

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



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NEWS CLIPPINGS

19 May 2017

Friday

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

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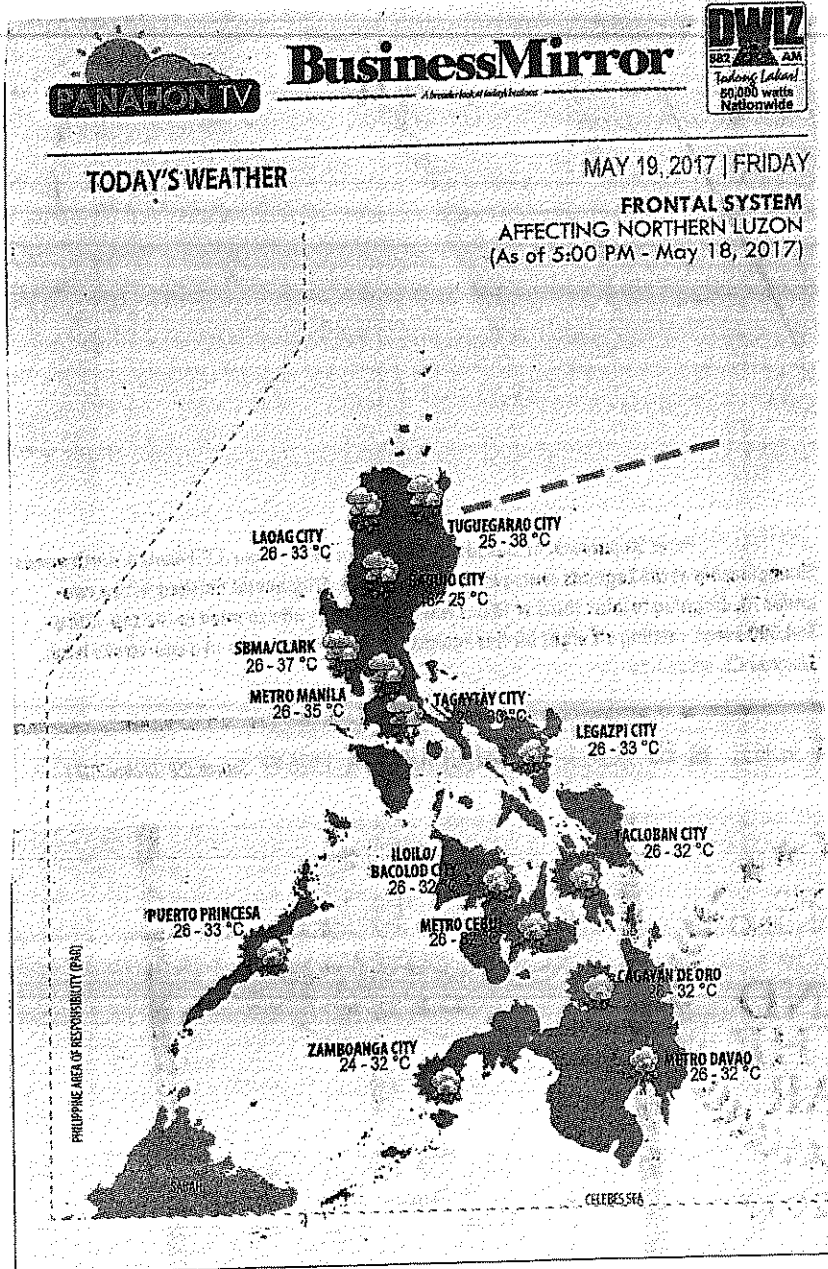
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BusinessMirror

A preview view of today's business.

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3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	MAY 20	MAY 21	MAY 22	3-DAY EXTENDED FORECAST	MAY 20	MAY 21	MAY 22
	Saturday	Sunday	Monday		Saturday	Sunday	Monday
METRO MANILA	25 - 35 °C	26 - 34 °C	26 - 34 °C	METRO CEBU	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO	25 - 37 °C	25 - 37 °C	26 - 37 °C	TACLOBAN	26 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C	25 - 32 °C
LAOAG	27 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	27 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C	26 - 32 °C
BAGUIO	17 - 25 °C	17 - 25 °C	17 - 24 °C	METRO DAVAO	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 34 °C
SBMA/ CLARK	26 - 36 °C	26 - 37 °C	26 - 36 °C	ZAMBOANGA	24 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C	25 - 33 °C
TAGAYTAY	23 - 31 °C	23 - 31 °C	23 - 30 °C	SUNRISE	5:27 AM	SUNSET	6:18 PM
LEGAZIPI	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	MOONRISE	12:08 AM	MOONSET	12:04 PM
PUERTO PRINCESA	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	FULL MOON	MAY 11 5:42 AM	LAST QUARTER	MAY 19 8:33 AM
ILOILO/ BACOLOD	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	26 - 33 °C	LOW TIDE	11:52 PM 0.06 Meter	HIGH TIDE	2:48 PM 0.96 Meter

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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

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PH rejects \$280-M EU aid with strings attached

**By Leila B. Salaverria,
Roy Stephen C. Canivel
and Jeannette I. Andrade**
@Team_Inquirer

The Philippines is turning down a grant of 250 million euros (\$278.7 million) from the European Union (EU) that will allow the bloc to interfere with the country's affairs, but remains

open to accepting other forms of EU financial assistance, Malacañang said on Thursday.

"The President has approved the recommendation of the Department of Finance (DOF) not to accept grants—this is not necessarily humanitarian aid—from the EU that may allow it to interfere with the internal policies of the

Philippines," presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella said in a press briefing.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez noted that the proposed EU grant "would involve [a] review of our adherence to the rule of law."

The "grants pertain to particular projects or programs that have the potential of af-

fecting the autonomy of the country," Abella said.

President Duterte has a testy relationship with the European Union, which he lambasted for expressing concern over the death toll in his administration's war on drugs. He said the Philippines could survive even if the European Union would decide to withhold aid to the country.

Asked what Malacañang considered interference, Abella said comments did not necessarily amount to interference. "But when it begins to impose certain conditionalities that will interfere with the way we handle things, then we consider that objectionable."

Abella said the country nevertheless remained open to hu-

manitarian and other kinds of aid from the European Union.

"The Philippines reserves the right to accept loans and grants that help attain its objectives of promoting economic development, inclusiveness and reducing poverty," he said.

EU Ambassador Franz Jessen said the DOF informed him of the govern-

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ment's decision at a meeting on Wednesday.

"Our understanding is that it solely applies to new EU grants. It was in a meeting with DOF yesterday (Wednesday). We asked for a written clarification," Jessen told the Inquirer.

Jessen said ongoing projects initiated by the European Union, mostly in Mindanao, would not be affected.

The European Union has invested over 35 million euros (P1.8 billion) in projects in Mindanao to help achieve peace and sustainable development in the region.

For 2016-2017, it has earmarked 5.5 million euros (P287 million) for the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, conflict-prevention and peace-building.

Thelma Gecolea, public affairs officer of the EU Delegation to the Philippines, said many projects in the country, coursed through various non-government organizations, would not be affected by the government's move.

Asked for the explanation behind the rejected development aid, Jessen said "human rights were mentioned."

Trade perk not affected

The European Union is the largest foreign investor in the Philippines, the only member of the 10-nation Association of Southeast Asian Nations to enjoy duty-free exports under the union's Generalized System of Preferences plus (GSP+) incentives for developing countries.

The Philippines' duty-free exports to the European Union in 2016 was worth around 1.6 billion euros (\$1.78 billion), according to EU Delegation data.

Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said the Philippines would not leave the tariff-free trade arrangement with the

bloc although the trade incentive came with its own set of conditions.

Lopez said that unlike development aid, GSP+, which allows zero tariff for over 6,000 Philippine products entering the EU market, dealt with "commercial transactions."

Top exports

Top Philippine exports to the European Union under the scheme are agricultural oil products, electrical equipment, processed meat and fish, optical products, and processed vegetables, fruits and nuts.

"[T]hey're commercial transactions that can mutually benefit both sides," Lopez told the Inquirer in a text message.

The GSP+ status comes with the condition that the Philippine government comply with 27 international conventions, including those that call for the protection of human rights and the abolition of the death penalty. The Philippines is a signatory to these conventions.

In March, the EU Parliament issued a joint motion for a resolution that said, among other things, that the EU Commission should "use all available instruments to persuade the Philippines to put an end to extrajudicial killings related to the antidrug campaign," including the possible removal of the GSP+ if there were no substantial improvements.

Envoy summoned

The European Union also summoned a Philippine envoy in March to explain an explosive tirade by Mr. Duterte, who threatened to hang EU officials for opposing his efforts to reimpose the death penalty.

The President has lashed out at the European Union repeatedly for raising human rights concerns over his deadly crackdown on illegal drugs.

"If you think it is high time for you to withdraw your assis-

tance, go ahead, we will not beg for it," Mr. Duterte said in a speech in October, referring to aid from the United States, the European Union and other critics.

Windfall from China

The announcement to turn down EU grants came days after Mr. Duterte's working visit to China to attend the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation.

He had a bilateral meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping on May 15 and he brought home four agreements. One agreement seeks to implement a RMB 500-million grant to conduct feasibility studies for major projects, including the construction of a drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation center, and bridges crossing the Pasig River.

Abella said the government would find ways to support projects that may be deprived of funds from the European Union.

Mendicant attitude

"As you can very well see from the past achievements of the President, he has brought in an enormous amount—huge slabs of bacon," he said.

Abella also pointed out that the Philippine economy under Mr. Duterte was performing well, and that people needed to believe the country could fend for itself.

"I think we need to gain a certain confidence in ourselves, and this is exactly the kind of mentality that the President wants Filipinos to avoid, a mendicant attitude," he said.

—WITH REPORTS FROM JULIE S. ALIPALA AND AP INQ



WATCH THE VIDEO: Palace: Gov't rejecting 'conditional' EU grants
<http://inq.news/PHrejectsEUgrants>

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Marcelino cleared, may testify vs Leila

By EDU PUNAY

The Department of Justice (DOJ) has cleared Marine Lt. Colonel Ferdinand Marcelino and his Chinese companion Yan Yi Shou of drug

charges stemming from a raid on a meth lab early last year.

Marcelino's lawyer, chief public attorney Persida Rueda-Acosta, earlier revealed before a press conference that

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the officer is willing to testify against detained Sen. Leila de Lima on her alleged involvement in the illegal drug trade.

Acosta immediately filed a motion before the Manila Regional Trial Court seeking release from detention of Marcelino, which was granted yesterday.

In a 13-page resolution released yesterday, the DOJ granted the petition for review filed by the detained military officer and reversed its earlier review resolution in September last year.

The DOJ had found probable cause in the charges of violation of Section 11 (possession of dangerous drugs) of Republic Act 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) against Marcelino and Yan.

It instead reinstated the original resolution of investigating prosecutor in May last year that dismissed the charges for lack of probable cause.

"Lt. Col. Marcelino and Yan Yi Shou have sufficiently proven that they were in performance of a lawful duty when they were chanced upon by the PNP (Philippine National Police) and PDEA (Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency) joint team, thereby negating the evidence of the complainants-appellees purportedly establishing that they are probably involved in the manufacture of illegal drugs, conspiracy in the manufacture thereof, or illegal possession of the same," read the latest resolution signed by Undersecretary Deo Marco for the office of Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II.

Visit from the senator

In his earlier affidavit, Marcelino revealed that while he was detained at the PNP custodial center after his arrest, De Lima visited him and discussed the raid and dismantling of a shabu laboratory in Camiling, Tarlac that stemmed from his counter-intelligence operation.

"We discussed operation in the clandestine laboratory in Tarlac and the possible infil-

tration of the drug syndicate in the political leadership of which she said to me, 'I can assure you the President is not involved,'" Marcelino said in his sworn statement obtained by **The STAR**.

The raid on what was tagged as the biggest shabu laboratory ever dismantled by authorities in the country took place during the previous administration of president Benigno Aquino III.

"I was stunned when she mentioned the president, when I did not even state his name nor even allude to him at that time," Marcelino said.

Marcelino, who had served in the PDEA, had revealed he was pursuing the possible political link of the syndicate behind the Tarlac laboratory.

"Why is the largest clandestine shabu laboratory established right in the home province of then President Benigno Aquino III, which is also the province where the then PDEA director general Arturo Cacdac once served as provincial director of PNP?" he asked.

"Is it possible that the syndicates already penetrated the highest political leadership of the country? Or do they want to simply embarrass our government when it will eventually be discovered?" Marcelino pointed out.

While pursuing this angle, Marcelino said anti-narcotics operations of government also focused on the flourishing drug trade in the New Bilibid Prison following intelligence information showing that about 70 percent of illegal drugs in the country came from the national penitentiary.

Marcelino claimed he was surprised why the ISAFP was left out of the operations led by then justice secretary De Lima when the original plan was that the military intelligence operatives would conduct forensic tests on contraband seized.

In the same affidavit, Marcelino also belied claim of De Lima that he was supposedly being coerced to testify against her.

“As a matter of fact, I was only constrained to execute this affidavit due to the misleading claims made by Sen. De Lima in her press conference on Sept. 22, 2016 using my name and my privileged communication with my mistah (classmate) without my knowledge and consent,” he said.

**Forgiveness
more powerful
than vengeance**

Following his release from military detention yesterday,

Marcelino said he would be going home to secure his family and himself, as he had earned a lot of enemies in his anti-drug campaign.

He said he would join Duterte’s war against drugs as soon as his return to his unit has been finalized.

“President Duterte is my commander in chief, who am I to refuse him if he orders me,” Marcelino said.

Asked if he would be filing counter-charges against the policemen and the PDEA, Marcelino said he has yet to decide.

“I learned a lot while in detention. I learned that forgiveness is more powerful than vengeance. Justice is continuously moving that you don’t know which way, but it is coming,” he said.

Marcelino and Yan were arrested in a drug bust in a house along Felix Huertas Street in Manila on Jan. 21, 2016 where PNP and PDEA agents seized 76,697.7 grams or P380 million worth of shabu.

Marcelino argued he was in a covert operation when the lawmen chanced on him and Yan when they raided the house. – **With Emmanuel Tupas, Jaime Laude**

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7 gov't combatants, 2 civilians wounded in attacks by NPAs

By **DANNY J. ESTACIO**
and **FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD**

mitted by the NPAs" that caused the wounding of non-combatant civilians and damage to their property.

LUCBAN, Quezon — Four soldiers, a pro-government militiaman, two policemen, two civilians and three rebels were wounded in gun battles and a landmine explosion as security forces were chasing New People's Army (NPA) rebels through the villages between this town and Luisiana in Laguna the other day.

Colonel Arnulfo Burgos, commander of the Philippine Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade (202 IB), said sporadic gun battles between government troops and the NPA rebels began around 11 a.m. in Barangays Kalangay and Mahabang Parang, Lucban.

