

ISLAND HOPPING WITH THE MARINES

Fr. Thomas Onoda joined an ACIM (Association Catholique des Infirmieres et Médecins) trip to the island of Jolo at the invitation of the U.S. Army and the Philippine Marines.

The area is a haven for militant Islamic separatist groups.



Multi-purpose Attack Craft – a handy asset for a missionary in the Philippines.

Military Chauffeur

21st August 2012 : The Philippine Marines picked us up at around 6am and headed straight to the port of Naval Forces Western Mindanao. The MPAC, which **is the fastest of all the Philippine's** Navy vessels, left around 7am from Zamboanga City to arrive at the bay of Barangay Bonbon (where we supported a medical mission on 27th April 2012) three hours later. We then set off directly to Jolo port where we were warmly welcomed by the Philippine Marines and by the US Army Civil Affairs Team.

We headed directly to the Bud Datu Camp (where there was a medical mission on 14th March 2012) Fr. **Onoda's security** was composed of one 6x6 truck with



Fr. Onoda is welcomed on board.

armed soldiers, one armoured tank, then our car with two snipers behind us, followed by two trucks of US Army.

Meetings

It was about 11am when we arrived in Bud Datu Camp. After an intensive discussion and lunch we then headed directly to Camp Asturias for a coordinating meeting with the Sulu Police Provincial Office to determine how we could help the local population displaced by a local feud. Following this, we rushed to Campo General Teodulfo Bautista (main camp) where Fr. Onoda celebrated the Latin, Tridentine Mass for the troops.

The Holy Sacrifice

There were about 30 military personnel who attended the Latin Mass for the first time. Though they had little understanding of Latin and how it differed from the Novus Ordo Mass, they assisted as best they could. When the Mass ended, Fr. Onoda preached about the brown scapular and imposed brown scapulars on the troops.

Return

We left Jolo at around 6pm and reached Zamboanga at around 9pm. We then proceeded to a **faithful's house for the night**. The next day, Fr. Onoda celebrated a mass at 4:45am before we set off to the airport for our 7am flight to Manila.

ACIM-ASIA Team



Military convoy.



Fr. Onoda offered Mass for the 30 marines who received the Blessed Sacrament on their tongue for the first time. Afterwards, he imposed the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

