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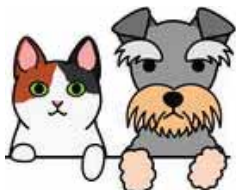
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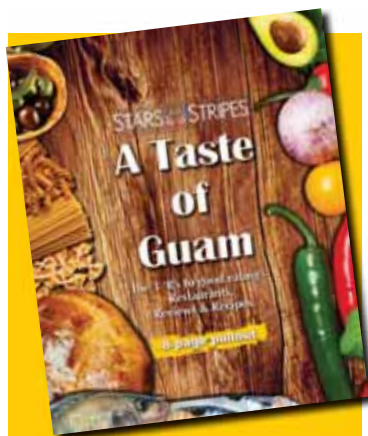
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GUAM LIBERATION DAY - JULY 21

Echoes of war remain



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MEET TEAM ANDERSEN

'Military was perfect fit for me'

BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS ANDRE' BASKER,
THE 36TH WING

Different people, different cultures and different atmospheres are what I appreciate the most about growing up as a military brat. Getting to experience such diversity as a child made me well rounded and educated about all walks of life. I saw everywhere, from Japan to Washington, to what I claim as home, Louisiana. My favorite part of the

experience was all of the different foods I got to try.



Basker

I come from a long line of military service in my family. My grandad served in WWII as an Army soldier, my father served 24 years in the Air Force as a Security Forces defender and my older brother is currently serving alongside me today in the Air Force.

From a very young age, I remember being so fascinated with the sounds, smells and sights that an air show brings. I went to every

air show at every base I've been to. You could say I'm a huge fan of aircraft and now I can name just about any plane in the sky.

Serving my country is always something I wanted to be a part of growing up. I was raised in a structured and well-rounded household. The military just seemed to be the perfect fit for me."

Airman 1st Class Andre' Basker, cable antenna maintenance technician assigned to the 36th Wing Communications Squadron, AAFB, Guam.

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Masters from Merizo

Spotlight on two hard-charging Guam Guardsmen

BY CAPT. MARK SCOTT,
GUAM NATIONAL GUARD

MERIZO — The southernmost village on the island of Guam, Merizo covers six square miles and contains about 1,800 people. But don't let the numbers fool you. Merizo has, pound for pound, one of the proudest legacies of military service anywhere.

Part of this legacy are Master Sgts. Joe Santiago and Andrew Barcinas, both active members of the Guam National Guard. For Father's Day, as they prepare for the Sergeants Major Academy, they talk about family values in rural Guam culture, and its connection to their success in the military.

■ What was the culture like growing up in Merizo?

AB: For us down south, its all about respect. We respect our elders, we're humble and we welcome everyone. Money is not an object as much as friendship and living life the simple way. We were very secluded, so we had to make do with what we had. Maybe once every school year we would go into town.

JS: Back then, it was yes ma'am or sir. Our elders would teach us once and expect us to learn, and it's the same way in the Army. Whether feeding the dogs and pigs, moving the carabao to the shade, cutting grass by hand. We were held accountable for our responsibilities.

■ How have these values helped in your military career?

JS: It's all about family. We come together



Brothers-in-law and Master Sgts. Joseph Santiago, left, and Andrew Barcinas, of the Guam National Guard. Photo courtesy of Guam National Guard

in the military like we do as family. Growing up we had no air conditioning and we used outhouses.

So on deployments, the so-called rough conditions just reminded me of back in the days. Also, our faith added discipline in our lives, so basic training was easy. My dad yelled much louder than the drill sergeants, so I had fun at basic!

AB: Being in the military, we respect the rank, and we treat others the way we want to be treated. It's not about me, it's not about you. It's about all of us, together.

■ How does it feel to be accepted into the Sergeants Major Academy?

AB: It's definitely a blessing to reach this milestone in my career. I had good mentors that pushed me to pass them, so I'm thankful for that. Thanks to all the SGMs and officers. Also, to my family, without their support none of this would be possible. To the Soldiers, everything we do is for you all. I'd like to say consider the opportunities that could lie ahead of you too.

JS: I'm also grateful to be here. In addition to my family, thank you to all our Soldiers and leaders along the way, including this command and State CSM Diaz and others for your mentorship. It's never been in my vocabulary to quit. We train, we fight, and we survive.



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NBG paves way as safe-haven liberty port

U.S. NAVAL BASE GUAM

SANTA RITA – U.S. Naval Base Guam has been designated a Safe Haven Liberty port for ships to safely pull in for potential logistical re-supply, possible repairs, and the rest and relaxation for Sailors and crewmembers amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

U.S. 7th Fleet flagship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) along with the USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) pulled into Guam for Safe Haven Liberty port visits in early June. The Nimitz Carrier Strike group, consisting of aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN 68), Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59), and Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyers USS Sterett (DDG 104) and USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114), pulled into Guam for a Safe Haven Liberty port visit June 24.

NBG has been recognized for the ability to support and maintain U.S. ships' COVID-free "bubble", while enhancing liberty opportunities for 7th Fleet ships

conducting COVID mitigations.

"NBG provided support to a critical and unique never before accomplished mission of remediating a national strategic asset, the Theodore Roosevelt, from a global pandemic," said NBG Commanding Officer Capt. Jeffrey Grimes, "and now we're going to continue to support the fleet and our warfighters by providing them a safe place whether it's operational or for their quality of life. Quality of life is integral to mission readiness."



Policies and procedures for COVID mitigations are strictly enforced, including social distancing, the use of masks, and gloves. Additionally, the interaction with personnel outside of the designated liberty areas is kept at a minimum, barring a few exceptions for key personnel.

For NBG Port Operations, it's business as usual but with the added emphasis on ship and crew safety.

"With NBG being designated as a safe haven liberty port, the added responsibility falls on us to ensure these ships

can one, maximize their limited space and time and two, ensure the ships and crew remain safe and healthy in order to continue on with the mission," said NBG Port Operations Planning Officer, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jared Klevens. "It is a new challenge, but like everything else we have encountered over the last few months, we adapt, overcome and move forward to the next challenge."

During port visits, Sailors have access to specific designated areas on the pier and a secured beach on base. The Safe Haven Liberty Port visit is designed to provide the necessary mental and physical relaxation that the crew needs in order to better perform their jobs and feel rejuvenated.

MWR Guam is one of the NBG entities currently supporting the pier liberty by enhancing quality of life, boosting crew morale, readiness, and effectiveness while mitigating the risk of contracting COVID-19.

