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**CELEBRATING MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD**

## 'SHE'S GOT WHAT IT TAKES'

Marine band singer shows you can come home to Okinawa again

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DAVE ORNAUER, STARS AND STRIPES

CAMP FOSTER – Little Emily Talampas, wide-eyed and a bit nervous, made her public singing debut during a talent show at Kinser Elementary School in 2001. The 6-year-old soloist sang her heart out as her teacher Jan Stroud played guitar and her first-grade classmates backed her up.

Now, fast-forward 19 years, and Emily is once again singing on Okinawa. But this time, she's a few miles north at Camp Foster, wearing a Marine Corps dress uniform with lance-corporal stripes on her sleeves and performing as a vocalist with the III Marine Expeditionary Force Band.

And it proves that a military child – now Emily Talampas-Figueroa – can go home again and continue doing what has become a lifetime passion for her.

Figueroa returned to Okinawa for the first time since her first-grade days last August. She was part of a new recruiting program put in place in 2018 by the Marine Corps to find vocalists for their bands, according to III MEF bandmaster Master Sgt. Michael Stanley.

**SEE SINGER ON PAGE 7**

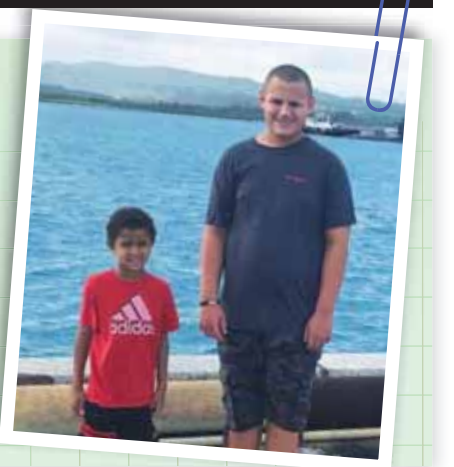
**CELEBRATING MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD**

### Our Life

**M**y brother Damian and I both attend McCool Elementary Middle School. When people ask me what its like to be a military child, I dont have much to say. This is normal life for us. For the past few years we have had the opportunity to live on the beautiful island of Guam. How many kids get that opportunity? How many kids get to make friends around the world? Its sad when we have to leave our friends but I know one day we

will cross paths again. With our dad being on a submarine that is always gone, we always send our love and prayers to the bottom of the ocean. I wouldnt change my life for the world. We are grateful for the life our dad sacrifices, so that we can live a good life!

– Nickolas Patrick  
McCool Elementary Middle School



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## The grass is always greener where the dog drags you

I remember it like it was yesterday. I was walking back to our stairwell apartment from dropping my daughter off at Patch Barracks Elementary School, minding my own business along Florida Strasse with our labradoodle, Dinghy.

Suddenly, Dinghy spotted a hare munching grass in General So-and-so's backyard.

Dinghy was 110 pounds, and a keen hunter. Every place our family lived, he was on the lookout for indigenous prey as soon as we stepped outside. Prior to Germany, we lived in Virginia, where Dinghy dug a WWI trench across our backyard in pursuit of a mole. After Germany, we moved to Florida, where Dinghy frantically tunneled his head into the sand until a "crunch" indicated that he'd cornered a poor crustacean.

But during our years in Germany, Dinghy longed to taste a hare. Anyone who has seen these long-legged rabbits run knows Dinghy didn't stand a chance. Nevertheless, upon seeing that hare off of Florida Strasse years ago, he gave chase.

"Dinghy! No!" I yelled in a fruitless attempt to stop the inevitable. He took off like a bullet, yanking the leash, which I had wrapped around my waist, holding a full dog doo bag in one hand and my travel coffee mug in the other. Before I knew it, I

### The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



was flying, hitting the ground, then being dragged 15 feet across General So-and-so's front lawn before the leash broke loose.

As expected, the hare got away. Dinghy returned nonchalantly as if to say, "What's the matter with you?"

I hadn't spilled a drop of coffee; however, my white sweatshirt showed proof of the incident. No scratches on my knees, no dirt on my elbows, no mud on my rear. Just two large, round, bright green grass stains, right over each breast.

I wanted to bury my head in the sand. But as fate would have it, I ran into every soul I knew on my way home.

"Dinghy dragged you ... in front of General So-and-so's house?" they each said. My idiocy was the hot topic at Building 2500 that day.

Living on base, we have moments when we just want to be alone, away from judgment, prying eyes, ringing doorbells,

shared parking lots and communal dumpsters.

Sharing walls with your neighbors makes you involuntarily privy to every thump, groan, argument and flush. There's always someone watching to make sure you're picking up after your dog. There's no sneaking out to throw a weekend's worth of wine bottles away, because everyone hears every clink, clank, clunk in the dumpster bay. You can't pop into the commissary undetected, because you'll likely run into your husband's boss when your cart contains a jumbo box of super plus tampons and a Party Size pack of Double Stuff Oreos. If you tell your children to play outside to give you a moment's peace, your unruly kids will quickly become the subject of judgmental parent chit chat under the picnic pavilion.

When you hear laughing, you'll know someone saw you in your kitchen window, spraying whipped cream into your upturned mouth. Trust me. I know this firsthand.

My family lived on base for 11 of my husband's 28 active-duty years in the Navy. I sometimes turned my lights out and ducked behind the couch, pretending I wasn't home. We got good at "whisper-yelling" so they wouldn't hear us arguing. I closed our shades on those mornings when I just wanted to watch "Real Housewives" reruns while eating a can of Pringles.

Despite it all, my only regret is that we didn't live on base more.

The benefits of companionship and community in military housing far outweighed the sacrifice of privacy. I lost count of the moments when I relied on my base neighbors to force me outside for fun, keep an eye on kids, help carry heavy things, talk something through, cheer me up when I was feeling low. The special brand of camaraderie found only in base neighborhoods — with potluck picnics, spontaneous parties, communal-like feel and got-your-back mentality — will be remembered fondly long after one's experience in the military is over.

Trust me, I know this firsthand.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at:  
[themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com)  
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# Andersen celebrates CHamoru people, culture

BY SENIOR AIRMAN AUBREE OWENS,  
36TH WING

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – Friends and members of the Andersen Air Force Base community came together to celebrate Guam’s native people and culture during the annual Tãotão Guåhan event held in honor of CHamoru Month at Arc Light Memorial Park at Andersen AFB on March 13.

“Tãotão Guåhan is an annual event to showcase the CHamoru culture and to bring the local culture to the base,” said Carly Macias, a community recreation manager with the 36th Force Support Squadron. “By educating our military personnel and families, we feel that it creates a sense of understanding and appreciation of our culture and people. This appreciation can create unity and togetherness among the locals and military, which is the ultimate purpose of the event.”

Offering many sights and sounds familiar to Guam celebrations, the event featured 16 booths, to include weaving and cast net demonstrations, cultural chant and dance performances, locally-crafted jewelry, and carabao rides. The evening concluded with a fire dance performance.

Open to all with base access, hundreds of military members



Local CHamoru dancers perform during the Tãotão Guåhan event at Arc Light Memorial Park at Andersen Air Force Base on March 13. In honor of CHamoru Month, the Andersen AFB community hosted an event to celebrate the island’s indigenous culture and heritage with members of the base and local residents in attendance. Photo by Senior Airman Aubree Owens, U.S. Air Force

and locals attended, as well as a few Guam mayors, who joined their sister squadron commanders and families for the event.

“During this month, we recognize the CHamoru core values of respect, harmony, reciprocity, humility, and hospitality, and all the ways our island neighbors

have graced us, considered us, and partnered with us with these values in mind,” said U.S. Air Force Col. David Aragon, vice commander of the 36th Wing.

There were several changes to this year’s event due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure everyone’s safety, masks

were worn at all times and some events, such as the notorious pie eating contest and craft tables, were not included this year.

“COVID-19 has really made having events an obstacle,” said U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Marcel Palomo, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 36th FSS

operations flight and Tãotão Guåhan master of ceremonies. “With that being said, we have scaled our event down, but it will still be enjoyable and safe for family and friends to attend.”

Although smiles were masked, members of the base and broader Guam community were still able to come together, celebrate local traditions, and be integrated.

“This event makes me proud! [I’m] proud to share my teaching, culture, and upbringing with the people I now call family,” said Palomo, who is not only an Airman, but also native to Guam. “Being stationed on Guam has been a great blessing. I do my best to make the military feel invited and welcomed to the island I call home.”

Tãotão Guåhan, which means “people of Guam” in the native tongue, was held to recognize the native CHamoru people and to socially immerse Guam’s military residents in the island experience.

“This event is close to my heart,” said Macias. “I want to represent our culture and people as best I can. Seeing the performances and demonstrations fills me with so much pride for my people. Sharing this with everyone makes me feel so proud that I am from Guam, and that I am CHamoru.”




