

## Philippine Armed Forces review

The history of Philippine Armed Forces began in the 19th century when the Revolutionary government had created Philippine Army under Captain General Artemio Ricarte (1866-1945). The Army was a derivative of the Revolutionary Forces which were battling the Spanish government in the period of 1896-1898, the Army was also active during the conflict with the United States from 1899-1903. After these conflicts in 1935 National Defense Act constituted the Philippine Army and after the Second World War in 1950 the Philippine Army has been transformed into Philippine Armed Forces with four major branches: Philippine Army, Philippine Navy, Philippine Air Force and Philippine Constabulary. The Republic of Philippines is a country situated in the western part of the Pacific ocean with population around 100 million people and territory that has more than 7,000 islands. The country's GDP is estimated around 300 billion dollars with military budget around 2 billion dollars. The country's proximity to China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam and South China Sea makes Philippines a rather interesting territory in geopolitical sphere.

Threats and challenges for the PAF are both internal and external in nature. Some of the regular duties of the Philippine's military include: maintaining regional peace and stability, maintaining and assessing threats to the national sovereignty and integrity, combating international terrorism and organized crime which can affect security and overall stability of the country. Other more specific threats include domestic paramilitary/terrorist organizations which are active and have good potential to threaten Philippine's society. These groups represent a serious domestic threat to the stability of the country which will require PAF participation in order to contain them. These groups are:

- **The Communist Party of Philippines** and its guerilla branch **New People's Army (NPA)** are considered one of the main security challenges for the government and the military. NPA is a guerilla organization which has support in certain parts of the country. The numbers of the group vary widely from 8,000 fighters to 4,000 fighters armed with more than 6,000 light infantry weapons. The group is highly mobile and relies on strong propaganda in order to justify its actions but also to gather support from the masses. The group usually wages guerilla warfare in the countryside utilizing tactics such are harassment of military brigades, taking prisoners of war and destroying communications and infrastructure.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. Santos, P. V. M. Santos, O. A. Dinampo, H. J. S. Kraft, A. K. R. Paredes and R. J. G. Quilop, *Primed and Purpesful Armed Groups and Human Security Efforts in the Philippines*, p. 318 (<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/D-Book-series/book-12-Philippines/SAS-Armed-Groups-Human-Security-Efforts-Philippines.pdf>)

- **Moro Islamic Liberation Front or MILF** is the largest rebel group in the country stationed mostly in Mindanao in the southern part of Philippines. The group is heavily influenced by radical Islam and since 2001 it has been accused numerous times for training foreign jihadists or participating in terrorist operations. The group is primarily guided by principles of radical and political Islamism which advocates islamization of the society and the entire state. It is estimated that the group has around 12,000 fighters which makes it the largest rebel group in the country. The group is organized similarly to the regular Army, has its bases, training camps and communities (nearby villages) which provide food and other supplies for the fighters. Today the group applies guerilla tactics but in the eighties the group was able to utilize semi-conventional warfare.<sup>2</sup>
- **Abu Sayyaf Group** is partially a terrorist organization while utilizing criminal tactics such are kidnapping, raiding, banditry etc. Most of the members are former MNLF fighter who decided to leave the group after the MNLF entered peace negotiations with the government, while the core of the group is made of mujahedeen and combatants who have participated in Afghan wars. The group is usually portrayed as lawless bandit group which uses tactics such are bombings, executing civilians or kidnapping in order to spread terror. Despite having some ideological objectives (spreading Islamism or implementing Sharia rule) the main threat are the group's connections to Al Qaeda and other foreign terrorist organization and potential cooperation with them.<sup>3</sup>

Philippine Armed Forces have 125,000 active and 131,000 reserve personnel deployed across Army, Navy and Air Force. PAF also includes paramilitary of 40,500 active and 50,000 reserve personnel. Philippine Armed Forces have eight regional command centers which include: National Capital Region Command, North Luzon Command, South Luzon Command, Western Command, Central Command, East Mindanao Command, Western Mindanao Command and Nation Development Support Command.

### **PHILIPPINE ARMY 86,000 active and 100,000 reserve personnel**

The Philippine Army has been formed in the nineteen thirties but its roots can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the rebel forces fighting for the national independence. The initial idea was to create a small standing army, however over the time the idea has changed. In the nineteen nineties certain reforms have been implemented in the Philippine Army. The reform had changed the Army both in size and structure, this was mostly due to modernization, new international threats and domestic threats which were primarily embodied in communist as well as Islamist insurgency attempts by the above-mentioned groups. Most of the weapons and equipment used by the Philippine Army is appropriate to its light infantry force structure and counter insurgency missions.

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<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem* p. 327

<sup>3</sup> A. R. Lastimado and A. G. Rojas, *The Armed Forces of the Philippines and Special Operations*, December 2004 p. 14-15. (<http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a429856.pdf>)

## **FORCES BY ROLE**

### ***Special Forces***

1 Special Operations Command

- 1<sup>st</sup> Scout Ranger Regiment HQ in Fort Andres Bonifacio, Bulacan. The unit is specialized in reconnaissance, airborne operations and unconventional warfare.
- Special Forces Regiment HQ in Fort Ramon Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. This unit's operations include: special reconnaissance, airborne operations, unconventional warfare, counter-terrorism operations, hostage-rescue operations, disaster relief operations.
- Light Reaction regiment HQ in Fort Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija. Unit is specialized in counter-terrorism, reconnaissance, unconventional warfare and hostage-rescue missions.

