



ARMY

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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS NEWS CLIPPINGS

14 March 2016

Monday

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

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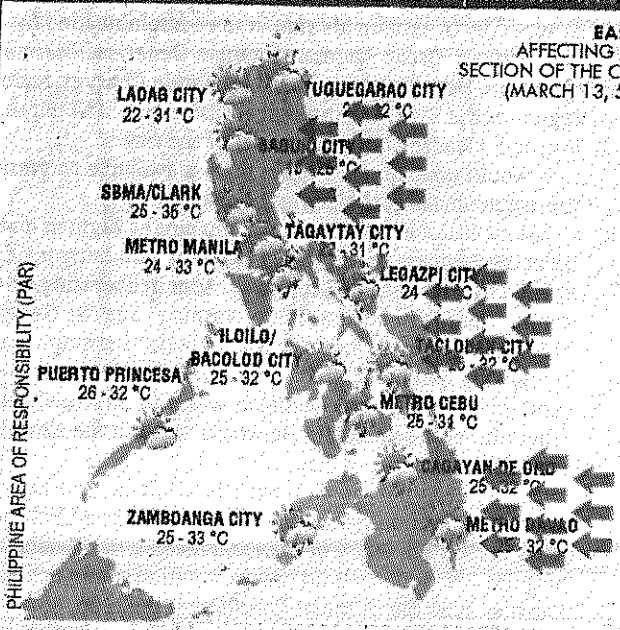


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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MARCH 14, 2016 | MONDAY



PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (MARCH 13, 5:00 AM)

LADAG CITY 22 - 31 °C

TUQUEGARAO CITY 23 - 32 °C

BAGUIO CITY 15 - 25 °C

SBMA/CLARK 25 - 36 °C

METRO MANILA 24 - 33 °C

TAGAYTAY CITY 23 - 31 °C

LEGAZPI CITY 24 - 32 °C

ILOILO/BACOLOD CITY 25 - 32 °C

TACLOBAN CITY 25 - 32 °C

PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 32 °C

METRO CEBU 25 - 34 °C

CAGAYAN DE ORDO 25 - 32 °C

ZAMBOANGA CITY 25 - 33 °C

METRO DAVAO 25 - 32 °C

SUNRISE 8:04 AM

SUNSET 6:08 PM

MOONRISE 10:20 AM

MOONSET 11:23 PM

NEW MOON MAR 9 9:54 AM

FIRST QUARTER MAR 16 1:02 AM

LOW TIDE 9:10 PM 0.02 Meter

HIGH TIDE 1:40 PM 0.85 Meter

MANILA SOUTH HARBOR




Partly cloudy skies


Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers

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

	MAR 15	MAR 16	MAR 15	MAR 16	MAR 15	MAR 16		
METRO MANILA	24 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C	TAGAYTAY	21 - 32 °C	21 - 32 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
TUQUEGARAO	23 - 33 °C	23 - 33 °C	LEGAZPI	24 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORDO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
LADAG	22 - 31 °C	22 - 31 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C
BAGUIO	15 - 25 °C	15 - 26 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 33 °C	24 - 34 °C
SBMA/CLARK	24 - 35 °C	24 - 35 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C			

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



SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

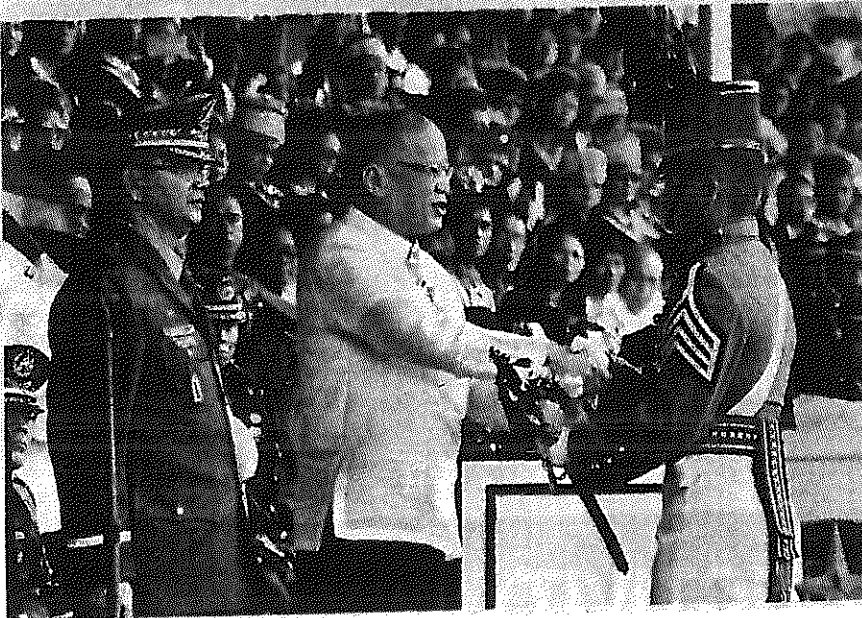
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IN THE
1811 1896
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

PNoy to AFP: Always

be apolitical



Aquino leads
his last PMA
graduation rites

By GENALYN D. KABILING

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City — With the national and local elections fast approaching, President Aquino has called on the military to remain apolitical at all times and focus on their duty of protecting the people.

Addressing the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) graduation ceremony at Fort del Pilar here, the President advised the new military officers to stay out of partisan politics and particularly resist the temptation of corruption and other threats that bring harm to the nation.

Aquino reminded them about the country's dark history when the military was used to curtail the country's democracy and enforce the whim of one family, referring to the Marcos dictatorship.

"Tandaan lang po natin, ►17

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tanging Sandatahang Lakas lang ang may puwersa, na kung makikihalo, lalo na sa pulitika, ay may tinatawag pong 'monopoly of power.' Tila hindi ho parehas ang usapan, kaya importanteng nasa isip natin parating neutral tayo, lalo na pagdating sa pamumulitika (Let us remember that only the Armed Forces is the only force, if they will join partisan politics, that has a monopoly of power. It will not be fair so it is important to remain neutral especially when it comes to politics)," Aquino said during the commencement of 63-member PMA Gabay-Laya Class of 2016.

The Commander-in-Chief also told the military about its important role in sustaining the country's positive transformation, saying progress cannot be achieved without stability and peace.

"Hangga't nariyan nga ang buong Sandatahang Lakas, matapat na ginagampanan ang inyong mandato, hangga't iisa lang ang panig ninyo at iyon ay sa taumbayan, hangga't di kayo nakikihalo sa pulitika, maaasahan nating magtutuloy-tuloy ang positibong pagbabago (As long as the entire Armed Forces is here, faithfully fulfilling its mandate, as long as you take only one side and that's the people, as long as you don't meddle with politics, we can hope to see the continuity of positive change)," he said.

As the PMA graduates start their career, the President also said they should brace for many temptation of corruption but urged them to always take the side of the Filipino nation.

"Tanungin ninyo ang inyong sarili,

ang gagawin ko ba ay makakatulong sa sambayanan, o yung mangyayari rito, iilan lang ang makikinabang at makapapahamak sa mas nakararami? (Just ask yourself, will my action help the nation or will benefit only the few and put the majority in danger)," Aquino said.

