

insight 15

## more articles...

▶ [The propriety of Courtesy Calls](#)

▶ [Samar Island: Still in agony](#)

▶ [An open letter to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo](#)

▶ [Assumption speech of MajGen Jovito S. Palparan Jr.](#)

▶ [What was Samar doing when MacArthur waded ashore 60 years ago?](#)

▶ [The time to return the bells is now](#)

▶ [Delusions of Communism](#)

▶ [The Poverty of Filipinos](#)

▶ [Pride, Sadness and Hopes of a Samaron in California](#)

▶ [Counting the Cost of Corruption in the Philippines](#)

## AWARE-Samar accusations of rape and sexual abuse of Military Operatives in Paranas are unfounded and baseless

By 1Lt ROSA MA. CRISTINA T. ROSETE (FA) PA

Commanding Officer, Kamurayaw Company, 8ID, PA Detachment, Zone 1 Paranas, Samar

September 3, 2005

***"We do not tolerate our men in committing such sexually malicious acts on women and children."***

The presence of military troops in the municipality of Paranas for five months now has contributed much in its peace and order situation. If indeed there have been cases of rape and sexual abuses on women and children perpetrated by our personnel ([link](#)), then, we should have been bragged with complains by no less than Mayor Elvira Babalcon since the main detachment of troops deployed in the interior barangays of Paranas is at the poblacion proper.

The municipal and barangay officials are in close contact and have been working hand in hand with the military troops in various developmental efforts in the area and they have been informed during their MPOC meetings and Peoples' Day that any misdoings from our personnel will be reported at once at the main detachment for appropriate action. However, up to date, there have been no complaints filed on such allegations at Paranas Police Station or even hearsays from the local folks that have reached our detachment. Said issue if indeed true will immediately be the "talk of the town" as it is scandalous.

It is clear that statements of AWARE-Samar are just to discredit the men in uniform as their allegations are unfounded and baseless.

We do not tolerate our men in committing such sexually malicious acts on women and children. Much of the troops' developmental efforts in Paranas area were even focused on women, youth and children affected and victimized by the CPP/NPA/NDF deceptive agenda. We challenge therefore AWARE-Samar and including the Paranasnons who are aware on the issue to allow the victims to formally file charges against our erring personnel, rest assured it will be acted upon if it was committed.

**Lukban and His Camp**



By CHITO DELA TORRE

September 1, 2005

***"But perhaps Basaynons and Catbaloganons should proclaim him, first, as an "adopted son" by way of a resolution of the Sangguniang Bayan of each of their towns..."***

Did you know that Vicente Lukban, for whom Camp Lukban was named, was not a Samaron? He was a native of Labo town in Camarines Sur where he first saw the light on February 11, 1860. However, he married Pacencia Gonzalez, a Samareña. After over 3 years of a colorful military career marked by battles against Spaniards and American soldiers, while he was under command of General Emilio Aguinaldo, he joined the rank of businessmen in Tayabas and there won as governor. In 1916 he died.

Hardly however does every Samaron, particularly Catbaloganons and Basaynons know this man for whose "commitment to Philippine Independence" the present military camp, now serving as headquarters of the Philippine Army's 8th Infantry Division (known also by its signal name, "Storm Troopers" - following the "Desert Storm" legend before the end of the first millennium, was named. Even the 8ID does not possess an official document showing why Camp Lukban was so named. There are also no accounts about his being considered as an "adopted son of Catbalogan". There are not here even records linking "Lukban" to "Lucban", another known family name, and to "Lucban" the street.

But perhaps Basaynons and Catbaloganons should proclaim him, first, as an "adopted son" by way of a resolution of the sangguniang bayan of each of their towns, next, as a hero by way of a resolution from the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Samar or if this is not possible at the local level then perhaps the SP could urge Congress through Samar's Representative Reynaldo S. Uy of the First District and Representative Catalino V. Figueroa of the Second District, then, put up a giant statue for him right on the site which history could claim of his most valuable contribution to the fight for Philippine Independence.

The 8ID could not possibly initiate this move. It was a late comer and late occupant. It has been here only 17 years ago. Lukban, the camp, was there a long, long time ago.

Vicente Lukban became a general in the army of Gen. Aguinaldo. In 1899, he was assigned to Leyte and Samar. He established a hideout at the rocky cliffs of the Sohoton Caves in Basey - which later became known among the Basaynons as the "Panhulogan Caves", noting the place by the legendary Golden River as where Lukban's soldiers dropped big rocks to ward off or drown American soldiers who were sent out to get him. That was to be Lukban's last line of defense against the American, until November 1901. He survived, just as he did in August, 1901 in an attack elsewhere in Samar that resulted in the capture of his beloved Samareña wife. He suffered wounds but managed to escape. It was in February, 1902 that the American soldiers captured him successfully.

