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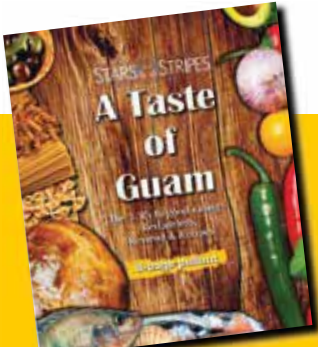
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78TH GUAM LIBERATION DAY

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Left: Lt. Cmdr. Linden Dahlkemper (right) relieves Cmdr. Ryan Adams (left) during a change of command ceremony July 15 aboard USCGC Sequoia. The U.S. Coast Guard District Fourteen Commander, Rear Adm. Michael Day (center), presided over the ceremony. Right: Dahlkemper addresses the crew and guest.

New CO takes helm of Sequoia

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR,
U.S. COAST GUARD FORCES
MIRCONESIA / SECTOR GUAM

SANTA RITA — Lt. Cmdr. Linden Dahlkemper relieved Cmdr. Ryan Adams, as the USCGC Sequoia commanding officer during a change of command ceremony on Friday aboard the cutter moored at Naval Base Guam.

The U.S. Coast Guard District Fourteen Commander, Rear Adm. Michael Day, presided over the ceremony.

Adams will report for duty as the District Fourteen chief of waterways. He served as the commanding officer of Sequoia for the past three years.

While leading Sequoia's team, the crew updated and modernized the Republic of Palau's Aids to Navigation constellation

by installing or refurbishing 66 aids to navigation valued at over \$400,000, supporting commerce and Department of Defense partners.

Enhancing regional partnerships, they transported the U.S. Ambassador to Palau, representatives of the Royal Australian Navy and Japan Coast Guard, and a delegation of Palauan officials to Sonsorol Island. They also delivered critical humanitarian supplies of food, water, and medicine early in the COVID-19 pandemic and conducted surveys for future civil and defense projects.

The team partnered with U.S. Navy Underwater Construction Team Two for a two-month channel widening project at Kapingamarangi Atoll in the Federated States of Micronesia. They expended over 12,000 pounds of high-yield explosives to widen

the channel into the lagoon and enable larger supply vessels to serve the people of the atoll.

They completed the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training and Tailored Ship's Training Availability in 2021 with a 96.8 percent rating over 97 tailored drills, earning the Battle "E" across all warfare areas. They received the Coast Guard's Forrest O. Rednour Memorial Award for medium afloat cutters for excellence in food service.

Dahlkemper comes to Sequoia from the U.S. Embassy in Hanoi, where she managed all maritime security cooperation programs in the Office of Defense Cooperation Vietnam.

Her previous afloat tours include command of USCGC James Rankin homeported in Baltimore, operations officer on USCGC Aspen (WLB 208), and

a deck watch officer on USCGC Walnut. Ashore she served on the presidential transition team and in the office of the administrator at the General Services Administration as a 2016 White House fellow.

Before her fellowship selection, she taught American government and public policy courses at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. She also served as an assistant coach for the Intercollegiate Sailing team and a safety officer for the Coastal Sail Training Program. Dahlkemper graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy with a bachelor's degree in government and has a master's degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University.

She is a native of Erie, Pennsylvania, and brings her spouse Mark and son Clarke to Guam.

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U.S. Coast Guard opens new facility in Guam

STORY AND PHOTO BY
CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR,
U.S. COAST GUARD FORCES MICRONESIA
/ SECTOR GUAM

SANTA RITA — The U.S. Coast Guard conducted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Cmdr. Carlton S. Skinner Building located at U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

U.S. Coast Guard Fourteenth District Commander, Rear Adm. Michael Day, presided over the ceremony. The Lt. Gov. of Guam Joshua Tenorio and U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam Commander Capt. Nicholas Simmons joined him.

Day's remarks highlighted the Service's effort to be a more adaptive and connected Coast Guard that generates sustained readiness, resilience, and capability to enhance our Nation's maritime safety, security, and prosperity. That security mindset is ever present in the Pacific. Day also reflected on recently attended World War II memorials in Guam.

"We attended the Inalahan Memorial earlier this week, and something Mr. Willy Flores said resonated with me. We who are alive today, we walk in some giant footsteps. And I can't help thinking about Carlton Skinner and what made him so remarkable was his ability to recognize

talents and inclusivity."

The facility is home to the U.S. Coast Guard Maintenance Augmentation Team and Weapons Augmentation Team (MAT/WAT) Guam. MAT/WAT Guam, a detached duty sub-unit of Base Honolulu, under the Director of Operational Logistics, comprises 23 personnel from various rates who conduct depot-level maintenance aboard the three Guam-based 154-foot Sentinel Class Fast Response Cutters.

"This building is the recognition by the Coast Guard that shore infrastructure is a crucial component of the operations that we perform every day," said Simmons. "Every ship, every small boat, every aircraft leaves a shore facility and returns to a shore facility."

The MAT/WAT team supports the operationally driven maintenance system. They also conduct corrective maintenance, trailering operations, troubleshooting assistance, and underway personnel support, allowing cutter crews to attend training courses or take earned leave. The unique capabilities of this unit in the remote location of Guam also enable the MAT/WAT to support additional Coast Guard and Navy units, including USCGC Sequoia (WLB 205), Station Apra Harbor, Sector Guam and Coastal Riverine



Rear Adm. Michael Day, Lt. Gov. of Joshua Tenorio, and Capt. Nicholas Simmons cut the ribbon for the new U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Carlton S. Skinner Building.

Group One, Detachment Guam.

The legacy and commitment of Cmdr. Carlton Skinner inspires the plank owners of MAT/WAT Guam. Skinner served in the U.S. Coast Guard in World War II and was the first civilian governor of Guam. He was a trailblazer who leveraged

the innate abilities of his crew to achieve mission excellence. He was a champion of civil rights, remembered for leading the first racially integrated U.S. military ship crew aboard USS Sea Cloud (WPG 284).

"Carlton Skinner had a radical hypothesis that an integrated

crew could run a Coast Guard cutter. That sounds crazy today, but he had to ask permission from the commandant. That experiment went swimmingly well, and they were the first of the naval services to be integrated. Skinner epitomized our core values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty," said Day.

The MAT/WAT's seal pays homage to the three enlisted heroes, the namesakes of the Guam-based FRCs. The most prominent element is the cog, which symbolizes Oliver Henry's rate as a Machinist Mate. At a time when African Americans were limited in their service, Carlton Skinner saw Oliver Henry's potential to serve as a Machinist Mate and applied for his service as such. Upon denial, he appealed the decision and successfully had Oliver Henry instated as a Machinist Mate, the majority rate within this new unit, now known as Machinery Technicians.

"The Organic Act of Guam provided citizenship to the people of Guam and self-government. Governor Skinner was one of the key change agents who drafted the Organic Act and shepherded Guam from a naval administration into a civilian administration. Skinner is a popular figure on Guam," said Tenorio.

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LINEBACKERS OF THE WEEK

Staff Sgt. Devin Floyd

‘Never did I think I was going to be asked to lead a flight’

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS EMILY SAXTON,
U.S. AIR FORCE

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Devin Floyd, armament flight chief and interim wing weapons manager with the 36th Maintenance Squadron, was recognized as the 36th Wing’s Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, July 13, 2022.

The Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week recognizes outstanding enlisted, officer, civilian and total force personnel who have had an impact on achieving Team Andersen’s Mission, Vision and Priorities.

After arriving at Andersen AFB, Floyd took over the armament flight chief role in February of 2020. As a Staff Sgt. filling a senior non-commissioned officer’s role, he’s not only performing his primary duties given to him, but he also directed two squadron anti-terrorism programs, and reported over 900 pieces of equipment across ten facilities, culminating in a zero-defect Integrated Defense Management Process inspection. In addition, he teamed up with the 36th Contingency Response Group

to augment them with his armament systems knowledge, and has also served as a unit fitness monitor for the 36 MXS, driving a 99% pass rate.

His work ethic directly led to his recent selection as the role of the wing weapons manager, which is usually reserved for a Senior Master Sgt. In his roles, Floyd leads a team of seven personnel in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Bomber Task Force, Dynamic Force Employment, higher headquarter directed missions and local flying operations. He also manages and conducts the armament weapon system, liaising for tenant units, deployments, transient aircraft, and joint exercises.

“Never did I think I was going to be asked to lead a flight or hold some of the responsibilities of a wing weapons manager and I can honestly say I’m grateful for the opportunity,” said Floyd. “There is a lot more that goes on off of the maintenance floor that my current rank doesn’t get to see all that often.”

Floyd has increased the high morale in his flight while maintaining normal operations through multiple exercises and manning and resource limitations. His leadership said that he serves as an excellent example to his peers.



Staff Sgt. Devin Floyd receives the Linebacker of the Week Award from Brig. Gen. Paul R. Birch accompanied by Chief Master Sgt. John E. Payne. Photo by Staff Sgt. Aubree Owens, U.S. Air Force

Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson

‘Seeing a lightbulb go off for someone in class... a good feeling’

STORY AND PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ALLISON MARTIN,
U.S. AIR FORCE

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – U.S. Air Force, Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson, non-commissioned officer in charge, education and training with the 36th Wing Medical Group, was recognized as the 36th Wing’s Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, July 6, 2022.

Staff Sgt. Wilson leads the Air Force’s Multi-Capable Airmen initiative by establishing the Pacific Air Force’s first MCA site. He authored a 48 hour/50 module syllabus, trained 33 instructors and prepared a \$175,000 equipment package; benchmarking the standard and being coined by the PACAF Surgeon General. He authored, organized and deployed the 36 MDG’s first Tactical Combat Casualty Care Tier two class complete with a field training exercise finale at Northwest field. This training included simulated incoming hostile fire, trainees donned in plated vests and helmets and multiple casualties that included bleeding arterial wounds.