If they are ever confused at work, the new military officials should take the advice of their superiors especially the leaders of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Department of National Defense, according to the President. He said listening to their superiors would help ensure they would not repeat the mistakes of the past.

Aquino also highlighted the great responsibility of the military as the "defender of the people" especially in terms of protecting democracy and keeping peace.

"Nasa inyong mga kamay kung

mamamayani ang demokrasya o kung babalik tayo sa madilim na kabanata ng pang-aabuso at kawalang hustisya; kung magiging laganap ang kapayapaan sa mga komunidad na siyang hihimok sa iba na makiisa, o kung babalik tayo sa estado ng pagdududa sa isa't isa (It is up to you if democracy will reign or we will return to the dark chapter of abuse and lack of justice; if peace will prevail in communities that will encourage others to unite, or if we will return to the state of doubting each other)," Aquino said.

Gabay-Laya Class

In his final appearance as Commander-in-Chief at the PMA graduations, the President distributed the diplomas to the 63 members of the "Gabay-Laya Class of 2016" led by class valedictorian Kristian Daeve Abiqui during the ceremony.

Of the 63 graduates, 29 will serve

the Philippine Army; 11 will go to the Air Force; and 16 will join the Philippine Navy.

In his remarks, the President admitted he was initially worried about the class name "Gabay-Laya," thinking it meant the military would be guiding or dictating how democracy works in the country. Aquino instantly recalled Article 2, Section 3 of the Constitution that states "Civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory."

But as soon as he saw the real meaning of the class name "Gabay-Laya," Aquino said his blood pressure went down. The PMA class name, Aquino said, actually meant "Gintong Anak ng Bayan Alay ay Buhay para sa Kalayaan."

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Al Gore to train PH climate warriors

'It's not smart to build new coal-fired plants'

By Michael Lim Ubac

AL GORE has no doomsday message for the Philippines as he starts today the training of more than 700 climate warriors from all over Asia who have converged in Manila for the "Climate Reality Leadership Training Corps."

In fact, the former US vice president told the INQUIRER yesterday that because of Super typhoon "Yolanda" (international name: Haiyan) the country had the "moral authority" to take a leadership role in helping the world shift its heavy reliance on coal to renewable energy.

Gore said it was "not smart" to build new coal plants. The Philippines is nevertheless building more coal-fired power plants.

Unknown to Gore, the Aquino administration has ap-

proved 21 new coal-fired power plant projects in the past five years despite its commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

The government's decision to continue constructing coal plants puts into question the country's call for sustainable development and deep cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

The Nobel peace laureate and global climate activist arrived in Manila last Saturday to personally preside over the training of participants to the

AL GORE/A18

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climate leadership training, which runs from Monday to Wednesday at the Hotel Sofitel.

"Yes, why not? You have some of the best solar resources in any country of the world because of your latitude. You have fantastic wind resources," Gore told the INQUIRER in an exclusive interview, when asked if the Philippines could become a leader in developing solar and wind power as alternative sources of energy.

"I think the Philippines occupies a special role because of the respect it has in the world community," he said, citing the "economic strength" the country "demonstrated to the world during a period when ... the rest of the world was devastated by the 2008-2009 Great Depression."

The Climate Reality Leadership Training Corps is part of the Climate Reality Project founded and chaired by Gore, a nonprofit organization that aims to solve the climate crisis. Gore will explain to the

soon-to-be climate warriors what climate change is all about and what individuals can do about it.

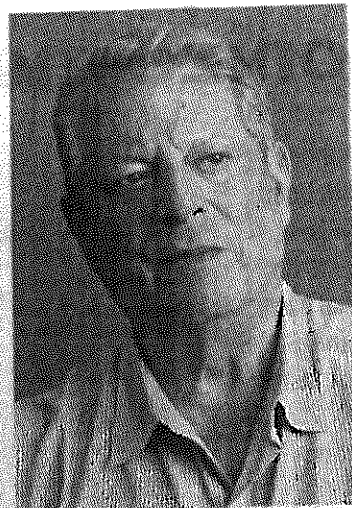
Over the last 10 years, there are thousands of trained "Climate Reality Leaders" in over 57 countries who are already working at every level of society to solve climate change, according to organizers of the Manila training sessions.

During the three-day training, renowned climate scientists, communicators, storytellers and grassroots organizers will speak about reaching and inspiring people to take climate action.

'Courage, resilience'

Gore acknowledged the particular vulnerability of the Philippines to typhoons. Being in the Pacific typhoon belt, the country "attracts constant attention from the world, which has admired the Philippines' resilience," he said.

Gore referenced Yolanda, the strongest recorded storm to ever hit land that lashed nine



GORE: The Philippines has moral authority to take leadership role in helping world shift to renewable energy.

RAFFY LERMA

regions of the country on Nov. 8, 2013, killing 6,300 people, mostly in Eastern Visayas.

"I think that Haiyan, in particular, underscored not just that single event but brought in to focus the courage and resilience of the [Filipino] people, and the immediate translation

of that in the Warsaw climate conference [in 2013] cannot be overemphasized. It really touched the hearts of the people around the world," Gore said.

He could still vividly recall the "image of the nation standing up courageously" to one of the greatest demonstrations of a climate change impact.

'Hub for geopolitics'

"And as a developing country—some would say—emerging economy, it has a unique position in the community of nation," he said. "Its geographic position gives it a particular relationship to all of East Asia—and of course the historical ties to the US actually make the Philippines a kind of a hub for geopolitics."

Gore noted that the Philippines' enduring ties to America were seen as very significant in the United States.

Impressed

He joked that Daly City or parts of Los Angeles in California could be another province of the Philippines because of

the large presence of Filipino-Americans in the area.

Gore praised the country for its advanced climate change laws, ostensibly referring to the Climate Change Act of 2009 and the People's Survival Fund of 2012.

Both laws were authored by Sen. Loren Legarda, the United Nations Global Champion for Resilience.

"She is truly a leader not only in the Philippines but among her counterparts in the international community around the world. Her proposals [for Disaster Risk Reduction and climate change adaptation] are now being looked at as models for the world," Gore said.

He noted that the country was learning its lessons from Yolanda.

Quoting the forecast of scientists around the world, including those from the Philippines, he said it was being predicted that these typhoons would "likely to come stronger still with the continued warming of the oceans."

More than 90 percent of the

extra heat trapped by the man-made global warming pollution—which has triggered temperatures to rise since the Industrial Revolution—goes into the oceans.

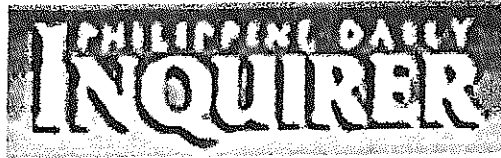
Oceans warming faster

"The ocean waters around the Philippines are warming faster than anywhere else on the planet," Gore warned.

"If there is another place that is warming faster, I don't know what it is. As a result, sea level is rising faster in the Philippines than anywhere else on Earth mainly because of thermal expansion, and also of course, the melting of ice in Greenland and Antarctica is accelerating sea level rise everywhere in the world," said Gore.