"We are leading the charge in offering exclusive liberty options for sailors who have been underway for extended periods of time," said MWR Guam Director Julian Bogan. "Through community recreation programs (including) outdoor recreation, the marina, bowling, theatre, deployed forces support and food

and beverage options we are enabling the warfighter to be ready and resilient, boosting morale. We will continue to strive to think outside the box, be innovative in our programming, and ensure the warfighters enjoy a much-deserved break"

Navy Exchange Guam is also supporting the liberty calls and work with the individual ship's leadership to find out if there is anything specific the NEX can provide. "We are offering a variety of services from laundry and dry cleaning, to food, tent rentals, ship orders, and the Downrange program to sailors," said NEX Guam General Manager Lisa Ballejo.

The NEX Downrange Program, proved valuable in recent weeks, as thousands of remote orders were processed for Sailors of the Roosevelt. The Downrange Program is a service developed to provide NEX shopping for Sailors who are unable to physically visit the store.

"We have to be creative and think outside the box - if they can't come to us, we have to bring the services to them," Ballejo said. "A liberty call is so important to our sailors to recharge their batteries so they can be ready for the next mission. It is an honor to help support that mission."

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GUAM LIBER



Feb. 4, 1972 Shoichi Yokoi Photo by S. Sgt. Raymond Denis, Stars and Stripes

Yokoi returns to Japan

Tears and cheers for an old soldier

BY SGT. C.E. WITTER,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Feb. 4, 1972

TOKYO — Shoichi Yokoi, the former Japanese Imperial Army sergeant who hid out in the jungles of Guam for 28 years, jetted home Wednesday and received a hero's welcome—a welcome that outshone Emperor Hirohito's return from his world tour.

About 5,000 people crowded the observation decks at Tokyo International Airport Wednesday afternoon as the Japan Air Lines charter plane touched down bearing Yokoi and the remains of two other Japanese soldiers, Mikio Shichi and Satoru Nakahata.

The two soldiers had spent some time with Yokoi in the jungles of Guam before they died about eight years ago.

Yokoi, 56, was placed in the first class compartment of the special JAL flight from Guam, where he was captured Jan. 24 after spending half his life hiding from "the enemy," never wanting to surrender because it would have been a disgrace to do so.

He was attended by Dr. Yoshiuki Koyama of Tokyo's Daiichi Hospital, a nurse from Tokyo, and Kazushige Nakamura, director of the Repatriation Bureau.

First on board the aircraft after the doors opened in Tokyo were customs and immigration officials. Following them, 10 doctors filed through the doors to examine Yokoi.

Next on board were three officials to



Shoichi Yokoi

claim the remains of Yokoi's two companions. They came back out almost immediately bearing white boxes containing the remains. They passed by bereaved relatives who wept openly and bowed low in grief.

About 15 minutes after the plane had parked, it was time for Yokoi to emerge. He was visibly touched by the response as he stepped onto the stair-ramp. He had to be steadied by his doctor and nurse.

The crowd waved Japanese flags and chanted "Banzai! Banzai!" Yokoi waved back as tears streaked down his face.

At the bottom of the steps he set foot on Japanese soil for the first time in 31 years. He was first greeted by Japan's Health and Welfare Minister Noboru

Saito. The two chatted for a few minutes, Yokoi now standing on his own but not letting go of the minister's hand.

After the exchange of greetings the two turned towards the assembled press for pictures. Again Yokoi waved and this time he shouted "Banzai!" The crowd cheered louder.

EXCLUSIVE NEWS FROM:
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Two airport ground crewmen, who were also working the day the Emperor returned from his overseas tour, said the crowd was bigger and more boisterous on Wednesday than the day of the emperor's return.

Yokoi was placed in a wheelchair for the short trip from planeside to a waiting car. As he was pushed to the car he again received a loud ovation. The car took him to the airport hotel for a brief press conference.

During the conference Yokoi was asked his first impressions of Japan. "When I saw my motherland Nippon I could not help but cry. I am too full of emotions to express my happiness to be back in Japan," he said.

Yokoi also gave his reason why his

Editor's Note: Stars and Stripes has been
As Guam marks the 76th anniversary of its L
These stories of heroism and intrigue

As Guam moves on

BY HAL DRAKE,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: Aug. 10, 1980

In a lot of Pacific War histories, Guam is swept aside and banished as insignificant.

How soon they forget, many might say.

In Tokyo, soundtracks festooned with World War II colors still extol those lost in a gallant defeat. In America, elders like Louis H. Wilson Jr. and George Tweed would never forget.

Masashi Ito and Bunzo Minagawa spent young manhood in the tropical underside of an island that tourists now praise as a paradise. They were holdouts, soldiers who refused to surrender and would forage for survival for 16 years.

The last known Japanese survivor, Shoichi Yokoi, held out until 1972, captured by chance as he ventured out to empty a fish trap. Yokoi had never crept out of dense cover to hear the happy shouts of Japanese tourists and honeymooners. Nor had he walked the lobby of the Hilton or the Cliffside.

Luxury hotels swarm over the beachfront and jungle growth has covered the faint traces of war, and Guam gets only a passing nod as a battlefield beside Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Okinawa and Leyte. Thirty-six years ago, shellfire plowed across Guam. Some 18,500 Japanese were trying to pry loose the fingerhold that many more thousands of American soldiers and Marines had fastened on beaches and cliffsides.

Many of the Americans barely had a respite between battles, having first seized Saipan to pull the keystone of the Marianas archway. Guam was almost a point-of-honor afterthought. The island was an American possession until a handful of Marines, soldiers and Guamanian militia made a no-choice surrender only three days after Japanese bombers pounded Hawaii.

The III Amphibious Corps and the 77th Infantry Division are not going in blindfolded that July 21, 1944. Eleven days before the landing, as American warships savage Guam's coastal defenses, a tall figure sprints down a beach and plunges into the surf, swimming with desperate strength until he is within hailing distance of a destroyer.

George Tweed is pulled aboard and tells an astonishing story. He was one of the 288 men on the island as 5,000 Japanese surged ashore, ignoring the flea-bite firepower of a few .30 cal. machine

country lost the war: "Japan lost the Pacific war because it lacked arms, warships and planes and not because of any lack of fighting spirit."

