



Sobejana recalls battle with ASG that earned him Medal of Valor

MANILA – Outnumbered, but not outfought. This was the life-and-death situation then Philippine Army commander and now Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Cirilito E. Sobejana faced when he led a 16-man Scout Ranger team, including two members of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) during a five-hour close-quarter gun battle with some 120 Abu Sayyaf members in the hinterland of Matarling, Basilan on that fateful Friday the 13th of January 1995, killing 42 terrorists.

Forty-two terrorists, five Scout Rangers, and the two CAFGUs were killed during the firefight that uncovered for the first time the existence of the clandestine terrorist group hiding in Basilan since 1989.

In an exclusive interview with this writer on Wednesday, Sobejana said the encounter with the Abu Sayyaf led by Abudarjak Janjalani was completely by chance when a trembling 9-year-old boy went to his unit in Maluso, Basilan to report the presence of over 100 armed men unloading supplies two kilometers away.

Sobejana, who was resting was jolted from his hammock and immediately

talked to the boy, who related what he saw.

The location of the Abu Sayyaf was at Sitio Sweet Jackal.

Without wasting time, Sobejana told his men to move quickly towards the area where the gunmen were spotted by the boy, who was tending a carabao of his father at that time.

The boy said he hid behind tall grasses to avoid being seen by the armed men.

Before going to the area, Sobejana made a plan and told his men to prepare for a surprise attack, and quickly withdrew after inflicting heavy casualties.

He radioed the Army's



Newly-appointed Armed Forces of the Philippines

101st Infantry Brigade to ask permission to mount an attack. His request was granted as the brigade also positioned two to three tubes of 105mm howitzers ready to fire if needed.

When the Scout Rangers arrived in Sitio Sweet Jackal, they saw the heavily armed men as narrated by the boy.

Occupying a strategic position, Sobejana ordered his men to fire simultaneously, catching the Abu Sayyaf by surprise. It was close-quarter fighting with only two coconut trees dividing between the two forces.

At the start of the firefight, five Rangers were killed, leaving only nine of the soldiers standing their ground.

“At the height of the battle, I was slightly hit in the face. I glanced at my watch it was 2:30 p.m. My men and I continued fighting and fir-

ing at the enemy. I was again hit. This time, it was my right arm. The bullet from an M14 assault rifle shattered the bones. It was hit so badly, only the skin prevented it from falling off,” Sobejana recalled. “I stretched my left hand to hold and save my right hand. The pain was excruciating. As I did this, I could hear bullets buzzing just a few inches from where I was lying down. Mortar shells and rockets fell all over.”

Using his left hand, Sobejana applied a tourniquet to stop the bleeding.

“I saw one of my men hit in the abdomen. His intestines came out and we bandaged him,” he added.

As the fighting raged, his machine gunner armed with M60 was wounded, but only slightly.

However, the soldier handling the more powerful (SEE page 7)

DOST to continue assisting startups, OFWs to help rebuild economy

MANILA – Through its existing programs, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) will continue to assist startups, including overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), as part of the government's efforts to rebuild the economy, Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said Friday.

“Startups are important as they will generate employment. We have programs to assist the MSMEs (micro, small, medium enterprises), communities, especially the marginalized, even for LGUs (local governments) planning for development in their provinces,” he said in a virtual presser.

Research and Development Institutions, centers and other platforms are also there to assist the startups, he added.

The DOST has the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program

(SETUP), which helps improve the MSMEs' productivity and competitiveness by providing them a loan that is payable in three years. The program aims to encourage them to adopt technological innovations to improve their products and operations.

“We target to assist 781 companies this year,” de la Peña. He told the Philippine News Agency that 781 is a combined figure of startups that will be assisted through SETUP and SETUP 4.0.

SETUP 4.0 which will (SEE page 7)

Ang buwan ng Pebrero ay Philippine Heart Month! Be happy healthy, Ka-heartner! KonsulTayo sa ating mga Primary Care Providers

Chikiting Ligtas Libreng Bakuna kontra Rubella, Tigdas at Polio para sa mga batang edad 0-59 months mula PEBRERO 1 - 28, 2021 Makipag ugnayan lamang sa pinaka malapit na health center sa inyong barangay

SIGA KA BA?

