

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



TEAM ARMY

Serving the people. Securing the land.

oacpa.army2012@gmail.com

OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

08 May 2017

Monday

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS
08 MAY 2017

PAGE NR.	TITLE	WRITER	NEWSPAPER
1	Weather Forecast		PDI p.A18
NATIONAL NEWS			
2	Blast probes focus on Muslim Cleric	Aie See	PDI P.A1
3-4	Terrorism ruled out in Quiapo blasts	Analou De vera	Manila Bulletin p.1
ARMY RELATED NEWS			
5	Army to rescue soldier abducted by NPA rebels	Jerome Aning	PDI p.A8
6	Military files 29 cases of rights violations vs NPA	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B2
7	Army's 81 st IB is one best battalions in Northern Luzon	Mario Mallari	The DailyTribune p.3
8	War on ASG leaves 4 terrorists dead in Basilan	Francisco Tuyay	The Standard p.A1
9	Army hits out at CPP-NPA	-	The Standard p.A2
10	2 road blast rock Maguindanao	PNA	The DaillyTribune p.3
11	Photo: In Mourning	Malañang Photo	The Standard p.A2
AFP RELATED NEWS			
12	US troops keep ties with PH alive	Allan Macatuno	PDI .A15
13	PH-US Balikatan Exercises starts today	Francis Wakefield	Manila Bulletin p.1
14	PH Warship joins Singapore Navy's Fete	Philip Tubeza	PDI p.A8
15	4 Sayyaf men killed in Basilan clashes	Victor Reyes	Malaya p.B1
16	4 Abus killed in Basilan clashes	PNA	The Daily Tribune p.1
17	NPA strikes again, raids Bukidnon firm	Lance BAconguis	The Standard p.A3
18	Wife o slain Bayan Muna leader files complain with GRP-NDF team	Chito Chavez	Manila Bulletin p.15
19	PH to mark territory in Benham Rise expedition-Piñol	Ellson Quismorio	Manila Buletin p.1
20	New PH Navy ship arrives today	Francis Wakefiled	Manila Bulletin p.1
21	COA: PVAO released P54.9M to dead pensioners	Michael Punongbayan	The Phil Star p.16
EDITORIAL/COMMENTARY			
22	ROTC with a 'new twists'	Caridad Ullegue	PDI p.A18
ONLINE NEWS			
23-24	Islamic State claims latest Philippines bombing		www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com
25	Only 2 commands to participate in this year's Balikatan' exercises		www.pna.gov.ph

08 May 2017



Page: A18

www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

TODAY'S WEATHER FORECAST | MAY 8, 2017 | MONDAY

EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE EASTERN SECTION OF THE COUNTRY (As of 5:00 AM - May 7, 2017)

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE 5:31 AM	SUNSET 6:15 PM
MOONRISE 4:13 PM	MOONSET 3:44 AM
FIRST QUARTER MAY 3 10:47 AM	FULL MOON MAY 11 5:42 AM
LOW TIDE 2:20 AM 0.19 Meter	HIGH TIDE 9:04 AM 0.72 Meter

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

	MAY 9	MAY 10	MAY 9	MAY 10	MAY 9	MAY 10		
METRO MANILA	25 - 34 °C	25 - 35 °C	TAGAYTAY	23 - 32 °C	22 - 31 °C	TACLOBAN	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	24 - 35 °C	24 - 36 °C	LEGAZPI	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C
LADAG	24 - 32 °C	24 - 33 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	METRO DAVAO	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
BAGUIO	16 - 24 °C	16 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD	26 - 33 °C	26 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA	25 - 32 °C	25 - 33 °C
SBMA/CLARK	25 - 35 °C	26 - 35 °C	METRO CEBU	25 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C			

Watch PanahonTV on DZRH News Television from Monday to Friday at 11:00 AM and 5:00 PM, and via Pilipinas HD at 6:00 AM, 6:30 PM and 9:00 PM.

SAGOT KO, PADALA MO!

May 2017

INQUIRER

Page: A1

Blast probes focus on Muslim cleric

FROM A1

By Aie Balagtas See
@ABalagtasSeeINQ

A Shiite Muslim cleric was the likely target of explosions that killed two people in Manila on Saturday, police officials said on Sunday, rejecting Islamic State (IS) group claims of involvement.

Six others were wounded when two explosions rocked the office of the imam, Nasser Abinal, in Manila's Quiapo district, on Saturday.

Director Oscar Albayalde, head of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the bomb was apparently intended for Abinal, who is also a lawyer for the Bureau of Internal Revenue in Manila.

Abinal was not at the office at the time.

Threats to his life

"He (Abinal) admitted there were threats to his life in the past" while being questioned by police, Albayalde said.

He said the bombing was apparently set off by a personal feud, adding the package that contained the explosive was intended for Abinal.

The bomb was carried in a package by a hired delivery man who handed it over to an aide of Abinal just before it went off.

Chief Supt. Joel Coronel, Manila Police District director, identified the delivery man as Mark Anthony Torres and Abinal's aide as Muhammad Baniga.

The blast killed both men.

As police were searching the blast site late on Saturday, another explosion rocked the area, possibly from a second bomb

planted earlier, Albayalde said.

"This has nothing to do with terrorism. There is no indication that this was done by a terror group, local or foreign," he said.

IS has claimed it staged the explosion.

"Five Shiites were killed and six others wounded in a bomb blast by Islamic State fighters in the center of Manila," said a statement from Amaq, the IS propaganda arm.

Albayalde said this was just the IS custom of taking credit for any such incidents.

But Albayalde said the attack seemed to be targeting Abinal, adding that it may be for personal reasons.

Coronel also believed Abinal was the target of the attack, which he said could be related to Abinal's work as a government lawyer or as a religious leader.

Besides threats that he had received through calls, e-mails and text messages, Abinal had also received a notice evicting him from his office on Gunao Street, Coronel said.

The blasts came a week after a pipe bomb exploded in the same area, injuring 14 people, at the height of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) summit in Manila.

Police blamed the explosion on rival gangs operating in the area.

Albayalde said on Sunday that Saturday's blasts were not related to the April 28 explosion.

That explosion has already been solved, with one of five suspects now in police custody, he said.

Coronel said the suspect in custody would be presented to the press at the Manila Police headquarters on Monday.

The suspect is the brother-in-law of a 14-year-old boy who

was beaten up by local toughies in Quiapo, leading to the bomb attack, Coronel said.

Tensions remained high after the blasts, with police cordoning off the area again on Sunday after a suspicious bag was spotted.

False alarm

A bomb disposal robot later established it was a false alarm.

Malacañang urged the public to stay alert but avoid spreading "unverified" news that may cause panic.

"While [an] investigation is [going on], we ask the public to remain alert and immediately report to authorities any suspicious activity or movement," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in a statement on Sunday.

"Also we urge our people to refrain from forwarding the news from unverified sources that may cause undue alarm and panic," Abella added.

The British Embassy in Manila advised its citizens to stay away from Quiapo.

