

Cory honor guards cope with newfound fame

by ALEXA VILLANO
Philstar.com

THEY were ordinary soldiers, ready to defend and help the country.

The four honors guards who escorted the remains of the late President Corazon Aquino never imagined that standing for nine hours would change their lives.

During a visit to *The Star* office, the four honor guards—Navy PO3 Edgardo Rodriguez, Air Force A2C Gener Laguindam, PO2 Danilo Malab Jr. and Army PFC Antonio Cadiete—were treated like celebrities, with employees waiting in line to have their pictures taken with the four soldiers in their dress uniforms. The escorts even had their own escorts, one noted, as the four were accompanied by representatives from their respective units.

Rodriguez says that now, after the office workday they were being invited everywhere.

"It was a big change in our lives. After office hours, I would usually go home. But after what happened, many invitations

came," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez, who has three children, said that he usually sees his family in the evening, but even that has changed.

"I usually see them before sleeping. But these days, when I arrive from work, they are asleep, and when I leave for work, they are still asleep" he said.

Laguindam, on the other hand, says that they are now always on call. In fact, since the Aquino burial on Aug. 5, they have been interviewed by TV, print and radio, and even guested in a musical game show.

Laguindam says they are not used to all the attention. "It's like there are many eyes focused on you now."

Malab, who hails from Camias Magalang, Pampanga, recalls that when he went home to his family, many of his kababayans were there to support him.

"They congratulated me and the councilors even wanted to meet me," he said.

With all the attention, the four are often teased by their comrades.

"Sometimes they would ask,

where is the interview? Where is the taping?" Cadiete said.

When asked to describe what they felt when they met the children of Mrs. Aquino, Malab said, "We were very happy. The feeling was good when we finally met them. We relayed our deepest gratitude to them. They said thank you."

In recognition of and gratitude for the services they rendered, *Star* president and CEO Miguel Belmonte handed them simple tokens of appreciation, one coming from a reader of *The Star* who was so touched by what they did. All four are thankful for the help they have been receiving.

"Whatever financial help they are giving, it's a big help to us and to our families and (it) can also help our units," Cadiete said.

They were sad at the news that many of their comrades were killed in recent clashes in Mindanao, but they all agreed that they knew what could happen.

"Even before we became soldiers, we knew what could be the consequences already," Cadiete said.



Cory cortege honor guards - Army Pfc. Antonio Cadiete, PO2 Danilo Malab Jr., Air Force A2C Gener Laguindam and Navy PO3 Edgardo Rodriguez.

Philstar photo by Fernan Nebres

remove the civilian attitude and have the military attitude. Be dedicated to your job. Your mind will definitely change. You should be focused on what you are doing," Laguindam shares.

"I want to tell the people that the Philippine Navy is ready to serve the country. I encourage the youth to join the Navy by simply coming to us," Rodriguez said.

Galman kin thankful for Cory's sympathy

by ANSELMO ROQUE
Inquirer.net

CABANATUAN CITY—Like the Aquinos, the Galman family in Nueva Ecija will observe on Friday the 26th death anniversary of a loved one.

But relatives of Rolando Galman, who was identified by the Marcos regime as the assassin of former Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. and who was gunned down by soldiers in 1983, are thankful that Aquino's widow, the late former President Corazon Aquino, did not believe that Galman killed her husband.

Nenita Galman, Rolando's younger sister who lives in Zaragoza town, said then President Aquino once told her mother, Saturnina, that she believed that Galman was a "fall guy."

She said her mother also approached the former President to ask for permission to bury Galman at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City, near where Ninoy was buried. The request was granted and Galman was buried there on Nov. 10, 1983.

Nenita said that for their love and respect for the former President, her mother and other members of the family joined the thousands who attended Aquino's funeral on Aug. 5.

She said the family, led by the 80-year-old Saturnina, will mark Galman's death anniversary

by lighting candles and saying prayers in the family home at Barangay Sto. Tomas in Aliaga town in Nueva Ecija.

"We were planning to visit his tomb on Aug. 21, but we decided to do it some other day," said Nenita.

She said when she and her four siblings met last Tuesday, Aug. 18, in their old house in Aliaga, their mother told them of her desire to visit the tomb of Galman, the eldest in a brood of eight.

But she said they realized that their presence at the cemetery might take away attention from the commemoration of Ninoy's death anniversary.

"We wouldn't like that to happen. We highly respect the Aquino family," Nenita said.

The family, she said, would also visit the tombs of the Aquino couple when they visit Galman's tomb.

"Our family is not talking anymore about the [Aug. 21, 1983] incident.... But we want to repeat our endless thanks to exceptional people who helped us during those trying times when the blame was being heaped on our late brother," Nenita said.

Saturnina, in a previous interview with the *Inquirer*, said: "*Mahirap gunitain. Nakasakit ng puso na isipin* (It is difficult to recall. It is too painful to think about it)." ■

Salonga raises possible Mar-Noynoy tandem

by JULIE M. AURELIO
Inquirer.net

YET another teamup has emerged for the 2010 elections, with former Senate President Jovito Salonga raising the possible tandem of Senators Manuel "Mar" Roxas and Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III.

"In my opinion, it would be good for Mar as president and Noynoy as his teammate or vice president," Salonga said at the reunion last Thursday, Aug. 20, of survivors of the Plaza Miranda bombing in August 1971.

