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Risks, rewards of 'I do' in military

Not only did I get married so long ago that I can't even remember the moment I said "I do," a couple years later, someone mistook our VHS wedding tape for a blank, and recorded a football game over it. If it weren't for our photo album, there'd be no visual evidence of the event during which Francis and I promised to love each other until death do us part.

Uncle Allen did manage to record a few clips of the event on his gargantuan shoulder-mounted camcorder, but the shots are so shaky, it appears that our nuptials took place during a magnitude 7 earthquake.

Besides, the moment that got the most attention wasn't our vows, it was the military sword arch at the end. My Navy husband, Navy brother, Navy brother-in-law and several Navy friends wore their dress blues. The attendees were in awe, and snapped dozens of photos.

I was in awe, too. I felt so fortunate to have found my soulmate and was excited to begin our life together. Like many new military spouses, I knew marrying into the Navy would impact my career. I quit my job as a litigation attorney in Pennsylvania to move to Francis' duty station, but I had no idea that I'd never practice law again.

After our first PCS move, our son was born, and I began my longest-running job, as a stay-at-home mom. I was good at it, but SAHMs don't earn a living, get promoted or contribute to their 401Ks. Francis was the family breadwinner, and I made the sandwiches.

Even though I was a lawyer, I never took steps to protect myself financially in the event that our marriage failed. Francis knew what I'd given up for him, and showed appreciation. In return, I trusted him to protect my future.

As romantic as that sounds, it's incredibly risky. Today, more than 40 percent of first marriages end in divorce. Even though 4 in 10 divorces happen before year 10, rates of "gray" divorces after 20+ years of marriage are rapidly increasing. Add military life stressors to a relationship, and marriage becomes very risky business, indeed.

Active-duty military couples have higher annual rates (3.4 to 3.7) of divorce than civilians (2.4 to 2.9). Rates are even higher for female service members (4.8), enlisted servicemembers (3.1 to 4.1) and Marines (3.8).

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



Rates increase with fewer years of marriage, less income, more deployments, and the more control the service member has over the couple's finances.

Furthermore, many military spouses face a greater likelihood of post-divorce poverty due to loss of earning power, less social security and resume gaps. Recognizing this, Congress passed the Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protec-

tion Act (USFSPA) in 1982 to allow state divorce courts to divide military retirement pay between service members and spouses.

The USFSPA also allows state courts to grant spouses certain lifetime military benefits such as base privileges and government health care under the "20/20/20" rule (20 years of marriage overlapping 20 years of eligible service and 20 years of retirement-creditable service). If there are only 15 years of overlapping marriage to a 20-year service person, then USFSPA allows state courts to grant only one year of Tricare coverage but no other privileges.

While courts will take into account military spouses' career sacrifices under general fairness principles, divorce decrees can vary widely depending on jurisdiction and judge. Military spouses must prove evidence of lost earning capacity, inability to work, military-related career interruptions and justified resume gaps, and cannot rely on general statistics about the impact of military life on spouses.

I feel secure in my marriage, but I realize how foolish I was in my youth to trust love alone to protect me. There's nothing more romantic than safeguarding a military spouse's financial future. This can include pre- and post-nuptial agreements guaranteeing fair alimony, military pension division and support for a spouse re-entering the workforce. Military spouses can also be equally involved in marital financial decisions. Military couples can treat these preventative measures not as a precursor to divorce, but as loving gestures to protect one's soulmate.

Another thing I really wish I'd been smart enough to safeguard 33 years ago — that VHS wedding videotape.

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*
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HOUSE HUNTING

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KATIE MCDONALD,
THE GUAM GUIDE

Moving to Guam represented a big change in my life professionally and personally, but it was also a big step for me romantically: I chose to travel thousands of miles from home to live with my boyfriend who, as of a couple months ago, is now my husband. This was the first time it wouldn't be "his place" and "my place" but "our home" that we would choose together. In our whirlwind of a house hunt, we learned some important lessons and picked up some pieces of advice that will help you to find your own dream home in paradise.

Different than the States

When you're shopping for a home in Guam, you'll notice that there are some noticeable differences between a typical Guam home and a home you might find in the States.

To save money on utilities, split air-con (air conditioning) is far more typical than central air conditioning and the flooring is predominately tile.

If you dislike washing dishes, you may be surprised that many properties don't have a dishwasher. If that's an important appliance for you, be sure to

check under "features" on Realtor.com to see if it's included under the list of appliances.

Not all homes have USPS delivery, especially if they are off unpaved roads. We ran into this situation and rent a PO box from Guam Postal Express, but you can also set up a box with your local post office.



We were excited to see bananas growing in your yard!

Features of island life

You'll want to make sure that your future home is prepared for Guam's typhoons and tropical storms.

Typhoon shutters help to protect your windows and doors from the strong winds, and if the home comes with a generator, that is a huge plus!

We prioritized having a two-car garage to keep our vehicles protected during storms and to keep us dry during the frequent rain showers, and many homes offer some form of covered parking.

Water softeners are also a great bonus feature because the hard water can be tough on hair and sensitive skin.

The best surprise is finding out you have a banana, avocado, or mango tree in your backyard!

Ritidian Beach is one of the most beautiful and quiet on the island.



Geckos are your friend because they eat unwanted insects.

Don't worry about wildlife

Most neighborhoods in Guam are home to flocks of wild chickens, and you'll soon get used to them being your alarm clock. House geckos will inevitably make an appearance in your home, and while these little lizards will initially catch you by surprise, they are actually beneficial because they eat insects. Boonie dogs roam in packs throughout Guam, but they are friendly or avoidant for the most part. You might even see a monitor lizard or wild pig in your yard (they've surprised me a couple of times!), but as long as you give them their space and keep your trash secure, you'll be fine!

Where to live

1. Tamuning-Tumon-Harmon

If you want to be close to resorts, restaurants, nightlife and beaches, this is the place for you! Shopping is a breeze because the Guam Premier Outlets, Micronesia Mall, Don Don Donki and T Galleria by DFS are all close by. Guam Memorial Hospital and Guam Regional Medical City are nearby as well, making it a convenient location for hospital employees to live.

2. Yigo

If you're working at Andersen Air Force Base, you won't be able to beat the convenience of living in this northernmost village. The gated subdivisions give a cozy suburban feel, but you also are close to the unspoiled nature of Ritidian Beach and Pagat Cave Trail.

3. Mangilao

Because of its central location and quieter feel, we ultimately chose to live in Mangilao. We are about half an hour from Naval Base Guam and Andersen Air Force Base and 20 minutes from Tumon's resorts and the airport. The University of Guam and Guam Community College are both in the village, making it convenient for professors and students. We are also fortunate to have the Mangilao Thursday Night Market for a weekly community event.



LeoPalace Resort gives you the chance to live on the grounds of a resort.