In a travel advisory issued on Sunday, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office told British citizens in Manila to keep themselves up to date with information from the media and follow the advice of local authorities and the police.

"Terrorists are very likely to try to carry out attacks in the Philippines. Terrorist groups continue to plan attacks and have the capacity and the intent to carry out attacks at any time and anywhere in the country," the advisory said.

It said attacks could happen in places visited by foreigners like airports, shopping malls, public transport and places of worship. —WITH REPORTS FROM

NIKKO DIZON, JOCELYN R. UY, AFP AND AP INQ

5285, 5295

2

08 May 2017

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

Page: 1

Terrorism ruled out in Quiapo blasts

By ANALOU DE VERA and AARON B. RECUENCO

Police have ruled out terrorism in the two explosions that rocked Quiapo district in Manila on Saturday night, saying the blasts that killed two people and injured six others were likely caused by feuding groups.

Director Oscar Albayalde, National Capital Regional Police Office (NCRPO) director, also said that the blasts are not

related to the explosion that happened in the same district last April 28.

"We are ruling out the possibility that this is a terror attack," said Albayalde, adding that investigators are looking into only one angle and that they have already invited witnesses who could shed light on the twin blasts.

The first explosion occurred near the Manila Gold- ►16

13

en Mosque on Norzagaray Street at 5:55 p.m. and instantly killed two people while injuring four others.

The second explosion occurred at 8:32 p.m. right after a press briefing conducted by the top officials of the NCRPO and the Manila Police District (MPD).

Saturday's twin blasts happened a few days after the pipe bomb explosion also in Quiapo during the Philippines' hosting of the 30th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting, but Albayalde said these are not related.

Although the international terror group ISIS claimed responsibility in the attack during the ASEAN summit, police said it is a result of a gang war that stemmed when three members of a group mauled a minor who is a member of a rival gang.

Fending off speculations that Saturday's blast might be terror-related, Albayalde said: "Wala (no connection to terrorism). Most probably of all indications wala ito."

The target

He cited how the first explosion was from a package intended for a specific person.

"Well, ang initial na finding, ay merong dinalang package dito at nung pagkadeliver, kung sino ang nagdeliver, isa yun sa namatay, plus yung pinag-abutan na sinasabing caretaker sa lugar na ito (The initial finding is that the package was delivered; and the one who delivered it was one of the dead, plus the one who received it who is said to be a caretaker of the place)," said the NCRPO chief.

Probers are zeroing in on Muslim leader Atty. Naser Abinal, president of the Imamate Islamic Center who is said to be the target of the explosion. The package was reportedly addressed to Abinal's office located near the blast site.

The first blasts resulted in the death of two people and the injury of four others. The second explosion injured two police officers who were scouring for evidence at the site of the first blast.

The victims

One of the fatalities was identified as a certain Mohammad Bainga, while the other victim who still remains unidentified, is reportedly a GrabExpress driver.

Grab Philippines released a statement confirming that the other fatality was one of their "GrabExpress partners."

The bodies were removed from the blast site past 11 a.m. of yesterday, and taken to the Archangel Funeral Homes.

Two of the wounded victims – Jaber Gulam, a native of Lanao del Sur and Datu Sohair Adapun, a native of Marawi City – were rushed to the Mary Chiles Hospital while a certain Hajhi Ali, a resident of Gunao, Quiapo, was taken to the University of Sto. Tomas Hospital. The fourth victim has not yet been identified by the MPD.

"Yung tatlo they are out of danger; yung isa naman ay nagalusan lang at kinukunan na ng statement ng Manila Police District (Three are out of danger; the other sustained bruises and was giving his statement to police)," said Albayalde.

Meanwhile, the second blast resulted

08 May 2017



Page: AS

BLATANT DISPLAY OF INSINCERITY

ARMY TO RESCUE SOLDIER ABDUCTED BY NPA REBELS

By Jerome Aning
@JeromeAningINQ

The Philippine Army has launched a rescue operation for an off-duty soldier abducted last Friday by alleged members of the New People's Army (NPA) who disguised themselves as police-

men and pretended to conduct an anti-illegal drugs campaign or Oplan "Tokhang" in downtown Valencia City, Bukidnon province.

The PA's 4th Infantry Division (4ID) denounced the abduction amid ongoing peace talks with the government.

4ID commander Major Gen.

Benjamin Madrigal Jr. lambasted the abduction, saying, "The whole nation has again witnessed another blatant display of insincerity of these NPA bandits."

Suspected rebels stormed the Juanilla Subdivision in Barangay Poblacion, Valencia,

at around 6:30 p.m. on Friday, taking away firearms from the Dasia security agency and kidnapping the off-duty soldier from the 8th Infantry Battalion.

Outside the compound was another group of NPA bandits dressed as police personnel conducting checkpoint. INQ

May 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: B2

Military files 19 cases of rights violations vs NPA

BY VICTOR REYES

THE military has lodged 19 complaints against the New People's Army for violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL) in the Davao and Soccsksargen regions.

The complaints covering the period of February last year to January this year were filed last month by the Army's 10th Infantry Division before the Joint Monitoring Committee, a body established as

part of the peace process between the government and the communist National Democratic Front of the Philippines.

Copies of the complaints were also sent to the government's chief negotiator, Labor Secretary Bello III, and NDF chief negotiator Fidel Agcaoili, said Capt. Rhyan Batchar, public affairs officer of the Army's 10th Infantry Division.

A fifth round of peace negotiations is scheduled on May 27 to June 1 in the Netherlands.

"The 10th ID hopes that these violations of CARHRIHL will

be discussed by the peace panels and appropriate actions be taken to stop the wanton violation of human rights and international humanitarian law committed by the CPP-NPA against the Filipino people," said Batchar.

Forged in March 1998, CARHRIHL calls for respect for the lives, dignity, human rights, political convictions, and moral and physical integrity of combatants and non-combatants.

Batchar said five of the rebel violations were committed in South Cotabato, four in Sarangani, three each in North Cotabato and Dav-

ao del Sur, two in Davao Oriental, and one each in Davao Occidental and Compostela Valley.

Batchar said 15 of the 19 violations were committed against civilians.

"These include the burning of nine civilian vehicles, attack and burning of four civilian companies' equipment and facilities, the murder of a civilian and the harassment of another civilian," he said.

He said four of these violations were against soldiers and militiamen, including mutilation of the remains of three soldiers slain by NPA rebels.

May 2017



Page: 3

Army's 81st IB is one of best battalions in Northern Luzon

By Mario J. Mallari

For its accomplishment on peace and development efforts within its jurisdiction in Ilocos and La Union provinces, the Army's 81st Infantry Battalion (IB) was adjudged recently as one of the best battalions in Northern Luzon.

Lt. Col. Eugenio Julio Osias IV, commanding officer of 81st (Spartan) IB, cited the support and coordination of all stakeholders within his areas of responsibility in receiving the award during simple ceremony at the Northern Luzon Command (Nolcom) in Camp Aquino.