Wilson also drove Cope North ops by partnering with 38 Squadrons, swabbing of over 1,600 personnel. This major lift expedited 3,000 deployments to 13 nations, and

fueled 1,525 sorties!

“I’ve always been involved in group sports, clubs and other organizations growing up,” said Wilson. “Making the decision to serve my country on the best team in the world was a no-brainer.”

As the 36th Wing Emergency Medical Technician Program Director, he leads the EMT refresher courses; instructing 31 personnel and delivering 560 didactic and skills hours. He executed the deliverance of the new Emergency Medical Services protocols, proctoring 53 exams and besting the Air Force implementation standard by one week.

Wilson led the Department of Defense and Center for Disease and Control’s pediatric vaccine initiative. He also qualified and tracked training for 68 medics, bridging a 50% manning gap in the Immunization’s Clinic. This fueled the 36th Wing’s first health fair, in which 217 children were vaccinated.

“The best part of working in Education and Training is instructing, and the ability to put your own spin on each class you teach,” said Wilson. “Seeing a lightbulb go off for someone in class is always a good feeling, and better when you see them adopt those practices moving forward.”



Staff Sgt. Zachary Wilson receives the Linebacker of the Week Award from Brig. Gen. Paul R. Birch and Chief Master Sgt. John E. Payne. Photo by Staff Sgt. Aubree Owens, U.S. Air Force

Tech. Sgt. Lauren Hayes

Airman enthusiastic volunteer in local community

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ALLISON MARTIN,
U.S. AIR FORCE

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Lauren Hayes, a Client Systems Operations Technician, was recognized as the 36th Wing’s Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, June 29, 2022.

Tech. Sgt. Lauren Hayes is an enthusiastic volunteer who cultivates regional and local partnerships through various environmental preservation and humanitarian efforts to include; cleaning up and patrolling local beaches in order to save endangered turtle species and fostering multiple dogs in support of the “Boonie Flight Project” which finds stray dogs in Guam forever homes in the Mainland. In addition to all of this, she is a devoted Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Volunteer Victim Advocate who directly embodies the Department of Defense SAPR strategic plan, to establish an enduring culture of dignity and respect. She has

committed 100 hours on call, and 40 hours of training in order to maintain excellence in victim advocacy and solidify prevention efforts on the installation.

Hayes has performed multiple tasks that expand the combat capabilities of the 36th

Wing. Most recently, she assisted with an IT upgrade for the Contingency Response Group operations planning group room valued at 80,000 dollars. In doing so, she improved the overall communications capabilities for the CRG, enabling more efficient and effective mission planning and execution in the area of responsibility.

Her outstanding work ethic shows that she values mission partners and strengthening relationships within the Wing. After a CMI event, Hayes substantially eased the workload

for client systems when multiple devices needed to be sanitized, taking it upon herself to re-image devices for the CRG.



Tech. Sgt. Lauren Hayes receives the Linebacker of the Week Award from Brig. Gen. Paul R. Birch and Chief Master Sgt. John E. Payne. Photo by Airman 1st Class Kaitlyn Fron

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NBG VCC works diligently to ensure appropriate base access

STORY AND PHOTO BY VALERIE MAIGUE,
U.S. NAVAL BASE GUAM

NAVAL BASE GUAM – An average of 235 customers are processed for various services at the U.S. Naval Base Guam (NBG) Visitor Control Center (VCC) every day.

A staff of six employees handle the various tasks that are a vital part of the mission, as their services provide integrated base defense by controlling the flow of access to the installation.

VCC services include the processing of Base Access Pass Registrations, registering foreign nationals for Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Screening, conducting National Crime Information Center (NCIC) background checks, issuing Defense Biometric Identification System (DBIDS) credentials for base access, issuance of imagery badges, pier, and house guest passes, and processing agent letters.

The following is a daily average breakdown of VCC services provided to customers:

- NCIC background checks: 85
- DBIDS credential issuance: 60
- Appointment scheduling: 30
- Base Access Requests (both online and in-person): 29
- Pier Passes: 10
- Foreign National Registrations: 10
- Houseguest Passes: 7
- Camera/Imagery Badges: 4

Additionally, there are an average of 14 Agent Letter appointments processed weekly.

"The VCC oversees entry approval requests through an extensive process that begins with the individual whether they be personnel, contractors, vendors, service providers, veterans, houseguests, or agent letter holders," said NBG Deputy Security Officer John Paul San Nicolas. "The VCC is more than just the processing of passes. Every individual that is trying to attain access for the installation must go through a vetting process."

Access passes go through numerous steps before an individual is granted proper credentials to enter the installation. Their identity is registered into DBIDS, then VCC personnel collect finger prints, photo identification, and driver's license information, which is sent to the NCIC to verify the status of applicants, ensuring offenders are prevented from entering the installation.

Esther Santiago, a VCC security assistant, said background checks are integral for the safety of the NBG community.

"We are thorough for a reason – this is our

community," Santiago said. "We have nearly 16,000 people living and working on this installation and it is a matter of ensuring we keep everyone safe and we're protecting the assets on the installation."

As of July, the VCC is made up of four civilian employees and two active duty personnel, who are temporarily assigned to assist with the mission.

"Behind the scenes, some may think these numbers are small but these services are all conducted at different stations within the VCC," said NBG VCC Supervisor Elizabeth Balajadia. "The timing of these processes can vary from anywhere between 5 minutes to 15 minutes or more. But our staff is trained to be meticulous about how we handle each case because it also involves the safety for

the community that we serve."

From January to June, more than 11,000 background checks - ranging from active duty to contractors and house guests - were conducted by the VCC, according to Balajadia.

"Appointments are necessary, because we're dealing with more than 500 companies and there needs to be a system in place to keep track of every single customer and their transaction," Balajadia said. "Because we conduct multiple services, when we receive a request for an appointment, we ask them what service they are looking for and this is noted in the file. The appointment allows us to prepare the customer's paperwork, so when they come in processing is smoother."

Balajadia explained that in the case of foreign nationals, they come into the VCC and their initial paperwork for background checks is forwarded to NCIC in Virginia. Meanwhile, during the wait for background check results, VCC staff have already fingerprinted, photographed and prepared the customer's profile so that if the results of the background check are clear – majority of the work has already been completed.

Active duty personnel or government employees with valid Common Access Card Identification, or dependents at least 18 years of age with valid Department of Defense credentials are eligible to sponsor visitors to NBG under certain circumstances. The VCC, in conjunction with the NBG Housing Office, processes passes for off-island house guests for up to 90 days, which should be submitted at least 30-days in advance. Additionally, eligible personnel who reside in military housing onboard NBG may also submit a request for one-day/weekend visitor pass at least 5-days prior to the date of the visit.



A customer provides his information to U.S. Naval Base Guam Visitor Control Center Security Assistant Esther Santiago.

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Left: A Purple Heart recipient speaks during a Gold Star Families Memorial Monument unveiling in Hagatna on July 21. This monument honors the families of servicemembers from Guam and other Pacific Islands who made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the military. Center: Brig. Gen. Paul R. Birch. Right: A speaker shares her story.

