

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



**TEAM ARMY**

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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

# NEWS CLIPPINGS

22 December 2017

**Friday**

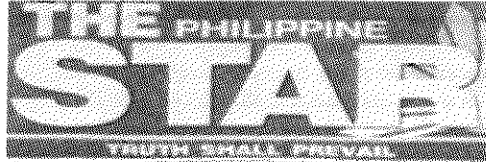
*Army Core Purpose. Serving the people. Securing the land.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### 22 DECEMBER 2017

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast	-	Phil Star p.
<b>HEADLINES</b>			
2-3	Fastcraft sinks off Quezon	Danny Estacio	Mla Bulletin p.1
<b>ARMY RELATED NEWS</b>			
4	More Sayyaf members yield in Sulu	Francis Wakefield	Mla Bulletin p.16
5	7 more AGS bandits give up	Zaida Delos Reyes-Palanca	P tonight p.10
6	NPA's release 2 POW in Surigao del Norte	Mike U Crismundo	Mla Bulletin p.16
7	Army honors wounded relief troops in Northern Samar	PNA	D Tribune p16
<b>AFP RELATED NEWS</b>			
8	Palace hoping, but not expecting truce declaration from CPP-NPA	Argyll Cyrus B Geducos	Mla Bulletin p.21
9-10	Duterte shortens holiday truce with reds	Christina Mendez	Phil Star p.4
11	'Navy chief relief displeases some military officials'	Roel Pareño	Phil Star p.14
12	Navy chief: P15.5-B project to push through	Mario Mallari	D Tribune p.3
13	700 NPA terrorist, sumuko	Joy Cantos	Ngayon p.14
14	8 araw ceasefire sa NPA idineklara ng Defense	Joy Cantos	Ngayon p.2
<b>ONLINE NEWS</b>			
15	Fallen Scout Ranger in Marawi tiff gets Medal of Valor	Priam Nepomuceno	www.pna.gov.ph
16	DND to comply with PRRD's holiday truce directive	Priam Nepomuceno	www.pna.gov.ph

22 December 2017



Page: 18

**TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST DECEMBER 22, 2017 / FRIDAY**

TROPICAL STORM "VITA" ESTIMATED AS 400 KM EAST OF MANILA; BRINGS WINDS TAN AND OF A COOL FRONT APPROXING EASTERN PORTS OF SOUTHERN LUZON AT 09:00 AM - DECEMBER 21, 2017

LAGUNA CITY 21 - 28 °C	TUGUEGARAO CITY 21 - 26 °C
BAGUIO CITY 14 - 22 °C	
SMALL CLARK 23 - 30 °C	ASTRO-MARINA 23 - 29 °C
TAGAYTAY CITY 18 - 27 °C	LEGAZPI CITY 24 - 30 °C
	MACADANAN CITY 23 - 29 °C
MANILA (SOUTH) 25 - 29 °C	DAVAO CITY 25 - 29 °C
PUERTO PRINCESA 25 - 30 °C	CAGAYAN DAURO 23 - 29 °C
	GENERAL SERRANO 23 - 29 °C
ZAMBOANGA CITY 23 - 32 °C	GENERAL SANTOS 23 - 31 °C

EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	DEC 23			DEC 24			DEC 25			EXTENDED WEATHER FORECAST	DEC 23			DEC 24			DEC 25		
	SAT	SUN	MON	SAT	SUN	MON	SAT	SUN	MON		SAT	SUN	MON	SAT	SUN	MON	SAT	SUN	MON
METRO MANILA	23 °C 29 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	23 °C 29 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 32 °C	25 °C 33 °C
TUGUEGARAO	20 °C 26 °C	22 °C 27 °C	22 °C 24 °C	20 °C 26 °C	22 °C 27 °C	22 °C 24 °C	20 °C 28 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	ILOILO/ BACOLOD	20 °C 28 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	20 °C 28 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C	20 °C 28 °C	26 °C 30 °C	26 °C 30 °C
LAOAG	20 °C 29 °C	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 30 °C	20 °C 29 °C	21 °C 30 °C	21 °C 30 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	METRO CEBU	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C	25 °C 31 °C
BAGUIO	15 °C 21 °C	15 °C 21 °C	15 °C 19 °C	15 °C 21 °C	15 °C 21 °C	15 °C 19 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	TACLORAN	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 31 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 28 °C	25 °C 30 °C	24 °C 30 °C	24 °C 28 °C	25 °C 30 °C	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C	23 °C 30 °C	23 °C 31 °C	24 °C 31 °C
TAGAYTAY	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	19 °C 28 °C	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 32 °C	26 °C 33 °C	26 °C 33 °C
LEGAZPI	25 °C 29 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 29 °C	25 °C 29 °C	25 °C 30 °C	25 °C 29 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 32 °C	24 °C 33 °C