Ni: BRENT MENDOZA



HILING NG KARAMIHAN, MANATILI PANG PANGULO NG ATING BANSA SI PANGULONG DUTERTE

Ang bilis ng panahon, parang kailan lang ay naging malaking balita ang pagka-panalo ng mahal nating Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte. Last 2016 Elections, nilampaso niya ang lahat ng mga kalaban sa botohan. At hanggang ngayon nga ay mahigit isang taon na lang at tapos na ang termino ni Pangulong Duterte. At kailangang magkaroon ng halalan muli. Ito ang Halalan 2022. Pero ano po ito? Hiling ng maraming tao na dapat daw ay manatili pa sa serbisyo bilang pangulo ng ating bansa si Pangulong Duterte dahil sa maganda niyang serbisyo sa taumbayan. Pero may batas po tayong dapat sundin. Kailangan pong magkaroon ng halalan sa 2022. Kaya't kung sinuman ang nanaisin ng Pangulong Duterte na suportahan upang maipagpatuloy ang lahat ng kaniyang nasimulang mga proyekto ay dapat nating suportahan. Sigurado namang hindi magtataas ng kamay ang pangulo kung hindi niya ito subok na tao.

Sa totoo lang naman po ay napakaganda na ng ating bansa. Patungo tayong lahat sa maunlad na bansa. Huwag lamang tayo mapasukan ng mga demonyong mapagkunwaring maka-tao at maka-Diyos, 'yun pala ay tauhan ni Satanas. Sana naman po, tayong lahat ay gising na sa katotohanan. Dapat nakita na ninyo o nating lahat na ang

dapat na susunod na pangulo ng ating bansa ay tunay na magbibigay-serbisyo at hindi magpapahirap sa taumbayan. Isipin po nating lahat na mula nang maupo bilang pangulo ng bansa si Ex-President Cory Aquino ay patuloy na bumagsak ang ekonomiya ng ating bansa. Ngayon lamang ito tunay na bumangon. Mula nang manungkulan bilang

pangulo ng bansa si Pangulong Duterte, lahat ay kaniyang binago. Maling pamamalakad sa gobyerno ay kaniyang tinuldukan. Lahat ng mga mapagsamantala ay kaniyang tinanggal. Nagtayo ng maraming mga tulay upang ang traffic ay maibsan. Mayroon na ring ipinagagawang subway, ang Metro Manila Subway. Kung hindi lang po talaga mapapalitan ang Pangulong Duterte, darating ang panahon na sobrang asensado na lahat ang mga Pilipino. Kaya huwag po kayo magpagamit sa mga taong mapagkunwari.

Lagi po nating tatandaan sa ating buhay na masarap mamuhay sa isang lugar kung ang namumuno ay matalino, may takot sa Diyos, maka-tao, at higit sa lahat ay nagtatrabaho para sa serbisyong bayan. Mahigit isang taon na lang at tapos na ang termino ng ating mahal na Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte. Kaya't dapat maging wise tayo sa pagboto ng magiging susunod na pangulo ng bansa. Sa sunod na taon na ang halalan. Mag-isip nang mabuti upang hindi tayo magsisi sa huli.



DOST to continue...

be implemented this year, is an enhanced version of SETUP to align the program with the industry 4.0. Through this, MSMEs could receive innovation enabling fund amounting to as much as PHP5 million which they could pay in three to five years, assistance in procuring the necessary equipment, and training.

Data from the DOST bared that more than 12,000 firms and entities were provided with assistance in 2020. For a total funding of PHP652.381 million, the DOST was able to assist 624 projects, it added.

Startups are encouraged to undergo incubation. There are 48 technology business incubators (TBIs) or hubs across the country. These were funded by the DOST, and were provided with equipment for manufacturing technology, information and communications technology, among others.