He also repeated his desire to meet the emperor. Thoughts of Emperor Hirohito helped him to continue during his lonely years in the jungle, he told the press.

He also mentioned one of the possessions he brought back from Guam. "I brought back the rifle entrusted to me by the honorable emperor which I want to return. I want to report that I am sorry I did not serve his majesty to my satisfaction."

He said, as he did in Guam shortly after his capture, that he was glad he was going to Japan, but apologized for not dying for his country.

Following the conference Yokoi was whisked away to the Tokyo Daiichi Hospital where he will undergo more medical check-ups. A team of specialists will be assigned to him full time.

Yokoi seems to know what he wants to do as soon as he is able. He wants to write his memoirs.

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American colors are again raised at the o
Marine Lt. General Holland M. Smith, Ma
and Admiral Raymond Spruance, U.S. Na
be seen in background. The flag is on a ex

RATION DAY

...een bringing news about the troops and for the troops since World War II. ...liberation on July 21, we bring you two archive stories from the battle for Guam. ...que are only a snapshot of the island's history, heritage and resiliency.

n, remnants of WWII endure

...they overwhelmed the thin garrison and forced the Naval ...or, Capt. George J. McMillin, into quick submission. ...ed and five others slipped away, hunted by Japanese who ...the underbrush with bayonets. Only Tweed survived, liv- ...and crabs and coconuts, warily evading the patrols that ...very palm tree and banyan for him. Tweed saw his pur- ...r more often than they saw him, and his sketchpad mind ...en it all down — every gun emplacement, trenchline and ...l cave. The Japanese failure to capture or kill this ragged ...ill cost them dearly.

...ting naval gunfire singles out visible and concealed ...guns – all but a few. As the 3rd Marine Division and the ...ine Brigade board barges that cut paint-stroke wakes to- ...e western side of Guam, sharp flashes burst along the ...e. Barges turn over like crumpled buckets.

...never get it for free,” an older Marine mutters as the ...push ashore — the division between Adelup and Asan ...and the brigade wedging between Point Bangi and the ...town of Agat. Beachheads are “tightly fastened and ...the coastal guns erased.”

...There are already wolfish shouts from the jungle ...along the coastline. Fierce counterattacks tear into ...the Marine lines and one lunge rips through the bri- ...gade. It is contained after a desperate brawl with ...blades and even fists.

...Marines begin moving inland, slowly closing a gap be- ...vision and brigade as hey crush across Apra Harbor and ...eninsula, squeezing the defenders between them. But the ...se put no markdown price tags on anything, heaping fall- ...nses with Marine dead. As the two Marine forces grasp ...another enemy rush pours forth — the futile bravery of ...anese sailors who die in an inferno of shellfire.

...Louis H. Wilson Jr. is a company commander in the ...talion, 9th Marines. He thrusts ahead of the others to ...h and important ground, holding it against human-ava- ...counterattacks.

...Medal of Honor citation will stiffly relate that Wilson ...outed essentially” to the success of the assault, passing ...e fact that he was wounded three times and fought aside ...d delirium to rally his Marines.

...ers of the 77th, fed slowly into the advance, must do the



Photo courtesy of USMC

...deadly, mop-and-dustpan work in southern Guam as the Marine ...advance lunges on. The suicidally-determined Japanese will tear ...tiny leaks and large gaps in the line, and the effort to repulse ...them will often get down to hand-to-hand piecework.

...The advance will spider all over the island, with Guam de- ...clared secure as Marines reach the northernmost tip on Ritidian ...Point. Everything is back under American colors by Aug. 10.

...The past will be wiped away over the years. Wreckage will be ...swept aside. Foundations for posh hotels will be sunk along ...the beachfront. Andersen AFB and Agana NAS will assure ...a stronger military presence than those unfortunate few of ...late 1941.

...Strangers will be strafed by stiff expense but nothing ...else.

...Tweed will write a book, “Robinson Crusoe, USN.”

...Wilson will become Marine Corps Commandant.

...Battle histories will little note nor long remember ...Guam.

...But Wilson, Tweed, many Americans and a ...few Japanese, will always share a thin fund of ...private memories.



Old Marine Barracks on Guam during the ceremonies July 29, 1944 at 1500 o'clock. Present were Major General Roy S. Geiger, CG of the 3rd Phib Corps. Brigadier General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. Navy Brigadier General Shepherd is CG, First Provisional Marine Brigade, Ruins of the barracks can be seen in the background. Attention atop a telephone pole. Photo courtesy of Marine Corps

CELEBRATING

75 YEARS

Revisit the past through the writing and photos of Stars and Stripes reporters over the past 75 years at:

75.stripes.com

Guam's best self-drive destinations

GUAM VISITORS BUREAU

When it comes to travel, if you feel that the journey is just as important as the destination, then Guam is the perfect destination for you. Named "Best Overseas Self-Driving Tour Destination" by Ctrip, China's leading online travel agency, Guam was selected for its stunning coastal routes and serene driving experience.

Being on your own gives you the freedom to explore the island at your own pace, the flexibility to visit the areas and sites that interest you, and a drive that takes you away from busy urban villages to wide coastal lanes that cut through shifting, breezy landscapes.

Ready to hit the open road? It's hard to choose a favorite but here are some sites around the island that you shouldn't miss.

Plaza de España

Plaza de España served as the center of cultural, religious, and government activities for centuries. In the 1660s, the Spanish colonial government chose this site as the



Plaza Principal. Historic sites here include the Azotea, the last remaining structural element of the Governor's Palace; the Almacen Arches, Guam's

signature triple arches that were once the entrance of the royal warehouse built in 1736; and the Chocolate House, the small round building that was

used by both the Spanish and American administrations to host meriendas where beverages and pastries were served. While you're in Hagåtña, take

some time to explore the Heritage Walking Trail that connects 17 historical sites and brings to life the resilient and fascinating history of the Chamorro people.

