

images of duty, sacrifice, and heroism

The best of men... The best in men

TEAM ARMY... At your service across the land.

Published by the Philippine Army

Printed in the Philippines by GPV Printing Ventures

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Dedicated to the Philippine Army soldiers
and CAFGU Active Auxiliaries (CAAs) who
went beyond the call of duty to rescue and
bring relief to thousands of victims affected by
“Ondoy”, especially to those who offered the
supreme sacrifice so that others may live:

Sergeant Adriano Regua (Inf) PA
Corporal Venancio Ancheta (Inf) PA
CAA Joel Hernalin
CAA Erineo Olaguer
CAA Florencio Dequiño
CAA Pedro Falcon
CAA Artemio Descotido

*"Consistent little acts of
kindness bring greatness."*

**"no, the
army soldier
is not
a new hero."**

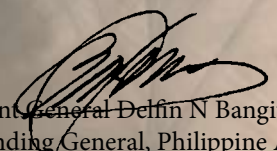
Inspired by his counterparts in history whose invaluable deeds and sacrifices made them heroes, the same spirit is alive in every soldier today.

In the many facets of life, the soldier is there... risking his life and limb so that others may live. The irony comes when he, too, unfortunately becomes a victim, just like the people he is serving or saving... and more disheartening, when his family or loved ones back home become victims themselves of the massive destruction.

The following photographs gathered from soldiers, family members, friends and ordinary citizens are vivid memories of the despair and heroism displayed during and in the aftermath of the devastating tropical storm codenamed "Ondoy" that wrought havoc in Metro Manila, Laguna, Rizal, Bulacan and its southern and northern suburbs and other provinces.

Behind all the finger-pointing, grandstanding and indifference of some sectors, the Philippine Army is humbly presenting a photo essay that typifies the Filipino spirit of Bayanihan and the Army Team Spirit of selfless service.

Knowing that no amount of recognition and benefits could assuage the pain of losing a loved one, the Philippine Army attempts to immortalize those who offered the supreme sacrifice to alleviate the plight of the "Ondoy" victims, insufficient and inadequate it may seem to others.



Lieutenant General Delfin N. Bangit AFP
Commanding General, Philippine Army
October 2009

IMAGES OF DUTY, SACRIFICE, AND HEROISM

Best of men...best in men

September 26, 2009—the country was taken by surprise as a serious weather disturbance wreaked havoc in the metropolis and nearby areas. Rain fell relentlessly, turning streets into raging rivers that swept away mud, garbage, properties, and even lives. Cries for help echoed during that grim day; cries that the Philippine Army heard and could not help but respond to. It was the nightmare the Filipinos wish to forget, the storm “Ondoy.”

Resulting in flashfloods and mudslides, rainfall brought about by “Ondoy” has been considered the most disastrous storm that struck the metropolis and suburbs since 1967. Metro Manila, together with surrounding provinces, experienced the wrath of the weather disturbance firsthand where, in just six hours, Metro Manila and Southern Luzon received an amount of rainfall due for a month.

During the onslaught of the powerful “Ondoy,” the Filipinos in the affected areas faced pitch-black death wherever they were—in their homes or on the streets.

The Blaring Call of Duty

The citizens in the areas affected by the terrible storm were in dire need of rescue and help, as their houses were submerged in flood water and raging flood kept them from reaching safer grounds. The Filipinos were in danger and the Philippine Army could not deny that their countrymen needed them and their help.

At the very height of the storm, the men and women of the Philippine Army left the safe confines of their headquarters and were mobilized to respond to the needs of the victims. Amidst heavy rain and hard terrain, the brave soldiers tried their very best to carry their task of saving lives and serving the countrymen.

Though impassable due to deep flood water, Army soldiers went down of their trucks and swam through EDSA in order to reach the areas most affected by the heavy rainfall. Also, the Philippine Army command provided four buses in Metro Manila, for stranded passengers to get to the safety of their homes.

