

**AFP CELEBRATES 73<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY;  
TRADITION OF BRAVERY AND HEROISM TIMELESS- GEN YANO**

CAMP AGUINALDO – “Rest assured that every Filipino in every nook and cranny of our country where an enemy of Peace and Freedom may still lurk, there is a soldier who, born in the tradition of bravery and heroism, will stand up to the enemy and emerge triumphant for the sake of the Nation he loves.”

This was stressed by no less than Gen. Alexander B Yano, the Chief of the Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, during the celebration of the AFP’s 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary here with Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the guest of honor.

With the theme “Team AFP: All out for Peace, Freedom and Development,” the celebration is focused on reliving the spirit of the forerunner of the proud Filipino soldiers. He is the brave warrior-patriot of Mactan who established the tradition of bravery and heroism that became the hallmark and tradition of his descendants.

The Chief of Staff cited the present generation of the men and women of the Armed Forces as the heir of the benevolent spirit of a warrior, who always stands up against different faces of terror.

He also commended the gallantry of the outstanding soldiers who emerged heroes in their respective duties and accomplishments, including boxing sensation Msgt. Manny Pacquiao. He also paid tribute to the heroism of officers and men who sacrificed their lives while faithfully performing their duties, including Lt. Col Angelo Benitez and his men from the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Brigade.

“That same spirit for heroic sacrifice drives our battle casualties to remain committed to our cause of peace and freedom; as do the families of our troops and personnel who perished in defense of our democratic way of life,” he added.

As the AFP marks its 73<sup>rd</sup> year, the tradition of bravery and heroism remain on the priceless capability of the AFP as peacekeepers of the nation. The military has successfully seized the threats of terror brought by the lawless elements and degraded several guerrilla fronts, from 87 to 63.

Most importantly, Gen. Yano reiterated the loyalty of every professional Filipino soldier to the nation, being able to face his most challenging enemy called politics and political ambition. "I am proud to say that this enemy within the AFP has already been slain," the Chief of Staff proudly told the President.

"The Filipino Soldier understands his sacred duties and knows that intervening in political processes and conflicts while still in active service in the AFP is not one of them," "To these unscrupulous merchants of political wares, I say, leave the AFP alone," he dared.

He also noted the AFP's active role in nation-building by assisting the government in its development projects in the countryside and by forging several partnerships with different civic organizations.

Meanwhile, several significant activities were organized prior to the grand celebration. These include blood letting activity and CSAFP hospital visitation. With the leadership of the CSAFP, the military formally tied up with different business organizations including the Management Association of the Philippines and Makati Business Club during the AFP-Business Year-end meeting last week.

"Our commitment is to never tire in the performance of our mission, nor to ever deviate from our focus. We will work together – soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines – as one, solid and united Team AFP that is professional, responsive, forward-looking and a constant source of our Nation's pride," Gen. Yano pledged.