## **MANOUVRE**

### ***Mechanized***

1 Armored Division with 2 Mechanized Brigades

### ***Light***

10 Infantry Divisions

- 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp Major L Sang-an, Zamboanga Del Sur
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp Mateo Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp Gen Macario Peralta Jr, Capiz
- 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp BGen Edilberto Evangelista, Cagayan de Oro City
- 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp Melchor F Dela Cruz, Isabela
- 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp BGen Gonzalo H. Siongco, Maguindanao
- 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Fort Ramon Magsaysay, Nueva Ecija
- 8<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp General Vicente Lukban, Samar
- 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp Elias Angeles, Pili, Camarines Sur, Philippines
- 10<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division HQ in Camp General Manuel T Yan Sr., Compostela Valley Province

## **COMBAT SUPPORT**

1 Artillery Regiment and 5 Engineering Brigades

## EQUIPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE ARMY

- **LT TK 7** *Scorpion*
- **AIFV** 36: 2 YPR-765; 34 M113A1 FSV
- **APC** 299 **APC (T)** 76: 6 ACV300; 70 M113 **APC (W)** 223: 77 LAV-150 *Commando*; 146 *Simba*
- **ARTY** 254+ **TOWED** 214: **105mm** 204 M101/M102/M-26/M-56; **155mm** 10 M114/M-68 **MOR** 40+: **81mm** M-29; **107mm** 40 M-30
- **AT** **RCL** **75mm** M20; **90mm** M67; **106mm** M40A1
- **AIRCRAFT** **TPT** **Light** 4: 1 Beech 80 *Queen Air*; 1 Cessna 170; 1 Cessna 172; 1 Cessna 206A
- **UAV** **ISR** **Medium** *Blue Horizon*
- **ARV** ACV-300; *Samson*; M578

## PHILIPPINE NAVY 24,000 active and 15,000 reserve personnel and 8,300 Marines (4 marine brigades)

The Navy is a branch of the Philippine Armed Forces and it's tasked with various maritime operations while maintaining, training and organizing naval forces. The Philippine Navy is composed out of the Fleet and the Marine corps. **The Fleet** also has four major forces which include: The Ready Force that manages the readiness of the vessels, aircrafts, SEAL teams and overall operational readiness and demands; Patrol Force manages patrol ships and their duties; The Service Force prepares transport and amphibious vehicles for specific operations; The Assault Craft Force deploys gunboats, crafts and small crafts for specific operations. Beside its regular duties of protecting national integrity and sovereignty, the Philippine Navy is also responsible for protecting marine ecosystems and country's overall marine ecology. **The Marine Corps** has been established in the 1950 as a highly mobile unit capable of countering smugglers, pirates and other criminal elements of the Philippine's coast. Throughout the years the Marines have maintained the portrait of the most organized and trained units in the military.

Philippine Naval force is deployed across 6 areas each responsible for naval defense and security in dedicated areas:

- Naval Forces North
- Naval Forces South
- Naval Forces West
- Naval Forces Central
- Naval Forces Southern Luzon
- Naval Forces Eastern Mindanao

## **EQUIPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE NAVY**

**PRINCIPAL SURFACE COMBATANTS** **FRIGATES** 1 *Rajah Humabon* with 3 **76mm** gun

**PATROL AND COASTAL COMBATANTS** **68** **PSOH** 2 *Gregorio del Pilar* with 1 **76mm** gun **PCF** 1 *General Mariano Alvarez* **PCO** 11: 3 *Emilio Jacinto* with 1 **76mm** gun; 6 *Miguel Malvar* with **76mm** gun 2 *Rizal* with 2 **76mm** gun **PBF** 16: 3 *Conrado Yap*; 7 *Tomas Batilo*; 6 **MPAC** **PB** 32: 2 *Aguinaldo*; 22 *Jose Andrada*; 2 *Kagitingan*; 2 *Point*; 4 *Swift Mk3* **PBR** 6 Silver Ships

**AMBHIBIOUS LANDING SHIPS** **LST** 5: 2 *Bacolod City* with 1 helicopter landing platform, capacity of 32 tanks, 150 troops; *Zamboanga del Sur* capacity 16 tanks, 200 troops

**LANDING CRAFT** 30: 12 **LCU**; 2 **LCVP**; 16 **LCM**

**LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT** 18: **AFD** 4; **AK** 1; **AOL** 2; **AOT** 3; **AP** 1; **AR** 1; **AWT** 2; **TRL** 3; **YTM** 1

