

Since the implementation of the integration program in November 1996 until September 1999, a total of 4,850 MNLF members have graduated, out of the 5,066 candidates who reported for training in the AFP. Of this number, 160 have been commissioned in the armed forces and called to active duty as 2nd Lieutenants, while 4,690 have been enlisted in the Philippine Army with the initial rank of Private. Effective February 1998, 998 Privates were promoted to the rank of Private First Class. Some 900 slots for MNLF integrees remain, broken down into 60 slots for officers and 840 for candidate soldiers, including the 250 slots for auxiliaries. At present, the AFP is undertaking the processing of the candidates for the training remaining batches to fill-up the above quota.

The current number of MNLF integrees into the PNP is 4,835, out of the original strength of 4,850. Since their integration, some have left due to absences without leave, death and summary dismissal. At present, the MNLF integrees are organized into 10 Engineering Company and 39 Rifle Company, for a total of 49 Separate Units. Eight other separate units have been organized to stalled by the integrees upon completion of their training.

A total of 496 were integrated as the first batch of MNLF integrees to the PNP, of which 35 were females. Comprising 4 companies, these individuals have been deployed in Sulu, Maguindanao and Cotabato City. The second batch consisted of some 500 integrees who graduated last 15 November, while another 500 integrees are undergoing training.

The additional integrees of the PNP will be inducted into the Non-Uniform Personnel, as a support group comprising 1,500 police integrees.

Profile of Integrees

Most of the integrees in the AFP are beyond the required age limit for commission or enlistment into service. Of the 160 officers, only 49 2nd Lieutenants (or 30 %) have under 31 years of age. Most of these officers are instead within the age range of 32 to 41 years old, while 31 (or 20 %) are within the 42-50 year old age bracket (which is already nearing the retirement age of 56).

73 (or about 45 %) of the 160 officers were from Sulu; 2,185 (or 46 %) of the 4,773 enlisted personnel were also from Sulu. 45 % or 75 of the 160 officers were college graduates. Also, 1,043 of the 4,773 enlisted personnel satisfied the standard educational attainment for enlistment into the AFP.

Issues and Concerns

An initial problem regarding the integration of MNLF members into the AFP has been the slow turn out of applicants. This 8-month delay has also affected the time frame for the processing, training, deployment and integration of these inductees.

During training, MNLF Major General Abou Amri Taddik said the MNLF integrees typically experienced a "cultural shock" in that they found it difficult to adjust to the AFP training rules and