

Proposed message for Testimonial dinner Hosted by UPBSFI
Venue: 8/F Samba Pavilion 1, Shangri-la, The Fort, BGC
Date & Time: 04 1830 August 2024

Pleasantries...

At the onset, I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude for tonight's testimonial dinner arranged and hosted by Brods JJ and Ivan. I am both humbled by the gesture and delighted to be amongst all of you.

Brods, I joined the Betan Elite as a 1st year high school student in SLU Boys' High School. The motto of "brotherhood of scholars" has lured me into joining the Elite being a member of the Science section...actually more than half of the section were members.

Later on in college, I begged the senior Brods to accept me as an amuyong. They seemed to be reluctant, at first. The Fraternity then was banned because one of our members from another Manila university died a few hours after the final rites a year before; and university policy discouraged freshmen from joining any organization or fraternity during the 1st semester. But I insisted and since I, initially, was the only one, they had to find another recruit. (You know the Brods, choosy and pakipot...quality over quantity...even if there is only one man standing, he will never compromise his beliefs. As stubborn as a bull). So, they finally found someone, and we were called "body and soul". Unfortunately, my buddy or "batchka" quit after the midterms, but I was determined to become one of the admired, tough, ruggedly good-looking and cool guys in campus, so in August 6, 1984 I

finally made it. Tonight is actually, an advance anniversary celebration of my 40th year of survival...so, thank you Brod JJ and Ivan...

...after long and sometimes sleepless nights of jug (with residents Brods and LCs) hugging around the bon fire and sometimes elsewhere...a few rumbles/ fist fights here and there, mediation with student affairs, skipping classes for a couple of beers leading to popping of the famous round post or quatro kantos ginebra gin, tambay duties, LOAs, etc...then, reality started to kick in...what do I really want to do with my life?

After a reckless and foolhardy youth, I found myself entering the portals of PMA in April 1986. As fate would have it, my Math-Physics major subjects in UP would help me breeze thru the exams; and then later through the academic years. More than that, my initiation rites experience (which we was actually hazing and maltreatment) we all, as Beta Sigmans endured, helped me through the months of plebehood physical regimen, developing in me the values of patience, perseverance and determination. There were also other similarities between our Frat's way of accepting new recruits and the PMA brand of instilling military values, aside from the physical and mental challenges - like selfless service, unending memorisation of notes and recitations, indoctrination under pressure...PMA training was only longer, but the programs were quite similar.

After 4 years of military education and training, I graduated in 1990 and subsequently volunteered to the Philippine Army. I wanted to be in the "middle of the action", so to speak, that was what we were trained for anyway, so why chose for anything else...our core competency is war

fighting. Here's a bit of trivia...before 1989, graduating cadets were required to draw lots (ping pong balls to be exact) and whatever they picked, the hand that was dealt, is where their journey began as 2nd Lieutenants in either the Army, the Navy, the Air Force or the Philippine Constabulary. We were luckier...

So, I volunteered again in Mindanao, where I thought the action was...but eventually landed in Bicol with the 2nd Infantry Division, only to find out that the fighting there was as fierce. I was deployed there for 5 years. In 1995, I joined the Light Armor Brigade (LABde), PA and was assigned in Cotabato and Eastern Mindanao for almost 5 years. Coming from field duty I held several office positions at the Headquarters of Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine Army as a Civil Military Operations Officer.

I also served as Senior Aide-de-Camp to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Speaker Arnulfo Fuentesbella of the 13th Congress in August 2000, and performed special Detailed Service outside of the Armed Forces of the Philippines as Military Assistant to the former Secretary Hernani Braganza of DAR with Ying as HEA. I also became a member of the 3-man Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) for the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHIHL) with the GRP Peace panel from 2012 to 2017.

Coming back from special detail, I later on served as Commandant of The Armor School before taking my post as the Commander of the 2nd Cavalry (Masigasig) Squadron, Mechanized Infantry Division, Philippine Army. This was followed by my stint as Commander, Civil Military Operations

Regiment. In Aug 2019, I led the 2nd Mechanized Infantry (Magbalantay) Brigade, Armor Div with Lanao del Norte and Iligan City as my operational area. Before my current designation as Commander of the the Southern Luzon Command, I was Commander of the Armor (Pambato) Division, Philippine Army. The premier Armor unit of the AFP.

That my beloved Brothers sums up my 38 years, 4 months and 3 days to date in the military Service and still counting. Every time, I narrate my biosketch or someone reads it, I feel like I am about to retire and leave the Service...

Somebody once said, "life for us is not to just exist in this world, but we need to live it, until we cease to exist". Life is a journey where our choices matter. My life in the Army and the AFP in general is challenging and exciting. I was exposed to the realities and disparities of life. I met and came across a sea and myriad of people. I've had my share of good and evil. And through the years, I tried my best to do what is right than doing the right thing. Discernment is an important facet of life. In this very uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, one can easily be lost; and life's purpose is sometimes difficult to find. Brods, I am, admittedly, a delinquent Brod. Because of my career and profession, I've been inactive in our fraternity for quite sometime...but to make up for my responsibilities and years of absences from the frat, I endeavoured to live up by our Credo and 9 principal truths if only to prove myself worthy of our Fraternity's ideals. When we were being taught how to develop our leadership traits and hone our motivational skills, we were required to come up with our own Command Philosophy which would be the bedrock and guiding pillars of our leadership principles.

I enumerated three - integrity, service and excellence. These values, along with what I have learned along the way, drive me up to this day and my role as a Servant-Leader where mission accomplishment is paramount and personnel welfare is of primordial concern. In soldiery, I found my purpose. Our beloved Beta Sigma fraternity instilled in me the fundamentals of these ideals, and gave meaning and direction to my calling...that's why I am standing in front of all of you tonight, not only as a proud Officer and gentleman of the AFP, but first, a Beta Sigman.

Brothers, before I end, allow me to paraphrase something I said during our 78th founding anniversary with the MSA...as I would like this to reverberate in the annals of our brotherhood, so that the younger generations of Beta Sigmans would strive to pursue nothing short of excellence in whatever path they take...Brods, we have a glorious past. Let us live and continue to build a future worthy of this past. Let's make our choices count. Together, let us chart our destiny. It's a matter of putting premium to what is important, for everything that we hold dear and cherish in our lives - for God, our country, family, our revered fraternity and ourselves. Duty, devotion, love and obligation to the fraternity is not only for our brothers but for the majority of the Filipinos out there who need our help. Brods, we are more than a fraternity. We are an important segment of the society. We have obligations and this is what sets us apart from others - a shared vision, a shared responsibility of the Beta Sigma Fraternity.

Brods, it's been an honor to be given this accolade. I hope, I made you all proud, as I am proud to be a member of our illustrious and noble fraternity. Again, thank you for this opportunity and thank you to all of you for

coming...also, once again, to Brods Ivan and JJ for hosting this testimonial. Let us all continue to live the Beta Sigma Fraternity way of life. Let us excel.

Mabuhay tayong lahat, mabuhay ang Kapatitrang Beta Sigma. Para sa bayan at sa Filipino. Cheers!