Osias received the award from former Nolcom chief retired Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez who was the guest of honor and speaker during the event that also celebrated Nolcom's 29th founding anniversary.

Nolcom chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Tanalgo and other Nolcom top brass were also present.

"Not a single person or group owned the award. Not the CMO (civil military operations) section, not the Intelligence Section, not the Operation Section, not the maneuver companies but the Spartan Battalion, as a whole. We can never achieve such award if it is not through the hard works of all the Spartan troopers," Osias said.

"This award also goes to all our peace and development partners –

the local government units and various non-government organizations," he added.

For Calendar Year 2016, the 81st IB scored heavily against the communist New People's Army operating in Ilocos and La Union provinces – attracting 15 rebels to surrender.

"These surrenders clearly indicate the dying ideology in the communist ranks. Our efforts to convince others will continue to allow them to live peacefully in the mainstream society," Osias said.

The 81st IB also completed support programs to 37 barangays in addition to the holding of two provincial youth summits while 4,000 families benefitted from the unit's disaster response operations when Typhoon "Lawin" wreaked havoc in Ilocos and La Union.

Maj. Gen. Angelito de Leon, chief of the 7th Infantry Division (ID), and Brig. Gen. Milfredo Meligrito, commander of the Army's 702nd Brigade, lauded Osias and all members of the 81st IB for their exemplary performance.

"It is my pride and honor as the commander, 7th Infantry Division to have such a hardworking men and women that are worthy of trust in accomplishing more than what is asked for. To the Spartan troopers, congratulations!" de Leon said.

7

May 2017

The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: A1

War on ASG leaves 4 terrorists dead in Basilan

By Francisco Tuyay

FOUR more members of the Abu Sayyaf Group were killed after troops encountered two squads of bandits in two separate forested areas in Sumisip, Basilan, Saturday afternoon.

Capt. Jo-Ann Pentinglay, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said the four bandits were pinned down in Barangays. Cabcaban and Bembengan in Sumisip town at 2 p.m.

Pentinglay said the slain bandits were part of a group of 15 to 20

terrorists.

Pentinglay said the bandits were in two separate groups when intercepted by the Army's 4th Special Forces Battalion and 18th Infantry Battalion under the Joint Task Force Basilan who were on patrol.

The first firefight occurred at Brgy. Upper Bembengan at 2 p.m. Two bandits were killed and several others were wounded.

Troops later intercepted the fleeing bandits, killing two more in Cabcaban village in Sumisip town at 9 p.m. *Next page*

War...

From A1

Troops clearing the area discovered a temporary encampment near the encounter site.

Last week, two prominent ASG sub-leaders were killed in separate clashes in Inabanga, Bohol and Indanan, Sulu as the military stepped up its attacks on the terrorist group.

AAlhabsy Misaya, one of the most dreaded bandits operating in Sulu, was killed by Marines.

Days after Misaya's death, security forces intercepted and

killed Muamar Askhali, alias Abu Rami, who was behind the beheading of two Canadian and a German hostage.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Eduardo Año predicted the eventual defeat of the ASG following a series of setbacks that the terrorist group suffered, with the death of dozens of its members in various encounters in Sulu and Basilan.

On Sunday, suspected members of the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters set off an improvised bomb along the national highway in Datu Hofer, Maguindanao, the second roadside bombing in the province in less than 24 hours.

"The roadside bombs were meant for government forces cruising the road network," Capt. Arvin John Encinas, 6th Infantry Division spokesperson, said.

Encinas said the Army had launched artillery attacks toward nearby Datu Salibo town in Maguindanao where the BIFF was planning to overrun an Army base in the village of Pagatin.

Datu Salibo and Datu Hofer are about 15 kilometers apart.

The roadside bomb Sunday morning missed a convoy of soldiers under the 57th Infantry Battalion conducting road security patrol, Encinas said. **With PNA**

8

68 May 2017

The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: 12

Army hits out at CPP-NPA

THE Army's 10th Infantry Division said Sunday it had submitted 19 complaints against the CPP-NPA for gross violations of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Law signed between the government and the National Democratic Front, which allegedly represents the CPP-NPA in the formal peace talks.

In a statement, the group said 15 of those violations were perpetrated against civilians, including the burning of nine civilian vehicles, the attack and burning of four civilian companies' equipment and facilities, the murder of a civilian and the harassment of another civilian.

The four violations against soldiers and militiamen were the mutilation of the remains of three soldiers and the killing of three soldiers and a militiaman who were off-duty, unarmed and in civilian clothes.

The group said the civilian vehicles burned by the CPP-NPA included five Yellow Bus Line buses, a Husky bus, one passenger van, an elf truck and a dump truck.

The attacks on civilian companies were the burning of heavy equipment of three construction companies and the packing plant of DOLE-STANFILCO.

The group said the violations were committed from February 2016 to January 2017. The number of violations committed by province were South Cotabato-5, Sarangani-4, North Cotabato-3,

Davao del Sur-3, Davao Oriental-2, Davao Occidental-1, and Compostela Valley-1.

Copies of the complaints were forwarded to the Secretariat of the Joint Monitoring Committee of CARHRIHL; Secretary Silvestre H. Bello, chairman of GPH-Negotiating Panel; and Fidel V. Agcaoili, chairman of the NDFP panel.

The group said it hoped the violations of CARHRIHL would be discussed by the peace panels and appropriate actions would be taken to stop the wanton violations of human rights and international humanitarian laws committed by the CPP-NPA against the Filipino people.

"We likewise urge other government agencies to assist the victims of these senseless violence committed by the CPP-NPA against the Filipino people so that appropriate complaints can be filed not only in the JMC but also in the proper courts," the group said.

"We call on the CPP-NPA to end these senseless violence against civilians and their properties to show your sincerity in the ongoing peace talks."

08 May 2017



Page: 2

2 roadside blasts rock Maguindanao

Suspected members of the outlawed Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) set off an improvised explosive device (IED) along the national highway in Datu Hofer, Maguindanao Sunday morning, the second roadside bombing in the province in less than 24 hours.

"The roadside bombs were meant for government forces cruising the road network," Capt. Arvin John Encinas, 6th Infantry Division spokesman, said.

Encinas said the Army had launched artillery attacks toward nearby Datu Salibo town in

Maguindanao where the BIFF is planning to overrun an Army base in the village of Pagatin.

Datu Salibo and Datu Hofer are about 15 kilometers apart.

The roadside bomb this morning missed a convoy of soldiers under the 57th Infantry Battalion conducting road security patrol, Encinas said.

At about 6 p.m. Saturday, suspected BIFF elements set off an IED in Barangay Pagatin that damaged two tires of a Simba armored personnel carrier, Encinas said.

