

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



TEAM ARMY

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oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

28 April 2017

Friday

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

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BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | APRIL 28, 2017 | FRIDAY

TROPICAL STORM "DANTE"
ESTIMATED AT 1,335 KM EAST OF CASIGURAN, AURORA
(As of 5:00 PM - Apr. 27, 2017)

SUNRISE 5:35 AM	SUNSET 6:12 PM
MOONRISE 7:06 AM	MOONSET 8:09 PM
NEW MOON APR 26 5:16 AM	FIRST QUARTER MAY 3 10:47 AM
LOW TIDE 8:23 PM -0.15 Meter	HIGH TIDE MANILA SOUTH HARBOR 10:50 AM 1.02 Meter

Partly cloudy skies

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

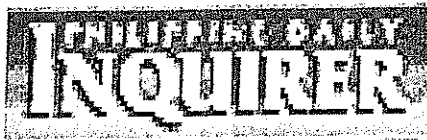
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thunderstorms

	APR 29	APR 30	APR 29	APR 30	APR 29	APR 30		
METRO MANILA	26-34°C	26-34°C	TAGAYTAY	23-31°C	24-31°C	TACLOBAN	25-32°C	26-32°C
TUGUEGARAO	25-34°C	25-33°C	LEGAZPI	26-33°C	27-32°C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25-32°C	24-33°C
LADAG	25-31°C	25-30°C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26-33°C	26-34°C	METRO DAVAO	26-33°C	26-33°C
BAGUIO	16-23°C	16-22°C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26-32°C	26-32°C	ZAMBOANGA	24-33°C	24-33°C
SBMA/CLARK	26-36°C	26-38°C	METRO CEBU	26-32°C	26-32°C			

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Drug suspects found in secret police cell

FROM A1

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABalagtasSeeINQ

Lawyers from the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), following a tip about drug suspects being held for extortion, were surprised and shocked when they found a dozen men and women detained in a secret cell behind a shelf in a Manila police station on Thursday.

Gilbert Boisner, regional director of the CHR for Metro Manila, said at least four of the 12 claimed that they were

locked in the cell at Raxabago station's drug enforcement unit (DEU) in Tondo.

Arrests not recorded

Boisner said the alleged drug suspects' arrests were not even recorded.

"They have been picked and they have to pay up to be freed. That's the allegation," he told reporters. "I'm really mad. Did you see that? It's terrible... My God!"

Quoting the detainees, Boisner said the police allegedly demanded P40,000 to P200,000 for the release of each suspect.

Supt. Robert Domingo, Raxabago station commander, at

first denied there was a hidden cell inside the station.

But Boisner, following the tip from an informant, proceeded to inspect a brown bookshelf in the DEU office, knocking on the wooden wall behind it and then heard voices responding.

"Someone's here," a woman said from behind the wall.

The CHR looked for ways to open the shelf and found and removed an L-shaped metal serving as a lock.

Shocking sight

Behind the shelf was a passage that led to the dark, cramped and windowless cell.

The sight shocked the CHR team.

"They (police) asked if this was a surprise inspection. But I'm the one surprised," Boisner said.

The 12 men and women rescued from the secret cell said they were arrested but no cases were filed against them.

Boisner said there also was no record of the alleged drug suspects' arrests.

Lawyer Brenda Canapi, head of the CHR's jail visitorial division, expressed disgust at the "inhumane" condition of the suspects.

Domingo denied any irregularity.

He insisted that those de-

tained in the hidden cell were arrested on Wednesday during the station's "one time, big time" antinarcotics operation.

Domingo said his men could not mix the drug suspects with other detainees in the station's main detention cell "because cases have yet to be filed against them."

He said cases against the detainees in the main lockup had already been filed with the Manila prosecutor's office.

Domingo also denied allegations that his men were extorting money from the drug suspects.

He said none of his men had asked money from the suspects.

The detainees were removed from the secret cell but were not released because charges would be filed against them, he said.

The cell, about a meter wide and five meters long, used to hold trash. It had no light and was poorly ventilated.

"It's such a waste of space. Why should I not maximize it?" Domingo said, adding that the shelf was used merely to cover the entrance to the cell.

He said the police enjoyed the presumption of regularity, and that it was "their word against our word," referring to the drug suspects. INQ

Sweepstakes Office (PCSO); Alexander Balutan, PCSO general manager, and Generals Francisco Uyami and Isidro Lapeña.

He said several members of this class were protectors of illegal gambling in the north, and were even issued STL franchises and later sold these to other individuals.

Reached for comment, Esperon just laughed off Ang's accusation.

"When did I become a killer? When I was a lieutenant I killed terrorists—Abu Sayyaf members. That's all," he told the Inquirer.

Esperon disputed Ang's claim about a conspiracy among PMA Class '82 retired generals.

He said he belonged to PMA Class '74, Corpuz was from Class '82, and Balutan from Class '83.

"I don't know Atong Ang, so why would I have him killed?" Esperon asked.

"I think you should call Corpuz and Balutan because they are the ones who introduced STL to eradicate illegal gambling," he said.

Ang said he was convinced that the threat to his life was serious when he went to Ca-

gayan de Oro City last Sunday for a cockfight.

While there, he said some PMA Class '82 members, whom he described as his friends, frantically called him on the phone and warned him to immediately leave the area, as some of their *mistah* (classmates) were out to kill him that day.

"I was told, 'Boss go home immediately. Our *mistahs* want you killed,'" he quoted the caller as saying.

Fearing for his life, Ang said he chartered a King Air flight reserved for emergency situations just to get him out of the area.

He also said he had been receiving tips from concerned friends in the NBI and the same PMA class.

"Last Saturday, friends phoned me and said 'Sir, take care as you are a target,'" he quoted them as saying.

Ang said those who were planning to kill him wanted STL to thrive in areas where his virtual jai alai was strong.

"It's OK if STL and virtual jai alai compete with each other. But they want to have me killed," he said. INQ

national security adviser went to Pangasinan province asking local government officials not to patronize Ang's operation.

Demanding cut

Citing information relayed by local officials, Ang said Esperon also demanded a cut from STL collections in the province.

Ang named some PMA Class '82 retired generals involved in STL as Jose Jorge Corpuz, chair of the Philippine Charity

23 April 2017

Malaya

The National Newspaper

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Troops still clearing Maute camp of bombs

BY VICTOR REYES

THE military yesterday said there is still no timetable for the return of thousands of displaced residents of Piagapo town, Lanao del Sur, to their homes.

At least 755 families or 3,544 persons were displaced by clashes

which broke out Friday last week when government troops assaulted a lair the Maute Group in Barangay Gacap, said Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman of the Army's 1st Infantry Division.

The fighting ended last Monday

See TROOPS > Page B6

TROOPS

when government troops seized the group's camp. The operation also resulted in the killing of 38 Maute members, including three Indonesians and a Malaysian formerly associated with the Southeast Asian regional terrorist network Jemaah Islamiah, and recovery of explosives and firearms.

Herrera said troops are still clearing the camp and its periphery,

which he said is about 15 hectares, of improvised explosive devices and bomb components.

"Once terminated (clearing operations), they can already return," he said.

He could not immediately say how much of the area has been cleared so far.

Herrera said the displaced residents are in different evacuation centers. He said soldiers are assisting the Red Cross and other

non-government units in relief operations.

Herrera also said pursuit operations against the remnants of the Maute Group were ongoing as of yesterday.

Military officials earlier said troops clashed with about 162 members of the Maute Group at the camp. Military aircraft and artillery assets supported the operating troops in the conduct of the operation.

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NPA set to free abducted soldier

By ROEL N. CATOTO

SURIGAO CITY – The New People's Army (NPA) said it will release tomorrow a soldier from the Philippine Army's 30th Infantry Battalion abducted Alegria, Surigao del Norte on January 29 this year.

"Ka Oto," spokesperson of Guerrilla Force 16 operating in Surigao del Norte and four towns of Agusan del Norte said they will release Pfc Erwin Salan on Saturday.

He said their tactical operation against government forces has been halted since last Tuesday noon until the midnight on May 5 in the towns of Placer, Tubod, Bacuag, Alegria, Gigaquit and Claver all in Surigao del Norte for this safe release of captured soldier.

Lt. Col. Rico Amaro, commanding officer of 30th Infantry Battalion welcomed the scheduled release of Salan.

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The Standard

DEFENDING THE PEOPLE

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Task Force Davao lauded for service

By F. Pearl A. Gajunera

DAVAO CITY—Mayor Sara Duterte thanked and praised the men behind Task Force Davao for their sacrifices to ensure the city is peaceful and safe.

Speaking during TF Davao's 14th founding anniversary, "Mayor Inday" took note of the anti-terror unit's vital role in maintaining the city's peace and order.

"The ultimate challenge is to mark years of living peacefully and freely, and that is something that we should always strive to attain," she said.

Speaking with the media, the mayor noted she expected only the best from the anti-terror group.

"Keep Davao City peaceful and terror-free," she said, referring to her order to TF Davao. "We do not seek perfection, but we do expect them to do their best."

TF Davao was created on April 16, 2003, in response to a series of bombings in the city.