☁️ Partly cloudy to at times mostly with rain/showers

☁️ Partly cloudy to at times mostly with rain/showers and/or thunderstorms

☁️ Cloudy zones with rain/showers and/or thunderstorms

☁️ Light rain

22 December 2017

MANILA BULLETIN  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

# Fastcraft sinks off Quezon

## 4 dead, 240 rescued, but 7 missing

By RAYMUND F. ANTONIO and DANNY J. ESTADIO

**F**our people were killed and 240 passengers rescued after an inter-island fastcraft carrying 251 passengers from Real, Quezon sank in violent waters enroute

to Polilio Island yesterday morning.

Captain Armand Balilo, spokesman of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), said the fastcraft "Mercraft 3" departed Ungos Port in Real at 9 a.m.

amid good weather and was enroute to Polilio Island when the maritime incident happened.

A survivor, Donel Jade Mendiola, told DZMM radio that the weather was fine when the ferry left port, but strong winds and large waves started to batter

## Fastcraft sinks off Quezon ◀1

rescue them before nightfall.

In a CNN-Philippines interview at 6 p.m., Kagawad Janette Balili of Barangay Dinahican in Infanta said most of the survivors were taken to her village, where temporary kitchen was set up at the barangay hall.

Balili said they were attending to 218 survivors and that apart from their tally in Dinahican, there were 22 more survivors taken to the town of Real. This tally showed that 240 had been rescued

and only seven remained missing as of press time last night.

Judith Sierno, one of the survivors, told CNN that the front part of the passenger vessel broke off.

Senior Superintendent Rhoderick Armamento, Quezon Police Provincial Office (PPO) director, confirmed there were only four deaths while Dr. Corazon de los Reyes, chief of the C.M. Recto District Hospital in Infanta, said 11 more were undergoing medical treatment.

De los Reyes identified the 11 as Donna Marasigan, Limuel Marasigan, Ruben Saltura, Vhon Lemuel-Marasigan, Hyracel Amande, Marilou Jose Diasanta, Jezriel Azul, Jhan del Azul, Dominador Zapanta, Rhian Valleros Pagao and Relan Balot.

Armamento said there was a joint effort to rescue the passengers with the PCG, the Infanta and Polilio Police Stations, the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Councils (MDRRMC) of Infanta and General Nakar, and fishing vessels on site.

Armamento said fishing vessel "JJJ"

it about two hours into the trip.

"The vessel came to a halt and started taking in water in the front side. The passengers dashed to one side and the ferry started to sink," Mendiola said. He said the passengers were instructed to don life vests.

Balilo said the PCG main headquarters in Manila received the report at 11 a.m. from Coast Guard Station

Northern Quezon that the fastcraft sank between Dinahican Point, Infanta and Agta Point, Polilio Island.

By late afternoon, the PCG confirmed that four of the passengers were killed, but their identities were still withheld pending notification of their relatives. Mayor Grace America of Infanta said 11 were still missing as maritime authorities scrambled to ▶6

was able to rescue 27 passengers and took them to the Port of Infanta by 2 p.m.

“As per initial information received, said craft has maximum capacity of 286 passengers and 251 were reportedly onboard,” said Balilo.

