

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



**TEAM ARMY**

Serving the people. Securing the land.

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

09 April 2017

Sunday

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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

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TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 9, 2017 | SUNDAY

**PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)**

**EDGE OF HIGH PRESSURE AREA AFFECTING NORTHERN LUZON EASTERLIES AFFECTING EASTERN SECTIONS OF CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN LUZON, VISAYAS AND MINDANAO (As of 5:00 AM - Apr. 9, 2017)**

<b>SUNRISE</b> 6:46 AM	<b>SUNSET</b> 6:09 PM
<b>MOONRISE</b> 4:38 PM	<b>MOONSET</b> 4:23 AM
<b>FIRST QUARTER</b> APR 4 2:36 AM	<b>FULL MOON</b> APR 11 2:08 PM
<b>LOW TIDE</b> 3:33 AM 0.03 Meter	<b>HIGH TIDE</b> 6:16 PM 0.78 Meter

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

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APR 10		APR 11		APR 10		APR 11	
<b>METRO MANILA</b>	24 - 34 °C	24 - 33 °C	<b>TAGAYTAY</b>	20 - 30 °C	20 - 30 °C	<b>TACLOBAN</b>	24 - 31 °C
<b>TUGUEGARAO</b>	23 - 33 °C	23 - 34 °C	<b>LEGAZPI</b>	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	<b>CAGAYAN DE ORO</b>	24 - 31 °C
<b>LAOAG</b>	24 - 31 °C	24 - 32 °C	<b>PUERTO PRINCESA</b>	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	<b>METRO DAVAO</b>	25 - 33 °C
<b>BAGUIO</b>	15 - 26 °C	16 - 25 °C	<b>ILOILO/BACOLOD</b>	26 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	<b>ZAMBOANGA</b>	24 - 33 °C
<b>SBMA/CLARK</b>	25 - 35 °C	25 - 36 °C	<b>METRO CEBU</b>	25 - 30 °C	25 - 30 °C		

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# QUAKE SWARM HITS BATANGAS

Six successive tremors trigger panic, trip power

Three strong earthquakes rocked a coastal region near the Philippine capital within half an hour of each other on Saturday, sending people running out of buildings.

There were no immediate reports of damage or casualties from the quakes, the strongest of which hit the coast close to the town of Mabini, in Batangas

province south of Manila.

The first 5.7-magnitude tremor struck inland at 3:08 p.m. followed by the 5.9-magnitude quake just a minute later, their epicenters within a few kilometers of each other, according to US geologists.

The 5-magnitude quake hit in the same region after another 20 minutes.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) later reported different readings, but putting the strongest tremor at a magnitude of 6.

The quake was followed by three weaker quakes with magnitudes 3.5 to 4.7.

The quake was felt in varying intensities in

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## FROM A1

surrounding areas and as far as Manila's financial district of Makati, where local broadcaster ABS-CBN showing live footage of frightened commuters fleeing the passenger terminal at the port of Batangas, near the epicenters.

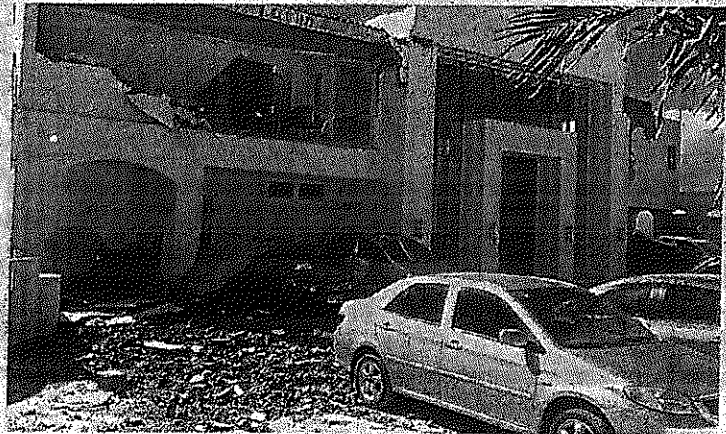
ABS-CBN quoted local officials as saying the quakes broke the windows of some houses in the region, but there were no reports of casualties.

The series of temblors was caused by tectonic in origin and caused by the movement of a local fault, said Renato Solidum, Phivolcs head.

"We can call this an earthquake swarm," Solidum said in a television interview. Swarms are events where a local area is hit by a sequence of many quakes in a relative short period of time.

"Swarms" differ from earthquakes succeeded by a series of aftershocks because no single earthquake in the sequence is considered the main shock.

Solidum said the quakes were not powerful enough to cause tsunamis, although he welcomed news that many people immediately went to higher



QUAKE-HIT Netanya Resort in Mabini, Batangas



'ACT OF NATURE' Cars hit by debris.

ground at the onset of the quake.

"This is tectonic in origin, caused by the movement of a local, unnamed fault between the towns of Tingloy and Mabini," he said.

The movement was felt in varying intensities in about 40 towns in Batangas, Laguna, Cavite and Quezon and in

metropolitan Manila. As of 4:43 p.m. nearly 800 small aftershocks were recorded, but they were too weak to trigger any tsunamis or damage.

Power was cut off but was immediately restored in affected areas, but centuries-old churches and some establishments in Batangas sustained minor damage, including the fire station in the city, disaster relief officials said.

At least 8,000 people, including patients in four hospitals in the province, were evacuated to open areas as the swarm shook buildings in Batangas.

—AFP

See related story on Page D4

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## Rights group casts doubts on military brass' sincerity in peace truce

A militant rights group has expressed doubt on military leaders' sincerity in carrying out the upcoming interim joint ceasefire agreement between the government and communist rebels.

According to Karapatan, the refusal of the Department of National Defense (DND) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to cease tracking down members of New People's Army (NPA) is a preview to how they will handle the implementation of the any agreements that would be forged during the peace talks.

"The military's refusal to suspend all military operations and pull-out from communities, despite overwhelming clamor of peasants and national minorities, and the

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### From page 1

poisonous duet of warmongers (DND Secretary) Delfin Lorenzana and (AFP chief of staff) Eduardo Año to sabotage the continuing peace talks reveal their disdain for free land distribution and genuine agrarian reform," Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay said.

Military presence and operations cause unpeace in most, if not all, communities. Nobody is buying their sorry attempts to portray themselves as messiahs, except their fellow warmongers and hacenderos in government," she added.

Palabay also said they are bothered with the military's association with landowners and local politicians, saying it will be difficult to freely distribute lands to farmers and peasants as mullied in the recent joint statement penned by both the government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front (NDF) peace panels that capped the fourth round of talks in the Netherlands last week.

For the leftists, AFP operatives are in cahoots with some landlords' private army or goons that allegedly often introduce themselves as NPAs so as to extort money and terrorize civilians.

With the Armed Forces of the Philippines and its paramilitary groups acting as private armies of big landlords

in the country, the objectives behind their constant terror attacks against farmers and indigenous peoples are in plain view," Palabay said.

"They protect the interests of landlords and big business, because they profit from it, hence giving peasants the land they tilled for decades and centuries is farthest from their fascist minds," she added.

Karapatan cited the recent killing spree of civilian farmer leaders in Mindanao and the forced evacuation of peasant communities in Calbiga, Samar.

On April 2, farmer Danilo Nadal, 37, was gunned down in Barangay Tibagun, Pantukan, Compostela Valley, by suspected agents of the 46th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army while boarding his motorcycle. He sustained 10 gunshot wounds.

On April 4, around 1,000 residents from four interior barangays of Calbiga town in Samar evacuated to the town gymnasium and civic center due to the continuing encampment of 87th IBPA troops in their communities.

On April 6, another farmer, Elias Pureza, 60, was shot dead by assailants believed to be agents under the 60th IBPA in Barangay Mamangan, San Isidro, Davao del Norte.

According to reports, armed men forcefully entered his home and shot him in front of his family.

