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OFFICE OF THE ARMY CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

18 April 2018

Wednesday



Honor. Patriotism. Duty

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PANAHON TV
www.panahon.tv /PanahonTV

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

TOMORROW'S WEATHER FORECAST - APRIL 18, 2018 - WEDNESDAY

EASTERLIES AFFECTING THE COUNTRY as of 4:00 pm - April 17, 2018

PHILIPPINE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (PAR)

SUNRISE 5:41 AM	SUNSET 6:10 PM
MOONRISE 7:24 AM	MOONSET 8:22 PM
NEW MOON APR 18 9:57 AM	FIRST QUARTER APR 23 5:40 AM
LOW TIDE 6:31 PM 0.07 Meter	HIGH TIDE 11:15 AM 0.88 Meter

Partly cloudy to at times cloudy with rainshowers and/or thundershowers
Cloudy skies with rainshowers and/or thundershowers

METRO MANILA 24 - 34 °C	TAGAYTAY 25 - 35 °C	TACLOBAN 24 - 32 °C
TUGUEGARAO 23 - 38 °C	LEGAZPI 26 - 32 °C	CAGAYAN DE ORO 24 - 33 °C
LAOAG 23 - 32 °C	PUERTO PRINCESA 26 - 32 °C	METRO DAVAO 25 - 34 °C
BAGUIO 16 - 24 °C	ILOILO/BACOLOD 26 - 32 °C	ZAMBOANGA 22 - 32 °C
SBMA/CLARK 25 - 38 °C	METRO CEBU 26 - 32 °C	

DZRH NEWS TELEVISION

MONDAY - FRIDAY
11 AM & 5 PM

PILIPINAS 10

AIR 21
SAGOT KO, PABALA MO!

WEEKDAYS
6 AM, 6:30 PM & 9 PM
WEEKENDS
6 AM



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18 April 2018

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

Page: A1

CHINA MILITARY PLANES LAND ON PH REEF

Photos obtained by the Inquirer show a pair of Xian Y-7 military transport aircraft on Panganiban Reef, indicating Beijing is stepping up its militarization of Philippine-claimed territory in the South China Sea.

By Frances G. Mangosing
@FMangosingINO

Two Chinese military transport planes have been photographed on Panganiban Reef, marking the first reported presence of this type of aircraft in Philippine territory in the South China

Sea and raising the prospect that China will base warplanes there.

Panganiban Reef—internationally known as Mischief Reef—is located within the Philippines’ 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ) in the South China Sea. The waters within this zone are known locally as West

Philippine Sea.

Surveillance images taken on Jan. 6 showed two Xian Y-7 military transport planes 20 to 50 meters apart on the ramp near Runway 21 on Panganiban, one of seven reefs in the Spratlys that China has transformed into artificial islands with military capabilities.

The photos were given to the Inquirer by a source.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines declined to comment on the images. The Chinese Embassy in Manila did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

The Inquirer checked the photos

for modifications, but there appeared to be none.

It was unclear if it was the first ever presence of military aircraft on Panganiban Reef. It could not also be determined how long the planes had been there. Aerial photos of the reef dated Dec. 30, 2017, pub-

AG

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FROM A1

lished by the Inquirer on Feb. 5, 2018, indicated no presence of airplanes.

China landed a civilian aircraft on Panganiban Reef on July 13, 2016, a day after the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in a case brought by the Philippines and declared Beijing's claim to almost the entire South China Sea invalid. It was as if China, which did not take part in the arbitration, was telling the court that it did not recognize its ruling.

Besides Panganiban, China has also transformed Kagitingan (Fiery Cross), Calderon (Quarteron), Burgos (Gaven), Mabini (Johnson South), Zamora (Subi) and McKennan (Hughes) reefs into artificial islands.

A Chinese military aircraft landed on Kagitingan in 2016 reportedly to evacuate three ill workers to Hainan Island for treatment. There has been no confirmed presence of military planes on Zamora so far. Three of China's artificial islands in the Spratlys have 3-kilometer runways.

The Hague court's 2016 ruling says Panganiban Reef belongs to the Philippines. Part of the ruling says the reef, located about 232 km from Palawan, forms part of the Philippines' EEZ and continental shelf, and China has violated the Philippines' sovereign rights with its island-building in the area.

But China has refused to acknowledge the verdict and continues to insist it has sovereignty over almost the entire 3.5-million-square-kilometer South China Sea.

Aside from the Philippines and China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have claims in the South China Sea, which is crisscrossed by vital sea-lanes through which \$5 trillion in global commerce passes every year and where islets, reefs and atolls are believed to be sitting atop vast energy reserves.

China to up the ante

"If they could land transports now, in the future they might want to land more provocative and destabilizing types of assets such as fighter jets and bombers. And over time, such consistent but creeping practice would become a fact, in effect dealing a fait accompli to Manila, should it choose to stay silent or downplay the issue, and it could become 'routinized' or 'normalized' operations for China," Collin Koh, a research fellow at Singapore's Rajaratnam School of International Studies' Maritime Security Program, told the Inquirer.

The Duterte administration has repeatedly played down the militarization of China in the South China Sea and if it continues to do so, "this could embolden Beijing to up the ante in the future," Koh said.

"There must be certain calculations within the Chinese political elite circles that Manila is in Beijing's pocket, because of President Duterte's desire for rapprochement and quest for Chinese aid and investments, which thus conclude that they could possibly get away with further acts of militarization," he said.

"There's always also a concern about the American factor in the back of their minds, but they could have assessed that so long as the Duterte administration chooses to downplay these developments, there's also nothing much the Americans can do," he added.

'Interesting revelation'

The landing of military transport planes on Panganiban Reef, he said, is an "interesting revelation," and if the Philippine government has been aware of the presence of the military planes but refuses to raise it in public only highlights the administration's desire to "not rock the boat with China" despite the ongoing talks on a code of conduct in the South China Sea with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean).

Tensions between the Philippines and China over the West Philippine Sea eased when Mr. Duterte assumed office in 2016, put the Philippine victory in The Hague on the back burner, and began to court Beijing for aid and investment.