4. Yona

If you want easy access to the more rural, laidback lifestyle of the southern villages, the capitol village of Hagåtña and Naval Hospital Guam and scenic trails to explore, Yona is the village for you! One of the more unique housing options is LeoPalace Resort Guam, which leases duplex golf villas and 1-3-bedroom tower apartments with access to the resort's amenities. Between the waterfalls, Pago Bay, and the famous golf courses, you are surrounded by beautiful landscapes.

5. Asan-Maina

Asan-Maina offers you easy access to Naval Base Guam, Joint Region Marianas, Naval Hospital Guam and Hagåtña. Asan War in the Pacific National Park has a walking path filled with beautiful views and history and the Chamorro Village Wednesday Night Market is just a short drive away. Nimitz Hill offers some of the most stunning views on the island if you're not afraid of heights and the community is home to many military families.

RENTING VS. BUYING

Renting pros

- Renting gives you more flexibility than buying, as it's easier to move from one home to another, if necessary.
- One of the biggest benefits of renting is that you don't need a large amount of money up-front.
- Less maintenance and repairs are required since they're generally the responsibility of the landlord.

Buying pros

- Freedom and control to fully customize your home the way you want.
- The potential for increased wealth over time as property values appreciate, especially on Guam.
- The ability to build equity through ownership.
- No need to worry about being asked to leave by a landlord.
- The option to lease out the property when you relocate off the island and earn passive income.
- If you bought in a good and safe area and you decide to lease out the home when you relocate (PCS), you can get prime rental income starting at \$2,200 (for a military tenant).

Renting cons

- You'll be unable to make any changes to the property, as it belongs to the landlord.
- Renters are at risk of rent increases.
- The longer you stay in a rental the less money you will gain back.
- There are no tax benefits to renting a property.
- If you are military, you are giving away \$53,000 (for a 2-year unaccompanied orders) or at least \$88,000 (for a 3-year accompanied orders) during your time on Guam.

Buying cons

- A larger financial commitment is required up-front (down payment [if any] and closing costs).
- It can take some time to build equity and realize a potential gain from the increase in property value.
- Maintenance costs are all yours to bear, meaning you may need to pay for repairs and other upkeep out of pocket.
- Monthly expenses may vary depending on interest rates, insurance premiums, common area fees, and other factors.
- It can be challenging if you relocate (PCS) off Guam and do not have a good property manager when leasing out your home.

REAL ESTATE

The real estate market in Guam is an incredibly competitive one, given the limited amount of homes available. From the modest and affordable to those radiating with all the latest touches, there are a good number of options to choose from.

Something that can sometimes be overlooked is the VA Loan Program for Military members and families. This outstanding benefit is available to those who serve and have served in the military and are seeking property ownership in Guam.

In addition, for those in the military who may have to PCS (permanent change of station) off of Guam, there is also the option of renting or selling their homes. Having that flexibility is invaluable in a market like Guam's, as it gives people the chance to make the most of their home and its value.

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SAFETY FIRST

Risks lurk off Guam

STRIPES GUAM

The best thing about being on Guam is all the opportunities there are for fun in the sun on the beach and beyond. There is an endless array of water sports from swimming, scuba and snorkeling to waterskiing, windsurfing sailing, fishing and more.

While young and old alike should take full advantage of all this, annual water-related deaths and injuries should be a sober reminder that you can never be too cautious when it comes to safety.

There are various dangers to be aware of off Guam's shores where aquatic activities take place. Some of the main ones include powerful rip currents, waves, wind, rain, strong sun and sharp coral reef.

For swimmers and snorkelers, the safest areas are beaches protected from the ocean by a barrier reef. Inside this reef, the water is calm, shallow and has only a slight to non-existent current. However, swimming near the reef can be extremely dangerous because of waves and currents.

Whether using a beach that is off or on base, you should always check the beach warning flags before deciding whether to get into the water. A red flag means it's too dangerous to swim, a yellow flag warns to swim with caution, green indicates all is good, while a blue flag warns that dangerous marine life is present. Also, keep an eye out for signage with specific precautions for beaches.

Active-duty military personnel are

prohibited from reef walking anywhere on Guam. For these purposes, the reef is defined as the elevated ridge of coral or rock between the shore and the open sea. This ridge may be above or slightly below water level, depending on the tide. Keep well clear of the outer portion of the reef when the tide is going out. Rip tides are common on Guam and extremely dangerous.

Dangers of reefs, currents

Even in the calmest conditions, it is difficult and dangerous to cross the reef in the surf. The coral itself is extremely sharp and can cause deep and painful cuts. Gloves and foot protection are essential.

The second danger is the current caused by the waves. In almost all cases where the waves are consistently larger than one foot, and a strong current runs along the reef. This current, known as a "long shore" current, is created when the water forced inside the reef by the waves is higher than the sea level outside the reef. When this happens, the water tries to flow back out to sea but the waves bringing more water into the reef prevent it. The water will flow along the reef or shoreline until it finds a place to flow back into the sea. This current can be very strong.

A person swimming too close to the reef's edge can become caught in the current and be swept onto or over the reef. When they attempt to climb back over the reef, not only do they have to fight the current pushing them sideways, but they must also fight the waves smashing against the



Tanguisson Beach in Dededo. Photo by Jorge Luis Brito

reef. After struggling to cross the reef, many people become exhausted and are washed out to sea or banged along the reef until they die.

Wrestling a rip current

Tips on what people should do when they are caught in a rip current. Stay calm. Don't fight the current; you will lose all

your strength.

- Escape the current by swimming in a direction that follows the coastline. When over the shallow reef flat, walk or swim to shore.

- If unable to escape by swimming, float or tread water. When the current weakens, swim toward the reef flat where the water is shallow.

BOATING

Even fishing boats in the presumed safety of Apra Harbor are routinely carried out of the harbor by the outgoing tide. Experience has shown that boats drifting in this area travel in a generally westerly direction at a minimum of one nautical mile per hour. Few people can paddle against a one-knot current for any length of time. Winds in the area of 15 to 20 knots can increase the drift to two knots. That means a rate of drift anywhere from 24 to 48 miles per day. What starts out a simple frustration (i.e. dead battery within sight of land), can quickly lead to a large search covering hundreds of square miles of ocean.

Always observe a measure of caution and good judgment when boating around Guam. One of the most important measures is to stop and take a good look at the situation. Ask yourself all the "what if" questions you can think of and make sure you have planned for the unexpected. Take plenty of extra water and food. Take as much fuel as possible. Make sure that the proper safety equipment is onboard. Have extra flares, a mirror, a flashlight, and extra flashlight batteries. Let someone know



A snorkeler enjoys the stunning array of coral and diverse fish of Fish Eye Bomb Hole in Piti. Photo by Hatsue Kojima



Guam's shores



due to strong waves and currents. Beaches from the northwest end of Guam around to Andersen AFB have consistently larger waves and are greatly affected by the Rota Channel current. The Equatorial Current compresses between the islands of Guam and Rota which creates a Venturi effect that increases the current by two nautical miles per hour. Although the current is slower closer to shore, it still is strong enough to make swimming very dangerous.

