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Good afternoon to everyone. My name is Mr. Neville Jay Manaois. I'll be talking only for ten minutes, so please regale me.

I have been studying and researching about the 10th BCT and PEFTOK and the Korean War since 2001, and I'm still discovering and learning new things, reminding me that I am still an infant in the field of Korean War and Korean studies. The 10th BCT and the PEFTOK is a fascinating part of our nation's history. There should be no reason for it to fall into historical obscurity. I have listed several reasons why the 10th BCT and PEFTOK and the Korean War are memorable—part of our history and should not be forgotten.

First reason: There are enough stories from soldiers about the battlefield that would keep anyone interested and engaged. I was very fortunate to interview a lot of 10th BCT veterans. From these interviews, they share enough human elements to keep the story memorable and very compelling, making me wonder why it's still a forgotten war. The human stories and elements make everything memorable. The 10th BCT soldiers always begin with the cold weather. They can never stop talking about the cold weather. It made an impression to me that this was probably their greatest enemy. The succeeding paragraphs are excerpts from interviews of veterans I have collected over time.

This is from 2nd Lieutenant Francisco Tamondong of Heavy Company, narrating how he faced the winter season: “It was winter, and we were fighting two wars. We were fighting the North Koreans, and we were fighting the winter. When we were there, we just had a sweater and a field jacket to keep ourselves warm. We kept the trucks running, and we were at the exhaust pipe. We did not care about carbon monoxide to keep ourselves warm. We found ourselves on top of each other.”

This is also coming from Ret. Maj. Maximo Young, whom I interviewed in 2003, who was a 1st Sergeant in the Korean War, explaining the clothing supplies issued in Taegu: “We were given field jackets plus the sleeping bags. When the month of October arrived, we were transferred to Taegu. In Taegu, we were expecting issuances of parkas, jackets, and boots, but they never arrived. The boots we used in Korea came from the Philippines. We were using Ang Tibay boots, which were considered okay that time, unlike now. We were also expecting more weapons and other personal equipment.”

The human stories continue with the different events in the Korean War. The 10th BCT soldiers talk in great lengths about the entry of the Chinese forces, which pushed the UN forces almost back to the Pusan perimeter in 1951: “The Chinese descended from the mountains and started the first phase of its offensive. The UN forces were overwhelmed with the massive number of Chinese soldiers.”

Ret. Col. Francisco Tamondong, who was a 2nd Lieutenant during the Korean War, narrates the Chinese attack on their hill: “The Chinese were attacking using sheer number. We noticed not all of the Chinese soldiers were armed. The first

wave of attacking soldiers was using rifles. The second wave still carried weapons. The third would run to the battle fields without any weapon. They would use the weapons from their dead comrades.”

The Battle of Yuldong is probably the most famous part of the 10th BCT. It took part and was immortalized in the history of the PEFTOK. The battle is the first Chinese spring offensive to turn back the tide and force the UN to the South. The UN commanders received intelligence reports that other massive attacks were being planned by the Chinese to dislodge the UN forces and retake vital areas such as Seoul. The 10th BCT, composed of only 900 hundred soldiers and enlisted men, received orders to move out and deploy in the front line. This is where they faced the ferocity of the Chinese forces.

1st Lieutenant Noberto Blanco narrates the Chinese attack: “Some of the Chinese soldiers were drugged. The Chinese were crawling. They were all drugged. A few Chinese soldiers carried rifles. Most of them carried grenades. The Chinese would strike or hit grenades before throwing them to our positions. After the first wave of Chinese soldiers attacked us, I heard a bugle sound. I was so terrified. The Chinese would then attack our position using seasoned veterans.”

This eventually continues with other accounts. The fighting was so close that the dead soldiers were piling up just in front of the Filipino soldiers’ fox hole. 1st Lieutenant Noberto Blanco narrates the confusion in the frontlines: “We would think of that time if it would be better if we joined the platoon in our right flank. I think it was the platoon of the commandant Daquigan, then I told the soldiers if we went there, we might be mistaken as an enemy. They might shoot

us. A misencounter might happen. The other platoon might think that we were the Chinese attacking them. If we identified ourselves as Filipinos, the Chinese in the area might shoot us. It's better to stay here and fight."

These stories are very, very compelling. They would make any book a page-turner. The PEFTOK stories are filled with enough human elements that will keep the stories alive for a long period of time.