In the neighboring provinces, on the other hand, Army men traversed mud and flood in order to reach the homes of the residents whose houses fell victim to the wrath of “Ondoy.” With nothing but the desire of saving their fellow countrymen, they were able to surpass the mud and treacherous terrain. All for the call of duty, the Philippine Army was willing to give everything then.

The Color of Sacrifice

“At your service across the land.”

This single sentence alone has been the main principle the Philippine Army has been following for many years. It mentions no conditions, terms, and restrictions. The Philippine Army, as defenders of the people, carries these words in their hearts wherever they may be, forgetting everything but service to the countrymen.

Despite the danger the families of the Army men themselves face, selfless as they are, they have chosen to serve other people instead. Leaving all to the Almighty, they dived into the flood water, saving lives and praying for the safety of their loved ones at home, at the same time.

In the end, billion-pesos worth of properties were destroyed and hundreds of lives were swept away by the flood. However, as the sun shines again, the Filipinos come to realize that the death toll would have risen higher if not for the efforts and the selflessness of the Army men.

The Bright Hues of Heroism

After the storm and saving thousands of lives, many of the Army men are lucky enough to go home in one piece. However, saving thousands of lives always has a cost, as two Army soldiers and five CAAs offered their lives in line of duty during the rescue operations in Laguna.

As the detachment commander of his team deployed in Mabitac, Laguna, Corporal Adriano Regua tried to save one of his men from being swept away by the flood, but, eventually, was carried away with him, drowning both of them in mud and water. The five CAAs in his team who offered the supreme sacrifice were Florencio Dequino, Joel Hernalin, Erineo Olaguer, Pedro Falcon, and Artemio Desotido.

In Famy, Laguna, on the other hand, the Philippine Army has suffered a loss in Private First Class Venancio Ancheta's death brought about by the raging flood of the terrible “Ondoy.” Having saved 20 residents, Pfc. Ancheta was in the middle of helping an old man through the rampaging flood water when he was hit by a log. He was able to put the man to safety before he was finally carried away by the angry water. Inspired by Pfc Ancheta's heroism, his whole team was able to save 600 more lives in the area.

These heroes shall forever be honored and remembered, along with the bitter memories “Ondoy” left behind. Up until now, the Philippine Army has been assisting the victims and shall never stop until the country fully-recovers from the nightmare many know as “Ondoy.”

Amidst confusion and disarray, the Philippine Army units responded quickly



In the most critical hours of 26 September 2009, Army units along the route of the tropical storm “Ondoy” mustered their troops in preparation for the inevitable.

Armed with bare hands, others with rope and spade, and with insurmountable spirit, the Army soldiers did what they can beyond the call of duty.



Resources were gathered and mustered. Personnel were recalled. Hoping for the best, preparing for the worst, they knew they needed to move fast.

