

From Blackboard to Battlefield: My Journey with BCMT “Kalakhan”

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The sun was barely up when the first crack of simulated gunfire split the air. Dust rose in clouds around us, clinging to sweat-damp skin, as boots pounded the dry earth. Commands echoed — sharp, urgent — and we moved without hesitation. It was only a drill, part of the Field Training Exercise, yet my heartbeat told me otherwise. Every push-up, every lecture, every muscle ache had been leading to this moment.

When I signed up for the Basic Citizen Military Training (BCMT) Class 2025 Alpha, I thought I knew what to expect — long hours, physical strain, a challenge to my endurance. What I didn’t expect was how much it would reshape me, not only as a Filipino, but as a college teacher. Our batch name was Kalakhan — KAkampi ng Lahi, Aktibong Kawal, HANda sa tawag ng Bayan. At first, it sounded ceremonial. By the end, it felt like a promise we had each made to ourselves and to the country.

From February’s humid mornings to June’s sweltering afternoons, our days at the 6th Air Reserve Center in Edwin Andrews Air Base followed a rhythm of discipline. Dawn meant the slap of running shoes against the tarmac, the bite of cold air mixing with the warmth of exertion. The drills pushed our bodies; the lectures sharpened our minds. By afternoon, the clink of rifle parts filled the air as we assembled and stripped M16s, the scent of gun oil lingering on our hands. Evenings ended in aching muscles and minds replaying the day’s lessons. We were evaluated on attendance, discipline, marksmanship, and survival skills — but in truth, we were being measured in something deeper: consistency and heart.

The Field Training Exercise was where those lessons came alive. In one simulated ambush, as the mock “enemy” closed in, I felt the world narrow to the weight of the rifle in my arms, the crunch of gravel under my boots, and the steady breathing of my teammates beside me. It was in that moment — dusty, tense, and far from the safety of the classroom — that I realized: I was ready. Ready not just to complete the training, but to serve.

As a teacher, this experience became more than a personal milestone. It was a new chapter in how I approach my work. Military training honed my adaptability and deepened my sense of responsibility. It taught me that leading isn’t about always being in front — sometimes, it’s about standing shoulder-to-shoulder, pushing forward together. These are lessons I now bring back to my students: that discipline is not about rules but about respect, that resilience is built one challenge at a time, and that service to others is the highest form of education.

To my fellow educators, I offer this: the classroom is not our only arena. The nation calls us in many ways, and we have the choice to answer with both our minds and our hands. Whether in the field or in the faculty room, may we always be ready to step forward — prepared, committed, and united.

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