Ritidian Beach, Gun Beach, Tanguisson Beach, Haputo Beach, Shark's Hole, Asan, and Andersen AFB's South Beach Scuba Cut are dangerous areas. Strong rip tide currents may be present during this time, especially on a high outgoing tide.

Hazardous marine life

Treat all seashells as poisonous. Do not handle shells with your bare hands as some contain live animals with deadly venom. The beaches on Andersen AFB are designated as a marine preserve; as a result, shell collecting on base beaches is prohibited.

Another danger to keep in mind is hazardous marine life such as scorpion fish, sea urchins, moray eels, cone snails, crown of thorns starfish, stingrays, sea snakes, stone fish, turkey lionfish and sharks. For protection while in the water, wear some type of footwear (preferably felt bottom or thick gripping rubber/plastic) to prevent painful coral cuts, sea urchin stings, etc.

If at any time you feel you will be unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself: face the shore, call or wave for help.

Prohibited swimming areas

All military members are prohibited from swimming in the following areas: Pagan Point, Shark's Hole, and Shark's Cove. Several beaches are especially hazardous

Guam Swimmer's Safety

NEVER swim alone!
The ocean can be very dangerous even for experienced swimmers.

RIP CURRENTS occur near the shore and can carry swimmers out to sea. **Be mindful of the area, avoid currents.** If you find yourself caught in a current, swim parallel to the shore until you are free.

Watch the weather:
Keep yourself safe in all conditions. Apply sunscreen as needed and never swim during adverse weather.

Watch out for **MARINE LIFE!**

Guam has a beautiful ecosystem full of vibrant sea life. Keep a safe distance and **don't touch!**

Pay attention to beach warning flags!

Water Closed to Public	High Hazard	Medium Hazard	Low Hazard	Dangerous Marine Life

where you're going, when you'll return, and what equipment you have onboard.

No one should ever go out in the ocean without a marine VHF radio.

SNORKELING

Guam offers some of the best snorkeling in the world. However, people venture out into unfamiliar waters and find themselves in serious trouble. The waters around Guam need to be respected.

Always snorkel with another person and use proper equipment: a snorkel, mask, and brightly colored fins. If you are not an experienced Guam swimmer, wear a snorkel vest (this will enable you to stay afloat if you become tired or carried out to sea). If a current carries you away from shore, wave one of your brightly colored fins in the air to signal someone on the shore to seek help.

Before you venture out, contact a local dive shop for information on areas you intend to snorkel. The National Weather Service (dial 211 off base and 99-211 on base) has a recorded message on surf, winds, and tide conditions.

Safest snorkeling areas

- Tarague Beach (swim within buoyed area)
- Any beach in the Tumon Bay hotel row area (Hilton to the Guam Reef Hotel)
- Gab Gab Beach (Big Navy, no lifeguard)
- San Luis Beach (Big Navy, no lifeguard)
- Outhouse Beach (No lifeguard)
- Piti Bomb Holes
- Dog Leg Reef (Family Beach)

Hazardous snorkeling areas

- Ritidian Beach
- Tanguisson Beach
- Asan Cut
- Gun Beach
- Haputo Beach

SURFING

Guam's location in the middle of the Pacific Ocean subjects it to many different ocean swells. Unfortunately, these swells hit on dangerously shallow and sharp reefs. Currents in these areas range from friendly to deadly causing surfing to be very deceptive and dangerous.

The best place to learn to surf or boogie board is Talafofo Bay. In addition, pay attention to surfing etiquette and perhaps talk to experienced local surfers before attempting to surf on Guam.

There have been a number of incidents where non-locals were harassed or even threatened by the "regulars" at the limited number of surfing sites.

SCUBA DIVING

Guam features many excellent dive sites and a robust scuba-training infrastructure with several large dive centers, boat operators, and guides. Do not scuba dive deeper than your certification level. Always use the buddy system and use a dive flag at the surface. Newly assigned military personnel (PCS and TDY) should plan their first few dives through Outdoor Recreation or at one of the local dive shops until you are familiar with the area. Many local dive shops offer free shore dives led by a dive master on weekends. This is a great opportunity to learn the local area and meet new dive buddies.

– 36th Wing Safety Office



Orote Point.
Photo by Troy Green

Beachin' good fun on base

STRIPES GUAM

Naval Base Guam's Gab Gab Beach

Gab Gab Beach, or Fab Gab as we like to call it, is truly a hidden gem and easily our family's regular go-to place for no-frills, low-cost weekend fun.

Great for picnics, birthday parties, unit gatherings, hail & farewells, snorkeling, swimming, diving, sand volleyball, SUP'ing and all sorts of water play. The beach umbrellas and grill grates can be rented for a meager amount, and camping is allowed by reservation with the Outdoor Recreation Center. There is something for everyone.

Gab Gab is located on Naval Base Guam, so you'll need base access to get to it, its also one of the most popular shore dives on Guam, and any given day of the week you're likely to find divers exiting or readying to enter the water via the easy stairs next to the "3-sided pool."

If you get there early enough, make a leisure surface swim due north out to the Atlantis Submarine Tender buoy, and drop down on the plateau reef at about 50', known as Gab Gab II, where baited buckets attract the fish for the viewing pleasure of the underwater tourists. You're almost guaranteed to get an up close view of the docile Nurse Sharks, large schooling fish, and possibly a moray eel in the artificial reef ball. Also look out for anemones teeming with clown fish at various locations on the reef.

Steer clear of the submarine while diving, but be sure and give a wave to all the tourists peering out the portholes.

It's also a beginner snorkeler's paradise. Enter the water via the stairs and you're only yards from colorful coral, sloping reefs, an abundance of fish and there is always a greater than average chance of seeing a turtle along the reef edge. Note, no forms of fishing or collection of marine life (live or dead) is permitted at Gab Gab.

Bathrooms are provided, and outdoor showers are just steps away from the water stairs—convenient for divers and snorkelers exiting the water to rinse their gear and themselves. During your surface interval, enjoy some



Gather with friends at Gab Gab Beach.
Photo courtesy of USS Emory S. Land

beach volleyball, relaxing under the umbrellas, barbecuing in the poolside grills.

Enjoy fabulous Gab Gab, but be sure and clean up after yourselves when you leave.

Dadi Beach

Dadi Beach is also located on Naval Base Guam. It is quiet, away from the hustle and bustle, and is a great spot for laying out and soaking up some sun, swimming, picnics and watching sunrises. You can even catch glimpses of dolphins, turtles and manta rays.

San Luis Beach

San Luis Beach is another oasis on Naval Base Guam. It is known for being a great dive, standup paddle boarding and kayaking spot.