Cetti Bay Overlook and Fort Nuestra Señora de la Soledad

The village of Umatac is located on the southwestern coast of the island and is home to some of Guam's most visited scenic and historical sites including the Cetti Bay overlook and Fort Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, or Fort Soledad. "Umatac" is derived from the Chamorro word "uma," which means to carry something on the back or a heavy load on the shoulders. Umatac is the smallest and the second oldest Guam village, and Umatac Bay is believed to be the site where explorer Ferdinand Magellan made first contact with Guam on March 6, 1521. There are a number of historical sites to see in Umatac and many of them can be explored by walking along the quiet streets of the village. ↗



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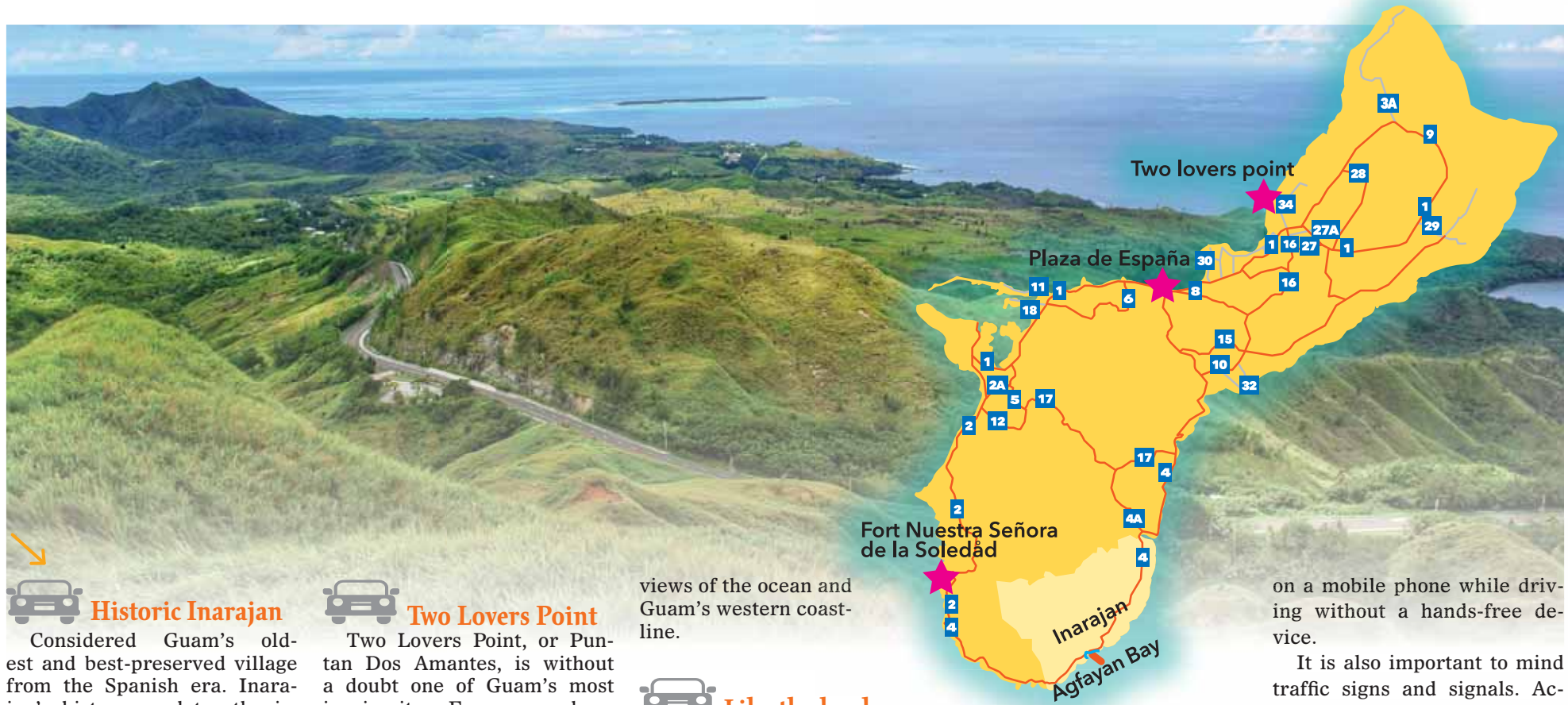
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 **Historic Inarajan**

Considered Guam’s oldest and best-preserved village from the Spanish era. Inarajan’s history predates the island’s discovery by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, and has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1977. There are 17 National Register of Historic sites in Inarajan, and many can be explored on foot. As you further along the coast, look out for the “Bear Rock” sitting on the edge of Agfayan Bay and stop to take a dip in Salaglula Pool, a set of natural seawater pools that is a popular spot for swimming and relaxing.

 **Two Lovers Point**

Two Lovers Point, or Puntan Dos Amantes, is without a doubt one of Guam’s most iconic sites. Every year, hundreds of thousands of visitors are drawn to the towering cliff that is the site of one of Guam’s most renowned and romantic legends. The site features tiered lookout points that offer a dramatic view of the Philippine Sea and breathtaking Tumon Bay. From the top, it is a 400-foot drop to the crashing waves below. Visitors can walk the plunging face of the cliff on walkways that hug and hang over the jagged rock. There are also telescopes for long range

views of the ocean and Guam’s western coastline.

 **Like the landscapes, renting a car in Guam is a breeze**

Requirements may vary between car rental companies but basic requirements include a driver’s license in the visitor’s home country and a passport. An international driving permit is not required. Some car rental companies have a minimum age to rent a car such as 21 years or older, and might also require a deposit and credit card.

 **Slow down and go with the flow**

We want you to have an unforgettable – and safe – holiday in Guam. To get the most out of your around-the-island road trip, plan your route ahead of time and remember that driving is on the right-hand side of the road. Seat belts are required by law and it is against the law in Guam to talk or text

on a mobile phone while driving without a hands-free device.

It is also important to mind traffic signs and signals. According to Richard Kuntz from Blake’s Car Rental Guam, one of the most common mistakes is obeying the traffic lines and signs. “Be careful and please obey the traffic laws. Enjoy your time on Guam and get lost in the beauty and splendor of Guam. Go see all the sites around Guam. I have seen too many times a family will come to Guam, stay four days and not even go around the island one time. It’s so sad,” said Kuntz.

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Why having a pet helps with anxiety

BY ELIZABETH JONES,
STRIPES GUAM

Anxiety is something that I've struggled with for as long as I can remember. For anyone who battles with anxiety, unfortunately, you know the feeling of drowning in self-doubt, constant worry, and panic attacks. For me, it started at a young age and over the years I had to find ways to manage my anxiety before I let it take control of my life.