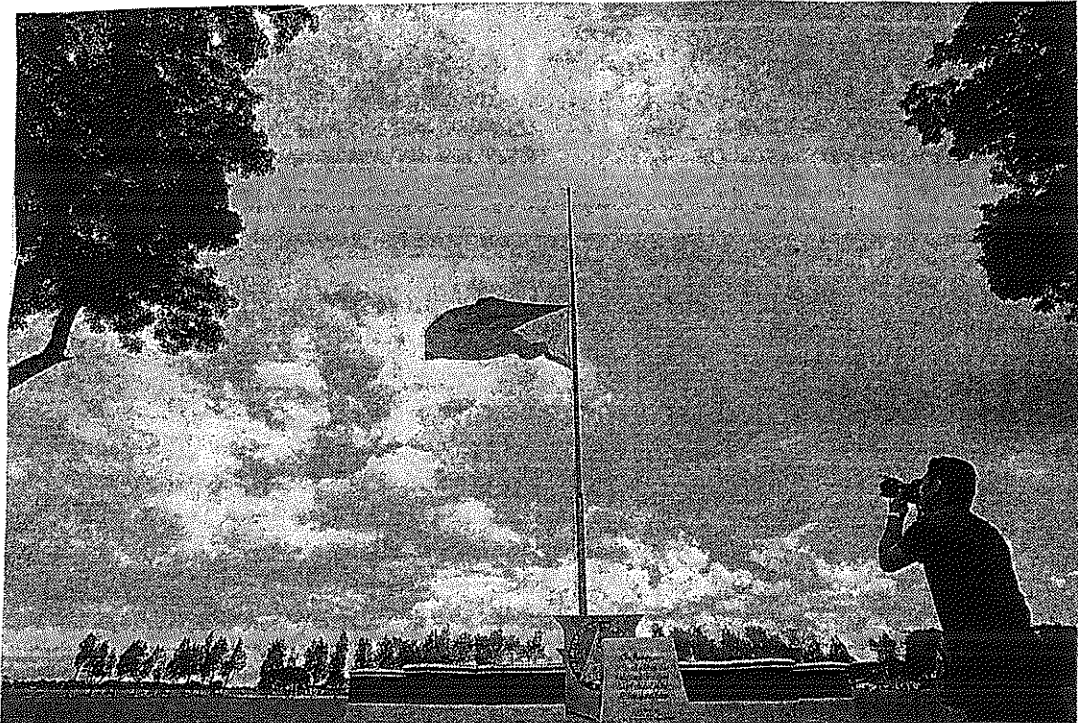
Encinas said the troops did not suffer any casualties. **PNA**

May 2017

The Standard

DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: A2



IN MOURNING. An unidentified visitor takes a snapshot of the Philippine flag flying at half-staff in Lipa City's Fernando Air Base as the Philippine Air Force mourns the death of Captain Christian Paul Litan and Staff Sergeant Byron Tolosa who died after their UH-10 helicopter crashed at Brgy. Sampaloc in Tanay, Rizal on May 4, 2017. President Rodrigo Duterte visited the wake of the two deceased PAF personnel on May 7, 2017.
Malacañang Photo

06 May 2017

INQUIRER

Page: A15

US TROOPS KEEP TIES WITH PH ALIVE

Amid President Duterte's retreat from a foreign policy heavily tilted toward the United States, American soldiers continued to try to win hearts and minds in noncombat components of military exercises with the Philippine Armed Forces in the islands of Luzon and Visayas.

In the province of Zambales, at least 12 US Navy officers and sailors gave hygiene kits and medical supplies to deaf students being cared for by the Foundation for Differently Abled Persons in Olongapo City.

The US servicemen from the unit Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 85 "Firehawks" were part of American forces that would hold annual "Balikatan (shoulder-to-shoulder)" military exercises with their Philippine counterparts today.

The Firehawks is part of a US Navy reserve helicopter squadron based in San Diego, California.

Norman Tuzon, a US military liaison officer in the former American naval base in Subic Bay, said the noncombat-related activities of the US Navy in the Philippines were part of "Project Handclap," a humanitarian program that started in 1962.

Through the program, he said, US sailors distribute materials and offer medical support to various civic organizations.

Books

On April 28, sailors from the Military Sealift Command's Expeditionary Port Unit 111 visited Gordon College in Olongapo to donate 22 boxes of books and first-aid supplies.

They also delivered medical and dental supplies to James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital and handed out stuffed toys and gifts to young patients there.

Another batch of US Navy officers and enlisted servicemen from USNS Pecos donated

hygiene supplies and clothes to Olongapo City Development Center for Girls.

They also donated soccer balls and jersey uniforms to Dragonball Kickers, a local youth soccer team.

In a statement, the US Embassy in Manila said US forces would conduct civic activities in different areas of the Philippines, including the provinces of Panay, Leyte and Samar.

US and Philippine soldiers taking part in Balikatan, the embassy said, would renovate schools and deliver medical services.

The key component of the exercises, however, would be to improve counterterrorism tactics "to build safer communities and work for the eradication of global terror networks."

But in the Visayas, a ranking Philippine military officer said the holding of Balikatan was not related to any terror threat.

Transferring skills

Col. Medel Aguilar, head of the Philippine Joint Civil and Military Operations Task Force, made the statement as 50 US soldiers were to take part in Balikatan in different parts of Visayas amid a still-ongoing hunt for at least three members of the terror group Abu Sayyaf, who were among those who tried to set up a base in Bohol province.

Aguilar said the 50 US soldiers would take part in "humanitarian and civilian assistance, and transfer knowledge and skills" on disaster response.

The US soldiers, said Aguilar, would help build disaster-resilient facilities, classrooms, hold training sessions on disaster preparedness and response, and develop good working relations with the people.

US and Philippine soldiers would hold Balikatan exercises for two months in Panay, Leyte and Samar.

Col. Camilo Ligayo, head of

Unified Command Staff, said Balikatan would strengthen ties between the Philippines and United States, which had taken a nose-dive following Mr. Duterte's rants against the United States.

Duterte's rants

Mr. Duterte had called Americans hypocrites for expressing concern about the rising death toll in his war on drugs yet ignoring the massacres committed by Americans during the colonial period and justifying US invasion of Iraq through false claims of discovering weapons of mass destruction being kept by Saddam Hussein.

To show his disdain for the United States, Mr. Duterte recently visited warships from Russia and China that docked in Manila in symbolic gestures of warming ties between them and the Duterte administration.

But Balikatan, said Ligayo, was the "most evident manifestation of a shared commitment to move shoulder-to-shoulder for stability, security and development."

"I believe we are changing lives and making a difference one classroom-building at a time," he said.

Lt. Col. Ryan Scott of the US military engineering department said the recent clashes between Philippine troops and Abu Sayyaf in Bohol, which indicated an expansion by the terror group, did not worry him.

Since April 11, eight Abu Sayyaf men have been killed in clashes in the Bohol towns of Inabanga and Clarin.

Among the dead Abu Sayyaf members were Moammar Askali, the leader of the group; bomb experts Abu Sufyan and Edimar Isnain; Joselito Mello-ria, a native of Bohol who guided the Abu Sayyaf; pumpboat operator Aldimar Taib; and one alias Richard.

