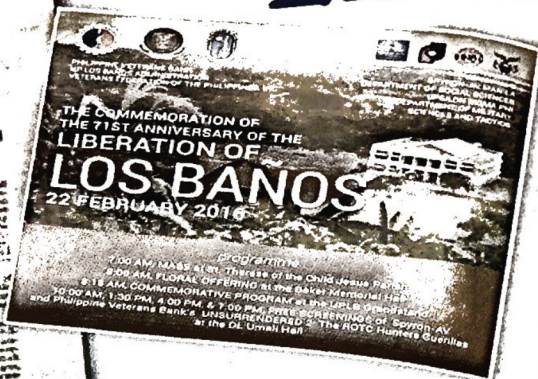


71st ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF LOS BAÑOS

Commemorating this successful operation is important to both Americans and Filipinos.



Guadalupe G. Morales, RN, MSN
Associate Member, 11th Airborne Division

On February 23, 1945 members of B company, 1st Bn., 511th Infantry Regiment parachuted into Los Baños internment camp, where they were joined by over 100 Philippine guerrillas to rescue over 2,100 civilian internees being held prisoner by the Japanese. After they were freed, the prisoners were then ferried to safety by the 672nd AMTRAC Bn. This year marks the 71st anniversary of the rescue.

On February 23, 1945 exactly 71 years ago today, the Japanese interment camp on Luzon, near Baker Hall at the UP College of Agriculture (UPCA), was successfully liberated by the American troops together with heroic and courageous Filipino guerrillas. The Raid of Los Baños, as it is known, was hailed as one of the most successful military rescue operations in modern history, as stated by Ret. Col. Ciscar during his speech honoring the liberators of Los Baños, both Americans and Filipinos. He associated the success of the operations to the determination of all involved and stated that "only those who are prepared to fight a war will attain success".

It was a privilege and an honor to have represented the 11th Airborne Division during the commemoration of the 71st anniversary of the Liberation of Los Baños held at the UPLB Campus on February 19, 2016. The event was spearheaded by the Philippine Veterans Bank together with UP Los Baños and the Veterans Federation of the Philippines, Inc. The activities for the day focused on the context of lessons learned from the war, recognition of the heroism and bravery of the men and women both young and old and the collective actions that led to the liberation of Los Baños from the Japanese.

Veterans, UP Los Baños and UP Rural High School management/staff as well as representatives from the National and Local Government of Laguna have graced the occasion. Ms. Gemma Cruz Araneta, former Secretary of Tourism (1998 to 2001) and the first Filipino and Asian to win the Miss International Title (1964) was the guest of honor. Also present were UP Los Baños Chancellor Fernando Sánchez Jr., UP Los Baños Dean of College of Arts and Sciences Dr. Felino Lansigan, Ret. Col. Michael Angelo Ciscar from the Veterans Federation of the Philippines, Prof. Ricardo Jose of UP Diliman, Ret.

Gen. Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr. from Bases Conversion Development Authority and some war veterans with their families headed by Mrs. Sofia Tidon.

The program started with a morning mass at 7AM at St. Therese of the Child Jesus Parish church followed by a floral offering ceremony at the Baker Memorial Hall and the commemorative program at the UP Los Baños Grandstand. The guest speakers shared their views about the liberation of Los Baños in different perspectives: military, academe, and as a war veteran. Focuses of message are the lessons learned from the past and way forward to the future. History doesn't give much emphasis on the roles of the Filipino guerrillas during the war according to Prof. Ricardo Jose of UP Diliman. It is noteworthy to retell history and "share the combined efforts of the Filipino guerrillas and American troops to liberate the internees". He further stated that this "textbook rescue operations" is not only for the American paratroopers but for Filipino guerrillas also.

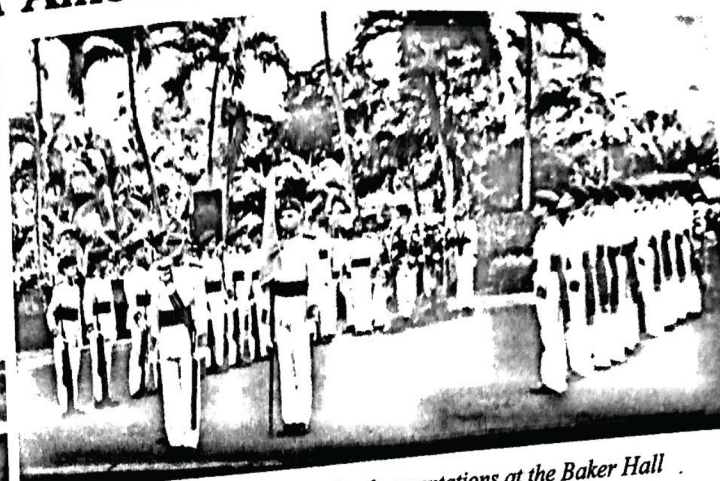
The great lessons from this rescue operation should be emphasized with the youth of today as stated by Ret. Gen. Pio Catapang Jr. He further recommends the need to "highlight the heroism and courage of the liberating forces, the sacrifices of the internees and civilians so the youth will know and understand our own history". Mrs. Sofia Tidon, a war veteran shared her experience during the war, how her parents and sibling got killed thus forcing her to come and join the guerilla movement. She emphasized that after all that had happened, "I realize the need to forgive. To learn from the past and cut the negative cycle and instead focus to promote unity, service and peace."



Scholars of the Los Baños Liberation Memorial Scholarship Foundation of UP Rural High School take part in the celebration activities with Mr. Lucky Guillermo, Ret. Gen. Gregorio Pio Catapang Jr. from Bases Conversion Development Authority; Dr. Felino Lansigan, Dean of UPLB College of Arts and Sciences; Prof. Liza Carascal, Principal UP Rural High School; and Ms. Guadalupe Morales, representative and Associate member of the 11th Airborne Division Association.



Honored guest and dignitaries participate in the solemn liberation services.



Honor guards prepare to make floral presentations at the Baker Hall Memorial during the 71st Anniversary of the liberation of Los Baños.



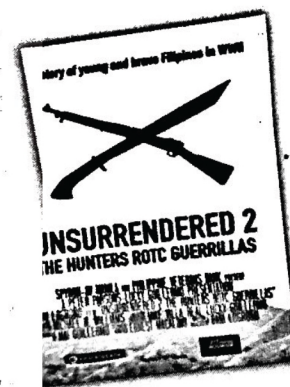
Rural High School student chorus celebrates in song.

Speaker Ret. Col. Michael Angelo Ciscar of the Veterans Federation.



Photos provided by UP Rural High School and Guadalupe Morales.

The Baker Hall Memorial.



The program was followed by a free screening of "UNSURRENDERED 2: The ROTC Hunter Guerrillas

This new World War II documentary tells the story of disbanded ROTC college students who independently organized one of the earliest guerrilla resistance in the Philippines. The film retells the legendary stories of the Hunters through riveting interviews with veterans, historians, and descendants of the guerrillas.

(<http://www.expatch.org/2015/09/28/new-philipino-world-war-ii-documentary-unsundered-2-premiered-at-the-ayala-museum/>).

essor Liza Carascal, Principal of the UP Rural High School opened and omed all the organizers and guests of the film showing of Unsundered2: ROTC Hunter Guerrillas. She emphasized the importance of the film to the youth of today in knowing and understanding the important role of inos in the liberation of Los Baños. Prof. Carascal also took the opportunity reduce the scholars of the Los Baños Liberation Memorial Scholarship dation (LBMSF) and provided brief history, importance and impact of the cholarship to selected and deserving students of UP Rural High School.