Fantasy Island

Fantasy Island is located off base at Polaris Point which is two miles from the front gate of Naval Base Guam in the beautiful village of Piti. It is most known for its camping grounds.

- Planning on heading out to the beaches this weekend



Bamboo Willies at Tarague Beach.

but don't have the proper outdoor equipment? Don't let it ruin your plans! Drop into Rec-N-Crew and inquire about all your outdoor needs. Call (671) 564-1826.

Andersen's Tarague Beach

Whether you're with a group of friends or looking for some personal time, Tarague Beach on Andersen Air Force Base is your answer to camping on Guam.

Make the most of the day at the beach enjoying activities such as swimming, snorkeling, beach volleyball or barbeque. The beach also provides a playground for kids, a nature trail for hiking and exploring the different historical highlights and agriculture in the area.

Tarague Beach offers 20 campsites along the sandy beach. Most of the campsites are shaded by beautiful pine trees and the ocean breeze keeps you cool. Each campsite includes a picnic table and grill. Bathrooms and showers are centrally located so all patrons can use them conveniently.

Bamboo Willies beachfront restaurant is open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

SEE BASE ON PAGE 10



Gab Gab II is one of the most popular and most enjoyable dives on Guam.
Photo courtesy of mdaguam.com



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Family fun at Tarague Beach.
Photo by Tessie Faustino Guerrero



BASE: So much to do!

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

As the evening approaches, catch a breathtaking sunset, roast marshmallows or make smores.

Camping at Tarague is open all year round. However, December through February usually offers the best weather conditions: slightly cooler with a little less rain and humidity. This makes for perfect camping.

Sirena Beach

Sirena Beach has a pavilion where you can spend the night camping under the stars.

- If you don't own any camping equipment, Outdoor Recreation has all your supplies such as tents and other camping equipment for rent. Reservations for campsites as well as supplies can be made online at www.MilitaryMWRGuam.com under Outdoor Recreation or by calling (671) 366-5204 or 5197.
- Fishing is allowed by permit only. Permits are \$12 at Outdoor Recreation.

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The Navy operates three swimming pools on the island. At Naval Base Guam, the swimming pool is located at the Charles King Fitness Center & Pool. Call the pool at (671) 564-1822.

At the Naval Communications Station, the pool is located on the main drive of the base, next to the laundromat. For more information, call (671) 355-5091/564-1822.

At the Naval Hospital, the pool is located near

the housing area. To reach the Naval Hospital pool please call (671) 564-1822/344-9009.

The Andersen Air Force Base pool is located near housing, directly next to the Youth Center and Skate Park. They have an aquatics program for all ages and interests. Red Cross certified instructors teach swim lessons to all ages and all ability levels. They also have lap swim, open recreation swim, a wading pool for your little ones and a picnic area that is available on a first come, first serve basis. For inquiries, email andersenaquatics@gmail.com, or call (671) 366-3202.

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Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



Mt. Alifan

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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 the trailhead on Saturdays at 9 a.m. unless otherwise indicated. Directions to the trailhead will be posted on the Guam Boonie Stompers Inc Facebook page. The cost is \$5.00 for hikers over 13. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Hike fees for active military and veterans are covered by Adaptive Adventures. 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:
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Guam Boonie Stompers is a non-profit Guam corporation composed of volunteer leaders committed to leading hikes to and protecting the unique natural destinations on our island.

SCHEDULE 2026

June 13 (Sat.)	Togcha Cemetery to Asanite Cove (Medium)
July 4 (Sat.)	Liberation Stomp (Easy/Medium/ Difficult)- Easy- Asan Pt (2 sites w/ short walk), Med/ Difficult- Mt. Alifan
July 11 (Sat.)	Fonte Dame/Libugon Radio Station (Medium)- Nimitz Hill
July 18 (Sat.)	Invasion Hike (Asan to Asan Bay Overlook) (Very Difficult)- Asan
July 25 (Sat.)	Korean Airline Memorial (Easy)/ Charlie Corn (Medium)/Hidden Bunkers (Medium)- Nimitz Hill



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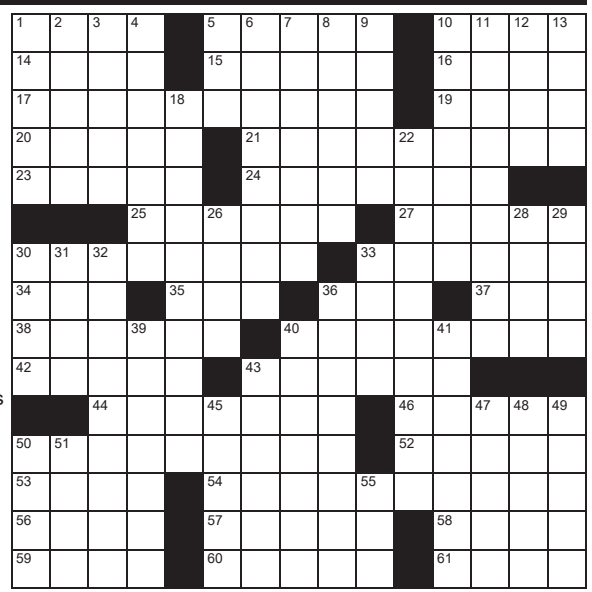
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Crossword by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Church bell sound
- 5 Takes off
- 10 Tiny fraction of a min.
- 14 Start to bat?
- 15 Commercial creator
- 16 Wistful words
- 17 Thanksgiving centerpiece
- 19 "The Amateur" actor Malek
- 20 Set straight
- 21 Like some herbs
- 23 More popular song, usually
- 24 Soon, in old times
- 25 Declared
- 27 Missionary Junipero _____
- 30 Airport vehicles
- 33 Puzo and Cuomo
- 34 Mother _____
- 35 "Lent" body part
- 36 Washed out
- 37 Allow
- 38 Digitally endorses
- 40 Samoan seaport
- 42 Equally irate
- 43 Diocese division
- 44 Dappled, as a horse
- 46 Like a _____ bricks
- 50 More thin
- 52 Use more WD-40 on
- 53 Lymph _____
- 54 Haughtily
- 56 Radio transmission
- 57 Jason of "The Wrecking Crew"
- 58 TV's "How _____ Your Mother"
- 59 Makes one
- 60 Defeat decisively
- 61 Prefix with -graphy



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DOWN

- 1 Rainforest rodents
- 2 Reason for a food recall
- 3 Right Guard rival
- 4 1974's and 2005's "The _____ Yard"
- 5 Animal pouch
- 6 Dashboard gauge
- 7 Current units
- 8 Made a surprise attack
- 9 Slow mover
- 10 Seattle slugger
- 11 Place of bliss
- 12 Jane Austen heroine
- 13 Top off a room
- 18 Neglected
- 22 Sicilian Mafia
- 26 "Oh, woe!"
- 28 "The Witches" director Nicolas
- 29 Regarding, in a memo
- 30 Mets' old stadium
- 31 Name on toy fuel trucks
- 32 Unrestricted
- 33 Wise Men
- 36 Naval officers' hangout
- 39 Diving maneuvers
- 40 Sicilian seaport
- 41 Cardinals' home
- 43 Pirate's pet
- 45 Grins widely
- 47 "Who did this?" reply, maybe
- 48 Persian Gulf ship
- 49 Reach by plane
- 50 Old TV problem
- 51 Letter sign-off
- 55 Opening

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Stripes Sports Trivia

The late Rashaan Salaam won the 1994 Heisman Trophy as the running back for which school?