A second item that the 10th BCT, the PEFTOK, and the Korean War should be immortalized, should be remembered for is the numerous historical markers that we have commemorating them. To begin with, the 10th BCT has its own movie entitled "The 10th Battalion: SAF 38th Parallel Korea." From what I can gather, this was released from 1951 to 1952. The movie did its best to depict the Korean War.

Aside from the movie, there was massive coverage about the event. So, as you can see, we have different pictures of that film. As always mentioned in the studies of the PEFTOK, reporters such as Benigno Aquino, Jr. was a 17-year-old Korean War correspondent. He sent pictures and stories of the battlefield.

Interestingly, Benigno Aquino, Jr., a war correspondent at that time, wrote a movie about the Korean War. Ninoy Aquino, Jr. wrote the story and the screenplay of the movie "Korea 1952". It was nominated for the year's FAMAS Best Picture and Best Screenplay for Benigno Aquino. It won two FAMAS major awards: Best Supporting Actor for Gil de Leon and Best Supporting Actress for Nida Blanca, who was only 16

years old that time, and in just barely one year, she portrayed a Korean War wife.

So, if you can see here, we can have actor Johnny Reyes, writer Benigno “Ninoy” Aquino, director Lamberto V. Javellana, Lt. Boni Serrano, and actor Jaime dela Rosa.

There are also enough historical markers and edifice. The Boni Serrano Avenue is named after the 10th BCT soldier popularized by Benigno Aquino in his articles. He swam across an icy sea and captured North Korean soldiers, but the 10th actually tells me a lot of interesting trivia about him, which I am prepared to tell anyone who would like to know more about him.

Capt. Conrado Yap, probably one of the most famous soldiers of the 10th BCT—his heroism in the Battle of Yuldong was immortalized by the stories of his men. Capt. Conrado Yap, commander of the tank company or the heavy weapons company, received news that one of the hills occupied by his company was captured by the Chinese during the heavy assault in the evening. Almost the entire unit, along with its officers, Lt. Jose Artiaga, was killed during the night assault. Amid all the confusion, Capt. Conrado Yap decided to mount a counter-offensive to take the hill and rescue possible survivors and recover the dead soldiers of his tank company.

As 2nd Lt. Francisco Tamondong explained to me while he was basically trying to recall the events, the reason why Capt. Conrado Yap wanted to go there was to recover and rescue the soldiers of Lt. Jose Artiaga. He told the men, “When we go back to the Philippines, I want to bring back the officers and men as whole, whether dead or alive.” He wanted to keep his

word, even though he would sacrifice himself. A rescue team was organized, and remnants of the tank company provided cover and fire support.

Capt. Conrado Yap's name can now be found in numerous buildings of the Armed Forces of the Philippines—from the Yap Building in PMA in Baguio, Zambales, and Tarlac. And I would like to acknowledge the daughter of Capt. Conrado Yap. Please stand. She is basically the reason why I conducted my research on the 10th BCT.

So, despite all of this, the 10th BCT and the PEFTOK still fell into historical obscurity, just like the Korean War. There are so many explanations and theories why this happened. I fairly believe the main reason why the 10th BCT and the PEFTOK fell into historical obscurity is the fact that what the Filipinos and soldiers have achieved at that time was far more advanced than Filipino society and history can understand. Our soldiers answered the call of the UN and were taking part in the destiny of another country. We were fighting a modern warfare. We were accomplishing our mission. And Filipinos were taking an active role in another nation's history, even before we knew we could. It was an amazing achievement for the Philippines from the Second World War.

History has never been the search of evidence, nor the search of artefacts, nor the search for materials. History has never been the search for truth. History is one of those rare disciplines that searches for only one thing, and that is the search for meaning and value. Because without meaning or value, then it just becomes an event. What I have seen in my studies in people responding to the stories of the PEFTOK and the Korean War, when they talk about the soldiers'

experience in the fox holes, fighting the cold, the brotherhood, the camaraderie, this becomes very meaningful to a lot of people.

Filipinos are moved by how professional our soldiers are and how much they value each other. In order for us to remember the 10th BCT, PEFTOK and Korean War, we should keep hearing, and we should keep sharing the personal stories of our soldiers. Because in these stories, we will see that the Filipino soldiers continue to fight not because of the war but because they never want to let down the men beside them. The human element and component have always fascinated people to learn history and its human stories that would always make the 10th BCT and the PEFTOK alive and significant.

In closing, to the PEFTOK veterans and their families, it's hard really to talk about the PEFTOK, the 10th BCT, and the War in the past, since for me, your accomplishments are so very much in the present.

Thank you very much.