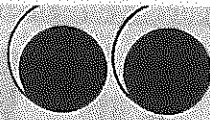
Last week, Mr. Duterte returned home from his third visit to China with \$9.5 billion in investment and aid pledges from the Chinese government. Mr. Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping also held talks for a possible joint exploration for oil and gas in the West Philippine Sea.

The President said he did not take up the South China Sea dispute during his meeting with Xi because he believed it was "not the appropriate time."

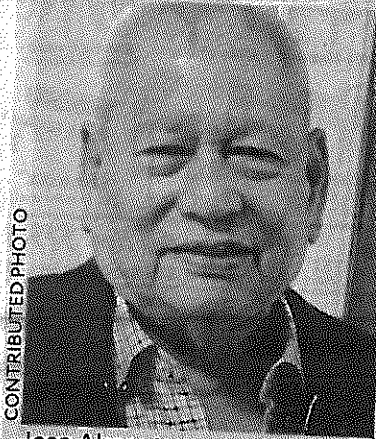


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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jose Almonte



Collin Koh – TWITTER PHOTO

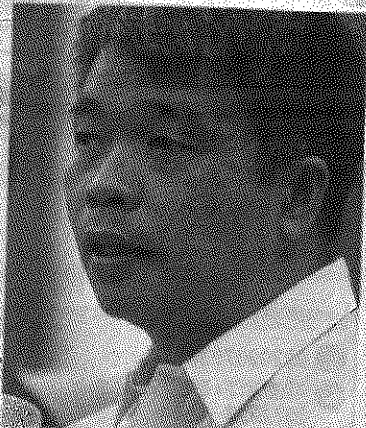
Collin Koh
Research fellow

"Why should I ruin it? They are now offering joint exploration and from the mouth of the president of China, he said, then exploration, maybe we can be extra generous ... I am not ready to sacrifice the lives of my policemen and soldiers for nothing. I'd rather talk about business. Let it float there, it cannot be stolen. But China is coming in, offering something," he told reporters in Davao City early on Friday after arriving from China.

'No giving up of claims'

Despite criticisms of the administration's defeatist attitude toward China, Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano insists the Philippines has not given up its claims in the South China Sea. "[T]he prosperity of the Filipinos coming from China is not because we gave up sovereignty but because how we are dealing with issues of territorial claims and sovereignty. China has not asked us, and I can tell you this very honestly whether closed door or in open, they have never asked us to give up our claims. They have simply asked us to put some order in how we will discuss these claims and where we should discuss these claims," he told journalists last week in Hong Kong, where the Philippine delegation proceeded after the Boao Forum for Asia on Hainan Island.

Cayetano said earlier that the Duterte administration held China to its "good faith"



Jay Batongbacal – LYN RILLON

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promise not to reclaim new features in the South China Sea.

"As of now, if we compare the Aquino administration strategy and the Duterte strategy, we simply are making do with a bad situation but we have stopped the bleeding. Meaning, we have stopped other claimants from getting new features, we have started discussion on the [code of conduct], we have jump-started relationship: people to people, cultural exchanges; educational exchanges; military to military. Yes we want to fight for what is ours but we don't want a war. And no one in our region wants a war because no one will win," he said.

Slow step of operations

Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines' Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said the presence of the planes on Panganiban Reef showed China had continuous operations in the area.

"This means they're going there both by air and sea. It indicates full reach of their operations," Batongbacal said in an interview.

This means, he said, the deployment of the cargo planes is just "another slow step" in their operations: "They will make it appear that it's not threatening. They started out with cargo planes first, and they would say these are normal operations. We know they would do that eventually and it's evident on

their timetable."

What should be watched out for, Batongbacal said, is the presence of fighter jets or bombers.

"If this happens, it means they are expanding their operations in their bases. Eventually this will be more frequent until it becomes permanent. Right

now, [the transport planes are] either for construction people or military who operate the facilities. Maybe they're part of the rotation," he said.

Tense and busy week

It was a tense and busy week in the South China Sea last week with demonstrations of power by both China and the United States.

Xi presided over the largest maritime parade in the disputed waters on Thursday, with the participation of at least 10,000 personnel, dozens of fighter jets, submarines, ships and aircraft, to show off China's naval might.

The US aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt arrived in Manila last Wednesday for a port visit. Before its stopover, it showed off its capabilities with flight deck operations in the South China Sea. It hosted a reception for Philippine government officials, military and business leaders on Friday night.

The United States, which has no claims in the South China Sea, has no official position in the disputes but has repeatedly asserted its right to freedom of navigation.

The Wall Street Journal last week reported that China had also started deploying communications and radar jamming equipment on Panganiban and Kagitingan, spurring suspicions that Beijing would use its bases on the two artificial islands to enforce its claims in the South China Sea.

Discovered by accident

Panganiban is within the Philippines' EEZ but China has occupied it for decades. Before its transformation into the largest of the seven artificial islands in the Spratly archipelago, it was a small outpost that China claimed in the 1990s as a shelter for its fishermen.

"It was discovered by accident when I was national security adviser. A [Filipino] fisherman who escaped [from Chinese detention] told us about it," Jose Almonte, who was national security adviser to President Fidel Ramos when China seized Panganiban Reef in 1995, told the Inquirer in an interview.

"They've been constructing for years. They've been there since early '90s," he said.

The Philippines rallied Asean for support in trying to

shoo China away, but the economic dependence of some members of the bloc on China had stood in the way of unity within the grouping.

China started massive dredging operations on the seven reefs in the Spratlys in early 2014 in anticipation of an adverse ruling from the Hague court. In 2015, Xi said during his trip to Washington that China wouldn't militarize the artificial islands.

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'Barangay of China'

For the Philippines, which has one of the weakest militaries in the region, war is not an option. It doesn't have to be, according to Almonte.

The Philippines, Almonte said, could mobilize world opinion, as "China, who wants to be a superpower, is sensitive to world opinion."

"We should continue to uphold the decision of [the Hague court]. Of course, we can't implement it because we have no armed forces. Even the [United Nations] can't implement it. And America will not implement it even if they can. So we should campaign for world opinion," he said.

