

June 30, 2008

Troops discover arms cache in Occidental Mindoro

Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro – A New People's Army arms cache was found at the tri-boundary of Barangays Talabaan, Fatima, and Balansay all of Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro by members of the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division under Lt Col Arnulfo Marcelo B Burgos Jr at about 8 a.m. on June 12.

Troops found 16 assorted high-powered firearms which include 10 M16 Armalite rifles; two M14 Sniper rifles; a Carbine Sniper rifle; an M653 Assault rifle; a Garand rifle, a shotgun, assorted ammunition, a round of 60mm Mortar, a hand grenade, medical kits and subversive documents of high intelligence value.

Earlier, a certain Andring Layco alias Wado, a former NPA rebel belonging to Platoon 3, Komiteng Larangan Gerilya (KLG) 2, Islacom Mindoro voluntarily surrendered to the members of Alpha Company, 80th IB under 1Lt Ronaldo R Riva along with a 5.56 M16 Armalite rifle on May 29.

During the custodial debriefing, Wado revealed that his commander, on lie low status and staying in Isabela Province, also intended to return to the folds of the law.

On June 3, Lt Col Burgos organized a negotiating team headed by 2Lt Emil T Delos Reyes. The team proceeded to Isabela Province and negotiated for the surrender of the said commander. Finally on June 5, Noel De La Cruz alias Russel, Platoon Leader of Platoon 3, KLG 2 of Islacom Mindoro surrendered. During the custodial debriefing, Wado and Russel collaborated and revealed that they buried their platoon's firearms and war materiel in a remote hill.

According to Lt Col Burgos, "The discovery of the arms cache and the fall of one of its leaders to the hands of the government troops can be attributed to the relentless joint combat, civil-military and intelligence operations of the unit along with the collaborative efforts of the local government units (LGUs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the province."

“The 80th IB continues to implement the Philippine Army’s **‘long arms policy’** by reaching out even to the remotest villages where the government’s presence is very much needed; the **‘open arms policy’** to those who want to return to the folds of the law; and the **‘arms of steel policy’** for those who continue to wield arms against the government in spite of the latter’s amnesty program and sincerity to pursue a genuine and lasting peace in the country,” Lt Col Burgos added.

“The collapse of Platun 3, KLG 2, Islacom Mindoro operating in Mamburao, Paluan, Sta Cruz and Abra de Ilog (MAPSA) area is an indication that the insurgency problem in the Province of Occidental Mindoro is nearing its end,” Lt Col Burgos said.