

**Presidential Communications Operations Office
Presidential News Desk**

**SPEECH OF
PRESIDENT RODRIGO ROA DUTERTE
DURING THE NATIONAL HEROES DAY COMMEMORATION**

[Delivered at the Libingan ng mga Bayani, Taguig City | 27 August 2018]

Kindly sit down. Thank you.

His Excellency Gabriele Caccia and the esteemed members of the Diplomatic Corps; Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea; Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana; National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon and the other members of the Cabinet; Taguig City Mayor Maria Laarni Cayetano and other local government officials present; AFP Chief of Staff Carlito Galvez Jr. and the Major Service Commanders; Police Director General Oscar Albayalde; officers and enlisted men and personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the National Police; fellow workers in government; distinguished guests; my countrymen

As a footnote, just the --- a vignette of life, Lapu-Lapu was the first Filipino to kill a foreigner who invaded our country.

But sadly he was a Visayan. I think he was a Moro, still in the Visayas. History forgot him. He was the first hero and designated a certain specie of fish and called it "lapu-lapu".

That is why it pains me deeply to see lapu-lapu being eaten every day, *[laughter]* escabeche, fried, and all sorts of recipe.

So that when I became President, I said that you know... No offense intended, but I saw the Lapu-Lapu statue smaller than Magellan. And I said during the campaign, "Why is this so?"

And I will not maybe dishonor the memory of Magellan. He was the, so to speak, the first guy who discovered our country.

And I really... It's funny to me because we were not discovered. We, along with the Indonesians and Malaysians, Brunei and everybody here, we belong to the Malay race and we have had our own civilization thriving before the Dutch invaded Indonesia; the British, Malaysia; and the Philippines, the Spaniards and the Americans.

Well, all is history, water under the bridge. As we go along life and we strive for a nation-building, I felt it very important that things should be corrected along the way.

I consider it a privilege to stand before you today as we honor the extraordinary heroism of countless Filipinos who have faced seemingly insurmountable odds in defense of this nation and the values that it stands for.

We are gathered here today not just to commemorate their sacrifices and remember their exploits, but more importantly, to emulate their selflessness and to live up to their example as we go about our daily lives.

Today, we honor not just those heroes whose statues proudly stand along hallways and pedestals, or whose portraits are embedded in our currency and history books. Instead, we

honor our unnamed heroes who, in their own little ways, have made huge difference in the lives of those they have touched.

We honor our brave troops who gallantly sacrificed their lives to defeat communist insurgents, Islamic separatists, and other threats to our sovereignty, especially those who took part in the successful liberation of Marawi from the clutches of terrorism and extremism.

We honor our volunteers who, despite the risks to their lives and safety, have dedicated their precious time and resources to [rebuild] and bring back the once thriving and prosperous city back to its former glory.

We honor our dedicated police officers who, through an intensified campaign against criminality and illegal drugs, have made our streets, neighborhoods, communities and [businesses] safer and more conducive for growth and development.

We honor our educators who, despite limited resources, have made it possible for our youth to learn and understand what it takes to become heroes in their own right by contributing to our efforts in nation-building.

We honor our overseas Filipino workers who, while enduring the hardships of working away from their homeland, have contributed to our national development while providing the needs of their loved ones.

Today, let us honor ordinary Filipinos who, despite the challenges that come their way, continue to work for the well-being [of] their families, the betterment of their communities, and the advancement of our nation. These are our everyday heroes that we need our youth to emulate and look up to.

It is my sincere hope that as we come together to honor our heroes and celebrate their extraordinary feats and love of country, [we may be] further inspired to embody the ideals and values that they stood up for.

Let us all become worthy heirs to their legacy so that we may leave behind to the succeeding generations of Filipinos a nation that they will also proudly give up their lives for.

Maraming salamat. Ang bayaning Pilipino! Thank you. *[applause]*

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