"Here, America will help us because we are not creating conditions for them to go to war with China. If we want to campaign in the world, they will be with us," he added.

"I've said this before in my speeches. There are only two forces that can solve the South China Sea dispute: China and world opinion," he said.

But China will never do it and it is even willing to violate international law for its ambitious claims, he said.

"We have won in The Hague but they disregarded it. Duterte allowed them to go with it so you remove China," he said.

Almonte also warned that too much cozying up to China could have its consequences, citing the struggle of Sri Lanka to repay its massive loans to China. It was forced to lease one of its ports to China for 99 years to be able to pay its huge debt, he said.

"If we do not manage properly the so-called opportunities provided by China in terms of loans, grants, we will become a barangay (village) of China," he said.

Almonte described the South China Sea as the "maritime heartland of Southeast Asia."

"Anybody who controls [the South China Sea] will control the peripheral countries. Anyone who controls the peripheral countries will control the Southeast Asia region. Who controls the Southeast Asia region will [have] influence in [the] Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific [regions]," he said. INQ

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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Gov't troops encounter NPAs in San Carlos City

By CALVIN D. CORDOVA

CEBU CITY - A firefight between government troops and suspected New People's Army (NPA) guerrillas broke out in Barangay Guadalupe, San Carlos City Monday morning.

Soldiers from the 79th Infantry Battalion (IB) of the Philippine Army were conducting security patrol at around 8 a.m. when they chanced upon at least

30 armed men believed to be members of the NPA.

Lt. Col. Emelito Thaddeus, commanding officer of the 79th IB, said the armed men fired shots at troops, triggering a shootout that lasted for about 20 minutes.

Thaddeus said no one was hurt on the side of the government, while it was not immediately known if someone from the other side was killed.

Various items, such as solar panel and subversive documents, were recovered from the encounter site, said Thaddeus.

"The area had a good supply of water and a strong signal for communication," said Thaddeus.

Thaddeus said the 79th IB has been patrolling the area due to the persistent complaints of the residents that members of the NPA have been conducting

extortion, harassment and recruitment of minors in the hinterlands of the city.

"The reports that we are getting from the citizens are clear indications that they are against the NPA," said Thaddeus.

Thaddeus added that the 79th IB is conducting combat operations in the first, second and third districts of Negros Occidental to suppress insurgency and terrorism.

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MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

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67 rebel returnees in Masbate avail of local integration program

LEGAZPICI CITY – At least 67 former rebels in Masbate are now undergoing clearances for the Comprehensive Local Integration Program (CLIP) of the national government after they surrendered to military authorities.

Col. Greg Almerol, commander of 903rd Infantry Brigade, said the rebel returnees coming from the different towns of Masbate province will receive support under the CLIP program, as well as aid from the different line agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

"I am very thankful for the pledges of support given by our partner agencies," he said during the Tsokolate at Pandesal forum over the weekend.

Almerol said the former rebels surrendered to authorities, particularly to members of the 903rd Brigade of the Philippine Army assigned in Masbate province from December of 2017 to March 2018.

Nine of the former rebels were from Claveria town, 21 from Aroroy, 16 from Balud, 14 from Monreal, two each from San Pascual and Mobo, one each from the towns of Milagros and San Jacinto, and one from Masbate City.

Some rebel returnees said their worst situations and sufferings in the former organization caused them to surrender.

A former rebel said they decided to

surrender because the leadership of their former organization did not give them the promised salary.

"Our family was only given ₱2,000 per month," he said.

Under the CLIP program, the former rebels will be given the assistance they need from the government in order to reintegrate themselves as law abiding citizens.

The National Housing Authority pledged to support their housing needs; while JCI, Team Albay Youth Organization (TAYO) and other agencies will provide food assistance.

Bicol PNP spokesperson Senior Insp. Ma. Luisa Calubaquib said the PRO-5 is now collecting material support from every division and office inside Camp Gen. Simeon Ola intended for the former rebels.

Meanwhile, Almerol said they were overwhelmed with the recent numbers of rebels surrendering in different towns of Masbate.

He noted that over 100 communist members are also willing to surrender and avail of the 'Balik-loob' program of the government.

The 903rd IB is now under the process of preparing the mass surrender of a whole community allegedly infested by the New People's Army in an undisclosed town in Masbate province, he added. (PNA)

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19 April 2018

Manila
Standard

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Guerrero to new AFP chief: Focus on internal security

AS HE steps down as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Wednesday, AFP chief General Rey Guerrero said that he gave instructions to his successor, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, to focus on internal and maritime security.

Guerrero will officially turn over his post to Gen. Galvez, who is currently the commander of the Western Mindanao Command (WestMinCom).

In a statement, AFP public affairs office chief, Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia, said that President Rodrigo Duterte will preside over the ceremony to be held at the parade grounds of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Guerrero will be honored with a testimonial parade and review and will be presented the prestigious Philippine Legion of Honor (Rank of Commander).

As head of the Eastern Mindanao Command head, Guerrero spearheaded the execution of Community Support

Programs, a key component of the military's new operation plan, the Development Support and Security Plan Kapayapaan.

During Guerrero's term as AFP chief, the concerted efforts of AFP units in the conduct of focused military and intelligence operations, alongside intensified stakeholder engagements, resulted in the neutralization of 6,817 members of the New People's Army as of April 15.

A total of 6,709 of them have surrendered, 723 of whom were regular NPAs and Sangay ng Partido sa Lokal members; 513 were Militia ng Bayan; 712 were underground organization

members; and 4,761 were mass supporters.

Moreover, 47 NPAs were also killed, while 61 others were apprehended in legitimate focused military operations.

A total of 288 assorted firearms were also seized from the rebels.

Meanwhile, intensified efforts against local terror groups and foreign fighters have resulted in the neutralization of 457 various terror personalities, 81 of whom were killed, 280 were apprehended, and 96 surrendered.

Faced with an equally challenging task of rebuilding Marawi City from the devastation brought by the armed terrorist attack, the AFP has conducted activities to support the overall effort of the government, spearheaded by the Office of Civil Defense, for the City's recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation.