He said that the combination of higher sea levels and more powerful storm surges made island-nations particularly vulnerable to the impact of climate change, stressing that "the warming of the seas and rising of the seas are faster here than virtually anywhere on Earth."

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Suspected Abu leader slain in Sibugay

THE SUSPECTED leader of a kidnap-for-ransom gang behind the abduction of an Irish priest and an Australian ex-soldier was shot dead by security forces yesterday, the military said.

Waning Abdusalam was killed after he resisted arrest by a combined military and police team, according to Maj. Filemon Tan, Western Mindanao Command spokesperson.

The suspect was gunned down in the town of Naga in Zamboanga Sibugay province.

A joint team from the 102nd Brigade of the Philippine Army's 1st Infantry Division and the police carried out the arrest operation.

Tan said Abdusalam had been tagged in the kidnapping for ransom of numerous people in Mindanao, including three Filipino teachers in Zamboanga Sibugay in 2009, Irish missionary Father Michael Sinnott, also in 2009, and Australian Warren Rodwell in 2011.

While Sinnott was released after about a month through the inter-

cession of a larger Muslim rebel group, Rodwell spent 15 months as a hostage and was only freed after ransom was paid.

Abdusalam may have had links to the Abu Sayyaf, the Muslim extremist group known for kidnapping foreigners and Christians, said Tan.

The Abu Sayyaf, reportedly founded with seed money from al-Qaida founder Osama bin Laden, has been designated a terrorist organization by the United States. It has been blamed for several terror attacks in the Philippines.

One-month deadline

Early this month, suspected Abu Sayyaf militants holding two Canadians, a Norwegian and a Filipino woman hostage set a one-month deadline for millions of dollars in ransom to be paid.

Canadian tourists John Ridsdel and Robert Hall, Norwegian resort manager Kjartan Sekkingstad and Filipino Marites Flor were seized from yachts in a marina in the southern Philippines in September.

The Philippine government has stressed its position of not paying ransom. Police said they were continuing efforts to rescue the hostages.

Pushing for peace deal

The Aquino administration has been pushing for a peace deal with one separatist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. A bill on the creation of an expanded Bangsamoro homeland, a prerequisite for the peace agreement, however, did not pass muster in Congress. It will await scrutiny by a new Congress which will convene in June after national elections on May 9.

In the 1990s, a peace agreement was worked out with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which led to the creation of the existing ARMM (Autonomous Region

of Muslim Mindanao).

The MILF is a breakaway faction of the MNLF.

Breakaway factions

The MILF is now also beset by breakaway factions, one of them the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF).

There are also reports new rebel groups inspired by the extremely violent Islamic State (IS) are beginning to take

shape in Mindanao.

The killing last year of the Malaysian terrorist Zulkifli bin Hir, alias Marwan, in Masapano, Maguindanao, indicated links between Islamic rebel fighters in the Philippines and neighboring Indonesia and Malaysia.

Marwan was believed to be a member of the southeast Asian terror group Jemaah Islamiyah's central command. *AFP; Julie Aurelio*

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Troops seize 2 ASG camps in Sulu

By **NONOY E. LACSON**

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Government troops have seized two camps of the notorious Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Patikul, Sulu Thursday.

Military reports said soldiers from the 10th Scout Ranger Company (10

SRC) discovered the two heavily-fortified ASG camps after a 15-minute firefight with elements of the bandit group in a remote sitio in the village of Langhub.

According to Brig. Gen. Alan Arrojado, head of the Joint Task Group Sulu, the encounter took place at around 1

p.m. Thursday.

The report added the soldiers were conducting combat patrols when they encountered around 30 suspected ASG bandits, who were led by sub-leaders Namel Ahajari and Arkam Udjaman.

As the government troops gave chase of the fleeing bandits, they discovered the

two ASG camps in sitio Mabusing.

The government did not suffer any casualty during the fighting.

Arrojado said one of the camps was capable of housing 50 persons while the other camp, which was captured by the 11th Scout Ranger Company, could accommodate about 100 individuals.

The troops also seized a rocket-propelled grenade, an M-16 automatic rifle with 45 rounds and assorted food provisions.

Test case for rights abuse

From the Mindanao Times (Mar 12): *Soldier, 3 others relieved as video of abuse becomes viral*

THE 10th Infantry Division ordered to relieve a soldier and three militiamen who reportedly tortured a Tagakaulo farmer in Barangay Demoloc in Malita, Davao Occidental last Feb. 19.

The Philippines is a signatory to the United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As a signatory to this treaty, the state has the duty to respect and implement this covenant.

Capt. Rhyan Batchar, spokesperson of 10th Infantry Division, said they were shocked and saddened by the actions of their soldier and SCAAs perpetrated against Mr. Orlando 'Kaido' Engo, 52, and his two grandsons as shown in a Facebook post.

In a facebook post yesterday afternoon, Batchar said: "Pursuant to Articles of War 70, Cpl Sandy Batolbatol and four SCAAs who are possibly involved in the said incident are now placed under arrest by the Commander of 72nd Infantry Battalion at their headquarters at Camp Gen Manuel T Yan Sr, Barangay Tuboran, Mawab, Compostela Valley Province. They shall be restricted to barracks to insure their appearance while the investigation is on-going.

"As of now, the names of the four SCAAs are being withheld until the investigation has clearly established their involvement in said incident. Due process of law shall be strictly observed in the investigation and when evidence warrants, they will be prosecuted with the full force of military justice, including trial by Courts-Martial. The soldier and the CAAs are subject to military laws.

"The command further reiterates that the investigation will not prejudice any investigation that maybe conducted by other agencies and shall make available the soldier and CAAs for such investigation."

Spokesperson of Bayan-SMR Sheena Duazo said they condemn the violation perpetrated by the soldier and militiamen to the farmer whom they accused of being the mastermind in robbing a small store. She said that it was a clear violation of the law and they deserved to be punished for what they did to a civilian in the community.

Bayan was one of the first organizations informed of the incident.

Batchar said "we are further enraged by their acts as described by Father Joey Gánio Evangelista, MJ of Malita Tagakaulo Mission in the said post."

The division has directed the commander of the 72nd Infantry Battalion to relieve Sgt. Sandy Batolbatol and the three militiamen from their detachment in Barangay Demoloc.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, division commander, also ordered to the soldier to custody pending the investigation to determine the appropriate punishment.

The internal investigation, he said, will not prejudice any other probe that other agencies might conduct.

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

"We want to assure everyone that the 101D does not and will not condone or tolerate any abusive behavior of our troops including the Cagay Active Auxiliaries, especially violations of people's rights," Batchar said.

"We therefore urge everyone to report abuses committed by our soldiers and CAAs," he added. "Rest assured that we shall promptly and appropriately act on these reports."

In the MindaNews report, Orlando was falsely accused of sending his 14-year-old grandson, Ian, to steal from a store in Sitio Matamis.

Fetches by the father of the store owner and three SCAA militiamen at his house on the morning of that day, Kaido proceeded to the barangay hall but was brought directly instead to the SCAA detachment where Batolbatol was waiting for him.