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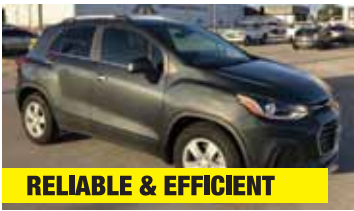
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# CELEBRATING MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD LESTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Ms. Burch  
6th grade

As the wind whips around I am Taking A breath of victory  
I am waiting for the time to strike.  
I see that is not a one-man journey  
I get a group or even a gang, but that would be a big mistake  
Making friends is harder than I thought  
Then you will leave only a memory in your life  
But that memory will always be in your life  
No matter you go...

- Cole Dickson

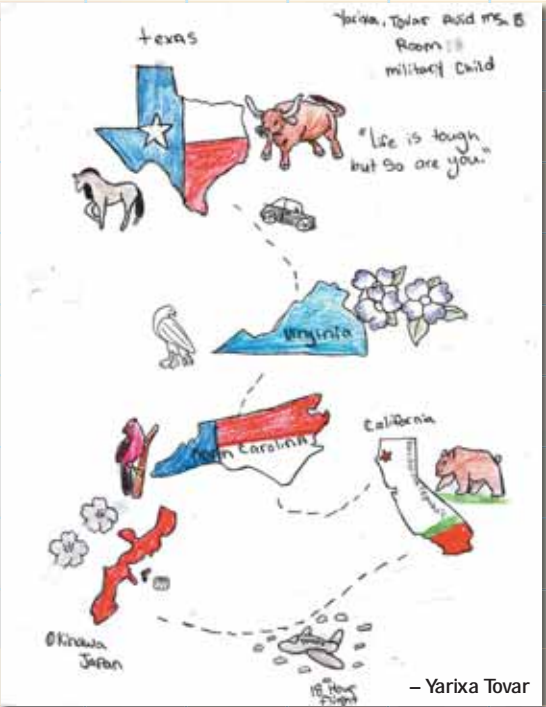
Meet new friends  
Get used to life  
Move somewhere else  
Lose all I love  
REPEAT  
- Tae Hwan Park

People continue,  
Fighting for freedom and life.  
Brave, daring, fearless.

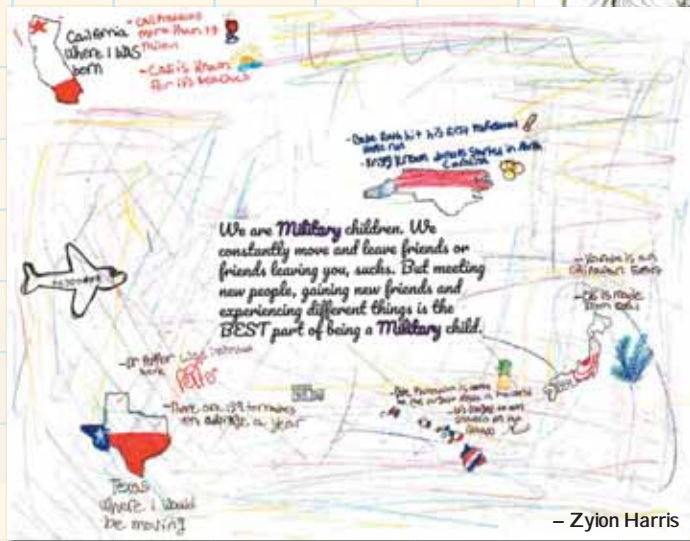
"Sadness and Sorrow"  
Fighting for eternity,  
Peace is still not here.  
- Kevin Hunt



- Sophia Wurdinger



- Yarixa Tovar



- Zion Harris

The month of purple  
Children both sad and happy  
Because of travel

Traveling places  
Friends not forgotten at all  
Meeting your new pals

The military  
Making us move from our homes  
Can't stay in one place  
- Brody Baltrus

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# SINGER: From Las Vegas to the Marine Corps

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Before Figueroa's arrival, "We would have had whoever was the best vocalist in the unit sing as kind of a collateral duty," Stanley said. "And we weren't recruiting vocalists then, but now we are."

A friend of Figueroa's from the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, where she attended school, "reached out to me, said 'they (Marines) are looking for vocalists and why don't you come try it out?'" Figueroa said. "So, I was like, 'OK, I might as well.' And here I am."

Figueroa is the daughter of retired Chief Petty Officer Edward Talampas, a corpsman, and his wife Imelda of Santiago City in Isabela Province in the Philippines. They're a Catholic family, as many from the Philippines are.

"I've been singing since I could talk," Figueroa said. "They wanted me to pursue and continue singing. I was always around music. Especially in church. I think that was the biggest influence. Gospel. Christian music."

Long before she even set foot in Kinser Elementary, she would listen to songs on the radio or TV, with one staying with her: "My Heart Will Go On," by Celine Dion from the "Titanic" movie soundtrack.

"My parents told me, I would constantly sing that whenever it was on the radio and I would get super upset whenever they would change it or turn it off," she said. "I can still sing the song and all the words."

One of her biggest singing foundation moments was that elementary school talent show, teacher and pupil said.

"She (Stroud) put me on the spot. I was kind of nervous," Figueroa recalled. "She was like, 'Why don't you do a solo?' I don't remember what song it was. My parents still have a VHS tape of



me singing."

For her part, Stroud, who taught in DODEA for 25 years, seven on Okinawa, remembers Figueroa and said she could have been "anything she wanted to be."

"She was precious in first grade and had a loving group of friends and family," said Stroud, who is retired and living in Florida. "We had fun, worked, played, learned together and sang in a beautiful school."

After 2002 and seven years on the island, the Talampas family moved to San Diego. Emily went to two elementary schools before her parents enrolled her in the San Diego School of Creative and Performing Arts.

She was reluctant at first. "I didn't want to go because my friends weren't going to be there," she said. "The first year was kind of hard."

But things changed, and it was the passion that the teachers had for music that she says motivated her. "I fell in love with all the teachers that I had," she said. "They had so much passion that it kind of drove me to continue on."

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:  
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She was also introduced to a vocal coach, Rolando de Leon, with whom she stayed until she moved on to college.

"He pushed me where he knew I needed to be pushed," Emily said. "He wasn't demanding, (but) he led me in the right direction, and he paved the way to help me feel more comfortable with my voice."

Figueroa didn't just stick with Gospel or movie-soundtrack music. Her tastes branched out over time. She likes everything from Carole King to Stevie Wonder to Bruno Mars, Ariana Grande, the Beatles. "I like all music," she said.

During her years in San Diego, she sang for a church group, had a band on the side and did gigs with them as well as solo jobs.

"Sometimes, we would do retirement ceremonies for close friends, weddings, stuff like that," she said. "I would also perform on my own."

Her singing voice got a huge workout after high school as she moved on from high school to Las Vegas, a place she called a "pivotal part of my life."

In addition to studying at UNLV for 18 months, she worked at the Venetian Resort, a theme hotel based on the Italian city of Venice. There, she would play the

part of a singing gondolier, teach piano and sing to groups or individuals and also do solo gigs on the side.

How much sleep did Emily say she got during that span?

"Not enough," she said. "At that point, I was like, I don't want to do this my entire life while I was there. And I was going to school, too."

Somewhere along the way, Stanley said, one of the Marines' audition supervisors spied Emily performing and put in a call to Stanley, just as the new recruiting program had launched.

"He told me, 'She's got what it takes, she's in Las Vegas, she's got some experience,' so he's telling me about Emily long before I got to meet her," Stanley said. "I said, 'Heck yeah, I could use a vocalist!'"

There was, of course, the matter of Figueroa being married to an Air Force civil engineer, Senior Airman Rae Anthony Figueroa – and whether they could be assigned in the same place or close by.

"There's only a couple of places where they can be co-located, and one of them is here," Stanley said. Emily's husband is assigned to the 18th Civil Engineering Group at nearby Kadena Air Base.

The coronavirus pandemic limited the band early on during Emily's tenure to virtual performances, Stanley said.

"In December, things opened up for us, so we were able to get her up to (Marine Corps Air Station) Iwakuni and do some performances here, socially distanced," Stanley said.

As for what the future holds for Figueroa, she says she wants to pursue a masters degree in speech pathology.

"To teach kids who want to learn how to sing, so I can give them a better understanding of how the voice works and how everybody is different," she said. "I love teaching. In Vegas ... the most rewarding thing for me was to teach."

ornauer.dave@stripes.com  
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“I’ve been singing since I could talk. [My parents] wanted me to pursue and continue singing. I was always around music Especially in church. I think that was the biggest influence. Gospel. Christian music.”



**Celebrating  
Month of the  
Military Child**

I am the one who smells the Meat Lovers pizza from Pizza Hut in a box carried through the door by my dad, waiting to be devoured by my mouth.

I am the one who tastes the meaty Meat Lovers, and the marinara, and the cheese, melting in my mouth, also from Pizza Hut.