A total of 3,953 assorted unexploded ordnance (UXO) and 738 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) had been found and disposed of. **With PNA**

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Guerrero: I'm leaving AFP in better place

By Mario J. Mallari

Outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero yesterday declared he is leaving the 135,000-strong AFP in a better place, citing the accomplishments the military achieved during his six-month stint.

Guerrero will relinquish the AFP top post to outgoing Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom) chief Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr. tomorrow during change of command ceremony to be presided over by President Duterte at Camp Aguinaldo.

According to Guerrero, he did not aim for much when he was appointed AFP chief of staff by Duterte last October and only pursued the programs already laid out by previous military chiefs.

"I am not too ambitious, when I assumed office I just told myself that I want to leave behind an organization that is much better, stronger and more united," Guerrero said.

But more than any projects implemented or completed during his tenure, Guerrero cited his good working relationship established with



GUERRERO

AFP personnel that made him feel fulfilled as AFP chief of staff.

"The appreciation of the people that you serve...as they say, work is not all about achievements and accomplishments, it's about relationship," Guerrero said.

"We succeed not because we are smarter, we are better but because we were able to work more harmoniously...we were able to carry good relationships with our colleagues," he added.

Among the major accomplishments of the AFP

during Guerrero's stint were the start of the massive rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City following the six-month siege laid by Islamic State-inspired terrorists, the gains against the New People's Army (NPA) and the continuation of the AFP modernization program.

As lesson to the Marawi City siege and the Zamboanga City crisis, Guerrero activated the AFP Special Operations Command (Socom)—putting all military elite units under one umbrella command to further improve readiness and cohesiveness.

Guerrero said the AFP modernization program remains on track with several big ticket acquisitions in the pipeline.

During his term as AFP chief of staff, Guerrero aimed to cut the NPA strength by half—through combat and civil military operations.

In the past six months, the concerted efforts of AFP units in the conduct of focused military and intelligence operations alongside intensified stakeholder engagements resulted in the neutralization of 6,817 NPA personalities as of April 15.

A total of 6,709 of these

have surrendered broken down as follows: 721 regular NPAs and Sangay ng Partido sa Lokal members; 513 Milita ng Bayan; 712 underground organizations members, and 4,761 mass supporters.

Moreover, 47 other NPAs were also killed while 61 others were apprehended in legitimate focused military operations.

A total of 288 assorted firearms were also seized from the NPAs.

Meanwhile, the intensified efforts against the local terror groups and foreign fighters resulted in the neutralization of 457 various terror personalities composed of 81 killed, 280 apprehended/arrested and 96 surrendered.

The outgoing AFP chief of staff said he is leaving the AFP in the good hands of Galvez.

"General Galvez is a respected leader, he is a leader on his own," said Guerrero, who was supposed to retire last December upon reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56 but was extended by President Duterte.

Talks are rife that Guerrero would be appointed to a key civilian post after his retirement.



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New AFP chief takes over today

By Zaida DeLos Reyes-Palanca

ARMED Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Mindanao Command commander Lt. General Carlito Galvez Jr. will assume his post as the new Chief of Staff of the organization in a ceremony today in Camp Aguinaldo.

Galvez will replace AFP outgoing Chief of Staff General Rey Leonardo Guerrero who bows out of service after 38 years in the military.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte will preside the turn over ceremony in the AFP headquarters parade ground.

On the same day General Guerrero will also be honoured with a testimonial Parade and Review and will be given the prestigious award of the Philippine Legion of Honor for the rank of commander.

General Guerrero served as commander of AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command before he became the Chief of Staff.

He has orchestrated the execution of Community Support Programs, a key component of the military's new operation plan, the Development Support and Security Plan Kapayapaan.

During his term as the AFP Chief, the concerted efforts of AFP units in the conduct of focused military and intelligence operations alongside intensified stakeholder engagements resulted in the neutralization of 6,817 New People's Army (NPA) personalities as of April 15.

A total of 6,709 of these have surrendered including 721 regular NPAs and Sangay ng Partido sa Lokal members; 513 Militia ng Bayan; 712 underground organizations members; and 4,761 mass supporters.

There were also 47 other NPAs killed and 61 others were apprehended in legitimate focused military operations.

A total of 288 assorted



Galvez Jr. firearms were also seized from the NPAs.

Meanwhile, the intensified efforts against the local terror groups and foreign fighters resulted in the neutralization of 457 various terror personalities composed of 81 killed, 280 apprehended/arrested, and 96 surrendered.

During his term, Marawi City Rehabilitation started as the AFP conducted activities to support the overall effort of the government to rebuild the city from the devastation brought by the armed terrorist attack.

A total of 3,953 assorted unexploded ordnance (UXO) and 738 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were found and disposed.

Currently, seven out of the nine sectors in the main battle area are already cleared from UXOs and IEDs. The remaining two are still being cleared from explosives that may have been trapped within collapsed buildings.

The AFP also deployed engineering units to assist cognizant agencies in the construction of temporary shelters for Internally Displace Persons.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways together with the National Housing Authority, the AFP completed 250 units of temporary shelters in Barangay Sagonsongan and is currently supporting the construction of additional 570 units of temporary shelters in the area.



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Galvez assumes AFP's top post

ARMED Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Western Mindanao Command commander Lt. General Carlito Galvez Jr. is the new Chief of Staff after today's change of command ceremony at Camp Aguinaldo.

Galvez will replace AFP outgoing Chief of Staff General Rey Leonardo Guerrero, who retires after 38 years in the military profession.

President Rodrigo Duterte will preside the turn over ceremony at the AFP's Parade Grounds.

General Guerrero will also be honored with a testimonial Parade and Review and will be given the prestigious Philippine Legion of Honor award.

General Guerrero served as commander of AFP-Eastern Mindanao Command before he became the Chief of Staff.

He has orchestrated the execution of Community Support Programs, a key component of the military's new operation plan, the Development Support and Security Plan Kapayapaan.

During his term as the AFP Chief, the concerted efforts of AFP units in the conduct of focused military and intelligence operations and the intensified stakeholder engagements resulted in the arrest of 6,817 New People's Army (NPA) rebels as of April 15.