Guam unveils Gold Star Families Memorial Monument



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Guam celebrates 7

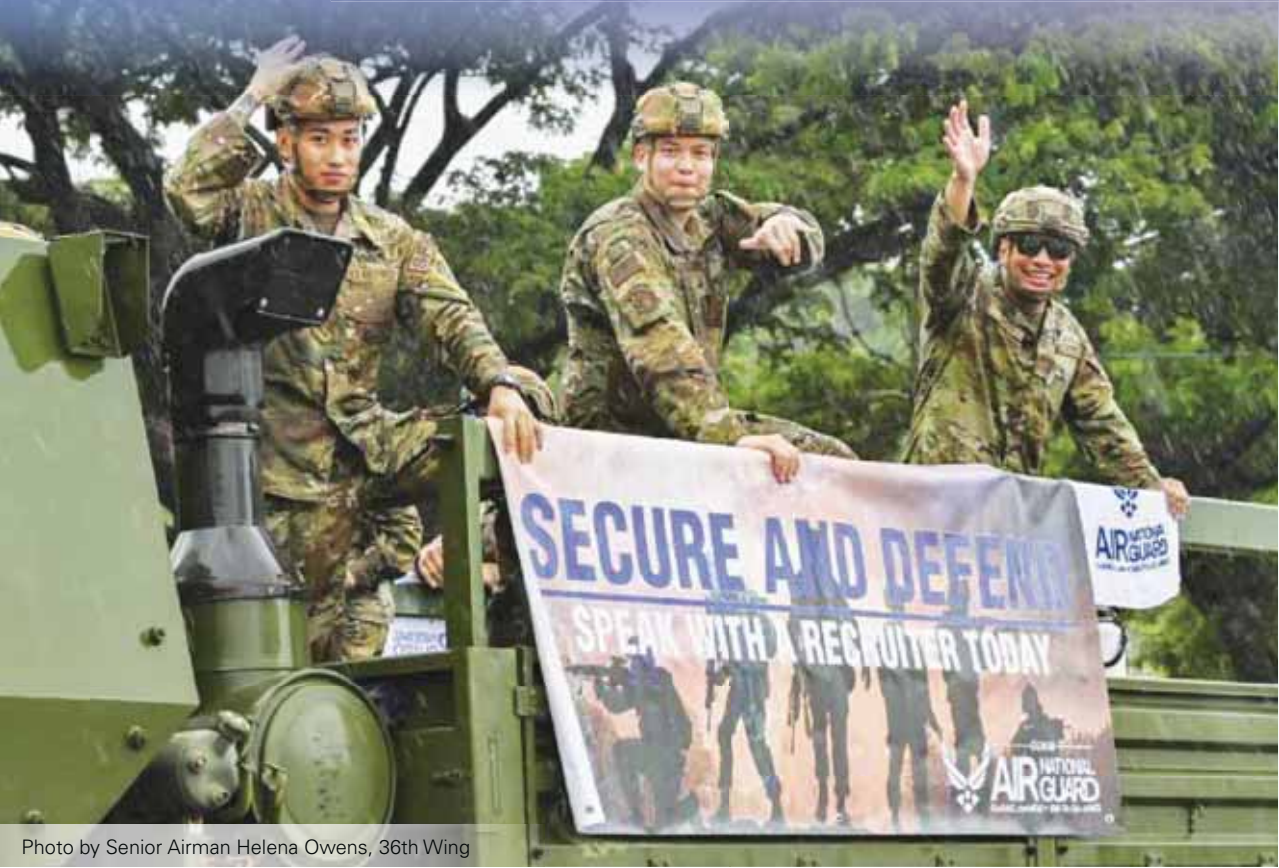


Photo by Senior Airman Helena Owens, 36th Wing

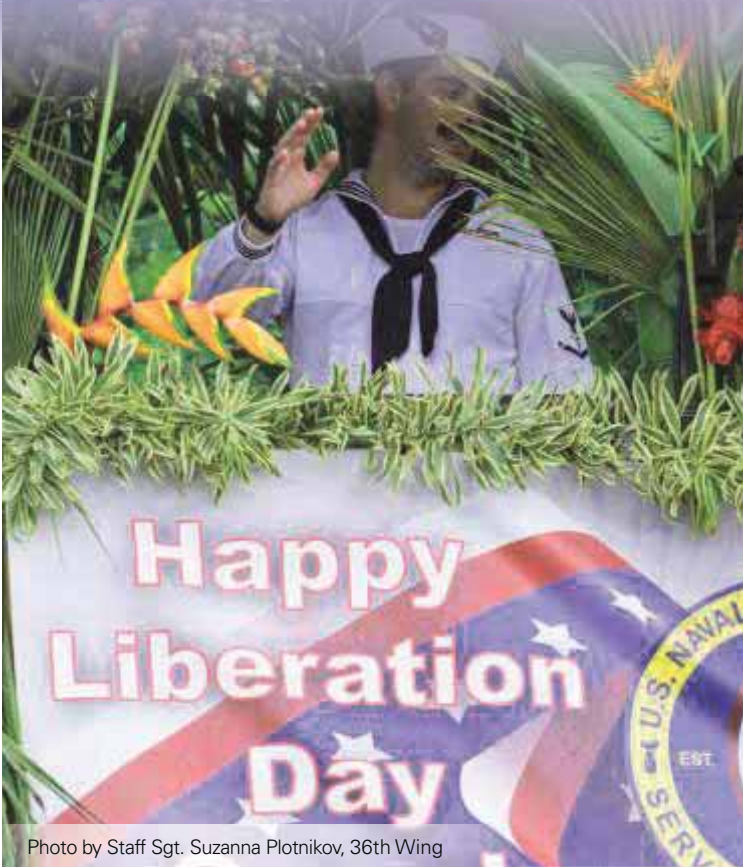


Photo by Staff Sgt. Suzanna Plotnikov, 36th Wing



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78th Liberation Day

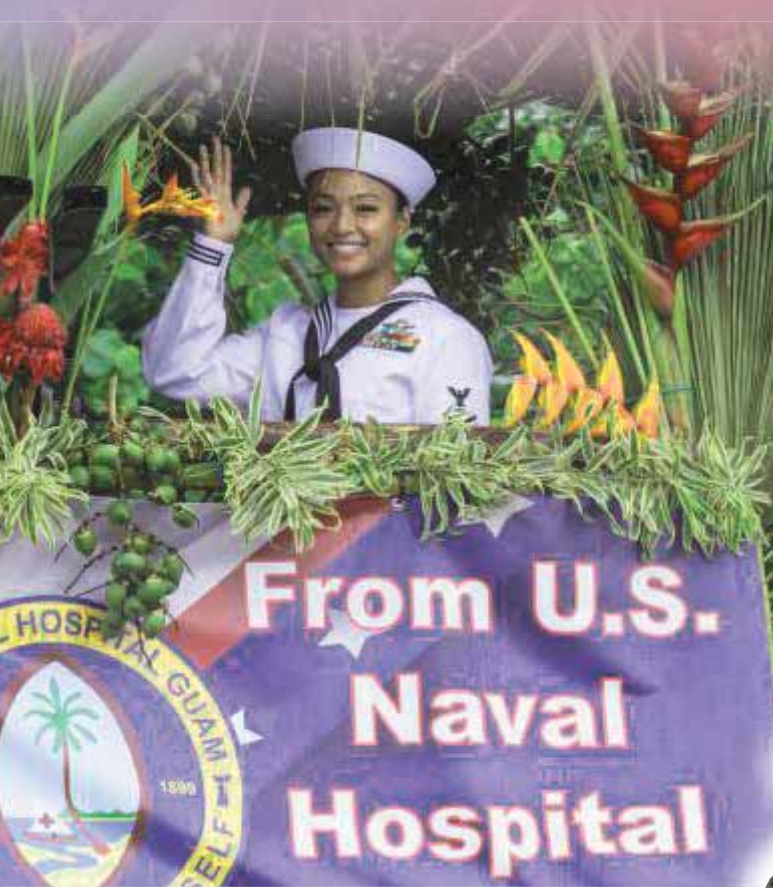


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Gadao's Cave

A cave of famous petroglyphs named after Gadao, the ancient chief of Inarajan



This is a fantastically short hike to one of Guam's most celebrated cultural treasures. It is definitely a must-see if you are driving through the South.

Quick Stats

LOCATION: Inarajan
REGION: Southeast
DIFFICULTY: Very Easy
TIME: 5 – 10 Minutes, Allow 30 Minutes
LENGTH: .06 of a Mile
ELEVATION GAIN: 22 Feet
SIGHT: Caves
COOL STUFF: Pictographs, Ancient Chamorro History
WHAT TO BRING: Closed-toe shoes for walking on sharp limestone

Directions

FROM CENTRAL AND NORTH GUAM
(Inarajan & Talofofo residents, adapt

these directions):

Take Cross Island Road (route 17) from the west to the east, across to Talofofo. You may take route 4a towards the end to head in a more southerly direction. (If starting from the Northeast side just come straight down route 4). Whether you stay on 17 or take 4a, you will end up at route 4 (the coastal road) when it ends and turn right, going south. Pass Talofofo Bay and keep going straight. When you start entering a slightly more populated area, slow down and look out for the sign to your left (usually covered by trees, which says "Gadao's Cave" and turn left here. This is a long, narrow road that skirts the left edge of Inarajan Bay. If you start the curve to the left around Inarajan Bay where the statue of Gadao in half a canoe, the church ruins, and ancient chamorro village is, you have gone too far.

Take a right turn on the first gravel road that you see. Soon you will see private property and "Keep Out" signs. You will park on the side of the road before driving through where there are two polls on either side used to string a wire cable across a private driveway, marking the end of the public road. Oftentimes this driveway is left open to allow the residents to drive through. To your right is a chain denying vehicle access with metal cables fencing in a forested area. This chain, possibly with a "Keep Out" sign attached, is what you will be hopping in order to start this short hike.



FROM SOUTH OF CROSS ISLAND ROAD
(Including southern Agat, Umatac, and Merizo):

Drive south on route 2 (the main road), which then technically turns into route 4 and pass the village of Merizo. Keep on this road. You will pass the downtown village of Inarajan marked by buildings on your left

side, a church ruin and the statue of Gadao in half a canoe on your right. You may have to stop at the stoplight, which is only here until the construction is finished. You will see a mini-mart and old martial arts building in ruins on your left. Immediately after these, before you leave Inarajan, you will take your first right, marked by a sign for Gadao's Cave, which is almost always covered by trees. This is a long, narrow road that skirts the left edge of Inarajan Bay. Take a right turn on the first gravel road that you see. Soon you will see private property and "Keep Out" signs. You will park on the side of the road before driving through where there are two polls on

SEE GUAM ON PAGE 14

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GUAM: Great family adventure

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

either side used to string a wire cable across a private driveway, marking the end of the public road. Oftentimes this driveway is left open to allow the residents to drive through. To your right is a chain denying vehicle access with metal cables fencing in a forested area.

This chain, possibly with a "Keep Out" sign attached, is what you will be hopping in order to start this short hike.



Parking

Park to the side next to the "Keep Out" sign.



Trailhead

Trail begins just past the "Keep Out" chain.



Trail Guide

After you cross the chain, keep straight through the weeds towards the beach for 3 – 5 minutes. Soon the trail will veer to the left along the water. Travel between the large boulders and the shoreline.

The first cave-like structure you may see looking through the trees is not Gâdao's cave. Keep walking straight until you see a reddish rock structure, with a ridge along the middle with a clearly etched level to walk along. Climb up to this ridge with just a couple of rocks to step up, and walk along the rock wall on this middle level.

The opening to your left is the mouth of the cave, and the pictographs of the two stick figures are to your left as you enter.

There is a nice spot to sit and



over look the ocean if you keep walking forward, to the right, along the shoreline. Either crawl through the small opening in the rocks, outside of Gâdao's Cave, towards the tip of the peninsula or carefully walk across the spiky limestone closer to the water. Here is a larger, more open overhang with a lovely view of the ocean.

To leave, return the way you came.

Pictographs in Gâdao's Cave

Since it is extremely difficult to date cave art, we have a large period of time from when these

painting could be from. An educated guess would place them within the Latte Era sometimes between 800 A.D. until Magellan's presence and the Spanish colonization starting around 1521. Since we do not know whether or not some of the symbols are crosses (a Catholic symbol brought in by the Spanish) we cannot place if these paintings came before or after the Spanish colonization.

Guampedia says that the paint used for these symbols was made from white lime, which bonds to the wall by a chemical reaction, and may have been applied by finger. On the west wall, to the

right when you enter the cave, there are about 50 drawings ranging from 2 to 20 centimeters in height, depicting human- and animal-looking forms. The most obvious and popular pictographs are on the east wall (to the left upon entering the cave), where two human figures stand together, with one perhaps something in his or her hand. It is suggested that these figures are of Chief Gâdao of Inarajan and Chief Malaguana of (now) Tumon, as depicted in their folktale (retold to the right). Others suspect it is of a man and woman.