Kaido's son and Ian were also at the detachment. Batolbatol accused Kaido of masterminding the theft in Matamis.

When Kaido denied the accusation the sergeant started beating the frail-framed Kaido with a piece of wood hitting his behind.

After hitting him 10 times, Batolbatol ordered Ian to beat up his grandfather; the boy complied.

Later, it was the turn of the SCAA militiamen.

They hit Kaido on the head with a piece of wood. They repeatedly hit him with their fists on his side, on the chest and stomach.

Not satisfied with beating up Kaido, the militiamen placed ice under both his armpits, in his trousers by his bottoms and his groin. They then poured ice cold water on his whole body.

Unable to take anymore, Kaido agreed to sign a document admitting to having sent his grandson to steal from the store. He was released soon after that.

On the evening of that same day, Kaido, together with his daughter-in-law, proceeded to Malita to file a police report as well as have himself examined by a doctor.

According to the doctor's report, Kaido had a 5cm laceration on his head, "contusion hematoma anterior chest, swelling hematoma at left wrist, and hematoma at buttocks area."

Kaido has asked the help of the Mission.

At the Barangay hearing on Wednesday, Batolbatol offered Kaido P50,000 and his old motorcycle; the barangay officials at the hearing were allegedly pressuring Kaido to accept.

Kaido refused the offer saying he wanted the case settled in court.

This could be a test case for the AFP in ensuring that their soldiers follow the law and do not resort to human rights violations such as the use of torture and other acts that strip civilians of their humanity.

<http://mindanaotimes.net/test-case-for-rights-abuse/>

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

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The Manila Times

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Notorious bandit killed in Zambo Sibugay

SECURITY forces killed on Sunday an alleged leader of a notorious kidnap-for-ransom group with ties with the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Mindanao, reports reaching Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City (Metro Manila) said.

Major Felimon Tan, spokesman of the Armed Forces of the Philippines

(AFP) Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom), said Waning Abdulsalam was killed when he resisted arrest and traded shots with elements of the Philippine Army's 102nd Brigade and the local police.

The incident happened in Barangay Singkilon, Naga, Zamboanga Sibugay at around 8 am on

Sunday, according to Tan.

Authorities said Abdulsalam, a former leader of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), was involved in the series of kidnappings in the province for the past years.

Among others he was tagged as responsible in the abduction of

the three teachers in Zamboanga Sibugay in 2009 and Australian Warren Rodwell in Ipil, also in Zamboanga Sibugay in 2011.

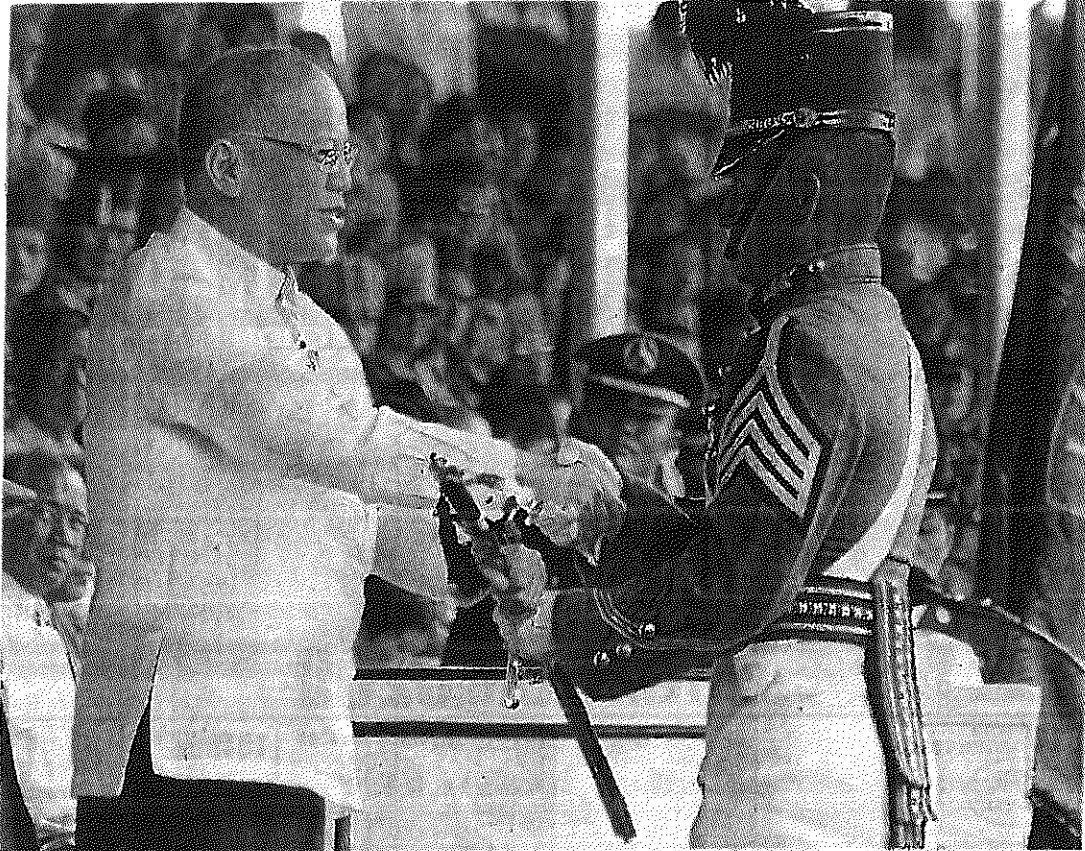
His brother Abrial was also linked to the kidnapping of Hong Nwi Seong, a 73-year-old Korean businessman in 2015.

FERNAN MARASIGAN

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PMA VALEDICTORIAN President Aquino presents the Presidential Saber to newly commissioned Ensign Kristian Daeve Abiqui, valedictorian of Philippine Military Academy Class of 2016, during commencement exercises at Fort Del Pilar, Baguio City, on Sunday.

EV ESPRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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MALACANANG PHOTO

NEW SOLDIERS Philippine Military Academy cadets toss their shakos in the air after their graduation.

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'Don't mix service with politics'

**By Gabriel Cardinoza
and Kimberlie Quitasol**
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City
—For as long as it shuns politics, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its newly commissioned officers from Philip-

pine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 2016, Gabay Laya, will pave the way for meaningful change in the country, President Aquino said yesterday.

"We can be assured that the AFP can help sustain positive changes for as long as soldiers continue to follow their mandate,

for as long as you are on the side of the people, and you do not mix with politics," Mr. Aquino told the 63 members of the class.

"Progress can never happen

DON'T GET / A20

**Much-improved AFP
awaits new officers / A20**

From page A1

without peace and stability," he said.

Gabay Laya (Freedom's Guide) stands for "Gintong Anak ng Bayan Alay ay Buhay para sa Kalayaan (Golden children of the nation, who offer their lives for freedom)."

Maj. Gen. Donato San Juan II, PMA superintendent, gave the same advice: "In a few more months, the 2016 national elections will take place. Your duty as new military officers is to ensure clean, honest and peaceful elections."

The new graduates should protect "the integrity of each voter" because "one vote can make a world of difference," he said.