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Mindanao News

Fighting in Lanao Sur town subsides; 41 reported killed

By ALI G. MACABALANG

MARAWI CITY – Governor forces are now clearing four villages in Piagapo, Lanao del Sur after jihadist militants fled the areas following intense offensives by ground troops backed by aerial and artillery support since Saturday, according to civilian authorities.

Piagapo Mayor Ali Sumandar said the military-led clearing operations covered barangays Gacap, Tapocar, Pantaon and Tambo where suspected

elements of the combined Maute and Abu Sayyaf Groups purportedly planted land mines before fleeing to different directions.

Thirty-six bandits and five civilians were reported killed during the clashes.

Central Mindanao-based reporters of national dailies including the Manila Bulletin drove on Wednesday to this town amid a supposed news black from Lanao del Sur-based military and police quarters, and opted to gather updates from civilian entities.

Sumandar said there were more

than 400 families involving 2,833 individuals displaced from the four barangays, which all lie at the border of Piagapo, Balindong, and Marantao towns and this city.

Sumandar added that said the military had reported 36 casualties from the Maute and Abu Sayyaf Group.

Sultan Bryan Marmay, the reigning traditional leader in Balindong's royal houses, said he received reports from displaced residents that four civilians and an imam were killed when a bomb hit a house in Piagapo on April 22.

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Pahina. 6

NPA nagbalik-loob

Dahil sa nararanasang hirap sa palipat-lipat bundod nang pinaigting na opensiba ng militar, isa na namang aktibong kasapi ng rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) ang nagbalik-loob sa pamahalaan sa Zamboanga Del Sur.

Ayon kay Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, Jr. commander ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), boluntaryong sumuko sa militar ang rebeldeng si Jonelo Daluyon Balabag, alyas Joel, 25. Kusang-sumuko si

Balabag sa tropa ng 53rd Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army ng Joint Task Force ZamPelan sa pangunguna ni Lt. Col. Virgilio Hamos Jr. sa Camp Major David Sabido sa Guipos.

Si Balabag ay nasa ilalim ng SYP-KARA, Western Mindanao Regional Party Committee na nag-operate sa Zamboanga del Sur.

Isinurender din ni Balabag ang kanyang M16 rifle, pitong mga magazine at mga bala. (BJulian)

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NPA member sa Zambo Sur sumuko

Sumuko sa militarang isang aklatbong kasapi ng New People's Army (NPA) sa lalawigan ng Zamboanga del Sur.

Ayon kay Lt. Gen. Carlito Gavez, Jr. commander ng Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), sumuko si Jonelo Daluyon Balabag, alyas 'Joel', 25, sa 3rd Infantry Battalion ng Philippine Army, ng Joint Task Force ZamPelan, sa Camp Major David Sabido sa Guipos, Zamboanga del Sur.

Isinukon ang kanyang M16 rifle na may pitong magazine at mga bala, si Balabag ay nasa ilalim ng SYP-KARA, Western Mindanao Regional Party Committee na kumikilos sa Zamboanga del Sur, ayon sa militar.

Fer Taboy

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BATTLE-READY FOR ASEAN VIPS Antiaircraft guns manned by Marines are deployed on Macapagal Avenue, Pasay City, as part of the security measures for the ongoing Asean summit. —RICHARD A. REYES

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PHOTO ESSAYS
frame.inquirer.net

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BusinessMirror

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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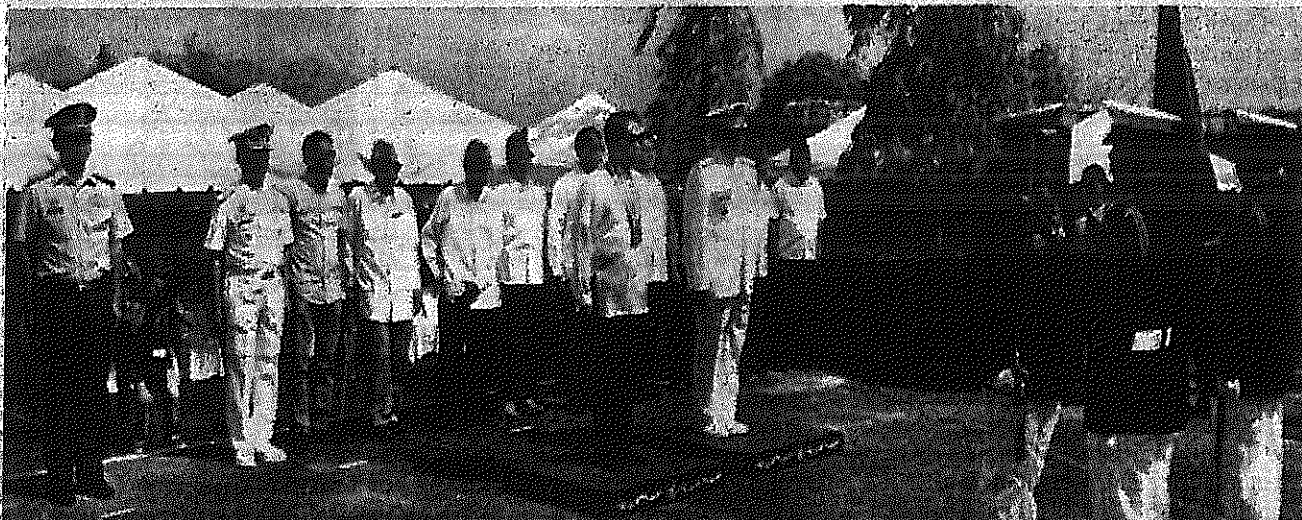
return visit. President Duterte talks to visiting Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah during a meeting at Malacañang ahead of the ASEAN summit.

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1934 1988
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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EX-NAVY CHIEF AT TRIBUTE TO WAR VETS – Former Philippine Navy Chief Vice Admiral Eduardo Ma. F. Santos AFP (ret.) (standing left on platform) is accorded arrival honors by the Armed forces of the Philippines led by Philippine Fleet deputy commander Commodore Rommel Galang (at Santos' right) at the heroes' memorial at the historic Corregidor Island where Santos led in paying tribute to war veterans to kick off the commemoration of 2017 Philippine Veterans' Week and 'Araw ng Kagitingan' (Day of Valor). Santos, President of Maritime Academy of Asia and the Pacific (MAAP) was joined by government officials, education, civic and student groups' representatives. Among those present were Navy chief Vadm Ronald Joseph Mercado, Defense Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina and officials of Philippine Veterans' Affairs Office (PVAO), together with retired Sandigan Presiding Justice Manuel Pamaran, Philippine Coast Guard OIC – commandant Commodore Joel Garcia, along with provincial officials of Cavite.

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Año: Converts not targets

By Philip C. Tubeza
@ictubezaINQ

The highest ranking official of the armed forces sought to correct what he said were wrong impressions that the military was targeting Muslim converts in its offensive against terror groups, saying government soldiers respect "freedom of religion."

Gen. Eduardo Año, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff, said the military's targets were Islamic radicals.

He said he saw nothing wrong with Christians or Catholics converting to Islam but the military was keeping a close watch on radicals among them.

"There is nothing wrong with Muslim converts as we have freedom of religion," Año said.

"What we are looking at are those associated with the



Eduardo Año

Maute Group [and the Abu Sayyaf] as converts," he said.

He said "those who had become radicalized" were considered threats.

He said there were soldiers who had converted to Islam but they did not present any problems for the military.

The AFP chief made the

comment after journalists asked him if the military would investigate the links of conversion to Islam with the emergence of terrorist groups after one convert, Joselito Milloria, had been identified as the Abu Sayyaf member who acted as a guide for members of the terror group during their incursion into Bohol province.

The Abu Sayyaf members were found in the Bohol town of Inabanga supposedly to conduct kidnappings in the province, a known tourist destination.

A series of clashes between soldiers and Abu Sayyaf members erupted in Inabanga, killing several members of the terror group.

Four terrorists were killed in Inabanga on April 11 and four more, including Milloria, were killed on April 22. INQ

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SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

DUTERTE: ARBITRAL RULING NOT AN ISSUE FOR ASEAN

By Leila B. Salaverria
@LeilasINQ

President Duterte on Thursday said it was pointless discussing at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit the Philippines' victory over China in the South China Sea dispute, and no one dared pressure Beijing anyway.

Mr. Duterte told reporters that the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration's ruling in favor of the Philippines in the South China Sea dispute was an issue between Manila and Beijing only and it was not worth discussing with other Asean member states during the summit in Manila this week.

"I will skip the arbitral ruling. It is not an issue here in the Asean," Mr. Duterte said.

Handed down on July 12 last year, the arbitral ruling invalidated China's claim to almost all of the South China Sea and said Beijing violated Manila's sovereign right to fish and explore resources in the West Philippine Sea, waters in the South China Sea within the Philippines' 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone.

Mr. Duterte, however, said the Philippines, the Asean chair this year, could not alone force China to abide by the ruling.

"China said [it was] completely ignoring the [ruling], so what more can you ask of it? Make noise? For what?" he said.

'Misunderstanding'

On reports that China's Navy harassed Filipino fishermen at Union Banks, in the Spratly archipelago, Mr. Duterte said there had been a "misunderstanding."