Answer

Colorado

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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Edited by Margie E. Burke

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.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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RESTAURANT INFO

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By Army Lt. Col. (Ret.) Annette Merfalen

Fish Tacos with Mango Salsa and Tangy Coleslaw

This is not your typical fish taco. It's even better if you ask me, but then I might be a bit biased.

When I think of fish tacos, I picture battered fried fish, cabbage slaw, and a spicy mayo, all wrapped in a corn tortilla.

I'm trying to eat healthier meals, so I created this version where I bake instead of fry the fish. I also created a tangy coleslaw that uses no mayo, but some surprise HEALTHIER-FOR-YOU ingredients that kick up the flavor as well as the nutrition. You won't see spicy mayo drizzled over my version either. Instead, I made a mango salsa that pairs so well with the fish and coleslaw. To make this even better for you, I opted for lettuce leaves as my taco wrap. Man-oh-man, are these tacos delicious!

Give my recipes a try. I think you'll like them. Drop me a line to let me know what you think.

Ingredients:

Coleslaw Ingredients:

- 1 bag (10-oz) angel hair coleslaw (or 8 cups finely shredded cabbage)
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley

Coleslaw Dressing Ingredients:

- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons blackstrap molasses (you can use honey, but the molasses is healthier for you... read more about its amazing health benefits here.)
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon celery seeds
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon Stevia sweetener (or you can add 2 more tablespoons of honey)

Mango Salsa Ingredients:

- 2 ripe mangoes
- ½ red onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
- The juice of 1 lime
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Optional: 1 jalapeño, seeded and chopped

Fish Ingredients:

- 4 whole orange roughy filets (about 2 pounds)
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- Extra virgin olive oil, about 3 tablespoons

Other Ingredients:

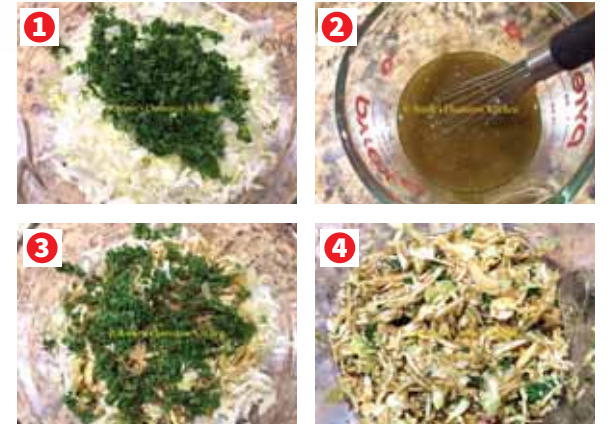
- Lettuce leaves (use Bib Lettuce, Red or Green Curly Leaf Lettuce)
- Avocado, sliced



Directions:

1. Make the Coleslaw. Place the sliced cabbage in a medium-sized mixing bowl. Add the parsley. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the ingredients for the dressing. Pour the dressing over the cabbage and parsley. Toss the ingredients together. Refrigerate the coleslaw until you're ready to assemble the tacos. This will give it time to let the flavors meld.

2. Make the Mango Salsa. Cut the skin off the mango. Dice the mango into 1/4-inch cubes. Place into a small mixing bowl. Add the red onions and the optional jalapeño to the bowl. Add the cilantro. Stir to combine the ingredients. Set aside until you're ready to assemble the tacos.



3. Bake the Fish. Cut the fish filets into halves (if they're small) or thirds (if they're large). Place into a rimmed baking dish (I used a 9x13 pan). Sprinkle both sides of the fish with the sea salt, black pepper, garlic powder and paprika. Drizzle the olive oil all over the fish (top side only). Bake the fish at 400 degrees for 15 minutes.



4. Assemble the tacos. Slice the avocados. Rinse and dry the lettuce leaves. Set aside.

Place a lettuce leaf on a plate. Add some Tangy Coleslaw on top of the lettuce leaf. Place a piece of baked fish on top of the coleslaw. Add a scoop of mango salsa on top of the fish. Top with avocado slices, serve and ENJOY!

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GUAM EDITION

JUNE 8, 2026



BRIAN BOWERS/Stars and Stripes

Marines fight in Middle Eastern city in a scene from Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. The Activision game is being used at the Marine Corps University's Sergeants School to train newly promoted Marine sergeants in real-world leadership skills they need to level up as noncommissioned officers.

New kind of Duty

Marines turn to vintage video game in NCO school **Page 2**

COVER STORY

Marine training now includes classic COD

Sergeants School turns to modified 2007 video game

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps hopes that a modified version of the nearly two-decade-old hit video game Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare can help newly promoted sergeants level up as leaders.

A group of researchers from Virginia Tech and the University of Memphis developed a training adaptation of the genre-defining game to help teach students in the Sergeants School at the Marine Corps University in Quantico, Va. The effort, funded by the Office of Naval Research, is known as Research into Competency Acquisition with Novel E-gaming.

The fourth installment of the Call of Duty franchise, a top seller after its release in November 2007, was the first to bring the series out of World War II and into the modern era, though much about modern warfare has changed since, with the advent and growing use of drone technology and artificial intelligence.

In the game's modified version, which was introduced to the first cohort of Marine students in January, players participate in over a dozen scenarios tailored to help them hone skills in leadership, critical thinking, decision-making and communication in real time, Virginia Tech said in a statement last week.

"The actual skills translate directly into making good decisions under high stress," said Brig. Gen. Matthew Tracy, commanding general of Marine Corps Education Command and president of Marine Corps University, according to the statement.

Sergeants School is designed to prepare newly promoted sergeants to take on more significant leadership roles as noncommissioned officers, according to a description on the Marine Corps University's website.

The curriculum emphasizes Marine Corps doctrine, tactical decision-making and maneuver warfare concepts. Course instruction is typically delivered through guided discussions, case studies, practical applications and other exercises.

Traditional modes of instruction provide students with the necessary knowledge, but the video game lets them develop that knowledge into skills "through practice, reflection and refinement," said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Natali, a program manager with the Office of Naval Research.

The students see "how their thoughts, decisions, and inter-



BRIAN BOWERS/Stars and Stripes

Marines prepare to enter a room in a Middle Eastern city in a scene from Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. The Activision game is being used at the Marine Corps University's Sergeants School to train newly promoted Marine sergeants in real-world leadership skills they need to level up as noncommissioned officers.