“Hopefully, the number is correct and there is no excess passengers,” he added.

The search and rescue is still on for the passengers and crew of Mercraft 3 while the cause of the sinking remains unclear, according to Balilo.

“There is a huge possibility that the bad weather affected its sea travel,” Balilo told reporters in an interview.

“After the conduct of search and rescue, we will conduct our investigation and we will find out what really happened,” he said.

The Coast Guard has dispatched its

rescue teams from Southern Luzon to Real Quezon.

At the same time, the maritime agency also coordinated with the Armed Forces of the Philippines’ Southern Luzon Command for the deployment of its air and maritime assets for the SAR mission.

Responding to the incident, Balilo also said PCG’s multi-role response vessels were about to leave Manila for the conduct of the search and rescue.

“I was told there were already passengers who were rescued and onboard their boats. Some of them were on their way to the Coast Guard station for accounting of passengers,” he said.

“We will continue [the rescue operation] even through the night,” the PCG spokesman said. (With a report from Francis T. Wakefield and AP)

21 December 2017

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 16

# More Sayyaf members yield in Sulu

By FRANCIS T. WAREFIELD

The military yesterday said that more Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) terrorists are returning to the folds of the law, yielding their firearms, and hoping for a better life.

The growing number of terrorists yielding to authorities was brought about by Joint Task Force (JTF) Sulu's proposal of a Comprehensive Psycho-Social and Reintegration Package for ASG surrenderers which was concurred with by governors and mayors of Sulu last November 16.

This month alone, seven Abu Sayyafs yielded with their firearms for a total of 51 surrenderers with 48 firearms for the year since March.

Five of the seven who surrendered were presented by Lt. Col. Jessie R. Montoya, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Special Forces Battalion to Brig.

Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana, JTF Sulu Commander at the War Room at Camp Bautista, Jolo, Sulu on Monday.

Those who surrendered were identified as Persing J. Abdurasid alias Lito, 41, a resident of Brgy. Wannu Piyanjihan, Parang who also yielded his M1 Garand rifle last December 11; Midzfar Idjarani Jukuran alias Mitchie/Che Guevarra, 31, a resident of Brgy. Panabuan, Indanan who yielded his M16 rifle last December 12; Tating Asid alias Black from Maimbung who submitted himself with an M1 Garand rifle; Amin Asjad Ismula alias Amin, 37, a resident of Brgy. Taglibi, Patikul and Aldisar Bara Jurrani, 24, a resident of Brgy. Buansa, Indanan who handed-over one M1 Garand rifle each.

Montoya said they underwent medical examination at the Station Hospital here.

"They are now undergoing custo-

dial debriefing in preparation for their reintegration into society. Since they all surrendered with firearms, they are qualified to avail of the compre-

hensive psycho-social reintegration package," Montoya said.

"JTF Sulu leadership is very optimistic that with the active support of

the Local Chief Executives and peace-loving Tausugs, the road toward peace and progress of the province is on sight," he added.

22 December 2017

Page. 10

## **7 more ASG bandits give up**

**By ZAIDA DELOS REYES-PALANCA**

**SEVEN** more members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) decided to go back to the folds of the law for the month of December, bringing the number of those who surrendered to 51 this year.

Joint Task Force Sulu Commander Brig. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana said since the JTF Sulu's proposal of the Comprehensive Psycho-social and Reintegration Package for ASG members who surrendered last November 16 that the governor and all mayors of Sulu are amenable with, more ASG members surrendered.

He said for December alone, seven ASG bandits yielded with firearms, making a total of 51 surrenderers with 48 firearms.

Five of them were presented by Lt. Col. Jessie R. Montoya, commanding officer of 2nd Special Forces Battalion to the JTF Sulu.

They were identified as Persing J. Abdurasid, alias Lito, 41; Midzfar Idjarani Jukuran, alias Mitchie/Che Guevarra, 31; Tating Asid, alias Black, from Maibung; Amin Asjad Ismula, a.k.a. Amin, 37; and Aldisar Bara Jurrani, 24.