"We have talked about it. I said I [hoped it would] not happen again," he said.

The ruling is relevant to the disputes between China and three other Asean members—Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam—over territory in the South China Sea.

But Mr. Duterte, a self-styled socialist who came to office in June last year, has deferred assertion of the country's legal victory to repair relations with China that had been frayed by the Philippine challenge in the Hague court.

He visited Beijing in October last year and returned

home with millions of dollars in Chinese pledges of projects and investment in the Philippines.

A study commissioned by the Philippine government in 1975 established that the Kalayaan group belongs to the Philippines and not to China, Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines (UP) Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, told a forum sponsored by the military's northern command in Tarlac City on Wednesday.

But the study was never published, Batongbacal said.

"It was a secret study. It was basically commissioned by the government through then Solicitor General Estelito Mendoza. It was conducted by UP professors who were then with what is now the Asian Center," he said.

"If it was published at that time, we [won't be facing] this 'historic rights' argument of China [today]," he said.

An offshoot of the study was Presidential Decree No. 1596, which declared the Kalayaan group part of the Philippine territory, Batongbacal said.

It was issued by dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1978, he added.

On Wednesday, Marciano Paynor Jr., director general of the Asean 2017 National Organizing Council, said that as chair of this year's summit, the Philippines should be neutral in the South China Sea disputes.

A draft of the customary joint statement to be issued by the Asean leaders at the end of their summit on Saturday indicates that they will express serious concern over territorial disputes

in the South China Sea but will not directly refer to China or mention the arbitral decision.

China has steadfastly opposed the raising in international forums of its territorial disputes with Asean nations and Taiwan in the South China Sea.

When they played host to the Asean summit, Cambodia and Laos, both economically dependent on China, allowed mention of the disputes in the postsummit statement, but not reference to China by name.

Code of conduct

As Asean chair, however, the Philippines has a "golden opportunity" to push for the completion a framework for a code of conduct for the South China Sea claimants, according to UP professor Chester Cabalza.

Mr. Duterte, Cabalza said on Thursday, should maximize his "influence in the region and good relations with China" for the conclusion of the code, which should recognize freedom of navigation and overflight.

Mr. Duterte said the Manila summit would discuss the proposed code, the framework for which the Philippines hopes will be completed this year.

—WITH REPORTS FROM GABRIEL CARDINOZA, NIKKO DIZON AND REUTERS INQ



WATCH VIDEO: Duterte: UN sea ruling nonissue at Asean summit
<http://Inq.news/DuterteSCSnonissue>

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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AFP pressed: Produce Jonas

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan
@dpazzibuganINQ

On the tenth year of the abduction of farmer-activist Jonas Burgos, his family and supporters continue to press the military, particularly Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Año, to come clean about his fate.

Burgos' mother Edita, his wife and siblings will lead special Masses and rallies around the country on Friday to mark his disappearance a decade ago.

Edita said 11 ecumenical Masses would be held, including one at the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), which said the military was responsible for his abduction.

Protest rallies will also be staged at military camps, including Camp Aguinaldo and the Armed Forces of the Philippines Headquarters, against Año, who was implicated in the 2007 abduction as the Army intelligence chief then.

No false hopes

"We have no false hopes here," Burgos' mother said on Thursday, referring to Año's appointment to the top military post last December.

"I do not hope for anything to happen as long as the people involved are around. We just pray that they'll be converted and soften their hearts," she added.

Burgos' brother, Jose Luis, is still angry at Año's promotion, which he said encouraged military impunity.

"What kind of justice system do we have? It's a vicious cycle. It's very hard to go against the military institution even if they're in the wrong," he said.

"It's hard not knowing what happened," he added. "We want them to produce him in whatever state he's in. We have no choice but to continue to hope."

Press freedom icon's son

Burgos, a son of press freedom icon Jose Burgos, was snatched at Ever Gotesco mall in Quezon City on April 28, 2007. He was 37 at the time.

In 2011, a CHR investigation identified one of his abductors as Army 1st Lt. Harry Baliaga Jr. of the Army's 56th Infantry Bat-

talion under the 7th Infantry Division.

The Supreme Court upheld the CHR's findings and ordered the military to produce the activist. The Court of Appeals in 2013 also held the military, particularly the Army, accountable for the abduction.

Criminal case

The military merely denied involvement.

Based on the CHR's findings, Burgos' mother filed a criminal case against Baliaga, Año and other officers in 2011.

The Department of Justice eventually charged Baliaga in the Quezon City Regional Trial Court but cleared other military officials, including Año.

Burgos' mother petitioned the Supreme Court in November 2014 to cite in contempt the military officials who had denied involvement in the abduction but did not act on the court's order to produce her son. She said the petition has not been acted upon.

"Our plea is, all these should be acted on, otherwise the writ of amparo and writ of habeas corpus are useless," she said. "Our conclusion is it's a cover-up. If they will only cleanse their ranks of rogue elements, this will benefit the institution. But because they're covering up, they foster impunity."

Burgos' brother said Baliaga's trial for arbitrary detention is still ongoing. The prosecution has completed presenting witnesses and evidence, and the court will soon hear the defense.

"How many years will that take again? That's how our justice system is—it takes decades," he said. INQ

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US troops in Guiuan for modified Balikatan

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBI**

GUTUAN, Eastern Samar—American troops have arrived in this town for a joint military exercise, or Balikatan, with Philippine forces.

Mayor Christopher Sheen Gonzales told Manila Bulletin the Americans started to arrive last April 1 and joined the Philippine Army's 564th Engineering Battalion who is already doing civic work in the town.

Gonzales said he is grateful his town was chosen as the venue for this year's Balikatan, whose focus has been modified from war games to community and humanitarian work.

"We are proud because of the many places in the country our town was chosen to be the venue of the joint exercises which focuses on the humanitarian work, infrastructure and the exchange of knowledge and skills between the Philippine and the US forces that directly benefit the people of the town especially for the aspect of education," Gonzales said.

The mayor said a US medical support team is conducting a medical mission at the Felipe Abrigo Memorial Hospital (FAMH), a government hospital in this town, and holding medical seminars together with the hospital's medical staff.

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Malaya
The National Newspaper

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NPAs free policeman in Bukidnon

NEW People's Army rebels yesterday released a member of the Bukidnon Police Provincial Office they snatched in the province early this year.

Supt. Lemuel Gonda, spokesman of the Northern Mindanao Police Regional Office, said PO2 Anthony Palomar Natividad was released by the rebels in Sitio Sosyalon, Barangay Dominorog, Talakag, Bukidnon at around 11:20 a.m.

Gonda said the release was facilitated by an unidentified Na-

tional Democratic Front representative.

Natividad was turned over to local officials and members of the church before he was brought to Kalilangan Municipal Police Station for debriefing.

Natividad was on a motorcycle heading for Camp Alagar in Bukidnon to undergo a medical examination required for schooling when he abducted by the rebels in Barangay Tikalaan, Talakag town on February 9. — *Raymond Africa*

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Navy acquires Korean ship for \$100 only

By Francisco Tuyay

THE Philippines' maritime patrols are expected to be boosted with its acquisition of a destroyer-type vessel from South Korea, Defense Department spokesman Arsenio Andolong said Thursday.

He said the South Korean government will donate the Pohang-Class Flight III anti-submarine corvette within the year for a token fee of \$100.

"The transfer will be in the form of a donation, but we will pay a token fee of 100 dollars," Andolong said.

"We have sent a letter to the government of South Korea expressing our intent to acquire one Pohang-class corvette and we are hoping to receive the vessel within the year."

The Pohang-class corvette served during the Cold War era when 24 were built. Eighteen are still in commission.

During the incumbency of Defense Secretary Voltaire Gazmin, the government attempted to acquire a Pohang-class vessel, but the plans were scuttled as the ship they claimed as too old.

The South Korean government has already donated two ships to the Philippine Navy that it now uses for its maritime patrols.

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DND eyes acquisition of Sokor warship

By Mario J. Mallari

The Department of National Defense (DND) is eyeing a Pohang-class warship from South Korea to further boost the capability of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Director Arsenio Andolong, DND-Public Affairs Service chief, said that the acquisition of the corvette may come in donation with the Philippine government paying a token of \$100 to South Korea.

"It may come like a donation. There is still no confirmation what type and configuration," said Andolong.

However, Andolong stressed that the DND will shoulder the transfer and refurbishment costs.

"We have sent a letter to the government of South Korea expressing our intent to acquire one Pohang class corvette. We are hoping to receive the vessel within the year," Andolong said.

"The transfer will be in the form of a donation, however, we will pay a token fee of \$100. The corvette will still undergo refurbishment, the cost of which we will shoulder," he added.

Andolong would not know how much will be spent for the refurbishment.

He said the acquisition will definitely boost the capability of the AFP, particularly the Philippine Navy.

"It will definitely enhance our capability to patrol our waters and perform counter terrorism missions," Andolong said.

Only on Wednesday, two brand new FA-50 lead in fighter jets were received by the Philippine Air Force from South Korea as part of the squadron of aircraft contracted with Korea Aerospace Industries for P18 billion.

Two more FA-50s are expected to be delivered by July to complete the 12 units.