Although every person is different, I do believe having a pet is one of the best ways to calm the waves of anxiety from flooding throughout every aspect of life. I personally own two dogs, however, cats are great anxiety relievers too! Sure, pets can't offer advice and they don't know what exactly we're anxious about, but they still do wonders to help put us at ease. Here are four reasons why having a pet helps control anxiety:

● **Block chaos**

Anxiety develops a simple thought or feeling into a huge pit of anxiousness. During those times, I feel the need to ponder over what is or could go wrong. Instead, I force myself to get up by reminding myself that no matter what is going on in my world, my dogs need to be taken care of. Caring for a pet is a lot of work, but it's almost always enjoyable. Taking long walks in the early morning as the sun is rising, showing love and affection with lots of cuddles, teaching new tricks and playing with toys can pull us away from the real world.

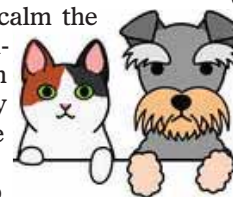
● **We aren't alone**

When I felt like nobody was on my side, I would come home, lie on my bed and wonder when the feeling of loneliness would seize. A few moments later, my dogs pounce on me, licking my face, and sometimes my tears. They nuzzle their way into my arms letting me know that they will always be there. Our four-legged loved ones will never let us feel alone because to them, we are their world.

They would be silly to let us think that they don't want to be a part of our world too.

● **No room for judgment**

Some people use the words "dramatic" or "weird" to describe those struggling with anxiety. Some think it's something that can easily be turned off and on. While I wish that were the case, it isn't. Unlike some humans, pets will never judge the level of anxiety and fear we are experiencing. Even if we don't want to, anxiety can lead us to be overemotional, unmotivated, antisocial and rant about our long list of worries. When that happens, dogs and cats are there for us by simply being present with zero room for judgment.



● **Make you feel loved**

Anxiety can push us into crippling self-doubt. It can cause us to compare ourselves to others and start questioning our self-worth. There are many people in my life that have reassured me and picked me up when I have felt low. However, my two precious pups never fail to make me feel loved every single day.

It begins with the sloppy, morning kisses to wake me up. Then, they follow me around everywhere I go – to the kitchen when I make breakfast, to my closet as I get ready for work, on the couch when I drink my coffee and sometimes they'll sneak in while I'm trying to use the bathroom. I feel loved when I come home from work and they're already at the door wagging their tails. They cuddle next to me or lay by my feet while I'm watching Netflix. Then, they follow me up to my bedroom to go to sleep. Constant, loyal companions that do the smallest of things to make me feel so incredibly loved.

Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to battling anxiety but luckily there are many solutions to help reduce its presence in our lives. I can always count on my dogs to love me unconditionally and brighten my day no matter what anxiety throws my way.



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Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



July 11 *Medium*
Mt. Tenjo to Maguagua *3 hours for 2 miles*
Mt. Tenjo to Tarzan Falls *Difficult*
5 hours for 4 miles

We hike to see some US foxholes from WWII, the WWI gun positions and their command post, optionally walking the knife edge trail. We exit by either the medium Maguagua Falls trail or the difficult Tarzan Falls route.
Bring: 3 to 4 quarts of water, hiking shoes, gloves, sunscreen, insect repellent, lunch, snacks, and camera.
Special conditions: sword grass, steep rocky or muddy slopes, and long distances for the Tarzan Falls option.



July 18 *Medium*
Tinta, Faha, and Priest's Pools *3 hours for 1 mile*

We hike to the two Memorials in Merizo where village residents were massacred just before the Liberation of Guam. We then walk along a narrow ridge with spectacular views to cool off in the freshwater pools of the Pigua River, with waterfalls, jumping, and swimming.
Bring: 2 quarts water, get wet shoes, gloves, swim suit, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch, and camera.
Special condition: possible muddy trail, mosquitoes.

Stomp Tips:

- 1) Alcohol and hiking do not mix.
- 2) Do not bring beverages with caffeine on hikes.
- 3) Bring plenty of water with you on hikes.
- 4) When hiking, lots of little snacks are better than one big meal.
- 5) Always carry a well stocked personal first aid kit.
- 6) Carry a couple of extra shoelaces in your first aid kit. They have many uses.
- 7) Always bring a small flashlight in case you get lost, or delayed. Save your phone battery for calls.
- 8) Do not hike alone and let someone know where you are going and your return time.

Complete 10 Boonie Stomps to earn a Boonie Stomp T-Shirt!

Tinta, Faha, Priest's Pools

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



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Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Whale groups
- 5 They may be loaded
- 9 Razor sharpener
- 14 Grand tale
- 15 Corner pieces
- 16 TV teaser
- 17 Disney's Willie
- 19 Varnish ingredient
- 20 Horse handler
- 21 Nearly wipe out
- 23 Picked up the tab
- 25 For that reason
- 26 Wheelchair-friendly
- 30 Indian dignitary
- 34 Carpentry tool
- 35 Web address punctuation
- 37 Napkin's place
- 38 Fizzled firecracker
- 39 Champion, as a cause
- 41 Little devil
- 42 Suffix with legal
- 43 Home addition?
- 44 Record company
- 46 "Nebraska" actor Bruce
- 48 Kirk's ship
- 50 Big galoots
- 52 Motel offering
- 53 Scottish castle
- 57 Shelled slow-mover
- 61 First sign of spring
- 62 Two-sided
- 64 Path to the altar
- 65 Unwanted look
- 66 Virus in 2003 news
- 67 Mythical goat-man
- 68 Nervous
- 69 Sitter's charge

DOWN

- 1 Coin in Cancún
- 2 Chooses, with "for"
- 3 South Beach, for one
- 4 Surgeon's blade
- 5 Remains of a wreck
- 6 U.N. workers' grp.
- 7 Outfitted
- 8 Big name in beauty products
- 9 Bit of parsley
- 10 Shake
- 11 Santa ____, Calif.
- 12 Skip over
- 13 Southern side?
- 18 Childhood illness
- 22 Mustard family plant
- 24 Non-essential
- 26 Stated further
- 27 Small jar
- 28 Autumn drink
- 29 Swell up
- 31 Suspect's out
- 32 Bond-Bond link?
- 33 Eden fruit

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

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Answers to Previous Crossword:

R	O	S	A	O	T	T	E	R	S	L	A	W	
O	P	U	S	P	R	O	S	E	A	O	N	E	
D	E	B	T	P	E	R	P	E	T	R	A	T	E
E	N	T	H	R	O	N	E	F	R	A	M	E	D
E	M	E	N	D	P	E	E	N					
P	A	R	A	D	E	P	A	R	A	D	I	S	E
E	L	F	O	N	S	E	T	T	O	N	N	E	
S	L	U	R	T	H	E	I	R	N	E	A	R	
C	A	G	E	D	A	V	O	I	D	V	I	I	
I	N	E	D	I	B	L	E	V	I	R	I	L	E
			O	V	A	L	B	E	S	E	T		
O	M	E	L	E	T	M	O	T	H	B	A	L	L
R	E	P	E	R	T	O	I	R	E	O	B	E	Y
E	R	I	N	E	N	T	E	R	O	L	A	F	
S	E	C	T	N	E	E	D	S	T	E	N	T	



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Stripes Sports Trivia

On July 4, 1939, this Major League Baseball player was the first to have his number retired. It was also on the same day as he announced his retirement from The Yankees. Who is the Iron Horse?