Ted Tuvera

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TURNOVER TO THIRD PARTY

# REBELS SEARCH FOR SAFE WAY TO FREE CAPTIVES

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.  
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCENA CITY—Communist rebels are in search of options to safely release what they call prisoners of war (POWs), referring to three soldiers and a policeman, amid the refusal of the armed forces to suspend military operations in areas where the captives are being held, according to communist party founder Jose Ma. Sison.

Sison, acknowledged as founder of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), said in an online interview that the CPP and its armed component, the New People's Army (NPA), were studying how to safely release the captives without endangering their lives and that of their rebel captors in the absence of a military cessation of offensives against the rebels.

"There are precedents for the release of POWs to a domestic third party," said Sison in the interview on Saturday.

"President Duterte had acted in a third party role several times when he was still a may-

or," Sison said, referring to many instances when the rebels released their captives to Mr. Duterte when he was still Davao City mayor.

### Goodwill gesture

He said rebels were committed to releasing their captives not only to heed one of four conditions set by Mr. Duterte for peace talks to proceed but also as a gesture of "goodwill and confidence" by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP), an umbrella organization of underground leftist groups, in relation to peace talks with the Duterte administration.

Aside from the release of captives, Mr. Duterte had also demanded a ceasefire and a stop to rebel tax collection as his conditions to resume formal peace negotiations with the rebels.

Sison blamed Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenza and armed forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año for the delay of the release of the captive soldiers and policeman.

"They do not care about their personnel. They have no mercy for their families," Sison said.

"They do not respect President Duterte's desire to have these POWs freed by the NPA," he added.

Lorenzana and Año, he said, continue to push for an all-out war on the rebels "without considering the safety and orderly release of their own men."

### Disconnect

Sison said he believed that the military had not yet been apprised of results of negotiations in the Netherlands between rebel and government representatives which had led to an agreement to declare a unilateral ceasefire.

"It seems that they suffer from a disconnect in policy and action regarding confidence building measures in the peace negotiations," he said.

Sison said the NDFP had already asked the government peace panel to work for the suspension of military operations to pave the way for the captives' release. They are Pfc. Edwin Salan, Sgt. Solaiman Calucop, Pfc. Samuel Garay and PO2 Jerome Natividad. INQ

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## 'IS couple' now out of NBI

By GHIO ONG

The couple suspected to be members of the Islamic State (IS) were removed from custody of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday.

Officials, however, did not say where Kuwaiti Husayn al-Dhafiri and his wife Syrian Rahaf Zina would be taken.

Sources said the couple were taken out by a joint team of NBI and Bureau of Immigration operatives and taken to the custody of the Philippine National Police (PNP) for further questioning.

"Actually, we have said even before that we have no capacity to detain those kind of people because they are considered terrorists. In our detention facility, we jail those still undergoing investigation," an NBI official said.

"Also, the intelligence community wants to know more from them, so they can also ask them," the source added.

The NBI has reportedly concluded interrogation of the couple.

Al-Dhafiri and Zina had been living and working in Manila since January. They were arrested on March 25 at a condominium unit in Taguig City, officials said.

Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II on Friday said military intelligence reports had pointed to al-Dhafiri as allegedly involved in explosives manufacturing and planning a terror attack against his home country Kuwait.

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente added al-Dhafiri is a ranking IS operative in Syria and is also known as Warsh al-Kuwaiti and Abu Muslim al-Kuwaiti.

Morente said Zina is the widow of Abu Jandal Al-Kuwaiti, a high ranking IS commander who was killed during an airstrike in December last year.

Morente said a working visa allowed al-Dhafiri's entry to the country, which was approved by a recruitment agency Q8 Solutions.

He said the couple flew to Davao for four days and to Cebu for three days before flying back to Manila.

Aguirre added al-Dhafiri also entered the country as a tourist in 2016.

Aguirre though admitted the couple is not directly linked to any local terror group, saying they are still verifying their activities during their stay.

NBI spokesman Ferdinand Lavin said any information on the foreigners remains "compartmentalized."

"It is an immigration matter, even we are not allowed access to that information," he said.

Lavin said the NBI had asked permission to access the couple for information.

"Because we have to know the level of threat also at the NBI where we are keeping them in custody," Lavin said.

"We were allowed but it was very limited to (their) involvement and all, but where they will be transferred, we cannot be given any information," he added.

On the other hand, the local recruitment industry said the arrest of the Arab couple would also put a stop to what they claimed were illegal operations of Q8 Solutions, a recruitment agency.

Local recruitment officials claimed Q8 has collected some P100 million in medical fees from Filipino migrant workers.

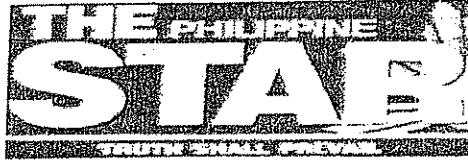
Recruiters deploying workers to Kuwait and other stakeholders have long been calling for an end to the highly expensive new medical system covering all Kuwait-bound Filipino workers.

They said the medical system is burdensome for workers who are forced to shoulder the cost of the exorbitant cost of the mandatory health examination prior to deployment to Kuwait.

Under the new medical system, Kuwait-bound OFWs are required to undergo medical screening at a clinic accredited by Q8, which submits the medical results to the Kuwait embassy. — With Mayen Jaymalin



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## Abu Sayyaf crushed in three months – AFP

By JAIME LAUDE

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) is confident it can wipe out the Abu Sayyaf within three months.

AFP spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said the military is making headway in its campaign against the Basilan and Sulu-based bandit group.

President Duterte has ordered the military to sustain the offensive against the Abu Sayyaf and to finish them off within the six-month deadline.

"We are confident that we will meet our targets and deadline. We expect more support and cooperation from the communities where we operate as well as from the local government units," Padilla said.

Duterte on Thursday reminded the military to run down the Abu Sayyaf.

He directed AFP chief Gen. Eduardo

Año to use all available military assets in destroying the bandit group.

Padilla said the AFP is making progress in the war against the Abu Sayyaf in terms of casualties and the firearms recovered from them.

"We still have more than three months to work in degrading their capacity to carry out their criminal activities and we will definitely do more along this line," he said.

The Abu Sayyaf are still holding more than a dozen foreign and local hostages, who they have reportedly divided among their groups in order to derail the military's ongoing rescue operations.

The AFP has deployed thousands of troops in the Abu Sayyaf strongholds of Basilan, Tawi-Tawi and Jolo islands following the beheading of German Jurgen Kantner in February.

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## AFP: Soldiers priority in KIG

By JAIME LAUDE

Following orders by President Duterte to occupy all islets and land features in the Spratlys under Philippine control, the military said it would focus first on improving the living conditions of soldiers deployed in the Kalayaan Island Group.

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) spokesman Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said new facilities and structures would be built on seven islets and two reefs to make them more habitable for the soldiers manning them.

The new structures would

include barracks and desalination facilities. He said better sewage systems as well as power generators would be installed. Additional shelters for fishermen seeking refuge from bad weather would also be constructed, the AFP said.

At present, the military outposts in KIG – except for Pag-Asa Island – still don't have any source of potable water. A Navy logistic vessel supplies the outposts with water.

In some outposts – like in Panata sandbar – soldiers have to catch rainwater for their water supply. The soldiers have thus learned to conserve water.

"For bathing, we first use salt water. We usually make do with two dippers of fresh water for rinsing," a soldier in Panata earlier told **The STAR**.

Meanwhile, a senior military official said that while the AFP is in a position to establish new outposts as ordered by Duterte, such undertaking should be done quietly so as not to agitate other claimant countries in the West Philippine Sea and South China Sea, particularly China.

"This is best taken up quietly to ensure our moves are not preempted by adversarial action," the official, who declined to be named, said.