American anthropologist Laura Thompson studied the cave paintings on Guam and other nearby island before WWII. She described cave paintings in Talofoto and Inarajan in the South and Jinapsan and Mergagen (on Andersen Air Force Base, just north of the Tarague Beach boundary) in the North. Other cave paintings have been found at Ritidian Point, Fena, and Fadian Cave (on the east coast). The drawings depict animals such as fish, stick-figured humans (sometimes without heads), circles, and other various symbols.

For more information on other caves on the island and on surrounding islands, please visit www.guampedia.com/chamorro-cave-art.

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A primer for hiking newbies

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
RACHEL WALKER,
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

Take a hike. It sounds like the easiest thing to do: Head out and put one foot in front of the other. But if you're not used to being outside in nature, or if walking is difficult for you or if you require a wheelchair or walker, then the very idea of hiking can be intimidating. Resist that reaction. When the opportunity to go on a hike presents itself, take it, advised D.C.-based Florence Williams, author of "The Nature Fix: Why Nature Makes Us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative."

"When we experience beauty and awe, science suggests that it helps us feel more connected to the world around us and

to each other," Williams said. "And really, we have evolved to walk. Our bodies and brains feel very comfortable doing it."

You won't be alone; since the pandemic began, people have flocked to the outdoors, where there's plenty of airflow and they can practice social distancing and get exercise. As a result, many state and national parks, as well as local trailheads, have implemented reservation systems or supplied shuttles to minimize parking headaches.

Given the number of people in the outdoors, a summer hike might seem daunting for beginners. But getting started with hiking is relatively easy, said Amy David, a hiking and backpacking guide for Sawtooth Mountain Guides in Stanley,

Idaho. Novice hikers may think they need expensive gear or ambitious destinations when, in fact, the only requirement is a desire to get outside. This can be easier in the American West, where state and federal public lands abound, but it is also possible in most parts of the country, she said.

"At its simplest, hiking is a way to enjoy the outdoors, fresh air and nature," David said. "You can go to an urban park, but I lean toward backcountry."

Non-hikers might be wary because of pervasive myths that can act as obstacles to getting people onto trails. For one, many people assume they need expensive, fancy gear to go on a hike.

"There are certain types of gear you should have to make your experience safe and enjoyable," David said, "but it doesn't have to cost a fortune."

Hikers should have shoes or boots that fit well to prevent blisters; thin wool socks; a water bottle; wool or synthetic clothes that wick sweat and dry quickly; and, if the weather forecast looks volatile, proper layers to keep you warm and dry. Trekking poles help distribute your weight and make descending hills easier by taking pressure off your leg muscles and joints. Many trekking poles are collapsible, like tent poles, which makes them easy to travel with. For longer day hikes and overnight trips that include sleeping in a tent,

the gear list grows. But for a newcomer to the trails heading out for a short or half-day hike, there's no need to purchase a lot of fancy new supplies.

David said some people are also intimidated because they think they must be in peak physical shape and climb a mountain for their hike "to count." Wrong. "A gentle stroll can be a hike," David said. "Hiking is open to most everybody, no matter their experience or fitness level. So long as you enjoy moving your body at a pace that works for you, you're a hiker. And you will continue to progress as you gain more experience and fitness."

Instead of looking for the most beautiful or rigorous trail, David suggested simply finding a pleasant trail and exploring. This is relatively easy with the proliferation of trail-finder apps. David recommended Avenza Maps, OnX



The author hikes in Boulder, Colo.



A well-fitting pack is important for carrying your supplies.

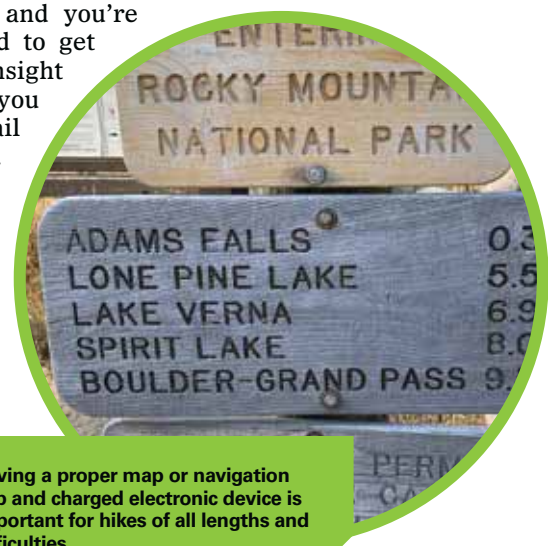
or even dissuade you from hiking for the rest of the season, said Eric Henderson, a long-time outdoor educator and guide based in Denver.

"I would never advise buying boots online without trying them on first," he said. "The right footwear is essential for an enjoyable hike, and it's worth the time and expense to go to a specialty store to get expert advice."

People's feet are not uniform. Even if you know your size, you may have bunions, arch issues or other complications, Henderson said. That means that fit is paramount, and you won't know whether shoes or boots are a good fit without first trying them on.

and Gaia GPS, adding that the best app is the one you're comfortable using. Most apps rank hikes by difficulty and provide salient information such as round-trip mileage, elevation gain and loss, and more. Printed maps and guidebooks also work, and most outdoor sporting stores have local trail maps. Pop into one on vacation, and you're almost guaranteed to get friendly, local insight that will help you pick the best trail for your objective.

There are few things that can ruin a hike as completely as poor-fitting shoes or boots. Blisters can take weeks and sometimes months to heal, and tender feet will restrict movement



Having a proper map or navigation app and charged electronic device is important for hikes of all lengths and difficulties.

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.

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Check Out GSA's Guam Catalog!



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→ When shopping, don't just lace up and shuffle around the shop. Step onto benches, hop around, and go up and down stairs if you can. Henderson said he prefers mid-height boots that provide more ankle support than a hiking shoe but are less burly than a heavy hiking boot.

If all of that sounds intimidating to a first-timer, go ahead and hit the trail in your running shoes, provided they fit well and are broken in so that you don't get a blister, David said. But if your interest in hiking piques, invest in durable, well-made hiking shoes or boots.

There's a popular refrain among hikers: Leave no trace. This is an ethos that comes down to respect, David said. Literally, it means pack out what you pack in, including trash, extra food, orange peels or apple cores (or any other biodegradable refuse that should not be thrown into the bushes). If you hike with a dog, bag its poop and carry it out. And if you have to poop, David offered the following instructions: "Dig a hole, so bring a small trowel, which you can get at an outdoor store, and carry out used toilet paper, so bring a sealable plastic bag for that."

Leave no trace also means respecting others on the trail. Give people space when passing, and don't blare music on portable speakers or through your phone. "Go ahead and listen with earphones, but it's



Sawtooth Mountain guide Amy David at Idaho's Thompson Peak. Photo by Charlotte Ross, For The Washington Post

rude to subject others to your music or podcasts," she said.

Equally important is to make sure you bring enough

food to stay fueled and water to stay hydrated. David suggested bringing more food than

you think you will need (and a

comfortable pack for carrying it) and a water filtration system if you plan to replenish your water from a river or creek.

"Freshwater does not mean clean water," she said. "Even if it's clear, it can have giardia."

Hiking need not be relegated to able-bodied people. TrailLink by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is an online resource (traillink.com) for finding wheelchair-accessible trails around the country. The descriptive trail guides have photos and reviews. Some public land agencies are also adding Braille to trail signs.

Accessibility also extends to groups that have not been traditionally present or active in the outdoors. In recent years, hiking groups for LGBTQ individuals, self-identified fat people, minorities and women have proliferated. The group Diversify Outdoors (diversifyoutdoors.com) has a page devoted to connecting people around the country.

All of which is to say that the outdoors exist for everyone, and exploring nature by foot can be a wonderful way to spend some of your vacation. Not only can hiking allow you to slow down and stimulate your senses, but it can also help you adapt to a new place, Williams said.

"Being outside in the daylight is good for resetting circadian rhythms if you're traveling across time zones," she said. "It's also great for working off the inertia of sitting for long periods in a car or on an airplane."