"They thought it was so valuable that their units would benefit from it as well."

Louis Hickman
assistant professor of
industrial-organizational psychology
at Virginia Tech

actions with teammates affect performance and mission success in real-time vice theoretical talking points," Natali said in the Virginia Tech statement.

Having the chance to work with the military on something with a real-world impact "instead of something sequestered away in the ivory tower" was a plus for Louis Hickman, assistant professor of industrial-organizational psychology at Virginia Tech, who leads the research project.

"This is one of the few things in the course that allows for active practice and a more engaging experience," Hickman said.

The similarity of the game's setting to the real world was also part of the reason the researchers chose Call of Duty 4 over something like Halo, which is set on other planets centuries in the future, Hickman told Stars and Stripes last month.

Before he had two jobs and a



Office of Naval Research

Louis Hickman, assistant professor of industrial-organizational psychology at Virginia Tech, shows Marine Corps University students how to maneuver in the custom gaming module that leverages a modified version of the 2007 game Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare.

family, he was an avid player of first-person shooters and even played the first installment of the Call of Duty franchise competitively in his younger days, he said.

Hickman's gaming skills also showed in the team's weekly testing of the game and associated software.

"When Louis is there, it's like having Rambo on your team," said Ryan P. McMahan, director of the Blacksburg, Va.-based university's Center for Human-Computer Interaction, as quoted in the university's statement.

The team needed to ensure the software could collect data and function perfectly before being deployed because it could not be updated later, which was a unique constraint on their work, said Brandon Booth, a third member

of the team and an assistant professor in the University of Memphis Department of Computer Science.

The researchers used existing modification tools to create a custom campaign through 14 levels, some of which have several variants. Fire teams of five Marine players battle together through these levels against much larger numbers of opposing forces than the "drip feed" of enemies they would see in the game's original single-player campaign mode.

"Sometimes they're encountering up to 20 opposing forces at a time," Hickman said, an intensity of combat that "requires coordinating in terms of where you're looking and covering, as well as when you're reloading, just like you might encounter in the real world."

Before each scenario, the fire team gets a briefing and the team leader develops a plan. During the gameplay, researchers gather data from players' voice chats, video of the gameplay, and information about their in-game movements, shooting, kills, and deaths.

Afterward, the team does what the Marines call a "hot wash," facilitated by a large language model, a type of artificial intelligence that helps them discuss what went well, what didn't, and what to do differently the next time, Hickman said.

In a later phase of the project, researchers plan to feed the player data into the large language model to help it improve the after-action review and better aid Marines in developing lessons learned, Hickman said.

Ultimately, the skills the young sergeants practice in the game, and the lessons they learn from it, are tested and evaluated in realistic scenarios over several days during the school's culminating field exercise.

While Marine Corps University plans to deploy the software at a Sergeants School on Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms in California,

Hickman said students were already asking to take it back to their units.

"They thought it was so valuable that their units would benefit from it as well," he said in the university statement.

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MILITARY

Medal of Honor recipient may become saint

Chaplain's capture and death during Korean War built lasting reputation

BY LARA KORTE
Stars and Stripes

The last time Paul Roach and Mike Dowe had seen the Rev. Emil Kapaun, he was being taken away by prison guards during the Korean War — sick, shivering and near death.

More than 70 years later, in 2021, the two former Korean War prisoners traveled to Kansas to finally view the remains of their friend, the beloved Army chaplain, after the military identified Kapaun among unknown soldiers buried in Hawaii, finding remains long thought to be lost forever.

Kapaun would be welcomed home to Wichita by a crowd of more than 6,000 people and finally given a proper burial. But before the congregation paid its respects, the two aging veterans, who had been imprisoned alongside Kapaun, gathered for a private viewing beside the chaplain's flag-draped casket.

As soon as Kapaun's remains were uncovered, Roach and Dowe recognized their friend immediately.

"That's his smile!" Roach said, recalled the Rev. Matthew Pawlikowski, a retired Army chaplain who accompanied the men to the viewing. "Even in death, he was bringing joy to people."

Kapaun's capture and death at the hands of Chinese forces during the Korean War earned him the Medal of Honor and a lasting reputation among generations of soldiers and chaplains.

He's the namesake of a number of sites on overseas U.S. military installations, including the chapel at Camp Humphreys in South Korea and Kapaun Air Station in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Now, 75 years after his death, Kapaun is being considered for an even rarer distinction — sainthood.

In recent years, the Catholic Church has begun investigating claims of miracles tied to Kapaun — part of the Vatican's formal process for determining sainthood — including medically unexpected recoveries that many Catholics attribute to his intercession.

Last year, shortly before his death, the late Pope Francis named him "venerable."

Pending further investigation by the Vatican, he could become the first U.S. military service member declared a saint by the



RAYMOND PIPER/Soldiers Magazine

Army Chaplain Emil Kapaun, right, and Capt. Jerome A. Dolan carry an exhausted soldier during the Korean War. Kapaun became known for repeatedly risking his life to rescue wounded troops.

"I think he felt he could do more for the soldiers than he could for the parish"

Ray Kapaun
nephew of Emil Kapaun

Catholic Church.

Kapaun knew he wanted to be a priest from an early age.

Born to Czech immigrant farmers in Pilsen, Kan., he used to stack cardboard boxes in the living room and pretend to celebrate Mass, according to family stories.

After seminary, Kapaun began serving the Czech community in his hometown. But after his younger brother Eugene returned from World War II in 1944 — having taken part in the Normandy invasion — Kapaun began reconsidering where he could do the most good.

Later that same year, Kapaun joined the Army Chaplain Corps, serving in India and Burma during the war. After returning home and completing a master's degree on the G.I. Bill, he reenlisted.

"I think he felt he could do more for the soldiers than he could for the parish," said his nephew, Ray Kapaun.



COURTESY PHOTO/21st Theater Sustainment Command

Rev. Emil Kapaun celebrates Mass beside a Jeep during the Korean War.

In early 1950, his unit deployed to Japan as part of the postwar occupation force. Within six months, North Korean forces invaded South Korea.

Weeks later, Kapaun's unit — the 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division — became part of the first U.S. forces sent into the Korean War. In letters home, he wrote optimistically that the fighting might end by Christmas.

Instead, Kapaun and thousands of other American soldiers were captured before Thanksgiving.

Kapaun might have been a

man of God, but fellow soldiers said he carried no holier-than-thou attitude. Dowe, a young lieutenant when he was imprisoned alongside Kapaun, later wrote extensively about the chaplain's service.

"Outwardly he was all GI, tough of body, rough of speech sometimes, full of the wry humor of the combat soldier," Dowe wrote in a 1954 article for the *Saturday Evening Post*.