The initial encounters involved two teams of the 5th and 6th Maneuver Platoons of Quezon's Provincial Public Safety Company — one under Police Officer 3 Danilo P. Arcilla and the other led by PO3 Richard B. Calixto — and around 30 guerrillas.

Later at 3:12 p.m. as military troops — on board a KM450 military vehicle and a V-150 armed personnel carrier (APC) — were moving to augment police combatants fighting the rebels, a landmine exploded on their path on the Cavinti-Luisiana Road between Barangays San Antonio and Barangay San Jose in Luisiana, Laguna.

The explosion also damaged a sports utility vehicle (SUV) and a delivery van, wounding two civilians.

Around 10 guerrillas then opened fire at the troops, sparking a fierce gun battle that lasted until 6 p.m.

Police and military reports identified the wounded troopers as Sergeant Marvin Bagaboro; Corporals Zaldy Lebantino and Teejay Antonio; Private First Class (PFC) Jeff Ray Gatlabayan; Civilian Armed Forces Geographical Unit (CAFGU) member Domingo Garcillas; and PO2 Aldrin C. Leonida and PO1 Bong Anda Himor.

At least three NPA guerrillas were wounded, according to reports from the ground commanders.

Major General Rhoderick Parayno, Army 2nd Infantry Division (2 ID) commander, strongly condemned the "desperate act com-

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NPA, military clash in Samar; soldier killed

By **RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT**

CAMP LUKBAN, Catbalogan City – One soldier was killed in fighting between Army troops and New People's Army (NPA) guerillas in Samar Wednesday, the military reported Thursday.

Major General Raul M. Farnacio, commanding general of the Army's 8th Infantry Division (8ID), told reporters that soldiers from the division's 43rd Infantry Battalion engaged about 20 NPA rebels in Barangay Mahayag, Matuguinao.

Killed was Cpl. Renjie P. Ada. Farnacio said the number of casualties on the NPA side was known.

A villager had reported to authorities that the rebels were asking for food and medicines from the residents.

Farnacio said soldiers were rushed to the Mahayag and exchanged fire with the rebels for 15 minutes.

In another development, Farnacio said a 12-year-old boy was apprehended by government troopers while carrying illegal ammunition.

Farnacio said that troops from the 8ID's 803rd Infantry Brigade were patrolling in Barangay De Tubang, Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar, when they chanced upon the boy who was carrying a rice sack that concealed close to 20 rounds of assorted ammunition.

The general said that after being interviewed, the child was turned over to the Provincial Social Welfare Development and brought to Catarman Provincial Hospital for a medical checkup.

Farnacio said that arrest of the boy is proof that the NPA violated the International Humanitarian Law stating that children under age 18 cannot participate in any hostilities or carry supplies that could put their lives in danger.

"Let us give our children the chance to grow up while peacefully learning from their youthful experiences and contributing in their own unique ways. NPA should stop recruiting and using minors for their illegal activities," he said.

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2nd Negros Geographical Battalion formed

DUMAGUETE CITY – The commander of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division on Wednesday said the formation of the 2nd Negros Island Geographical Battalion will be a boost to existing government security forces here.

Maj. Gen. Jon Aying, 3rd ID chief, spoke during the activation of the territorial battal-

ion at the Ninoy Aquino Freedom Park here.

A day earlier, the 1st Negros Island Geographical Battalion was also activated in Negros Occidental.

Headed by Maj. Eugie Villan, the 600-strong 2nd Negros Island Geographical Battalion will be temporarily based at Camp Leon Kilat in Tanjay, Negros Oriental, where the 79th Infantry Battalion is also based.

The four "serious enemies" of security that Aying highlighted were the insurgency threat posed by the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's

Army, the threat of the extremist terror groups like the Abu Sanyaf, the proliferation of illegal drugs and the vulnerable targets of these three social problems.

"It is very glaring that we have already been attacked by the Abu Sanyaf Group in Bohol and it is a must that we must be able to be resilient or have that capacity to insulate us from Mindanao-based violent terrorism and extremism", he said.

Aying lauded Negros Oriental Governor Roel Degamo for his consistent stand against all kinds of security threats. (PNA)

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BusinessMirror

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Battle-tested military commanders score against Abu Sayyaf bandits

THE deployment of battle-tested military commanders in the ongoing campaign against the Abu Sayyaf Group is reaping good results as the bandits are now being driven away from their traditional hunting grounds.

This was revealed by the Armed Forces Public Affairs Office chief, Col. Edgar Arevalo, when asked what other factors have, so far, contributed to the Abu Sayyaf's decline in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Arevalo cited the case of Joint Task Force Sulu and Tawi-Tawi, the military units engaged in the campaign against the Abu Sayyaf, which are now being commanded by battle-hardened commanders—Brig. Gens. Cirilito Sobejana and Custodio Parcon, respectively.

Both men are known for competence and bravery in the field. Both are recipients of the country's highest military decoration, the Medal of Valor, which is equivalent to the US Congressional Medal of Honor and United Kingdom's Victoria Cross.

Owing to the leadership exhibited by the two men, Abu Sayyaf bandits in Sulu and Tawi-Tawi are now having a hard time operating in their former hideouts, as military units in the areas are always conducting tracking and pursuit operations against the lawless elements.

Arevalo said the brilliance of these officers and the bravery of their men are backed up by

“We also invited tribal leaders so they [newly deployed troops] can be familiar with their customs and traditions.”—VALENCIA

the whole-hearted support of the Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Eduardo M. Año, who has committed all available military assets and resources to eliminating the terror group.

Armed Forces Western Mindanao Command data indicate that from January 1 up to May 17, a total of 81 Abu Sayyaf bandits were killed, 50 surrendered and 18 were captured. In addition, military forces seized 70 high- and low-powered weapons from the bandit groups' members.

Arevalo said the number of surrendered bandits is unprecedented, as this is the first time the terrorists have opted to surrender en masse.

The Armed Forces Public Affairs Office chief said the surrendered bandits are also claiming that their finances are going low owing to their inability to kidnap new victims and ransom them, crimping on their ability to acquire weapons, food and other supplies.

This lack has caused the morale of the bandits to plummet making them prone to surrenders.

Meanwhile, another infantry battalion has been deployed to Davao City to secure the locality from the threat of insurgency.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, Army 10th Infantry “Agila” Division commander, said the 16th Infantry Battalion was pulled out from Sulu to help the Third Infantry Battalion in securing Davao City.

These military units will be under the 1003rd Infantry Brigade, he added.

A typical Army battalion consists of around 300 to 500 officers and enlisted personnel.

Valencia said the 16th Infantry Battalion arrived in Davao City last week and its troops are now undergoing acclimatization and familiarization, as well as cultural sensitivity training.

“We also invited tribal leaders so they [newly deployed troops] can be familiar with their customs and traditions,” he added.

Valencia said there is a need for another battalion to secure Davao City owing to its huge size and large population.

Making this more pressing is the fact that Davao City is constantly expanding with new subdivisions and industrial plants, which needs more units for security.

“We need to address the [security] gaps by bringing in an additional unit,” Valencia said. *PNA*

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4 soldiers, 3 others hurt in Laguna landmine blast

By Mario J. Mallari

Four soldiers and three civilians were wounded after the government troops, while en route to augment security forces in Quezon province, hit a landmine planted by New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Laguna on Wednesday, the military said yesterday.

Col. Arnulfo Marcelo Burgos, commander of the Army's 202nd Brigade, said that the troops, aboard a military truck and a V-150 armored vehicle, initially hit a landmine in the boundary of Barangays San Antonio and San Jose in Luisiana, Laguna at around 3 p.m.

