

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

**AT THE 56TH FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY OF THE
250TH PRESIDENTIAL AIRLIFT WING**

[Delivered at Philippine Air Force (PAF) Multi-Purpose Gymnasium Colonel Jesus Villamor Air Base (CJVAB) in Pasay City | 02 September 2024]

Thank you very much to our Secretary of National Defense, Secretary Gilberto Teodoro... *[Please take your seats]* for his kind introduction.

The Special Assistant to the President, Secretary Anton Lagdameo and some members of the Cabinet who have joined us today. Of course Philippine Air Force Commanding General Stephen Parreño *[applause]*; and the 250th Presidential Airlift Wing Commander, Brigadier General Loreto Pasamonte *[applause]*; the officials and personnel for the Philippine Air Force here today to help us commemorate this important day; distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen, good morning.

It's with great pleasure that I am here to celebrate with you the 56th Founding Anniversary of the 250th Presidential Airlift Wing.

The 250th PAW has its roots in the 7001st Detachment, created on September 2, 1968. And since then, the 7001st Detachment evolved first into what was known to me as the 700 special mission wing, under then the command of General Martel and those were --- ito 'yung unit na talagang --- that we were as members of first family, that we were only allowed to use was only the 700 special mission wing and they provided a great service for us and for my father specially. It has now evolved into the 250th Presidential Airlift Wing, which has now served eight administrations.

This milestone demonstrates your dedication to your mandate for more than five decades now, and I am fortunate enough to witness this firsthand.

[Please] accept my deepest gratitude not only for ensuring that I am safe in transit but also for the security, safety that you provide for the first family, and our state guests – past and present.

Since we started this Administration, we have been on 445 flights. These flights represent all that the Presidency and the Presidential Airlift Wing stand for:

The courage to rise above challenges, the precision of movement, the unshakable trust in the craft and the crew to carry us forward, and the level of excellence and professionalism that you always demonstrate.

To Brigadier General Loreto Pasamonte and the former Wing Commanders who are present here today, we thank you for your perseverance in building a strong culture of safety and of excellence.

To our pilots, the Bluebirds, the crew, [and] the maintenance and administrative personnel – thank you once again for the commitment and professionalism that you have shown in every call of duty.

You continue to formulate ways so that I, the first family, and all the presidents and dignitaries of foreign countries, can safely reach our destination.

You ensure that we remain steadfast, secure, and moving forward, even when the winds threaten to pull us back, as evidenced by your 8,416 accident-[free] flying hours since the start of this Administration.

I could not --- I will say this outright. I could not do the job that I do if not for the professionalism and the provision of service that the Presidential Airlift Wing provides. I cannot imagine... Pagka mayroong bagyo, pagka mayroong krisis na hindi ko mapuntahan dahil walang eroplano o hindi lumilipad dahil sine-service, whatever; mahina 'yung maintenance, whatever; for the political things pag punta ko sa mga LGU.

I simply could not do the job that I need to do without the airlift wing available to me. And that is how important the job is that you do and that is not only directed towards myself, the first family, and all our VIP guests, but it is an important part of our effort at nation-building.

So understand... Maayos 'yung eroplano ninyo, 'yung sound system na lang ninyo ang may problema. *[laughter]*

Well maybe we can attribute that to the weather but nonetheless, again, once that as I said it is not only a service that you provide for me and for the first family, and for our guests, and our VIP guests, but it is a service that you provide for the country. That is how important a job it is that you do.

You enable me and the Cabinet members to fly around the country in support of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Missions.

This, you are doing despite the danger [in the air and the] disaster that we might meet on land. Through your service, we have been able to assess the surroundings, to be with our people, to help our fellow men and women in the fastest and safest way possible.

Like the journey of our nation, there will be times of turbulence—moments when the path seems uncertain, and the horizon is not clear. Through it all, we put our trust in you and in each other, to reliably weather any storm, like this one that we are weathering now.

Very good. *[laughter] [applause]*

These are the glitches that all of you have to deal with every day and that is why your job and your professionalism and your skill and the depth of your training will show through at any time, even in the large crisis and the little problems that we face once in a while.

So it is no small responsibility, [and] it is not one that goes unnoticed.

Let me extend my sincerest congratulations to our Unit and Individual Awardees. May your excellence continue to shine as an exemplar for others to emulate.

So, as we celebrate your achievements, I ask all of you to reflect not just on what you have accomplished, but on what lies ahead.

It is not enough for us to rest on the laurels of the past. We must look inward, examine our strengths and weaknesses, and commit ourselves to continuous improvement.

Let us be reminded that it is not just our work that defines us, but also the depth of our commitment, the strength of our character, and the nobility of our cause.

Indeed, you, our men and women in uniform in the 250th Presidential Airlift Wing carry not just the Presidency, but the hope of every Filipino in *Bagong Pilipinas*.

Rest assured that this Administration is resolute to see that your health, well-being and wellness are attended to so that you continue to carry out your duties properly.

Let us continue to rise higher, reach further, dream bigger; let us ensure that the legacy that you have built is not just remembered, but carried forward with pride and with purpose.

Mabuhay ang 250th Presidential Airlift Wing!

Mabuhay ang ating Sandatahang Lakas!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! *[applause]*

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