Those who surrendered underwent medical examination at the station hospital and also underwent custodial debriefing in preparation for their reintegration into the society.

"Since they all surrendered with firearms, they shall be qualified to avail of the comprehensive psycho-social reintegration package," Sobejana said.

5

22 December 2017

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 16

## NPAs release 2 POW in Surigao del Norte

By MIKE U. CRISMUNDO

**CAMP RAFAEL C. RODRIGUEZ, Butuan City** — After 37 days in captivity, two policemen were finally released on Wednesday afternoon by the custodial force of the New People's Army (NPA), armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP).

They were identified as PO2 Jhon Paul M. Doverte and PO2 Alfredo L. Degamon Jr., both assigned at Placer Municipal Police Station (MPS) in Placer town, Surigao del Norte province.

The two were presented by top regional commanders of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) led by PRO 13 Regional Director Chief Supt. Noli A. Romana and 402nd Infantry (Stingers) Brigade commander Brig. Gen. Nemesio Gacal during a press conference at the PRO 13 regional headquarters here late Wednesday afternoon.

The two police officers were released at 1:30 p.m. in Sitio Tiltilan, Barangay Mahanob, Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte by the custodial force of guerrilla-Front Committee 16 to the third party facilitator organized by the provincial and municipal crisis management committees (CMCs).

The released policemen were accompanied by some local officials from Surigao del Norte, their families, and members of the third party facilitator.

"Thank you God we are safe now and to all those who helped secure our release," said PO2 Degamon.

The NPA guerrilla-Front Committee 16, in a separate statement, said the release of the two prisoners of war (POW) was a gesture of goodwill to promote the peace talks between the government and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP).

The release, it added, was also in response to the appeal of their respective families.

The custodial force of guerrilla-front Committee 16 called

for a suspension of military and police operations for the safe release of the abducted policemen in the towns of Claver, Gigaquit, Bacuag and Placer, all in Surigao del Norte. The stand-down reportedly started Monday until Thursday.

However, field unit commanders of the police and military said combat operations against the NPAs are still ongoing.

"Actually, we did not stop our operation against the NPA terrorists in targeted areas in some parts of the region," said PRO 13 regional spokesperson Chief Inspector Renel E. Serrano.

"However, we are grateful that they (NPAs) already released our policemen," he added.

The two policemen were supposed to be released last Dec. 5 but it did not push through because the military and police did not heed the call of the NPA for a stand-down.

The two cops were abducted while manning their assigned police box along the Maharlika national highway in Barangay Bad-as, Placer, Surigao del Norte on Nov. 13, 2017.

Chief Supt. Romana on Thursday disclosed that PRO 13 has filed a case against the NPA terrorist leaders and members responsible for the kidnapping of the two policemen.

Prior to the kidnapping, PO2 Degamon was set to marry his girlfriend in January 2018 while PO2 Doverte's wife was four months pregnant.

The two are currently undergoing debriefing and medical examination.

Romana, during the same press briefing condemned in the strongest manner the kidnapping which he called a "disrespect not only to the police officers who maintain peace and order but also to the people who benefit from the services provided by the law enforcers."

The region's police chief reminded all policemen in various parts of the region to be extra vigilant.



22 December 2017



Page: 16

## Army honors wounded relief troops in Northern Samar

TACLOBAN CITY – The Philippine Army has recognized the bravery of wounded soldiers who fought the New People's Army (NPA) who attacked humanitarian response team in Catubig, Northern Samar.

Brig. Gen. Mario Lacurom, 803rd brigade commander, pinned the wounded personnel medal to Corporal Yzazel Laure and Pfc. Ronald Gomez on Thursday while in confinement. The Northern Samar provincial government awarded P40,000 cash and grocery packs to each soldier.

Gomez suffered a bullet wound in the buttocks while Laure was hit in the belly when about 50 rebels attacked them, triggering an hour-long firefight Sunday afternoon in Hinagonoyan village, Catubig town.

The military was heading to flooded communities to help bring residents to higher grounds and transport relief goods.