There are also TBIs that cater to feed production, animal breed upgrading;

food/meat/milk processing; vacuum packaging/labeling and wood processing.

De la Peña said he eyes the establishment of 12 more TBIs this year.

The DOST chief said other companies are encouraged to partner with institutions for research and development (R&D) via the DOST's Collaborative Research and Development to Leverage Philippine Economy (CRADLE) program.

Through CRADLE, the DOST will provide funding for approved R&D proposals from higher education institutions (HEIs), R&D institutions and their partner industries. The partner industry will identify a problem, while the partner HEI or RDI will do the necessary R&D to find solutions. The DOST will provide funding assistance of up to PHP5 million per approved project, but it also requires the industry partner to shoulder at least 20 percent of the total project cost.

In 2020, the DOST has approved 38 CRADLE projects for a total budget allocation of PHP178 million.

In terms of helping OFWs who would like to put up a business in their provinces, de la Peña said the DOST's Innovation for Filipinos Working Distantly from the Philippines (iFWD PH) had a positive response.

Launched last year, the iFWD PH aims to provide returning OFWs with a no-interest loan, as well as training.

There were 119 who have enrolled for the iFWD PH, and 59 of them have already completed Phase 1 of the program, and are about to start Phase 2 or material-

izing their business, he said.

Businesses may also reach out to the various R&D institutions and centers of the DOST, according to de la Peña.

Among these include the Electronics Product Development Center, which houses hardware and software tools for companies and schools to use for the design, development and testing of electronics products.


The DOST recently inaugurated the Advanced Manufacturing Center that showcases 3D printing, promoting R&D in additive manufacturing. (PNA)



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KUTOB NG KAPALARAN

AQUARIUS: (Ene. 20-Peb. 18) Huwag mag-invest sakahitanongsugaldahilaloka. Pasayahinangsarilisamga singing contest, magagawamonaanghiligmo, may tsansaka pangmanalo. Kung hindinamanmahalagaanglakad, manatilinalangsalooobngbahay. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 46, 23, 38, 51, 45 at mustard yellow.

PISCES: (Peb. 19-Mar. 20) Masidhingayonangiyongpangangailangan, itoangmalakasnapwer-sang mag-uudyoksaiyongmgapagsisikap. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 22, 36, 49, 15, 43 at magenta red.

ARIES: (Mar. 21-Abr. 19) Masaya angarawdahilmararanasanmoang serendipity. Matatamoangsolusyonsaproblema. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 23, 36, 41, 12, 55 at mocha brown.

TAURUS: (Abr. 20-May. 20) Mag-ingat, iwanangmadilimnalugarkapaggumamitng ATM. Sundinang health protocol. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 33, 26, 48, 55, 11 at carrot orange.

GEMINI: (May. 21-Hun. 21) Kahitmasalimuotangaraw, hanapinang interesting activities. Ngayonmapapangitingisang biro. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 56, 27, 22, 31, 43 at tulip pink.

CANCER: (Hun. 22-Hul. 22) Wagiangiyong product sa market, increasing ang income dahilsalumalagongnegosyo. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 55, 41, 35, 22, 11 at dollar green.

LEO: (Hul. 23-Ago. 22) Iwasanangmapanirangtsismis. Ikawangunangmakakaranassaepektong meditation saiyongbuhay. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 23, 35, 49, 51, 15 at cloud white.

VIRGO: (Ago. 23-Set.23) Magiging powerful ang mind at word power, dahilsa meditation. Angmganasaisip ay mangyayari. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 53, 29, 13, 35, 11 at cherry red.

LIBRA: (Set. 24-Okt. 23) Tanggapmongayonanglimpak-limpaknahalaga, nabungangmgapagsisikap. Pagtuunan din angbuhayispiritual. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 55, 47, 44, 38, 25 at cyan blue.

SCORPIO: (Okt. 24-Nob. 22) Dahilsaisang biro, magkakupikunan kayo ngbarkada. Dumistansiyamuna at pakalmahinangsarili. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 33, 56, 49, 12, 21 at mango orange.