The DND-AFP has also contracted two frigates from South Korea which are now work in progress.

The AFP is currently in the middle of its modernization program which went into high gear during the previous Aquino administration that spent about P70 billion to acquire new military hardware.

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Nobleza says she's a DPA; Dela Rosa won't buy it

By **AARON B. RECUENCO**

Superintendent Maria Christina Nobleza, the police official who was caught while allegedly trying to rescue trapped members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Bohol, has been claiming that she is a deep penetration agent (DPA) of the government against the terror group.

But the Philippine National Police (PNP) chief is not buying her story.

"Everything that she said, we take it as her own version. We are still evaluating it and we will not be fooled by any attempt to fool us," said Director-General Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, following Nobleza's facing tactical interrogation.

Dela Rosa said they have already culled some intelligence information contradicting the statement of Nobleza that she has a secret mission against the Abu Sayyaf.

He said her claims could just be an alibi to save herself from the mess she has gotten into.

It was learned that Nobleza has been claiming that she first penetrated the ASG while he was still at the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) which was created by the past administration.

Based on the background check, Nobleza met Reenor Lou Dungon when she was designated as his interrogator after the latter was arrested for Cagayan de Oro bombings in 2012.

And Nobleza has been insinuating that she is using Dungon's access to the ASG in order to penetrate the bandit group.

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Recent developments surrounding the South China Sea

DEFENSE Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo Ano flew to the island of Pag-asa in the South China Sea on Friday, drawing a protest from China, which also claims the remote territory.

The Philippine government reiterated its claim to the island, where Filipino troops and villagers have lived for decades in a tiny community amid islands claimed by multiple countries.

The public argument came amid a thaw in once-frosty relations between the neighbors after Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte took office last June. Duterte has moved to rekindle Manila's friendship with Beijing and court Chinese state-sponsored investment for railways and other much-needed investment projects.

The two Philippine officials traveled with dozens of journalists to inspect an eroded airstrip that the Philippine government plans to reinforce and lengthen. The government plans to build a dock starting next month to accommodate ships with construction materials, Lorenzana said.

About P1.6 billion (\$32 million) has been earmarked for the construction work including a fishing port, solar power generators, a water desalination plant, improved housing for soldiers and facilities for marine research and tourism.

Pag-asa is internationally known as Thitu island and is called Zhongye island by China. It's the second-largest island in the South China Sea's hotly contested Spratlys archipelago.

In Beijing, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said China was "gravely concerned about and dissatisfied" by the island visit, adding that China "has lodged representations with the Philippine side."

China claims virtually the entire South China Sea and has aggressively tried to fortify its foothold by transforming seven mostly submerged reefs into island outposts.

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China to host Philippine president, others at Summit

CHINA will host Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and 27 other world leaders at a summit next month showcasing President Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy initiative. Only a few heads of state

from Western industrialized democracies will attend, however.

Vladimir Putin of Russia, Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and Spain's Mariano Rajoy are among those slated to appear at the summit, which aims to consolidate support for Xi's "One Belt, One Road" program to stitch together the Eurasian continent with infrastructure investment.

That includes a push to draw Southeast Asian nations further into China's economic and political order, despite territorial feuding over the South China Sea.

The May 14-15 summit is seen as a measure of China's international prestige at a time when Xi has positioned China as a rising outward-looking regional power. That has drawn particular attention because of questions over President Donald Trump's "America first" push to remove the U.S. from trade agreements and other international entanglements.

China has sought to frame Xi's vision for the China-led development program as an inclusive, mutually beneficial project rather than a statement of geopolitical ambitions that should arouse Western suspicions. The program aims to build roads, railways, ports and other infrastructure along the ancient Silk Road's maritime and overland routes with close to \$100 billion in funding.

USS Carl Vinson, S. Korea Navy to hold exercises

SOUTH Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported Monday that South Korean naval ships will conduct training exercises with the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier the USS Carl Vinson, as tensions surrounding the Korean Peninsula continue to eclipse those in the South China Sea.

North Korea marks the founding anniversary of its military on Tuesday, and South Korea and its allies are bracing for the possibility that it could conduct another nuclear test or launch an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time.

North Korea often marks significant dates by displaying its military capability. It so far has conducted five nuclear tests.

Trump spoke by phone with both the Japanese and Chinese leaders Monday. Chinese state broadcaster CCTV quoted China's

president, Xi Jinping, as telling Trump that China strongly opposes North Korea's nuclear weapons program and hopes "all parties will exercise restraint and avoid aggravating the situation."

The Carl Vinson had been visiting Singapore when U.S. officials

earlier this month announced it had been dispatched to waters off the Korean Peninsula in an apparent show of force in response to North Korean moves.

It has been making its way to the Sea of Japan since then, making stops in Asia along the way.

While the U.S. has dispatched what Trump called an "armada" of ships to the region, including the aircraft carrier, U.S. officials have told The Associated Press that the administration doesn't intend to militarily respond to a North Korean nuclear or missile test. AP

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GAMBLING OPERATOR LINKS 2 CABINET MEN. RETIRED GENERALS TO SLAY PLOT

By Cynthia D. Balana
@cynchdbINQ

Gambling operator Charlie "Atong" Ang on Thursday accused two Cabinet officials and several retired military generals of plotting to kill him over gambling operations in areas where his company operates.

Ang, who operates the virtual jai-alai numbers game through Meridien Vista Gaming Corp. based at the Cagayan Freeport, appealed to President Duterte to save him from Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and some members of Philippine Military Academy Class (PMA) '82.

Ang, a former gambling buddy of former President Joseph Estrada, is Meridien's consultant and general manager.

"Mr. President, I am not asking for any business concessions. I'm asking for [protection for] my life," Ang said in an interview with reporters.

He claimed that he and Mr. Duterte were friends. "Before Digong (Mr. Duterte) became President, I said there were

threats to my life. The people should know this because I may not be able to say it if I'm dead," said Ang, a business partner of Chinese gambling tycoon Jack Lam, who had operated an online gaming casino at Clark Freeport in Pampanga province.

Third attempt

Ang said this would be the third attempt on his life. He said he received similar threats from illegal gambling operators and government officials during the Estrada and Arroyo administrations.

According to Ang, he was tipped off by some agents of the National Bureau of Investigation about the plan to neutralize him and his gambling operation, which was granted a license by the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority.

Ang said Aguirre was taking part in Small Time Lottery (STL) operation through his brother, Engineer Ogie Aguirre. He said Ogie had been bringing investors to the Batangas STL and also operated STL in Laguna and the Bicol region.

STL is a numbers game that the Duterte administration is promoting to stamp out the illegal numbers game *jueteng*.

Ang also claimed that a congressman, whom he did not identify yet, was Aguirre's bagman in Quezon.

"I will name the congressman in a legislative investigation," he said.

He said Aguirre was using the NBI to neutralize him.

As for Esperon, Ang said the

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PH, Brunei to resolve sea row peacefully

By **Leila B. Salaverria**
@LeilasINQ

The Philippines and Brunei, which have rival claims in the South China Sea, on Thursday agreed to work for the peaceful resolution of disputes in the strategic waterway.

President Duterte of the Philippines and Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei also emphasized the importance of the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, signed in 2002 by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and China to maintain peace and stability in the region despite the competing territorial claims.

The two leaders also welcomed the progress in the consultations on the framework of a proposed code of conduct that would prevent the disputes from erupting into conflict.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, including

waters within the exclusive economic zones of Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.

Taiwan also have claims in the South China Sea.

Palace meeting

The South China Sea disputes were among the matters Mr. Duterte and Bolkiah took up during their bilateral meeting in Malacañang on Thursday.

The two leaders, who affirmed the strong ties between their countries, also discussed cooperation on trade and security issues.

Bolkiah is in the Philippines for a state visit and to attend the 30th Asean summit in Manila.

The Philippines, which plays host to the summit, is pushing for the completion of the framework for a code of conduct between Asean and China this year.

"We will work together to ensure that the principled position for the peaceful resolution

of disputes will be articulated fully," Mr. Duterte said after his meeting with Bolkiah.

Collective interest

"This is a collective interest that must be upheld in the implementation of the Declaration [on the Conduct of Parties] and greater progress on the framework of code of conduct in [the] South China Sea," he added.

Mr. Duterte said the members of the international community have duties that they must abide by as they seek peace, stability and security in the South China Sea.

Illegal drugs

Brunei and the Philippines will also continue their cooperation in the campaign against terrorism, violent extremism and piracy at sea, he said.

They will also work together for peace and development in Mindanao, he said.

Bolkiah said Brunei would work with the Philippines in

combating illegal drugs.

"We also look forward to our future collaboration in addressing issues on drugs. We believe that both sides will benefit from the exchanges of expertise and best practices in this area," Bolkiah said.

Mr. Duterte and Bolkiah also witnessed the signing of an agreement on cultural cooperation and a memorandum of understanding on the halal industry and halal export development and promotion.

Bolkiah said Brunei was interested in developing a partnership with the Philippines for investment and the production of halal products as part of their economic cooperation.

On energy matters, oil-rich Brunei will cooperate with the Philippines in exploring "potential downstream and upstream activities," Bolkiah said.