The explosion was followed by a brief exchange of gunfire between the troops and an NPA band.

"The troops opened fire and engaged the more or less 10 communist terrorists. The machine gun of the armored vehicle inflicted numerous casualties to fleeing rebels after a brief firefight," Burgos said.

On the other hand, Burgos said that four soldiers and three civilians were wounded.

Also, two civilian vehicles were damaged by the explosion.

Burgos said the convoy was on its way to Lucban, Quezon, supposedly to augment security forces there.

In Bukidnon, three members of the NPA's Guerilla Front 68 were killed during a clash with elements of the 1st Special Forces Battalion in Sumilao town.

In a belated report, Capt. Norman Tagros, civil-military operations officer of the 408rd Brigade, said the rebels were killed during the one hour of firefight on May 13 in Barangay Licoan, Sumilao, Bukidnon.

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More troops sent to Davao after series of NPA attacks

By Mario J. Mallari

The military has deployed additional Army battalion in Davao City, the home city of President Duterte, in the aftermath of series of attacks staged by the communist New People's Army (NPA) recently.

Maj. Gen. Rafael Valencia, commander of the Army's 10th Infantry Division (ID), said that the deployment of the 16th Infantry Battalion (IB) in Davao City was aimed at filling the security gap in the area.

Valencia said that recent atrocities committed by the NPAs in Davao City highlighted the security gaps that need to be filled up by deploying additional troops.

Prior to the deployment of 16th IB in Davao City, Valencia said that only one Army battalion – the 3rd IB, was operating in the entire city which has the size of a province and is expanding economically and has growing population.

"So we need to address the gaps by bringing in additional unit," Valencia said.

Aside from the two infantry battalions, which are tasked to secure rural areas, the military also has Task Force Davao primarily assigned to address terror threats in the city. An Army battalion is composed of 400 to 500 soldiers.

"We now have two infantry battalions operating in the hinterlands plus we have the Task Force Davao to secure the urban (area) we call downtown Davao against terrorist threat," Valencia said.

Valencia said that as one of the country's key cities, Davao City is always targeted by terrorist groups. Only last September, the Maute group bombed a night market in the city – killing 14 people and wounded 70 others.

"The city will always have a threat coming from outside, from terrorist groups, so we have Task Force Davao to address that," Valencia said.

Task Force Davao is an oversized battalion whose members are highly-trained in combating terrorism.

Among the recent atrocities committed by the NPAs in Davao City was the attack against a two box plants of the Lapanday Foods Corp. in Barangay Mandug last April 29 – burning down millions worth of facilities and seizing dozens of firearms.

Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio branded the incident as a terror act and stressed she was insulted by the NPA move as she has supported peace negotiations with the communists.

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• Soldier killed in anti-drug operation

KORONADAL CITY, South Cotabato — An Army soldier was killed after he shot it out with policemen who conducted an anti-drug operation on a warehouse in Barangay San Jose, this city Wednesday night. Supt. Jodylito Guisinga, Koronadal City police chief, identified the slain soldier as PFC. Richie Librado assigned with the 33rd Infantry Battalion who resisted arrest when police operatives stormed the compound believed to have been used as a drug den. A police officer, Senior Inspector Ramil Aurelio, was wounded during the firefight. Police arrested two other suspects identified as Herbert Deloso and Erickson Ligaya. The lawmen seized several grams of "shabu" and firearms, including one .45 caliber pistol, .38 revolver and one 12 gauge shotgun. (Joseph Jubelag).

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EARLY RETIREMENT

AFP PREPARING FOR CHANGE IN TOP MILITARY COMMAND

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is preparing for the early retirement of AFP Chief of Staff Eduardo Año next month before he formally takes over as secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the military said on Thursday.

Col. Edgard Arevalo, AFP pub-

lic affairs chief, said the military's board of generals was deliberating on Año's possible replacement while the AFP prepared for a change of command ceremony.

"It was Gen. Año who confided that he was going on early retirement, specifically by next month," Arevalo said.

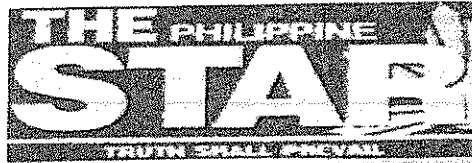
He added that all three-star generals of the AFP were "strong contenders" for Año's post.

"What I can assure you is that all our senior commanders, area commanders and major service commanders are contenders ... Our senior commanders are competent, experi-

enced and molded," he said.

When asked about reports that Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero, head of the military's Eastern Mindanao Command, might get the post, Arevalo said: "Well, you asked earlier who are the contenders and he is one of the contenders." —PHILIP C. TUBEZA INQ

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AFP board starts scouting for Año replacement

By JAIME LAUDE

When he retires next month to join the Cabinet of President Duterte, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief Gen. Eduardo Año would be replaced by one coming from a pool of three-star-rank contenders.

AFP Public Affairs Office chief Col. Edgard Arevalo said the Board of Generals will deliberate on the qualifications of

the key candidates to take over as next AFP chief once Año assumes the post as secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

There were reports that Eastern Mindanao Command (Eastmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero, a member of the Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class of 1984, is among the major contenders.

Guerrero is retiring in December. He was previously reported to have been eyed by Duterte as his first AFP chief upon assuming the presidency last year.

"While it is the AFP's loss, it is the gain of the DILG. But we are also saying that your Armed Forces will not run out of very competent, professional commanders who are all highly qualified to lead the military. Soon, we will be an-

nouncing formally who will be the replacement of General Año," Arevalo said.

Año will be bowing out next month ahead of his mandatory retirement on Oct. 26.

Insofar as the contenders for the top AFP post are concerned, Arevalo said all three-star generals are strong – from the AFP command staff down to service commanders and area commanders.

On Guerrero's supposed

leading the race, Arevalo replied he is among those being considered. However, everything remains fluid until the official announcement.

"He is among the contenders. He has all that it takes to be next AFP chief of staff, but until there is a formal announcement as to who will be the next chief of staff, we cannot name any at this time," Arevalo said.

He said the BOG will be

coming up with the names of strong contenders and submit the shortlist to the Department of National Defense (DND) for an official endorsement. Duterte will pick from among these candidates Año's replacement.

"In the AFP we have the saying that you don't assume until you have assumed," Arevalo said, citing previous designations that were recalled at the very last minute.

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AFP spokesman: Año retiring next month

By FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD

Armed Forces of the Philippines - Public Affairs Office (AFP-PAO) chief Col. Edgard Arevalo yesterday confirmed that AFP Chief of Staff Brig. Gen. Eduardo Año will be retiring in June to assume the post as Interior and Local Government secretary.

In a press briefing at Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City, Arevalo, said Año was

originally scheduled to retire on October 26, 2017 when he returns 56, but will instead do so four months earlier.

"October

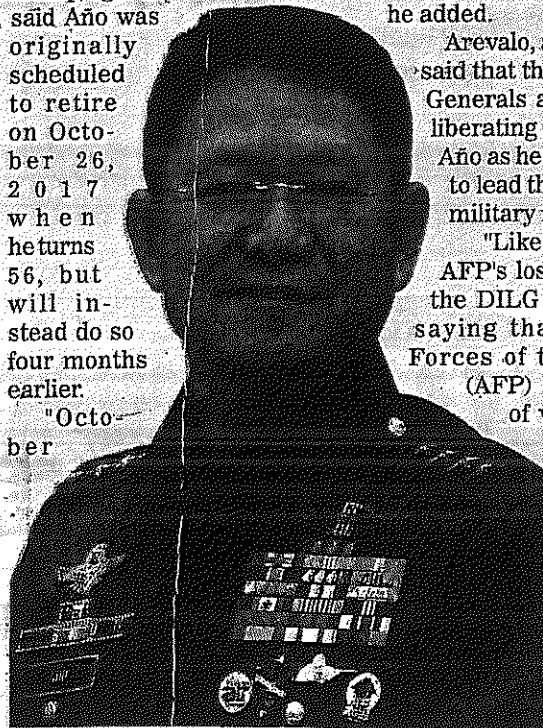
26 is the date of his compulsory retirement upon reaching the age of 56 but he will be retiring earlier," Arevalo said.