"I believe in our soldiers. The progress made because of 'Daang Matuwid' (Straight

Path) could not have been possible without your support. We are all aware we have a role to play in the development of this country," Mr. Aquino said in his speech.

"You are the smallest PMA class since the 1960s. More than 20,200 applied for a spot at PMA and only 63 stand before me today. For me, this was an achievement. You were weighed and measured and you passed all standards," he said.

He said Gabay Laya was the sixth class to graduate under his administration where "good governance, honesty and integrity reigned in the bureaucracy."

"When you leave PMA," he said, "you would face challenges and temptations."

"What standards do you use to help you decide? If you can

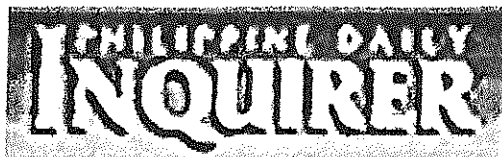
allow someone a bit older than you to offer an advice, it's simple: Ask yourselves, 'Will what I am about to do help the public? How many would benefit or would be hurt by my actions?'" Mr. Aquino said.

He said the new officers "should also examine their conscience when they come to a point when they start to believe that they are always right, or that they are better than everyone else."

"It's in all of your hands should democracy remain strong, or society returns to the dark period of our history filled with abuse and injustice," he said.

He said Gabay Laya graduates had the power to ensure "an environment of peace and unity, or a return to a world where no one could be trusted."

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Much-improved AFP awaits new officers

**By Gabriel Cardinoza
and Kimberlie Quitasol**
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio City—New graduates of Philippine Military Academy (PMA) are fortunate they are entering a much-improved Armed Forces of the Philippines, thanks to efforts to improve soldiers' wel-

fare and their capacity to protect the country, President Aquino said yesterday.

Addressing 63 graduates of PMA "Gabay Laya" Class of 2016, Mr. Aquino said 68 "big-ticket projects" worth P58.43 billion had been completed in the almost six years of his term.

He said his administration had also put up 61,378 housing

units for soldiers and policemen, livelihood programs for retirees at Fort Magsaysay in Nueva Ecija province and increased the soldiers' monthly hazard pay.

It was the last time that Mr. Aquino as Commander in Chief graced the PMA graduation where he also commissioned the new graduates as AFP officers.

The President said he had very poor impressions about the state of the military when he assumed his post as Commander in Chief in 2010 because some soldiers used "fast-food merchandising" as backups during sensitive operations.

He said soldiers had to "adapt and overcome" these logistical challenges.

"To be frank with you, the price for the equipment we provide the soldiers is nothing to joke about," he said.

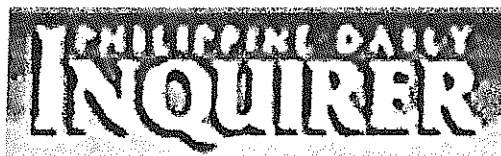
He said a secondhand C-130 cargo plane cost up to \$40 million (P1.8 billion), which, he noted, was "equivalent to the cost of building 109 school buildings."

Mr. Aquino said governance in-

involved establishing a balance between what the military requires and what other sectors need.

"Let us remember that more than 20 percent of our population was impoverished when I started my administration. But by ensuring good governance, we can say that every sector was assisted. No one was left behind," he said.

14 March 2016



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Female cadet is PMA 'goat'

By Kimberlie Quitasol
and Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

FORT DEL PILAR, Baguio
City—The graduating class of the
Philippine Military Academy

FEMALE/A20

From page A1

(PMA) had many stories to tell—one was that the class "goat," or the graduate at the bottom of academic performance, was again a female.

For the PMA Class of 2016, called Gabay Laya (Freedom's Guide), the unusual honor fell on newly commissioned Army 2nd Lt. Jean Carla Bermudez.

Observing the ritual, the PMA's junior class on Saturday dunked Bermudez in the water—after the announcement of the academic awards.

It was the second time a female cadet had copped the goat honor. The first was Air Force 2nd Lt. Ernalyn Fernando of PMA Class of 2014.

A goat refers to the last cadet on the list of graduates. Instead of ridicule, a goat is accorded respect for striving to beat all odds and graduate along with the rest of the class.

Just 63 graduates

The actual graduation ceremony was held yesterday.

But Gabay Laya had many more

stories to tell. It was also the smallest graduating class in 40 years—with only 63 graduates.

It was also a time for the valedictorian, newly commissioned Navy Ensign Kristian Daeve Abiqui, to shine.

Abiqui's speech was dramatic. At one point, he paused and handed his mother a handkerchief he pulled out from his shako (plumed hat).

He said it was the same handkerchief she gave him when he started training at PMA five years ago.

Abiqui also said the class goat should be proud because she bested 20,000 other applicants.

Gabay Laya was originally composed of 123 cadets but only 50 graduated, along with 13 cadets who joined them after being turned back from older classes due to bad grades or ailments.

An orphan

Newly commissioned Air Force 2nd Lt. Karl Angelo Torres from Batangas province was the youngest graduate. He will turn 21 on March 19.

"Being a pilot was my childhood dream," Torres said.

Newly commissioned Army 2nd Lt. Joseph Stalin Fagsao, an orphan, wished his parents had seen him graduate.

His father died when he was 9 and his mother died the day PMA notified him of his admission to the academy in 2012.

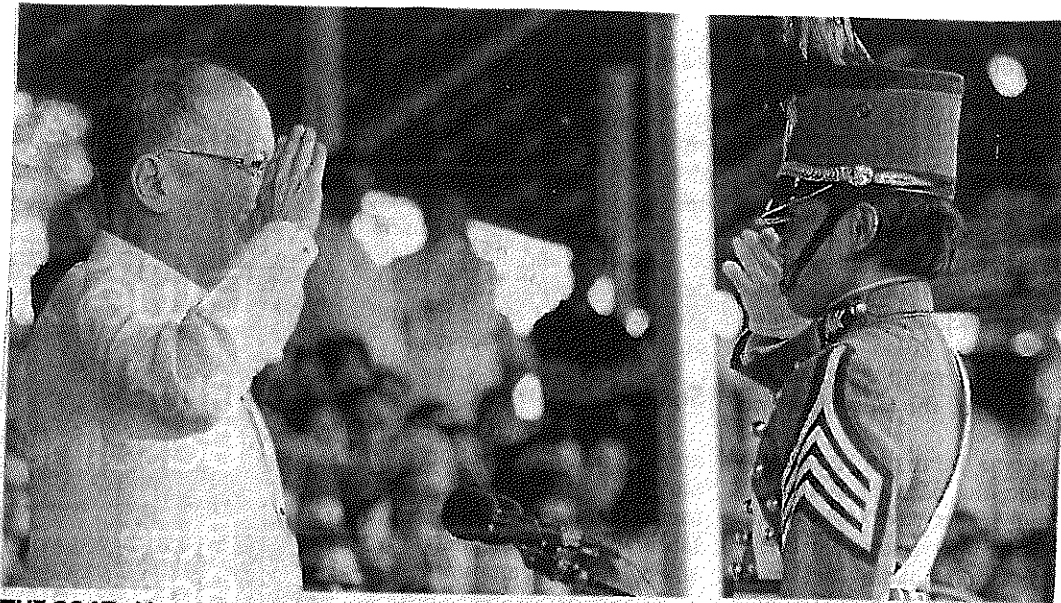
"That was the sad part because I wasn't able to tell my mother I was going to PMA," said Fagsao, who ranked fourth in the class.

