

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

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SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

**AT THE COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES OF THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY ACADEMY (PMA) “SIKLAB- LAYA”
CLASS OF 2025**

[Delivered at Fort General Gregorio del Pilar in Baguio City | 17 May 2025]

[Before we begin, troop commander you will give the command of tikas pahinga.]

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

The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain to the Philippines His Excellency Miguel Utray Delgado and the other esteemed members of the Diplomatic Corps; Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff General Romeo Brawner and the major service commanders; Philippine National Police General Rommel Francisco Marbil; Philippine Coast Guard Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan; and the PMA Superintendent Vice Admiral Caesar Bernard Valencia; Baguio City Mayor, Mayor Benjie Magalong; the officers, enlisted personnel and civilian employees of the Philippine Military Academy; the Cadet Corps of the Armed Forces of the Philippines led by PMA Siklab-Laya Class of 2025 and their families; *[applause]* my fellow workers in government; other distinguished guests; ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning.

First of all, my warmest congratulations to the Siklab-Laya Class of 2025!

You cadets are now full-fledged officers.

And as your Commander-in-Chief, I am impressed by your perseverance, strength of will, and dedication to reach this point.

We all know your path was not easy. Four years of discipline, training, hard work, and I am sure—some nights of self-doubt, wondering if this was the right choice.

But you did not give up. And now, you are here, ready to serve the country as new officers of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Kayo ang Siklab-Laya. *Sundalong Isinilang na Kasangga at Lakas ng Ating Bayan para sa Kalayaan.*

Remember that you carry a name that speaks of fire and of freedom. To be born a comrade. To be made strong for freedom. That is powerful, it is poetic.

Ladies and gentlemen, you are a class of many firsts.

You are the first group to be trained on Pag-asa Island itself.

You also brought the PMA's name to international fora and competitions that boast your organizational military skills, from academic conferences in Palermo to international sailing regattas in Italy and India, amongst others.

In every instance, you have proved that the Filipino soldier is ready to face the world with dignity and to show his excellence.

But beyond recognition, the most important lesson you carry is the understanding that warfare today goes beyond land, seas, and skies.

We have battles that are invisible to radar—ones that take place in cyberspace, in protecting information, in safeguarding the environment, and in helping communities during crises.

So physical strength and agility are no longer enough. What we need just as much—are your mental sharpness and your compassion.

Fortunately, your training now includes courses that were once unseen in the military academy—artificial intelligence, drone operations, strategic thinking, ethical leadership, amongst others.

These are all important. But what is also important, and possibly the most important, is your love of country. That is, an officer who knows how to love his or her country despite its flaws, in the most sincere way.

Our country needs men and women who put their country and others above themselves; who sacrifice for the good of all; and who overcome odds because they believe in the bright future ahead.

Isa na pong halimbawa si Cadet First Class Jessie Ticar Jr., ang Valedictorian ng Siklab-Laya at ika-apat na Summa Cum Laude sa kasaysayan ng PMA.

Sa pagnanais niyang makatapos ng pag-aaral at mabigyan ng magandang buhay ang kanyang mga magulang, nagsikap siyang maging sundalo.

Sa kabila ng mga pagsubok sa buhay, sa kabila ng kahirapan, at sa kabila ng pangungulila sa kanyang pamilya, nagawa pa niyang makuha ang pinakamataas na karangalan sa kanyang klase.

At ngayon, maisusulat na ni Cadet First Class Ticar Jr. ang bagong kabanata ng kanilang buhay.
[applause]

Nais kong ring pasalamatan at batiin ang inyong mga magulang. Alam kong may pag-aalinlangan sa kanilang puso, ngunit pinili nilang ibahagi kayo sa ating bayan at suportahan ang inyong mga pangarap.

It is also noteworthy the fact that of the 266 graduates today, 54 are women.

Ang mga kababaihang kadete ng PMA ang patunay na ang tapang, talino, at galing ay hindi nakaayon sa kasarian.

Nawa'y dumami pa ang mga kababaihang sasali sa hanay ng kasundaluhan. Nawa'y magsilbi kayong inspirasyon sa bawat batang babaeng nangangarap na magkaroon ng mahalagang papel sa ating bansa.

Let us not forget, of course, those who quietly supported and waited outside the battlefields: the parents, the siblings, spouses, the children, the grandparents, and the friends of our graduates.

If the child is strong, upright, patriotic, then of course, it is because their family and loved ones are so. *Ganoon po kayo.*

Sigurado po ako na kayo ang unang nagsanay sa kanila sa disiplina. Mula sa paghuhugas ng pinggan, hanggang sa pagtupi ng kumot. Kung tutuusin, siguro bago pa kayo sumabak dito sa PMA, dumaan na kayo sa mas mahigpit at mas mahirap na boot camp ni nanay at tatay sa bahay. [applause]

You pushed them to go further, even in their most difficult moments. You understood even when they had to cut off contact for weeks or months. You endured the distance and the longing.

In fact, with every award and medal that we give today, there is a corresponding sacrifice from you.

Kaya sa inyo rin po ito, saludo rin po ako sa inyo. [applause]

This is my prayer to the members of Siklab-Laya: wherever your duty may take you, may it be in the mountains, in the seas, or communities, serve with dignity; serve with honor, serve with love.

And I hope that when you are at your lowest, you will remember that you have your fellow Filipinos who are praying for you and are supporting you and are behind you.

You have an entire nation that respects and wholeheartedly believes in you.

Kayo ang mga bagong mukha ng serbisyo, ng kagitingan. Kayo ang Bagong Pilipino – na may disiplina, may husay, at may pagmamahal sa ating inang bayan.

Muli, sa Class of 2025—congratulations at maraming salamat sa pagpili ninyong manilbihan. Ito ay panata sa bandila, sa bayan, at sa taong-bayan.

Lastly, in the grand tradition of all commencement exercises of graduating classes of the Philippine Military Academy, I will sign before you the pardon of punishment in observance of the time-honored tradition on this very important day. *[applause]*

Mabuhay ang Siklab-Laya!

Mabuhay ang Philippine Military Academy!

Mabuhay ang Bagong Pilipinas! [applause]

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