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## AFP beefs up troops in disputed islands

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff General Eduardo Año has ordered the deployment of ad-

ditional troops in seven islands and two shoals in the West Philippine Sea.

The deployment was ordered after President Duterte, in his visit to the Armed Forces' Western

►6

Command in Palawan Thursday revealed his intention to venture to Pagasa Island on Independence Day and raise the Philippine flag there to draw attention to the country's jurisdiction over the disputed territory.

He also ordered the AFP to occupy all islands/territories and put structures and hoist the Philippine flag.

The 37.2-hectare Pagasa Island, the second largest land mass in the Spratlys group of islands, lies 480 kilometers west of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan.

Although the island is being administered as part of Kalayaan, Palawan, it is also being claimed by China, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

"That's an order from the President and I intend to carry that out. That's ours as per Arbitration Ruling so we don't see any problem," Año said.

"Actually, all the islands there totalling seven plus the Ayungin Shoal and Rizal Reef are occupied by our troops. We will reinforce our troops and improve the structures and facilities there," Año added.

"Within our EEZ (exclusive economic zone) there are submerged lands or rocks that we may occupy but we need to put up structures where our troops can stay. (But) I cannot give you the numbers and location for security reasons," Año said.

Among the shoals still without structures include Sabina, Alicia Annie, Halfmoon, and Royal Captain Shoal.

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# Aging survivors mark 75th anniversary of Bataan Death March

SAN FRANCISCO—Ramon Regalado was starving and sick with malaria when he slipped away from his Japanese captors during the infamous 1942 Bataan Death March in the Philippines, escaping a brutal trudge through steamy jungle that killed hundreds of Americans and thousands of Filipinos who fought for the US during World War II.

On Saturday, the former wartime machine gun operator will join a dwindling band of veterans of the war in San Francisco's Presidio to honor the soldiers who died on the march and those who made it to a prisoner of war camp only to die there.

They'll also commemorate the mostly Filipino soldiers who held off Japanese forces in the Philippines for three months without supplies of food or ammunition before a US army major surrendered 75,000 troops to Japan on April 9, 1942.

## Starving Filipinos

Few Americans are aware of the Filipinos who were starving as they relentlessly fended off the more powerful and well-supplied Japanese forces, said Cecilia Gaerlan, executive director of the Berkeley, California-based Bataan Legacy Historical Society organizing the event at the former military fort.

"Despite fighting without any air support and without any reinforcement, they disrupted the timetable of the Imperial Japanese Army," she said. "That was their major role, to perform a delaying action. And they did that beyond expectations."

More than 250,000 Filipino soldiers served in World War II, when the Philippines were a US territory. But after the war ended, President Harry Truman signed laws that stripped away promises of benefits and citizenship for Filipino veterans.

Only recently have they won back some concessions and acknowledgment, including the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. The veterans also received lump-sum payments as part of the 2009 stimulus law.

An estimated 18,000 Filipino veterans of World War II are still alive and living in the US.

Tens of thousands of Filipino and US troops were forced on the 105-kilometer (65-mile) march and Gaerlan said as many as 650 Americans and 10,000 Filipinos died in stifling heat and at the hands of Japanese soldiers who shot, bayoneted or beat soldiers who fell or stopped for water.

More than 80 percent of those forced on the march were Filipino.

After they arrived at a prison camp set up at Camp O'Donnell, she said an additional 1,600 Americans and 20,000 Filipinos died from dysentery, starvation and disease.

Gaerlan grew up knowing that her father, Luis Gaerlan, Jr., had been in a wartime march in which a lot of people had died. But he rarely spoke about it or he would re-enact it with rat-a-tat-tat sound effects for the guns that made her laugh.

She started researching the march in 2011 and tried to elicit more details from her father. He broke down crying telling her that some men were so desperate that they killed themselves. Others wrote goodbye letters to their relatives during the march.

"And he said he was start-

ing to write his farewell letter, because a lot of men did that and I asked him, 'Well, were you going to take your own life?' she said, 'And he didn't answer.'

Gaerlan's father died in 2014 at age 94.

She successfully lobbied California last year to mandate teaching details of the battle and march in high schools.

She also collects march veterans' stories before they die, including the memories of 99-year-old Regalado, who lives in the San Francisco suburb of El Cerrito.

#### War break out

When the war broke out, Regalado was a member of the Philippine Scouts, a military branch of the US Army for Filipino soldiers.

He and two other soldiers were assigned to feed horses during the march and slipped away when guards were not watching them, Regalado said.

A farmer took in the three, even though the penalty for doing so was death. All were sick with malaria. Only Regalado survived.

He went on to join a guerrilla resistance movement against the Japanese and moved in 1950 to the San Francisco Bay Area to work for the US military.

Regalado credits his survival and long life to his high morale.

While being cared for by the farmer, he recalls telling himself: "I'm not going to die."—AP



Regalado—AP



Gaerlan—AP

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## US Special Forces joining PH troops in symbolic 'Bataan Death March'

By **MAR T. SUPNAD**

**MARIVELES, Bataan** — In a display of solidarity in honoring wartime troops, the United States Special Forces will join Filipino soldiers and police officers in a commemorative march to mark the 75th anniversary of the Bataan Death March today.

Starting off at Kilometer Zero of this town, the symbolic march will traverse the Zigzag Road in Bataan, parts of Pampanga enroute to Capas, Tarlac – a distance of 145 kilometers.

Freeport Area of Bataan (FAB)

Information Officer Carissa Caraig said this is the exact same distance traveled on foot by thousands of Filipino and American freedom fighters, many of whom died along the way due to starvation and fatigue.

Caraig said the march has been dubbed the "Freedom Trail" and is open to the public to join or witness.

Tsaris Salgado, president of Think Tank Global, one of the organizers, said the BDM was set to start at midnight today.

"US Special Forces together with our own military, will march together

the 145-km route of BDM, not just to re-enact the tragic day in history, but most importantly, in honor of our World War II heroes," said Salgado.

"They will pass through five historical stops from Mariveles, Bataan to San Fernando, Pampanga before they reach Capas, Tarlac by 7 a.m. of April 11," said Salgado.

Mariveles Mayor AJ Concepcion will deliver welcome remarks, together with General Resty Aguilar of the Philippine Veterans Administration Office (PVAO), at the start of the march which is fully supported by Governor Abet S. Garcia.

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# Duterte to lead 'Araw ng Kagitingan' rites

By **MAR T. SUPNAD** and AP

**M**T. SAMAT, Bataan— President Duterte leads today the celebration of the 75th "Araw ng Kagitingan" atop of this historic mountain in Pilar town, where thousands – including survivors of World War II – are expected to converge to pay tribute to the motherland's freedom fighters.

Bataan Governor Abet S. Garcia said the President will keynote the event to be graced by foreign dignitaries, particularly from the United States of America and Japan.

Senior Superintendent Benjamin Silo, Jr., Bataan Police Provincial Office (PPO) director, confirmed, "the Ambassador of Japan and the Deputy Ambassador of America and their delegates are coming."

Unlike the previous years' celebrations, Garcia said that this landmark anniversary will feature various programs such as a parade of floats and a "Freedom Trail" or commemorative march stretching 145 kilometers, among others.

Araw ng Kagitingan is the official holiday marking what is referred to in history books as the "Fall of Bataan," highlighted by the tragic human event known as the "Bataan Death March" – a forced march of Filipino and American prisoners of war (POWs) with the intent to kill, brutalize, weaken and demoralize as many of the captives as possible along the way.

The Fall of Bataan was the end to a fierce battle between the Japanese Imperial Army invaders and the Allied Forces on Mount Samat.

Taking special seats at the event are WWII veterans and their families, said Garcia, who stressed the importance of continuously honoring those who have risked or sacrificed their lives for genera-

tions of Filipinos to enjoy freedom.

## US remembers well

In the United States, Filipino and American survivors of the Death March will also be marking the special occasion.

