were downed by Japanese bombers.

Sense of smell

American guerrillas used the Aetas' strong sense of smell to locate Japanese, Emiliano said, laughing.

Without boasting, they recalled having poisoned around 50 Japanese soldiers who ate bule (red beans). Dead or immobilized, the Japanese were disarmed, their guns snatched.

Emiliano and Roman said they were among the squadron members who marched one night to secure Bruce's transfer to Barangay Patling in Capas where American soldiers gathered days before the eventual return of Allied Forces.

"Before he left, Captain Bruce told us we would get benefits," Roman said. In mopping-up operations of Allied Forces, he said their squadron pursued Japanese stragglers who dug hideouts in Bamban mountains

They had not seen Bruce or heard from him again after they last saw him at the old house of the Aquinos in Concepcion town. They said it was in 1995, or four years after Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions, that Baptist pastors began helping Aeta guerrillas claim recognition and pension.

Although their clan has asserted ownership over large tracts of ancestral domain, Emiliano and Roman consider themselves poor and find the process of following up with the PVAO to be costly.

Neglect

De la Cruz said the plight of the three Aetas brings to fore not only the contribution of these indigenous peoples in the struggle against colonial rule but also the neglect of Aetas who fought in the war.

"They did not know how to write. They do not have birth certificates or *cedula* as proof of their existence. They live far up in the mountains. These must be the reasons for their difficulties in filing claims for pension," he said.

The BHS has no registry of Aeta pensioners among recognized guerrillas in Tarlac.

Emiliano and Roman said they wanted to get pension so they could buy some work animals and farm tools for their children to make the *lutan tua* (ancestral lands) productive.

"There is no anger in us in spite of the neglect. God will take care of us," Roman said.

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House seeks free legal aid for soldiers, cops

The House of Representatives is recommending free legal aid for soldiers and policemen who are facing criminal or administrative charges for doing their jobs.

In a bill passed this week, the chamber wanted to have each soldier or policeman entitled to free legal assistance whenever they are sued in cases that have something to do with the performance of their duties

Camarines Sur Rep. Felix William Fuentebella, the bill's principal author, argued that most of

these people could not afford to pay for their own lawyers and many end up in jail or are dismissed from the service.

This is aside from the baseless charges that are meant to harass them from doing their functions well.

His measure was co-authored by Representatives Niel Tupas Jr. of Iloilo, Jose Christopher Belmonte of Quezon City, George Arnaiz of Negros Oriental, Silvestre Bello III of party-list 1-BAP

and Lino Cayetano of Taguig City.

The Fuentebella bill provides that within 24 hours from the official receipt of the information, the AFP chief of staff, National Police Commission (Napolcom) chairperson or the Philippine National Police (PNP) director would authorize any lawyer or lawyers of their respective agencies to defend the accused. The Public Attorney's Office (PAO) is also mandated to assist the lawyers.

The PAO, AFP, Napolcom and PNP are tasked to draw the implementing rules and regulations.

62 March 2016



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Duterte bucks Edca, but is willing to honor it

By Niña P. Calleja

SHOULD he be elected president, expect Rodrigo Duterte's foreign policy to be critical, if not lukewarm, toward the United States.

Speaking for the Davao City mayor, his running mate Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano voiced Duterte's position on the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (Edca), the 10-year military agreement with the United States that was ruled constitutional by the Supreme Court.

Addressing the Joint Foreign Chambers of the Philippines at its annual business forum dubbed "Arangkada" on Tuesday, Cayetano said Edca does not assure that the United States will defend the Philippines from China in a confrontation in the South China Sea.

Edca allows US troops to rotate through the country and grants them access to Philippine military bases. In return, the United States is to help modernize the Philippines' armed forces and build up its military infrastructure and facilities.

The agreement has been challenged by Filipino left-wing groups who fear the return of American bases to the country.

"The Americans has known about intrusions by the Chinese into the West Philippine Sea [South China Sea], but they only talked about it in the last few years," Cayetano said.

