

February 4, 2010

### **BK 2010 Heads for Humanitarian and Civic Assistance Activities in Ilocos**

Philippine and U.S. members of the armed forces will conduct multiple medical, dental, veterinary and engineering assistance activities in Northern and Central Luzon from February 15 to March 19, 2010 as part of Balikatan 2010 exercises. These activities are a continuation of U.S. humanitarian assistance to the Philippines after the devastating storms of 2009. They will also be training opportunities for both of our armed forces in providing relief and assistance together in the event of natural disasters and other crises that endanger public health and safety.

The provinces of Albay, Masbate, and Sorsogon were among the locations that received medical and engineering assistance during Balikatan 2009, which were received with very warm welcome from the local Bicolanos.

The engineering projects will include the construction of three two-room schools in the municipality of Sinit in Ilocos Sur, in Barangays Teppeng, Cadanglaan, and Marnay; two-room school and a flood control facility in Barangay Pias, and a health center in Barangay Baluarte in the municipality of Salcedo as part of The Engineering Civic Action Program (ENCAP) of Balikatan 2010.

In addition Medical and Dental Civic Action Projects (MEDCAP) will be held in various barangays in the municipalities of Sinit and Salcedo. The seven target barangays are Cabarambanan, Cadanglaan, Barabac, Teppeng, Quimallogon in Sinit and Pias and San Jose in Salcedo. At present, a small group composed of Philippine and US troops is already doing advance work in Northern and Central Luzon to ensure the engineering projects will meet the highest quality and safety standards and can be turned over to the communities before the March 19 closing ceremony.

The humanitarian and civic assistance projects for Balikatan 2010 are practical exercises that focus on reaching communities that need assistance.