Both Roxas and Aquino III are members of the Liberal Party (LP), of which Salonga is the chair emeritus.

Roxas is the son of the late Sen. Gerry Roxas, who was among those wounded in the Plaza Miranda bombing.

Aquino III is the only son of former President Benigno Aquino Jr., whose assassination in 1983 is being commemorated Friday,

and former President Corazon Aquino, who died on Aug. 1.

Roxas has long announced his intention to run for president. Aquino III, who has another term to go as senator, is being urged to seek a higher post.

But Salonga said that if ever Aquino III decided to do so, he should have the necessary determination and specific plan.

"Many people have said that it would be good for Noynoy to run for a higher position. But I don't know whether he is determined to run for the presidency of the land," Salonga said.

He said he preferred that Roxas run for president.

Cavite Rep. Joseph Emilio Aguinaldo Abaya, LP secretary general, said the party had yet to actively talk about the arrangement between the two scions of political families.

"Actually we have not yet seriously talked about it (the

Mar-Noynoy tandem). Noynoy has always maintained a noncommittal stance about the issue, he is for teamwork in the party," Abaya noted.

He added that the LP is also respecting the Aquinos' privacy with the recent demise of their mother, the former President Corazon Aquino.

"We are not trying to shove it down his throat at this time," Abaya said.

Former senator Eddie Ilarde, also a Plaza Miranda bombing survivor, agreed with Salonga, pointing out that Roxas and Aquino should join forces especially as they are members of the same political party.

"Noynoy and Mar should work together because they are both fruits of a good tree... They should join forces for the sake of the country and for the sake of progress," Ilarde said, referring to their parents' political legacies. ■

Ping fails to stop new Dacer probe

by EDU PUNAY
Philstar.com

THE re-investigation of the Dacer-Corbito murders will proceed after the Court of Appeals (CA) ruled in favor of the Department of Justice and denied the petition of Sen. Panfilo Lacson for a temporary restraining order (TRO) to stop the investigation.

In denying the petition, the CA said the retired Philippine National Police chief failed to prove that he would suffer from irreparable damage if the nine-year-old case were re-opened.

The DOJ's preliminary investigation is "well within due process to determine if there is sufficient evidence to bring a person to trial," the CA added.

The CA said the move of investigating prosecutors led by Senior State Prosecutor Peter Ong to require Lacson to submit his defense was neither unreasonable nor oppressive.

Lacson's petition for a TRO lacked factual and legal basis, the CA added.

However, the CA did not rule on the merits of Lacson's petition alleging "grave abuse of authority" on the part of DOJ officials and prosecutors.

The CA ordered the DOJ to submit a comment within 10 days.

Upon DOJ's compliance, Lacson may file a reply after five days.

Justice Secretary Agnes Devanadera said the preliminary investigation into Lacson's alleged involvement in the murder case would proceed as scheduled.

"We anticipated that (move from Lacson) as part of due process," she said. "But we have a very well-grounded case."

Lacson has accused the DOJ of committing "grave abuse of discretion" in summoning him to answer charges that he masterminded the Dacer-Corbito murders based solely on the affidavit of former police senior superintendent Cezar Mancao, one of the main suspects.

Mancao's testimony would not suffice to justify the re-opening of the case since it did not constitute prima facie evidence, according to Gregorio Fernandez, Lacson's counsel.

Lacson accused the DOJ of engaging in a fishing expedition and trial by publicity to persecute him.

"The assailed reinvestigation of the Dacer-Corbito double murder case marks the penultimate act in the grand scheme to persecute petitioner," he said.

"The DOJ, after presentation of its evidence and resting its case

in Criminal Case No. 01-191969, all of a sudden coordinated with Cezar Mancao for the latter to go back to the Philippine and be its state witness to allegedly implicate petitioner in the said case."

Lacson said the DOJ's subpoena ordering him to submit his counter-affidavit against the complaint of the daughters of publicist Salvador "Bubby" Dacer is part of his persecution.

The complaint merely contains hearsay statements based on Mancao's affidavit, which did not allege the elements of murder, he added.

The re-investigation is illegal due to the DOJ's failure to seek permission from the Manila Regional Trial Court, which is already hearing the murder case, Lacson said.

The DOJ reopened the Dacer-Corbito murder case after Dacer's daughters charged Lacson with two counts of murder.

Dacer and his driver Emmanuel Corbito were snatched at the corner of Zobel Roxas Street and Sergio Osmeña Highway at the boundary of Manila and Makati on Nov. 24, 2000.

Their charred remains were later found Indang, Cavite.

The CA decision denying TRO petition was written by Associate Justice Juan Enriquez Jr. ■

Lacson mulls vice presidential bid

AFTER withdrawing his presidential bid, Senator Panfilo "Ping" Lacson is now considering to run for vice president.

Lacson said at least two potential presidential bets have been talking to him though no formal offer yet had been made. He refused to identify the two.

"No formal offer. Let's say you are one of those being considered," Lacson told reporters last Tuesday, Aug. 18.

Asked if he was considering the idea of

joining the May 2010 race, Lacson said, "Not seriously, but I'm open to the idea."

Initially, the senator wanted to run for president in 2010. But citing a lack of fund to bankroll his campaign, Lacson withdrew his presidential bid.

Running for vice president is less expensive than campaigning for the presidency, he said. This was also, Lacson said he was hoping he could still pursue his visions for the country. (*Inquirer.net*)



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