He also expressed appreciation for the contributions of 23,000 Filipino migrant workers in Brunei. Many of the Filipinos

there work as teachers, health professionals and engineers.

Bolkiah is the first head of state to come to the Philippines on a state visit during Mr. Duterte's term, and the second to arrive in the country.

Earlier this year, Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe came to the country on a two-day official visit.

Mr. Duterte visited Brunei last year.

Good relations with China

Commenting on Asean efforts toward a peaceful resolution of the South China Sea disputes, Jose Concepcion III, chair of the Asean Business Advisory Council (Abac), said the Philippines and other members of the bloc stood to benefit and prosper from good relations with China.

Among the "tremendous" benefits that Asean countries will get from having good ties with China is tourism, given China's population of more

than 1 billion, Concepcion said on Thursday.

Speaking at a news conference, Concepcion said he looked at Mr. Duterte's bid to make Manila a partner rather than an adversary of Beijing as "the right step" toward rebuilding ties with China.

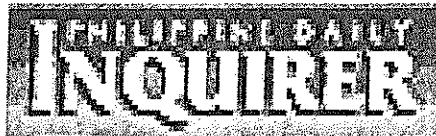
Abac is holding a "Prosperity for All" meeting on Friday on the sidelines of the Asean summit.

Mr. Duterte has deferred assertion of an international arbitration tribunal in favor of the Philippines in the South China Sea dispute and instead set about rebuilding relations with China.

Concepcion conceded that the Philippines has no military power to challenge China, but said that the country has the power to pursue good relations with its neighbors in the region through the friendliness and hospitableness of its people.

—WITH A REPORT FROM CHRISTINE O. AVENDAÑO INQ

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Solicitor General voids Tadeco deal

By Marlon Ramos
@MRamosINQ

The government's primary lawyer on Thursday declared void the multimillion-peso joint venture agreement (JVA) between the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) and a banana exporting company owned by the family of President Duterte's top campaign financier.

In a statement, Solicitor General Jose Calida said the JVA between the BuCor and Tagum Agricultural Development Co. (Tadeco), owned by the family of Davao del Norte Rep. Antonio "Tonyboy" Floirendo Jr., violated the 1987 Constitution and a Commonwealth-era edict on the use of public lands.

The deal allowed Tadeco to turn 5,300 hectares of the Davao Penal and Prison Farm (DPPF), formerly called Davao Penal Colony, into a commercial banana plantation.

Graft complaint

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, one of the President's closest political allies, had questioned the agreement. He filed a graft case against Floirendo, Mr. Duterte's chief financier in the May 2016 elections, for conflict of interest.

"The JVA ... is void as it goes against the Constitution and the Public Land Act," Calida said, referring to Commonwealth Act No. 141, which mandated that public lands may be used by private entities "only through homestead, sale, lease or confirmation of imperfect title."

"It should be noted that BuCor and Tadeco entered into a [JVA]. Clearly, a [JVA] is not one



Solicitor General Jose Calida

of the modes by which agricultural public lands may be disposed of," he argued.

Calida's legal opinion on the issue practically preempted an investigation ordered by Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II, who formed a six-member panel from the Department of Justice (DOJ) in response to a request by Alvarez.

Alvarez had also asked the Office of the Solicitor General to review the agreement.

Calida, however, did not recommend that the BuCor, an agency attached to the DOJ, should rescind the JVA.

Earlier media reports said Alvarez's falling-out with Floirendo, his erstwhile bosom buddy, was triggered by a public spat involving their mistresses in December last year.

Maximum of 50 years

According to Calida, the Constitution allows private entities to use public lands for a maximum period of 50 years.

In the case of the Tadeco-BuCor deal, the first agreement was signed in 1969 and was ex-

tended for another 25 years in 2003, or until September 2029, he said.

"Tadeco's use and occupation of the (penal) lands should cease by 2019. The JVA cannot be allowed to last until 2029," said the solicitor general.

In addition, Calida said the BuCor leased out a portion of the prison farm in Davao del Norte way beyond the 1,000-hectare constitutional limit on the use of public lands.

A review of the agreement also showed that the arrangement between BuCor and Tadeco was actually "not a lease, but a joint venture for the purpose of operating a banana plantation," he said.

Public Land Act

"This is a clear violation of the Public Land Act," he pointed out.

Calida agreed with Alvarez that the use of the DPPF should have been covered by a public bidding and not just a simple agreement between the BuCor and Tadeco as required by law.

"The right to lease the [penal lands] must be made through a public auction where bidders are required to submit sealed bids," he said.

Under the deal covering a total of 5,308.36 hectares of the DPPF, BuCor would receive a guaranteed annual production share of P26.54 million to be increased by 10 percent every five years.

But Alvarez claimed the contract was "grossly disadvantageous" to the government and was "lopsided" to the benefit of Tadeco, one of the world's biggest banana exporters. INQ

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Push for code stirs Asean suspicions about Beijing's endgame

BY MANUEL MOGATO
and MARTIN PETTY

CHINA'S support for finalizing a code of conduct in the hotly contested South China Sea is generating some hope in Southeast Asia of settling disputes, but those working out the terms remain unconvinced of Beijing's sincerity.

Signing China up to a legally binding and enforceable code for the strategic waterway has long been a goal for claimant members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (Asean).

But given the continued building and arming of its artificial islands in the South China Sea, Beijing's recently expressed desire to work with Asean to complete a framework this year has been met with skepticism and suspicion.

"Some of us in Asean believe this is just another ploy by China to buy time," said one senior diplomat familiar with the talks.

"China is expectedly stalling until it has completely attained its strategic objectives... What need is there for the green grass when the horse is dead?"

The framework seeks to advance a 2002 Declaration of Conduct (DOC) of Parties in the

South China Sea, which commits to following the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, and "refraining from action of inhabiting on the presently uninhabited islands, reefs, shoals, cays, and other features".

But the DOC was not stuck to, especially by China, which has built seven islands in the Spratly archipelago. It is now capable of deploying combat planes on three reclaimed reefs, where radars and surface-to-air missile systems have also been installed, according to the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative think tank.

Beijing insists its activities are for defense purposes, in areas it considers its waters. Malaysia, Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam and the Philippines, however, all claim some or all of the resource-rich waterway and its myriad of shoals, reefs and islands.

BINDING CONTRACT

The ASEAN diplomat said the two rounds of talks so far this year gave the impression of progress, but details worked out so far were "essentially the same"

as the DOC.

Another diplomat from the 10-member bloc said the framework would be "re-stating most of the major points" of the DOC, but the hard part was getting China to agree to a legally binding contract.

"Here lies the big challenge. You need to understand this is not just a simple matter of conforming to a set of words," the diplomat said.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang did not directly answer a question on whether China would support an enforceable code of conduct, but said China hoped for the framework and code to be completed this year.

Finalizing the framework would be a feather in the cap for the Philippines, which chairs Asean this year. Manila has reversed its stance on the South China Sea, from advocating a unified front and challenging Beijing's unilateralism, to putting disputes aside to create warm ties.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has opted not to press China to abide by an international arbitration decision last year that ruled in Manila's favor and invalidated Beijing's sweeping South China Sea claims.

There will be no mention of the

Hague ruling in an Asean leaders' statement at a summit in Manila on Saturday, nor will there be any reference to concerns about island-building or militarization that appeared in last year's text, according to excerpts of a draft seen by Reuters.

A diplomat at the Asean secretariat said there was urgency from all parties to get the framework done this year, but Asean was taking "a leap of faith" with China and there were concerns about what the end result might be.

Richard Heydarian, an expert on politics and international affairs at Manila's De La Salle University, said China's strategy was to project an image of being a responsible stakeholder rather than an aggressor, and avoid being bound to rules that could weaken its geopolitical position should the United States assert itself in the South China Sea.

"China wants to come up with a symbolic framework that says to America 'Hey, back off, we're dealing with Asean on a very diplomatic level', but nothing significant enough to operationally restrict their ability to respond if the Trump administration takes a tougher position," he said. — *Reuters*

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Fewer vets attend Baguio Liberation Day

By LARRY P. FABIAN

BAGUIO CITY — Less than a dozen World War II veterans belonging to the 66th Infantry Regiment of the United States Armed Forces in the Philippines-North Luzon (USAFIP-NL) gathered at the Veterans Park on Harrison Road, here, to take part in the 72nd Baguio Liberation Day rites yesterday morning.

Out of the thousands listed on the War Memorial Wall dedicated to gallant warriors — many of them in their teens at the time war broke out — eight of them stood in front of the Veteran's Park Monument to give salute to their fallen comrades.

These eight members of the 66th Infantry Regiment originally formed by Majors Bado Dangwa, Dennis Molintas Sr. and Santiago C. Nuval, repelled the advancing Japanese Forces in Benguet and Mountain Province.

Veterans Tino Aticao, Albert Bugtong, Garcia Wakit (93 years old), Esteban Esco (92), Marciano Miles, Jose Tiangao, Raymundo Gadgad (92) and Eduardo Peralta gave their own accounts of what WW II meant to them and how it changed the course of their lives.

Esteban Esco, recalls having to carry and transport the body of his soldier-brother Albert Esco from Buguias, Benguet to their village in Pico, La Trinidad.