—ALLAN MACATUNO, ADOR VINCENT MAYOL AND NESTLE L. SEMILLA INQ

8 May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

PH-US Balikatan Exercises start today

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The 33rd Exercise Balikatan between Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) troops and United States (US) forces opens today with ceremonies at the AFP Commissioned Officers Club

in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, to be followed by field activities in Panay, Leyte, and Samar in the Visayas and other sites in Luzon.

Major Celeste Frank L. Sayson of the Exercise Directorate, said AFP chief of staff Gen. Edu- ▶ 16

ardo Año will lead Philippine military officials at Camp Aguinaldo.

Aside from Camp Aguinaldo, other activities for Balikatan will be held in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija; Calayan Island, Cagayan; 5th Infantry Division headquarters in Isabela and Samar.

US and Filipino service members will work together to renovate five schools and conduct community medical engagements with local residents in the opening days of the 12-day military training activity on May 8-19. Preliminary work on community infrastructure projects began in mid-April.

Sayson said Balikatan 33-2017 incorporates training events designed to enhance the capabilities of both AFP and US armed forces. The training focuses on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in order to improve response effectiveness and speed in the event of natural disasters and other crises that endanger public health and safety.

Sayson said the Mutual Defense Board and the Security Engagement Board have carefully included President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's guidance for this year's exercise. The series of events manifests the exercise's refocus to humanitarian civil assistance, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and counter-terrorism.

The entire exercise follows a single-scenario concept where a super-typhoon devastates areas along its route in the areas of Central Command, National Capital Region, and Northern Luzon.

"This year's exercise will have AFP and US forces partnering to improve their counter-terrorism capabilities in order to build safer communities and work towards the eradication of global terror networks," Sayson said.

"During Balikatan, US and Philippine forces will conduct operational and counter-terrorism training exercises in diverse areas of expertise, including advanced marksmanship, counter-improvised explosive devices (IED), and maritime interdiction against piracy," he added.

In this year's Balikatan, the Philippines and the United States will continue to collaborate with regional partner nations. Forces from Australia and Japan will participate in all major training events, and the AFP has invited military forces from several other nations to be part of the International Observers Program.

Arms from China, Russia

Meanwhile, Malacañang shrugged off the proposal of two American legislators to restrict the exportation of arms by the US to the Philippine National Police (PNP) due to the growing number of killings amid the Duterte administration's drug war.

"I understand from the defense secretary that we have plenty of arms," chief presidential legal counsel Salvador Panelo said.

Even if the bill proposed by Democratic Senator Ben Cardin and Republican Senator Marco Rubio gets passed, the Philippines can still acquire arms from other sources, he said.

The two American senators had expressed opposition to the sale of some 26,000 assault rifles to the PNP. Cardin noted reports that more than 7,000 drug suspects have been killed since President Duterte took office. Rubio cited the Philippines' and the US' long-standing alliance as a reason why the growing number of killings is considered "deeply alarming."

"Our legislation reflects our sincere

desire to work with the Philippines to support human rights, expose narcotics networks emanating from mainland China and other countries, and use a public health approach to responsibly counter the dangers that drugs pose to our societies," Rubio said.

Aside from a restriction on certain defense items provided by the US to the PNP, their bill also authorizes a \$50-million fund for the State Department and USAID to promote a public health approach to the drug war.

President Duterte had earlier said he would rather turn to China and Russia if the US won't sell arms to the PNP. He said the two countries have pledged to give the Philippine government a soft loan for the purchase.

De Lima cites US bill

On the other hand, Senator Leila de Lima welcomed the filing of a measure of the US Senate which seeks to restrict exports of certain defense articles to the Philippines and supports Filipino defenders of human rights and those who help victims of human rights violations.

De Lima said that once passed into law, "The Philippines Human Rights Accountability and Counternarcotic Acts of 2017" filed by Senators Cardin and Rubio would restrict the exportation of certain defense articles by the US to the PNP and the US secretary of state would be required to submit a report to the US Congress on human rights cases related to the PNP and how foreign assistance to the PNP is used.

"I support the bipartisan efforts in the US Senate to introduce such important piece of legislation to hold our law enforcement authorities accountable to the thousands of human rights violations committed under the all-out war on drugs," De Lima said. (With reports from Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos and Hannah L. Torregozo)

OFFICE

Army Core Purpose: Serving the people, securing the land.

15

May 2017



Page: 18

50TH ANNIVERSARY

**PH WARSHIP
JOINS SINGAPORE
NAVY'S FETE**

By Philip C. Tubeza
@pctubezaINQ

The BRP Gregorio del Pilar has embarked on a voyage to Singapore to join the 50th anniversary celebration of the city-state's navy later this month.

The warship, which was acquired from the United States in 2011, sailed out of Manila Bay Saturday for the Singapore Navy's golden jubilee celebration from May 11-19.

Rear Admiral Allan Ferdinand Cusi, the chief of naval staff, presided over the send-off ceremony at Manila's South Harbour.

Naval Task Group 80.5

On board BRP Gregorio del Pilar were members of Naval Task Group 80.5, which will proceed to Davao for the Philippine Navy's 119th anniversary on May 24.

Adm. Ronald Joseph S. Mercado, the Navy's flag officer in command, will also attend Singapore's first International Maritime Review; International Maritime Defense Expo Asia 2017 and the fifth International Maritime Security Conference. INQ

14

15 May 2017

Malaya
The National Newspaper

Page: 15

4 Sayyaf men killed in Basilan clashes

BY VICTOR REYES

FOUR members of the Abu Sayyaf died in skirmishes with elite government forces in Sumisip town, Basilan on Saturday.

The operation also resulted in the seizure of an Abu Sayyaf camp in Barangay Cabcaban, said Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, spokeswoman of the military's Western Mindanao Command based in Zamboanga City.

Petinglay said troops from the elite Special Forces Battalion, aided by soldiers from 18th Infantry Battalion, were on a military operation when they clashed with about 20 Abu Sayyaf men in Barangay Upper Benembengan at around 2 p.m. Saturday.

The fighting resulted in the death of two Abu Sayyaf men.

At around 8 p.m., pursuing troops caught up with the fleeing Abu Sayyaf members in the

See 4 SAYYAF > Page B6

4 SAYYAF

nearby Barangay Cabcaban, leading to the killing of two more Abu Sayyaf members.

Petinglay said the troops found a temporary camp of the Abu Sayyaf in the barangay during clearing operations.

Petinglay said the fighting left one soldier with a minor injury in the shin area.

The skirmishes came two days after 19 Abu Sayyaf members, including two sub-leaders, surrendered to military officials in Basilan, 15 of them from Sumisip town and four others in Hadji Mohammad Ajul town.

The 19 who surrendered, led by sub-leaders Nur Hassan Lahaman alias Hassan and Mudz-ar Angkun alias Mapad Ladjaman, brought with them 11 high-

powered firearms.

The military is aiming to defeat the Abu Sayyaf within the first six months of the year, based on the deadline imposed by AFP chief Gen. Eduardo Año.

The group is composed of around 300 to 400 members, mostly based in Sulu and Basilan. It is holding over 20 foreign and Filipino hostages in the two provinces.