Top military officials condemned the attack of NPA terrorists against soldiers

delivering food relief to families affected by Tropical Storm "Urduja," calling it cowardly and inhuman.

Despite the attack, Lacurom promised that the military will continue serving the people especially in times of calamities. He branded the attack as a clear violation of the International Humanitarian Law.

"We deplore this kind of act of terrorist NPA that instead of helping the victims of disasters, they are making the disaster response complicated to the detriment of those who are already affected," Lacurom said.

Despite the recent declaration of President Rodrigo Duterte to suspend military operations against the New People's Army, the military in Northern Samar will remain vigilant and mindful of their safety during the holiday truce, according to Lacurom.

The ceasefire would run from Dec. 24, 2017 to Jan. 2, 2018 and the Palace expects the communist rebels to return the favor. **PNA**

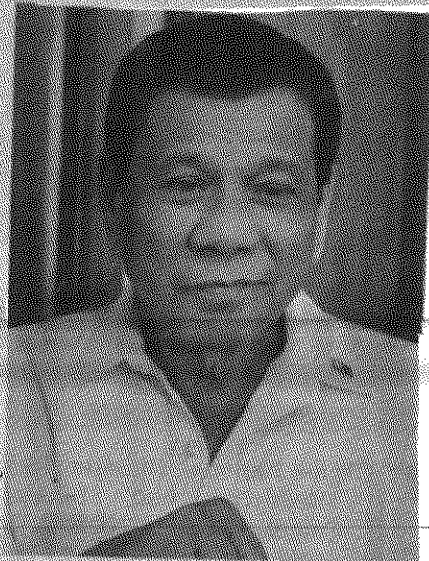
7

22 December 2017

**MANILA BULLETIN**  
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 2

# Palace hoping, but not expecting truce declaration from CPP-NPA



DUTERTE

By ARAYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

**M**alacañang is not expecting the communist rebels to reciprocate the unilateral Christmas ceasefire declared by President Duterte but hopes that they allow the people to celebrate the holidays without apprehension.

The Palace announced Thursday that Duterte has ordered an eight-day suspension of combat operations (SOCO) against the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF).

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the SOCO is from 6 p.m. on December 23 to 11:59 p.m. on Decem-

ber 26 and from 6 p.m. on December 30, to 11:59 p.m. on January 2.

Malacañang earlier said that the SOCO will be from December 24 to January 2, 2018.

According to Presidential spokesman Harry Roque, Duterte is not expecting the NPA to reciprocate the government's gesture.

"He has no expectations whatsoever. He's hopeful but if not, then it will prove what he has been saying all along that the NPA are treacherous. So the ball is in the court of the NPA," he said.

Roque reiterated that Duterte declared the SOCO so the Filipino people can celebrate Christmas with less worries.

"He did it for the Filipino people.

He wants the Filipino people to have less things to worry about because Christmas is a time for celebration," he said.

Roque, however, assured that even with the SOCO, the government forces will not let their guard down.

"Make no mistake about it, we will not fire but if fired upon, of course, the Armed Forces has every right to defend itself," he said.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Secretary Martin Andanar, in a radio interview Thursday morning, said the SOCO is for the soldiers, not the NPA.

The suspension of offensive military operations has been a customary move by both sides since the launch of formal talks in the late 1980s.

22 December 2017



Page: 4

# Duterte shortens holiday truce with Reds

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

Malacañang yesterday revised its declaration of a unilateral ceasefire with the communist rebels over the holidays.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the ceasefire would only be in effect from 6 p.m. of Dec. 23 to 11:59 p.m. of Dec. 26, and from 6 p.m. of Dec. 30 until 11:59 p.m. of Jan. 2.

"The President asked me to announce it at our Cabinet Christmas party. But it is always the President's prerogative to change his decision. That's part of the executive power," Roque said when asked what prompted the President to change his mind.

Duterte on Wednesday ordered the suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) against the communist New People's Army (NPA), supposedly to take effect from Dec. 24 to Jan. 2.