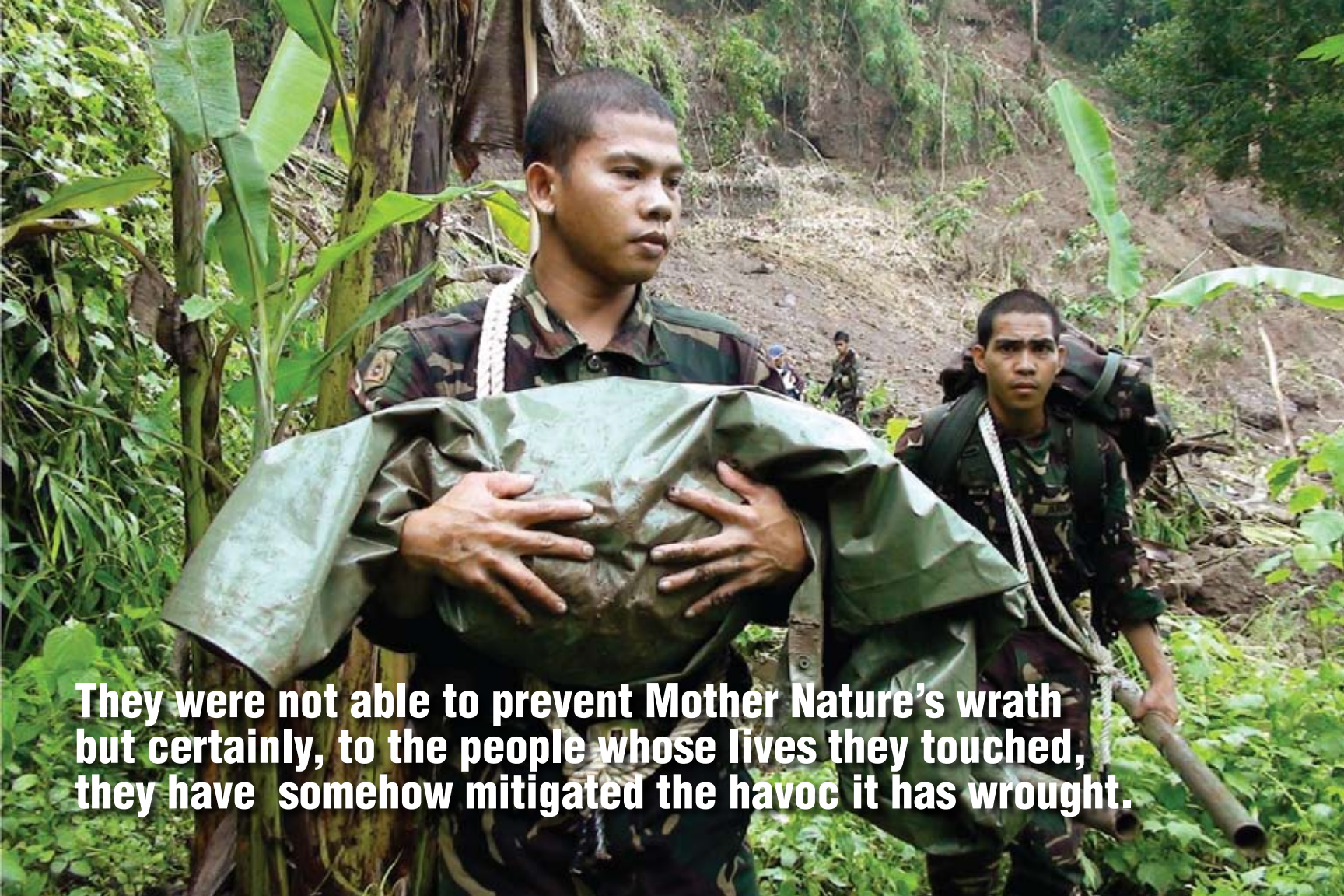
Army Action Center

Established before noon of 26th of September 2009




**Soldiers' early response
alleviated the suffering
of the people they have
sworn to protect**





They were not able to prevent Mother Nature's wrath but certainly, to the people whose lives they touched, they have somehow mitigated the havoc it has wrought.



Even losing their own

“In a different part of Laguna, another soldier displayed exceptional courage in the face of tragedy.

Pfc Venancio Ancheta was carrying a resident of Famy, Laguna to safety when a log struck him. Without thinking twice, Ancheta continued to struggle with the turbulent flood waters to get a stranded resident out of harm's way.

Weakened by the blow, however, the valiant soldier could not fight the flood waters any longer. After saving 20 people, Ancheta was swept away by strong currents, but his heroic effort inspired his teammates to rescue hundreds more.”