He noted that US President Barack Obama during his state visit to the Philippines in 2014 gave a "generic" response to the question of whether the United States would come to the defense of the Philippines against China.

Obama—just after he had said in Japan that the United States would stand by the Japanese in defending their territory in the East China Sea against China—did not make a categorical statement with regard to the Philippines, Cayetano said.

"We gave Edca for free," Cayetano said, noting that when it was signed by both countries, compensation for the use of Philippine military bases was not guaranteed.

Nevertheless, Cayetano said, Duterte would still want to continue with Edca but "from a position of strength."

"We will be decisive. And in the planning itself, we will know what equipment and technology will given or loaned to us," Cayetano said.

He said Duterte capitalizes on self-sufficiency.

"Even if the United States is our friend and ally, we won't depend on them completely," he said.

Cayetano said the Philippines must weigh its national interest and align itself with the United States only if "the US' national interest aligns with ours."

In previous speeches and interviews, Duterte expressed his willingness to set aside the Philippines' claims in the South China Sea if China helps the country build a railway system.

He said earlier he was open to entering into a joint exploration partnership with China for oil and gas in the West Philippine Sea provided that China dropped its sea claims.

Ay March 2016



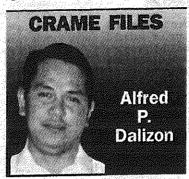
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More on PMA Class 1986

MANY friends not only thanked me for writing an article on the role played by members of Philippine Military Academy 'Sinagtala' Class of 1986 during the EDSA People Power Revolution 30 years ago but they gave me more untold stories about the Class, the first to graduate from Fort del Pilar after the Marcos presidency was over and the first batch of newly-minted Armed Forces 2nd Lieutenants to serve the Corazon Aquino administration.

Two weeks ago, members of the Class returned to the Borromeo Field 30 years after graduating, or 34 years after entering the Academy to be exact. One of them, however, did not march and simply smiled from the grandstand as his mistahs waved to him. He's a good friend, Senior Superintendent Eleuterio 'Gutzie' Gutierrez, a lawyer-Singtala member whose brilliant career was put to a halt by a bullet in Parañaque City in 2008.

Yes, 'Gutzie' or 'Gute' to many was the Highway Patrol Group Task Force Limbas commander who survived a bullet that struck his brain during that infamous gun battle that left 16 persons dead, 12 of them armed criminals who have sown terror in Metro Manila during those days before their hideout was located by the police. Gute could have been a one-star police general today or commander of a major PNP unit had he not been paralyzed in that gunbattle, a living proof that many of our po-



licemen are always ready to sacrifice even their lives and limbs just to keep the streets safe.

As I have mentioned before, the PMA Sinagtala or light from above Class of 1986 planned to join rebel troops in EDSA in February 1986 only to be prevailed by then PC/INP chief, Lieutenant General Fidel V. Ramos to stay and protect the sacred grounds of the Academy. Instread of marching to Manila with their issued M-14 and M-16 rifles and a handful of security ammunition to join the rebel forces, the graduating cadets were told by FVR to just stay and protect Fort del Pilar.

Many members of the Class told me that during those days, they were relying on the radio to monitor the development in Manila. One said that when Ramos and then Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile announced their defection from the Marcos government, the majority sentiment was to join the defectors. Armed with their PMA-issued weapons and very little ammunition, the Cadets planned to travel to Manila despite the danger of being intercepted by loyalist troops.

They knew they would be intercepted by Marine troops based in Tarlac and they will be no match to the Marines who were armed with tanks and heavy artillery then but they are ready to go ahead with their plan until they were told to stay put and defend Fort del Pilar. As they always say, the rest is history.

Atpresent, there are 15 PMA Class 1986 members who are now PNP one-star generals and three more are set to get their star-rank very soon. Four others are now Army Brigadier Generals, five are Air Force Brigadier Generals, four are Navy star-officers and another is a star-rank Coast Guard official.