"That took me into deep emotional anger, I was only about 17 years old and had to bear the horrors of war," Esco said. "After that, I joined the regiment, starting from being a messenger until I was given my own rifle and was called to the battlefield," Esco added.

He said that every year since the Liberation of Baguio is commemorated, Esco hopes that the younger generations learn from history and denounce war. "I hope your generation would not ponder on pulling out the dead body of a friend after a battle; a friend whom you have just spoken to and shared your life with just a while ago. It gives a scar to your memory and changes your life," Esco explains.

Benguet Governor Cresencio Pacalso, a WW II veteran's son, added that gallantry, heroism, and patriotism are the characters that should be emulated by the young generations.

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295



BAGUIO LIBERATORS — World War II veteran Esteban Esco, 92, points at the name of his brother Albert Esco on the War Memorial Wall during yesterday's anniversary celebration of the Liberation of Baguio. His brother died in combat during the war in Buguias, Benguet. (Larry P. Fabian)

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS – Email add: oacpa.army2012@gmail.com – Tel no. (02) 845-9555 Local: 5285, 5295

Abu Sayyaf no longer a threat to Region 7

CEBU CITY – The remaining Abu Sayyaf Group members on the run in Bohol no longer pose a threat to Central Visayas or Region 7, a joint statement released by the Police Regional Office 7 and the Central Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines said.

PRO 7 director Chief Supt. Noli G. Taliño and Centcom commander Lt. Gen. Oscar Lactao said the combined forces of the AFP and PNP are now committed to finishing the job and finally arrest the remaining ASG members who are now in the run for their lives, injured and

hungry, in Bohol.

"With their capabilities significantly diminished in leadership and resources, they no longer pose a threat to Central Visayas," the joint statement said.

Taliño and Lactao urged the public to remain calm and vigilant and immediately report any relevant information to the nearest police station or any military unit so that they could act on it promptly and appropriately.

They also lauded the vigilance of the public, which was a major key in the successful neutralization of

ASG members who entered Bohol with plans to sow terror.

"The support and cooperation that the government forces are receiving from the public is indispensable in the neutralization of Abu Sayyaf members who entered Inabanga, Bohol last April 11, 2017, and the arrest of their cohorts," they said.

They added that the arrest of Reenor Lou Dongon, also known as "Kudri" and "Renren," a known bomb maker who has pending warrants of arrest for illegal possession of firearms and double murder, at a PNP-AFP checkpoint a few meters away from the encounter site was another blow to the nefarious plot of the lawless armed group.

"The involvement in the said plot of Supt. Maria Cristina Nobleza, who was with the suspect during the arrest, is now being investigated. It was her own personal decision to be in the company of a fugitive and for that she, being a law enforcer, will be held accountable for her actions," they said.

The PNP and the AFP advised the public to refrain from posting unvalidated information in various social media platforms and disseminating inaccurate text messages to avoid casting fear and panic among the people. **(Mars W. Mosqueda Jr.)**

NOBLEZA-DONGON IKINASAL NG TERORISTA!

INAMIN ni Supt. Maria Cristina Nobleza na mismong ang dayuhang terorista na si Marwan ang nagkasal sa kanila ni Rennour Lou Dongon na isang bomb maker at miyembro ng Abu Sayyaf Group.

Ito ang sinabi ni Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Dir. Gen. Ronald Dela Rosa sa patuloy na isinasagawang tactical interrogation sa nasabing opisyal.

Ayon kay Dela Rosa, inamin ni Nobleza na naganap ang kanilang kasal ni Dongon noong umakyat sila noon sa bundok kung saan mismo si Marwan ang nagkasal sa kanila.

Hindi naman sinabi ni Dela Rosa kung kailan naganap at saan ikinasal sina Nobleza at Dongon.

Magugunita na si Marwan ay napatay ng mga elemento ng Special Action Forces (SAF) kung saan 44 na miyembro ng SAF ang nasawi sa isina-

gawang operation sa Mamasapano, Maguindanao noong Enero 2016.

Kasabay nito, sinabi ni dela Rosa na tinutulungan umano ni Nobleza si Dongon upang bumango ito dahil nawalan na ng gana ang mga kasamahan nito sa kanya.

Sinabi ni Dela Rosa na upang makabawi si Dongon ay humiling ito sa asawa na iligtas siya matapos na masugatan matapos na maka-engkwentro ang militar sa Clarin, Bohol kaya't sinamahan ito na magdala ng mga kagamitan at gamot. Kung sakaling nagtagumpay ito, ay magiging normal ang trabaho o tungkulin nito sa teroristang grupo at magiging malaking tyansa

naman ni Nobleza na makakuha ng mga importasyon.

Nilinaw naman ni Dela Rosa na ang lahat ng mga sinabi ni Nobleza ay pawang kanyang version at masusi parin ini-evaluate at pinag-aaralang mabuti ang mga sinabi o pahayag nito.

Aniya, posibleng mayroon pang mga itinatago at

hindi sinasabi si Nobleza na maaring magdiin sa kanya.

Sa kasalukuyan ay mahigpit na ipinapatupad ang seguridad kay Nobleza at Dongon sa detention cell sa Camp Crame at hindi pinapayagan na madalawang mga ito dahil kapwa itinuturing na "high risk detainee".

(Mark Obleda)



Nobleza: I'm a gov't DPA vs ASG

Superintendent Maria Christina Nobleza, the police official who was caught while allegedly trying to rescue trapped members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Bohol, has been claiming that she is a deep penetration agent (DPA) of the government against the terror group.

But the Philippine National Police (PNP) would not buy her claim during the tactical interrogation, saying it could just be an alibi to save her face from the mess she entangled herself into.

"Everything that she said, we take it as her own version. We are still evaluating it and we will not be fooled by any attempt to fool us," said Dela

Rosa.

In fact, Dela Rosa said they have already culled some intelligence information contradicting the statement of Nobleza that she has secret mission against the Abu Sayyaf.

It was learned that Nobleza has been claiming that she first penetrated the ASG while she was still at the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Commission (PAOCC) which was created by the past administration.

Based on the background check, Nobleza met Reenor Lou Dongon when she was designated as her interrogator after the latter was arrested for Cagayan de Oro bombings

in 2012.

And Nobleza has been insinuating that she is using Dongon's access to the ASG in order to penetrate the bandit group.

Nobleza reportedly got close with the ASG, even claiming that she married Dongon under Islam rites with no less than Marwan officiating the marriage.

Marwan, a Malaysian bomb expert, was killed during the controversial Masapano operation in Maguindanao wherein 44 police commandos were killed. He is tagged as one of those involved in the Bali bombings that left more than 200 people, mostly foreigners, dead.

Marwan, whose real name is Zulkifli bin Hir, went into hiding in Mindanao under the agreement that he would be secured in exchange for training on bomb-making and urban terrorism.

"She admitted that they are married. She said she and Dongon climbed a mountain where they were married by Marwan himself," said Dela Rosa.

BOHOL 'MISSION'

Quoting Nobleza, Dela Rosa said the female police official decided to go to Bohol in an attempt to have Dongon regain the trust and confidence of the ASG.

"She was helping him because apparently, the ASG no longer trusts Dongon," said Dela Rosa.

According to Nobleza, it was when they found out that some of the

trapped ASG men in Bohol are needing food and medicine that she saw it as an opportunity to help Dongon back in the bandit group's inner circle.

Dela Rosa said that should Nobleza's mission succeeds, it would be the opportunity for Dongon to go back in the circle and eventually a good opportunity for her to deeply penetrate the ASG.

"But that is according to her. We also have information (against her)," said Dela Rosa.

Dela Rosa said they have no information that Nobleza has a go-signal from any police or government official on her "mission" with the ASG.

"For our part, we are questioning her loyalty. Is she with us or no longer with us?" he added. **(Aaron Recuenco)**

28 April 2017



Pahina. 5

PABAHAY PARA SA SUNDALO AT PULIS, MINADALI NG NHA

TILA minadali ng National Housing Authority ang pagpapatayo ng mabiglit 4,000 units na pabahay para sa mga sundalo at pulis sa panahon ni dating Pangulong Benigno “Noynoy” Aquino III sa Pandi, Bulacan.

Ayon kay Negros Occidental Representative Alfredo Benitez ay mabilisan na itinayo ng NHA ang mga pabahay nang walang koordinasyon, ni hindi man lamang kinonsulta ang mga benipisyaryo kung matitirahan ang mga ito.

Sa ginawang pagsisiyasat ni Senate Chairman Urban Planning, Housing and Resettlement Committee Senator JV Ejercito ay napag-ala-

man na mabilisan na bumili ng lupa ang nasabing ahensya.

Ginawa ang pagbili kahit ito ay nasa isang liblib na lugar ng Pandi, Bulacan nang walang anomang kompromasyon mula sa mga kinauukulan.

Ang masakit pa rito, napakaligt ng flooring ng mga housing unit sa Pandi na sa pagkaka-alam ko na may sukat na 22 square meters na pinado na magsisiksikan ang pamilyang titira sa pabahay na ito.