Answer
Lou Gehrig

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answers to Previous Sudoku:

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

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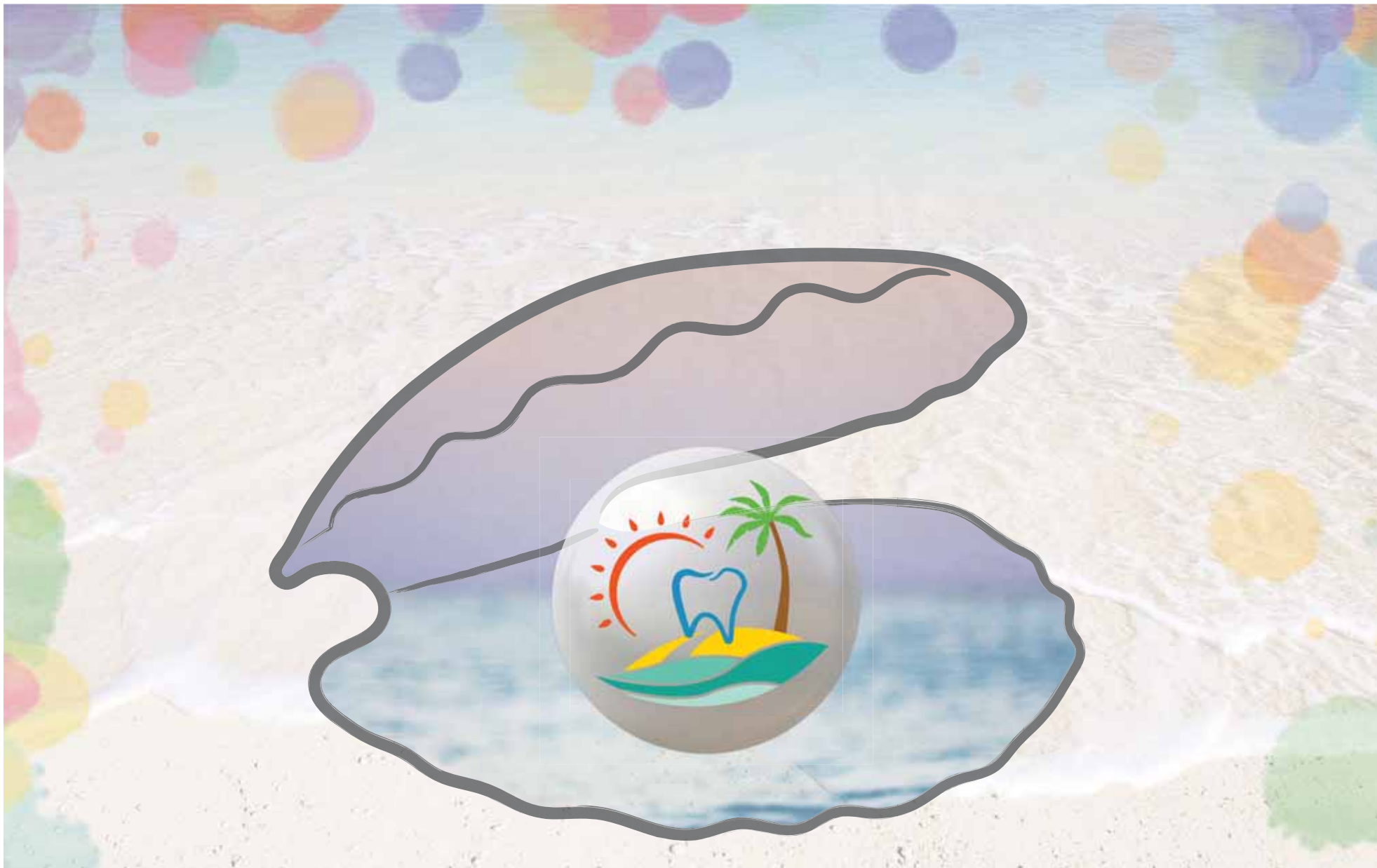
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4-page pullout

BBQ TIME!

BBQ'D BEEF SHORT RIBS - GUAM STYLE



One of our favorite BBQ eats on Guam are the BBQ'd Beef Short Ribs. These are actually crosscut beef ribs about 1/4 to 1/2 inch thick. They are very tender and meaty. They do not take long to marinade. Here is a photo of the ribs on the BBQ. Here is the marinade:

Ingredients:

- 1 cup of Kikkoman Soy Sauce
- 1 cup of Apple Cider Vinegar
- 1/2 to 1 onion sliced very thin
- 6 cloves of garlic minced
- black pepper to taste
- Beef short ribs depending on the number of persons 1/2 lb per person generally.

Directions:

1. Mix the ingredients either by hand or in a blender.
2. Pour the marinade over your ribs in a container and coat ribs well. (the amount of marinade depends on the amount of ribs)
3. Place the covered container in the refer for at least 2 hours. If you don't have a refer, any cooler will do.
4. BBQ or grill as some say, mopping the marinade on the ribs to keep them moist.

Because these ribs are thin, they will not take long to cook. These are juicy and delicious right off the grill. Enjoy and let me know what you thought of them.
- BBQ GUAM

BBQ GUAM <http://bbqguam.blogspot.com>



SMOKED BONE-IN PORK LOIN ROAST

My good friend Chad Miller from the Barbecue Bible Forum Board turned me on to this great rub. He calls it Bonedust. I wrote a post about it here <http://bbqguam.blogspot.com/2011/06/two-new-dry-rubs-to-try.html>.

Well I had to try out this rub out on something, so my victim was a bone-in pork loin roast.