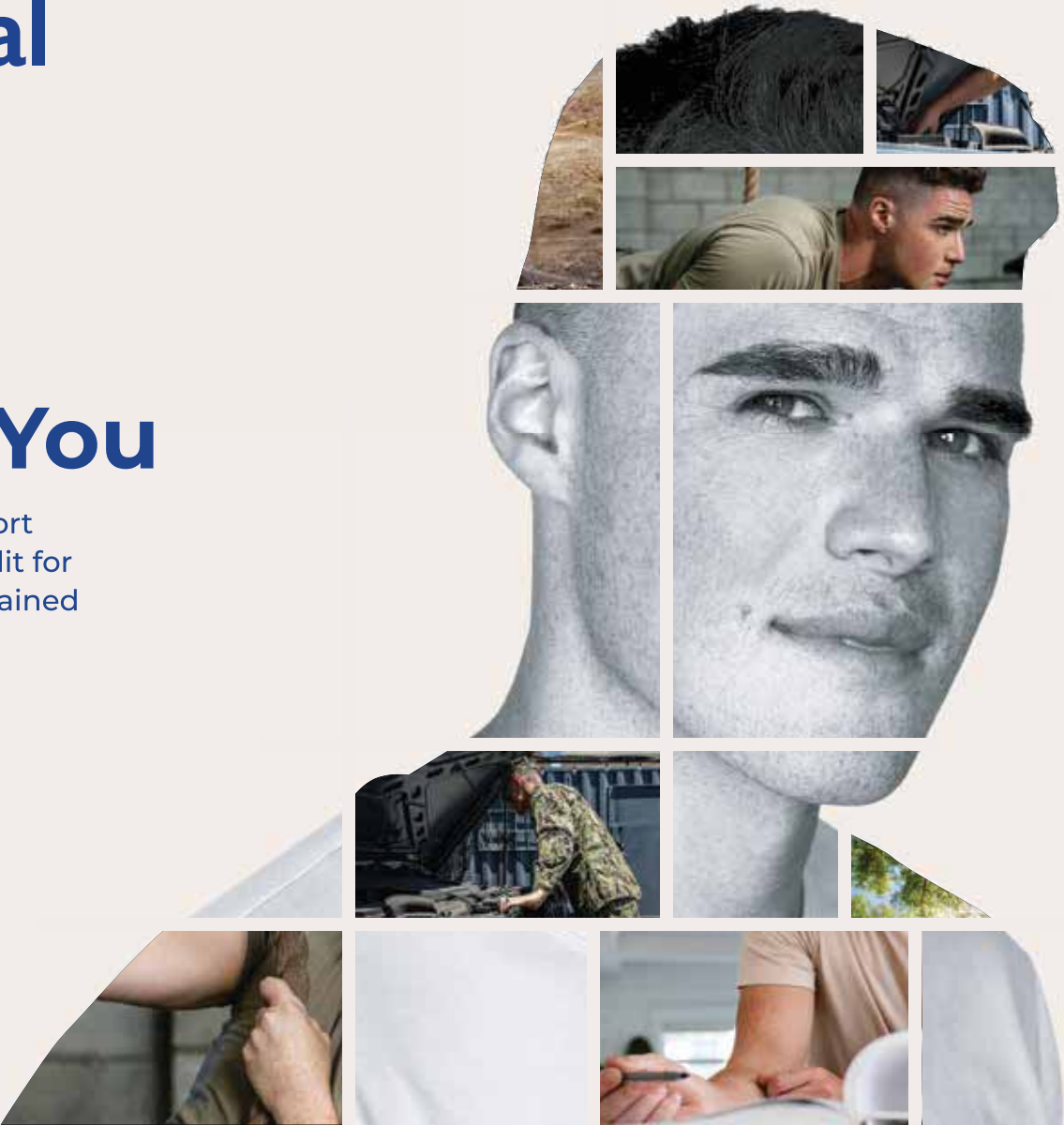


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‘Wanna play?’ What military life taught me about fear, friendships and foursomes

The tires squealed as I careened into the parking lot of the local nine-hole golf course. Leaping out of the driver's seat, I popped the trunk and heaved my golf clubs and pull cart out onto the pavement, looking around to see if there were any other latecomers to the Tuesday Morning Ladies' Golf League.

Uh oh, only cars in the lot, which meant the rest of the ladies were already beginning to tee off. I hoped there were incomplete foursomes willing to fit me in.

I'd signed up for the local ladies' league five summers ago, right after my husband retired from the military. I thought it would be a way to meet friends in our new local community, where we had bought a house and planned to stay.

After three years on the wait list, I knew it had to be rigged. Obviously, you had to "know someone" to get picked. I wrote the league off as a lost cause, but in the fourth summer, the league organizer invited me to play in the league's end of season

charity tournament.

Although I repeatedly sliced drives, lost balls, whiffed, hit worm burners and talked too much during that tournament, I was miraculously offered a spot in the league. But I was a rookie, a newbie, mere filler to these veteran lady golfers who had been playing with each other for years. They weren't necessarily interested in meeting new people. I'd have to play by their rules and bide my time.

As a military spouse, I'd felt this way a million times before. Every time we moved, I turned into a desperate middle school girl, jockeying pathetically for new friends. Deep down, I feared rejection. Feeling unworthy. Not fitting in. Military life taught me that new friendships are not an entitlement. In the school of military spouse hard knocks, you had to work at it.

When in a rush, setting up a collapsible golf pull cart is like figuring out how to split an atom. In my nervous haste, I pushed, pulled and popped until the tangle of metal bars and hinges somehow took its intended

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



shape. Strapping in my clubs, I shuffled hurriedly to the clubhouse hoping that I hadn't been kicked off the league for tardiness.

As I suspected, the cart path was lined with several groups of ladies garbed in moisture-wicking pastel polyester and golf shoes, waiting to be called to the tee by the starter. I looked down the first hole, and saw two more groups — one on the green and one in the fairway.

Soon, the waiting ladies noticed me standing there awkwardly alone, grinning goofily as if to say, "I'm new, but please let me play with you! I promise I won't be boring! I'll ask you about yourself, compliment you, and act like I need your advice!"

I'll be witty! I'll buy you a drink in the clubhouse! Please?!"

Despite my silent pleas of desperation, the women glanced away, avoiding eye contact. The next sixty seconds seemed like an eternity. I wondered if cobwebs were forming at the corners of my frozen mouth.

"Are you here to play in the ladies' league?" asked a passing elderly woman with white hair that matched her cotton sweater. I nodded and explained that I'd been late. "Well, I'm Pearl, and you can play with me," she offered sweetly. Pearl and I took our place at the end of the long line of foursomes. Soon, we were

joined by another latecomer, Rita. We three were the stragglers, the leftovers, the misfits, the rejects, the unwanted, last in line to tee off.

That morning, I put in the necessary work, asking questions, complimenting, soliciting advice and feigning wit. I learned that Pearl was 85 years old, played a respectable golf game, talked too much like me, and was nearly deaf. Rita was my age, had a career as an accountant, cared for her Portuguese mother with Alzheimer's and didn't like playing with Pearl because she never shut up.

It'll take time, but I'll get there. The key to success in golf, friendships and military life is the same — You don't get what you wish for; you get what you work for.

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at: themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and in Lisa's book, *The Meat and Potatoes of Life: My True Lit Com*. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

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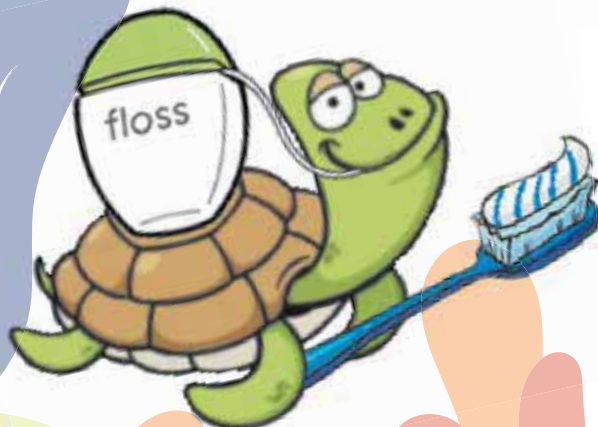
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The background of the entire page is a collage of various food items arranged on a rustic wooden surface. In the top left, there is a small wooden bowl containing green and black olives. Below it, there are stacks of different pasta shapes, including farfalle and bow-tie pasta. To the right, there is a halved avocado showing its pit, a whole purple onion, a yellow cherry tomato, and a green chili pepper. In the bottom left, there is a large, golden-brown baked fish. In the bottom center, there are several fresh fish, including a large silver fish and a smaller red fish. In the bottom right, there is a red bell pepper and another green chili pepper.

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COOK LIKE A CHAMORU

Latiya

GUAM VISITORS BUREAU

It's time for another Cook like a CHamoru recipe! If you want to learn how to make Latiya, a local favorite dessert, follow the recipe below!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 4 - 6 egg yolks
- 1 pound cake (store bought or homemade)
- Cinnamon
- Vanilla extract

Pound Cake recipe:

- 1 cups salted butter, room temperature
- 1 cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs
- 2 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat a medium sized pot over medium heat. Add all three milks and stir to combine. Bring to a low boil.
2. Separate egg yolks into a large bowl. Whisk together. Temper the eggs by slowly adding half of the milk mixture and continue to stir. Once combined, add all of the milk mixture to the bowl. Mix for 3 minutes.
3. Pour mixture back into the pot and set heat to low. Stir 3 minutes on heat and 1 minute off the heat to ensure the eggs don't scramble. Continue to stir until custard starts to thicken. Should take about 5-10 min.

4. Set aside to prepare cake. If using a store bought cake, cut in thick slices and place down in a serving dish. Pour custard over cake evenly. Place in the fridge to cool for at least 2 hours. Finish with cinnamon.



5. If making the cake, preheat the oven to 375F.
 - a. Beat the butter until smooth with a hand mixer. Add the sugar and mix until smooth. Then add eggs one at a time.
 - b. Add the dry ingredients to a bowl. Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet and mix on low until fully incorporated. Pour batter into a loaf pan or cake pan. Place in the oven and bake for 35-40 minutes or until the center comes out clean when poked with a skewer.



A Taste of Guam



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Nathan Clinebelle

The U.S. Army will start a Future Soldier Preparatory Course pilot program at Fort Jackson, S.C., to help America's youth overcome academic and physical fitness barriers to service so they can earn the opportunity to join the Army.

Meeting the standards

Army launches weight loss, academic programs to broaden its pool of eligible recruits **Page 2**

COVER STORY

Army program helps recruits meet standards

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army has created a new program designed to help potential recruits meet academic and fitness eligibility requirements as the service scrambles to address falling recruitment rates, the service announced recently.

A pilot program called the Future Soldier Preparatory Course is set to start this month at Fort Jackson, S.C. The program will offer two three-month courses — one to help potential recruits raise their Armed Forces Qualification Test score to the desired 31 or higher and another to help recruits slim down to the service's body fat requirement, according to the Army.

"The course is in response to the precipitous drop in the number of young Americans meeting Army enlistment standards," according to an Army statement. "Only 23% fully meet the Army's eligibility requirements, down from 29% in recent years."

To qualify for Army service, potential male soldiers can have a maximum of 20-26% body fat and female soldiers can have about 30-36%, depending on their age. To participate in the new weight-loss course, potential recruits can have up to 6% more body fat than the acceptable amount for their age and gender category.

"The young men and women who will participate in this pilot must have the desire to improve themselves and want to honorably serve their country."

Gen. Paul E. Funk II
leader of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command

Participants who meet the standards through the courses will then move on to basic training, the Army said.

Participants can take up to 90 days to meet the standards and will be re-evaluated every three weeks to see if they can leave the program early.