Ang matindi pa rito, yung pinagtayuan ng pabahay ay walang linya ng kuryente at wala ring pagkukunan ng tubig kaya nakabinbin ng mahabang panahon hanggang



JUAN DE SABOG

ni JOHNNY MAGALONA

sa magkandabulok-bulok at nasira na-ang ibang mga bahay.

Kaya tama lang na okupahan ng Kadamay ang nasabing pabahay na ginastusan ng gobyernong Aquino ng bil-yong piso na mabubulok nang paganon-ganon na lamang.

Ni multo nga ay hindi pananahanan ang pabahay na ito.

NAGBIBINGI-BINGIHAN SINA GOB AT PD

Sa Sto. Domingo at Lina-nera ng lalawigan ng Nueva Ecija ang papwesto piyo ng mga drop ball ni Jovie Fron-

da.

Pero sa kabila ng kaliwat kanang reklamo ng mga Novo Ecijano ay patuloy pa ring nagbibingi-bingihan si Nueva Ecija Gov. Chery Umali at ang PD nito na si Supt. Antoni Yarra.

Bakit hindi ipinahuhuli ni gobernadora kay Col. Yarra?

Huwag naman niyang sabihing may padulas din ang tanggapan ng kapitolyo.

ooo

Anomang puna o reklamo i-text sa 09189274764, 09266719269 o i-email sa juandesabog@yahoo.com.

24 April 2017

The Manila Times

Page: 76

Kagitingan in the 21st century

Can we still exemplify the value that won us our freedom?

THE Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), headquartered in Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, has been doing its utmost to care for Filipino veterans. Over the years, it has focused on distributing a monthly pension, death and disability pension, medical benefits, and burial assistance; but the reality of limited resources and its impact on PVAO's ability to honor those who risked their lives to defend the nation, has made it necessary for the organization to identify a unifying purpose and a better way forward.

Undersecretary Ernesto Carolina, who has served as PVAO administrator for the past nine years, calls this unifying purpose "kagitingan". Usually translated as "valor", Carolina describes it as a love of country that enables the individual to transcend love of self—a value best exemplified by our Filipino veterans that no longer seems to pervade society's decision-making process. "It [kagitingan] seems to have faded away after the war," he says. "*Ang pagmamahal sa bayan ay natabunan nang pagmamahal sa sarili.*" ("Love of country has been overshadowed by love of self.")

For Carolina, one manifestation of this is corruption, which, among other things, has prevented PVAO from carrying out critical assistance. He asks, "*Kung mahal mo ang bayan, bakit mo nanakawan?*" (If you love the nation, why would



you steal from it?}

These ideas were key in the creation of the Kagitingan Roadmap 2022, PVAO's action plan toward not only improving its own efficiency but also empowering Filipino veterans. Its vision for 2022 sees "a strong and unified Filipino Veterans Community serving as a reliable partner in nation-building".

The roadmap seeks to address serious issues that have built up over the years, including inadequate benefits, delayed pensions, inaccessible healthcare, and poor governance. In 2014, almost 90 percent of World War II veterans were found to be entirely dependent on the monthly old-age pension of P5,000 and an additional monthly disability pension of P1,700. Sixteen thousand one hundred veterans are currently considered indigent. PVAO seeks to reduce this number to zero by 2020 by unifying them under an empowered and credible Veterans Federation of the Philippines (VFP), and by pursuing legislation to reform the pension system and upgrade veterans benefits. Today, the organization is able to report that its effort to increase

the monthly old-age pension from P5,000 to P20,000 has gained the increasing support of legislators, with the proposed measure moved up to the committee on appropriations in February.

Another issue that is just as urgent as these administrative challenges is our waning national appreciation for Filipino veterans and what they symbolize. Informal settlers occupy 15 hectares of the Libingan ng mga Bayani (LNMB), which is constantly desecrated by those who remain unconscious of its status as a resting ground for the country's heroes. Only 13 out of 43 events mandated to be "commemorative" are observed by the local governments; and many stories of wartime heroism remain undocumented. To this end, the PVAO is working to increase the number of initiatives that can serve as reminders of our veterans' great historic legacy. These initiatives are called "Kagitingan Builders" and include the development of military shrines, local government ownership and staging of commemorative events, and the production of books, films and other materials.

As of 2017, PVAO has successfully had Mount Samat National Shrine included in the Bataan Tourism Enterprise Zone, considered to be central Luzon's flagship tourism zone. It has also secured P356 million for LNMB development this year; and published

14 books on women veterans, accompanied by a Facebook page dedicated to "Amazing Filipino Women Heroes".

Because of the roadmap, "kagitingan" has become a powerful rallying cry for PVAO's leaders, workers, and veterans. It has invigorated the organization to look at both its veterans and the nation's future defenders as partners in restoring *kagitingan* as an essential modern-day value. Looking ahead, PVAO hopes that its inclusive strategy can contribute to a cultural transformation that will inspire every Filipino to be a nation-builder.

Carolina puts it best and leaves us with something to think about as we close April and the Araw ng Kagitingan celebrations: "We owe it to the generations that entitled us to our freedom today to carry out our roles in society with love for our country—ever more with *kagitingan*."

The author is a program officer at the Institute for Solidarity in Asia (ISA), a non-profit group that advocates for governance reform and envisions a Dream Philippines where every government institution delivers and every citizen participates and prospers. Contact the author through mantonio@isacenter.org and learn more about the group's work with the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO) through isacenter.org.

28 April 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B4

What ROTC could have done

In the recent Palarong Pambansa speech of President Duterte, he emphasized the revival of reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) in the Philippines. He told the athletes about the need of civilians to "sacrifice for country". There is this consideration of for alternatives: conscription or compulsory military enlistment for all civilians. I've been telling to my friends several times that ROTC is only subject in College that teaches students "Patriotism." No other subject comes close.

Come to think of it, if we have ROTC students when the Abu Sayyaf landed in Inabanga, Bohol, since it is vacation time, we could have mobilized these ROTC students who know that terrain very well to help the 7th Infantry Brigade look out and search for the ASG. With proper training, the military could issue these students with weapons to fight the ASG.

I believe that the scrapping of the ROTC program in 2002 was "short-sighted." With the

Philippines facing internal threats from the ASG, the NPA or the Muslim separatists, all the more we need to revive the ROTC but with a twist. ROTC is just a measure to discipline youth in military perspective or perhaps in the other non-traditional issues such as search and rescue operations especially during natural disasters as typhoons or earthquakes.

For those who oppose the return of ROTC, better think twice because the alternative as the President pointed out is conscription. In Israel, able bodied Israelis 18 years old or above conscripted into military service. This includes Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. Now, do we want the Filipino youth to be conscripted to the military? Or should we revive the ROTC in order to train our youth for military service. The next question is without ROTC and trained uniformed men, who will protect the Philippines from the lines of enemies in the future especially in the urban jungle? Because, technically speaking, the generation will experience a different setting of security warfare to maintain peace and order. — **CARIDAD E. ULLEGUE, Peace Advocate in Cagayan Province, Atulayan, Tuguegarao City, caridad_u@outlook.com**

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ONLINE NEWS

28 APRIL 2017

Gov't forces intensify ops in key cities

From the Daily Tribune (Apr 27): Gov't forces intensify ops in key cities

Government forces have intensified security operations in key cities in Mindanao to thwart any possible diversionary or retaliatory attacks coming from terrorist groups now being pursued in Lanao del Sur.

Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, spokesman of the Army's 1st Infantry Division (ID), said that Brig. Gen. Rolando Bautista, commander of 1st ID has ordered troops to secure vital installations and avoid collateral damage.

"He issued instruction to secure all vital installations to avoid diversionary attacks by the enemy," said Herrera.

Bautista's order covered vital installations and places of convergence in the cities of Iligan, Marawi and even Zamboanga.

The move, Herrera said, was based on the history of the targeted groups, particularly the Maute group and the Abu Sayyaf, which usually conducts diversionary or retaliatory attacks when pinned down in certain area.

Currently, military operations are still ongoing against the Maute group in Piagapo, Lanao del Sur where 38 terrorists, including foreigners, had been killed since the offensives were launched last week.

"Historically, they conduct actions to mislead the government forces... so we are continuously securing public places and important areas in Iligan, Marawi... and even Zamboanga," said Herrera.

"We have route security, checkpoint operations, civil military operations," he added.

Bautisa also ordered for the troops to closely coordinate with other government agencies, particularly local government units, to ensure public safety and security.

Herrera also cited the links between the Maute group, the Abu Sayyaf and other terrorist groups.

"Diversionary, retaliatory... are the dangerous moves of our enemies. We know their tactics, so we are on guard," he said.

Last September, the Maute group exploded an improvised explosive device (IED) at a night market in Davao City –killing 14 people and wounded 70 others, to ease military pressure from the Abu Sayyaf in Sulu and Basilan.