Ramon Regalado was starving and sick with malaria when he slipped away from his Japanese captors during the infamous 1942 Bataan Death March, escaping a brutal trudge through steamy jungle that killed hundreds of Americans and thousands of Filipino freedom fighters during World War II.

On Saturday in San Francisco, California (today in Manila), the former wartime machine-gun operator will join a dwindling band of veterans of the war at the Presidio to honor the soldiers who died on the march and those who made it to a POW camp only to die there.

They'll also commemorate the mostly Filipino soldiers who held off Japanese forces in the Philippines for three months without supplies of food or ammunition before a US army major surrendered 75,000 troops to Japan on April 9, 1942.

## The Filipino stand

Few Americans are aware of the Filipinos who were starving as they relentlessly fended off the more powerful and well-supplied Japanese forces, said Cecilia Gaerlan, executive director of the Berkeley, California-based Bataan Legacy Historical Society organizing the event at the former military fort.

"Despite fighting without any air support and without any reinforcement, they disrupted the timetable of the Imperial Japanese army," she said. "That was their major role, to perform a delaying action. And they did that beyond expectations."

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of benefits and citizenship for Filipino veterans.

Only recently have they won back some concessions and acknowledgment,

including the nation's highest civilian honor, the Congressional Gold Medal. The veterans also received lump-sum payments as part of the 2009 stimulus

law.

An estimated 18,000 Filipino veterans of World War II are still alive and living in the US.

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**AWARENESS**

# 75th 'Araw ng Kagitingan' commemoration

IN this year's 75th commemoration of "Araw ng Kagitingan" (Day of Valor), also called Bataan Day, on April 9, 2017, the nation pays tribute to the heroism and gallantry of Filipino soldiers who fought alongside American forces during World War II, to defend Bataan, Corregidor, and Bessang Pass.

A prelude to "Araw ng Kagitingan," Philippine Veterans Week is observed on April 5-11, 2017, to promote, preserve, and memorialize the ideals and heroic deeds of Filipino veterans who fought for freedom and democracy.

The twin celebrations, with the theme, "Parangal sa mga Beterano, Tungo sa Bayan na Nararapat sa mga Pilipino, mga Pilipino na Nararapat sa Bayan," remember those who rendered military

service in defending the Philippines in times of war and their contributions in securing the country's sovereignty and independence.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte is expected to deliver his message at the "Dambana ng Kagitingan" (Shrine of Valor) atop Mount Samat in Pilar, Bataan, before an audience of veterans, government officials, and representatives of the United States and Japan. Veterans will offer flowers at Libingan ng mga Bayani. There will be commemorative rites in Bataan and Corregidor, as well as veterans parade, floral offerings in heroes' monuments, photo-exhibits and film showings in cities and towns.

The Philippine Embassy in Washington, DC, marks "Araw ng Kagitingan" with

wreathlaying at the WWII Memorial at the National Mall, and a program at the embassy's Romulo Hall. The Philippine Consulate in Honolulu will hold activities at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific.

"Araw ng Kagitingan" marks the surrender of more than 76,000 soldiers – 67,000 Filipinos, 11,796 Americans, and 1,000 Filipino-Chinese – by the American Army chief Major General Edward P. King to the Japanese Army at dawn on April 9, 1942 after a gallant, heroic stand that resulted in the Fall of Bataan and the ensuing "Death March" from Mariveles,

Bataan.

American and Filipino liberation forces eventually retook Bataan on February 8, 1945. A giant memorial cross was built at Dambana ng Kagitingan to honor the 76,000 captured soldiers.

An excerpt from "Bataan Has Fallen," written by Salvador P. Lopez and broadcast from Malinta Tunnel in Corregidor, reminds Filipinos of the event's historic significance: "Bataan has fallen. The world will long remember the epic struggle that Filipino and American soldiers put up in the jungle fastness and along the rugged coast of Bataan. Bataan

has fallen, but the spirit that made it stand – a beacon to all the liberty-loving peoples of the world – cannot fall!"

Republic Act 3022 was enacted in 1961 declaring April 9 of every year as Bataan Day. Letter of Instruction No. 1087 on November 26, 1980, made "Araw ng Kagitingan" a public holiday. Executive Order 203 on 1987 renamed April 9 "Araw ng Kagitingan (Bataan and Corregidor Day)." A month later, Executive Order No. 292 revised the holidays anew. Executive Order No. 203 on June 30, 1987, proclaimed April 9 as "Araw ng Kagitingan."

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# ARMM gov echoes Duterte's order to eliminate Abu Sayyaf

Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Gov. Mujiv Hataman yesterday emphasized the need to ensure the safety of civilians as he welcomed President Duterte's order to finish off the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG).

"We welcome President Duterte's most recent pronouncement regarding the government's engagement with the Abu Sayyaf, recognizing the futility of dealing with the said local terror group and choosing instead to take action against their crimes. It was never the ARMM regional government's policy to deal with criminals and terrorists," Hataman said.

"However, the regional government hopes that in dealing with the Abu Sayyaf, state forces

will conduct law enforcement operations, but at the same time ensure that civilians are protected at all times. More often than not, the communities bear the brunt of armed conflict, and we in the regional government, with the help of local government units, assure the provision of assistance to internally-displaced persons in conflict-affected areas."

On Friday, President Duterte renewed his marching order to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf bandits during his visit at Camp Teodulfo Bautista in Jolo, Sulu.

"There is no backing down from terrorism and illegal drugs, otherwise our country would be ruined," he was quoted as saying.

"They would not honor any sort of negotiation. All they want is to

kill. That is all they know. We might as well finish them off," the President added.

Hataman said there is a need for the local government units in ARMM to beef up measures to fight against the terror group.

"We call on the local government units to take on a more proactive role against the continued threat of terrorism in our region. The only way to sustain the government's response against terrorism is for our local government units to lead the fight against terrorism, making sure that there is no place for extremism and terror in our communities," he said.

"We also call on our religious leaders to emphasize that terrorism has nothing to do with

our faith, whether we are Muslims, Christians, or Lumad. We are called upon to take care of one another, to embrace and preserve life, and to respect the rights of each other."

The military has been intensifying its operations in the island provinces of Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi following the order of the President to wipe out the Abu Sayyaf within a six-month period. The deadline will lapse on June 30.

About 40 Abu Sayyaf members have been neutralized since the campaign started.

Although a number of kidnapped victims have been rescued in recent weeks, the bandits are still holding about 28 hostages.

**PNA**

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## DND chief calls for rapid int'l response in wake of shrinking global community

**CEBU CITY** – With the global community shrinking fast, there is an urgent need for an international response should disasters and other security threats befall any nation.

This was the rationale behind the just concluded Asean Defense Senior Officials' Meeting held here early this week.

"As a result, various security threats, such as terrorism, illegal drugs, human trafficking, cybercrimes, and disasters now go beyond borders and often need a quick response on an international scale," National Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

These threats are further exacerbated by rapid advancements in communication and transportation, he added.

With these threats around, the DND chief said it is important that the Philippines craft closer defense ties with its neighbors for better coordination.

Lorenzana said Asean defense officials also aim to create a mechanism to prevent miscalculations in areas of common maritime concerns, and develop strategies to counter unwelcome superpower advances and their rivalries in the region.

The Asean groups 10 Southeast Asian states that promote intergovernmental cooperation and facilitate economic integration.

Since its formation on August 8, 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand, the organization's membership has expanded to include Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

Its principal aims include accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, alongside the protection of regional stability and the provision of a mechanism for member countries to resolve differences peacefully. **PNA**

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## Gov't says no threat despite IS arrests

By Ted Tuvera

Despite the undeniable threat of the presence of members of international terrorist network Islamic State (IS) in Metro Manila, Malacañang and the Philippine National Police (PNP) yesterday assured the public that the Philippines overall remains a safe place.

Presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, in a statement, said that the President has instructed state security forces to be vigilant on the terrorists' creeping movements across the country.

"The government, utilizing the military, police, and civilian (resources), will exhaust all efforts to ensure peace and order, as

well as the safety of our people," Abella said, while urging the public to be observant on their communities.

"We encourage our citizens to remain vigilant, alert and ever mindful of their surroundings as well as report to concerned authorities any information to prevent possible terrorist or criminal activities," he added.

Authorities two weeks ago nabbed suspected ISIS members Husayn Al-Dhafiri, a Kuwaiti national, and Rahaf Zina, a Syrian national who claimed to be his wife. They were presented to the media last Thursday by Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre.

The arrest was done

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through the coordination of the US government's Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) which also confirmed that IS elements had already established contacts with Islamic bandits in Mindanao.

Furthermore, Malacañang lauded the Bureau of Immigration's (BI) efforts in foiling terrorist threats.

"We commend the BI, the Department of Justice and other agencies of government for the swift action and timely arrest of these individuals that may have posed a danger to our security," Abella said.

"The arrest in Taguig City of a Kuwaiti and a Syrian national who are suspected members of the Islamic State is a testament (that) our ongoing cooperation internationally against terrorism and the vigilance of our agencies and security sector (is working)," he added.

Meanwhile, authorities in Davao City are following up reports saying that Al-Dhafiri and Sini stayed there.

Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) Commander Lieutenant General Leonardo Guerrero said the apprehended couple spent four days in the city and could probably have recruited members for ISIS. Authorities are also trying to track down their contacts in Davao City.

Davao City, President Duterte's hometown, endured a terror attack last year done by Islamic extremists whose comrades were

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captured near Metro Manila.

PNP Public Information Office (PIO) chief and spokesman Senior Supt. Dionardo Carlos in a press conference in Camp Crame, Quezon City, said the PNP has deployed more than 75,000 policemen for the Holy Week festivities and during the summer break of schools.

"With the deployment of PNP of over 75,000 policemen for Semana Santa (Holy Week), we haven't seen any threat," Carlos said.

He noted the deployment is to secure the safety of travelers for the Lenten Season.

"We (will) reinforce based on available intel information. So far, there are no report of threats on the part of PNP or information pertaining to other persons connected with the two arrested foreign nationals," he said.

The PNP has launched Operation Summer Vacation (Sumvac) last Friday that will last until June 13.

Likewise, the PNP reminded residents to secure their establishments and homes from burglars, especially during the observance of the Holy Week (April 9-16).

Among others, the significant events during the summer vacation are the Araw ng Kagitingan, Holy Week, Labor Day, Pistas and Flores de Mayo.

#### **IS couple in AFP custody**

The two suspected IS members who were arrested recently in Taguig City are now in the custody of Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Based on the letter sent to Aguirre by the NBI Fugitive Search Unit, Husayn Al-Dhafiri, Kuwait citizen; and Rahaf Zina, a Syrian national, were turned over to AFP custody on Saturday, through Major Jonathian Escopalao, ISG PA, AFP at ISG HQ Fort Bonifacio Taguig City.

Aguirre said the Department of Justice (DOJ) will continue its investigation to determine if there were other members of the terrorist group in the country following the arrest of the duo.

"We are going to continue, in partnership with our intelligence units, to verify if there are other persons involved," said Aguirre.

The two, whose arrests stemmed from the deportation request of the Kuwaiti Embassy, were detained at the NBI while awaiting the finalization of the deportation proceedings against them.

Based on intelligence reports provided by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the information given by the Kuwaiti government, Al-Dhafiri is a member of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which is another term for IS.

Al-Dhafiri is allegedly involved in explosives manufacturing and possibly on operational planning against Kuwait, while Rahaf is the widow of the slain Abu Jandal Al-Kuwaiti, who is the number two military commander of the IS operating in Syria.

Aguirre said the couple had been in the country since January 28 using working visas which was

facilitated by a local company called Q8 Solutions.

Citing verification made by the BI of Al-Dhafiri's travel records, the DOJ chief noted that the Kuwaiti has been in the Philippines several times in 2016 using a tourist visa.

Aguirre said the two were charged for violation of immigration laws in the country as they failed to present immigration documents. He added that deportation proceedings are being conducted.

BI Commissioner Jaime Morente assured that the bureau is conducting an investigation against the company. Since their arrival last January, Morente learned during the debriefing of the couple that the couple went to Davao for four days and to Cebu for three days.

During the couple's stay, Morente admitted that it was possible that the two may have met with members of local terror groups like the Maute.

"That is a possibility and that is being investigated by our intelligence service," he assured.

"I think this company (Q8 Solutions) was being investigated by the House (of Representatives) Rep. Joey Salceda in 2016 for illegal recruitment," the BI chief added.

Morente said Al-Dhafiri would be deported to Kuwait while Zina would be deported to Qatar since it was her last known location before she arrived in the country. He said they are coordinating with the security services of Kuwait and Qatar for the turnover of the two.

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## 'Kagitingan'

**T**oday, Araw ng Kagitingan, we formally remember the valorous Filipino and American soldiers who, having finally surrendered to the Japanese invaders 75 years ago, set off at gunpoint on the terrible march from Mariveles in Bataan to San Fernando in Pampanga, and thence to Capas in Tarlac by a brutal train ride.

The Filipino and US forces in the Far East had dug in for a determined last stand after being surrounded by the Japanese Imperial Army. On April 9, 1942, US Gen. Edward P. King surrendered to Japanese Gen. Kameichiro Nagano, ending the resistance in the Bataan peninsula. Reported the Voice of Freedom in its radio broadcast: "Bataan has fallen. The Philippine-American troops on this war-ravaged and blood-stained peninsula have laid down their arms. With heads bloody but unbowed, they have yielded to the superior force and numbers of the enemy."

The Philippines was the last country in Southeast Asia to yield to Japan. The surrender of 60,000 Filipino and 15,000 American soldiers served its noble purpose: to delay the Japanese advance. It also led to the infamous Bataan Death March, during which thousands of Filipino and hundreds of American prisoners of war died.

There had been much criticism of what used to be called Bataan Day, to mark the "Fall of Bataan." The stinging question was: Why commemorate the defeat, the surrender, when it is the uncommon valor of Filipino and American soldiers that should be remembered?

The change to Araw ng Kagitingan was made in 1980. What has not changed is the nation's appreciation for the fighting men of Bataan, whose number has dwindled to a precious few. Araw ng Kagitingan itself is now part of Philippine Veterans Week (April 5-11), an occasion to honor both veterans of World War II and all who served admirably in the military.



**WHAT HAS NOT  
CHANGED IS THE  
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A perennial issue is the poignant conditions of the war vets. The government is mandated to provide them a monthly pension, death and disability pension, medical benefits, and burial assistance. Those financial benefits come up to a minuscule amount for the surviving vets and their families. And yet they have to deal with a mind-boggling bureaucracy and an unconscionable wait to collect what is due them, let alone whatever pitiful increases are offered, as though their faltering voices are too faint to be heard.

And the soldiers fight still. Last year, the guerrilla Maximiano Gama, 90 and almost blind, fought to reclaim the old age pension that just stopped coming in 2004. While the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) promised to review his case, his plight is not unusual for war vets who constantly have to prove their identities. Gama, for one, a member of the Hukbalahap's Squadron 24, Battalion 2, used an alias as a guerrilla. "If you didn't have an alias back then, you would be easily traced. The Japanese had many spies," he said.

In August, President Duterte ordered the release of P4.7 billion in unpaid benefits to the war veterans. His predecessor, President Benigno Aquino III, had approved the allocation but it was held up due to the election ban. The money is intended for retired soldiers 80 years and older, and the PVAO has promised prompt distribution.