Excerpts from “Ondoy’s Selfless Heroes Shine in the Face of Tragedy”

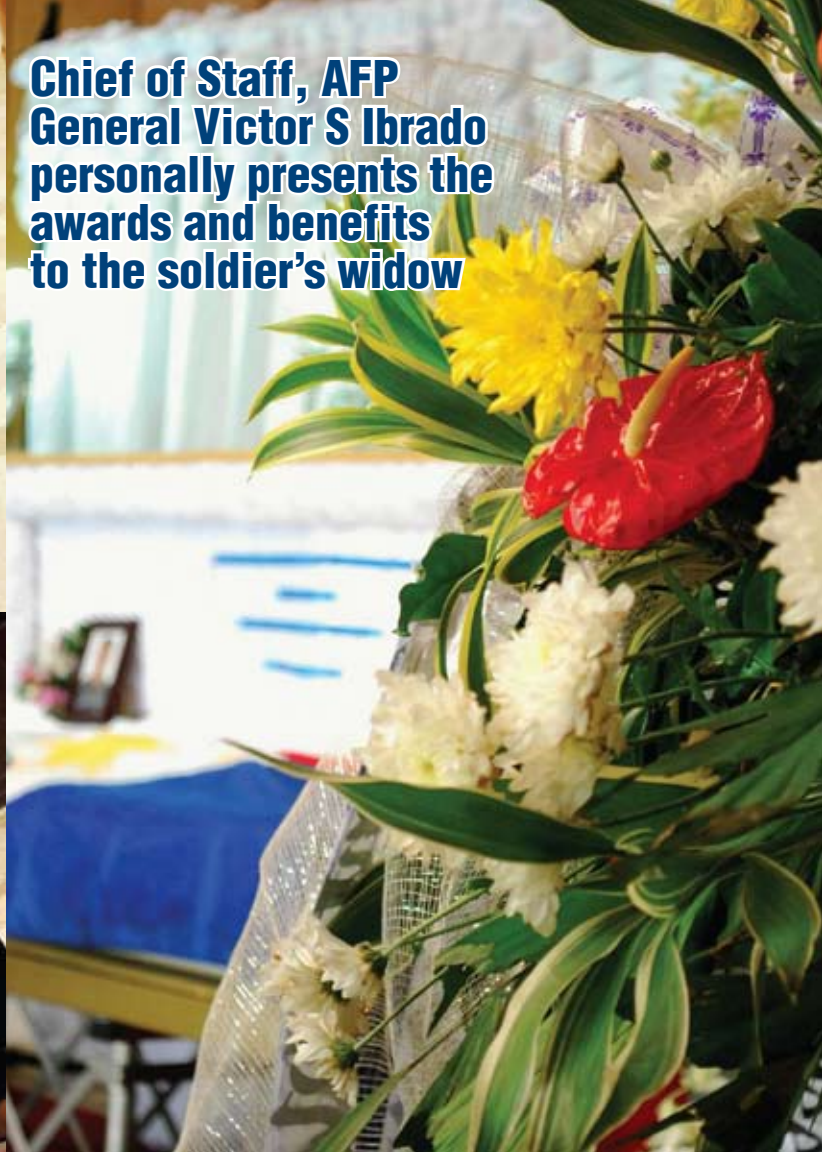
— Special Reports. www.gmanews.tv



GMA7's “Wish Ko Lang” Anchor Vicky Morales comforts Marilou Ancheta in one of the episodes.



**Chief of Staff, AFP
General Victor S Ibrado
personally presents the
awards and benefits
to the soldier's widow**





Your grief over their loss may not make you realize that they are heroes; but to a grateful nation, they will always be

Maj. Gen. Jorge Segovia, Army's 2nd Infantry (Jungle Fighter) Division Commander consoles Sheryl Regua, widow of Cpl Adriano Regua, as Army Commanding General Lt. Gen. Delfin N. Bangit lays the posthumous promotion.

Sgt. Regua was one of the seven Army men who offered their lives while on rescue operations for the victims of the tropical depression "Ondoy."

He was the detachment commander of his disaster response team deployed at Mabitac, Laguna that saved more than 200 lives. He died trying to rescue one of his men from being swept away by the rampaging flood.