I am the one who hears rap music at night from Hamilton called "Guns and Ships".

I am the one who feels the fur on my favorite stuffed animal called "Little Cheetah" while I'm carrying him in my arms.

I am the one who sees my sister after school waiting for me to pick her up and take her home, with my mom.

I am the one who wishes to be the richest family on earth because I can buy a lot of expensive things.

Who am I?

– Oakley Johnson

**Joan K. Mendel  
Elementary School**  
**I Am the One Who...**  
**Mr. Anderson's class 4th grade**

I am the one who sees my good drawings and artwork  
I am the one who hears my cats, Casper and Nemo, meow at night

I am the one who smells cheeseburgers, my favorite food  
I am the one who tastes the Reese's peanut butter ice cream

I am the one who feels my Nintendo switch controller while playing Minecraft

I am the one who wishes I had super powers

I am the one who hopes my drawings would come to life  
Who am I?

– Alivia Gleason

I am the one who sees my dogs jumping on me after school.

I am the one who hears my brother's ipad in my ear in the morning.

I am the one who smells my dad's steak getting cooked for dinner.

I am the one who touches slime in the morning.

I am the one who tastes my mom's homemade macaroni for dinner.

I am the one who wishes my grandpa was here with me and my family.

Who am I?

– Jackson Gamble-Trozzi

I am the one who sees my beautiful mom every morning  
I am the one who smells her baking

I am the one who touches my iPad every morning  
I am the one who tastes my mom's bacon and eggs every morning

I am the one who hears my mom's loud music  
I am the one who hopes to see my older sister Kamiya this summer

Who am I?

– Deadora Flores

I am the one who sees the beautiful fish in the morning.  
I am the one who smells the chocolate that is so delicious.

I am the one who touches my toys every day when I come home.

I am the one who tastes my mom's teriyaki hamburger patty.

I am the one who hears melodies on the train when it departs the station.

I am the one who hopes I'm the winner.

Who am I?

– Kaito Kidd

I am the one who sees my "stuffedies" every morning at 6:45 a.m. before I go to school.

I am the one who hears the news every morning when my Dad leaves for work.

I am the one who smells the grilled hot dogs on the grill in my backyard on a Friday night.

I am the one who feels my Mom's warm loving hugs before I go to bed in the evening at 8:00 p.m.

I am the one who tastes the cookie dough with my sister when my parents are done mixing the cookie dough with the mixer in the kitchen.

I am the one who wishes my Great Grandma, who passed away this summer before July, was here with me, because she loved me very much.

Who am I?

– Cameron Parlier

I am the one who smells smoke when I help my dad work on his car, a Daihatsu Move. I am the one who smells the cool air when I walk to school. I am the one who smells the Sharpie permanent marker, when I use it on my work.

I am the one who tastes Gogert because the flavors for Gogert are so good. I am the one who tastes my mom's lasagna at dinner time. I am the one who tastes crackers because I just like the salty taste.

I am the one who hears the sounds of birds chirping in my yard, when I wake up.

I am the one who hears the sounds of the wind when I walk to school. I am the one who hears the sounds of my family talking to each other when I come back from school.

I am the one who sees people when I go to school and back. I am the one who sees the sunlight as I look out the window, when I wake up in the morning. I am the one who sees the sky in the backseat, not the way backseat where my two older sisters sit - I'm in the middle - as we drive to Chilies, for dinner (we always go to Chilies, or almost always).

I am the one who feels my soft blanket when I go to bed. I am the one who feels soap when I take a shower before I go to bed. I am the one who feels the cold metal on my legs from my bike when I ride to school.

I am the one who hopes this COVID virus will be gone soon because it makes everyone go through a lot. I am the one who hopes I will get a good home the next time my family moves. I am the one who hopes I will be a good person when I grow up.

Who am I?

– Bowen Edelen

I am the one who sees the bright sun in my face when I get out of my bed at 6:00 A.M.

I am the one who hears my loud annoying little sister's voice in my house, every day.

I am the one who smells pizza, fresh out of the oven in the kitchen, downstairs, cooling when I'm in my room with the door closed, at night.

I am the one who feels my warm, cozy fluffy blanket when I go to bed, and when I'm watching a movie.

I am the one who tastes cold yummy cookies and cream ice cream from the commissary, for dessert.

I am the one who hopes I can get all of the video games I want for my Nintendo Switch and Xbox One for Christmas.

Who am I?

– Jason Reyes

I am the one who smells hand sanitizer at school.  
I am the one who tastes the hot chocolate that my mom makes on cold winter days.

I am the one who hears students talking in my classroom, every day at school.

I am the one who sees backpacks hanging on chairs, every day at school.

I am the one who feels the soft fur of my dogs Rosco Jenkins the bulldog and Bella the lab, after a long day of school.

I am the one who wishes I could see my other dog Buster the bulldog, again.

Who am I?

– Alana Martin

I am the one who feels my mom's warm hands while we are snuggling

I am the one who smells my mom's homemade brownies

I am the one who tastes my nana's fresh homemade ice cream on warm summer nights

I am the one that hears my sister screaming when she can not get juice

I am the one sees my beautiful family all together  
I am the one who wishes to visit my family in Texas and Georgia

Who am I?

– Mariah Brown

**GSA in Guam**

GSA Global Supply® is partnering with M80 Systems, a local small business, to serve civilian and military customers in Guam. M80 is now storing and delivering approximately 350 high-demand National Stock Number (NSN) items formerly stored in and shipped from the continental United States. The change reduces delivery time to a few days from weeks or months.

Customers can order using GSA websites (GSA Global Supply or GSA Advantage!®) or via existing customer logistics platforms (e.g., GCSS-Army). GSA's systems recognize the items stocked in Guam and fulfill orders locally. Other items will ship from the mainland. An electronic catalog is available.



The new program does not replace existing retail stores managed by GSA at Andersen AFB and Naval Base Guam. Instead, the stores and new outlets are complementary. For more information, please contact your local GSA Customer Service Director, Brandy Untalan, at 671-333-4721 or brandy.untalan@gsa.gov.



Scan this QR code to view GSA's 2021 Guam catalog.



Send your Month of the Military Child submission to [MilitaryChild@stripes.com](mailto:MilitaryChild@stripes.com) by April 15!





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Tostadas, and Many other TB Promotional items.





Left: Airmen from Andersen Air Force Base play with puppies while volunteering at the Guam Animals In Need pet shelter in Yigo on March 13. Right: Airmen place a newly constructed roof onto a pet shelter.

# Andersen airmen rebuild pet shelters

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TECH. SGT. ERIC SUMMERS,  
36TH WING

More than 60 airmen from Andersen Air Force Base volunteered at the Guam Animals In Need shelter March 13 and 14.

The volunteers spent the two days replacing roofs to provide shelter to homeless pets.

“This is the only pet shelter here on Guam,” said Staff Sgt. Shawn McInnis, 554th Red Horse Squadron structural technician and project coordinator.

“So any stray dogs that are here needing home this is the only place for them live. We want to provide them a safe and comfortable living space until they one day get adopted.”

On Guam, stray dogs has become a problem is not enough stable shelters for the furry canines on the island.

“The covered areas were pretty old and they have been around

for a while,” said Alison Hadley, GAIN executive director. “This was a much needed project that has been a long time coming, and it’s finally happening.”

This project will help provide protection to the animals as they wait their forever home.

“We are demolishing the existing sunshades of all the dog kennels and replacing them brand new, with sheet metal, for

the only dog kennel on Guam,” McInnis said. “That way the dogs have some protection from the heat and protection from the rain.”

“I love doing my job as structures and also finding a purpose in showing the local community that even though I am not from here I still respect where I live and want to come out here and help,” McInnis said.

**G.A.I.N. Pet of the Week**



**CAPTAIN KUDDLY:** (black tortie cat)  
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Call G.A.I.N. (Guam Animals In Need) Animal Shelter in Yigo at 653-4246 or visit <a href="http://www.guamanimals.org">www.guamanimals.org</a> for more information on adopting this pet. G.A.I.N. is a shelter-based humane society with a mission to prevent cruelty to animals, educate the public and promote good animal laws. Under Water World will donate one adult admission for every Pet of the Week adopted.




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# Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY  
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



**Apr. 3** *Difficult*  
**Attilong Acho to Umatac** *5 hours for 4 miles*

We hike down the narrow, open ridge, then over the two huge black rock hills with good views the whole way. We then head over gently rolling terrain to the coastline at the head of Cetti Bay, then south to Umatac for swimming and snorkeling.  
**Bring:** 3 quarts water, good shoes, gloves, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch, camera, swimsuit, and snorkel gear.  
**Special conditions:** Very steep slopes, sword grass, little shade

**Apr. 10** *Medium*  
**Tarzan Swim Hole** *3 hours for 2 miles*

We make a nice loop trail to cool off at one of the best freshwater swimming pools on the island. We'll enjoy jumping from the ledges, corking the jacuzzi pool, or just relaxing on the sunny ledges and watching the kids play. We'll then head a short ways upriver to follow jeep trails back to our cars for lemonade.  
**Bring:** 2 quarts water, wet shoes, swimsuit, sun screen, lunch, and camera.  
**Special conditions:** Slippery slopes and rocks, mud, and no shade.