SAGITTARIUS: (Nob. 23-Dis. 21) Huwagmagsalitanghindimagandasakapwadahilmaakitmoang negative events. Appreciate the good in you. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 43, 59, 25, 13, 11 at satin white.

CAPRICORN: (Dis. 22-Ene. 19) Angsalapi ay symbol ng wealth. Nasaabilidadmoangsusinyamannamagpapasaya at aakitngmagandangkita. Lucky numbers at color for the day ang 53, 37, 49, 13, 22 at lilac violet

Banana yield forecasting app likely to be launched in 2021

MANILA – An application (app) that can compute the estimated harvest date and yield of bananas is likely to be launched within the year, Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD) executive director Reynaldo Eborra said Tuesday.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency, Eborra said the development of the app is under the Smarter Approaches to Reinvigorate Agriculture as an Industry in the Philippines (SARAI) program led by the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and funded by the PCAARRD.

"The cost of developing the mobile app itself is PHP50,000 since it just took one week for the programmer to develop the app. The estimated cost of banana research and development to come up with reliable data used in the development of the app is about PHP1 million," he said.

Target users of this app are the agricultural technicians, farm owners, and traders for them to seek buyers and have an estimate of supply by the bunch, Eborra added.

To use the app, the user will need to input the location of the crop. He or she must also indicate the variety (lakatan or saba).

The next step is to choose the status of the crop based on the photos that will be shown on the app. The photos of

selected and monitored sample plants in the app were taken during the SARAI phenological studies on lakatan and saba varieties.

"Result will be the estimated harvest date. Estimated yield can also be computed based on the number of bunches," said Eborra.

He noted that the app is still for field validation and copyright application before releasing to the users.

Meanwhile, Eborra said the SARAI program aims to develop and implement science-based cropping system technologies, long-term strategies geared to maximize crop yield. It also aims to minimize the adverse environmental and climate impacts on the following crops: rice, corn, coconut, banana, coffee, cacao, sugarcane, soybean, and tomato.

"It is our response to the pressing challenges brought about by climate change, specifically to the agriculture sector. The program is anchored on precision agriculture by optimizing the use of crop simulation modeling, remote sensing and geographic information systems and field sensors to develop decision support models for crop forecasting, crop advisories," Eborra said.

Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Fortunato de la Peña earlier said that crop forecasting is significant to the global food supply. "To improve national food security, policymakers rely on specific forecasts to take timely import and export decisions, he said.

Sobejana recalls.....

90mm Recoilless Rifle (RR) was fatally hit.

Worse, the 90RR flew overhead and landed on the Abu Sayyaf side.

"The terrorists tried to retrieve the weapon, but we fired at them. But when the Rangers also tried to retrieve it, the Abu Sayyaf opened fire at us, and vice versa for several times," he said.

After hours of fighting, Sobejana and his men were running low in ammunition. They fired only when necessary.

Sobejana fired using his left arm.

During the fighting, Sobejana put his trust in God to spare them from being killed as he was determined to fight to his last breath as a pledge he made as a soldier to defend freedom and democracy.

His prayers were answered, though he was seriously wounded.

Reinforcement from the Philippine Army's 1st Armour Battalion under Col. Resty Aguila arrived and brought them to their headquarters before Sobejana and eight of the Scout Rangers were airlifted to the Southern Command in Zamboanga City for treatment.

For his exceptional bravery, Sobejana was

awarded the Medal of Valor, the highest award by the AFP for gallantry in combat.

Then-President Fidel V. Ramos handed the medal to Sobejana during the 98th AFP anniversary held in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City on Dec. 21, 1996.

Left-handed salute Not many people are aware of it but Sobejana is the only person who does the left-handed salute in the military.

After the 1995 encounter in Basilan, his right hand lost its motor capabilities. He underwent nine surgical procedures in the United States for two years.

Sobejana requested the doctor not to amputate his right arm because he wanted to continue in serving the country.