After graduation from the Academy, 50 members of PMA Class 1986 out of the 174 total joined the PC/INP and 36 later joined the PNP in 1991.

Members of the Class graduated on March 22, 1986, nearly four weeks after the bloodless EDSA revolution. The PMA superintendent then was Gen. Rodolfo Biazon, an officer who would later become an Armed Forces chief and later a Senator of the Republic and Muntinlupa representative. A member of the Class said

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that March 22, 1986 was also the first engagement of President Corazon Aquino after her different Metro Manila sorties.

"It was also the first time that demonstrators were allowed to enter the Borromeo Field which is sacred to us. It surprised us since we can only pass thru the side of the Borromeo Field and cant' cross it but anyway, that took place while the whole country was still in euphoria," the official told me over a cup of coffee. He said that security at Fort del Pilar then was not that tight since 'everybody loves Cory then.' The following year, a bomb exploded at the PMA grandstand badly injuring some officials including a PMA Class 1979 member in what was described as part of a plot to destabilize the Aquino government.

Another official said that when Mrs. Aquino attended their graduation in 1986, the ceremony was over at 11:30 in the morning or just a little eight hours after they woke up and wore their cadet uniforms for the last time. Unknown to many, members of the Sinagtala Class made history in Fort del Pilar when they 'walked out' of their class during their 2nd year.

I was told that the 'walkout' was triggered by a PMA decision to expel seven of their classmates for hazing. It turned out that three of the seven were charged for countenancing the hazing act of their mistahs and thus were held equally liable along with the four others. The rest of the Class came in defense of the three and wrote a letter to the PMA superintendent which did not reach his office.

After their pleas went unheard, the Class stormed out of Fort del Pilar in protest of the perceived harsh decision on their other mistahs. They returned only after some 'negotiations' with the PMA leadership but were made to face the consequences of their actions including 'touring' the Academy. I still have to learn what happened to the rest of the students that time particularly those from PMA Classes 1983, 1984 and 1985?

Two weeks ago, six members of the Class took their oath as new PNP one-star generals. They are Chief Superintendents Valfrie Tabian, Edwin Roque, Lyndon Cubos, Oscar Albayalde, Roel Obusan and Ronald de la Rosa. Other Chief Superintendents from the same class are my neighbor Melvin Buenafe, Archie Gamboa, Ted Carranza, Jojo Mendez, Elmo Sarona, Ding Acio, Eddie Benigay, Joevic Ramos and Noel Baraceros. Waiting for promotion

are Senior Superintendents Ely Rasco, Doy Trampe, Pikoy Cascolan, Tony Gardiola, Mariel Magaway, Chen Purugganan, Amador Corpus, Noli Romana, Aaron Aquino, Egay Gonzales, Joel Garcia and Ato Angara

CONGRATULATIONS TO NEW PMA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

I would like to congratulate the new set of officers of the influential Philippine Military Academy Alumni Association, Inc. or PMAAAI led by good friend, retired Deputy Director General Jun Avenido of PMA Class 1967 who assumed their posts effective yesterday.

Avenido, a former PNP deputy chief for administration who went on to become a Director General of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency was elected as Chairman of the Board of the PMAAAI for 2016-2017.

Other officials are retired Major General Mel Rosales of PMA Class 1968 as Vice-Chairman; Navy Captain Erick Kagaoan of PMA Class 1987 as President; Senior Supt Bong Leuterio of PMA Class 1988 as Vice-President; Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Consuelo Castillo of PMA Class 1997 as Corporate Secretary; Army Colonel Eliezer Galam of PMA Class 1987 as Treasurer; and retired Navy Rear Admiral Rodolfo Rabago of PMA Class 1968 as Corporate Auditor.

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ONLINE NEWS

02 MARCH 2016

www.philstar.com

Philippine assault seizes terrorist lair, kills 24 militants

(Associated Press) | Updated March 1, 2016 - 8:36pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine military says a major offensive has killed 24 suspected local sympathizers of the Islamic State group and captured their remote southern stronghold, where troops raised the national flag.