A total of 6,709 of these have surrendered, including 721 NPA rebels and Sangayng Partido sa Lokal members; 513 members of Militia ng Bayan; 712 underground organizations members; and 4,761 mass supporters.

There were also 47 other NPAs killed and 61 others were apprehended in military operations.

A total of 288 assorted firearms were also seized from the NPAs.

Meanwhile, the intensified efforts against the local terror groups and foreign fighters resulted in the neutralization of 457 various terror personalities, of which 81 were killed, 280 arrested and 96 surrendered.

During Guerrero's term, Marawi City rehabilitation kicked-off as the AFP con-

ducted activities to support the overall effort of the government to rebuild the city from the devastation brought by the Maute Group terror attacks.

A total of 3,953 assorted unexploded ordnance (UXO) and 738 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) were found and disposed.

"It is with great pride that I commend the AFP Chain-of-Command, the members of the Joint, Personal, and Special Staff, the Officers, the Enlisted Personnel, and the Civilian Employees who all together performed their functions well for the accomplishment of their respective units' missions, not to mention the many sacrifices they made, that brought the AFP Organization to where it is now," General Guerrero said.

"It was without a doubt that we have distinguished ourselves as an organization by performing our mandate with gusto and focus: to protect the Filipino people," he added.

Zaida delos Reyes-Palanca

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Pahina. 3

NPA rebels

masahol pa sa terorista

Masahol pa sa mga tulisan at tunay na terorista ang mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa bansa.

Ito ang sinabi ni outgoing Armed Forces of Philippines (AFP) Chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero at hindi lang "brand" o "tag" ang pagbansag sa CPP-NPA bilang terorista kundi ito ang katotohanan sa

kanilang tunay na kulay. Ipinaliwanag ni Guerrero, sa legal na depenasyon ay mga terorista ang CPP-NPA dahil totoo namang "terroristic activities" ang panununog ng mga pribadong ari-arian, pangongotong sa mga negosyante, at pangharase sa mga sibilyan. Magugunitang hiningi ni CPP founding Chair Jose Maria Sison na iatras

ng pamahalaan ang mga hakbang na ipadeklarang mga terorista ang CPP-NPA bilang kondisyon sa pagbuhay muli ng gobyerno sa peace talks. Ayon kay Guerrero, ipinapakita lang ng

Ni JOY CANTOS

hakbang ng pangulo na sa kabila ng kanyang matapang na pananalita, ay nasa puso niya ang pangmatagalang kapayapaan sa bansa.

Samantala, sinabi ni Guerrero na nasa maibuting kamay ang Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) kaniyang sucesor na si AFP-Western Mindanao Command Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez Jr.

Si Guerrero, produktong Philippine Military Academy (PMA) Class 1984 ay nakatakdang bumaba sa puwesto ngayong araw matapos ang 4 buwang pagpapalawig ng termino nito.

Si Galvez na produktong PMA Class 1985 na tumanyag ang military career sa pagsusuberbisa sa Marawi City siege na nag-umpisa noong Mayo 23, 2017 na tumagal ng limang buwan.

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NGAYON

Pahina. 2

NPA masahol pa sa terorista - AFP chief

Bago bumaba sa puwesto ay muling nanindigan si outgoing Armed Forces of Philippines (AFP) Chief Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero na masahol pa sa mga tulisan at tunay na terorista ang mga rebeldeng New People's Army (NPA) sa bansa.

Ayon kay Guerrero, hindi lang "brand" o "tag" ang pagbansag sa CPP-NPA bilang terorista, na ginagamit ng pamahalaan laban sa komunistang grupo dahil ito ang katotohanan sa kanilang tunay

na kulay. Si Guerrero ay nakatakang bumaba sa puwesto ngayong araw sa gaganaping change of command ceremony sa Camp Aguinaldo.

Ipinaliwanag ni Guerrero, sa legal na depensyon ay mga terorista ang CPP-NPA dahil totoo namang "terroristic activities" ang panunuhog ng mga pribadong ari-arian, pangongotong sa mga negosyante, at pangharass sa mga sibilyan.

Magugunitang hiningi ni CPP founding Chair Jose Maria Sison na iatras ng pamahalaan ang mga hakbang na ipadeklarang mga terorista ang CPP-NPA bilang

kondisyon sa pagbuhay muli ng gobyerno sa peace talks.

Una rito, ipinag-utos ng Pangulo sa mga negosyador ng pamahalaan na tingnan kung may posibilidad na buhayin ang naudlot na usapang pangkapayapaan.

Maging ang anak ng Pangulo na si Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio ay tutol na buhayin ang peace talks dahil nagsasamantala lamang umano ang teroristang grupo.

Ayon kay Guerrero, ipinapakita lang ng hakbang ng Pangulo na sa kabila ng kanyang matapang na pananalita, ay nasa puso niya ang pangmatagalang kapayapaan sa bansa.

Idinagdag pa nito na kung ayaw ng CPP-NPA na bansagang mga terorista, ay dapat lang na tapatan nila ang sinseridad ng gobyerno.

Sinabi ng heneral na dapat itigil na rin ng CPP-NPA ang teroristang aktibidades na kabilang sa mga kondisyon na inilatag ng pamahalaan sa muling pagbuhay ng peace talks. (Joy Cantos)



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AFP, PNP identifying Visayas poll hotspots

At least 62 of 555 barangays in Negros Oriental have been included in election watchlist areas in Western Visayas, authorities said yesterday.

Senior Superintendent Edwin Portento, Negros Oriental police director, said these election hotspots are mostly hinterland barangays where New People's Army rebels have been monitored.

Portento said they deployed 140 neophyte police personnel in the province to reinforce the 2nd Provincial Mobile Force Company.

Authorities said at least 200 barangays in Western Visayas are on the initial list of potential hotspots.

In Eastern Visayas, Maj. Gen. Raul Farnacio, 8th Infantry Division commander, said

80 percent of their five battalions would be deployed in election hotspots and conflict areas.

Farnacio said they would prioritize areas where there are intense political rivalries, citing Samar, Northern Samar and Eastern Samar.