"We will continue to fight insurgency to win peace for the country. I had several gunshot wounds, and I turned those wounds into wisdom rather than anger," he said.

Last week, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte appointed Sobejana as the 55th AFP chief, replacing Gen. Gilbert Gapay, who mandatorily retired from the service on Feb. 4. (with Priam Nepomuceno/PNA)

Gov't infra program to boost manufacturing sector

MANILA – The government's 2021 infrastructure program is expected to partly boost Philippines' manufacturing sector this year and help address the contraction in domestic growth and economic activities because of the pandemic.

In a report, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) chief economist Michael Ricafort said the infrastructure program, aimed to be around PHP1 trillion annually from 2016-2022, is expected to support the expansion to 52.5 of the Markit Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index (PMI).

Citing government data, he said the rise in the PMI last December is "a pleasant surprise" and is the

highest in more than two years or since December 2018.

He said this development transpired even amid the movement restrictions to address the rise of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections.

"(This is) a leading indicator that could suggest further pick-up in business/economic activities even after the Christmas season in December 2020," he added.

The uptick in the PMI last December is better than the 49.2 last November.

An index below 50 indicates contraction while figures 50 and above shows growth.

"For the coming months of 2021, increased infrastructure spending, as

part of the priorities of the economic recovery program, would benefit contractors and manufacturing industries that are part of the supply chain/value chain," Ricafort said

The government's infrastructure spending is also expected to boost economic activities, especially in rural areas, "given (the) high multiplier effects on real estate/property and in many other related/allied industries," he said.

Its impact is likewise seen to boost the other expected growth drivers this year that include the continued re-opening of the domestic economy, eventual availability of Covid-19 vaccines, and the impact of monetary easing last year. (PNA)



Bilang pasasalamat sa naging pagtulong at pagkukop ng bayan ng Silang sa mga Batangueño na naapektuhan ng pagputok ng Bulkan Taal, binisita ni Municipality Mayor Joan Amo si Mayor Corie Poblete upang magbigay ng Plaque of Appreciation.

"This token goes out to all our fellow Silanguenos who have selflessly extended help to our Batangueño brothers during the relief operations of Taal Eruption early last year," saad ni Mayor Poblete sa naging post niya sa Facebook.

Kasama sa bumisita ay sina Vice Mayor Rachelle Ogalinola, Municipal Councilor Shiela Marcelino, Sk President Iris Agojo of Municipality of Laurel Batangas.

?? Mayor Corie Poblete

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In God We Trust

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PARLADE CONTINUES RED-BAITING CLAIMS, ALLEGES EXISTENCE OF CPP FUND SCAM

The high-ranking military official in hot water for red-baiting a journalist ap-

peared to be unfazed by the persistent criticism. This time, he alleged that progressive organizations have Belgian backers helping them to recruit children to the armed struggle.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier admitted Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade Jr. may have "overstepped" with his comments about Inquirer.net reporter Tetch Torres-Tupas. The defense chief said he has directed the AFP leadership to talk to Parlade so that a similar incident may be prevented in the future.

Parlade, chief of the Southern Luzon Command who also serves as spokesperson of the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), called Torres-Tupas a "propagandist" over an article she wrote on two Aetas seeking to join petitions against the anti-terrorism law. The report contained the Aetas' narration they were tortured by the military and falsely charged of terrorism.

This legal document



PROGRAMANG LGU ENBIS, ITATAGUYOD SA CARMONA

Opisyal na nilagdaan ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Carmona at GSYNC Solutions Philippines ang memorandum of agreement na magtataguyod ng LGU Enterprise Business Intelligence System o ENBIS.

Ang naturang programa ng pamahalaang bayan ay layon na matulungang umunlad pa ang komunidad sa bayan ng Carmona.

Source: Municipality of Carmona, Cavite

Miss Flawless

FLAWLESS FRESH FRAGRANCE

Perfume

"FLAWLESS sa BANGO. Bangang SOSYAL. Masang PRESYO"

Ms. ANGELICA JONES ALARVA
Actress/Public Servant