18 May 2017



Page: 1

4 Abus killed in Basilan clashes

Four Abu Sayyaf Group bandits have been killed in separate encounters in Sumisip town, Basilan, the military yesterday said.

Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, Western Mindanao Command (Westmincom) spokesman, said the first encounter took place 2 p.m. at Barangay Upper Bembengan and the second at 9 p.m. in Barangay Gababan, on Saturday.

Two bandits were killed in the first clash and another two in the second.

Also captured by government from Joint Task Force Basilan was a temporary encampment.

Identities of the leaders of the terrorist group, numbering around 20, are still being verified as of posting time.

No losses were sustained by the

military, Petinglay said.

Pursuit operations are still ongoing.

Relatedly, the Westmincom announced that the informant who helped the military in neutralizing a notorious Abu Sayyaf leader has received P1-million cash reward.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Westmincom chief, said the tipster received the cash reward for providing accurate information that led to the death of the bandit group sub-leader Alhabsy Misaya.

"A (cash) reward was voluntarily generated by concerned individuals from Sulu who were elated of the confirmation by the JTF (Joint Task Force) Sulu over Misaya's death," Galvez, in a statement, said.

Turn to page 2

JTF's troops killed Misaya in a firefight last April 29 in the town of Indanan, Sulu.

Misaya, a known bomb expert, was involved in the string of bombings that killed an American soldier at the height of the Balikatan Exercise in 2002.

He was also tagged as the primary suspect in the bombing of Salaam Bridge in Brgy. Bato-Bato, Indanan, Sulu in 2009 and the 2014 bombing of Dennis Coffee Shop in Barangay San Raymundo, Jolo.

Misaya was also involved in kidnap-for-ransom activities including the abduction of Japanese Amer Katayama Mamaito, Malaysians Tung Wee Jie and Tung Wee Wei in nearby Sabah, Malaysia; and the abduction of Sugar Diagne Esperanza Buenviaje in the province of Tawi-Tawi.

The military has earlier said the neutralization of Misaya is a big blow to the bandit group.

Galvez urged individuals to help the government in the fight against the terror group.

"The group who requested that its identity be kept anonymous, wishes to recognize the assistance extended by the informant to the government troops as well as encourage other residents of Sulu to do the same," he said.

"Misaya was one of the targets the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) and PNP (Philippine National Police) had been seriously working on for the past years since the start of his notoriety," Galvez stressed.

Col. Cirilito Sobejana Jr., JTF's commander, said the crucial information being provided by civilians is vital for the operations.

"We would like to extend our gratitude to the people of Sulu in helping us neutralize a high value target," he said, adding that "we also would like to recognize the generosity of certain individuals who generated funds for the reward. It is obvious that majority of the Suluanons already wish to have a peaceful and progressive province."

Rear Adm. Rene Medina, commander of the Naval Forces Western Mindanao, said the cooperation among the community members and the military is needed in making the Abu Sayyaf irrelevant. **PNA**

May 2017

The
Standard
DEFINING THE NEWS

Page: A3

NPA strikes again, raids Bukidnon firm

By Lance Baconguis

AT LEAST 15 members of the New People's Army barged into the office of a security agency in Valencia City, Bukidnon and took away assorted weapons Friday night, prompting the military to denounce the attack as "blatant display of insincerity in the ongoing peace process."

The NPA fighters, dressed in Philippine National Police uniform, entered the office of the Dasia security agency in Hindangon, Barangay Poblacion, Valencia, pretending to conduct a search around the security agency situated inside the residence of a certain Joel Ariola. The NPA rebels carted away two AK47 rifles, an M16 rifle, three shotguns, and three .38 cal. revolver pistols, police said.

While the insurgents searched the office, another group of NPA members conducted road block outside the Ariola's house flagging down motorists.

Police Officer I. Emilio Traya, a member of the Maramag municipal police station, who happened to have passed by, was stopped at the roadblock.

Taken by the rebels from Traya's possession was his government-issued 9mm Glock handgun. He was released unharmed.

Police said the raiding group belonged to the NPA's Front Committee 86 sub-region guerrilla unit.

The suspects left the crime scene on a pick-up truck, two motorcycles, and two of the armored vans owned by Dasia.

Minutes later, the armored vans were found abandoned in the same barangay.

Police also detained one Luvimin Rosos, alias "Tiyal," 18, male, and a resident of Barangay Poblacion, Quezon town in Bukidnon, who was suspected as the NPA's lookout.

Witnessed by village officials, law enforcers searched the room rented by Rosos in Hindangon and found inside were the following: surveillance cameras, night vision goggles, sniper's veil, camouflage raincoat, hammock, black jacket, bulcap, eyeglasses.

The police also found flash card containing footage of Dasia, which investigators believe was part of the NPA's surveillance and planning before the raid. **With Abe Almirol**

17

May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 15

Wife of slain Bayan Muna leader files complaint with GRP-NDF team

By **CHITO A. CHAVEZ**

The wife of a Bayan Muna leader, who was killed in a reported clash between soldiers and the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) in Basilan last March 8, has filed a complaint against the military before the Joint Monitoring Committee of the Philippine government (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDF).

"I am here for justice. The families of those killed cannot all be here, but we all want the same thing. State security forces should know that they cannot readily commit crimes without punishment. We live in a poor community in Basilan, and just because we are poor should not mean that those with resources can easily deprive us

of the justice that we deserve," said Nurhidaya Hasan, wife of Moro leader and peace advocate Hadji Billamin Hassan, who was killed when the military allegedly fired at three houses, in Tabuan Lasa, Basilan.

Aside from Hassan, 59, Nuruddin Muhlis, 33, and a one-year-old girl were also killed.

The Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom) claimed its forces were on conducting an operation against Abu Sayyaf members in the vicinity when the attack happened.

WestMinCom later released a statement claiming its soldiers had neutralized four bandits belonging to the ASG.

The casualties, however, were Hassan, Muhlis and the infant.

An 11-year-old girl was also wounded and remains in critical condition.

Nurhidaya Hasan was assisted by Karapatan in filing the complaint.

Families of the victims also lodged a complaint against the military before the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) on March 14, 2017.

"We have to undertake all forms of exacting accountability from State security forces. The WestMinCom later issued an apology, but perpetrators are still left unpunished. Nor has there been any investigation on the incident. This has been the reality for many victims of political killings in the country," said Karapatan secretary general Cristina Palabay.

18

18 May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN

Page: 1

PH to mark territory in Benham Rise expedition - Piñol

By **ELLSONA A. QUISMORIO**
and **GENALYN D. KABILING**

BENHAM RISE, Philippine Sea — Do not call it a show of might. It's just our way of marking our own territory.

This was how Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary Manny Piñol described the historic expedition here at Benham Rise that began in earnest on Saturday.

"Of course, it could be ► 16

a way of marking our own territory, marking our own fishing grounds. It's marking fishing ground ito (This is our fishing ground)," Piñol said aboard MV DA-BFAR.