Those who do not meet the standards in that time will exit the program and not move forward with basic training, according to the service.

Each course is separate, but potential recruits who need to participate in both programs might be allowed to do so on a case-by-case basis, "the fitness portion prior to basic combat training and the academic portion following basic training," the Army said.

Potential recruits must be able to meet all other eligibility requirements, such as

"moral and medical accessions standards," and be willing to work toward their goals to participate in the program.

"The young men and women who will participate in this pilot must have the desire to improve themselves and want to honorably serve their country," said Gen. Paul E. Funk II, leader of the Army's Training and Doctrine Command. "This [program] is a great way to increase opportunities for them to serve without sacrificing the quality needed across our force."

The program is part of a series of steps that the Army is taking to expand its pool of eligible recruits as the service remains behind in recruiting goals, service officials told reporters on Tuesday.

"Over the past few years, student test scores have dropped and childhood obesity has increased [and] the Army is making

every effort to overcome these challenges," said Lt. Gen. Maria Gervais, the Training and Doctrine Command's deputy commanding general. "These conditions have negatively affected the Army's ability to meet its recruiting targets."

The service expects its force to drop to about 466,400 by October and believes it could further decrease to between 455,000-452,000 by the end of fiscal 2023, the service said in a statement last week.

"Though it will take time, our objective is to regrow our end strength to 460,000 or more as quickly as possible, and we will pursue this objective aggressively," the Army said.

Last month, the Army announced another measure to attract more candidates — a \$35,000 bonus offer to new recruits willing to sign a four-year contract and ship out to boot camp within 45 days.

"Recruiting in the current environment is a challenge, and we have positions we need to fill right now," Maj. Gen. Kevin Vereen, who leads the Recruiting Command, said at the time. "Our Army is counting on us to fill these training vacancies quickly, so we are able to offer incentives to gain interest in critical career fields."

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Report recommends testing for those exposed to 'forever chemicals'

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

Individuals living near sites contaminated by manufacturing chemicals known as PFAS should be regularly tested, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine recommended in a report released last month.

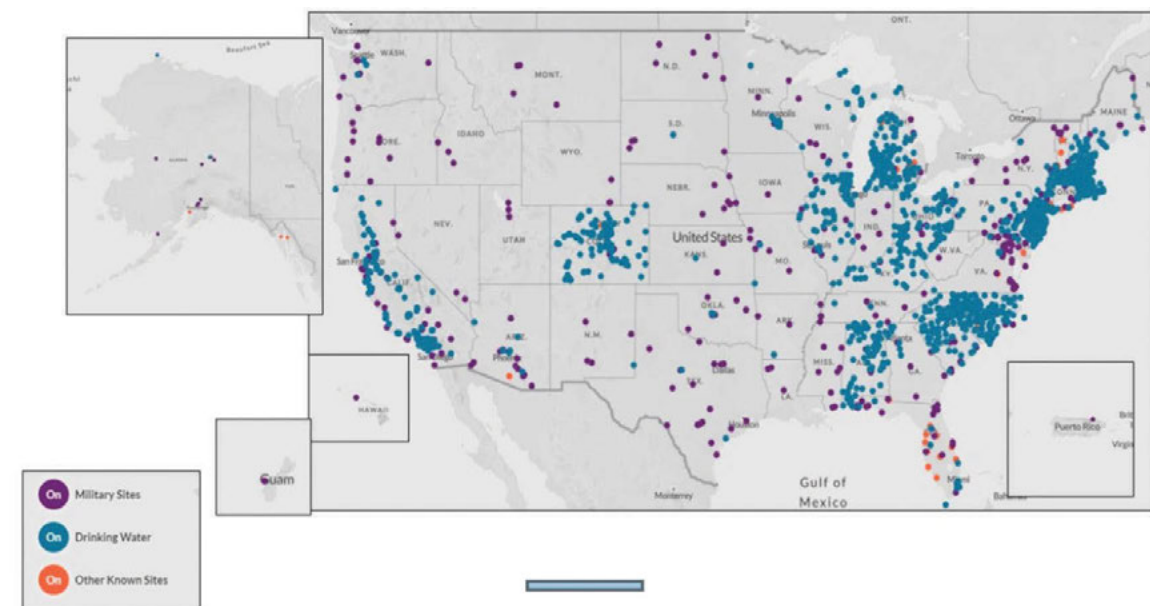
PFAS, or perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, are a class of chemicals that have been widely used in manufacturing processes since the 1950s. They have been used in thousands of products to aid in repelling water or oil and to reduce friction.

PFAS do not break down into their harmless elements over time after escaping from the original product. They have earned the moniker "forever chemicals" because they "persist in the human body and the environment," the report said.

Roughly 2,854 locations in the United States are contaminated to some degree by PFAS, and about a quarter of those sites are linked to military installations, according to the 300-page report, which was commissioned by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The National Academies study cites data collected by the Environmental Working Group that found 678 U.S. military sites are contaminated by PFAS to varying degrees.

The Environmental Working



A map shows the estimated 2,854 sites in 50 U.S. states and two territories contaminated with PFAS, with points in purple representing military sites.

Group, a nonprofit advocacy group that promotes the use of fewer chemicals in agriculture, said in a 2020 report that tap water or groundwater at 328 military installations showed the presence of PFAS, based on records it obtained through the Freedom of Information Act.

"Although not all of the contamination represents exceedances of health advisories, the pervasiveness of the contamination is alarming," the National Academies report said. "Furthermore, almost 100 percent of the

U.S. population is exposed to at least one PFAS."

The health risks posed by PFAS are not entirely understood, but the National Academies report concluded there is sufficient evidence that four diseases or conditions were associated with PFAS exposure.

They were decreased antibody response in children and adults, a cholesterol imbalance called dyslipidemia found in children and adults, decreased growth in fetuses and infants and increased risk of kidney cancer in adults.

There is limited but "suggestive" evidence that the chemicals are linked to increased risk of breast cancer, pregnancy-induced hypertension, testicular cancer and an inflammatory bowel disease.

The report recommends that doctors offer testing to patients likely to have a history of elevated exposure to PFAS.

Also, at elevated risk of exposure are those who have lived near "facilities that use or have used fluorochemicals, commercial airports, military bases,

wastewater treatment plants, farms where sewage sludge may have been used, or landfills or incinerators that have received PFAS-containing waste," the report said.

The report includes input collected from citizens around the U.S. during a series of town hall meetings, some of whom have been grappling with PFAS contamination from military bases.

Cathy Wusterbarth co-founded Need Our Water, a community group in Oscoda, Mich., in response to contamination left by the nearby former Wurtsmith Air Force Base.

The area's groundwater was contaminated by PFAS found in firefighting foam used at the air base. Aqueous film forming foam, or AFFF, accounts for much of the PFAS contamination found at military installations.

Wusterbarth said during the town hall that improved access to PFAS blood testing was crucial to understanding the links between exposure and poor health outcomes as experienced by many living in Oscoda.

"We've tested the fish. We've tested the deer. We've tested the groundwater, the waterways and the foam," Wusterbarth said at the town hall. "When are we going to test the people?"

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MILITARY

Navy sets priorities in new force-design plan

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Navy leaders are strengthening their commitment to developing more advanced weapons and other capabilities over some traditional ships to challenge the increasing aggression from China and Russia around the globe, according to the service's 2022 Navigation Plan released July 26.

"Retiring legacy platforms that cannot stay relevant in contested seas — and investing in the capabilities we need for the future — is essential for our national security," the Navy wrote in the document that lays out the service's long-term priorities.

Citing China's ongoing efforts to build its military rapidly and Russia's dismantling of the post-Cold War peace in Europe when it invaded Ukraine in February, the service said prioritizing new capabilities and weapons will be key to future conflicts, according to the document.

"The world is entering a new age of warfare, one in which the integration of technology, concepts, partners, and systems — more than fleet size alone — will determine victory in conflict," the service said in the document.

The navigation plan helps lay out the service's requirements for Congress, which has been hesitant to allow the Navy to cut ships as China grows its fleet, Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, told reporters.

"There's more work to be done with the Hill, particularly with respect to composition of the force — explaining ourselves better with respect to that composition, the why behind it," Gilday said about explaining the Navy's plan for the force to lawmakers.

In its 2023 proposed budget,

the Navy said it wants to cut 24 ships next year to save \$3.6 billion in the next five years that could be used to develop new technologies. They included nine Freedom-class littoral combat ships, five Ticonderoga-class cruisers, two Los Angeles-class submarines, four landing dock ships, two oilers and two expeditionary transfer dock vessels.

Whether Congress will allow the Navy to cut 24 ships remains in question. Last year, lawmakers ordered the Navy to build 13 ships in the fiscal 2022 budget in pursuit of a larger fleet after service leaders asked for just eight.

The Navy is required by Congress to reach a fleet of 355 ships "as soon as possible" under the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets the military's goals and spending priorities. Its new plan calls for a "hybrid fleet" of more than 350 warships, about 150 unmanned ships and underwater vehicles, and approximately 3,000 aircraft by the 2040s, according to the document.

"The why behind the composition and the size is grounded on how we're going to fight," Gilday said. "In short, it is our intent to face any adversary with our forces spread out with our effects masked across multiple vectors, both physically and virtually in all domains from the seabed to space."

Six new priorities

The plan for the future force is broken down into six categories: distance, deception, defense, distribution, delivery and decision advantage.

"The six different force design imperatives are informed by the challenges that we've seen based

on the rise of China," Gilday said.

The service wants to "expand distance" by developing and focusing on long-range weapons that allow the Navy to strike an enemy from further away, thus "increasing our own survivability" against a potential counter-attack, according to the plan.

Leveraging deception will be done by prioritizing capabilities such as stealth and electronic warfare technologies to "degrade enemy surveillance and increase adversary uncertainty," allowing the Navy to operate more effectively in battle.

The Navy aims to "harden defense" by incorporating directed energy weapons such as high-powered lasers alongside traditional weapons such as missiles to disrupt attacks by adversaries.

