



## PINNACLE CLUB OF ASEAN: NEWSLETTER 08/16

**INSPIRING WRITE UPS AND MESSAGE  
FOR PINNACLE CLUB OF ASEAN BY  
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL (RET'D)  
WILLIAM K. HOTCHKISS**

*Surigao Del Sur, a small fishing community in the backwaters of Mindanao, just beside the shores of the beautiful Pacific Ocean. While I was playing in the school grounds with my*



Truly a man with integrity, Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William K. Hotchkiss is known as someone whose spirit level is very strong. He is also a friend to many of us and we all know that he is one successful career man with an inspiring 37 year military background.

We are very pleased to share his story with our fellow members in this issue. Here are his motivational write ups published as he had well written it.

*"It all started as a dream sometime in 1957 when I was a barefoot 14 year old high school student in Cantilan,*

*fellow students, I happened to look up to the sky and see an airplane with what I thought was smoke coming out of its tail. It was only later on where I would realize that what I saw was actually the contrail of a jet plane. Regardless of this innocent ignorance, this image would become forever ingrained in my mind and would help me realize my dream that indeed, "The Future is in the Skies". And with this in mind, I firmly resolved to do two things in life*

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*– to become a pilot and to return and give back to the community which nurtured this dream.*



*Little did I know that this dream of mine would start a journey that allowed me to scale peak after peak in a 37-year career in the Philippine Air Force. Back in the late 60's, I thought I reached the peak of my flying profession when I became a member of the "Blue Diamonds", the Precision Aerial Demonstration Team of the Philippine Air Force. But then, sooner than expected, I became the squadron commander of the 7<sup>th</sup> Tactical Flight Squadron at the tender age of 30 and got the Lt Col rank that same year.*

*At that point, I looked up at the sky once again and there, somewhere in the clouds and covered in mist, was the Pinnacle of the career of any Air Force man – to be the head sky warrior, the Chief of the Air Force. It took more*

*than two decades and several significant command and staff positions before I reached that pinnacle in November of 1996 when I became the 24<sup>th</sup> Commanding General of the Philippine Air Force. That was undoubtedly one of my proudest moments in life.*

*I retired in January of 1999 and returned to my hometown to give back to the cultural womb of my youth. At that time, there were two advocacies that I had internalized along the way – one was to help in the educational development of my hometown by continuing the educational legacy that my grandfather, an American schoolteacher, left in that community where he served from 1906 until his death in 1944. To do this, I founded the non-profit and non-stock Hotchkiss Learning Center, where I setup from scratch an elementary and high school project centered in the development of English, Science and Math skills to make the youth of our community competitive in the global job market. This is a work in progress and a continuing challenge.*

*The other advocacy was environmental conservation, which started while I was Chief of the Air Force. Back then, I had initiated the Adopt a Mountain (ADAM) project, which allowed Air Bases around the Philippines to adopt a mountain in their vicinity so they could help in the reforestation project of the government. After that, I volunteered to become a Trustee of the non-profit/non-stock Philippine Eagle Foundation, an NGO dedicated to the conservation of the critically*

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*endangered Great Philippine Eagle, the country's national bird who sits on the pinnacle of the food chain in the Philippine forests.*

*I became its President for 6 years from 2006 to 2012, a position that gave me immense inner satisfaction. To date, I remain immersed in this advocacy.*

*I was allowed the privilege to support such advocacies when I became the President and Chairman of the Board of Cantilan Bank Inc, a community bank that my father co-founded in 1980. I became its CEO a few months after retirement from the Air Force. As CEO, I managed the growth of this bank from an 80 million peso asset 3 branch company to a 2.4 billion peso asset 42 branch company this year, wherein we aim to grow it to 5 billion pesos by 2020. The strategic key to this growth was the adoption of Microfinance operations right after I took over the bank. Leading this financial institution was truly challenging and therefore success was proudly sweet when Cantilan Bank was awarded the International Microfinance Best Practices Award in Italy this year. My efforts here have proved to be financially and spiritually rewarding, especially since they have enabled me to sustain my educational and environmental advocacies. Although much has been achieved, everything remains a work in progress.*