Kapaun often risked his life to retrieve wounded troops and administer last rites. He would sometimes drop into foxholes to

comfort nervous riflemen, offering a fresh peach and a joke before moving to the next soldier.

He carried the tools for the sacraments with him across the battlefields of Korea, often celebrating Mass on makeshift altars of ammunition boxes or the hoods of Jeeps.

Once, while rushing to rescue a wounded soldier, he came under such heavy fire that his smoke pipe was shot out of his mouth. For his bravery in action, he received the Bronze Star Medal.

It was this devotion to the wounded, Dowe wrote, that would ultimately cost him his freedom and later his life.

In November 1950, during a battle near Unsan after Chinese forces entered the war, Kapaun worked to retrieve wounded troops and anoint the dying. At one point, he was offered a chance to escape but refused, opting instead to stay behind with the injured soldiers.

Shortly thereafter, he was captured and forced to march for dozens of miles with other American forces to a prison camp at Pyoktong. It was here that Dowe met Kapaun, who was moving up and down the line encouraging soldiers to help carry the wounded lest they be shot for falling behind.

Pawlikowski, the retired chaplain who now serves as a civilian at West Point, has spent much of his career sharing Ka-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

MILITARY



ALFREDO BARRAZA/Army Multimedia and Visual Information Division

Former President Barack Obama applauds after presenting the Medal of Honor to Ray Kapaun, nephew of Army chaplain Emil Kapaun, during a 2013 White House ceremony honoring Emil Kapaun's actions during the Korean War.

FROM PAGE 4

paun's story. What stands out to him most, he said, is that Kapaun never seemed larger than life — just deeply committed to helping others.

“Service is another word for love,” Pawlikowski said. “I tell people that there’s nothing he did in his story that you couldn’t do. It’s just that he did it.”

Kapaun spent the next seven months in Prison Camp No. 5 tending to fellow detainees — skirting rules and defying prison guards even as his own physical condition deteriorated.

He would often sneak off to scrounge for additional food to supplement the meager rations of millet or cracked corn given to prisoners, saying a prayer to St. Dismas, the Good Thief, as he stuffed grain into his pockets.

Prohibited from tending to the wounded in the sick house, he’d sneak past guards to visit them, washing their old bandages, picking lice from their bodies and holding them in his arms when they became overcome with delirium. He said prayers for them, joked with them, and urged them not to lose hope.

Dowe later wrote that another prison camp known as Death Valley had similar conditions but a death rate 10 times higher — a difference he attributed to Kapaun’s tireless work and positivity.

“The main thing he did for them was to put into their hearts the will to live,” Dowe said. “For when you are wounded and sick and starving, it’s easy to give up quietly and die.”

Despite threats and communist indoctrination attempts, Kapaun continued ministering to the soldiers, quietly and calmly

pushing back against anti-religious propaganda.

But Kapaun’s health was failing. On Easter Sunday 1951, he gathered soldiers in a burned-out churchyard to listen to the Easter readings in defiance of prison rules. The following week, he began limping on a swollen and discolored leg from what was likely a blood clot.

The next Sunday, as he led the men in prayer, his voice faltered and he fainted, Dowe recalled. Though his leg improved, he was soon struck by dysentery that left him delirious with fever.

He later began to improve, eating and joking with the others. But the Chinese guards did not intend for him to live, Dowe wrote. As they came to take him to the sick house, the men protested, knowing he would be left to die in freezing filth.

But Kapaun himself did not object.

“Tell them back home that I died a happy death,” he said, per Dowe’s account.

He died a few days later, on May 23, 1951, at the age of 35.

For years, the location of Kapaun’s remains was disputed. Many former POWs believed he had been buried in a mass grave, while others swore he was buried alone. Later, his family learned he had been moved to Hawaii as part of Operation Glory, the effort to repatriate Americans who died in the Korean War.

Once thought to be lost forever in a rural part of North Korea, Kapaun had actually rested among fellow unknown service members at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu since 1954.

For decades, Catholics, chaplains and soldiers shared Ka-



RUSTY FRANK/Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency

Ray Kapaun secures the remains of his uncle, Army chaplain Emil Kapaun, during a 2021 ceremony in Hawaii after the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency identified the Korean War chaplain among previously unknown remains.

paun’s story as an example of sacrifice and service to others. Then, in the early 2000s, reports of medically unexpected recoveries began drawing the attention of the Catholic Church.

Supporters of Kapaun’s sainthood campaign point to at least three cases in the Wichita area between 2006 and 2011 involving people who recovered after prayers to the late chaplain.

The Rev. Eric Weldon, a priest in the Diocese of Wichita, was serving at St. Patrick’s Church in 2006 when he learned that one of his parishioners, a 12-year-old girl named Avery Gerleman, was gravely ill.

Gerleman, who had an autoimmune disorder, had been in a coma for weeks. Multiple organs, including her lungs and kidneys, were failing. Weldon, a former Army Reserve lieutenant who had attended Kapaun Mt. Carmel High School in Wichita, asked his congregation to pray to Kapaun on All Saints’ Day.

“I just straight up said, ‘Avery Gerleman, in our parish, she’s in the hospital and she’s going to die,’” Weldon recalled. “So we’re going to ask for Father Kapaun’s intercession.”

Days later, Gerleman began emerging from the coma. Within weeks, her kidneys and lungs recovered. Later, doctors reportedly told Vatican investigators they were unable to find a sufficient medical explanation for her recovery.

“It was very emotional,” Weldon said.

The Catholic Church is currently examining Kapaun’s life as part of the process to potentially declare him a saint. The Diocese of Wichita says it has already sent more than 8,000 pages of research to the Vatican.

In addition to Gerleman’s case, supporters point to the recoveries of Chase Kear, a college student who survived a severe head injury after a 2008 pole-vaulting accident; and Nick Del-

lasega, who collapsed during a 5K race in 2011 and appeared to die before ultimately surviving.

Last year, the Vatican gave Kapaun the title “venerable,” the second step toward sainthood. If the Church verifies one miracle, he’ll be eligible to receive the title “blessed.” A second verified miracle would be required for sainthood.

For Ray Kapaun, the campaign around his uncle has been surreal. He jokes that he sometimes feels extra pressure to be the last person to leave church or behave a certain way because of his connection to a potential saint.

Ray Kapaun said his grandmother was able to see some of the enthusiasm around Kapaun, including early calls for sainthood, before she died in the 1980s, but her primary focus remained on his return.

“She got to see some of that momentum,” he said. “But I think ... she just wanted her son home more than anything.”

Today, Kapaun’s remains rest in the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Wichita, but his story has traveled around the world.

When asked why his life resonates so much, those who follow Kapaun often bring up a common theme — his humanity.

He’s not the typical saint depicted on prayer cards or paintings, with hands gently folded and eyes looking upward, Pawlikowski said. He struggled and experienced incredible hardship, but he still had a sense of humor and joy, he said.