"He (Año) has already said that to us that he might be retiring earlier by June so this is for him... this is to give way for him to join the DILG as the named appointee of the president and to give way to the next chief of staff that will replace him," he added.

Arevalo, at the same time, said that the (AFP) Board of Generals are currently deliberating who will replace Año as he next chief of staff to lead the 125,000-strong military force.

"Like what I said the AFP's loss is the gain for the DILG but we are also saying that your Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) will not run out of very competent,

professional commanders among us who are deserving to lead the military in the soonest possible time."



EDUARDO AÑO

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PH-China bilateral talks to tackle rocket launchers

By **Leila B. Salaverria**
and **Nikko Dizon**
@Team_Inquirer

China's installation of rocket launchers at Kagitingan Reef in the Spratly Islands may be a subject of discussion when officials of the Philippines and China meet for their bilateral consultative mechanism, according to presidential spokesperson Ernesto Abella.

The meeting, which is expected to tackle sensitive issues between the two countries, is scheduled to be held on Friday.

Days before the meeting, reports said China had installed

antifrogman rocket launcher defense systems at Kagitingan Reef, also known as Fiery Cross Reef, which is partly claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, China and Taiwan.

"I think that will be covered by the bilateral consultative mechanism," Abella said in a press briefing when asked about this development.

"I'm sure that will be opened up, that will be touched on," he said.

As to whether the Philippines' actions concerning the South China Sea would be affected by the financial windfall that the country would receive

from Beijing, he said these were two separate situations.

President Duterte has said he would bring up in the meeting the Philippine claim in the disputed waters, as well as the crafting of a code of conduct for the South China Sea, Abella said.

But an administration lawmaker on Thursday said the Philippine government should give a "decisive and firm response" on China's reported installation of rocket launchers in Kagitingan Reef.

In a statement, Muntinlupa City Rep. Ruffy Biazon said that "anything less would be inter-

preted by the Chinese and other claimants as a capitulation or acquiescence."

"The Philippines should not let this pass without a comment against the installation of rockets. We should be immediately calling the attention of the Chinese and do a diplomatic assertion of our sovereign rights," said Biazon, senior vice chair of the House committee on defense and security.

In a separate statement, Magdalo party-list Rep. Gary Alejano called on the government to file a diplomatic protest against China if the report is true. INQ

9 May 2017

INQUIRER

Page: AR

Marcelino a free man after beating drug raps

By Philip C. Tubeza
and Marlon Ramos
Team Inquirer

Saying forgiveness is more powerful than vengeance, Marine Lt. Col. Ferdinand Marcelino walked out a free man from his detention cell in Camp Aguinaldo on Thursday afternoon after a Manila court ordered his release.

Marcelino thanked the Armed Forces of the Philippines, particularly its chief of staff, Gen. Eduardo Año, for its support and his lawyer, Persida Rueda Acosta, chief of the Public Attorney's Office, for working for his release.

"I'm very happy because finally I have achieved justice. I don't know how to thank those people who continued to trust me and give their support. It's not easy being in jail," he said.

Charges junked

The Manila Regional Trial Court ordered the release of Marcelino and his Chinese informant, Yan Yi Shou, after the Department of Justice (DOJ) junked the drug trafficking charges against them for insufficiency of evidence.

The DOJ released a resolution earlier on Thursday ordering the dismissal of the charges brought against Marcelino and Yan after their arrest in a raid on an apartment in Sta. Cruz, Manila, on Jan. 21, 2016.

Agents of the Philippine Drugs Enforcement Agency (PDEA), where Marcelino once served as chief of the Special Enforcement Service, seized P380 million worth of illegal drugs from the apartment, which was allegedly used as laboratory for manufacturing crystal meth, locally known as "shabu."

The DOJ applied the princi-

ple of "liberality" in granting Marcelino's petition for review, as the motion was filed beyond the 15-day limit for seeking an appeal.

"[The] same is merely procedural and thus may be waived by the department for compelling reasons and in the interest of justice," the DOJ said in the 13-page resolution dated May 17 and signed by Justice Undersecretary Deo Marco.

Besides, Marco said, "a show of liberality is within the competence" of Justice Secretary Vitaliano Aguirre II.

The military freed Marcelino after receiving a copy of the court order for his release.

No plans to hit back

Marcelino said he had no plans yet of bringing counter-charges against his accusers.

"We still have to consider that. There are many things to consider like my financial capability [to pursue charges] but justice has to be served," he said.

"As they say, forgiveness is more powerful than vengeance and compassion is greater than hatred," he added.

Marcelino, whose reputation as a top drug buster has been clouded by his arrest on drug charges, retires in 2029.

He said he would wait for instructions from the AFP leadership for his next assignment.

DOJ overturns own decision

But the Philippine National Police Drug Enforcement Group said it would "exert all legal remedies to rectify" the DOJ resolution that led to Marcelino's release.

In withdrawing the case against Marcelino and Yan, the DOJ overturned its Sept. 15, 2016, decision that recom-

mended the indictment of the pair for violation of Section 11 of Republic Act No. 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, for possession of illicit substances.

The DOJ also upheld its May 23, 2016, resolution that threw out the complaint filed by the PDEA against Marcelino and Yan for insufficiency of evidence.

Petition for bail

Six months after his arrest, a Quezon City Regional Trial Court judge granted Marcelino's petition for bail, saying the evidence presented against him by the PDEA and the PNP were "irrelevant and immaterial."

"Crucial in applying the foregoing principles in the instant case is whether [Marcelino and Yan] ... were in possession, actual or constructive, of dangerous drugs. We rule in the negative," Marco said.

In dropping the case, the DOJ believed Marcelino's explanation that Yan was his informant and that they were in the area to conduct a covert operation on the drug laboratory.

Marcelino, whose successful career as a PDEA agent made him a legend of sorts among narcs, vehemently denied the allegation that he was a member of a drug syndicate.

He presented the certifications issued separately by former National Bureau of Investigation Director Virgilio Mendez and Brig. Gen. Ronald Villanueva, the chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Both officials spoke highly of Marcelino's significant role and accomplishments in the government's campaign against illegal drugs. INQ

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PH needs P5B to protect Benham Rise

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**
@RonWDomingoINQ

The government would need an initial P5 billion to kick-start efforts to protect and conserve the country's vast marine resources at Benham Rise, Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said.

In a statement, Piñol said the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources sought the amount as a last-minute addition to the proposed 2018 budget of the Department of Agriculture, which supervises the agency.

He said the funding request was prompted by a directive from President Duterte "to protect and conserve the rich fishing area, which is now being poached by foreign fishing vessels."

Piñol said the seed money would be used to establish a research and monitoring facility at the 15-hectare Benham Bank, the shallowest portion of the 13-million-hectare Benham Rise.

He earlier said the planned facility would serve as a research station and advance command post that would

help deal with "rampant cases of illegal fishing."