**Attilong Acho**

Every Saturday, Guam Boonie Stompers offers public hikes to a variety of destinations such as beaches, snorkeling sites, waterfalls, mountains, caves, latte sites, and World War II sites. We meet at 9:00 AM in the Center Court of Chamorro Village in Hagatna. The cost is \$5.00 for hikers over 17. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Hikers should provide their own transportation. Guam's trails are not developed. Weather conditions can make the hikes more difficult than described. No reservations required.  
**For more information:**  
[www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompersInc](http://www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompersInc)  
 or call 787-4238.

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### Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14				15						16			
17				18						19			
20					21				22				
23				24				25					
26						27	28		29		30	31	
32	33	34				35		36			37		
38				39	40					41			
42				43				44	45				
46			47			48		49					
50					51			52			53	54	55
56	57					58	59			60			
61					62					63			
64					65						66		
67					68							69	

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## Memories with

# STARS AND STRIPES Pacific

Share your Memories with Stars and Stripes Pacific!

Your photos/stories will appear on the Stars and Stripes Pacific 75th Anniversary Website, [75.stripes.com](http://75.stripes.com).



## Stripes Sports Trivia

With one of the most successful programs in NCAA men's basketball history, Duke has had some of the biggest names in college hoops. From Zion Williamson most recently, to Bobby Hurley, Grant Hill and Shane Battier, the list is endless. But, with all the stars to shine at Cameron Indoor Stadium, which one is the Blue Devils' all-time leading scorer?

Answer
J.J. Redick

### SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy Edited by Margie E. Burke

1				4	9	8		
		9	5	1		6		
6								
				3	1	7		
4		6	7			5		3
	3	2						
	2		1	9				
			3		2		9	
9	5			4				2

HOW TO SOLVE: Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

4	3	6	7	9	2	1	8	5
2	1	7	5	8	4	9	6	3
9	5	8	6	3	1	4	2	7
8	6	3	1	4	7	5	9	2
1	7	9	3	2	5	8	4	6
5	2	4	8	6	9	7	3	1
6	9	1	2	5	8	3	7	4
3	8	5	4	7	6	2	1	9
7	4	2	9	1	3	6	5	8



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# A Taste of Guam

The 3 'R's to good eating –  
Restaurants,  
Reviews & Recipes

4-page pullout



# Bite into Guam's tasty land crabs

STRIPES GUAM

**W**hat has six legs, gnarly claws, climbs trees and can grow to the size of a small dog? Oh! It's tasty, too.

The answer is a coconut crab, or what the local Chamorros call "ayuyu." These giant crabs are on islands throughout the Western Pacific and East Indian oceans. But on Guam, they have had long history with locals and visitors alike – primarily, but not exclusively – as a delicacy. But now these giant island mascots are in danger.

*Birgus latro*, commonly known as the coconut crab, is the largest terrestrial arthropod in the world. It is a type of hermit crab that can grow to a leg span of more than three feet, weighing over nine pounds. However, they are more outgoing than their hermit counterparts.

While most hermit crabs spend their entire lives inside their shells to protect their soft bodies from predators, coconut crabs rely on those shells only when they are young and small. When they grow older, they abandon them and develop hard exoskeletons that continue to grow with the rest of their bodies.

These crabs have also been nicknamed "robber crabs" on Guam. Rumor has it that they earned that reputation by stealing items from U.S. Marines in the trenches during World War II. They're known to wander into unlocked houses and steal knives, forks and even shoes. So, if you are missing some household items, look around for one of these big guys conspicuously crawling nearby.

Anyone who has seen a coconut crab knows they also have huge claws. These claws are powerful enough to tear through the tough shell of a coconut to get at the sweet coconut meat. They can climb up to 20 feet high just to reach growing coconuts. Though not a major part of their diet, perhaps this taste for coconuts is what makes them so tasty.

On Guam, Chamorro have eaten coconut crabs for centuries as part of their cultural tradition. The meat

has been traditionally served at various ceremonies and events such as weddings. It is so tender that it is often compared to lobster. But the high demand for both home and high-end restaurant consumption has led to rampant hunting of the crabs.

It is said that the population of larger crabs on Guam is nearly depleted, and hunters have now turned to younger and smaller crabs. Coconut crab shells have also become popular souvenirs for tourist, prompting even more hunting. As a result of these demands, the coconut crab population has been declining rapidly.

In 1981, the coconut crab was listed as a "vulnerable species" on the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List. However, a lack of accurate information caused the crab to be classified as "data deficient" in 1996.

Today, according to the Guam Department of Agriculture, coconut crabs must be at least four inches long to be sold commercially and at least three inches long for personal consumption. It also is illegal to collect coconut crabs with eggs. Selling undersized coconut crabs is an offense punishable by arrest and fine.

According to one study, the coconut crab is also threatened by the development of Guam's coastal zone. Emily Lu writes in the *Scientific American* that recent heavy development is continually reducing the crab's preferred habitat on Guam. Typically, female coconut crabs release their eggs within a few miles of the ocean because they hatch only upon contact with saltwater.

Today, the highest crab densities on Guam can be found on military installations, where limited civilian access makes it difficult to hunt crabs, according to Lu.

In fact, all coconut crabs can find sanctuary on both Naval Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base. Hunting them, regardless of their size, is banned on both bases, according to Leanne Obra, 36th Civil



Photo courtesy of Dr. Jim McConnel University of Guam

Engineering Environmental Flight natural resources specialist at Andersen.

"The coconut crab is a unique and fascinating component of the biota of Guam, the Marianas, and Federated States of Micronesia," said Obra. "The Andersen Air Force Base environmental office is available at any time to answer questions about protection of the coconut crab to help preserve the species for the meaningful role they play in the Chamorro culture and its popularity as a tourist attraction."

Obra advises that if people see the crabs on base, they should leave them alone. Illegal collection of crabs on military installations should be reported immediately to Andersen's Natural Resources Conservation Program at 366-5078/1849.

## Pet a coconut crab at Chamorro Village

You may be hesitant to pet the largest land-living arthropod in the world, but go ahead, the coconut crab doesn't bite. Coconut crabs can weigh up to nine pounds with a leg span of more than 3 feet. Locals are adept at handling the crabs and sometimes keep them as pets. Stop by the Chamorro Village Night Market on Wednesday and Friday for a photo op of you or someone brave petting a giant crab.

- ADDRESS: Paseo Loop,  
off Marine Corps Drive, Hagatna
- TEL: (671)475-0375



Photo courtesy of The Guam Guide



# Pång'lao: Stuffed land crab



## Preparation

Crab hunting is a family affair with men, women and children taking part in the hunt.

After they are caught, crabs are kept for a few days to purge their system of toxins and to fatten them up. They are usually fed a diet of grated coconut.

There are regional difference in how the stuffing for the grab is prepared. In northern and central Guam, the stuffing is called “pengot.” In southern Guam, it is referred to as “ka’it.”

## Placement on table

Stuffed crab is placed alongside the fish on the fiesta table. The fish section is the third section coming after the starch section (ãggon) and the meat section (totche). The vegetables and salad section follows the fish section. The kelaguen, fina’ denne’ and kadu (soup) section is at the end of the table. The desserts are usually located on a separate table.

– Jillette Leon-Guerrero, MA

## Recipe

- Crabs
- Onion, chopped
- Pepper leaves, chopped
- Pumpkin Tips, chopped
- Red Pepper, chopped
- Coconut, grated
- Coconut milk (for every 1 cup of coconut milk add ½ cup of water)

1. Remove shell from body of crab. Set aside. Remove bitter part (bile) then scrap out meat. Mix finely chopped onion, pepper leaf, pumpkin tips, and donne (hot red chile peppers) and grated coconut. Stuff mixture in shell and tie it securely with coconut leaf or string.
2. Mix coconut milk and water and place in large stock pot. Submerge stuffed crab in pot. Vegetables can be added to the top of crab if desired. Cover and let boil until crab turns red.



[www.guampedia.com](http://www.guampedia.com)

– Recipe provided by Sen. Pilar Lujan

## Annie's Chamorro Kitchen

[www.annieschamorrokitchen.com](http://www.annieschamorrokitchen.com)

“ My name is Annie. Food and I get along so well! Cooking and baking are more than a hobby for me – they’re a passion. I come from the beautiful island of Guam, U.S.A. The recipes you’ll find here are my creations, or those of my children, who are also budding foodies. I hope you like them. Drop me a comment or two to let me know how you like our island and other delicacies. Enjoy!”  
– Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Annette Merfalen



## Crab-Stuffed Mushrooms

One our favorite appetizers when we eat out are crab-stuffed mushrooms. Tender mushrooms, sweet crab meat, and melted cheese are sure to make these tasty morsels a hit at your dinner table. With my easy recipe, you don’t have to wait until you eat out to enjoy them — now you can make these in your very own kitchen!