Gen. Lukban was imprisoned thrice. First, in 1894, the very same year that he became a freemason, a member of Andres Bonifacio's KKK (or the Katipunan). Spanish soldiers tortured him, until he was released in 1897, eight months after Dr. Jose P. Rizal was shot to death at Bagumbayan. Next, in February, 1902, for a few weeks, though. Finally, just for being suspected that he had again involved himself in "further insurrection attempts", he was hailed back to the karsel, but only briefly.

During his leadership in Samar, the guerillas, including the Pulahanes, in the whole island enjoyed a centralized authority. More and more Samareño and Samareña guerillas joined the expanding groups of Pulahanes whose mettle and genuine fight for nationalism was found out during the command of the American forces in the Philippines by General Arthur MacArthur (a hero of the American Civil War who was later military governor of the Philippines, and father of Gen. Douglas MacArthur who figured in history as the Liberator of the Philippines when he saved Leyte and the Philippines from the vicious and tyrannical hands of the Japanese Imperial Army). With their general in command, the Pulahanes fought savagely against the Americans. Since his fall, the local resistance groups weakened.

Vicente Lukban has been considered by the "Storm Trooper" magazine of 8ID as a "revolutionary general serving the government under General Emilio Aguinaldo. That magazine said of him: "He studied at the prestigious Ateneo Municipal de Manila and law at San Juan de Letran, and then worked in the Court of First Instance in Quiapo, Manila, before becoming Justice of the Peace in Labo."

The magazine continued to say of him when he was in the revolutionary Katipunan society, Lukban "established lodges (of the freemason) in the region" and "set up cooperatives for small and medium scale farmers who not only helped them economically but also helped raise funds for the revolt against Spain."

Of his imprisonment in 1894, the "Storm Trooper" said: "Days of imprisonment in a flooded cell left him with a permanent limp. He denied his involvement in the revolutionary movement but, unlike Luna who hardly stopped talking - Lukban refused to expose his fellow revolutionaries."

The magazine said further: "August 1897 saw his release from prison and he formally joined Aguinaldo and participated in several battles against the Spanish (soldiers). After the Pact of Biak na Bato towards the end of that year, he went into exile with Aguinaldo in Hongkong and became part of the revolutionary junta.

"There, according to some sources, he studied military science under Commander Joseph Churchase.

"In 1898, he returned to the Philippines and fought very successfully against the Spanish. Painted in contemporary American accounts, Lukban is described as little more than a wily oriental bandit with a touch of a sneaky Chinese blood in him, a useful addition to the weaponry of propaganda warfare after the Boxer Revolt. General Vicente Lukban was probably the most competent and imaginative general in Aguinaldo's team.

"He certainly outshone the erratic Antonio Luna and managed to impose discipline on his forces that Luna failed to achieve, and which, indeed, cost the latter his life."

The magazine also said about his being a hero: "Indeed, one of the few who did not surrender. His name is rarely connected with the 'Bayani', the Filipino heroes, most of whom would hardly rate a mention in any objective hall of heroes, possibly because his major actions were against the US, rather than the Spanish and he was strange that he was assigned to what at first appears to be mere backwater, Leyte and Samar, in early 1899. Yet as the war of independence faltered in Luzon, it became clear that Samar, at least the Visayas, could be the kernel of a continuing guerilla warfare, which could last for years. "These islands had an international trade in abaca, through British trading houses like Smith, Bell, which could provide income to keep the fight going and provide a channel for the influx of arms and ammunition.....

"General Arthur MacArthur offered \$5,000 for Lukban's head, and nobody tried to collect. He was offered the position of governor of Samar under the American regime, with autonomy, if he would surrender, but he refused to accept the offer."

Some twists in oral tales had portrayed the general from Labo as a killer of priests and the doctor of Balangiga massacre in September, 1901. These were not the case. As for the massacre, the "Storm Trooper" said: "Although bearing command responsibility for the Balangiga incident, he only learned about it a week later, on October 6, 1901. Other than a letter to town mayors encouraging them to follow the Balangiga example on the same date, there are no published records of his reaction to the news or later comment from him."