MV DA-BFAR was accompanied by three smaller ships - including one from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) - during the 20-hour trip which began 4 p.m. Friday at the port of Dinahican, a fishing village in Infanta, Quezon.

It's the first high-level expedition of the Philippine government to the resource-rich Benham Rise in the country's east. Piñol is the first Cabinet secretary to board the MV DA-BFAR.

"They can interpret it any way they want to," Piñol said of the expedition.

"I'll insist that my concern is to protect and conserve the area as a source of food for future generations," he said.

Piñol further called the endeavor "symbolic."

"It's like sending a message to those who want to exploit the resources to tell them this is ours."

Benham Rise made news last March after it was reported that a Chinese vessel surveyed it with permission from President Duterte himself.

Piñol declined to comment on political matters regarding the continental shelf, which in 2012 was declared by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) as part of Philippine territory.

Modern satellites

National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said the government is eyeing the use of modern satellites to keep tabs on the country's maritime borders and track down terrorists and lawless elements.

"I'm actually the advocate for the use of more satellites in the Cabinet," Esperon said to better monitor and protect the country's resources, apart from boosting the country's telecom-

munications network.

"And we will soon be coming up with the one which will be an imagery satellite to look into such things as oceans and seas," he added.

Esperon, who recently presented the government's National Security Policy, said the country has a massive maritime area that requires improved satellite surveillance system.

Esperon said his "main advocacy" was the use of satellites for communications to improve on the "land-based backbone" by local telcos Globe and Smart. "The penetration of the two leading telcos, is not - is so much on in the urban areas but what do we have in the rural areas?" he said.

The satellites could also enhance intelligence gathering to combat terrorism and other security threats, according to Esperon.

"In our job, we would constantly look at the threats of terrorism, illegal drugs, criminality, lawlessness, of course, anti-graft and corruption, including illegal gambling," he said.

Benham Rising

Just before noon Saturday, the DA-led expedition reached the edge of the Benham Bank - the part of Benham Rise that is traditionally visited by fishermen. The submerged bank is 15,000 hectares large.

The Pacific, which was very calm at that time, was a deep but clear blue. It was clear enough to reflect the shadows of the clouds.

In fact, the clouds were the only other things to see aside from the expansive waters right smack in the middle of nowhere.

"There are no visual cues to tell you that you're in Benham Rise," said Raffy Ramiscal, officer-in-charge of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' (BFAR) Capture Fisheries Division.

"You just have to know the coordi-

nates," he noted. There was no noise except those coming from the vessel.

Ramiscal said the entire Benham Rise, including the vast extended continental shelf (ECS), is 26 million hectares.

Good catch

Two Philippine fishing vessels greeted MV DA-BFAR upon its arrival at the bank.

One of them, the Philippine-flagged FB Ron Erly-2 from Dinahican, hauled on board several big fishes. The highlight catch, however, was a yellow fin tuna estimated to weigh 40 kilos.

It was so impressive that, upon seeing it, Piñol exclaimed: "Pulutan na! Kusinero!"

"It's probably worth ₱15,000," Judy Esteras, 37, said about the yellow fin during an interview with reporters on board the government vessel.

The dozen-strong crew of Ron Erly-2 arrived at the bank on May 2. They've remained at sea since then.

The spot practically takes a day to reach but the bounty makes fishers like Esteras keep coming back for more.

"You can choose from a lot of fishes here," he said, adding that the bank gives the fishers an average "take home pay" of ₱30,000 a month.

During the expedition, Piñol led the deployment of the first of 15 "payao" or floating devices, which are used to attract fish. Fish are known to gather around the line below the payaos, even if there's no bait.

The payao is marked DFA, which stands for Dinahican Fisherfolk Association.

Establishing presence

Piñol's ultimate goal is more than just to drop a bunch of payaos. He is looking to establish continued Philippine government presence at the shallowest portion of the Benham Bank through a structure.

"I'll report to the President on Monday to give my recommendations and I'll ask for funds [for the structure]," Piñol said.

May 2017

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

Page: 1

New PH Navy ship arrives today

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

The Philippine Navy (PN) said yesterday that its Humanitarian As-

sistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations is expected to be boosted with the expected arrival today of its newest ship from ►16

New PH Navy...

◀1

Indonesia – the “SSV Davao del Sur (LD602).”

The SSV Davao del Sur departed Surabaya Indonesia at 12 noon last Thursday and is expected to arrive at South Harbor, Manila, any time today, said Navy Spokesman Captain Lued Lincuna.

The Commander of the Philippine Fleet Rear Admiral Gaudencio C. Collado and his party were present during Sail-Away (Send Off) ceremony for the PN's only second Strategic Sealift Vessel.

Lincuna said the ship has more than 120 crew members on board. “Its (BRP Davao del Sur) arrival, will complement

BRP Tarlac. Of course it will impact on our HADR operations considering it's a very big vessel,” he said.

Its commissioning will be held at the PN Headquarters. “It can (also) accommodate a lot of cargo and a lot of personnel,” Lincuna added.

BRP Tarlac is currently preparing for the Balikatan Exercises which will open today at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Lincuna said among the significant mission BRP Tarlac conducted is a Naval blockade in the south, particularly to prevent terrorist attack, seajacking, and kidnapping.

04 May 2017



Page: 16

COA: PVAO released P54.9 M to dead pensioners

Some 1,735 veterans who have died still received their monthly pensions totaling P54.982 million in 2015 and 2016, the Commission on Audit (COA) said in a report released last week.

This was the result of "poor monitoring and non-updating of records" on the part of the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office (PVAO), the COA said.

State auditors said 1,735 or 89 percent of 1,946 deceased pensioners continuously received their monthly pension ranging from one to 132 months after death during the past two years.

Of the P54.982 million, only P33.038 million have been refunded as of Dec. 31, 2016, which leaves a balance of P22.554 million that is yet to be recovered, they said.

The COA report noted that PVAO, an attached agency of the Department of National Defense, adopted the PVAO Enhanced Validation Program in July 2015 as a means to ensure that the money was paid to the rightful veterans or beneficiaries by properly monitoring an updated status of the pensioners.

But the PVAO failed to effectively implement the system and only adopted

further improvements five months ago that would make use of text messaging and internet-based applications like Skype in the validation and updating process.

The COA report advised PVAO to "continuously monitor the updating of pensioner's status to prevent overpayment and excess settlement."

State auditors said the finance division should also be asked to justify the overpayment and excess settlements and exert effort to recover the overpayment.

– Michael Punongbayan

21

07 May 2017



Page: 118

ROTC WITH A 'NEW TWIST'

In his speech at the last Palarong Pambansa, President Duterte emphasized the revival of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) program in the Philippines. He told the athletes about the need for civilians to “sacrifice for country.” He even broached the idea of conscription or compulsory military enlistment for all civilians as an alternative to the ROTC.

I’ve been telling my friends several times that the ROTC is the only subject in college that teaches students patriotism. No other subject comes close.