There is no time to lose, as more and more war vets are lost every month. In the January celebration of the 72nd anniversary of the Lingayen Gulf landing in Pangasinan, only 76 of the 370 surviving vets in the province were able to attend. "Most of the veterans [here] are already bedridden. Those who come to my office are already in their wheelchairs," said PVAO regional head Romeo Madriaga.

It's important to remember this day in a country that continually seeks heroes. Perhaps the young can think in terms of the war veterans as being as new to the world as they are when called to fight for flag and country—no more than boys with their lives ahead of them, thrust into war and the constant peril of death. It is important to think of these men when we think of the word "Kagitingan," and honor them beyond one day or one week of the year. Real heroes, when remembered, never die or fade away.

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**INQUIRER**

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# Why we remember Bataan



ILLUSTRATION BY MAXIMILIAN VILLANOBIS

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OFFICE O

The stubborn resistance of Filipino and American troops in Bataan led to war gains that eventually handed victory to the Allies in the World War II.

al: 5285, 5295

**By Benito Legarda Jr.**  
Contributor

**S**o why should Filipinos remember the Fall of Bataan? Wasn't this a day of ignominious defeat?

Not so. In fact, the story of Bataan's resistance is a major epic of Filipino heroism.

The Japanese gave invasion commander Gen. Masaharu Homma 50 days to conquer the Philippines, probably thinking that their combat-hardened veterans who had fought in China could easily overwhelm the half-trained and ill-equipped recruits of the Philippine Army. But it took 130 days, by the count of historian Uldarico Baclagon, for the Japanese to bring Bataan to its knees. Everywhere else, in the first sweep of conquest, deadlines were easily met. Only in the Philippines was there a delay, and Gen. Homma was retired in disgrace for this failure.

Part of the failure was the denial of Manila Bay and its harbor as staging area for Japanese operations. While all the initial objectives were attained except in the Philippines, extended operations farther out relied on Manila for the staging operations.

The first Japanese setback came the day after Corregidor fell in the Battle of the Coral Sea on May 7, 1942. A Japanese invasion convoy to Port Moresby in eastern New Guinea, which was dominating communications between Australia and the United States, was turned back. The tide was beginning to turn, and the stiff resistance offered by Bataan and Corregidor proved significant.

A little known consequence of that resistance was revealed by Professor Ricardo T. Jose of the University of the Philippines. A US Navy code-breaking group was in Corregidor until March 1942, intercepting and decoding Japanese messages. If Bataan had fallen

sooner, the code-breaking would have stopped and much valuable intelligence would have been lost.

#### Local victories

During the three-month battle, the United States Armed Forces in the Far East (Usaffe) scored local victories—the Battle of the Points when they repulsed Japanese efforts to land from the sea, and the Battle of the Pockets, when the invading Japanese, who had tried to penetrate the front line, were surrounded and wiped out.

The Bataan resistance enabled President Manuel L. Quezon and Vice President Sergio Osmeña, along with the Philippine Cabinet, to leave the country and set up a government in exile in Washington. It also enabled Gen. Douglas MacArthur to go to Australia, from where he led the liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese two and a half years later.

The departure of the principal personalities from the Philippine government clearly signified that Bataan would not be reinforced, and that expectations of a mile-long convoy were illusory. Meanwhile, the Japanese were broadcasting blandishments to the doomed garrison urging a surrender. But the "Battling Bastards of Bataan" fought to the end with stubborn courage.

One must emphasize that 85 percent of the Bataan force consisted of Filipinos, with only 15 percent being Americans.

The Filipino troops came from all over the country and from all social classes. My uncle Col. Santiago Guevara of the Philippine Scouts, who was a Commandant of Cadets at the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) in Baguio, was ordered to the lowlands, along with the PMA cadets, after five days of war. Also from the north was a contingent of Igorots who distinguished themselves in jungle fighting, as reported by Associ-

ated Press correspondent Clark Lee in *They Call It Pacific*. The Igorots were part of the five divisions from Luzon.

Our family driver, Irineo Dagot, a road laborer in Palawan, was called to active service as well in November 1941 in Canlubang, with the 41st Division under Gen. Vicente Lim. His mostly Cuyayanon unit (from northern and central Palawan, very few of whom could speak Tagalog) joined Caviteños and Batanguenos in one of the Luzon divisions. Two divisions from the Visayas, one of which included decorated war hero and aristocratic Visayan Venancio Jalandoni, reached Luzon after the war began. Some officers came from Mindanao.

#### Death March

The infamous Death March after the surrender of Bataan on April 9 was considered one of the major Japanese atrocities. The prisoners were made to walk from Bataan to Capas, Tarlac through San Fernando, Pampanga, a trek of some 100 kilometers under the summer heat, with little food and water. Those too weak to keep pace with the others risked being bayoneted. Civilians, including pregnant women, who tried to help the prisoners, were killed. (See related story on Page A14).

Of the estimated 78,000 men at the start of the final Good Friday offensive on April 3, some 66,000 were Filipinos and 12,000 were Americans. Of the latter, just under 10,000 reached the prison camp; of the former, about 54,000. Of this number, only 28,000 survived imprisonment, reduced by starvation, disease and cruelty. In other words, more men died in the prison camp than in combat or the Death March.

Indeed, given the war gains that led to the Allies' eventual victory in the Pacific war, the delayed Fall of Bataan has become a symbol of Filipino heroism and endurance. INQ



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# THE LAST OF THE GUERRILLAS

*A WWII veteran shares his story of heroism to inspire the young*

Text, photos and video by **RAYMUND MAGNO GARLITOS**  
Layout by **ELIAS GUERRERO, JR.**



SHARE

AT 92, Liberato Gagala Sandoy has worn different hats in life—that of a father, a lover (he had three girlfriends after his wife passed away), an OFW, a water well 'engineer', and barangay arbitrator. But he is most proud of the hat he wears every day—a royal blue military beret signifying that he is a veteran of World War II.

Lolo Atong still remembers vividly the day in 1942 when he was enlisted to become a guerrilla soldier in his hometown of Balayan, Batangas. Today, aside from being known as the only WWII veteran in his present home in Lagundi in Morong, Rizal, Lolo Atong is considered a "history expert," as he can still accurately describe the details of war despite the passage of time.

"*Ako ang nagsilbing runner ng mga gerilya* (I served as runner for the guerrillas)," he starts. Being a 'runner' meant he was feeding information from the side of the enemy like a spy, traversing mountains and towns in order to report where Japanese troops were posted and their activities. Part of the job meant he must not be recognized by the Japanese as a hostile figure.

"*Dahil maliit ako, ang akala nila ay bata ako* (Because I had a small built, they thought of me as a kid)," Lolo Atong says. "*Hindi nila ako hinahuli. Ang hindi nila alam, may baril akong nakatago* (They don't arrest me. What they don't know is that I carry a gun with me)," he points to his leg where the 45-caliber pistol was tied.

Japanese troops viewed him not as an enemy but as someone safe to be around with. "*Pinamamaneho pa nila sa akin iyong sasakyan nila. Komo nga natutuwa sila, minsan hinahampas nila ako ng latigo nang pabiro* (They even made me drive their military vehicle. As they enjoy being with me, they even hit me with a whip, but in jest)," he recalls.

He would then return to the guerrilla camp to report the Japanese army's whereabouts. When the American forces arrived, they were immediately given uniforms and issued guns. Then they were assigned to become sentries to important bridges.

"*Mula Lipa, naglalakad lang kami hanggang San Jose (Batangas), sa paanan ng*

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*Mount Maculot kung saan maraming sundalong Hapon (From Lipa, we would walk to reach San Jose, at the foot of Mount Maculot where there were many Japanese soldiers),” he narrates. “Tinatanong nila kami kung may nakita kaming mga gerilya. Ang sabi namin, ‘Wala dito, wala.’ (They would ask us if we have seen guerrillas around. We just said, ‘No one, there’s no guerrilla around’).”*

### Chilling Experience

Not long enough, the ugly side of war reached Lolo Atong. He recalls the chilling experience of killing a Japanese soldier one rainy night in August at a hill in Batangas called Kalansayan.