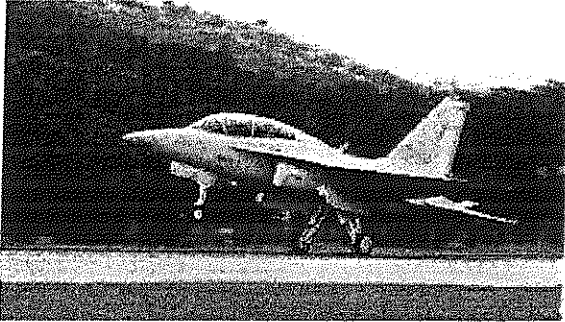
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www.dwdd.com.ph

2 KARAGDAGANG FIGHTER JETS, DUMATING NA SA BANSA

Posted by Lui Claudio on April 27, 2017 at 2:44 PM



Sampu (10) na ang FA 50 lead-in fighter jets ng Sandatahang lakas ng Pilipinas, makaraang dumating sa bansa kahapon ang dalawa (2) pang FA 50 mula sa South Korea.

Ito ang inihayag ni Philippine Air Force (PAF) spokesman, Col. Antonio Francisco, anyang mga FA aircrafts assist ng AFP ay gagamitin sa ibat-ibang operasyon kontra sa mga bandidong grupo lalo na sa bahagi ng Mindanao.

Sinabi naman ni AFP Chief of Staff Eduardo Año, ang dalawang jet fighters na dumating kahapon ng umaga sa Clark Air base sa Air Force City, Pampanga., na may tail number 009 at 010 ay agad na isasa-ilalim sa pagsubok bago naman ipapadala sa bahagi ng Mindanao.

Matatandaan na ang mga nasabing fighter jets ay ilan lamang sa bahagi ng AFP modernization program ng AFP na sinimulan noong panahon ni dating pangulong Benigno Aquino III, mula sa Korea Aerospace Industries na binili sa halagang P18 bilyon, kaugnay na din sa pagpapalakas ng pwersa ng militar.

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www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

DND to acquire SK 'Pohang' ASW corvette for USD100

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 27): DND to acquire SK 'Pohang' ASW corvette for USD100

The Department of National of National (DND) will be acquiring a "Pohang" Flight III anti-submarine corvette from South Korea for just USD100.

This is possible as South Korea is now in the process of retiring the above-mentioned ship from its inventory.

"We have sent a letter to the Government of South Korea expressing our intent to acquire one Pohang class corvette. We are hoping to receive the vessel within the year (no specific date yet)," DND public affairs chief Arsenio Andolong said in a message to the Philippine News Agency Thursday.

"The transfer will be in the form of a donation, however, we will pay a token fee of USD100. The corvette will still undergo refurbishment, the cost of which we will shoulder," he added.

However, Andolong has no information on whether the transfer will include the ship's weapon and sensor suites and exact cost of the refurbishment.

But he added that the ship will definitely boost the Philippine Navy's capability to patrol the country's territorial waters aside from helping in the fight against piracy and terrorism.

"Pohang" are class of general purpose corvettes operated by the South Korean Navy.

Around 24 were built during the late Cold War and post-Cold War period. Out of this number, 18 are still in commissioned as of this posting.

These ships are armed with a variety of anti-sub, anti-ship, and anti-air weapons with their accompanying sensor gear and are capable of running to speeds up to 32 knots.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php/articles/983146>

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Religion not a factor in PHL anti-terror campaign -- AFP

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 27): Religion not a factor in PHL anti-terror campaign -- AFP

Religion is not a factor in the country's ongoing campaign against terror groups and lawless elements in Mindanao.

This was stressed by Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Gen. Eduardo Año when asked on whether they are looking on the involvement of "Balik Islam" adherents on terrorism activities in wake of the botched Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) landing in Inabanga, Bohol last April 10.

"There is nothing wrong with 'Balik Islam' or Muslim converts as we have freedom of religion (in the Philippines) what we are looking at are those (got) associated with the Maute Group (and ASG) as converts coming these groups are those who have become radicalized," he added in Filipino.

Año added even in the AFP there are "Balik Islam" adherents and he sees no problem with these individuals.

In the above-mentioned incident, Joselito Milloria, a "Balik Islam" convert, allegedly acted as guide and contact of ASG sub-leader Muamar Askali alias "Abu Rami" in Inabanga where the group rested for a while to plan their kidnapping attacks.

However, this proved naught as military and police units pounced on the group last April 11, killing Askali and three others along with three soldiers and police officers along with an elderly couple.

Pursuit operations last April 22 in Clarin town, also in Bohol, resulted in the neutralization of Milloria and three other ASG men, leaving only three survivors from Askali's 11-man band who are now being hunted as of this posting.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php/articles/983000>

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2 Abu Sayyaf bandits surrender in Sulu as military offensive continues

From the Philippine News Agency (Apr 27): **2 Abu Sayyaf bandits surrender in Sulu as military offensive continues**

Two members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) have surrendered on Thursday due to the continuous military operations in the island province of Sulu.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana Jr., commander of Joint Task Force Sulu, identified the ASG surrenderees as Husain Nasirin, 22, and Hasir Asara, 24, of Barangays Buhanginan and Danag, respectively, in the town of Patikul.

Sobejana said Nasirin and Asara surrendered to the 501st headquarters in Sulu at around 1:45 p.m. Thursday. Intelligence operatives facilitated the surrender of the two bandits.

He said the two are followers of the late ASG sub-leader Hairulla Asbang, who died while undergoing medication at a hospital in Davao City. Lawmen arrested Asbang on December 26, 2016 at a private hospital in this city where he was admitted for a gunshot wound he sustained in a clash with government troops in Sulu. He was later transferred to Davao City for further treatment.

Sobejana said the two surrenderees turned over an M-16 Armalite rifle and a caliber .30 M1 Garand rifle "as a gesture of sincere commitment that they wanted to fully return to the folds of the law."

The surrender of Nasirin and Asara brought to 19 the number of Abu Sayyaf bandits who surrendered to the government since January in the provinces of Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi.

Military troops are continuously pursuing the Abu Sayyaf bandits in the three provinces on orders of President Rodrigo Duterte.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php/articles/983190>

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www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

NPA to release captive soldier in Surigao Norte

From MindaNews (Apr 27): **NPA to release captive soldier in Surigao Norte**

A soldier belonging to the 30th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army abducted by the New People's Army (NPA) abducted last January will be released in Alegria town in Surigao del Norte this Saturday.

Ka Oto, spokesperson of the NPA's Guerilla Front 16 operating in Surigao del Norte and four towns in neighboring Agusan del Norte, said they will release Pfc Erwin Salan, who was captured last Jan. 29 in Barangay Budlingin in Alegria.

He said their tactical operations against government forces have been halted since last Tuesday noon until midnight of May 5 in the towns of Placer, Tubod, Bacuag, Alegria, Gigaquit and Claver, all in Surigao del Norte, to pave the way for the safe release of the captured soldier.

Lt. Col. Rico Amaro, 30IB commanding officer, said he is glad about the news of Salan's release soon, noting that the soldier has been in captivity for almost three months now.

But he said that although the NPA has announced it will halt operations, the military could not reciprocate the gesture.

Amaro said he has "no basis to recommend" to his superiors suspension of military and police operations, adding that these are "beyond [his] authority to declare."

"I request the NPA leadership to define their parameters, else, I will continue my mandated task to secure remote communities," he said.

Surigao del Norte Governor Sol F. Matugas and the local crisis management committee have no statement on the issue.

On July 10, 2014, four police officers were captured by the NPA during a raid in the Alegria police station. They were freed after 19 days in captivity.

On November 16 of the same year, two police officers also in Alegria were seized by NPA rebels. They were released to then Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte three months later in the hinterlands of Gigaquit town in Surigao del Norte.

<http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2017/04/npa-to-release-captive-soldier-in-surigao-norte/>

Posted by Retired Analyst at 4:48 AM

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

AFP says they have fully cooperated with courts in Jonas Burgos case

April 27, 2017 Share

MANILA, April 27 — The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) said they have fully cooperated with the courts in the probe into the disappearance of farmer activist Jonas Burgos, which marks its 10th year on Friday.

As the case is being handled by the courts, the military cannot make any further comment, AFP spokesperson Brig. Gen. Restituto Padilla said Thursday.

"The AFP is fully cooperating with the courts on this case but cannot comment on it further since the case is already being tried (making) it sub judice," he explained. A case is sub judice when it is under judicial consideration, thus its discussion in public is prohibited.

Burgos was allegedly snatched by militarymen at a Quezon City mall on April 28, 2007.

As of this posting, only 1st Lt. Harry Baliaga Jr., then assigned at the 56th Infantry Battalion, is undergoing trial for Burgos' disappearance after he was tagged by witnesses as among those involved in the crime.

Other ranking officials tagged for reasons of command responsibility have long been cleared. (PFN/PNA)

2 Abu Sayyaf bandits surrender in Sulu as military offensive continues

April 27, 2017 Share

ZAMBOANGA CITY, April 27 (PNA) - Two members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) have surrendered on Thursday due to the continuous military operations in the island province of Sulu.

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(Teofilo P. Garcia Jr./PNA)

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

AFP clashes with Islamic State-linked militants

Richel Umel, AFP



Philippine soldiers hoist a national flag after clashes with Islamic State-affiliated extremists in the mountain area of Piagapo town, Lanao del Sur province, on Tuesday. The military said it has killed almost 40 militants loyal to the Islamic State group, including three Indonesians and a Malaysian, in a major land and air assault in the south.

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