He said it was her memory that kept him from giving up despite the rigorous training. He cried when his high school and elementary school teachers came to congratulate him.

'Perfect moment'

The graduation was a perfect moment for newly commissioned Army 2nd Lt. George Bernard Garcia to catch up with his brothers, Air Force 1st Lt. John Melvin Garcia, who came from Cavite province, and Army 2nd Lt. Jerson Garcia, who flew from Basilan province.

"We are very proud of the achievement of our youngest," said John Melvin of Class of



THE GOAT New Army 2nd Lt. Jean Carla Bermudez, the goat of PMA Class of 2016, salutes President Aquino during graduation rites on Sunday.

EV ESPRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

2012. Jerson comes from Class of 2013.

A PMA sheet says 10 Gabay Laya members have unemployed parents, while seven have monthly family incomes of less than P5,000. Twelve said their monthly family incomes did not go higher than P9,999.

Seventeen have monthly family incomes of from P10,000 to P19,000. Only 10 graduates have family incomes exceeding P30,000 a month.

Nine graduates are children of farmers, nine have parents who are government employees. One has a mother who

drives a jeepney for a living.

Abiqui said in Filipino in his speech: "Like you, we believe talking peace is important. I believe a peaceful society is a progressive society, free from oppression and abuse, and a society that does not tolerate violence and greed."

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The Standard

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PMA cadets' kin give PNoy a cold welcome

By Christine F. Herrera and Sandy Araneta

THE families of the latest graduates of the Philippine Military Academy were noticeably cold to President Benigno Aquino III but greeted Vice President Jejomar Binay with warm applause during the academy's graduation rites at Fort Gregorio del Pilar, Baguio City on Sunday.

Some relatives of the graduates said Aquino was greeted with silence when he was introduced because they still remembered how the President allegedly mishandled the massacre of 44 members of the PNP Special Action Force in Mamasapano, Maguindanao more than a year ago.

When asked in an ambush interview for his reaction to the lack of

a warm welcome for the President, Binay simply smiled and refused to comment. Both Aquino and Binay attended the graduation ceremonies of the Gabay Laya Class of 2016.

"It just happened. We did not talk about it [beforehand]. Deep in our hearts, we fear that our children would be deployed anywhere in the country and we are scared that what happened to the SAF 44 would befall

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our children,” said a PMA graduate’s mother, who refused to be identified.

She said her son was among the top students in the graduating class and she was sure that he would be given dangerous assignments immediately.

“We know the risk my son is facing but we want to be reassured that the risk they are taking is worth it. Given what happened in Mamasapano, our fears are real,” she said.

The 44 SAF members were killed on Jan. 25 last year during a covert operation to capture Malaysian terrorist and bomb-maker Marwan and his Filipino accomplice Basit Usman.

Meanwhile, Aquino reminded the PMA graduates not to indulge in politics.

“It is important to always remain neutral when it comes to politics,”

said Aquino, in a speech delivered in Pilipino. “It is in your hands whether democracy will remain, or if we will go back to abuses and lack of justice,” Aquino also told the PMA graduates.

Aquino also reminded the PMA graduates to be protectors of the country.

“Civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory,” said Aquino.

Binay, meanwhile, commended his fellow Ibanag, Cadet First Class Kristian Daeve Gelacio Abiqui, who topped the class.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

No-ransom policy stays – AFP, PNP

Still being held by the ASG are Canadian tourists John Ridsdel and

"We will continue our search and rescue operations without let up," stressed the military official who requested anonymity.

14 March 2016

Malaya
The National Newspaper

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US army explosives found in La Union

BY VICTOR REYES

A LARGE cache of explosives with the markings "US Corps of Engineers" was found at the shoreline of Luna town in La Union.

Luna town police investigator SPO2 Aniceto Aragon said the explosives were discovered by Marcel Nelmda last Friday while scavenging at the shores of Barangay Magallanes.

Aragon said Nelmda, 40, was collecting recyclable materials in the area when he saw his son, Justin, playing with a rounded object.

Aragon said Nelmda checked

the object and saw it bore markings of "high explosives" TNT," "1/2 pound," and "USA Corps of Engineers."

Aragon said Nelmda checked the area where his son found the object and saw some more explosives, which were covered by sand, prompting him to report the matter to the local police.

"Nu'ng tiningnan ng ama, marami pala, so ang ginawa niya, tinabunan muna ng lupa at saka nagreport samon," said Aragon.

Aragon said the Luna police

See US ARMY > Page B6

US ARMY

station later coordinated with the Explosives and Ordnance Disposal of the PNP Ilocos regional police office which later retrieved a total of 88 pieces of explosives.

Aragon could not immediately say how the explosives got into the area.

"Hindi namin alam. Dating mataas 'yung lupa dun, ngayon dahil sa pagkuha ng bato, bumaba nang bumaba 'yung lupa dun," he said.

The explosives are currently in the custody of the PNP regional office in La Union for safekeeping. Aragon could not immediately say if coordination was already made with US authorities about the recovery of the explosives. – *Victor Reyes*

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14 March 2016

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 3

Swiss ambassador visits MILF camp in Maguindanao

By EDD K. USMAN

Swiss Ambassador Andrea Reichlin visited the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF's) Camp Darapanan in Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao, last Thursday and met with the rebel group's leader, Chairman Al-Haji Murad Ebrahim.

Camp Darapanan, which can be reached in an hour or so by car from Cotabato City, is the MILF's Administrative Base and also its Peace Panel's secretariat office.

During their meeting, Ebrahim reiterated his warning that Moro young men run the risk of becoming radical after Congress failed to pass the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

As reported on Luwaran.com, Murad told the top diplomat of Switzerland in the Philippines that "Moro youths might

be attracted to radicalism as an alternative to the peace process."

"Many if not all young Moros were expecting that the Bangsamoro Question and Conflict in Mindanao could finally be resolved and allow the Bangsamoro to govern themselves through the passage of the Bangsamoro law, but it did not come out to be that way as expected," the MILF chieftain said.

The MILF's official online portal reported that Reichlin shared Murad's concerns.

"For her part, Ambassador Reichlin shares the MILF's concern that extremists and radical groups may capitalize (on) the frustration of the people, especially the Bangsamoro, over the non-passage of the BBL to gain

more recruits," Luwaran.com cited the Swiss envoy's statement.

Murad and some members of the MILF Central Committee welcomed the visiting diplomat.



Swiss Ambassador Andrea Reichlin (File photo/Courtesy of Switzerland and the UAE admin website)

Reichlin assured the MILF of her country's continued support to the peace process between the Philippine Government (GPH) and the MILF.

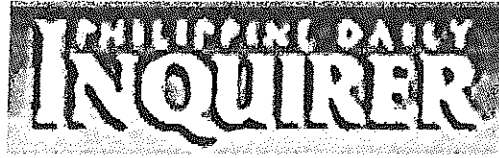
She expressed hope for the faithful implementation of the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro

(CAB) signed by GPH and MILF, and the basis for the BBL.