*“Naging guwardiya na ako ng tulay. Natutulog iyong kasama kong guwardiya sa kabilang dulo ng tulay. May narining akong ingay. Iyon pala ay kalaban. Binanatan ko na. Nang mag-umaga nakita namin ang bangkay niya. Ang ginawa ko, kinuha ko iyong baril. Tapos may hukay sa tabi ng tulay. Ihimulog ko na lang doon at saka ko tinabunan. Doon ko na inilibing iyong Hapon (I was a bridge sentinel. My counterpart on the other side of the bridge was sleeping. I heard a noise. I found it was the enemy. So I fired my gun. We saw the body when morning came. What I did was get his gun. There was a hole near the bridge. I threw his corpse there and covered it. It was there where I buried the Japanese [soldier]).”*

Though luck was on Lolo Atong's side, there were some moments when his life was in peril.

*“Nahuli kami sa kung tawagin ay sona. Initapon lahat ng tao sa bayan. Pinaruwi lahat ng tao sa bayan ng Nasugbu at binigyan ng passes. Matapos ang isang linggo, iyong ibang binigyan ng passes di na nakabalik sa susunod na sona; ang alam namin nangamatay na. (We were caught during zoning. They gathered us around at the town. They made people go to the town of Nasugbu and were given passes. After a week, some of those who were given passes did not return; we knew they were already dead),” he says.*

*“Nadiskubre kami sa Nasugbu. Nang di kami sumaludo sa kanila, sumigaw sila na kami ay gerilya. Ayun, pinagbubugbog ako at sinaksak ng bayoneta (We were discovered in Nasugbu. When we did not salute them, they shouted that we were guerrillas. They beat me*

*up and stabbed me with a bayonet knife).”*

He thought his life will end right there. Luckily, his life was spared. But with no doctor around, he had to endure the pain of his wound for days. Today, he still bears the scar of that fateful day on his left thigh, a reminder how fragile life is.

### A New Life

After the war, he was then recruited by the returning American forces to become a Philippine Scout and was sent to Camp O'Donnell in Tarlac. For months he was there to guard around 15,000 Japanese surrenderers. He was also assigned to teach fellow troops how to drive a military jeep.

When he was honorably discharged, he went to Morong in Rizal where he met his wife and started a family. Though he only finished grade three, he was sent to study how to construct deep wells by the National Waterworks and Sewerage Authority. In the 1970s, he would be among the country's first overseas workers bringing his skill to Saudi Arabia where he supervised construction of wells there.

When asked about his secret to his longevity and acuity, his children, now senior citizens like him, revealed that surprisingly, the man did not eat vegetables.

“He only ate chicken and pork,” they say. He also continues to read even without wearing eyeglasses. His children all grew up to be professionals—one of them was a teacher, the other a colonel in the army. They also revealed that Lolo Atong still works as a contractor for deep wells, and had a vulcanizing shop. He also served as head of a local chapter of veterans.

“He never stops telling his WW II stories,” Rose Ann Jugueta, a teacher in Antipolo City and one of his grandchildren shares. “Though we have grown tired of hearing them, he still wants to tell them even to strangers. We are thankful that finally, someone sought him out to hear his story, that it will be shared long after he's gone.”

*“Ikinukuwento ko ito dahil sa malaon ako'y mawawala na. Nais kong ibahagi ang naging kontribusyon ko sa pagtatanggol sa bayan, na sana ay di malimutan (I'm telling my story because soon I'll be gone. I want to share what I have contributed in defending my country, which I hope will never be forgotten).”*

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

## ONLINE NEWS

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[www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com](http://www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com)

### 1 killed, 1 captured in Zambo Sibugay clash

From the Sun-Star-Cagayan de Oro (Apr 8): 1 killed, 1 captured in Zambo Sibugay clash

A suspected member of a lawless group was killed and another was captured in a brief gun battle in sitio Ulingan in the coastal village of Salipyasin, Kabsalan, Zamboanga Sibugay province at 1:30 p.m. on April 6.

Lieutenant Colonel Jo-ar Herrera, 1st Infantry "Tabak" Division Philippine Army Spokesperson, identified the fatality as Samuhong Ahod. The other suspect, Akhmad Dapat, was captured and turned over to the police for custody and further investigation. The rest of the group escaped.

Herrera told SunStar in a phone interview that the joint law enforcement agencies went to the site after receiving information about the presence of seven unidentified armed men in the area.

"The 17th Special Forces Company, 6th SF Battalion and the Regional Operation Group of Philippine National Police Region 9 immediately went to the area and a gunfight ensued when the armed group fought back," said Herrera.

Recovered from the crime scene were one 38-caliber revolver; ammonium nitrate, detonating cord, and blasting cap, which are components of improvised explosive device; and a motorized pump boat.

"The armed group was responsible for kidnap-for-ransom activity allegedly linked with the Abu Sayyaf Group operating in some parts of Zamboanga provinces of Basilan and Jolo. The armed group was involved in illegal drug trade, arm smuggling, extortion and linkage with local terror group," said Herrera.

Brigadier General Rolado Joselito Bautista, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division, lauded the community for reporting the presence of the armed men.

"While our ground troops uphold the rule of engagement, we sustained and strengthen the conduct of joint law enforcement in Zamboanga Peninsula area to contain the lawless elements and pre-empt the conduct of possible atrocities," he said.

<http://www.sunstar.com.ph/cagayan-de-oro/local-news/2017/04/08/1-killed-1-captured-zambo-sibugay-clash-535626>

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## First Photos of Philippine Navy's New Multi-Purpose Attack Craft Mk. 3

From MaxDefense Philippines (Apr 7): First Photos of Philippine Navy's New Multi-Purpose Attack Craft Mk. 3

MaxDefense was able to obtain excellent photos of the Philippine Navy's new Multi-Purpose Attack Craft (MPAC) Mk. 3, as it was being tested in Subic Bay. The photos came from a source and from a community member, and these appears to be the first photos of the type to be made public, a MaxDefense exclusive.

The MPAC Mk. 3 are being built in the Philippines through the winning proponent, Propmech Corporation, using a design made by its partner, Lung Teh Shipbuilding of Taiwan.



*This photo shows the front and side views of the new MPAC Mk. 3. Compare that to the MPAC Mk. 2 photo below. Photo from MaxDefense source who wish to remain anonymous.*



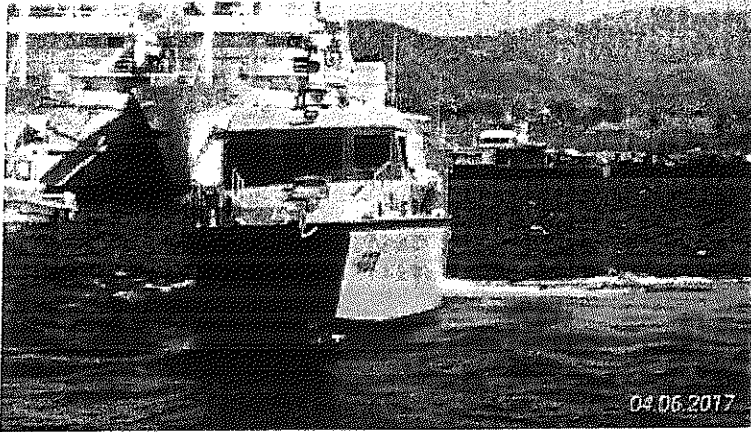
*The MPAC Mk. 2 for comparison purposes.*

Based on the photos provided to us, there appears to be several physical differences between this Mk. 3, and the older Mk.2 and Mk. 1. For easier comparison, MaxDefense will only refer to the MPAC Mk. 2 for comparison as it is an improved design over the MPAC Mk. 1. Thanks to some of our contributors for their inputs as well.