The Christmas ceasefire has been a customary move by

both sides since the launch of formal talks in the late 1980s under the first Aquino administration.

Duterte's declaration of SOMO will be in effect despite ending peace talks and branding the NPA, Communist Party of the Philippines and National Democratic Front (CPP-NDF) as "terrorists."

Duterte said he is hoping that the communists would reciprocate his gesture.

CPP founding chairman Jose Maria Sison, however, branded the unilateral ceasefire gesture as a "sham" and ordered the NPA to guard against attacks by government forces.

"The President doesn't have to explain. In fact, Joma Sison is calling it a sham. We should be thankful that the President is pushing through with the unilateral ceasefire," Roque said.

"He could have ignored it completely 'no, and not declared anything. But I felt that

it was a right decision because finally, I personally felt it's Christmas with the announcement," he said.

Roque took a dig at Sison for having no Christmas spirit.

"I feel sorry for him then. That's what happens when you are not here in the Philippines anyway," he said.

## A waste of time

The NPA in southern Mindanao also rejected the government's ceasefire offer and even resorted to calling Duterte a madman.

In a statement, Rigoberto Sanchez, spokesman for the NPA's Medardo Arce Command, said Duterte wasted the "confidence and goodwill of the people of Southern Mindanao" in extending martial law.

"Duterte foolishly and carelessly wasted the confidence and goodwill of the people of Southern Mindanao towards him when he bludgeoned the sycophantic Congress to extend once again the martial law in Mindanao and reinforce the current police state responsible

for the mass murder not only in the island but in the whole country as well," Sanchez said. Sanchez called Duterte a madman, a "drug-crazed monster" and the country's number one terrorist. "He should rightly be referred in the annals of Philippine history as the Adolf Hitler of the South, capable of exterminating millions of Filipinos should he continue to sit in power for the next four and a half years," he said. The military, for its part, said it would abide by the President's ceasefire declaration but would not lower its guard against treacherous attacks by the rebels.

The Philippine National Police (PNP) is also wary that the communists would attack police stations in taking advantage of the government's unilateral ceasefire declaration.

"That is what we are monitoring because police stations are the most vulnerable," PNP chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa said.

Dela Rosa explained that while there is a need to beef

22 December 2017



Page: 14

## 'Navy chief relief displeases some military officials'

By ROEL PAREÑO

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Some senior military officers allegedly expressed displeasure with the Duterte administration following the relief of Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado as chief of the Philippine Navy, sources said yesterday.

Mercado was relieved three months ahead of his retirement in March 2018 after alleged disagreement over the Navy's P16-billion frigate contract.

He was replaced by Rear Admiral Robert Empedrad as acting Navy chief.

A military official, who asked not to be identified, said President Duterte has the privilege of appointing whoever he wanted to replace Mercado.

"But the practice in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in looking at the merits of any candidate should be followed instead of having the 'Durian taste,'" the source said.

"But as soldiers, we will follow the commander-in-chief – and that's the President," another official said.

The officials were referring to the appointment of Empedrad, former AFP deputy

chief of staff for retirees and reservists, and a classmate of Philippine National Police chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa at Philippine Military Academy Class of 1986.

The military officials believed that the assumption into office of Empedrad had nothing to do with the implementation of the warship project.

Mercado and Empedrad were allegedly at odds over the frigate acquisition, with the former as the head of the technical working group.

The officials said Empedrad is "not qualified as he has not assumed the post as a naval force commander," which is equivalent to division commander of the Army.

They expressed apprehension that Empedrad might not perform his job well as he has not occupied key positions in the Navy.

"With due respect to the acting Navy chief, there are other officers who are more qualified for the post," the officials said.

Empedrad urged Navy personnel and Marines to work together as a team.

He made the appeal amid calls for a congressional in-

vestigation on the sacking of Mercado.

Empedrad also thanked President Duterte for trusting him.

The acting Navy chief said the frigate acquisition program would proceed without delay.