**Secretary
of National
Defense
Gilberto C.
Teodoro Jr.
honors the
soldiers and
CAAs who
offered the
ultimate
sacrifice**







In support of the AFP's overall disaster response and relief operations



The Philippine Army employed more than 2,000 of its personnel including reservists to help in the clean-up drive in the affected areas of Metro Manila and Rizal.



**In parallel effort with the civilian authorities,
the Army shares its resources, both human and materiel**



Newly acquired Army KM450 trucks traversing the highway after they were dispatched to augment the mobility assets of the rescue and relief operations in flood-stricken areas of Metro Manila and Rizal.



**Their pillars of strength,
their steady anchors,
the Army ladies doing
their share**





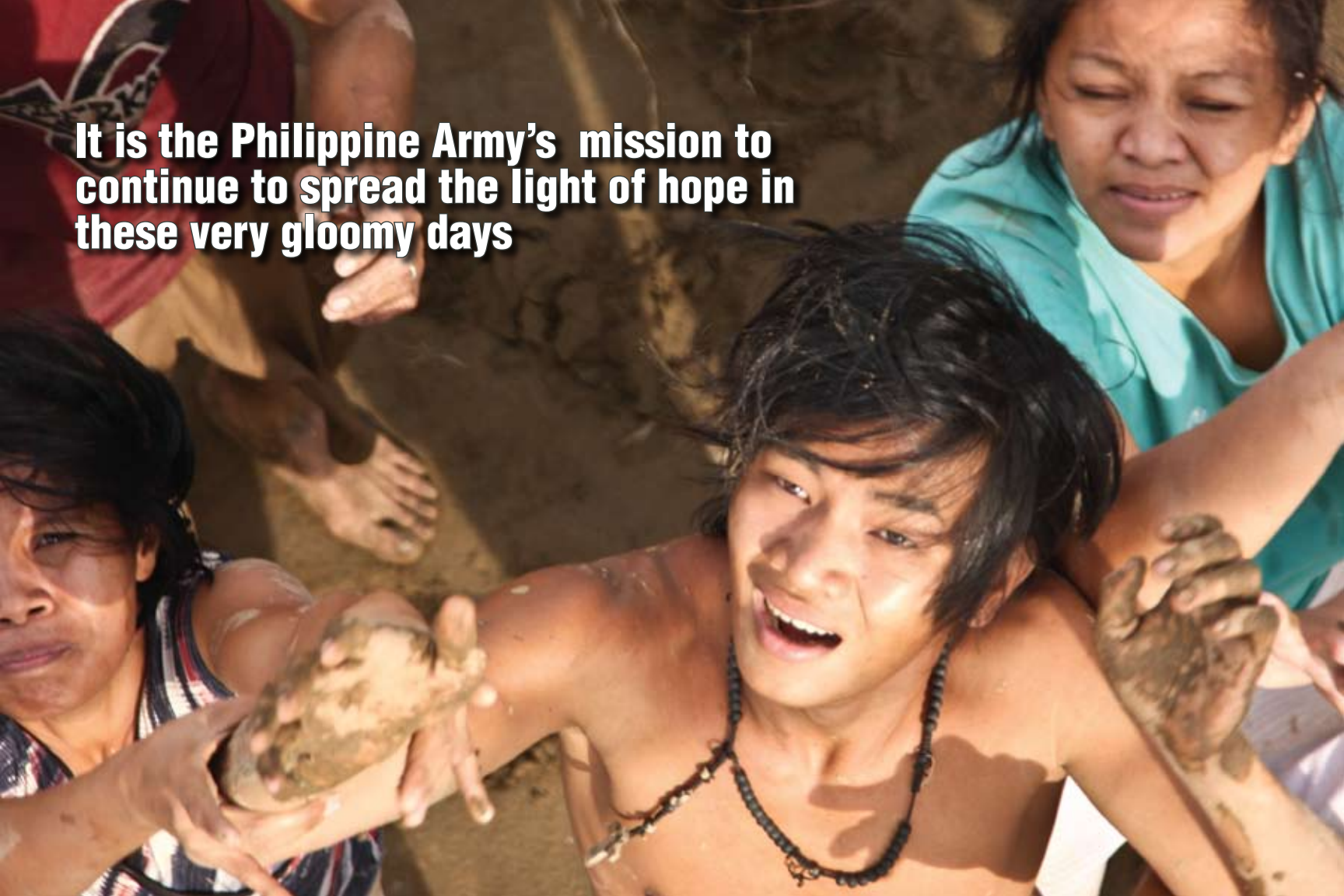
**Sharing the
responsibility of
making the lives
of many a little
easier**



