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2nd Battalion Combat Team (BCT)

My Friends,

I just whispered to our director, Quintana, I'll make it five minutes or less.

Well, our distinguished guests have already left, so the most important topics, or the most important narration that has been made this morning, as far as the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea is concerned, have already been made by no less than our Dr. Vilorio, who is also President of our Philippine Veterans Association, and then followed by no less than our Vice President, Forever Young, in his exploits in the Battle of Yuldong, followed by the Battle of Eerie, and finally, by the 14th BCT represented by Col. Gus Flores, who mentioned Christmas Hill. Like he said, it's a good thing he did mention that we likewise in the 2nd BCT enjoyed many, many "battles"—San Miguel Beer!

In Korea, we anticipated the San Miguel Beer to come in—almost a truckload, or maybe not just a truckload but a shipload—because our LST from the Philippines brought in the San Miguel Beer one case for every PEFTOK veteran that's in Korea. But, honestly, I didn't drink a single San Miguel Beer. You know why? Our battalion commander for the 2nd BCT, instead of distributing a case for each veteran, he'd say, "You guys don't drink. You're only 21 years old, especially our Privates, our Corporals, our Sergeants." They would listen to our commanding officer and said, "This San Miguel Beer will serve as the battle that will win the hearts and the friends of

our United Nations compatriots around the United Nations Command, particularly the Americans who love San Miguel Beer.” Oh, so you see? We did win the battle. We did win the hearts and minds and the friendship of our compatriots in Korea. Not on the battle ground, we won the battle against the enemy that was right in front of us.

We at 2nd BCT came in when the war was already at the peace talks. The 38th Parallel said, “Mistah, wala naman kayong ginagawa doon eh! Mga 2nd BCT, namamasyal lang!”

“Correction, please,” I said. “We did not sit on our ass out there, or drink San Miguel Beer! We had one training after another. We developed the vertical envelopment of the enemy. We used the helicopter to be able to come and fly beyond our demarcation line. And that was why it was a difficult job to just maintain the armistice out there.”

About the demarcation line, there was a one-mile distance between the North Koreans and the United Nations forces. The 2nd BCT used to cover for the 14th BCT and occupied the West Yanggu Valley of the United Nations Command, and there, we served as the division reserve of the 24th Division of the United States Army.

We didn’t sit on our ass! We were training from one type of experience that we had, particularly to make sure that we were trained on biological warfare, nuclear warfare, chemical warfare. That was what we did.

We didn’t sit on our ass out there! We were training from one morning to the next morning, from one week to three weeks, as far as seven weeks, so that when finally, there was no more reason for us to stay since there was no shooting war,

we finally left some time in April of 1955. But we left only one reinforced company, and this was commanded by one of our very able second lieutenants, Gregorio Vigilar. He came home with the good news that the 2nd BCT, as a compliment, was still very much honored, because we brought in the tradition of courage and the dedication to service of the Philippine soldier at the Korean War.

And you know what he said? Do you know that the Philippine contingent, represented by only one reinforced company, and he as second lieutenant, while parading in front of three generals of the United States Command; they saluted the 2nd BCT component of the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea. General Hall, General Taylor, and General Douglas MacArthur, who was still there in the United Nations Command. So, you see, we at the 2nd BCT, are proud that we were part of the Philippine Expeditionary Force to Korea.

Aside from this, I'd like to make one more comment about the Korean people. When we came in and the war was supposed to have ended, we were transported from Busan by railroad all the way to Yanggu Valley where we were supposed to be the reserve component of the 24th United States Army Division. All along the railroad track, which took about maybe much longer since it was an old railway, I personally noticed that from a war-torn country, such as the entire peninsula, from up north—the demarcation line up to Busan—there were green fields all over. In spite of the five-year Korean War, I could notice that there were green fields all over, which meant that the Korean people were not just worried about what was going to happen to them. They themselves were a very dedicated and hardworking people. I did not see a single

house, or edifice, or concrete. They were sleeping in mud houses covered, but then all over were green fields. To my mind, this is a trait of people that were industrious and self-reliant. In other words, they did not take the disaster as what it meant to the families, but rather, to be able for them to strive for their welfare, for their food.

And the one thing admirable about this was my personal experience with our encampment in the area. We are usually in a tent, and therefore, we were not surprised that little boys come in and say, “Sir, we help. We help.” So, this little Korean boy does our cleaning up the house, or the tent around, so it could be very clean. And every time, I’d ask one little boy, “What’s your name?” He’d say, “Kim, Sir!” Then, I ask another boy. “Kim, Sir!” So, our impression of all the boys in Korea was “Kim.” I was going to congratulate the Ambassador Kim Jae-shin, who is our Ambassador, who is a very, very capable man.

And therefore, I would say that we will try to duplicate—or even surpass—the dedication, the ideals of the Korean people. But one thing I would like to remind the youth, and especially here present today: Do not forget your nationalism. And that was why we in the Armed Forces, and we retired people, are always asking, “Where is our Reserve Officer Training Corps?” Because you are the future of the country.

Thank you very much.