

May 17, 2010

AFF WELCOMES 1st PEACEKEEPERS TO GOLAN HEIGHTS

Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City – Members of the 1st Peacekeeping Contingent to Golan Heights (PCGH) were formally welcomed by Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Delfin Natividad Bangit today at the General Headquarters Canopy.

Gen. Bangit awarded the United Nations Service Medal to the 326 members of the 1st PCGH headed by Col. Milfredo M. Melegrito. He rendered the completeness report before the Chief of Staff during the ceremony.

The U.N. Service Medal is awarded to Filipino peacekeepers for their meritorious service and for ably performing their duties for the country and the U.N. The 1st PCGH returned to the Philippines after their six-month tour of duty.

“Not only is their participation historical, their assignment also coincides with the opportune moment when the Philippines took over the leadership of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) under Maj. Gen. Natalio Ecarma. With all these, one can only infer that the UN and the international community have very high regard for the Philippine government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. And I am glad that we never fall short of their expectations.” Gen. Bangit said in his speech.

The 1st PCGH took part in static, mobile, surveillance and inspection operations 24/7 in accordance with the ceasefire and protocol to the agreement in the area of separation and area of limitation in the given area of responsibility.

Col. Melegrito, Commander of 1st Peacekeeping Contingent to Golan Heights, considers it as a “successful experience”. He also hopes that the peacekeepers from Golan Heights would be able to apply what they learned in their six-month mission.

Col. Gregory M. Cayetano, Commanding Officer of AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center is all praises on the 1st PCGH. He said that based on reports, they performed well in their duties. He further adds that they are "at par" with other UN contingents before them.

By virtue of a U.N. Security Council resolution 3500 (1974) dated May 1974, the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) was established. At the request of the U.N. department of peacekeeping operations on May 2009, the Philippine government agreed to contribute personnel, equipment and services for a Headquarters support platoon at UNDOF headquarters and a Philippine battalion at the southern portion of UNDOF area of responsibility to assist the U.N. in its mission to carry out its mandate and bring about the international peace for the Syrian and Israeli governments.