Come to think of it: had we had the ROTC in our schools when Abu Sayyaf terrorists landed in Inabanga, Bohol, we could have mobilized ROTC cadets very familiar with the terrain there to help the 7th Infantry Brigade go after the criminals as it was already vacation time. The military could have issued the cadets, who have undergone the proper training, weapons to fight the terrorists.

I believe that the scrapping of the ROTC program in 2002 was a “short-sighted” move. With the Philippines facing internal threats from terrorists, communist rebels and Muslim separatists, all the more is there a need to revive the

ROTC—but with a “new twist”: as a means to inculcate among the youth military discipline or, perhaps, prepare them for search and rescue operations following disasters like typhoons and earthquakes.

For those who oppose the revival of the ROTC, better think twice: Among the alternatives under consideration by the President is conscription. In Israel, able-bodied Israelis who are more than 18 years old are conscripted into military service. Conscription is also done in Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.

Do we want our young to be conscripted into the military? Or would we rather revive the ROTC to equip our youth with the right attitude and necessary skills for military service? Without ROTC graduates and trained uniformed men, who will protect the Philippines from its enemies? The fact is, in the future our country will be facing different, perhaps, more formidable security challenges.

CARIDADE E. ULLEGUE,
caridad_u@outlook.com

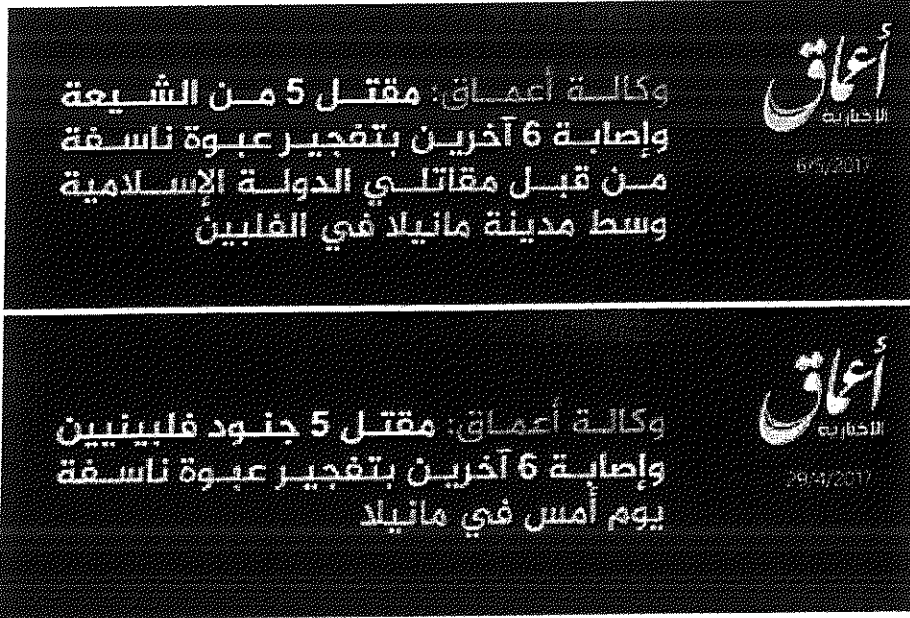
Army vision: By 2028, a world-class Army that is a source of national pride.

ONLINE NEWS 07 MAY 2017

www.retiredanalyst.blogspot.com

Islamic State claims latest Philippines bombing

From the Mindanao Examiner (May 7): Islamic State claims latest Philippines bombing



The Islamic State's Amaq News Agency reported that the group is responsible for the latest bombing in Manila.

The Islamic State has owned for the twin bombings in the Philippine capital that left nearly two dozen casualties in a span of one week.

The latest attack in Manila killed 2 on Saturday when a package being delivered by private courier GrabExpress exploded in Quiapo district. The blast killed the delivery driver and another civilian, Mohamad Bainga, and injured 6 others, including two forensic policemen.

Grab Philippines condemned the bombing. "Grab Philippines condemns perpetration of the bombing on Saturday at Norzagaray Street in Quiapo, Manila. We are deeply saddened the incident took the lives of two civilians, including one of our GrabExpress partners. Our prayers go out to those who perished, and we extend our sympathies and deepest condolences to their loved ones," it said.

It was not immediately known whop contacted the GrabExpress to deliver the package containing an improvised explosive.

The Islamic State's Amaq News Agency reported that the group is responsible for the bombing in Manila, saying the latest explosion targeted Shia Rafidah in the capital city.

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

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

It also claimed the bombing in Quiapo on April 28 that wounded 14 people. This was also reported by the non-governmental counterterrorism organization, SITE Intelligence Group, and said: "The Islamic State's Amaq News Agency reported the killing and wounding of 11 Shi'ites with an explosive device in downtown Manila, Philippines."

Police tried to downplay the attacks and said these were "gang-related".

Panic also erupted Sunday in Quiapo after a suspicious bag was left abandoned on a busy road, but police said no explosives were found after a remote operated vehicle inspected it. The ROV even ran over twice on the bag and a policeman only wearing Kevlar helmet and bullet proof vest picked up the bag and inspected its contents.

President Rodrigo Duterte has repeatedly warned that the influence of the Islamic State in the Philippines is the country's biggest security threat.

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

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

www.pna.gov.ph

Only 2 commands to participate in this year's 'Balikatan' exercises

From the Philippine News Agency (May 7): Only 2 commands to participate in this year's 'Balikatan' exercises

Only two of the military's unified commands will be involved in this year's "Balikatan" exercises with American units which will run from May 8 to 19th.

This is fewer compared to last year's four.

Philippine "Balikatan" spokesperson Major Frank Sayson identified these unified commands as the Cebu-based Central Command (CENTCOM) and Tarlac-headquartered Northern Luzon Command (NOLCOM).

In the 2016 "Balikatan" maneuvers, participating commands included the CENTCOM, NOLCOM, Southern Luzon Command and Western Command.

Sayson attributes the reduction to the fact that this year's exercises are operating on one scenario concept which involves a massive storm or typhoon coming from the Pacific which will then pass through the Eastern Visayas, National Capital Region, reaching maximum strength upon arrival on the northern tip of Luzon, severely devastating it.

With that scenario in the offing, all participating units, whether on so-called "STAFFEX" (staff exercise) and "CPX" (command post exercise), will focus on responses to the particular scenario, he added.

And while these activities are more concerned with the humanitarian assistance and disaster relief aspects, Sayson said some counter-terrorism activities which is very important and relevant nowadays are also factored in.

"We will be having small arms military-to-military activities, some joint special operations activities which is really aligned to counter-terrorism," he added in Filipino.

Other activities include underwater demolition activities in Ormoc, Leyte wherein US operatives will teach their Filipino counterparts the techniques in clearing up debris in the sea bottom to allow ships to safely dock and use the port and expedite the transport of relief supplies and aid to areas battered by typhoon and other calamities.

Participating US troops for this year's "Balikatan" are placed at 2,600 personnel, with the Philippines fielding in 2,800 and 80 for the Australian Defense Forces.

<http://www.pna.gov.ph/index.php/articles/985678>

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