Armed Forces of the Philippines spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla says six military personnel were killed and a dozen wounded in the operation. About 2,000 troops took part in the weeklong campaign in Butig town in Lanao del Sur province.

Padilla said Tuesday that army generals turned over control of the captured militant stronghold to the Butig town mayor after the flag-raising, which was held near where leaders of the extremist group identified as Omar and Abdullah Maute used to live.

Padilla said the military offensive, which was supported by the provincial government, helped stop "the spread of extremism."

www.inquirer.net/

Army regains control of Lanao Sur town, drives away ISIS-inspired group

By: <u>Jeoffrey Maitem</u> @inquirerdotnet Inquirer Mindanao

07:10 PM March 1st, 2016

BUTIG, Lanao del Sur — Government security forces on Tuesday regained full control of this town following the capture of three major strongholds of a local terror group said to be inspired by the Islamic State.

The 10-day operation left 24 armed men and three soldiers dead. (An earlier death toll placed the number of soldiers dead at five.) At least 5,000 families were also displaced.

Houses, school buildings, government offices and small business establishments were destroyed in the fierce battle since February 20.

Brig. Gen. Gerardo Barrientos, 1st Army Division chief, led his men in a flag raising ceremony in one of the three strongholds of the Maute group, where the houses of group leaders Omar and Abdullah Maute were also burned and destroyed.

"This is my message to them. Never challenge the legitimacy or the rule of law in this part of the region because you will suffer from the forces of the armed forces," Barrientos said before his men and local officials.

"We will not hesitate to use the full force of the army once challenge by any other non law abiding people," he added.

The group led an attack on the detachment of the 51st Infantry Battalion in Barangay Bayabao on Feb. 20, killing two soldiers and wounding six others.

The military immediately pursued the group, which reportedly included minors as nembers. "This day is historic for all of us because what of our troops did. From February 20, we resolved the crisis in the fastest possible time," the military official said.

Barrientos said the first stronghold, located in the village of Ragayan, had state-funded school facilities and a three-story building – which served as an observation point used by about 30 snipers.

He said the second territory, surrounded by trenches and situated in the nearby village of Puktan, was used as center of the militants' events.

"It is where one of the houses of Maute leader was located," he said.

Barrientos said the last camp was where Omar and Abdullah stayed.

"We will continue to run after them so the people of Butig will have peace. They still have capabilities and maybe they can still recruit new members," he said.

Barrientos also thanked the leadership of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front for their cooperation by repositioning their men.

Mayor Ibrahim Macadato told reporters the displaced residents could now return to their respective homes.

"But we want to have a military base in our town so the Maute group can no longer return here," he said. ${\bf SFM}$

www.bomboradyo.com

AFP iginiit muli sa MILF na terorista ang nakasagupa nila sa Lanao Sur

By Bombo CdeOPosted in Latest News Tree address. Let take you know to be able to

(Update) CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY - Taliwas sa iginigiit ng Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) na mga tiwalag na kasapi nila ang nakasagupa ng militar sa Lanao del Sur ay iba naman ang hawak na impormasyon ng Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Ito ay mayroong kaugnayan sa naunang pahayag ni MILF 1st vice chairman for political affairs Gadzhali Jaafar na ang kabiguan umanong pagkapasa ng Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) kung bakit inatake ng pamilyang Maute ang 51st IB, Philippine Army ang bayan ng Butig na kumitil na sa maraming buhay.



Sa panayam ng **Bombo Radyo**, inihayag ni AFP spokesperson B/Gen. Restituto Padilla, sinabi nito na mismo ang magkapatid na Omar at Abdullah Maute ang nagkupkop ng isang terorista na pangunahing suspek sa nangyari noong Bali bombing sa Indonesia.

Sinabi ni Padilla na talagang mga terorista ang nakasagupa ng kanilang tropa salungat sa pahayag ni Jaafar.