*What I would consider as the most challenging climb in my life was when I was asked by our President Benigno Aquino III to return to government service, after a hiatus of 13 years, to*

*serve as the Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP). At that time, the Philippines had just been hit by the triple whammy of international aviation sanctions---Significant Safety Concerns (SSC's) from the International Civil Aviation Organization, a comprehensive EU ban on all Philippine air carriers and a Category 2 Rating from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). All these happened before President Aquino took over as President in 2010. By 2012, when there was still no light at the end of the tunnel, I was tasked to provide that light. I asked for a month to think it over and when I met with Secretary Mar Roxas of the Department of Transportation and Communications in the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of June, I had an answer for him, "Yes, I will accept the job but under 3 conditions: I bring in my own team, I run the show, and I will not get any pay until all aviation safety restrictions were lifted." To cut the story short, the CAAP under my leadership was able to overcome the triple whammy in 22 months when Philippine civil aviation finally regained the FAA Category 1 rating on April 10, 2014.*

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*With the U.S. Trade and Development Agency on the day of agreement with the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) to launch a specialized training program for aircraft rescue and firefighting (ARFF) vehicles*

*That was undoubtedly the proudest moment of my life where I, together with my management team and all the personnel of the CAAP, were able to bring civil aviation in the Philippines to its rightful place in the International Civil Aviation Community.*

*To the members of the Pinnacle Club, let me quote Gen. Douglas McArthur when he said, "Old soldiers never die. They just fade away." Parenthetically, allow me to add, "Yes, they can fade away, but they can do it in a proud and glorious way."*

*For the younger members of the ASEAN Military, let me say this: your professional military education and training, whether in the Air Force, Navy or Army, are the essential tools upon which you can build a professionally solid service reputation*

*that can propel you to reach peaks and pinnacles, which you would have otherwise deemed impossible. And hopefully during your journey to the top, you will be able to envision your own dream, a dream that will help you realize that the ultimate pinnacle in life is not a single and detached idea or form, but rather, it is one that continually evolves and one that is inseparable with society and the environment.*

*There is much to do in this world, and it all starts with a dream".*

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*(From left) LBP Dir. Tomas T. De Leon, Jr., LBP Dir. Crispino T. Aguero, Treasurer Roberto B. Tan, LBP Officer-In-Charge Cecilia C. Borrromeo, Cantilan Bank Liaison Officer Maylen R. Franca, Cantilan Bank Chairman Lt. Gen. William K. Hotchkiss III (Ret.), Finance Sec. Carlos G. Dominguez III, LBP Dir. Victor Gerardo J. Bulatao, and LBP SVP Joselito P. Gutierrez, Lending Center Head*

The achievements of Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William Hotchkiss are all the more remarkable as he seemed to have done as much after retiring from the air force as when he was serving in it.

The Secretariat of the Pinnacle Club would like to congratulate Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William K. Hotchkiss

on his most recent achievement of receiving the No. 1 Most Outstanding Countryside Financial Institution and Best CFI Availer for Agri-Agra Loans during the 18th edition of Gawad CFI Awarding Ceremonies on 10 August 2016. We wish Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William Hotchkiss every success in his current and future endeavors!

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Please feel free to respond or comment on Lieutenant-General (Ret'd) William K. Hotchkiss' thoughts. You may also email us at the Secretariat, [secretariat@pinnacle-asean.org](mailto:secretariat@pinnacle-asean.org) and we will publish them in the subsequent Newsletters. We welcome more contributions by members. We hope to have a diverse collection from all the member countries, all service branches and through several generations of retired chiefs."

Please email [secretariat@pinnacle-asean.org](mailto:secretariat@pinnacle-asean.org) if you wish to submit any documents, photos or special messages and we will be happy to include them in our next issue.

Alice and Hidayah

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