"We will not allow violence to happen... We would continue to assess and review the situation to guard against private armed groups... We will see if we have to increase the number of troops in these areas," he said.

Farnacio said they also put up checkpoints in strategic

areas in Calbayog City and other parts of Samar, Northern Samar and Leyte.

Jose Nick Mendros, Commission on Elections (Comelec)-Western Visayas director, said they are reviewing other possible areas of concern during the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections on May 14.

Senior Superintendent Edgar Alan Okubo, Cebu police director, said they would recommend the inclusion in election watchlist areas of two barangays in Tuburan town.

Okubo refused to identify the barangays pending validation.

Village chief nabbed

Meanwhile, William Mar-

tinez, chairman of Barangay Sta. Maria, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur, was arrested on Sunday for violating the Comelec ban on illegal possession of firearms. He reportedly yielded a caliber .45 pistol and ammunition.

Motorcycle rider Moises Pecho was apprehended on Monday for possession of an unlicensed caliber .45 pistol after he figured in an accident in Sto. Domingo, Ilocos Sur.

Pecho was taken to a hospital for treatment after his motorcycle rammed an electric post in Barangay Cabigbigaan.

– Gilbert Bayoran, Miriam Desacada, Ben Serrano, Raymond Catindig, Ermida Moradas/The Freeman

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Sara: NPA not deserving of human rights

By EDITH REGALADO

DAVAOCITY - Presidential daughter and Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio accused communist rebels of being terrorists who do not deserve protection of their human rights.

Duterte-Carpio earlier asked her father President Duterte to reconsider his decision to resume talks with the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army-National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF), pointing out the series of atrocities committed by the leftist guerrillas.

"I believe the insurgency problem can only be ended peacefully if the NDF and the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, are sincere, honest and committed to working toward the direction of peace and reciprocate the gesture offered by the government," Duterte-Carpio said over the weekend.

Anakpawis Rep. Ariel Casilao, however, called on the presidential daughter to follow the government's decision to resume peace talks with the rebels.

"While it is disappointing that the Davao chief executive changed tune on her stance on the peace talks, we likewise urge her to investigate the military in its involvement on reported human rights violation against peasants and lumads. The recent International Fact Finding and Solidarity Mission in Mindanao confirmed cases

of rights violation committed by the military against peasant and lumad communities," Casilao said.

Duterte-Carpio answered back by claiming Casilao is playing the political propaganda playbook of the communists.

"Mr. Ariel Casilao's comment on my opinion on the resumption of the peace talks is telling of how the representative of Anakpawis has designated himself as the mouthpiece and the attack dog of the groups responsible for a long list of terroristic activities against the people and the state over the past 40 years," she said.

Duterte-Carpio said Casilao is an "aberration" in government.

She said Casilao should be expelled from the House of Representatives.

"Instead of working to help the workers and farmers he is supposed to represent in Congress, Casilao is now serving as the representative of the terrorists. His colleagues in the House of Representatives should expel him," she said.

"And if it is the desire of Casilao to continue attacking the government, which he is supposed to be a part of, he should resign and join his brother in the communist movement," Duterte-Carpio added.

The mayor said she doesn't need to follow the military when she came up with her position.

- With Gilbert Bayoran

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ASG extortionists lob grenade at DPWH bodega

By NONOY E. LACSON

ZAMBOANGA CITY – Suspected members of the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), believed to be involved in extortion, lobbed and exploded a hand grenade at the warehouse of the Department of Public Works and Highways in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, (DPWH-ARMM) in Isabela City Monday night.

DPWH-ARMM District Engineer Soler Undug said unidentified persons threw the grenade which exploded on the roof of the DPWH-ARMM warehouse located in Purok 4, Barangay Aguada in Isabela City.

Undug said the incident happened at around 7:30 pm, Saturday. No one was reported injured as a result of the incident.

Police and military authorities,

who rushed to the explosion site, recovered the safety lever pin and fragmentation parts of MK2 type grenade.

The police said the roof of the warehouse sustained minor damage as a result of the explosion.

Early this year, suspected ASG detonated an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) outside the residence of Undug.

The IED exploded on the perimeter fence of Undug's residence located on Calle Bisaya in Isabela City.

Authorities also found an IED planted at the fence of the residence of DPWH-ARMM Basilan assistant district engineer Salonga 'Bong' Lasatan, located at the village of Aguada, which was few meters away from the residence of Undug.

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Guerrero leaves behind 'more professional AFP'

By Priam Nepomuceno April 17, 2018, 3:03 pm

MANILA -- Outgoing Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero is proud to leave behind a more professional military as he formally steps down from office on Wednesday.

Guerrero made the statement when sought for a comment on what legacy he has left behind during his six-month stint as AFP chief.

"You can look around, makita n'yo naman (you can see) that our soldiers are professional and I believe during the months that I have been the Chief-of-Staff, I was able to strengthen (our) professionalism, (our) culture of excellence (in the) Armed Forces and this has greatly contributed to the accomplishments of the AFP in the past months," Guerrero said.

Guerrero was appointed as AFP chief last Oct. 26, 2017, replacing Gen. Eduardo Año.

Guerrero was supposed to retire on Dec. 17, 2017 after reaching the mandatory retirement age of 56 but his term as AFP chief was extended by another four months by President Rodrigo Duterte.

The outgoing AFP chief said there is still a lot of things to improve in the AFP which his replacement, incumbent Western Mindanao Command-head Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez, can do once the latter officially assumes the top military post.

"(Things you want to do, but wala nang time) organizationally marami pang ano e, mga dapat (there is much to) improve sa (in the) systems and processes ng (of the) Armed Forces but I believe given yung (the) initial steps, I have already taken the initial steps to make sure that the next Chief-of-Staff will be able to follow through dun sa nasimulan (what has been started)," the outgoing AFP chief stressed.

These include measures to improve the nation's security, he added. *(With reports from Ericka Cirera, OJT/PNA)*

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Guerrero to step down from AFP top post Wednesday

By Priam Nepomuceno April 17, 2018, 2:27 pm

MANILA -- After 38 years in the military service, Gen. Rey Leonardo Guerrero will formally step down as Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) on Wednesday and pass the post to outgoing Western Mindanao Command chief, Lt. Gen. Carlito Galvez.