Natuklasan daw na ang Indonesian terorista na kinupkop noon ng pamilya Maute ay konektado sa Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) na unang itinatag ni al-Qaeda terrorist group founder Osama bin Laden upang maghasik ng kaguluhan sa rehiyon ng Asya.

www.bomboradvo.com

Malaking kuta ng Maute terror group, nabawi na ng militar

By Bombo Jerald UlepPosted in Latest News Tuesday, Or March 2018 04:05

Tuluyan nang nakubkob ng militar ang malaking kuta ng Maute terror group sa Butig, Lanao del Sur.

Kahapon ay napasok na umano ng mga sundalo ang main camp ng Maute group na gumagamit sa pangalan ng ISIS.

Sinabi ni Col. Roseller Murillo, commander ng 103rd Infantry Brigade na hindi naging madali para sa mga sundalo na pasukin ang kampo dahil nakadisenyo ang mga bahay ng mga rebelde para hindi tablan ng bala.

Ayon kay Murillo, maliliit ang bintanan ng mga bahay at matibay ito dahil hindi na gumamit ng holiow blocks ang mga rebelde at purong buhos na semento ang ginamit sa kanilang mga bahay para mas matibay.

Sa ngayon ay nagsasagawa na lamang ang mga sundalo ng clearing operations at sinusuri kung may naiwang mga patibong sa lugar.

Patuloy din nilang kinokolekta ang gamit ng mga bandidong grupo.

www.inquirer.net

Soldier killed, 2 hurt in clash with suspected BIFF in Maguindanao

By: Karlos Manlupig <u>@inquirerdotnet</u> Inquirer Mindanao

06:41 PM March 1st, 2016

DAVAO CITY — A soldier was killed while two others were hurt in an encounter in the town of Datu Salibo in Maguindanao on Tuesday afternoon.

Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, spokesperson of the Philippine Army's 6th Infantry Division, said that a combined unit of government forces were providing support during a law enforcement operation when they were Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.



fired upon by suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) in Barangay Tee at around 2 p.m.

Initial reports received by the division stated that a soldier died in the firefight while two others were wounded, she said.

Petinglay explained that the ongoing operations have been aimed at securing the communities and government projects from attacks by armed groups.

The attacking rebels were allegedly led by a certain Abu Zaiden.

The BIFF was created by former Moro Islamic Liberation Front commanders who left the organization after a series of serious disagreements on the conduct of the peace negotiations with the government. **SFM**

www.news.pia.gov.ph

10 NPA rebels surrender anew to AFP in SurSur

March 01, 2016

TANDAG CITY, Surigao del Sur, Mar. 1 (PIA) – In just a matter of days, 10 regular New People's Army (NPA) rebels of the Guerilla Front Committee 30 (GFC-30) and Guerilla Front Committee 27 (GFC-27), who likewise turned in their firearms (FAs), have surrendered to the 2nd Special Forces Battalion under Lt. Col. Gaspar Panopio in a joint effort with San Miguel Mayor Alvaro Elizalde, this province, recently.

Col. Isidro Purisima, 402nd Infantry Brigade commander of the Philippine Army (PA) here, said that seven of whom (all belonging to the GFC-30) had returned to the folds of the law on February 18 and 19.

A couple of days earlier, three NPA regulars, also with firearms, had done the same, the army official disclosed.

Purisima bared that among the high-powered firearms that were brought along by the seven surrenderees included four AK47, an M2 Carbine rifle, an M16 rifle, and a caliber .357.

However, when check was done with the initial details, it was found out that an M14 rifle was on the list instead of M16.

Also, all of the guns cited were loaded with magazines and ammunitions apart from the spares—a total of two magazines and ammunitions for the Carbine rifle, one magazine and ammunitions for the M14, plus 16 magazines and 480 rounds of live ammunitions for the AK47s, including four bandoleers.