The magazine said: "There were many myths about him - that he'd had every priest on Samar killed and replaced with his own men, for instance, or the tale that his men had wrapped an American sympathizer's head in the stars and stripes and set fire to it. These stories are nonsense, but he may even have encouraged them, he knew the value of propaganda."

## Women in Samar seek redress to Col. Palparan's crimes against humanity

A Press Statement by the Advocates for Women's Action, Rights and Empowerment – Samar (AWARE-Samar)

August 29, 2005



***"AWARE-Samar believes that militarization is a patriarchal mode of conquest of a fascist orientation to subdue the most vulnerable sectors of society – the peasantry, the women and children."***

The Advocates for Women's Action, Rights and Empowerment – Samar (AWARE-Samar) stands in solidarity with all the survivors and victims of human rights violations perpetrated by the military establishment under the command of Col. Jovito Palparan, Jr. We mourn for the lives lost and seek redress for the victims-survivors. Justice ought to be served to the more than 4,127 individuals, more than 2000 families and 100 communities affected and/or displaced in the course of the military's Reign of Terror in Samar.

While we recognize the relief and transfer of Col. Palparan from the post as Regional Commander of the 8thIDPA, as a gain to our advocacies for justice and peace in Samar, we firmly believe that this is not enough. Palparan should be punished for his crimes against humanity, along with his Commander in Chief, Gloria Macapagal – Arroyo.

Most affected by militarization are the women and children who are amongst the evacuees or those bereaved of a love one. In the course of AWARE-Samar's participation in the documentation of human rights violation cases in Samar since Palparan's deployment, the group learned that there were cases of rape and sexual abuse that were perpetrated by military operatives in some barangays in Paranas. Although the victims did not come out in the open, we seek justice in their behalf. AWARE-Samar believes that militarization is a patriarchal mode of conquest of a fascist orientation to subdue the most vulnerable sectors of society – the peasantry, the women and children. We further condemn the dastardly acts of extra-judicial killings, tortures, harassments, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and other crimes against humanity of the military under the command of Col. Palparan.

We urge the provincial government under Gov. Milagrosa Tan to pay heed to the plight of the women and children in Samar. By clinging to a fascist military commander, our local government officials are in effect tolerating these abuses.

The damage created by the military's psychological operations, of sowing lies and slandering the names of legitimate peoples organizations such as AWARE-Samar have gone unchecked since activists have become targets for liquidation. During these period, leaders and members of AWARE-Samar had been targets of harassments. The organization concentrated on documenting the cases of human rights violations, and providing protective custody and facilitating sanctuaries for women and children victims of displacement.



## Speech of Maj. Gen. Jovito S. Palparan Jr.

(Speech delivered during the 8ID 17th Founding Anniversary on August 22, 2005)

***"...we believe that continuous progress and development can only come into realization after the attainment of true peace and stability."***

our mission.

As we celebrate our 17th Founding Anniversary, we cannot help but look back and vividly recall where we have started & how far have we gone through. Knowing our colorful & glorious past, we can wrap-up that the 8th Infantry (Storm Troopers) Division is the totality of all its internal security operation gains in Eastern Visayas region through the years.

Both the smooth and rugged roads we have trudged set forth the foundation of what is 8th Infantry Division today. It is therefore indeed, appropriate to express our gratitude to all the previous 8ID Commanders who have significantly steered the Command in our peace, security & support-to-development efforts.

We likewise pay tribute to our fallen comrades who, in one way or another, have meaningfully sacrificed their lives in our quest of protecting our democratic government & the integrity of our nation.

Moreover, I would like to emphasize that this accomplishments could have been far from realization without the support of our civilian counterparts. That is why we have some of them with us this morning, for us to

recognize the unconditional support they have extended which contributed much in our mission accomplishment.

Our theme for this year's celebration, "8ID: KAAGAPAY SA KAPAYAPAN TUNGO SA KAUNLARAN", renews our commitment to uphold our mandated task of creating a "PHYSICALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY SECURED ENVIRONMENT THAT IS CONDUCIVE FOR PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT".

I would like to inform our constituents that, from the time I assumed to date, the Command have initiated twenty-four (24) engagements with the NPAs, with a recovery of twenty-eight (28) high-powered & two hundred nineteen (219) low-powered fire arms. In addition to this is the neutralization of seventy-three (73) NPAs, sixteen (16) enemy camps and six (6) identified safe houses not to mention the neutralization of other members of their intelligence & support system.

I have stated that to inform you, that we are determined to continue performing our mission and we vow to double-time our effort to reduce the insurgency problem in the region to an "insignificant level" at the soonest possible time. Because we believe that continuous progress and development can only come into realization after the attainment of true peace and stability.