I had a hard time buying a decent piece at the grocery store but I was able to come up with this roast.



Notice the marbled fat in just the right places.

Because I was going to be cooking it for about 8 hours, I brined the roast in my usual brine. That consists of 1 1/2 cups of Kosher salt, 2 cups of brown sugar to about one gallon of water.

It was just enough to cover the entire roast in the pot I used. This was brined in the refer overnight.

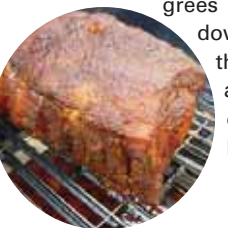
When it came to smoking time, I rubbed olive oil over the roast and then applied the Bonedust rub very liberally. I let this sit out for a spell to come closer to room temp before smoking. This gave me enough time

to set up my fire. Here are a couple of photos of the loin all oiled and rubbed down.



Here is a photo of my fire setup.

This photo shows my lump charcoal on both sides with my drip pan in the middle filled with apple juice and a little Bonedust rub added. Of course this is an indirect heat setup. For those of you that may not know, indirect heat is when you do not smoke or grill directly over your fuel.



I decided to cook this nice and slow for about 8 hours. The plan was the 1st four hours around 150 degrees F and the final four hours at about 250 degrees F. I find this style gets that heat down to the middle of the loin and the finale gets the outside nice and crusty. That's my style. Everyone has a different one.

Photo 4 hours into the smoking. During this entire time, I would

check on the fire to see if it needed more charcoal, wood chucks and chips (apple-wood). I would also spray the loin down with apple juice at the same time. After 8 hours I came up with this. And of course we ate this.



I eventually smothered this with my Salsa Ranchero salsa <http://bbqguam.blogspot.com/2011/06/salsa-ranchero-the-perfect-compliment-to.html>.

My wife thoroughly enjoyed this meal. She was making noises that I wouldn't know how to describe here. She told me that she had never eaten a pork loin like this before. I must admit the Bonedust rub was awesome, the meat was super tender, but not falling apart, juicy and the outside (bark) crusty. The brining really helps maintain the moisture.

I will definitely be doing this again.

- BBQ GUAM

Annie's Chamorro Kitchen <http://www.annieschamorrokitchen.com>

CHICKEN THIGHS WITH HONEY MUSTARD GARLIC WINE SAUCE

Serves: 5-8

Ingredients

- 1 pkg (10 pieces thighs with skin and bone)
- Salt
- Black pepper
- 4 tablespoons vegetable oil

SAUCE:

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/2 cup stone ground mustard
- 1 cup white wine
- 6 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary

- 1/4 tsp paprika
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

Instructions

1. Mix all the sauce ingredients together then set aside.
2. Heat 4 Tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium high heat. (Note: don't overcrowd the chicken; use two pans if needed.) Cook the chicken skin side down for 12 minutes (do not turn it while cooking; you want the skin to brown and crisp). Season the other side of the chicken thighs with salt and

black pepper.

3. After 12 mins, flip the chicken over (they may all fit in one pan now). Cook for 2 mins over medium high heat then pour in the sauce.
4. Turn heat down to medium. Simmer for 10 minutes or until the sauce has reduced, the alcohol has cooked out, and the thighs are done.
5. Spoon sauce all over the chicken. Serve with rice or potatoes, and/or steamed vegetables.

- Annie's Chamorro Kitchen



File photos

Quaff an ice-cold taste of island life

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES GUAM

There's few things more refreshing than sipping a cold one on a sandy beach or while watching the sun set from your backyard or balcony. And this tropical paradise we call Guam offers a wide variety of beer to help you soak in the island atmosphere, including craft beers from a local microbrewery and a brewpub. And if beer isn't your drink of choice, try sipping on a traditional Chamorro coconut wine or a locally distilled mango liquor. Whatever your choice, these beverages offer an indispensable taste of Guam.

Authentic tastes

"Locals drink light lager beer, such as Budweiser or Miller as a substitute for water," said Toshiyuki Ishii, owner of Ishii Brewing Company. "Corona, Heineken, Kirin, Asahi and other popular imported lager beers are virtually available anywhere in this island."

But Ishii's microbrewery, as well as the Mermaid Tavern & Grille brewpub, offer locals and tourists a chance to enjoy authentic tastes of craft beer.

"These local beers complement our tropical weather on Guam," says Matthew Sgro, of the Guam Economic Development Authority. "While the malt and darker beers are more adequate for cooler weather, these beers provide a refreshing taste that can be enjoyed on the beaches or at various fiestas throughout the island."

Ishii is a renowned Japanese brewer who had developed his own ale at a microbrewery in Japan. Although his brewery was very successful, he was determined to become independent and moved to Guam nine years ago after producing various collaborations with breweries in the U.K, Czech and Norway.

"There were no microbreweries on Guam when I moved out here," Ishii said, adding that San Miguel Beer closed its Guam brewery 39 years ago. "I feel it gave me the chance to be a pioneer in micro brewing on this island."

The first thing he did, was name his brand of beer Minagof, a Chamorro word meaning "happiness, pleasure and cheer."

More than 99 percent of beer on the island is lager, produced by major breweries overseas. "So, I was determined to brew only ale with selected barley and wheat malts, hops and yeasts," Ishii said.

Ishii brews several flavored craft beers, including American-style Pale Ale, American-style India Pale Ale, American-style Pale Wheat Ale, Oatmeal Stout, Smoked Porter and Green Tea India Pale Ale.

Mermaid Tavern and Grille near Chamorro Village is also known for its tasty craft beers. The brewpub is currently offering Oatmeal Stout, Vanilla Porter, India Pale Ale, Cascadian IPA, Sirena Pale Ale, Irish Red Ale and Classic American Pilsen Ale.

"Mermaid's Tavern and Grille is a great place to go," said Josh Tyquiengco, information officer of Guam Visitors Bureau. "They have a beer sampler that allows people to try their homemade brews. Their food is also very good."

Brewers paradise Distilled spirits

Ishii considers Guam a great place for micro brewing.

"Water on Guam contains a lot of minerals, such as calcium and magnesium, that are suitable for brewing ales," Ishii said. "Neither consumption nor liquor tax are posed on spirits, and thousands of U.S.

service members are located here and many of them are craft beer fans. These are all great assets in terms of brewing craft beer."

The most notable asset, however, is Guam's tropical climate, according to Ishii.