Col. Purisima assured that every former rebels (FRs) would be entitled to cash aid—a total of P70,000 each—P50,000 for livelihood assistance, P15,000 for immediate assistance, apart from the additional P5,000 financial assistance to be given by Governor Johnny Pimentel from the provincial government.

Meanwhile, the brigade chief said his command remained optimistic that more surrenderees would be availing of the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP).

"Since the start of this year alone, the brigade has already accounted for close to 30 FRs," Purisima pointed out.

On other developments, the 36th Infantry Battalion (36IB) here under Lt. Col. Randolph Rojas has continued to carry out security operations following the clash with NPA rebels at Sitio Boringon, Barangay Mahaba, Marihatag town on Sunday, February 21.

The army troopers had recovered subversive documents, medical kits, three rifle grenades, cords believed to be used in detonating improvised explosive device (IED), and personal effects at the encounter site, according to Capt. Al Anthony Pueblas, battalion civil military operations (CMO) officer.

Bloodstains in all directions were also seen, he added.

Pueblas, quoting a certain Ka Corazon De Jesus, spokesperson of Guerilla Front Committee 19 (GFC-19), who, he said was monitored in an interview over a local radio station a day after the incident owned up to have suffered casualties during the 10-minute firefight.

The CMO officer also said that Lt. Col. Rojas was thankful to a civilian who tipped off the battalion via "text" about the presence of armed group in their area.

Rojas has again reiterated his call on rebels to give up their cause and return to the mainstream of society by availing of the CLIP. (NGBT/Greg Tataro Jr., Radyo ng Bayan-Tandag/PIA-Surigao del Sur)

www.bomboradyo.com

Bangkay ng sundalong nalunod sa ilog, narekober na

By Bombo ButuanPosted in Latest News 1998 1998 1998 1998

BUTUAN CITY – Narekober na ng mga rescuers ang bangkay ng isang sundalo na nadala nang malakas na agos ng Tago River matapos niyang itong tawirin nitong nakalipas na araw.

Ang bangkay ni Pfc. Nickie Barlis, miyembro ng 2nd Special Force Battalion, Philippine Army na nakabase sa Brgy. Tina, bayan ng San Miguel, lalawigan ng Surigao del Sur, ay narekober ng mga tauhan ng search and rescue team ng Philippine Army.

Napag-alamang tinawid umano ng biktima kasama ang iba pa nitong mga kasamahan para sa security operation ang Tago River nang madala ito sa malakas na agos ng tubig hanggang sa natangay papalayo sa kanyang mga kasamahan.

Dalawang araw pa ang lumipas bago nataguan ang bangkay ng biktima dakong alas-3:45 kahapon ng hapon.



www.dwdd.com.ph

GOOD EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIP II Vietnamese Navy Rescues Filipino Fisher

Lo. Warding 2016 Committees, leading the transmission variant ways



Manila, DWDD–A Filipino fisherman was rescued by Vietnamese forces near Sin Cowe Island, one of the features in Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) claimed by the People's Republic of Vietnam on Feb. 18 while clinging to a fishing boat that capsized due to big waves. His four companions are still missing.

The rescued fisherman named Mr. Anthony R. Gonzales, 34, of Batangas is brought to the above mentioned Island by the personnel of Vietnam People's Navy (VPN) and was given proper medical attention.

The ill-fated boat of Mr. Gonzales was part of a fishing venture being handled by MARLYD Fishing Company under a mother ship (FB Jermel) in the vicinity of Eldad reef.

This instance steered the Philippine Navy (PN) to direct the logistics ship BRP Laguna (LT501), which was at that time at the vicinity of Pagasa Island conducting Rotation/Reprovisioning mission at KIG, to fetch the fisherman at the closest possible time.