In a statement Tuesday, AFP public affairs office chief, Lt. Col. Emmanuel Garcia, said President Rodrigo R. Duterte will preside over the turnover ceremony that will be held at the parade grounds of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

Guerrero will be honored with a testimonial parade and review and will be presented the prestigious Philippine Legion of Honor (Rank of Commander).

While serving as Eastern Mindanao Command head, the outgoing AFP chief orchestrated the execution of Community Support Programs, a key component of the military's new operation plan, the Development Support and Security Plan Kapayapaan.

During Guerrero's term as AFP chief, the concerted efforts of AFP units in the conduct of focused military and intelligence operations, alongside intensified stakeholder engagements, resulted in the neutralization of 6,817 members of the New People's Army (NPA) as of April 15.

A total of 6,709 of them have surrendered, 723 of whom were regular NPAs and Sangay ng Partido sa Lokal members; 513 were Militia ng Bayan; 712 were underground organization members; and 4,761 were mass supporters.

Moreover, 47 NPAs were also killed, while 61 others were apprehended in legitimate focused military operations.

A total of 288 assorted firearms were also seized from the rebels.

Meanwhile, intensified efforts against local terror groups and foreign fighters have resulted in the neutralization of 457 various terror personalities, 81 of whom were killed, 280 were apprehended, and 96 surrendered.

Faced with an equally challenging task of rebuilding Marawi City from the devastation brought by the armed terrorist attack, the AFP has conducted activities to support the overall effort of the government, spearheaded by the Office of Civil Defense, for the City's recovery, reconstruction, and rehabilitation.

A total of 3,953 assorted unexploded ordnance (UXO) and 738 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) had been found and disposed of.

Seven out of nine sectors in the main battle area have already been cleared of UXOs and IEDs. The remaining two are still being cleared of explosives that may have been trapped within collapsed buildings.

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The AFP has also deployed engineering units to assist cognizant agencies in the construction of temporary shelters for Internally Displaced Persons.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways and the National Housing Authority, the AFP under Guerrero completed 250 units of temporary shelters in Barangay Sagonsongan and is supporting the construction of additional 570 units of temporary shelters in the area.

Under Guerrero's tenure, the Letter of Instruction on Pagbabago "Juliet" was also issued to revise and update the Pagbabago "India" and reiterate the "force provider, force employer concept."

It defines and standardizes the command relationships of AFP units based on existing doctrines and current operational guidelines.

Several units and offices have also been activated, among them the Tactical Operations Wings (TOW) that re-designated the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd TOWs and 579th Composite Tactical Wings into Northern Luzon, Central, Western Mindanao, and West TOWs, respectively. Five infantry battalions (IB) have likewise been activated under Guerrero's term, namely the 90IB, 91IB, 93IB, and 94IB following the increase in the number of Philippine Army personnel as ordered by Duterte.

The Special Operations Command (SOCOM) of the Army has also been reconfigured into the AFPSOCOM, which will consolidate all AFP special operations forces under one commanding unit.

AFPSOCOM will take command of, and supervise the Special Operations Wing of the Air Force, the Naval Special Operations Group of the Navy; Scout Ranger Regiment, Special Forces Regiment and Light Reaction Regiment of the Army; and the Joint Special Operations Group of GHQ.

The AFP Systems Engineering Office (AFPSEO) was also activated to manage the implementation of the AFP modernization and Self-Reliant Defense Posture programs.

The AFPSEO will act as the technical adviser to the CSAFP on matters related to the systems engineering design of the weapon systems and defense equipment that will be acquired under the Revised AFP Modernization Program with regard to their functional and material designs.

The activation of the AFPSEO will also put into place a dedicated office for the management and implementation of the various modernization projects along the five major components of the program, namely: Capability, Materiel and Technology Development; Bases and Support Systems Development; Force Restructuring and Organizational Development; Human Resource Development; and Doctrine Development.

Under Guerrero's guidance, the AFP has judiciously utilized Martial Law in the implementation of the campaign against loose firearms.

Various AFP units have facilitated the surrender of a total of 1,424 assorted loose firearms with the cooperation of local government units and clan leaders in Mindanao.

The total figure includes 81 firearms surrendered by residents and officials in Lanao del Sur on March 24 and March 26; and 106 firearms surrendered by local executives in Maguindanao on March 26-27.

Hundreds of loose firearms were voluntarily surrendered by politicians and clans in various parts of Mindanao.

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

The AFP had also launched more than 85,930 checkpoint operations; 47,557 security patrols; and more than 6,791 critical infrastructure and installations security.

"It is with great pride that I commend the AFP Chain-of-Command, the members of the Joint, Personal, and Special Staff, the Officers, the Enlisted Personnel, and the Civilian Employees who all together performed their functions well for the accomplishment of their respective units' missions, not to mention the many sacrifices they made, that brought the AFP Organization to where it is now," Guerrero said.

"It was without a doubt that we have distinguished ourselves as an organization by performing our mandate with gusto and focus: to protect the Filipino people and the state. Rest assured, the AFP will remain a reliable force for peace and progress, securing the nation's core and peripheral interests and rendering service to the country in collaboration with other agencies towards the attainment of lasting peace and stability in the country," the outgoing AFP chief said. **(PNA)**

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House panels approve Palace-backed BBL

By Filane Mikee Cervantes April 17, 2018, 12:46 pm

MANILA – Two House of Representatives' panels have approved the Palace-endorsed version of the proposed Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL).

In an executive session on Monday, the House committee on Muslim affairs, voting 5-3, and special committee on peace, unity and reconciliation, voting 6-4, approved Deputy Speaker Bai Sandra Sema's motion to pass House Bill 6475 as the BBL version and retain all of the bill's provisions.

The House committee on local government, however, rejected the motion with a vote of 1-9.

HB 6475, authored by Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez, provides for the BBL and seeks to abolish the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

The bill is based on the proposal submitted by the Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) to President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

The bill seeks to repeal Republic Act No. 9054, entitled "An Act to Strengthen And Expand the Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao" and RA No. 6734, entitled "An Act Providing for An Organic Act for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao."