“I think he’s a saint that’s not beyond reach,” Pawlikowski said.

All of the men imprisoned alongside Kapaun have now died. Dowe died in 2025. The final surviving member of “Father Emil’s Boys,” Roach, died last month.

Today, Ray Kapaun lives on a little island in Puget Sound, north of Seattle. When Stars and Stripes spoke to him, he was looking out over the same waters his uncle crossed when he left the U.S. for Japan in 1950.

Ray Kapaun recalled his father often retelling the story of the last time he saw his brother in Kansas, just a few weeks before he shipped out. The chaplain pulled his younger brother aside and told him he felt it would be his last trip.

“He said, ‘don’t say anything to mom and dad, but I don’t think I’m going to be coming back from this one,’” he recalled.

When his brother objected, the chaplain insisted he wasn’t trying to upset him, but to reassure him he was at peace with the prospect.

“He was willing to give his whole life to what he was doing, without having that fear of anything,” Ray Kapaun said. “He knew that was his mission in life.”

MILITARY

DOD extends Guam missile defense contract

By JONATHAN BAEZ
Stars and Stripes

The Pentagon approved another \$407 million for Lockheed Martin's work on the Enhanced Integrated Air and Missile Defense System on Guam, bringing the company's contract total to \$1.9 billion, according to a recent announcement.

The contract, first awarded in November 2020, calls for the company to engineer, develop and certify integrated air and missile defense capabilities into the Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense system being built on the island.

The Lockheed contract is part of an \$8 billion project to defend the U.S. island territory from cruise, ballistic or hypersonic missiles that could come from China or North Korea in the event of hostilities. The Pentagon announced the extension on May 7.

Guam is the westernmost U.S. territory and a key forward operating base in the Pacific. Andersen Air Force Base, Marine Corps Camp Blaz and Naval Base Guam, which includes the Polaris Point submarine base, are located there.

The defense system is a 360-de-



NAOMI JOHNSON/U.S. Navy

Naval Base Guam is within the Integrated Air and Missile Defense System under construction on Guam.

gree integrated air and missile defense network on 16 sites around the island. Eight sites are on Naval Base Guam, six are at Andersen and two are on Blaz.

The system is composed of 36 missile launchers, 23 communica-

tion towers and 14 radar systems. Construction is scheduled for completion in 2035.

The project could have consequences for the island's environment and living standards, according to an Environmental Im-

pact Statement released in July.

An influx of contractors and service personnel to build and operate the system may strain the island's housing supply and health care system, according to the report.

Construction is expected to destroy 282 acres of limestone forest and remove nearly 5,500 fadang trees, an endangered species unique to the region, while also threatening the habitat of the endangered Mariana fruit bat, according to the impact statement.

An Aegis system on Guam would give the U.S. its third operational Aegis Ashore installation.

The other two are in Deveselu, Romania, operational since 2016, and Redzikowo, Poland, operational since 2024. Both sites are designed to protect NATO allies and U.S. personnel from potential missile attacks originating in the Middle East.

Both European Aegis systems incorporate radar stations from the SPY-1 family and an integrated fire-control system.

The Guam system was planned to include AN/TPY-6, a ground-based radar derived from SPY-7

and Long Range Discrimination Radar technology. However, the Pentagon halted its development in January 2025 while retaining an experimental panel for potential future use, according to Defense News on May 30, 2025.

Lockheed Martin was the only company considered for the modification. The company faces no competitive bidding pressure on a contract that has grown by more than \$400 million.

Sole-source contracts that pay fixed costs and incentive costs, plus fees, are standard practice for the Pentagon. They are used for complex or early-stage development projects where costs cannot be estimated accurately in advance, while incentivizing contractors to meet performance targets, according to the official U.S. government acquisition website.

The work will be performed in Moorestown, N.J., home of Lockheed's Combat System Engineering Development Site, and on Guam. The modification extends Lockheed Martin's original contract timeline by two years to December 2029, according to the contract announcement.

Marines plan to phase out F/A-18 Hornet by 2030

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps will complete a switch from the F/A-18 Hornet to the new fifth-generation F-35 Lightning II by 2030, the service said.

An internal administrative message issued in early May said the Hornet will be retired from Marine service, and maintenance jobs tied to the F/A-18 Hornet fighter attack plane will be eliminated.

Variants of the Hornet have served in the Marine Corps since 1983. The service has been planning to phase out the Hornet since it received its first Lightnings in 2012.

The Marines ended new pilot flight training for the Hornet in 2018.

The Navy flies later-model F/A-18E/F Super Hornets and



CECILIA CAMPBELL/U.S. Marine Corps

A Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornet with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 232 sits on the flight line at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, in January.

plans to keep the aircraft into the 2040s while also shifting more squadrons to the F-35C. The Navy also flies the EF-18G Growler, an electronic warfare version

of the Hornet.

The 2026 Marine Aviation Plan calls for squadrons to expand to 420 F-35s.

The Marines fly two versions

of the F-35. The F-35B, which is the primary variant, has vertical takeoff and landing capability and can fly from some amphibious assault ships. The F-35C is designed for carrier-based launch and recovery using catapults and arresting cables.

The plan is to phase out the F/A-18 from its squadrons over a two-year timeline:

- Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort, S.C., by Aug. 1, 2028.
- Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., by Aug. 1, 2029.
- Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, by Aug. 1, 2030.

The administrative message says Marines with Military Occupational Specialties affected by

“No further promotion or retention opportunities will exist for the remaining F/A-18 maintenance population.”

Marine Corps memo

the change include F/A-18 mechanics and specialists on power plants, airframe and safety equipment. Positions for technicians on navigation/radar systems and electrical systems are also being eliminated.

Marines in those specialties are encouraged in the memo to retrain for similar roles on the F-35.

They can also retrain for other specialties or opt to leave the Marine Corps at the end of their current enlistment contract. Marines who do not make a choice to change specialties will be transferred.

“No further promotion or retention opportunities will exist for the remaining F/A-18 maintenance population,” the memo said.

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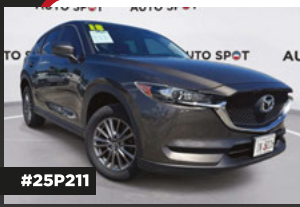
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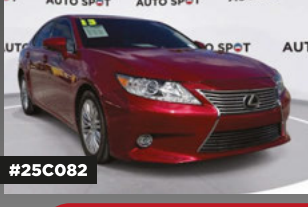
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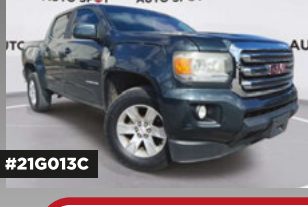
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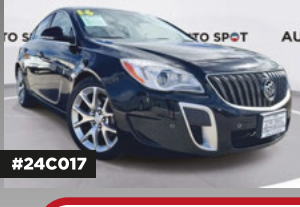
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