Don’t skimp on the crab meat and use that stringy imitation stuff. Yes, I know real crab meat is pricey, but it’s worth it. Trust me! While imitation crab meat will do when you make sushi, you’ll do these stuffed mushrooms a great injustice if you don’t use the real thing.

Funny story...we made these for our appetizer for dinner tonight. As my husband was popping a stuffed mushroom into his mouth, my daughter scolded him, stating that the mushrooms were a SIDE DISH, to be eaten with our meal. “I thought they were appetizers!” exclaimed my husband. “No...mushrooms are vegetables, and we’re having vegetables with our dinner” my daughter said, matter-of-factly. Hahaha! I love my kids! :D Give my recipe a try. I KNOW you’ll LOVE it. :)



### Ingredients:

- 1 pound lump crab meat
- 1 cup mayonnaise (I like using Best Foods or Hellman’s)
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 stalks green onions, sliced
- 15-20 fresh white mushrooms, more or less, depending on the size

### Directions:

Place the crab meat in a small mixing bowl. Pick out any stray crab shells.

Add the mayonnaise to the bowl... and the Parmesan cheese... and the black pepper and the garlic powder... and the green onions.

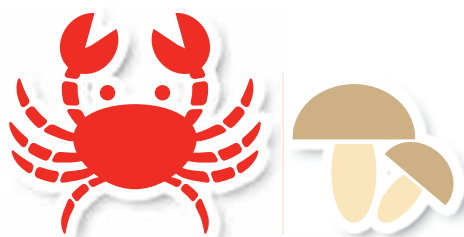
Stir to combine all the ingredients. At this stage, this is FANTASTIC as-is, as a dip or spread for crackers. If you want to use it as a dip, place it into a microwave-safe bowl and heat it for about 90 seconds to 2 minutes, or just long enough to warm it and to get some of the cheese to melt. Don’t microwave it too long or the mayo will break down and your mixture will be very oily.

Pull off the stems of each mushroom. If the mushrooms are dirty, wipe them GENTLY with a paper towel. DO NOT rinse the mushrooms in water—the mushrooms will soak up the water and become almost slimy (yuck!). Trust me—a paper towel is all you need to clean these babies.

Stuff each mushroom cap with the crab mixture. It’s okay to be generous. You’ll have more than enough filling even if you overstuff the mushrooms. We bought rather large mushrooms at COSTCO.

Place each stuffed mushroom onto a baking pan. Top each mushroom with more grated Parmesan cheese.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes (for smaller mushrooms) and up to 30 minutes for the larger mushrooms. These were rather large mushrooms, so 30 minutes was about right. Bake until the cheese and mushrooms are nicely browned.



Step into  
Annie's Chamorro Kitchen via Facebook.  
Search for:  
"Annie's Chamorro Kitchen"







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## Your favorite KFC chicken but in a sandwich!

Howdy folks! KFC's Colonel Sanders here! When making the new Kentucky Fried Chicken sandwich, people asked how I felt about burger places selling fried chicken. I'd say that's none of my business! Just like making fried chicken is none of theirs. Come on in and try a deliciously crisp and tasty KFC chicken sandwich today! Follow KFC Guam on Facebook and Instagram. Let us cater your next family meal and have it delivered directly to you. Quick, easy and delicious! K-F-C, It's Finger Lickin' Good!

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RESTAURANT INFO



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GUAM EDITION

APRIL 2, 2021



## Pilot program

Air Force eyes waivers for civilian-trained pilots,  
new ROTC programs to fill shortage **Page 2**

Royal Air Force Flying Officer Syd Janota, a Pilot Training Next 2.0 student, observes a fellow student flying a virtual-reality training sortie at the PTN facility at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Austin, Texas, in 2019. The Air Force is developing a program to exempt civilian pilots from some military training to become officers and fly aircraft for the service more quickly.

DAN HAWKINS/U.S. Air Force



## COVER STORY

# USAF eyes waivers for civilian-trained pilots

By ROSE L. THAYER  
*Stars and Stripes*

AUSTIN, Texas – The Air Force is developing a program to exempt civilian pilots from some military training to become officers and fly aircraft for the service more quickly, said Maj. Gen. Craig Wills, the 19th Air Force commander.

It's an attempt by the Air Force to find ways to fill its pilot shortage and create a more diverse workforce, he said.

"The most important thing on that program is you still have to be willing to fight and kill and potentially die for your country to serve as an Air Force officer. And that's a pretty big lift," Wills said during a call about efforts to overhaul the Air Force's pilot training to increase pools of candidates, speed up training time and redesign curriculum to match the technology-driven 21st century.

Air Education and Training Command, known as AETC, is tasked with sending 1,500 pilots a year into the Air Force, said Wills, who leads the command's unit that trains pilots, as well as aircrews, air battle managers, weapons directors, survival and escape specialists and many others.

Last year, 19th Air Force produced 1,263 pilots, which was down from 1,279 in 2019, in part because of the coronavirus pandemic, which cost the service about 120 pilots, he said.

To keep the standard the same for civilian-trained pilots, Wills and his team developed an assessment methodology that includes an oral exam, written exam and a series of flight checks in a simulator. Based on those scores, service officials determine how much Air Force training the pilots need.

"Somebody who is exceptional and extremely well qualified might be able to bypass undergraduate pilot training altogether. We would put those folks through an Air Force fundamentals course ... to bring them up to speed on Air Force differences, teach them how we fly, teach them the things that they need to know to make a difference," Wills said.

One challenge to launching the program is finding space in Officer Training School.

"We're really not hiring pilots, we're hiring officers who are trained as pilots. That's really the difference," he said.

In a similar vein, the Air Force also is working on an initiative to offer ROTC scholarships at colleges and universities that have undergraduate aviation programs and are willing to work with the service on specific syllabus material. This could allow



SEAN M. WORRELL/U.S. Air Force

**Second Lt. Austin Sneed, a Pilot Training Next student, trains on a virtual-reality flight simulator in 2018. The Air Force is looking for ways to fill its pilot shortage.**

those students to graduate and then bypass a portion of Air Force pilot training using a similar methodology used for assessing prospective civilian pilots.

"Potentially, we could have an opportunity where we have added to the number of pilots at a relatively low-cost point," Wills said. "Obviously, the number one thing is the quality of the training and the standard of these officers. That's non-negotiable."

## A diverse pilot pool

While recruiting more pilots, the service also wants to attract a more diverse pool of candidates that reflects the diversity of the Air Force and the country. As it stands, Air Force pilots are overwhelmingly white men.

As of March, the Air Force has 12,468 pilots and 87.3% are white, according to data self-reported by pilots to the service's personnel center. The service has 860 female pilots, who are also about 87% white. Nearly 5% of pilots declined to provide their race. About 71% of the nearly 330,000 Air Force members are white and 21% are women.

Last year, the service began developing a deliberate approach "to attract, recruit and retain the most qualified people from diverse backgrounds," said Maj. Gen. Jeannie M. Leavitt, who is the AETC director of operations and communications and team leader of the Rated Diversity Improvement Strategy.

"A diverse force of unique strengths, perspectives and experiences strengthens our Air Force and helps maintain its competitive advantage," she said in a statement on the efforts.

As it stands now, acceptance can lean toward wealthier candidates who can afford some flight training. Wills acknowledged this and he said work is underway to overhaul the way that candidates are evaluated for pilot training. They are also looking at what can be done before prospective students arrive to provide them knowledge to help fill gaps in prior flight experience.

It's not about lowering the standard, but about removing barriers, Wills said. He also said he worries the current system is leaving behind exceptional candidates because of a lack of opportunity.

"We want the best candidate. We have no intention of getting anything but the best candidates, but we have to make sure we're using the right measures," Wills said. "What I want is people who are willing to work as a team, people who have courage and grit and determination and resilience. I can go out with a credit card, and if I have a big enough credit card and I have a patient enough flight instructor, I can rack up a lot of hours and make myself look really good on paper. ... But now you compare me to somebody who's working three jobs to get through school, who's

an all-star on the football team, who's got heart and grit, and who's tough."

## Training the next generation

Other initiatives within AETC and 19th Air Force are targeting how to redesign pilot training so it better relates to a new generation of pilots who were raised on technology. This includes incorporating virtual reality, different types of simulators, and remote learning and teaching platforms.

"They have different expectations, and yet, our learning systems, generally speaking in our training pipelines, have failed to adapt thus far," Wills said.

Many of the redesign concepts for undergraduate pilot training build off lessons learned from Pilot Training Next, a new, technology-heavy form of pilot training that began two years ago. Students get about 100 extra hours on immersive training devices such as virtual-reality simulators. A new, more reliable common immersive training device is in development with a contractor to provide to all students, Wills said. It should reduce the maintenance that is needed on the devices used now.