Magdalo Rep. Gary Alejano said he would initiate a probe to ferret out the truth behind Mercado's relief.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana allegedly signed a draft letter asking the President to remove Mercado as Navy chief over the warship contract with South Korea's shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries.

The frigates acquisition project is one of the two big-ticket modernization projects of the AFP under the previous administration. The other item, the P16-billion project to acquire 12 fighter jets, has been completed.

The frigate project includes acquisition of Combat Management System (CMS).

Mercado allegedly wanted the frigates to be fitted with CMS by another company.

Lorenzana accused Mercado of causing the delay of the project. – With Jaime Laude

22 December 2017



Page: 3

# Navy chief: P15.5-B project to push through

By Mario J. Mallari

Despite the unceremonious relief of Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph Mercado recently for delaying the acquisition of frigates by pushing a specific foreign company for the combat management system (CMS), the P15.5-billion project will push through as planned.

Acting Navy chief Rear Admiral Robert Empedrad vowed that the South Korean contractor Hyundai Heavy Industries will deliver the two brand new frigates by the first quarter of 2020 which is still within the timeframe.

"It should be delivered first quarter of 2020. It is within the

timeline," Empedrad said of the military vessels.

Empedrad was tapped by Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana as acting Navy chief after relieving Mercado, whom Lorenzana accused of insubordination.

Lorenzana said he had lost his trust and confidence on Mercado due to the latter's action relating to the acquisition of the frigates, whose contract the former Navy chief had reportedly even threatened to rescind.

Mercado had wanted the French defense contractor Thales to deliver the CMS for the two frigates, but Lorenzana said the contract spelled out that Hyundai, as the winning bidder, would be the

one to identify the contractor for the CMS.

Mercado's insistence and preference for the French firm have already delayed the CMS project and affected the whole frigate acquisition program for four months, according to Lorenzana.

But Empedrad said the whole project is still within its designated period.

"The frigate is not been delayed, it is ongoing and the delivery time is still the same, and we are going to process that," he said.

"We will move on, whatever is the ongoing projects of the Navy, we will move on from here, he added.

Empedrad said they are going

to facilitate the things needed by the project and ensure that the frigates would be delivered and used by the Navy by 2020.

"A frigate has a lot of problems. How to prepare the Philippine Navy for the frigate is the most important one, like where are we going to dock the frigate and who will be the personnel that will man the frigate?" he said.

Empedrad said other problems also involve the sources of missiles and torpedoes.

"It's because it does not have missile and torpedo, that's two years to manufacture. So we have to process that so that when the frigate arrives, it has munitions," he said.

22 December 2017



Pahina. 14

### 700 NPA terrorists, sumuko

Umaabot na sa 700 teroristang New People's Army (NPA) ang sumuko sa tropa ng militar sa Eastern Mindanao, ayon sa opisyal kahapon.

Ayon kay Major Ezra Balagtey, spokesman ng AFP Eastern Mindanao Command, ang mga nagsisukong NPA terrorists ay mula sa mga lalawigan ng Agusan, Bukidnon, Surigao, Davao, North Cotabato at Sarangani.

Ayon kay Balagtey, ang mga ito ay nagsisuko noong Enero hanggang Disyembre 15, 2017.

Isinuko rin ang kaniyang mga armas kung saan ang mga ito ay mga automatic recipients ng Comprehensive Local

Integration Program ng pamahalaan.

"Among the specific benefits that each former terrorists can get from CLIP are P15,000 financial support, another P50,000 for livelihood, and a remuneration for the surrendered firearm with an amount ranging from P12,000 to P210,000 depending on the type of firearms that they turned over," ayon kay Balagtey.

Samantala, aabot naman sa 265 matataas at maiikling mga armas ang isinuko rin ng NPA terrorists.

Kaugnay nito, hinikayat ng tropa ng pamahalaan ang mga nalalabi pang NPA na magsisuko sa batas.  
(Joy Cantos)

22 December 2017



Pahina. 2

## 8 araw ceasefire sa NPA idineklara ng Defense

Nagdeklara kahapon ng walong araw na holiday ceasefire ang Department of National Defense (DND) sa hanay ng mga teroristang New People's Army (NPA).