"Increasing distribution" will be done by spreading out the force across the world and focus on building "smaller, lethal and less costly platforms," such as unmanned ships, according to the plan. The idea is to "further complicate threat targeting, generate confusion and impose dilemmas" for adversaries.

By "ensuring delivery," the service aims to boost logistics to keep the fleet sustained with supplies at sea and strengthening its communications technologies, which are key to keeping ships engaged in battle, according to the plan.

Finally, the Navy will "generate decision advantage" through communication technologies and artificial intelligence that will connect sensors and weapons across the world, according to the plan. The tools should allow warfighters more time to make quicker decisions about incoming threats.

"Naval forces will out-sense,



KAYLIANNA GENIER/U.S. Navy

The guided-missile destroyer USS Kidd transits the Taiwan Strait in August 2021. The Navy's recently-released 2022 Navigation Plan says prioritizing new capabilities and weapons will be key to future conflicts.

out-decide and out-fight any adversary by accelerating our decision cycles with secure, survivable and cyber (attack)-resilient networks, accurate data and artificial intelligence," according to the plan.

China and Russia

The changes are necessary so the Navy can keep up with "a battlespace that is quickly growing in lethality and complexity," according to the document.

For example, China has tripled the size of its Navy since the early 1990s, expanded its nuclear weapons capabilities, advanced its cyber and space capabilities and developed long-range weapons and hypersonic missiles, the Navy said.

"These investments in offensive warfighting systems — across all domains — are aimed at the heart of America's maritime power," according to the document. "China designs its force for one purpose: to reshape the security environment to its advantage by denying the United

States military access to the western Pacific and beyond."

Additionally, Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine also presents a challenge to the United States. Russia seeks to "fracture NATO and reestablish its sphere of influence" and threaten global peace with nuclear threats, cyberattacks and submarine deployments near American shores, according to the document.

The Navy, which handles about "70% of America's deployed nuclear arsenal" on platforms such as submarines, will play a major role in countering such threats, according to the document.

"Decisive naval power is essential in this security environment. America cannot cede the competition for influence," the document said. "A combat-credible U.S. Navy ... remains our nation's most potent, flexible and versatile instrument of military influence."

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USAF grounds some training planes over ejection seat safety concerns

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

The Air Force has temporarily sidelined nearly half of its combat training aircraft and a smaller portion of its primary training aircraft while it reviews the safety of a potentially defective ejection seat part.

It's the same component the Navy and Marine Corps are concerned enough about that they're replacing it in some airplanes, such as Super Hornets and Growlers, the Navy announced last week.

The Air Education and Training Command's 19th Air Force confirmed the grounding of the trainers, Air Force Magazine reported July 28.

The order affects 203 T-38 Talon jets and 76 T-6 Texan IIs, 19th Air Force Commander Maj. Gen. Craig Wills told the magazine.

That equates to about 40% of the T-38 fleet and about 15% of the T-6 planes in the Air Force inventory, the San-Antonio Express News reported. Fighter and bomber pilots train on the supersonic T-38, while the turboprop two-seat T-6s are used to teach basic flying skills.

The aircraft are assigned to Air Force undergraduate training bases and Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., which trains aviators from all branches of the military.

The issue triggering the grounding

involves a cartridge-actuated device, or CAD, a component that's activated when aviators pull the ejection handle or deploy a parachute.

The Navy and Marine Corps are replacing the CAD in aircraft equipped with the potentially defective part, the Navy announced last month.

Planes affected include the F/A-18B/C/D Hornet, F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, E/A-18G Growler, T-45 Goshawk and F-5 Tiger II, the Navy said. But officials would not say how many planes are involved, what the defect is and whether any jets had been grounded.

The Navy said it was notified of the potential defect by vendor Martin-Baker,

a British manufacturer of ejection seats.

Martin-Baker began installing new escape systems in Air Force T-38s in 2010. The new seat, called the Mk US16T, provides rapid deployment of the parachute following ejection, an Air Force official was quoted as saying at the time.

When the seat clears the airplane, "explosives deploy the parachute," the official said.

The T-6 uses a more lightweight ejection seat, also designed by Martin-Baker, which produces the ejection seat for the F-35 Lightning II fighter jet as well.

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MILITARY

‘Brink of a major revolution’

Pentagon-funded drug trial may end venomous snakebite scourge

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

Japan has the habu, the keel-back and the mamushi; the United States has the copperhead, sidewinder and Mojave green. Djibouti has the boomslang, the red spitting cobra and the East African carpet viper.

Venomous snakes kill nearly 140,000 people worldwide every year, mostly children and farmers in developing countries, according to the World Health Organization. But their threat may be vanquished if a California doctor's idea for a snakebite antidote, fostered by a \$13.8 million Pentagon contract, proves successful this summer.

Dr. Matthew Lewin, an expert in expedition medicine, found in an existing drug, varespladib, a compact and affordable remedy for snake venom. The Pentagon paid to develop the antidote to shield U.S. troops from an occupational hazard, but it may benefit millions of people with little access to health care.

“It was the furthest thing from my imagination, ever, that the U.S. military would become the champion of this global health effort,” Lewin, of Corte Madera, Calif., told Stars and Stripes by Zoom in May. “Obviously friends and family and people put money in along with the military, but I think the real force behind this and the real credibility for the program has come from the military more than anywhere else. And that was not something I expected.”

Varespladib is in clinical trials with actual snakebite victims in the U.S. and in India, the latter with one of the world's highest rates of snakebite. If the trials succeed and the Food and Drug Administration approves, the drug could be available by summer 2024.



SUNITA RAO/Ophirex Inc.

Dr. Matthew Lewin, an expert in expedition medicine, at work at Ophirex Inc. in November 2020.

mer 2024.

The trials involve treating 110 people with antivenom and either varespladib or a placebo, then looking for significant improvement in the patients treated with varespladib, according to ClinicalTrials.gov.

Unlike antivenom, varespladib, a “small molecule,” is available as a pill, requires no refrigeration and counteracts nearly all snake venom.

Antivenom provides an immune response by flooding the body with antibodies that bind with the venom and remove it from the victim's body. It's expensive, requires refrigeration and often produces unpleasant side effects.

By contrast, varespladib, developed years ago by pharmaceu-

tical maker Eli Lilly, blocks sPLA2, a basic neurotoxin in venom that causes paralysis, tissue damage and respiratory failure. The drug neutralizes venom in test tubes and stops or reverses its effects in laboratory animals.

Lewin conceived of the idea in 2011 and to develop it cofounded Ophirex Inc., a public benefit corporation, the following year with Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Jerry Harrison.

“We are really on the brink of a major revolution of how people think about this,” Harrison, a tech financier, entrepreneur and original member of the band Talking Heads, told Stars and Stripes via Zoom on June 3.

Lewin later found financial and technical support through Lt. Col.

Rebecca Carter, a developer of medicines for Air Force Special Operations Command, and Derrick Rossi, a stem cell biologist and cofounder of pharmaceutical company Moderna whose work with messenger RNA led to vaccines for COVID-19.

“Guess what's a better idea than mRNA for snake bite — a small molecule for snakebite is a better idea,” Rossi said via Zoom. “I looked at the data, and the data is very, very impressive.”

WHO estimates that venomous snakes bite between 1.8 million and 2.7 million people every year, of whom as many as 138,000 die and another 414,000 are left with serious injuries, sometimes a lost limb. About 75% of snakebite deaths occur because the victim could not get treatment in

time.

The Defense Department recorded just 345 nonfatal incidents of snakebite involving active and Reserve members between 2016 and 2020, according to Lindsey Garver, who oversees the snakebite antidote project for Army Medical Materiel Development Activity at Fort Detrick, Md.

However, venomous snakes are a potential hazard where U.S. service members live and work.

In Africa, snakes kill as many as 30,000 people annually, according to Doctors Without Borders. But in 2010 the primary antivenom provider in Africa, the French company Sanofi, curtailed production of its broad-based antivenom Pan Afrique.

That “created a real issue” for U.S. Africa Command and the Defense Health Agency, Garver said by Zoom. Antivenom was becoming unavailable as special operations increased its exposure to snakes.

“When we talk to our SOCOM user community, what they're really concerned with is that they're moving toward small teams, in more austere areas,” Garver said.

A varespladib pill promises to halt or reverse, at the scene, the bleeding, pain and paralysis caused by a snakebite long enough for the victim to get further treatment. It may exceed expectations.

“The drug itself — and we're still in test and evaluation — it could end up curative,” Garver said. “You still have a wound and a potential for more supportive care, but it may be the only thing you end up needing. The idea is not to leave that person without treatment.”

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Four drone ship prototypes get workout during RIMPAC drill

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The U.S. Navy's four unmanned surface vessel prototypes are being tested together for the first time during the monthlong Rim of the Pacific maritime exercise that ends this week.

The Navy described the first gathering of the prototypes in waters off Hawaii as a “milestone” in a news release.

Sea Hunter and Seahawk, designated by the Navy as medium unmanned vessels, are 132 feet long. Nomad and Ranger, which are classified as large vessels, are about 195 feet long.

The Navy envisions a future fleet of such drone ships that will operate seamlessly with manned ships.

“This is the largest event that these vessels have participated in, and RIMPAC is a very large exercise,” Cmdr. Jeremiah Daley, who heads the San Diego-based Un-

manned Surface Vessel Division One, said by phone.

Division One was established in May to manage at-sea experimentation with the prototypes, looking at how unmanned vessels of this size could best be integrated with the Navy's manned ships. Knowledge gleaned will be used as the Navy embarks on developing and procuring an operational drone fleet.

Nomad and Ranger were developed under the Pentagon's Strategic Capabilities Office, with two similar prototypes still under development, according to a report by the Congressional Research Service. The second pair are expected to be completed before the end of 2023.

Sea Hunter and Seahawk were developed by DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

The four drone vessels participating in RIMPAC carry various payloads, the sen-

sors, radars, communication devices or weapons they were designed to transport, Daley said.