At the end of this phase, which uses the T-6 Texan aircraft, graduates will become Air Force pilots, and move on to further training specifically for their

selected aircraft.

A separate concept to speed up training time called the Accelerated Path to Wings uses only the T-1 Jayhawk aircraft to train pilots and allows students to graduate in seven months instead of 12 months.

The first eight students to undergo this accelerated program graduated in March at Randolph Air Force Base in Texas.

"What we found is that, in fact, you can train to the same standard," Wills said. "We certainly had some lessons learned along the way, but the students responded magnificently. The instructors have given us good feedback on that program. Although we're continuing to pore through the data and look at it right now, we're quite confident that we've just sent high-quality graduates off to their formal training units after only flying the T-1."

In a statement provided through AETC, 2nd Lt. Andrew Button said graduating in this first class was "pretty special."

"I volunteered for this not knowing if it would work out or not, but I just put my trust in the Air Force," said Button, who is slated to fly the C-17 Globemaster III, a fixed-wing cargo aircraft, at Joint Base Charleston, S.C.

When it comes to helicopter pilots, the Air Force is testing two options that do not require them to first fly in fixed-wing training planes before going to the Army's training program at Fort Rucker, Ala. One option sends students straight to Fort Rucker and the other sends them first to a contractor, then to Fort Rucker.

"We're very, very encouraged by the results thus far with both of those small group trials. We're in the final stages of evaluating the way ahead. We're very, very optimistic about a helicopter-only path for our helicopter pilots and very confident in the work that's being done," Wills said.

These plans could shave about six months off training time and save the Air Force about \$250,000 per pilot, he said.

Through all these initiatives, Wills sees a path toward meeting the goal of 1,500 new Air Force pilots each year by 2024.

"If we can't produce high-quality pilots in relevant numbers, we're going to have second- and third-order effects that stay with us for a very long time," Wills said. "The charter that we've gotten here is to accelerate change. A lot of folks don't really like change, especially when you're changing something that you know works."



## MILITARY

# Patriot Express' Seattle-Guam route to be permanent

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

A government-chartered Patriot Express route that connects Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, with Seattle-Tacoma International Airport will become permanent next fiscal year thanks to a successful pandemic-era test run.

Bi-weekly flights on that route started last year on a six-month trial basis to accommodate military families with pets changing their duty stations. The families found a lack of commercial carrier options and burdensome restrictions added costs to their moves to and from the U.S. territory.

The pilot program was extended another six months as coronavirus travel restrictions cut into ridership, according to a statement emailed to Stars and Stripes from Air Force Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base, Ill.

After further review, U.S. Transportation Command and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command signed off on the route for the fiscal year 2022 Pentagon budget.

"The Patriot Express has been a big win for morale and resilience for Guam [Defense Department] personnel and their fam-

ilies," Air Mobility Command's statement said. "We exceeded our break even points despite COVID-19."

A stop at Kadena Air Base on Okinawa is also being added next month to "ensure mission requirements are met at both locations and the aircraft are utilized to the fullest extent possible," according to the command.

The Patriot Express — sometimes referred to as the Rotator or Cat B flight — ferries travelers on official duty to U.S. military installations around the globe. Common destinations include the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Japan and South Korea as well as bases across Europe.

The Patriot Express also allows space-available travel for eligible passengers.

Brig. Gen. Gentry Boswell, commander at Andersen at the time, announced the route's inception, which followed several instances of service members raising money online to defer permanent change of station costs. In January 2019, a Navy family raised \$11,592, the cost of shipping their two German shepherds to Guam from Virginia.

Boswell also said he hoped the route would allow more airmen to make it home for holidays and



SHAWN NICKEL/U.S. Air Force

**Members of the 731st Air Mobility Squadron push kennels holding the pets of Patriot Express passengers at Osan Air Base, South Korea, in May 2015. The Patriot Express route that connects Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, with Seattle-Tacoma International Airport will become permanent next fiscal year.**

special occasions.

During the trial period, approximately 4,300 passengers and 400 pets utilized the flights, the command said. While larger pets often traveled in the cargo hold, smaller ones sometimes rode in the cabin with their families.

The coronavirus pandemic heavily impacted the pilot program, according to the command's statement.

Then-Defense Secretary Mark Esper issued a stop movement order April 20 that barred all PCS travel. On May 22, he lifted restrictions on travel to some locations that met specific criteria.

"As restrictions ease, we expect increased usage of the Patriot Express, allowing for continued availability to transport pets and opportunities for Space Available travel," Air Mobility Command's statement said. "This gives our Airmen a low-cost option to stay connected with friends and families off island."

All Patriot Express routes are reevaluated annually for necessity and cost effectiveness, the command said. Routes are routinely altered for additional stops.

After booking travel reservations for families and pets through the installation trans-

portation office, service members and their families are encouraged to check the Andersen Passenger Terminal Facebook page for flight schedules and updates.

Families making PCS moves are permitted to travel with two animals, restricted to dogs and cats, and must meet all shipping and country entry requirements, the 36th Wing said. Capacity is limited based on the carrier's cargo configuration.

Pet transport alone is not authorized for Space-A travel.

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# Army ups incentive for soldiers to move themselves

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

Army officials bracing to move some 90,000 soldiers in the summer announced Tuesday that the service will pay the expenses for troops to pack and move their belongings themselves.

The increase from the 95% reimbursement rate of the government's estimated moving cost is meant to make the so-called "personally procured" moves a more attractive option for soldiers, said Maj. Gen. Michel Russell Sr., the Army's logistics commander. The Army — and other military services — initiated 100% reimbursements last year on a temporary basis, but the decision is now to make it permanent, reflecting the first rate change for self-moves since it was upped from 80% to 95% in 1998.

"That puts more money in our soldiers' and families' pockets," Russell told reporters. "It incentivizes them to do their own moves with the conveyances they choose, and in a [coronavirus pandemic] environment, it also allows them to maintain their healthy bubble by doing things themselves."

It would also release at least some burden on government-contracted moving companies as the Army plans to return to a normal move schedule during the summer's permanent-change-of-station season, which traditionally runs from May through August. The Army expects to move some 90,000 soldiers this year, including domestic and overseas moves, said Derrick Candler, who leads the Army's transportation policy division. The service moved about 72,000 soldiers last year in an unusual season that stretched well into the fall, he said.

Despite the increased incentive last year, the Army only saw a minor uptick in the percentage of soldiers choosing to conduct personally procured moves, which used to be known as do-it-yourself, or DITY, moves, Candler said. Last year, about 23% of soldiers moved themselves — up from about 21% in 2019 and 2018.

The increased incentive was one of several PCS changes that Army officials wanted to undertake after the pandemic brought new issues to the process last year, according to Russell. As the coronavirus reached American shores and

quickly spread through all 50 states last March, the Pentagon for several months temporarily halted almost all military movement, including virtually all moves.

That created a backlog of moves for the services as they began conducting high-priority moves in April and gradually lifted some restrictions as the military learned how to conduct PCS moves while attempting to minimize the spread of the virus.

Candler said those protocols — including increased cleaning at soldiers' new and old quarters, mask wearing and social distancing — appeared to have worked. While the Army was made aware of cases in which movers and family members tested positive for coronavirus after a move, he said contact tracers did not establish that any transmissions occurred between Army families and movers in 2020.

Another improvement to the PCS process that Russell touted was a drastic increase in the time between when soldiers receive their PCS orders and they are due to report for their new job. On average, soldiers now are receiving their orders about 120 days before they must arrive at

their next assignment, Russell said, up from just 30 to 60 days in previous years.

The extra time, the general said, should allow soldiers to better prepare their moves.

Last year, the Army also launched a smartphone application that it hopes will help soldiers better navigate their moves. The app called Army PCS Move is available in Apple's App Store and on Google Play.

Soldiers can use the app for moving research, to book movers and track where they are in the moving process, Russell said. It can also help soldiers file a claim if their belongings are lost or damaged during a move.

To date, Russell said the app has been downloaded some 13,000 times.

"This basically allows them to take back control of how they conduct a PCS move," he said. "Knowledge is power, and the goal is to give the force the power to help us help them improve the PCS move experience."

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## VETERANS

# DNA databases help unite US vets, children

By SETH ROBSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

David Clark traveled the world as an Army noncommissioned officer, serving in South Korea, Germany, Iraq and Vietnam in support of President Bill Clinton's historic visit in 2000.

At the time, he never would have guessed that he had Vietnamese family living nearby.

Clark, 50, a civilian employee of Military Sealift Command living in Norfolk, Va., got a surprise after sending a DNA sample to Ancestry.com in December. In addition to finding out he is 44% French and has Scottish, English, Irish and Jewish blood, he discovered a Vietnamese cousin.