**The disaster victims were
growing weary and restless**



**It is the Philippine Army's mission to
continue to spread the light of hope in
these very gloomy days**



They came, armed not with guns, but with their medical implements, their bare hands and a strong resolve to heed the call of the times.






**With U.S. allies extending
needed services to the people**

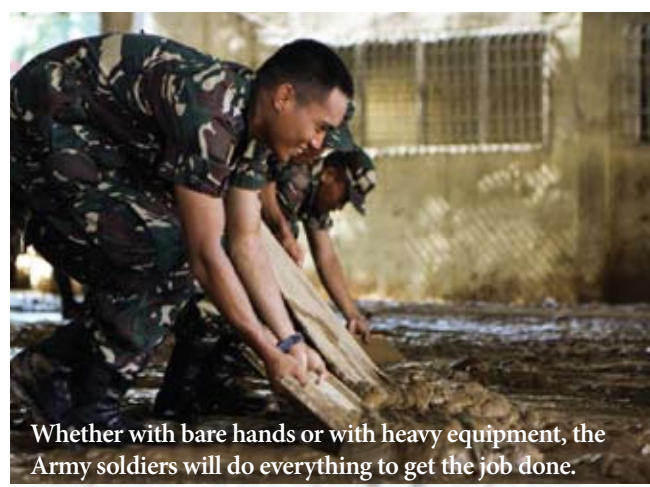




American medics providing help to victims of the calamity draw mixed emotions from children.



Clean-up Operation in Marikina



Whether with bare hands or with heavy equipment, the Army soldiers will do everything to get the job done.

**Team Army: No
task is too great
for dedicated men
working together
in service to their
countrymen**





**This is the Philippine Army's
brand of service with no
expectations other than a
very human tendency to wish
to be treated with kindness
and dignity by their own
countrymen**



**YOUR ARMY
SOLDIER WILL
ALWAYS BE
YOUR HERO...**

In the onslaught of typhoon “Ondoy”, heroes emerged; selflessness reigned amid the disaster; and a small tinge of hope inspired many to hold on to life.

Seven Philippine Army personnel displayed exceptional courage in the face of tragedy, losing their lives as they struggled through flood waters bringing people to safety; hundreds were saved.

Relief operations immediately followed, wherein Philippine Army troops shared the responsibility of making the lives of many a little easier. From relief distribution to clean up drives, Army soldiers remained committed and steadfast.

This is supreme form of sacrifice – duty first before family. This is an ultimate expression of love – dying in order that others may live.

Inspired by this heroism, the Philippine Army shall continue to offer help. It shall not cease in producing heroes who are willing to offer the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of many. It will keep the flame of selfless service and the spirit of bayanihan burning and alive.

Despite inherent limitations, the Philippine Army works, and works hard. In partnership with the different government agencies, organizations and private individuals, the Philippine Army will continue to be *“At your service across the land.”*



On 17 October 2009, the Philippine Army activated the Multi-Role Force Battalion also known as the Army Contingent for Emergency (ACE) to further enhance its disaster response capability.



*"We can do no great things,
only small things with great love."*

— Mother Teresa



At your service across the land...

www.army.mil.ph