

## **A RESOLVE REAFFIRMED**

**Col. Augusto Padua**

**2021 Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino Soldier**

Conferment Ceremonies

September 2, 2021

Guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I'm proud to receive the award on behalf of my fellow Metrobank Foundation Outstanding Filipino soldiers.

"Leaflets instead of bombs" was the tagline associated by the jurors of my accomplishments. Leaflet dropping, however, is not a new concept. Records show of their use as early as World War I. Commanders, however, normally look for that decisive engagement – that gallant stand in the battlefield, and for us, fighter pilots, victory in the air.

In college, as Corps Commander of the ROTC and eventually as Student Council President, I have realized that we and the enemy have the same aspiration: a sustainably prosperous nation. One, however, is through democracy and the other through communism. To prove that they are wrong is not to eliminate them but to show that Democracy works... by good governance.

The Government's whole-of-nation approach came at the right time. We reached out to the hinterlands of Cagayan Valley, the lairs of the rebels, by informing them of government programs – information no less than the truth but withheld by communist cadre leadership by having their frontline fighters incommunicado or cut off from the rest of society.

Internally, we received words of frustration questioning whether our non-kinetic operations were effective after all. From that viewpoint, I would understand the valuable resources spent by the Air Force... until a breakthrough came. From January 2020, rebels in groups came out from hiding bringing with them the leaflets we dropped. The surrenders were documented by the media. Up until my reassignment, a total of 103 returned to the fold of the law with three (3) guerilla fronts dismantled. No amount of bombs dropped can equal that to this day.

This award reaffirms my resolve to carry on with my advocacy. More than a pat on the back, they're hugs-and-kisses for a job well done. I will forever be grateful for this honor. "May your tribe increase" as my nominator tells me and so is my wish for you, the management and staff of Metrobank Foundation.

Thank you, Governor Manuel Mamba for the nomination sir. I thank my superiors led by our Commanding General, Lt. Gen Allen Paredes, for the untiring support. To the men and women who served with me, thank you for the sacrifice in accomplishing our mission.

My fellow awardees in the AFP, Col Elmer Boongaling and TSgt Jake Belino, your accomplishments bespeak of our clamor for peace. Congratulations to you all! This is our moment. But I'm sure Mr George Ty never meant for us to sit on our laurels but to carry on with our jobs, beyond excellence.

Finally, I thank my wife Gilda, for the patience and loving support; my daughter, Ysabela, for the inspiration; my parents, Jun and Mary, with my two (2) favorite sisters for the love and guidance as I trek through life. With all God's blessings, I can never ask for more.

And to the Filipino People, this award is dedicated to you! Thank you.