Phan Thi Nuoi, was born Nov. 15, 1971, and had her DNA sent to Ancestry.com in September 2017, in an effort to track down her father, an American GI who served there during the war.

That man turned out to be Clark's late uncle, Donald Pelkey, of Fort Fairfield, Maine, who served three tours with the Army at Cam Ranh Bay and Pleiku, Vietnam, between 1968 and 1971.

Pelkey had been in love with Phan's mother, Phan Thi Loan, but lost touch after he came home from the war, Clark said in a recent telephone interview.

"Nowadays finding people is easy, but in the 1970s it was just letters and telephone calls," he said. "And I'm sure the telephone system wasn't that good."

## Copenhagen connection

When Clark saw that he had a long-lost cousin, he sent an email to the address listed with her name on Ancestry.com.

He got a response from Brian Hjort, 50, an antique furniture repairman from Copenhagen, Denmark, who has been helping Amerasians in Vietnam and the Philippines find their fathers since the early 1990s.

Hjort first traveled to Vietnam as a 21-year-old in 1992 and was interested in meeting people his age who called themselves Americans, he said in a phone interview.

Once back home in Denmark, he got a request from one of his Vietnamese friends to help find the American father of a person in her village. Hjort filed a military records request with the

help of the U.S. Embassy and received a name and address.

"The first father I found was in 1995," he said. "After that, people started writing to me."

Hjort estimates he has reunited dozens of GI dads with their Vietnamese and Filipino children. But it has gotten easier in recent years thanks to the internet — he operates a website called [www.fatherfounded.org](http://www.fatherfounded.org) — and DNA.

Hjort has been sending samples from Amerasians looking for their American fathers to services such as Ancestry.com, MyHeritage, 23andMe, Y-DNA and Family Tree DNA, he said.

## 'Never came back'

Vietnam veteran Jim Reischl, 73, of St. Cloud, Minn., hopes DNA will help him find the daughter he left behind after serving as an Air Force clerk from 1969-70 at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam.

Reischl shared an off-base apartment with the woman who became the girl's mother.

"Her name was Hoa, which means flower in Vietnamese," he said in telephone interview early this year.

He keeps a photograph of Hoa, whose real name is Nguyen Thi Hanh, and a friend singing Vietnamese nursery rhymes in their apartment.

"I told her in late April of 1970 that I was probably going to be leaving," he said. "I told her I would be with her another month, but I don't think she understood me. She didn't speak a lot of English."

A week later, Hoa told Reischl she was pregnant.

"It scared me at the time," he said. "[The Air Force] had told us that women would tell us a lot of things, but it doesn't mean it's true."

Hoa told Reischl she wanted to come back to America with him, he recalled.

"The military told me, if I get to know a woman and want to bring her back expect to be there longer than my original term," he said.

Reischl left his pregnant girlfriend behind in Vietnam but wrote to her soon after arriving in the United States. He never heard back, he said.

He eventually married in the States, and it wasn't until he



Jim Reischl

Air Force veteran Jim Reischl reunited in 2016 with Nguyen Thi Hanh, the pregnant girlfriend he left behind in 1970 after a tour to Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam.



Brian Hjort

Brian Hjort, right, poses with friends in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in 2016. The antique furniture repairman from Copenhagen, Denmark, helps Amerasians in Vietnam and the Philippines find their American service member fathers.

divorced in 2001 that he started searching for his child, making a trip to Vietnam every year, he said.

Reischl found Hjort online and, after a decadelong search, contacted Hoa, who responded to an advertisement placed in a Vietnamese newspaper, he said.

Hoa, who declined to be interviewed for this article, was living in the Mekong Delta, and the pair met for the first time since the war when Reischl visited in 2016.

"She said our daughter was born Dec. 18, 1970, in Vinh Long at a clinic," he said. "A lady who was with her offered to watch the baby and the lady took her and never came back. She had talked about taking her to an orphanage."

It seems like DNA is the only

hope of finding their daughter, said Reischl, who plans to return to Vietnam once the pandemic recedes.

## Proof required

Meanwhile, Clark has been in touch with his cousin, communicating through Facebook with her adult son, Nguyen Van Anh.

In a Facebook message, the son said he's interested in meeting his newly found relatives and would travel to the U.S. to visit them if possible.

Nguyen Chi, a U.S. Consulate worker in Ho Chi Minh City, has been helping Clark communicate with his Vietnamese relatives and said they're excited by the news of their American cousins.

"I spoke with [Phan] on the phone and she seems very happy to find her father's relation,"

Nguyen Chi said in a recent email.

If Clark's Vietnamese relatives want to move to the U.S., they must submit evidence that Pelkey is Phan's father, said Clark, who is attempting to obtain his uncle's service records to show that he was in Vietnam at the time she was conceived.

Pelkey, who has no other known children and served as commander of the Paul Lockhart Veterans of Foreign Wars Post in Fort Fairfield, would have welcomed his daughter and grandson with open arms if he was still alive, Clark said.

But, he added, the rest of their American family won't be able to help much.

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## MILITARY

# Men more shy about unisex bathrooms

By **NIKKI WENTLING**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — A study of Special Forces service members found that male and female troops hold drastically different views on gender-neutral bathrooms, with many men firmly opposed to them.

About 33% of men who participated in the study said they would be willing to share a unisex bathroom with women, while 61% of women said they would be willing to share a unisex bathroom with men.

Male service members cited hygiene, risk and privacy as their main concerns.

The study, titled “Maintaining Male Exclusivity: Porcelain Privilege in the Military,” was published recently in the journal *Armed Forces and Society*. Researchers at the University of Kansas conducted focus groups with members of the U.S. Army Special Forces about their thoughts on women integrating into combat roles.

**“We weren’t focused on bathrooms originally, but they kept coming up, more than 300 times. We were focused on larger questions of military integration ... The results clearly showed men were concerned about continuing a sex-separated atmosphere.”**

**Shannon Portillo**  
University of Kansas

Researchers didn’t ask service members about bathrooms, but the issue kept coming up, they said.

“We weren’t focused on bathrooms originally, but they kept coming up, more than 300 times,” said Shannon Portillo, associate dean for academic affairs at the university’s Edwards Campus. “We were focused on larger questions of military integration, but we saw a stark gender difference on this topic. The results clearly showed men were concerned about continuing a sex-separated atmosphere.”

The researchers held 27 focus groups with a total of 198 participants at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and Fort Leavenworth in Kansas.

The study found that there is still resistance of women integrating into Special Forces positions. Bathrooms were often cited as a reason male service members were against the integration.

Historically, researchers said, bathrooms have been used as a way to keep women out of certain workplaces, such as police stations, fire-

houses and Congress.

When male-dominated workplaces have been integrated, some workers attempted to fight back by “doubling down on the existing sexist culture,” said Alesha Doan, a professor in KU’s department of women, gender and sexuality studies. The researchers found this same dynamic in their study of service members.

“Men’s discomfort with potentially sharing toilets and team room spaces with women, in contrast to the women’s readiness for such conditions, is an indication that the underlying logic of sexism needs to be addressed,” the study states.

The study did not include or ask about transgender service members because it was conducted when transgender people were barred from military service, the researchers wrote.

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## US troops in Japan have chance to see Olympic torch

By **ERICA EARL**  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — The Olympic torch will pass near several U.S. military installations this spring and summer on its journey through each of Japan’s 47 prefectures toward one of the most unique Olympic games in recent history.

Thanks again to the coronavirus pandemic, spectators will not be allowed to attend the ceremony in Fukushima, Japan, that kicks off the torch relay. But onlookers may watch from the street as torchbearers run through Japan with the iconic symbol, according to the Tokyo 2020 official website.

The flame arrived from Athens, Greece, aboard a special aircraft March 19 at the Japan Air Self-Defense Force’s Matsushima Air Base in Miyagi prefecture, according to Olympic.org.

The 121-day torch relay, which started March 25 at the J-Village National Training Center in Fukushima, will pass close to several military installations along its zigzagging route.

The torch is scheduled to pass through Okinawa City on May 1; Sasebo City on May 8; Iwakuni on May 13; Misawa on June 11; Yokosuka and Atsugi on June 29; and Fussa, in western Tokyo, on July 12. The journey will end in Shinjuku, Tokyo, on July 23 for the start of the summer games.

Specific time breakdowns for each location may be found on the Tokyo 2020 website.

The torch relay may be as



International Olympic Committee

**Japanese gold medalists Tadahiro Nomura, right, and Saori Yoshida light an Olympic cauldron with the flame brought from Greece to Matsushima Air Base in Miyagi prefecture, Japan, on March 19.**

close as spectators get to an Olympic event in person. The International Olympic Committee announced March 20 that overseas spectators will be barred from the games for the first time in history, due to the ongoing pandemic.

The IOC, during a virtual

meeting, also said it will be re-evaluating guidelines for Japan resident spectators and plans to have a decision by the end of April, according to a press release posted to the Tokyo 2020 website.