Murad assured Reichlin of the MILF's constancy on the peace process as it is still hopeful and determined as ever in the preservation of the gains of the over 17 years search for peace in Mindanao.

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China to put up maritime court

BELJING—China plans to set up an “international maritime judicial center” to help protect the country’s sovereignty and rights at sea, its top judge said on Sunday.

Giving a work report at the annual meeting of China’s largely rubber-stamp parliament, Chief Justice Zhou Qiang said courts across China were working to implement the national strategy of building the country into a “maritime power.”

“[We] must resolutely safeguard China’s national sovereignty, maritime rights and other core interests,” Zhou said. “[We] must improve the work of maritime courts and build an international maritime judicial center.”

He gave no details on when the judicial center may start working, where it would be located or what kinds of cases it would accept.

China disputes a group of uninhabited islets with Japan in the East China Sea, and also claims most of the South China Sea. The Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia, Viet-

nam and Brunei have competing claims there.

The Philippines has lodged a case in an arbitration court in The Hague on its dispute with China in the South China Sea, angering China which has said it would not participate.

China’s increasingly assertive claims in the South China Sea, along with its rapidly modernizing Navy, have rattled nerves around the region.

Zhou said about 16,000 maritime cases were heard by Chinese courts last year, the most in the world. China has the largest number of maritime courts globally, he added.

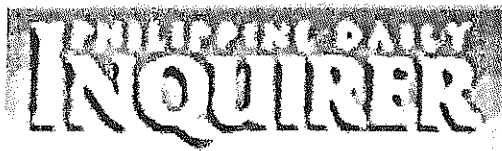
Zhou pointed to a 2014 case in a southeastern China maritime court involving a collision between a Chinese trawler and a Panama-flagged cargo ship in waters near the islets China disputes with Japan in the East China Sea.

The case, which was ended via mediation, clearly showed China’s jurisdiction over the region, he said.

Reuters

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AFP, PNP dispute UNTV title

EXPECT a fierce battle as Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police dispute the 4th UNTV Cup at 6 p.m. today at Smart Araneta Coliseum.

The top-seeded AFP Cavaliers are looking to ride the momentum of their 71-66 win in Game 2 last week to regain the crown they won two years ago at the expense

of PNP

Former PBA player Boyet Bautista, who exploded for 21 points in Game 2, will lead AFP's assault anew.

The champion team will receive P4 million, with P3.5 million going to its chosen charity. The beneficiary of the runner-up, on the other hand, will get P1.7 million from the P2M pot.

14 March 2016

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Navymen dominate Ronda Pilipinas Stage 2



ROQUE ROMY HOMILLADA

By June Navarro

ILOILO CITY—Philippine Navy-Standard Insurance is taking away the excitement in the Visayas leg of the 2016 LBC Ronda Pilipinas.

After a spectacular race in the kick-off stage, the Navymen dominated Stage 2 yesterday with Rudy Roque seizing lap honors and Ronald Oranza keeping the red jersey, Ronda's symbol of leadership, with ease.

Roque arrived simultaneously with Oranza, who finished second for the day, and third-placer Jan Paul Morales at the end of the sweltering 0.2-kilometer criterium at Megaworld Boulevard here.

The trio raised their arms in unison as they crossed the line in one hour, seven minutes

and 26 seconds.

"We worked as a team and got rewarded," said Oranza, winner of the opening stage held in Bago City, Negros Occidental.

For topping the race, Roque tied Oranza with 28 points but trailed by a split second in the overall standings.

Morales, the Mindanao leg champ, jumped from seventh to third with 16 points, along with Ronald Lomotos of Team LBC/MVP.

Rustom Lim, who lay third at the start of the day, fell to fifth overall with 13 points.

Lomotos and Lim finished with a big wave of riders, almost three minutes behind Roque and company.

Joining that group were Julius Mark Bonzo, George Oconer and Jerry Aquino Jr. of Team

LBC/MVP along with Navy riders Lloyd Lucien Reynante, El Joshua Cariño and Jhon Mark Camingao.

Roque, Oranza and Morales broke away early and never really gave other challengers a chance with the help of Reynante, Camingao and Cariño, who controlled the pace of the chase pack throughout.

Dennis Nebres, who figured in a crash near the finish in Stage 1, James Paolo Ferfas of Team LBC/MVP, Nelben L. Villafuerte and Yadu Salvacion bombed out of the race, shrinking the field to 30 riders.

Tomorrow's third stage promises a sprint finish after a mostly flat 122.35-km course from Iloilo to Roxas City while Stage 4 on Thursday is an individual time trial.

ONLINE NEWS

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PMA valedictorian: A 3-year-old kid's dream comes true

From Rappler (Mar 13): **PMA valedictorian: A 3-year-old kid's dream comes true**

From a toddler amazed by military vehicles, Kristian Dave Abiqui is now a full-fledged soldier, graduating at the top of the PMA Gabay-Laya Class of 2016

It was a dream that started when he was only 3 years old, a tiny toddler who was amazed by military vehicles and equipment on display at Fort Gregorio Del Pilar in Baguio City.

More than two decades later, Kristian Dave Abiqui stood before the Borromeo Field inside the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), a grown man of 23, the top graduate of the "Gabay-Laya" Class of 2016.

His father, Efren Abiqui, remembers that moment like it was yesterday.

"Nakita niya 'yung mga armored cars na naka display, mga arms. Sabi niya, 'Dad, picture picture!' So pinaupo namin doon habang nagpapicture siya. Then nung pumasok kami sa loob, nakakita siya ng kadete. That time, sabi niya, 'Daddy, picture picture,'" the older Abiqui told Rappler on the sidelines of his son's graduation on Sunday, March 13. (He saw the armored cars on display, the arms too. He said: Dad, take a picture! So we sat him down to take a picture. When we entered the camp, he saw a cadet. Again, he asked me to take a picture.)

"Habang lumalaki siya, kapag nagscascan siya ng pictures, parang may interest siya sa pagiging uniformed man," added the class toprnotcher's father. (As he grew up and looked at those photos again, it seemed like he had an interest in being a uniformed man.)

It wasn't always an easy decision to make, for Kristian Dave, his father, or his mother. The younger Abiqui was already a junior at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, taking up civil engineering, when he finally decided to take a leap in 2011 and join the military.

"It's a crossroads when I was in college. I was ideal back then and I also wanted to instill change in our country and I think the armed forces is one of the most stable institutions to have my own circle of influence as a junior officer," Abiqui, surrounded by family and friends, told media after the graduation rights.

What pushed him to finally enter the military? *"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity so hindi ko ma let go yung opportunity na yun, baka next time wala na,"* he said.
(I couldn't let go of this opportunity because it might not be there the next time.)

Abiqui is set to join the Navy as a second lieutenant at a crucial time – tensions between the Philippines and China over the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea) are rising, even in the midst of an arbitration try by government officials.

"The Navy is the service of the future. *Makikita natin* (It's clear) that we're an archipelagic country so we

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will need a strong Navy," said Abiqui.