Sinabi ni Defense Spokesman Arsenio Andolong na ipatutupad ng tropa ng militar ang Suspension of Military Operations (SOMO) laban sa NPA terrorists at inaasahang magdedeklara rin ang komunistang grupo ng sarili nilang bersyon kaugnay ng kapaskuhan.

"As directed by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), the Department of National Defense announces the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire against the

CPP/NPA by the AFP from 6:00 PM, 23 December to 6:00 PM, 26 December 2017, and 6:00 PM, 30 December 2017 to 6:00 PM, 2 January 2018," ayon sa Defense department kahapon.

Nitong Miyerkules ay naunang nagdeklara ang PNP ng Suspension of Police Operations (SOPO) laban sa NPA communists matapos na magdeklara ng 10 araw na unilateral ceasefire sa naturang grupo ang Pangulo mula Disyembre 24, 2017 hanggang Enero 2, 2018.

Ayon kay Andolong, sa kabila ng tigil putukan ay inalerto ng Defense department ang AFP troops na maging vigilante laban sa posibleng mga pag-atake ng NPA rebels (Joy Santos) [www.ingonlan.com](http://www.ingonlan.com)

14

# ONLINE NEWS

## 22 DECEMBER 2017

[www.pna.gov.ph](http://www.pna.gov.ph)

# Fallen Scout Ranger in Marawi tiff gets Medal of Valor

By Priam Nepomuceno December 20, 2017, 8:50 pm

**MANILA** – The Medal of Valor, the nation's highest combat decoration, was posthumously awarded to Capt. Rommel Sandoval Wednesday, for showing courage, gallantry, and intrepidity above and beyond the call-of-duty during the campaign to retake Marawi City from the hands of the Maute Group terrorists.

President Rodrigo Duterte gave the award to Sandoval's widow, Maria Ana Rosario, during the 82nd founding anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Sandoval, then commander of the 11th Scout Ranger Company, is the 41st recipient of the Medal of Valor.

Of the awardees, 17 are still alive while the rest are deceased.

Newly-appointed AFP public affairs chief Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia said Sandoval was awarded for the Medal of Valor for having "distinguished himself in combat as he displayed extraordinary courage, bravery, sterling leadership, and professionalism by offering the greatest sacrifice of giving his life to a fellow comrade, thereby keeping with the finest tradition of soldiery."

Sandoval and Pfc. Sherwin Canapi, died while trying to save one of their wounded comrades, Cpl. Jayson Mante, who was trapped in one of the buildings in the main battle area last Sept. 10.

Mante survived while his two rescuers died after being shot by the terrorists whom they engaged despite being severely wounded.

The deceased was also awarded with the Order of Lapu-Lapu (Magalong Medal).

Under Executive Order No. 17, the Order of Lapu Lapu is "awarded to officials and personnel of the government, as well as private individuals, in recognition of their invaluable service in relation to a campaign or advocacy of the President." (PNA)



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## DND to comply with PRRD's holiday truce directive

By Priam Nepomuceno December 20, 2017, 3:13 pm

**MANILA** -- Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the military would follow President Rodrigo Duterte's directive regarding the suspension of military operations (SOMO) against the New People's Army (NPA) communist terrorists.

"Well, we will follow the directive of the President *kung nag-ano siya* (SOMO issuance). I was actually adamant (on that), I did not recommend for the cessation of military operation against the (NPA) but if the President declared (that) so then, we are going to implement and abide by the directive of the President," he added.

On Tuesday night, the President, through Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, announced that the SOMO would last from Dec. 24, 2017 to Jan. 2, 2018.

"This unilateral ceasefire would lessen the apprehension of the public this Christmas season. We expect that the CPP-NPA-NDFP would do a similar gesture of goodwill," he added.

"Christmas holds a special place in the hearts of our countrymen. In the observance of this occasion, we hope that all Filipinos would stand together as one nation and aspire for peace in our beloved Philippines," Roque added. **(PNA)**