The IOC and local organizers are asking that torch-relay spec-

tators observe coronavirus safety measures such as wearing masks, keeping distance from one another and refraining from traveling from prefecture to prefecture to see the relay.

The concept for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Torch Relay across Japan will be “hope lights

our way.”

Torchbearers will run the flame by famous landmarks and sites that are the favorites of the local population, according to the website.

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## MILITARY

# ‘Warrior restaurants’? | How the Army hopes to fight fat, boost DFAC usage with rebranding

By CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

Base cafeterias will always be “chow halls” for many, while others call them DFACs. But the Army is trying to add a new term to the lexicon: warrior restaurant.

In an effort to change how and what soldiers eat, the service has begun rebranding its dining facilities, modernizing them and upgrading their offerings to prioritize fresh or frozen ingredients over heavily processed foods.

“Warrior restaurant” is the preferred nomenclature, Sgt. Maj. Ken Fauska of the Army’s Joint Culinary Center of Excellence said in a statement in January. Use of the term has been percolating on social media, mostly through the facilities’ official accounts and by Army leaders promoting them.

“I miss just calling it a DFAC,” Command Sgt. Maj. Jason Towns said in a recent tweet. “It’s still a challenge to remember to call it a Warrior Restaurant.”

The dining facility overhaul comes as the Army looks to combat obesity and boost soldier fitness, and after Army and Air Force officials began exploring a university campus-style dining plan that would let soldiers use meal cards outside DFACs, at places where they’ve been paying out of pocket.

To draw customers in, some DFACs have begun experimenting with more meatless meals, some of which were offered recently to troops at Fort Hood, Texas, during a “Taste Fest” at the Always Ready Warrior Restaurant.

After a four-day training event with a Florida-based chef, Fort Hood culinary specialists served up samples of vegan breakfast burritos with scrambled tofu, vegan spelt pancakes topped with fresh berries, stuffed avocados with quinoa salad and pan-seared teriyaki tofu steak with couscous and grilled asparagus.

To promote healthier eating, facilities are also placing salad bars more prominently, deep-sixing deep fat fryers and switching to air frying ovens.

On social media, chow halls boast about meals with more whole grains, lean meats, fruits and vegetables — sometimes pitting them against fast food joints or other competitors.

“Don’t waste your money at Burger King ... hmmm!” said a recent 3rd Infantry Division Food Service post on Facebook with photos of fruits, vegetables and what looked like baked fish file.

DFAC meals are subsidized through food allowances, which let soldiers who live in the barracks use meal cards to pay for breakfast, lunch and dinner. But many soldiers fail to use about half that entitlement.

That means each soldier leaves about \$170 a month “on the table,” partly because of difficulty getting to DFACs at meal times for various reasons, Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, said during a committee hearing last year.

There is a “lack of participation in large volumes in the chow halls,” former Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy told lawmakers at the hearing.



Spc. Stephanie Bryant, 3rd Cavalry Regiment, prepares food during a “Taste Fest” at Fort Hood, Texas, on March 12. Some base cafeterias have begun experimenting with more meatless meals as the Army looks to fight obesity and increase soldier fitness.



A pan-seared teriyaki tofu steak with couscous and grilled asparagus is on display March 12 at Fort Hood.

Soldiers know about them, but “the million-dollar question” is how to get them eating there, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Michael Barnes, a food service adviser at Fort Polk, La.

While some DFACs have been stressing their value and menu variety, bases

are also launching food trucks, in-barracks kiosks and late-night or extended meal times to better serve the troops.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston touted the “transition to the warrior restaurant” at the Association of the U.S. Army’s annual meeting and

expo in October, saying the mess hall makeover aims to create “someplace you’d be proud to eat with your squad.”

They’re adding ID card scanners to cut down on wait times, starting to allow credit card payments and working to improve the food quality.

Installations are partnering with chefs off-base to improve kitchen staff mentorship and training. The service has recruited Food Network chef Robert Irvine, a fixture at holiday USO shows downrange in recent years, to help find ways to attract younger troops to the DFACs.

“If you give soldiers what they want, they will eat there,” Irvine said in August.

But will anyone really call them by the new name, especially without a catchy military acronym? Earlier this month, U.S. Army WTF Moments posted a variation of the “woman yelling at cat” meme depicting the renaming struggle.

“Warrior Restaurant? WTF!” retired Army Brig. Gen. Bill Shea wrote in response. “It’s a Chow Hall!”



## PACIFIC

# Chaplain cleanses base homes of spirits

BY ERICA EARL  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The headquarters of U.S. Forces Japan may also be home to supernatural activity, according to a couple who claim to help anyone dealing with paranormal disturbances to rid their homes of unwanted spirits.

Chaplain (Capt.) Lance Brown, of Yokota's 374th Wing Staff Agency, and his wife, Karen Brown, who is working on a master's in counseling, have been performing home cleanses, or anointings, for the past eight years in homes where "odd things occur."

Supernatural activity is reported so often at this base in western Tokyo that it inspired a Facebook group, Yokota Ghost Hunter Club. Its members post about paranormal phenomena they've experienced at their homes and workplaces.

Lance Brown is endorsed by the Pentecostal Church of God, and the home cleanses are not officially sanctioned by the Air Force, he told Stars and Stripes in an interview.

"Ghosts or spiritual demonic activity, things of an evil nature, God combats that," he said. "We have the ability to be that beacon of hope as people invite us."

The Browns said their cleansings are sometimes about helping someone cope with anxiety, heartbreak or a troubled past than about literal evil spirits, though Lance said they are not suggesting the supposed presence of spirits is "all in the person's head."

Laurie Pope, who lives in one of Yokota's garden units, said she started to feel uncomfortable in her home last year.

"My 3-year-old daughter has been experiencing sleep regression the past year," she told Stars and Stripes over Facebook Messenger early this month. "There have been several times when I would be watching her video monitor and I would see orbs of light in her room. There have been a few instances where I'd be in my bedroom and I would



ERICA EARL/Stars and Stripes

Chaplain (Capt.) Lance Brown and his wife, Karen Brown, perform cleanses at Yokota Air Base.

see a white streak of light run past the foot of my bed. And, more recently, my daughter has been saying she's seeing monsters and that she's scared."

Pope and her husband, Master Sgt. Austin Pope of the 374th Maintenance Squadron, decided that since Laurie Pope is six months pregnant, they needed to do something to help their daughter feel less afraid and sleep through the night before bringing a new baby home.

The family found the Browns on Facebook, and, despite not identifying with any religion, decided to give it a try.

"I know it won't happen overnight, but I'm hoping we can all live more comfortably in our home regardless if there was a spirit existing here," Laurie

Pope said.

The Browns' anointing process starts with talking to the family about what is happening at home.

"We discuss what they are seeing, hearing and sensing to determine if it's just a creaky house or if something evil is going on here," Lance Brown said. "Some people call it a 'spidey sense,' but we refer to it as a discernment of spirits, a heightened sense of things that are different or off."

They then apply anointing oil — a mixture of frankincense, myrrh, aloes and herbs — to anything that needs to be blessed, including people and objects. They also use incense and holy water.

"It's not as intense as movies

like 'The Exorcist' or anything like that," Karen Brown said. "After we have left, the situation has never gotten worse, ever."

The Papes, who had their home anointed March 1, are hopeful that the process worked for her family.

"My daughter still isn't sleeping through the night," Laurie Pope said. "But I feel a much greater sense of peace being home alone, especially at night."

The Browns do the cleanses free of cost, judgment or disclosure, they said. People need not be religious to have a home cleansing, and the Browns said their objective is not to convert anyone's belief systems.

The couple said they received more calls at Yokota over the past year than they did at their previous assignment in Fort McConnell Air Force Base, Kan. The Browns weren't certain exactly how many calls they have received on Yokota but explained that they receive a steady flow of requests, and had a cleansing arranged for right after their interview with Stars and Stripes.

Belief in hauntings, dark spirits and exorcisms is rooted in several factors, including religious beliefs about the afterlife and people's desire to connect and find patterns and signif-

icance in unusual or seemingly inexplicable incidents, according to Michael Shermer, a science historian and the founder of The Skeptics Society in Altadena, Calif.

"Incidents seem significant when you are looking for it," he said in a phone interview March 9.

The uncertainty and restrictions associated with the year-long coronavirus pandemic possibly amplifies stress and emotion, Lance Brown said. Add to that the feeling of isolation and separation from family and friends that comes with living in a foreign country.

"These feelings can make someone more heightened to portals for spiritual activity," he said.

The Browns declined to share the details of specific cleansings, but said they have experienced fear and emotional responses themselves during some visits.

"It's not anything of Hollywood, but evil is a very real thing," Lance Brown said. "You just sense an absolute darkness, and your skin tingles and the hair on the back of your neck raises and you get a sense of 'I don't want to be here.'"

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