As in all graduations, Sunday was a bittersweet moment for Abiqui and his classmates, members of the smallest class the military has seen in decades. As he spoke during his valedictory address, Abiqui waxed nostalgic, leaving messages of thanks to officials in the academy and words of encouragement for his underclassmen.

It was a bittersweet moment too for his parents, who will have to bid goodbye to their only son, as he begins a career in the armed forces. Abiqui would later admit his chosen career in the military remains a bitter pill to swallow for both his parents.

But his father, a technician at the Department of Public Works and Highways in Tuguegarao City, sees it differently. "*Kapag kontrahin mo yung interest nila, mag-iiba yung way nila. So this time, moral support ang i-aano namin sa kanya*," said the older Abiqui. (If you go against their interests, they'll stray. So this time, we offer all our moral support.)

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/125662-pma-2016-valedictorian-profile-kristian-dave-abiqui>

Posted by Retired Analyst at 11:46 AM No comments:

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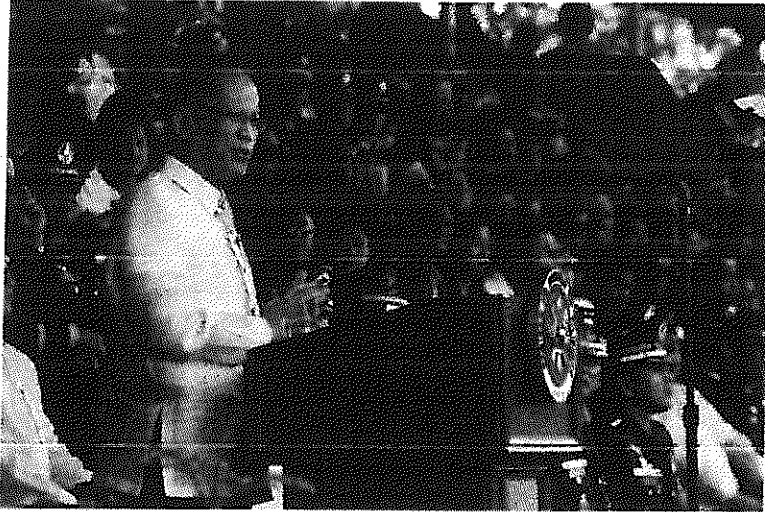
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Aquino hits 2 'anti-BBL senators' at PMA graduation

From Rappler (Mar 13): Aquino hits 2 'anti-BBL senators' at PMA graduation

President Benigno Aquino III does not identify the senators, who he says blocked the Bangsamoro Basic Law and failed to offer alternatives



BBL. President Benigno Aquino III raises the issue of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law as he speaks before the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 2016. Photo by Marcelino Pascua/Malacañang Photo Bureau

BAGUIO, Philippines – In his last hurrah before the Philippine Military Academy (PMA), President Benigno Aquino III did not hold back from hitting "two senators" who, he said, got in the way of a long-awaited peace deal between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Standing onstage alongside family and friends of the PMA Gabay-Laya Class of 2016 and ranking officials of the military and government, Aquino highlighted the hard life of the uniformed services in times of conflict.

"*Alam po natin ang kasabihan, ang kasundaluan ang huling magnanais na magkaroon ng kaguluhan. Sila nga ang unang sasabak sa hidwaan, sila ang unang mag-sasakripisyo at sila ang unang malalagay sa peligro,*" Aquino said on Sunday, March 13, during his address at the Class of 2016's graduation in Baguio City. (We're all familiar with the saying that it's the armed forces that desire conflict the least. They're exposed to war, they're the first to sacrifice, they're the first to be put in danger.)

The Aquino government, said the President, took measures to end decades of conflict in parts of Mindanao.

"Nariyan po ang panawagan ng Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL), kasama na ang Framework Agreement at Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Hangad natin: maghatid ng katarungan, kapayapaan, at kaunlaran sa Bangsamoro. Ang masakit po, may dalawang miyembro ng Senado na tahasang hinarang ang BBL," Aquino said. **(There's the BBL, the Framework Agreement, and the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro. Our goal: to bring justice, peace, and development to the Bangsamoro. Unfortunately, two members of the Senate actively blocked the passage of the BBL.)**

The proposed BBL would have paved the way for the creation of a new autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao, the

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result of years of negotiations between his government and the MILF. Both the Aquino government and the rebel group had said its passage would lead to peace in war-torn areas of Mindanao.

Aquino had hoped — and vowed — that the proposed measure would pass before his term ended, a timeline that seemed possible up until January 23, 2015, when more than 60 Filipinos, including 44 elite police commandos, died during clashes in Mamasapano town in Maguindanao.

Police forces were pinned down in hours-long clashes against MILF fighters, members of the breakaway Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and private armed groups. The Mamasapano clash triggered anti-BBL sentiments among lawmakers and the public, and cast doubt on the MILF's role in the peace deal.

(READ: With BBL 'dead', Aquino to strengthen Mindanao peace gains)

Up until Congress was adjourned, the Aquino administration had hoped for the measure's passage.

(READ: Blame absentee, indifferent lawmakers for failed BBL)

"Dito ko naalala ang mga sinasabi ng mga matatanda – sige, maliwanag na ayaw mo. Ano naman ang gusto mo? Ang dalawang miyembro ito ng Senado naiwan nalang sa ayaw, na walang nilalatag na mas mainam na solusyon. Kayo na nga po ang humusga kung sino sa atin ang nagkulang at sino naman ang tumotoo sa inyo," added the President. (During times like these, I remember what old people say: Okay, you don't like this. But what do you want? These two members of the Senate left it at 'I don't want it' but didn't even offer an alternative. I leave you to judge who failed and who fulfilled his promise to you.)

Aquino did not name the two senators but could have alluded to a handful of members of the Senate, most of which happen to be candidates in the 2016 national elections.

There's Senator Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who chairs the Senate committee on local government. At least two senators – Alan Peter Cayetano and Joseph Victor Ejercito – withdrew their signatures from the bill in the aftermath of the clash.

(READ: Cardinal Quevedo on BBL: 'Peace on the altar of politics')

Senator Grace Poe, meanwhile, chaired the committee that probed the deadly clash.

The draft committee report questioned whether the government should continue its deal with the MILF, noting that the group "refuse(d) to submit the findings of its internal investigations into the incident or disclose the identities of those involved in the massacre."

The MILF eventually released the findings of its probe into the clash but has thus far not released a list of names of members involved.

Marcos and Cayetano are vice presidential candidates while Poe is running for president.

(READ: Next administration must push BBL – Deles)

Aquino was in Baguio City on Sunday for activities related to his two jobs – as the sitting president and the chairman of the ruling Liberal Party. In the morning, Aquino graced the PMA graduation and in the afternoon, led a proclamation rally of his anointed candidates – bets of the LP-led "Daang Matuwid" coalition – in the city.

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Aquino's anointed candidate, LP standard-bearer Manuel "Mar" Roxas II, is also in the region for a series of campaign activities in Benguet province, Mountain Province, and Baguio City.

<http://www.rappler.com/nation/125674-aquino-anti-bbl-senators-pma-graduation>

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