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First of, it appears that the reclining bow ramp for inserting/extracting troops are gone. Instead it is now a solid hull with no openings, but still retaining the flat contour of the older MPACs. Retaining that contour could be to confuse the enemy on the MPAC's lost capability to land troops from the bow.

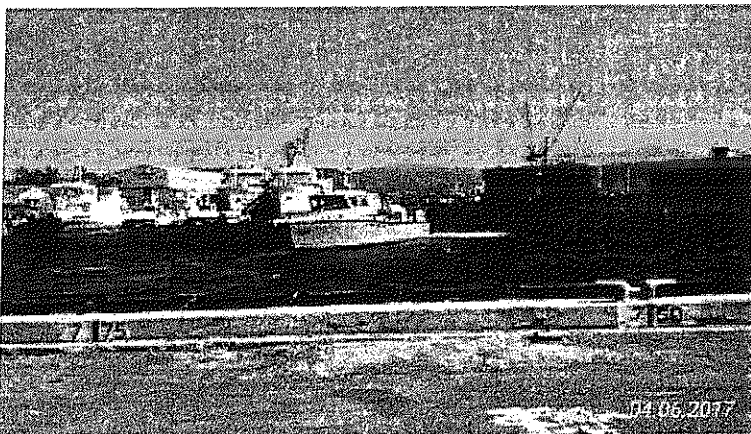


*The bow ramp is now missing, and built as a solid bow. The flat bow still remains, due to unknown reasons. Photo from MaxDefense source who wish to remain anonymous.*

Also missing are the twin top deck openings connected to the bow doors, which are not needed anymore without the bow ramp.

The mast is also re-designed on this new variant compared to the older ones. Based on the photo, its difficult to compare if the mast on MPAC Mk. 3 is lower than that of MPAC Mk. 2, considering the Philippine Navy requested for redesign on this matter.

The MPAC Mk. 3 must comply with the Philippine Navy's requirement for the new MPAC Mk.3s to be able to enter the well deck of the Tariac-class Landing Platform Dock. The previous mast were too high, and won't allow the older MPACs to safely fit the LPD's well deck opening.



*The MPAC Mk. 3 from afar. The overall design of the boat becomes apparent here. A lot of differences from the older MPACs. It looks sleeker too. Photo from MaxDefense sources who wish to remain anonymous.*

It also looks like there are no gun canopies above the boat's forward part of the bridge, which are present in the MPAC Mk. 2. so far no mounts on the bridge roof can be seen in the photo.

According to initial design submitted by the proponent, Propmech Corporation, the Mini Typhoon RCWS will be installed

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above the bridge at the center-forward part where a pedestal is located, while canopies for manually-operated machine guns will still be present at the rear part of the bridge. It remains to be seen though if Propmech and its partner, Lung Teh Shipbuilding, will follow this configuration.



*This is the concept illustration on the weapon system locations of the new MPAC Mk. 3, but not necessarily the design concept for the hull. The expected position of the Mini Typhoon RCWS, Spike-ER launcher and manually operated machine guns can be seen here, although it remains to be seen if this would still be followed in the actual boat. Photo taken from the former Timawa.net forum.*

The new boat's design was also changed, with the previous deck access configuration changed. The forward is now higher than the midship area resulting on a different gunwale contour.

The removal of the bow ramp also confirms the reduction of troop carrying capacity which was expected and indicated in the technical specifications. With this, our sources confirmed the absence of the jeepney-style front facing bench seats, and replaced with front facing shock mitigating jump seats.



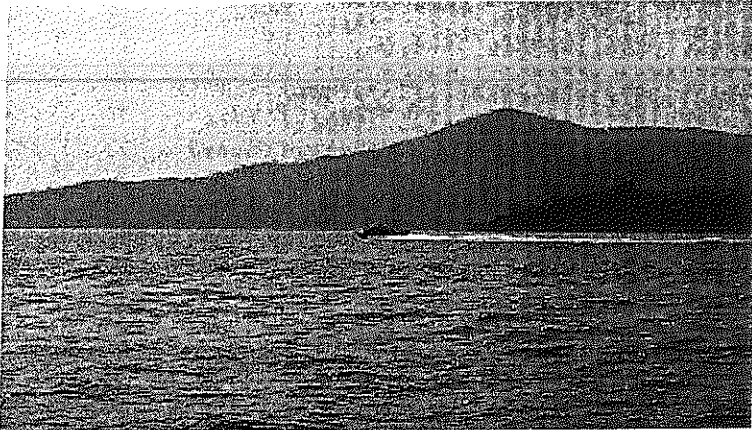
*Although the boat seats fewer troops than the MPAC Mk.1 and Mk.2, it now sports better seats and are now front facing. This provides more comfort for the passenger. Photo cropped from Propmech's video.*

It is difficult to assess if the MPAC Mk. 3 is indeed longer than the MPAC Mk. 2, based on the technical specifications

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provided by the Philippine Navy during the tender process. This can only be verified by a reliable source like Propmech itself, or by side by side viewing of the Mk. 2 and Mk. 3 MPACs. The size difference is important since it allows the boat to have a mounting for the Spike-ER missile launcher that is scheduled to be installed in the next few months.



*MPAC Mk. 3 BA-488 conducting tests at Subic Bay. Photo provided by a MaxDefense community member who wish to remain anonymous.*

No information yet available on the tests conducted on the first boat, with hull number BA-488, although Propmech still has enough time to make the necessary adjustments should it need to do so.

MaxDefense will be updating its readers and community members on the MPAC Mk. 3 development as more information is are made available to us.

<http://maxdefense.blogspot.com/2017/04/first-photos-of-philippine-navys-new.html>

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## PH Air Force to complete acquisition of 12 FA-50 fighter jets in May

From Rappler (Apr 8): PH Air Force to complete acquisition of 12 FA-50 fighter jets in May

*Four more FA-50s will arrive in April and May, according to military spokesperson Brigadier General Restituto Padilla*

**The Philippine Air Force (PAF) will complete its squadron of 12 FA-50 lead-in fighter trainers by May 2017, military spokesperson Brigadier General Restituto Padilla said.**

**"By May, there will be a complete delivery of 12 with the arrival of 11th and 12th FA-50 aircraft. It is ahead of the scheduled completion of July 2017," Padilla said.**

**"It was a goodwill gesture of the manufacturer because their assembly line seems to have freed up for some orders. And they prioritized the Philippines,"** he added.

**The 4th batch of two FA-50s – tail numbers 007 and 008 – that arrived in late March were formally received on Thursday, April 6, in a ceremony at the Air Force City inside Clark Air Base in Pampanga.**

**The remaining 4 FA-50s will arrive in two batches in April and in May.**

The squadron of 12 FA-50s from South Korea was acquired by the previous Aquino administration for P18 billion, one of two big-ticket items in the country's modest military modernization program. The Philippine Navy procured two new frigates for P18 billion, also from South Korea.

The FA-50 is technically a fighter trainer but the PAF acquired it to perform multiple roles. The aircraft were acquired by the previous administration to boost the country's defenses in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea) given China's aggressiveness in claiming maritime territories there.

The FA-50s are not known to have been deployed to the West Philippine Sea, however. Instead, they have been deployed for surgical airstrikes against local terrorists in Mindanao.

"The aircraft have been tested and employed against some armed groups and some evil elements. We have found it to be an efficient platform for close air support," Padilla said.

The acquisition of the FA-50s marked the PAF's return to the supersonic age a decade after retiring the last of its US-made F5 fighter jets in 2005. (READ: [PH Air Force a joke no more, gets fighter jets](#))

The video below shows the formal transfer of the 3rd batch of FA-50s in February.

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