Filipino scientists have said they have explored only about 1 percent of the area and more explorations were needed to determine whether petroleum and other minerals could be found in that underwater landmass off the northeastern coast of Luzon, which is now part of the country's continental shelf.

Sen. Juan Edgardo "Sonny" Angara last year filed a bill to create the Benham Rise Development Authority that would integrate studies and policies on the newest territory.

In a related development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Unctad) has urged governments to cut about \$35 billion in subsidies to the fishing industry worldwide that contribute to the depletion of fishery resources and the high prices of fish.

Unctad legal affairs officer David Vivas said subsidies accounted for one-fifth of the \$146 billion worth of global exports in fish and seafood products. INQ

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The Manila Times

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149 Abu Sayyaf bandits neutralized – AFP

THE military on Thursday confirmed that 149 Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members have been neutralized since January this year following the intensified operations launched by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Col. Edgard Arevalo, chief of the AFP public affairs office, 81 bandits were killed, 50 surrendered and 18 apprehended by government troops.

"One of the biggest factors is our focus on combat operations, which is our main asset in the AFP includ-

ing our personnel in air and sea. Our special massive operations unit also decreased their chances of kidnapping civilians," Arevalo told reporters.

He attributed the success of their operations to the assistance given by local residents.

Arevalo said the military will continue pursuing members of the terror group.

"There is one battalion deployed in Western Mindanao, particularly in Sulu. We feel like we have suffi-

cient forces in those parts," he said.

"We have been proactive in our actions and if there are reports that will keep on coming here, we will still be proactive," Arevalo added.

Members of the 10th Infantry Battalion under Joint Task Force Sulu engaged 15 Abu Sayyaf members in a five-minute gun battle in Patikul, Sulu, killing two of the bandits.

Brig. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Commander of the Joint Task Force Sulu, said in a statement that they re-

covered the remains of the two ASG bandits who are yet to be identified.

The latest skirmishes between the government forces and the bandits occurred on Wednesday.

Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr., Commander of the Western Mindanao Command, said that the joint task force based in Sulu aims to flush out the ASG bandits from their comfort zones and bring them to places "where they are vulnerable."

DEMPSEY REYES

19 May 2017

**Manila
Standard**

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149 Abus, killed, captured —AFP

By Florante S. Solmerin

AT LEAST 149 members of the Abu Sayyaf Group have been killed, captured and surrendered since January this year, including two more who were slain Wednesday in an encounter with government forces in Patikul, Sulu, Captain Jo-Ann Petinglay, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said on Thursday.

“The latest skirmishes that resulted to the killing of two more terrorists happened at around 7 a.m. at the so-called Patikul hill in Barangay Sandah. Our troops from the 10th Infantry Battalion also seized three M16 rifles,” Petinglay said.

It added that the military killed 81 Abu Sayyaf men, 50 have surrendered, and 18 were arrested. The encounters also yielded 70 high-powered and low-powered firearms.

Petinglay said the Patikul hill encounter yielded two bodies “who are still yet to be identified.”

Joint Sulu Task Force commander Brigadier General Cirilito Sobejana said no one from the operating troops was hurt or killed.

Before the encounter, Sobejana said Abu Sayyaf members Musa Jamil Alsid, 19, and Mohammad Wad-dang Udding, 20, surrendered Tuesday to the 2nd Special Forces Battalion. The two were residents of Barangay Pitogo, Caluang, Sulu.

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NPAs called to commit to peace, not to hostilities

By LARRY P. FABIAN

BAGUIO CITY — A statement from a top official in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) urged the New People's Army (NPA) to stop its hostile actions which have not only impeded the road to peace, but also stunted economic development and the delivery of public services in localities.

Baguio City Mayor Mauricio Domogan, who chairs both the Regional Development Council (RDC) and the Regional Peace and Order Council (RPOC) for the six provinces that constitute the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), signed last Tuesday a statement of commitment to the call to end violence and for the attainment of a permanent ceasefire between the government and the communist rebels.

In the statement signed by Domogan, it is stated that the joint RDC, RPOC of the region affirms that one of the foundations for the inclusive growth and sustainable development is “the attainment of just and lasting peace, realized through peaceful means of negotiations; sustainable economic reforms; and recognizing the people's rights to self-determination through an autonomous regional government.”

The signing of the statement happened at the end of the two-day consultative workshop on the agenda of the peace talks between the government and communist party peace panels at Albergo Hotel, here.

“Peace could be attained, however, I am also asking from the NPA to stop its hostilities in the rural areas and even here, no more burning of private properties owned by investors, please stop recruiting new insurgents in the country sides, and cease asking revolutionary taxes from private companies and individuals,” Domogan said, pertaining to recent incidents reported in the region.

19 May 2017



Page: AB

Decision on Abu cop out next week

By Philip C. Tubeza
@pctubezaINQ

The Philippine National Police Internal Affairs Service (IAS) will come out next week with its resolution on the case of Supt. Ma. Cristina Nobleza, who was accused of conniving with the Abu Sayyaf bandits who had sought to establish a base in Bohol.

IAS Inspector General Alfgar Triambulo said they would release its findings and recommendations even as Nobleza complained that the IAS was "in a hurry" to resolve her case.

"We will resolve it by May 22. We will start writing our resolution and recommendation to the PNP chief," Triambulo told reporters.

Nobleza, Davao PNP crime

laboratory deputy chief, was caught on April 22 in Bohol together with Abu Sayyaf bomb expert Renren Dongon. Nobleza claimed they were lovers.

The two were arrested after a chase as their vehicle did not stop at a police checkpoint in Clarin town.

"She was with a terrorist and was carrying a gun without papers. She also fled from her post," Triambulo said.

"That is not the proper conduct of an officer. That is grave misconduct unbecoming an officer," he added.

Triambulo said Nobleza complained that the IAS was "in a hurry" to resolve her case.

Nobleza joined the PNP in 1996 and was assigned to the PNP crime laboratory until 2004. INQ

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The Manila Times

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5 SOLDIERS, 2 POLICEMEN WOUNDED IN ENCOUNTERS WITH NPA

CAMP VIGENTE LIM, Laguna: Five soldiers, two policemen and three civilians were wounded in an encounter with New People's Army (NPA) members who detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) in Quezon and Laguna on Wednesday. The policemen were identified as Police Officers 1 Romelio Lameseria and Philip Tayaba, Police Region 4-A Director Ma. O. Aplasca said policemen from the 5th Maneuver Platoon of the Quezon Police Public Safety Company encountered an undetermined number of NPA rebels in the boundary of Barangay Kalangay and Mahabang Parang at about noon while on combat patrol operation. The rebels retreated bringing with them their wounded companions. At 3:12 p.m., another clash erupted in the boundary of Barangay San Antonio and Barangay San Jose, Luisiana, Laguna between Army troops and an undetermined number of NPA rebels. Army troops from the 80th Infantry Battalion were on board a military vehicle and V-150 armored personnel carrier along Cavinti-Luisiana Road when a landmine (IED) exploded. Wounded were Domingo Gardillas, a civilian home defense volunteer and Sergeants Marvin Bagaboro, Zaldy Lebantino, Teejay Antonio and Jeff Ray Gatlabayan. The explosion also wounded three unidentified civilians and destroyed two vehicles – an SUV and a delivery van. The rebels, reportedly with an undetermined number of casualties, retreated after the attack. Aplasca said all operating troops from the Armed Forces and the Philippine National Police continue their offensive operations.