We are very well aware on the plans and maneuvers of CPP/NPA/NDF and their allies to mount actions against our Internal Security Operations. They will always make moves to put us under deep scrutiny through their biased fault-finding activities with the goal of discrediting our organization and get the sympathy of the people.

With these prevailing facts, I renew my instruction for all of us, the Officers, Men & Women of the 8th Infantry Division, to continue establishing and maintaining sincere friendship with our constituents, whose rights we have sworn to protect and defend.

Remember that the innocent civilians, to include our families, are the sole meaning of our existence.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Let this anniversary make us continue to bear in mind the Army's purpose. Despite the political turmoil that the country has experienced in the past weeks, let us continue to uphold our constitution and follow the Chain-of-Command. Let us prove our predecessors and our fallen comrades that, "the spirit of service, strengthened by its customs & sacrifices, shall not be dishonored by mediocrity".

Along this line let me borrow the words of our very own Chief of Staff, General Generoso S. Senga, and I quote: "Every Filipino Soldier must be a symbol of peace. Let us insulate ourselves from politics and refuse in entertaining the idea of supporting any extra-constitutional step to remove the duly constituted authority", unquote.

This is not the time for weakness. But rather, a time for display of courage to face whatever challenge would stand to delay our good intentions.

Proving one's worth is an endless task. Let us therefore take every opportunity to show our people that we are always united to protect them and be their continuing partner in progress & development.

As we mark this milestone & enter in the new chapter of history, let us renew our strength & prepare to continue tackling our multifarious tasks that lies ahead. Let us maximize our effort to neutralize the enemy and give them no space for maneuver.

Likewise, let us continue to be relevant to the nation's developmental needs by continuously providing assistance to our Local Government Units and Line Agencies in the delivery of the basic social services intended for our constituents.

To our beloved friends & fellow workers in the government who are fortunate to be here to witness this occasion, rest assured that the 8th Infantry (Storm Troopers) Division will continue to be your dedicated partner in the pursuance of a lasting peace, stability, development & progress.

Once again, to the members of my Command, let us renew our loyalty to our constitution, to our flag, our country and our people.

Maupay nga aga ngan damo nga Salamat ha iyo nga tanan!

# PAGKAURUSA: A Pastoral Letter on Solidarity with our fellow Samaritans and the Whole of Creation

(Pastoral Letter No. 2, Series of 2005)



By Most Rev. JOSE S. PALMA, DD

Bishop of Calbayog

August 11, 2005

***"...The public have hurled the blame to either the NPA or the military. With intensified militarization, fear and displacement had been the sad life story of hundreds of Samaritans."***

Samar Day (August 11) is a welcome event for all of us. This year we do well to reflect on our situation as Samaritans, as Filipinos and as believers in the Lord. It is a fitting moment to look around us and in us and recognize our lights or blessings as well as our shadows or woes as we live in Samar we call our home.

We consider as blessings our seas teeming with abundant fish and our land thriving with coconuts and other vegetations. God's blessings too and source of our pride and hope are our mineral deposits and our virgin forests. So too are the various endemic birds, reptiles, flowers and plants. The awe-inspiring Suhuton and Calbiga caves, the many waterfalls of Calbayog, San Jorge and other towns, the dozen rivers with deep and clear waters are blessings to appreciate and enjoy. They are likewise business ventures in the future.

Aside from seeing the good and the beautiful around us we take notice of the noble and beautiful in us. We the Catholic community (which comprises 95% of Samar's population) share the sentiments of every Samaritan of good will in our longing for peace and progress. We all dream of a brighter tomorrow which spells fuller human life for us. How we all long that our children should be in the classrooms rather than in the streets or in the fields. We long that a few years from now because of better job opportunities we can rise above the stink and squalor of poverty. We recognize also as light our religiosity that we hope can transcend the painful divisions caused by petty politics and ghetto mentalities.

But even as we thank the Author of life and goodness who blessed our homeland and has sown the seed of hope in our hearts, we must recognize the shadows and call evil by its real name. We must define the shadows, or worse, the darkness that suffuses Samar.

We label as shadows the years we have allowed vested interests to plunder our resources. We have tolerated inept large-scale logging industries and unscrupulous mining practices. These enabled others to cart away our wealth and resources, leaving behind floods and un-arable lands causing pain and misery to our communities. Likewise either because of ignorance, ineffective laws or greed we ourselves have destroyed our corral reefs and seas.