**AIRCRAFT** **TPT** **Light** 6: 4 *BN-2A Defender*; 2 *Cessna 177 Cardinal*

**HELICOPTERS** **TPT** 11: **Medium** 4 *Mi-171Sh*; **Light** 7: 3 *AW109*; 4 *Bo-105*

## **EQUIPMENT OF THE MARINES**

**APC (W)** 42: 19 *LAV-150 Commando*; 23 *LAV-300*

**AAV** 59: 4 *LVTH-6*; 55 *LVTP-7*

**ARTY** 31+ **TOWED 105mm** 31: 23 *M101*; 8 *M-26* **MOR 107mm** *M-30*

## **PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE 15,000 active and 16,000 reserve personnel**

Though primary role of any Air Force is to provide air defense the Philippine Air Force is mostly focused on supporting ground and infantry units, especially since the end of the Cold War. This is mostly due to the specific security situation in the country and a constant insurgency threat. Other important missions for the Air Force also include: search and rescue, transportation and communication. During the Cold War era the US has been able to provide allot of needed equipment and resources for the Philippine Air Force, sadly since then there is an evident sign of deterioration of the country's Air Force capabilities and equipment. The Philippine Air Force has its HQ in Villamor Air Base and has three air divisions.

### *Forces by role*

**FIGHTER** 1 squadron with S-211

**GROUND ATTACK** 1 squadron with OV-10A/C *Bronco*

**ISR** 1 squadron with *Turbo Commander 690A*

**SEARCH AND RESCUE** 4 squadrons with Bell 205; AUH-76

**TRANSPORT** 1 squadron with C-130B/H *Hercules*; L-100-20 1 squadron with N-22B *Nomad*; N-22SL *Searchmaster* 1 squadron with F-27-200 MPA; F-27-500 *Friendship* 1 VIP squadron with F-28 *Friendship*

**TRAINING** 1 squadron with SF-260F/TP and 1 squadron with T-41B/D/K *Mescalero*

**ATTACK HELICOPTER** 1 squadron with MD-520MG

**TRANSPORT HELICOPTER** 1 squadron with AUH-76 1 squadron with W-3 *Sokol* 4 squadrons with Bell 205 1 VIP squadron with Bell 412EP *Twin Huey*; S-70A *Black Hawk*

### **EQUIPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE**

**AIRCRAFT** 22 combat capable

**MP 2:** 1 F-27-200 MPA; 1 N-22SL *Searchmaster*

**ISR** 10 OV-10A/C *Bronco*

**TPT 9 Medium 5:** 1 C-130B *Hercules*; 3 C-130H *Hercules*; 1 L-100-20; **Light 3:** 1 F-27-500 *Friendship*; 1 N-22B *Nomad*; 1 *Turbo Commander 690A*; PAX 1 F-28 *Friendship*

**TRG 40:** 12 S-211; 8 SF-260F; 10 SF-260TP; 10 T-41B/D/K *Mescalero*

### **HELICOPTERS**

**MRH 27:** 8 W-3 *Sokol*; 3 AUH-76; 3 Bell 412EP *Twin Huey*; 2 Bell 412HP *Twin Huey*; 11 MD-520MG

**TPT 44: Medium 1** S70A *Black Hawk*; **Light 43** Bell 205

**UAV ISR Medium 2** *Blue Horizon II*

**PARAMILITARY OF THE PHILIPPINES** includes **Philippine National Police, Coast Guard and Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units. It has 40,500 active and 50,000 reserve personnel.**

## **EQUIPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE PARAMILITARY**

### **PATROL AND COASTAL COMBATANTS**

**PB 54:** 10 Rodman 101; Rodman 38 3 *De Haviland*; 4 *Ilocos Norte*; 1 *Palawan*; 12 PCF 50; 10 PCF 46; 10 PCF 65 **PCO 5:** 4 San Juan; 1 Balsam **PCC 2** Tirad **PBR 11**

**AMPHIBIOUS LANDING CRAFT 2 : 1 LCM; 1 LCVP**

**LOGISTICS AND SUPPORT: 3 ABU**

**AIRCRAFT TPT Light 5:** 2 BN-2 *Islander*; 3 Lancair 320

**HELICOPTERS: 3 SAR**

### ***Abbreviations***

LT-Light

ARTY-Artillery

TK-Tank

AT- Anti Tank

AIFV- Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle

RCL-Recoilless Launcher

APC - Armored Personnel Carrier

TPT-Transport

UAV-Unmanned Aerial Vehicle

ARV-Armored Recovery Vehicle

ISR-Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance

PCF-Patrol Craft Fast

PCO-Patrol Craft Offshore

PBF-Patrol Boat Fast

PBR-Patrol Boat Riverine

LST-Landing Ship Tank

LCU-Landing Craft Utility

LCVP-Landing Craft Vehicles and Personnel

LCM-Landing Craft Medium

AFD-Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock

AK-Cargo Ship

YTM-Medium Harbor Tug

AOT-Oiler Transport

AP-Transport

AR-Repair Ship

AWT-Water Tanker

AAV-Amphibious Assault Vehicle

MOR-Mortar

MP-Maritime Patrol

TRG-Training

MRH-Multi-Role Helicopter

ABU- seagoing buoy tender

SAR-Search and Rescue

PB-Patrol Boat

Other sources used in this paper include: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/> and The Military Balance.

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