ROSELLE AQUINO AND DEMPSEY REYES

7 LOCAL TERRORISTS NABBED IN ZAMBOANGA

SHARIFF AGUAK, Maguindanao: Seven members of a local terrorist group were arrested by Marine troops in Zamboanga City after robbing a *sari-sari* (variety) store. Capt. Jo-ann Petinglay, spokesman for the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom), identified the arrested suspects as Salip Alip, Benhar Hasin, Bargen Hasin, Karim Majad, Hadani Odjor, Mohammad Hatuirdin and Jamri Salmani, who just robbed the store in Barangay Buenavista, Zamboanga City. They were accosted by the troops of the 11th Marine Company along Barangay Muli Highway. Alip, 18, a local terrorist under Jamul Nasalon alias Abu Harris, has a warrant of arrest for the murder of eight fishermen on Siromon Island last January 10 and of Ronald Juela in Barangay Buti on November 10, 2016, all in Zamboanga City. He is also accused of strafing a rural bus in Barangay Buenavista last February 14. Col. Leonel Nicolas, commander of the Joint Task Force Zamboanga, said the armed suspects were brought to Curuan Police Station for the filing of charges.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL AND AL JACINTO

MUSLIM CLANS END 'RIDO,' SURRENDER FIREARMS

COTABATO CITY: Three warring Muslim clans ended their decade-old *rido* (family feud) after a settlement on Wednesday at an Army base in Maguindanao. The peace truce between the feuding families – Abo and Mamalakat, Taaral and Mamaco and Pacasma and Wadia – was brokered by Mayor Abolais Manalao of Buldon town and Col. Jesus Sarsagat of the 603rd Infantry Brigade. The members from Iranun tribe ended their 15 years of armed conflict through Islamic religious rites and signing of peace pact witnessed by Maguindanao Gov. Esmel Mangudadatu, Maj. Gen. Arnel dela Vega of the 6th Infantry Division, and other local and military officials. The clans also surrendered their weapons – four automatic rifles, a Barrett sniper rifle and a 12-gauge shotgun. They will get livelihood assistance from the government in exchange for the surrendered firearms.

JULMUNIR I. JANNARAL

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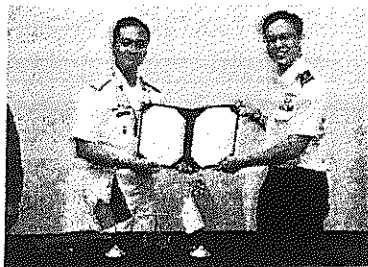
ONLINE NEWS

19 MAY 2017

www.dwdd.com.ph

MOU | PH Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy Signs White Shipping Agreement

Alvin Santiago | [View all posts by Alvin Santiago](#)



Vice Adm. Ronald Joseph S. Mercado (left), the Flag Officer In Command, Philippine Navy (FOIC, PN) and Rear Adm. Lai Chung Han, Chief of Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (CNV, RSN) signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the Exchange of Information relating to White Shipping last May 14. Philippine Navy via Facebook

NAVAL STATION JOSE ANDRADA, Roxas Boulevard, Manila (DWDD) – The Philippine Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy signed over the weekend a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Concerning the Exchange of Information relating to White Shipping.

Vice Admiral Ronald Joseph S. Mercado, the Flag Officer In Command, Philippine Navy and Rear Admiral Lai Chung Han, Chief of Navy, Republic of Singapore Navy (CNV, RSN) signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Pan Pacific Singapore Hotel, Singapore on Sunday.

The MOU signing manifests the strong desire of both navies to further strengthen existing bilateral relations in order to enhance cooperation beneficial to the defense and security of both countries.

Core of this understanding emphasizes the need to enhance information sharing relating to White Shipping which generally covers general commercial ships, passenger liners, pleasure craft and fishing boats, which are non-military and non-government in nature.

“This MOU underscores the establishment of policies and procedures for the conduct of information sharing and reciprocal protection of information relating to White Shipping between the two nations in order to enhance maritime awareness in their respective areas,” the Philippine Navy said in a statement.

The MOU signing, at the same time, highlights the PN’s strong commitment and desire to enhance its maritime awareness through partnership and cooperation with the end in view of strengthening its security and protecting common maritime interests.

The MOU is part of the Philippine Navy’s participation to the Republic of Singapore Navy’s 50th Anniversary themed as “RSN50: Maritime Nation, Maritime Force” from May 11-19, 2017. NPAO / MCAG

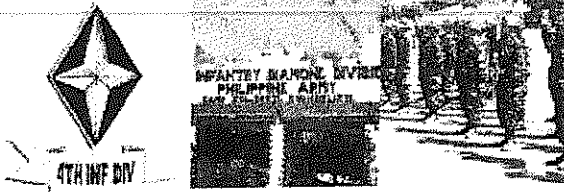
Army Core Purpose: Serving the people. Securing the land.

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NOBLE PROFESSION | 96 Candidate Soldier Aspirants Took their Oath at 4ID

Arvin Santiago



CAMP EVANGELISTA, Cagayan de Oro City (DWDD) – 96 individuals will be joining the noble profession of arms as they take their oath as the AFP's promising peace advocates. The activity was conducted in Headquarters 4th Infantry Division, Patag Cagayan de Oro City at 4:00pm today.

These 96 candidate soldiers are composed of 87 males and 9 females whom had underwent series of stages of the selection process such as qualifying examinations that tested their mental and physical ability to prove their worth as finest from the poll of aspirants to join the Army. After taking their oath, they will be undergoing the rigors of Basic Military Training to help them transform from their carefree civilian life to fine grown military men and women. Their training will be conducted in a six-month duration covering skills and knowledge not only in combat fighting but also in life-saving imperatives, disaster response operation, peacekeeping initiatives, Human Rights, Rule of Law, and Rule of Engagement.

In addition, these new breed of peace advocates will fill up the needed number of personnel due to attrition such as optional and compulsory retirement, and other causes. They will also continue the efforts of their predecessor in devoting their lives in the pursuit for peace.

MGen Benjamin R Madrigal Jr, Commander 4ID, said "Today is your oath-taking and we presume that each and every one of you came here in your own will and is ready to be of service to the country".

"I have great faith in each one of you. The 4th Infantry (Diamond) Division will support you in your future undertakings, as you also help accomplish our mission to win the Peace in this side of the country and to fulfill our vision that *by 2028, we will be a world-class army that is a source of national pride.*", MGen Madrigal added. 4DPAO / MCAG

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

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

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

5ID-PA accomplishments cited during 36th anniversary

From the Philippine News Agency (May 18): **5ID-PA accomplishments cited during 36th anniversary**

Camp Melchor Dela Cruz, Gamu, Isabela – **The 5th Infantry Division of the Philippine Army (5ID-PA) commander here on Thursday cited the accomplishments of the army division last year during the 36th founding anniversary culminating activity held inside the Camp here.**

Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Delfin Lorenzana was guest of honor during the founding anniversary held at the camp's grandstand.

M/Gen. Paul Atal, commanding general of the 5ID-PA, said the army division had done a lot to protect the state and the people it serve.

The 5ID-PA area of operations include the whole Cagayan Valley region, the Cordillera Administrative Region and some areas of Ilocos Region.

Atal said the army division had conducted anti-insurgency operations; disaster preparedness; search and rescue operations; humanitarian, medical and dental missions; and supported the government's anti-illegal drug and anti-illegal logging operations of law enforcers.

He said there were a total of 38 New People's Army rebels neutralized and 65 various guns and rifles confiscated during their operations. The army division commander emphasized the capture of a "high value target", a CPP/NPA/NDF leader.

"Aside from the anti-insurgency operations, the soldiers of the division also help in enforcing forestry laws that resulted to the apprehension of 33,000 board feet of forest products and supported the police in various anti-drug operations in its area of operations," Atal said.