But the more urgent of our concerns which is not just a shadow but a frightening darkness that has suffocated Samar is the culture of death and fear at this hour and moment. It revealed its ugly face in the brutal massacres that took away and desecrated lives. The public have hurled the blame to either the NPA or the military. With intensified militarization, fear and displacement had been the sad life story of hundreds of Samaritans.

This is the time when we have more questions than answers. When do we see the end to this culture of fear and death? Is this all-out-war policy sanctioned by the GMA administration? Is this the best solution to the insurgency problem? Is there a connection between militarization and mining? Can we still consider the threat to or loss of lives and limbs and the ever-present fear as "small sacrifices"?

Perhaps we have to wait for some time before we may have the answers to our questions. Meantime, we echo what a brother bishop said. To all Samaritans, but in particular to the victims, let there be no desire for revenge because we are angry. But let us not remain silent either, because we are afraid. Even as we speak with courage and in pursuit of the truth, we don't label persons as enemy. For indeed, we are all brothers and sisters in need of God's mercy and redemption.

Last Sunday's Gospel reading (Mt. 14:22-33) reminds us that if we look only at our woes and the immensity of our problems we have cause to fear and to sink. And so today we focus our gaze on Jesus. He is the Prince of Peace. In him we see, and we are grateful, for the grandeur of our person and the grandeur of creation. In him we are all brothers and sisters called to love each other and to love Samar and the Philippines. In Jesus we renew our solidarity with all Samaritans of good will. But we want to manifest our solidarity especially

with those who have lost a loved one or those who suffer in this moment of trial.

In Jesus we renew our solidarity with all of creation. And so we pledge to care for and protect our seas and rivers and our forests and mineral resources. Thus we uphold at least a 50 year moratorium on mining and large scale logging. In Jesus we hear the bidding to walk in faith and hope. We also want to walk in charity and generosity. And yes, even with the willingness to sacrifice if need be, that all of us may live in peace, that peace which is the fullness of God's blessing.

## More social services instead of troops

By **DANILO REYES**, Asian Human Rights Commission  
August 4, 2005

***"...it should be food instead of bullets. Justice instead of impunity. Teachers instead of troops."***

Deploying more troops in Eastern Visayas to combat the alarming trend of insurgency to me does not solve the insurgency itself, nor get support from the community soldiers ought to protect. Of why most people take arms and raise against the government is because of abject poverty, deep-rooted injustice, abuses by police and military, absence of adequate social services and failure of justice system, among others.

Government's resources should have been pulled on addressing this compelling problems, which to me pushed most people to take arms and to rebel, instead of confronting them head-on with arms and force.

Instead of deploying more troops and putting more government troops lives to risk, sacrificing the lives of poor villagers during firefight, a large scale displacement during fighting, pursuing and killing the communist rebels, the government should have address the compelling problem and root-cause of problem.

Whether they are soldiers, rebels, villagers and those parties involved in combating insurgency we should also think that these people have also their own family who don't want them to loss. They also have their wife, children and relatives who loved them and don't want them to die even they maybe worst, bad or good as a person in life.

In every war there's always a 'human person behind it'. Some scholars, and this what previous defense secretaries have been advocating that to promote peace, stable economy, development and others for the country's interest the government should combat threats to national security by force and arms.

But to me, it's only pouring gasoline into a bursting flame. If there's a need for that then there should be a balance on it. So why is budget expenditures for social services, basic education among others is low than that of the defense if reports are true?

Even if the defense and military's expenditure is high...still reality suggest most soldiers and their family are poor and still haven't had enough. Some of them even rebelled against the government. History and lessons in the past have told us this. When previous administration waged 'all-out-wars' in Mindanao years later the lives of ordinary and poor remains the same, if some may have improved, but rebellion and arms struggle hasn't been solved. During those wars, hundreds if not thousands of people died, displaced and some haven't recovered yet. History repeats itself, and I feel sad that we haven't learned of our lessons in the past yet. We are only pushing the people to rebel, breed more rebels, giving opportunity to some armed strugglers to take advantage of this situation and eventually let people die, get killed, displaced and ensue more injustice at everybody's mercy.

To me, it should be food instead of bullets. Justice instead of impunity. Teachers instead of troops. Deeper understanding of rebellion's root-cause instead of a knee-jerk reaction of troops deployment. Whether they are soldiers, rebels, villagers, government leaders or anybody, nobody can claim victory...but all losers in war. The decade-old problems of insurgency and rebellion speaks the proof of it.