It aims to establish a political entity, provide for its basic structure of government in recognition of the justness and legitimacy of the cause of the Bangsamoro people and their aspiration to chart their political future through a democratic process that will secure their identity and posterity and allow for a meaningful self-governance.

Under the bill, the Bangsamoro territory shall remain a part of the Philippines.

The Bangsamoro territory shall be composed of the following: 1) the present geographical area of the ARMM; 2) the Municipalities of Baloi, Munai, Nunungan, Pantar, Tagolan and Tangkal in the province of Lanao del Norte and all other barangays in the Municipalities of Kabacan, Carmen, Aleosan, Pigkawayan, Pikit, and Midsayap that voted for inclusion in the ARMM during the 2001 plebiscite; 3) the cities of Cotabatao and Isabela; and 4) all other contiguous areas where there is resolution of the local government unit or a petition of at least 10 percent of the registered voters in the area asking for their inclusion at least two months prior to the conduct of the ratification of the Basic Law and the process of delimitation of the Bangsamoro.

The measure also retains the central government's power and control over defense and external issue. The central government shall create a Bangsamoro Military Command of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the Bangsamoro, which shall be organized, maintained, and utilized in accordance with national laws.

A Bangsamoro Police, under the Philippine National Police, shall also be created for law enforcement and maintenance of peace and order in the Bangsamoro. **(PNA)**

www.pna.gov.ph

BCDA contributes P8-B to AFP in first 2 years of Duterte admin

By Priam Nepomuceno April 17, 2018, 11:59 am

MANILA -- The Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) has contributed PHP8 billion to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) in the first two years of the Duterte administration.

The amount is 20 percent of the PHP40 billion received by the military since the BCDA's creation in 1992, according to BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Vivencio Dizon.

"That is very, very significant. Two out of the 25 years of the BCDA, and under the term of President Rodrigo Duterte, 20 percent of the total PHP40 billion. We want that trend to keep on going," Dizon said in a statement Monday.

Duterte has earlier assured soldiers that modernization of the AFP will be his administration's focus.

"BCDA is here, it exists to help strengthen our Armed Forces while we build great cities. That's what really BCDA is all about," Dizon added. **(PNA)**

Sculpture honoring troops heroism unveiled in BGC

By Priam Nepomuceno April 17, 2018, 11:56 am



THE HEART OF A HERO. A sculpture depicting a soldier reading a letter from his family recognizes the heroism and sacrifices made by Filipino troops in defending the country from various threats. The sculpture named 'Alab ng Puso' was unveiled at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig on Monday (April 16, 2018). (Photo by Priam F. Nepomuceno)

MANILA -- In recognition of the heroism and sacrifices made by Filipino soldiers in defending the nation, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) and the Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation (FBDC) formally unveiled their "Alab ng Puso" (Fire in the Heart) sculpture at the Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City Monday.

This includes the recently-concluded conflict in Marawi City where hundreds of soldiers were killed and wounded to liberate the locality from the hands of the Maute Group terrorists.

"Alab ng Puso", sculpted by artist Daniel Dela Cruz, depicts a soldier reading a letter from his family and ignoring the war for a moment. Behind the soldier is metal plaque containing the lyrics of the country's national anthem, "Lupang Hinirang" in which the name of the sculpture was taken from.

On the steps are several words that mean "love", "sacrifice", "freedom", "peace", and "hope" in Filipino and other Philippine dialects.

The sculpture represents the humane side of every Filipino soldier wherein despite treating the battlefield as their second home, these brave and patriotic men and women go back to being an ordinary individual that misses their families back home. And weighing out what matters the most, whether family or country, becomes their biggest struggle every single day.

"Nakikita natin usually ang mga sundalo na makisig, dala ang kanilang armas, nakikipaglaban. May isang malaking pagkakaiba, sa atin dito na hindi sundalo (We usually see handsome soldiers fighting with arms. There is a big difference from us who are not soldiers). Sila (Them), apart from being ordinary citizens like us—a brother, a mother, a husband, a wife, a sister—they are at any point in

their lives ready to die for the rest of us. And that I think is the big difference," BCDA president and chief executive officer Vivencio Dizon said.

Philippine Army (PA) vice commander Major Gen. Roberto Arevalo, who represented Lt. Gen. Rolando Joselito Bautista, expressed his gratitude to the BCDA for recognizing and memorializing the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) at the booming economic center of the country.

"It is indeed an honor for the AFP to be recognized and memorialized here at the art of booming economic center in the country today, which if you can still remember was once a military reservation, a military camp named Fort Andres Bonifacio and now popularly known as Bonifacio Global City," Arevalo added in behalf of the Army chief.

Arevalo also stressed that the military is humbled by the humane portrayal of the Filipino soldier.

"We are deeply moved by your collective initiative and sincere recognition of the services rendered to our men and women in uniform. Ladies and gentlemen, as we stand here today, our soldiers are continuously fighting in the different battlefronts nationwide, not only in Marawi City. It is a fight against terror," the PA vice commander added.

"It is a fight for peace, it is a fight for our troops that are willing to take so that every Filipino who believes that we, as a race, no matter how diverse our ethnic backgrounds, no matter how diverse our cultures may be, no matter how different the ways we praise the Supreme Being, should live harmoniously, should live with respect, and should live under one flag in a country that we secure peacefully," he stressed.

While AFP vice chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Salvador Melchor Mison, Jr., who represented and delivered the message of President Rodrigo Duterte, lauded Dela Cruz's work and expressed his gratitude.

"The extraordinary work of Daniel Dela Cruz captures the truest sense of every soldier who has served and who continues to serve our flag and country. We regard this as a tribute to every soldier's dedication to duty, driven by the desire to secure a life of peace, a future of promise for a family, for community, for country. As Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, and on their behalf, express our deepest gratitude to the prodigious Daniel Dela Cruz, for the work that you have created. A work that captures the spirit of the Filipino soldiers. A piece that celebrates service and sacrifice of the men and women in uniform," Mison said. **(With reports from Ericka Cirera, OJT/PNA)**