“Each one of my unmanned surface vessels has different payloads,” he said.

“My charter and my role is to develop specific types of sensors and payloads as the warfighting operational commander desires,” he said.

“RIMPAC is a dedicated event that goes over the course of many weeks at sea so the opportunity to test and to integrate and to communicate tactically with manned platforms was a tremendous opportunity,” Daley said. “One of the benefits that every ship — manned or unmanned — has the ability to take away from a large exercise is simply the ability to operate with a significant number of platforms and ships.”

During RIMPAC, Sea Hunter and Seahawk have been paired with the destroyers USS Fitzgerald and USS William P. Law-

rence.

Sensors and radars aboard the drones augment the same type of equipment on the destroyers.

The Navy requested just over \$600 million for research and development of an unmanned surface fleet during the next fiscal year, the Congressional Research Service said in its report.

The Navy projects a fleet of 27 to 153 unmanned surface vessels, depending upon various scenarios, according to the report.

Unmanned vessels will play a role in the Navy's concept of distributed lethality.

“It's fairly simple,” Daley said. “By the nature of having more platforms, manned or unmanned, you have the ability to have additional distributed lethality over a larger area.”

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MILITARY

Studies on military injuries analyzed

Reduced initial fitness, more frequent reporting factors in US servicewomen’s higher injury risk

By NANCY MONTGOMERY
Stars and Stripes

The reason U.S. servicewomen seem to be injured more than their male counterparts may be lower fitness levels at the start of basic training combined with less reluctance to report their injuries and seek care, according to a new study.

The study found that women were more than twice as likely as men to be at risk of injury during basic training and 1.7 times as likely during officer training. But after initial training, women’s injury risk dropped to 1.23 times as likely as men’s.

Those findings, derived from an analysis of 25 studies on military injury, were published July 25 in the journal *BMC Women’s Health*.

Women tended to improve their fitness during basic training more than men and reported their injuries sooner and more frequently, the analysis found.

After adjusting for differences between the sexes in average fitness levels based on their times in the 2-mile run, there was no longer a significant difference in injury rates during basic training, the study found.

The 25 studies examined how differ-

ences between men and women may contribute to injury variability among military personnel.

For example, the fact that women are shorter on average makes them susceptible to overstriding while marching in formation when the pace is set by men, researchers said.

Other researchers suggested that bone differences “predispose female personnel to a higher incidence of injury, particularly those classified as overuse injuries,” they said.

Differences in which body parts are injured have been observed, with foot injuries more common for women during marches and ankle injuries more common in men, according to the analysis.

Researchers also found that the manner in which injuries were reported made a statistical difference.

Self-reports significantly underestimate injury rates when compared with those coming from medical care, the analysis noted. Female personnel are more likely to seek medical assistance.

One study of Marine Corps recruits showed no difference in injury rates between sexes when both reported and non-



STEPHEN STANDIFIRD/U.S. Army

An Army drill sergeant corrects a recruit during her first day of training in 2017. A new study analyzed factors in the variability of injury rates for male and female service members.

reported injuries were pooled, the analysis said.

Given that the difference in injury rates declined as military careers progressed and female personnel are more prone to report injuries, the variability in injury rate is “unlikely to be due to biological sex ... but rather to average sex-based differences in fitness levels, reporting behaviors and possibly other factors,” the analysis concluded.

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Guam among Navy bases to test serving meat alternatives



KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

Frozen, plant-based meats are shown for sale at the commissary on Yokota Air Base, Japan. The Navy will test serving plant-based protein options at some overseas bases.

By KELLY AGEE
Stars and Stripes

An amendment in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2023 could require the Navy to serve plant-based protein options at at least two overseas bases.

The amendment by Rep. Elissa Slotkin, a Michigan Democrat, singles out Joint Region Marianas on Guam, the Navy Support Facility at Diego Garcia and Sasebo Naval Base in Japan as candidates for a pilot program at commands “where livestock-based protein options may be

costly to obtain or store.”

After a three-year period, the Navy secretary would report to the House and Senate Armed Services committees the consumption rate of plant-based proteins by sailors at those bases, criteria that would increase vegan meat offerings at other bases and an analysis of the cost to purchase, store and serve plant-base protein versus regular meat, according to the amendment.

The Navy Times and Defense News first reported on the vegan amendment last week. Spokespeople at Naval Forces Japan did not immediately respond to requests for further information by Stars and Stripes.

Slotkin introduced a separate resolution in 2021 stating that the military members at the pilot program bases would still have access to animal products; the plant-based alternatives are just an option.

Some House Republicans denounced the proposal as an example of a “liberal agenda,” according to the Navy

Times report.

Chip Roy, a Texas Republican, called out the proposal on Twitter.

“A woke military that drafts our daughters, wastes resources on Green New Deal garbage, holds no one accountable for Afghanistan disaster, and prioritizes playing leftist politics over destroying our enemies,” Roy wrote in the thread. “Rep. Roy voted no.”

Vegan options are not new in U.S. military dining halls.

The Guns and Rockets Dining Facility at Fort Sill, Okla., in July 2018 became the first Army facility to offer a 100% plant-based entrée during every meal.

A study conducted by Mercy for Animals, an international nonprofit animal protection organization, reported that 81% of the 226 troops it surveyed wanted more access to plant-based foods, even though only 3.5% of respondents said they were vegan, according to Navy Times.

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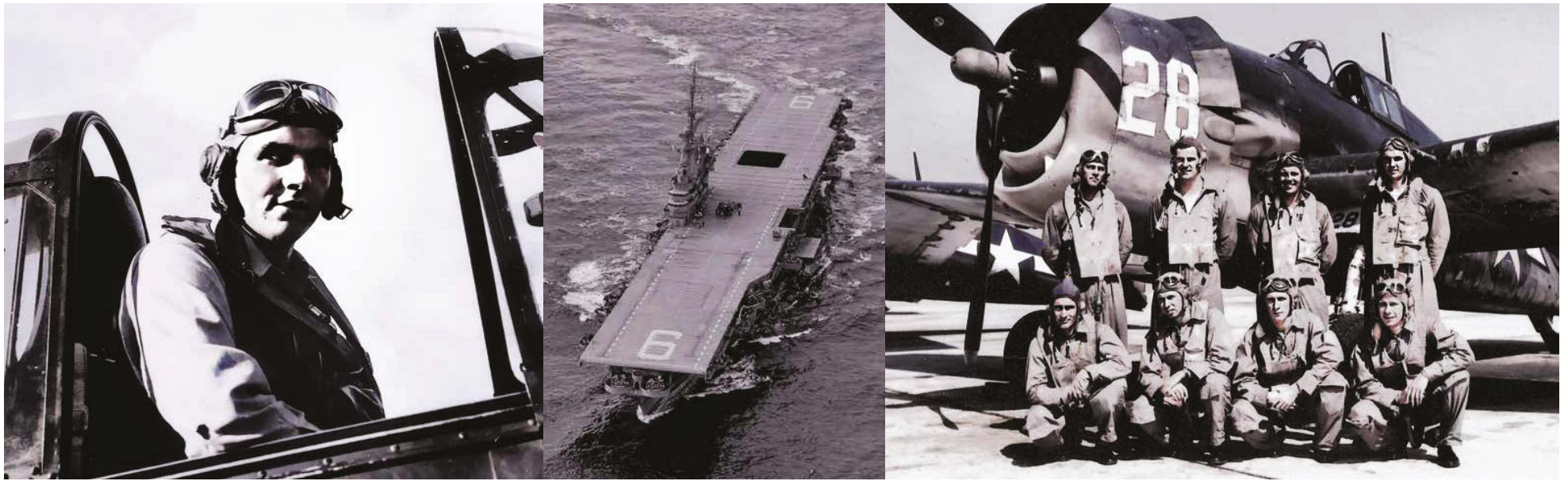
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With seven cars and one employee, Jack Taylor founded Enterprise in 1957 and grew the company into the world's largest and most comprehensive car rental provider. Over the decades, Taylor would become a modern titan of industry, leading thousands of employees with his commitment to integrity, hard work, team spirit and simply doing the right thing.

This is the origin story of Enterprise, but the story of Jack Taylor's legacy as an American hero and a friend of the Marianas goes back to December 07, 1941—the attack on Pearl Harbor. Following this tragedy, Taylor left university to enlist in the United States Navy and would qualify as an aviation cadet.

Taylor became an F6F Hellcat fighter pilot and saw combat duty in the Pacific Theatre from the decks of the aircraft carriers USS Essex (CV-9) and USS Enterprise (CV-6) [for which he later named his company]. As part of Task Force 58, these carriers participated in most of the Navy's major battles in the Pacific during the last years of World War II, including the campaigns in the Marianas, Palau, Iwo Jima, Formosa, and the Philippines.

Upon the completion of his training, Ensign Jack Taylor was assigned to Carrier Air Group 15 (CAG-15 or VF-15), led by top Navy ace of all time, Commander David McCampbell. When Ensign Taylor joined the squadron aboard the USS Essex in late June 1944, the ship was anchored in Eniwetok for resupply.

Prior to Ensign Taylor's arrival, CAG-15 had already been operating in the Marianas for weeks, notably over the skies of Guam, Saipan, and Rota. When the USS Essex returned to the Marianas, with Ensign Taylor aboard, they continued operations over Guam and the surrounding islands in earnest just days before July 21, the planned date for the Guam beach landings.

Guam would not be declared secure until August 10, 1944, for which Ensign Taylor's squadron and many others played a pivotal role providing air support for the forces on the ground.

CAG-15, which sustained more than 50 percent casualties during its World War II service, was one of the most decorated combat units in the history of U.S. Naval aviation. Taylor was twice decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross, and also received the Navy Air Medal. We will be forever grateful to Mr. Taylor and all those who served, honoring their sacrifices as we celebrate the 78th year of Guam's liberation, and with a special pride in the knowledge of our company's heritage. Biba!

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