Atal lauded the officers and men of the army division for obeying orders from the higher headquarters which resulted to a peaceful Cagayan Valley, Cordillera and Ilocos regions.

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Army efforts end 15-year-old Moro clan wars

From the Philippine News Agency (May 18): Army efforts end 15-year-old Moro clan wars

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao – Three warring Moro clans in Maguindanao “smoke the pipe of peace” Thursday in an Army-led reconciliation effort, ending 15 years of bloody skirmishes.

Major General Arnel dela Vega, commander of the 6th Infantry Division, gathered the warring families during lunchtime where they signed a peace deal not to use violence against each other.

Capt. John Arvin Encinas, 6th ID spokesperson, said the warring families signed the peace deal and vowed before the Holy Qu’ran never to use force again.

The settlement of “rido” (family feud) between the Abo and Mamalakat families, Taaral and Mamaco families, and Pacasma and Wadia families came after Buldon town Mayor Abolais Manalao and Colonel Jesus Sarsagat successfully convinced the protagonists to “bury the hatchet for the sake of their children.”

It took at least three months for the Army talking separately to all protagonists one at a time.

It was the first time in the past 15 years that the six Moro families came to see eye-to-eye, exchanged handshakes and hugs after swearing before the Holy Qur’an.

Encinas said the conflict between the Abo and Mamalakat and Taaral and Mamaco families stemmed from ownership of a vast track of land in Buldon while the Pacasma and Wadia clans’ rivalry was triggered by personal issues.

The effort to end the dispute that claimed an undetermined number of lives from both sides was also initiated by Maguindanao Gov. Esmael “Toto” Mangudadatu.

“Do not bring back your past animosities to prevent the conflict to escalate,” Dela Vega told Muslims leaders, mostly from the Iranun tribe,

“The future generations of the warring clans will be more affected if the conflict will remain unresolved.” he added.

Mangudadatu also lauded the efforts of the local government of Buldon and the military officials to bring the three warring families to settlement.

To show their sincerity, the “reunited” families, who are related by affinity, surrendered assorted firearms that included M-15, M-16 and M1 Garand rifles with ammunition.

Mangudadatu said in exchange for the surrendered firearms, the families will receive livelihood assistance from the Maguindanao agriculture office.

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

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

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

Army condemns rebel's recruitment of minors in Northern Samar

From the Philippine News Agency (May 18): Army condemns rebel's recruitment of minors in Northern Samar



The Philippine Army on Thursday condemned communist rebels for recruiting minors, following the apprehension of a 12-year-old boy carrying ammunitions and cartridge allegedly for use of rebel fighters in Northern Samar.

Maj. Gen. Raul M. Farnacio, commander of the Army's 8th Infantry Division based in Catbalogan City, Samar said the involvement of minors in communist rebellion is a clear violation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

"Children ages 18 below are prohibited to participate in any hostilities and carrying supplies that could merely put their lives in danger," Farnacio said.

The official made the statement after government troops apprehended a boy carrying half sack of rice that concealed 20 rounds of 5.56 mm ammunitions, three cartridges 7.62 mm linked for M60 machinegun and two cartridges 5.56 mm linked for K3 machine gun.

Soldiers of the 803rd Infantry Brigade noticed the suspicious content of sacks while conducting security patrol on May 13 in De Tubang village, Silvino Lobos, Northern Samar.

After an interview, the boy was turned-over to the Provincial Social Welfare Development for proper custody and was brought to Catarman Provincial Hospital for medical check up, the army said in a statement.

"Let us give our children the chance to grow up while peacefully learning from their youthful experiences and contributing in their own unique ways. NPA should stop recruiting and using minors for their illegal activities," Farnacio added.

The military believes that the New People's Army has been recruiting minors in areas with poor road access and high illiteracy rate, capitalizing on their innocence.

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'Communist terrorists' being tracked down in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental

From the Philippine News Agency (May 18): 'Communist terrorists' being tracked down in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental



Army troops of the 79th Infantry Battalion are tracking down the whereabouts of 20 armed men, including a woman, reported to have arrived in Guihulngan City in northern Negros Oriental on Wednesday afternoon.

The arrival of the unidentified armed group in Guihulngan City came on the same day that the 3rd Infantry Division of the Philippine Army, headed by Maj. Gen. Jon Aying, had activated the 600-strong 2nd Negros Island Geographical Battalion in Negros Oriental at ceremonies in Dumaguete City.

Lt. Col. Roderick Garcia, 79th IB commander, in an interview Thursday disclosed that a civilian first reported the sighting of the said armed group, believed to be "Communist terrorists", to the police in Guihulngan City.

Garcia said he deployed his troops immediately after receiving the information to validate the report and now conducting operations in the hinterlands of Guihulngan.

However, due to the travel time and distance from their point of origin, his troops no longer caught up with the armed group in the lowlands.

A police report on Thursday also corroborated the Army report that around 3:10 p.m. Wednesday, a group of more or less 20 armed men, including a woman, was sighted by concerned citizens at Sitio Matu-og, Barangay Basak in Guihulngan City.

The armed group, wearing camouflage fatigue were on board two pumpboats that docked at the shoreline of Matu-og, said the police report from the Negros Oriental Philippine National Police Provincial Office (NORPPO).

The report further said the unidentified armed individuals walked across the national highway going to the hinterlands of Barangay Binobohan and Barangay Mani-ak of Guihulngan, a city about 116.3 kilometers north of this capital.

They were seen carrying assorted high-powered firearms to include Carbine and M16 rifles and a machine gun.

The police report further said the armed group was believed to carry out tactical offensives against government troops, vital installations and to disrupt the upcoming fiesta celebration of Guihulngan

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City on May 25 as well as the tentatively scheduled Federalism Summit there.

Lt. Col. Garcia said he strongly suspect that it was the Communist terrorists, referring to the New People's Army (NPA), had arrived in Guihulngan and not the extremist kidnap-for-ransom group, Abu Sayyaf.

Garcia said, the lone female in the group was speaking the Visayan dialect.

Garcia further said these armed individuals could be remnants of the NPA's South Eastern Front (SEF) operating in southern Negros Oriental, specifically in Sta. Catalina town.

Acting provincial police director Sr. Supt. Henry Biñas said the it would appear that the armed group was pressured by the ongoing military operations in Sta. Catalina which drove them instead to Guihulngan.

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MMDA named as National Army Reserve Engineering Brigade

From the Philippine News Agency (May 18): MMDA named as National Army Reserve Engineering Brigade

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has enlisted the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) as the country's first National Army Reserve Engineering Brigade which can be mobilized to construct vital infrastructures such as roads and bridges during times of emergencies like disasters or in the event of war as an Engineering Combat Support Unit.

The Philippine Army, with the approval of the MMDA, granted the title to the MMDA after a thorough evaluation of its documents and qualifications.

The agency expressed intent to become an affiliated reserve unit after presenting its charter and the qualification of the agency's personnel to the office of the Army's Reserve and Veterans Affairs which recommended to approve MMDA's bid.

MMDA Officer in Charge Thomas Orbos said the designation would enable the agency to maximize its resources and personnel to assist in times of disaster and calamities.

"It is an honor to be named and get this title. We owe it to the public that we serve to get immediate response especially in emergency cases," Orbos said in a statement.

The MMDA has selected personnel willing to serve and qualify to perform the functions of the Army Reserve Engineering Brigade.

Those recommended to compose the Brigade will undergo the Military Orientation Training inclusive of field exercises.

Those who complete the required training will either be commissioned as officers or enlisted as non-commissioned members of the Army Reserve.

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