Lt 501 arrived at the vicinity of Sin Cowe Island on Feb. 18 but during that time, a fishing vessel from MARLYD Fishing Company was also at the vicinity awaiting any development and was also prepared to fetch the fisherman.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) granted the clearance to transfer the said individual under the PN custody. However, due to rough sea conditions, BRP Laguna was not able to come near Sin Cowe Island and receive Mr. Gonzales. This prompted the Commanding Officer (CO) of LT 501 to communicate with the fishing vessel of MARLYD Fishing Company to be the one to accept Mr. Gonzales in behalf of the Philippines and be the one to bring said fisherman to the country. Upon ascertaining the successful transfer of Mr. Reyes, LT 501 resumed to her mission in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

This occurrence is a manifestation of the long and sustained ties between the Philippines and Vietnam, so as their forces, the PN and the VPN which participated in several interactions that foster understanding notwithstanding varying positions and overlapping claims between the two countries in the WPS.

The assistance rendered by the Vietnamese People's Navy in helping a distressed Filipino fisher folk near their island detachment this year is one good example of such cooperation and assistance.

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MULTI-YEAR CONTRACT II DND in the market for 2 long range patrol planes

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MANILA — The Department of National Defense (DND) is allocating the sum of PHP5,976,000,000 for the acquisition of two brand-new long range patrol aircraft. The contract includes sensors, sensors Integration, mission support facilities and integrated logistics support package for the Philippine Air Force which is the specified user of the planes.

Funding will be sourced from the Armed Forces of the Philippines Modernization Act Trust Fund.

Bid opening is on March 14, 10:00 a.m. at the DND Bids and Awards Committee Right Wing Basement, DND Building, Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Acquisition of the two long range patrol aircraft is among the seven modernization projects placed under the "Multi-Year Contract" (MYC) scheme approved by President Benigno S. Aquino III last year.

Other projects include the two missile-capable frigates now undergoing bidding; two anti-submarine helicopters; eight amphibious assault vehicles; six close-air support aircraft; munitions for the FA-50PH light-interim fighter planes and surveillance systems for the Air Force.

Payment from the seven projects started last year which will run until 2018.

Granting of the MYC will allow to pursue the military modernization program beyond Aquino's term.

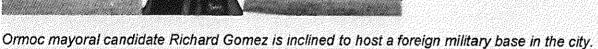
The total value of the seven projects is about PHP44 billion.

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Richard Gomez open to the idea of a foreign military base in Ormoc

By: Lottle Salarda, InterAksyon.com March 1, 2016 9:45 PM





InterAksyon.com

The online news portal of TV5

Ormoc City, Leyte - Ormoc City mayoralty candidate Richard Gomez, husband of Leyte 4th District Representative Lucy Torres-Gomez, said he is open to the idea of a foreign military base operating in the City if he gets elected.

Gomez admitted he is happy that the Supreme Court has approved the EDCA or Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, considered a supplemental agreement to the previous Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

In fact, he said, he and Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez invited a foreign military group a few weeks ago, to check out Ormoc City. They even inspected the abandoned port in Brgy. Ipil as a possible docking area for military naval ships.

He said that, presuming foreign military forces came in, "it's not just the peace and order situation of Ormoc that will be addressed, but also the whole 4th district of Leyte."

Gomez vows to do everything he can to improve the economy and lives of the people of Ormoc. "This is now my hometown," he added.

He also vows to use his connections to invite investors, but, first, he must make Ormoc "business friendly", confident that, with the right pro-business policies in place, the economy of the City will be and the people of Ormoc, especially in the outskirts, will benefit the most.

"In my visits to the barangays, I noticed that most of the residents are jobless," he said.

Since agriculture has been the backbone of Ormoc, Gomez vows to implement programs that will help and improve the agriculture sector of the City.

While Rep. Lucy Torres-Gomez said that, in her two terms, has lobbied for farm-to-market roads and important infrastructure project to be poured in the district, to help make the lives of constituents easier, she has a hard time implementing programs in Ormoc City, where the mayor is their opposition.

Gomez said that, because of his dream to see a progressive Ormoc, he has sacrificed two upcoming movies with Star Cinema because he wants to focus on his candidacy and show the people of Ormoc that he is willing to give up his acting career for them.