"Guam is always hot and that is the best environment for drinking beer," Ishii said. "Some Locals drink beer seven days a week throughout the year." Ishii said that in Japan, he felt that a lot more people drank beer in the summer and sales dropped significantly in the winter.

"The warm climate doesn't necessarily assist in the brewing, but it sure helps work up the craving to drink a nice cold beer," says India Sekiguchi of The Island King Imports, a distributor which imports beer and alcohol to Guam.

According to Ishii, one of the reasons craft beers are popular is because they can be paired with various foods depending on the type of flavors, just like wine. Craft beer varies according to its raw ingredients and ways of fermentation, and each beer has a unique aroma, flavor and taste.

"So, certain craft beers can be paired with certain courses, such as hors d'oeuvre, main dish, desert, meat or fish," Ishii said.

It's not all about beer on the island, and Guam's Own Distillery ensures the taste of Guam is bottled up in every case of its alcohol.

"The process from raw alcohol to distillation to bottling is done by hand here on Guam," says Valentino Perez, co-owner of Guam's Own, which opened in 2009. "Our Chamorro heritage and history of distilling, as well as our dedication to only use the premium alcohol, makes us special."

In fact, both of Perez and his business partner have a family history of distilling, going back decades. "The business seemed a natural progression of that family history," he said.

Perez says it's been a lot of trial and error in perfecting the distillation process, especially in fermenting carbohydrates and sugar to create a mash. If the distillation using the mash isn't right, you could end up with a product that's rough going down, he said.

"The most important item is the expertise of the distiller," Perez said. "We only bottle premium alcohol. Being able to know how to pull out the premium alcohol and leave the lower quality alcohol behind is difficult. Perfecting that art is time-consuming and expensive. For our product, it is still an artisan's trade."

According to Perez, whose distillery produces vodka, mango vodka, whiskey, rum and a local moonshine that dates back to colonial Spanish times on Guam, he started very small and has not changed.

"We have contemplated adding lines but our market is a niche market," he said. "It is very hard to be competitive with off-island brands."

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Courtesy Photo



Photo courtesy of Guam's Own



Minagof Photos courtesy of Ishii Brewing Company



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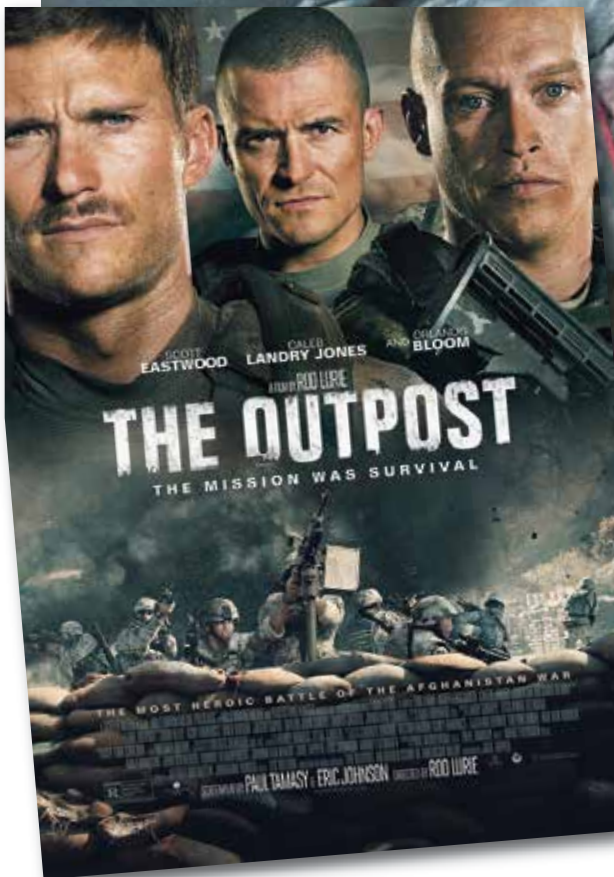
Volume 7, No. 11 ©SS 2020

GUAM EDITION

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020

'The Outpost'

Film brings
Battle of Kamdesh
to big screen **Page 2**



Scott Eastwood portrays Medal of Honor recipient Clint Romesha in "The Outpost".

SIMON VARSANO/Screen Media

COVER STORY

Movie recounts 2009 attack of Afghanistan post

By ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

AUSTIN, Texas — Movie audiences can experience one of America's most decorated battles of the ongoing war in Afghanistan as "The Outpost," a veteran-directed film on the 2009 Battle of Kamdesh, hit theaters and on-demand streaming services July 3.

The battle occurred Oct. 3, 2009, when more than 300 Taliban fighters attacked Combat Outpost Keating, in a remote valley outside of Kamdesh. Outnumbered, about 50 soldiers from Bravo Troop, 3rd Squadron, 61st Cavalry Regiment, fought for 12 hours as the enemy breached the walls of the outpost until reinforcements arrived. In the end, eight soldiers died and 27 were injured.

There were feats of heroism as well. Then-Spc. Ty Carter and Staff Sgt. Clint Romesha received the Medal of Honor and nine others were awarded the Silver Star. Nearly two dozen more received the Bronze Star and 27 received Purple Heart medals.

"This battle was won as a result of very strong leadership on the ground and very strong character embedded into these men," said Rod Lurie, director of "The Outpost," and 1984 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. "The leadership at the ground level, in the captains and below, was absolutely extraordinary."

Lurie, who directed "The Last Castle" and "Straw Dogs," said he is energized by movies of leadership, character and principle, and was immediately drawn to that element of the battle.

"In this particular battle, their only mission was to survive. The mission of the base eventually became just stay alive. That is how it ended," he said. "Eight men died in this battle, but 46 survived and it was due to the leadership, but also the fact that every man died trying to save another man."

"We learn much more about ourselves by what we are willing to die for as opposed to what we are willing to kill for. That is a lesson that I really learned as I was making this film," he said.

To recreate the terrain of COP Keating — in a lush, jungle-like valley surrounded by steep mountains near the Pakistan border — Lurie found a quarry in Bulgaria where he rebuilt the base. Veterans of the battle helped bring their experiences to life, including Carter, who left the Army as a staff sergeant in

The fallen

Eight men died in the Battle of Kamdesh. These are their ranks at the time of the battle; several were posthumously promoted.

- Sgt. Justin Timothy Gallegos
- Spc. Christopher Todd Griffin
- Sgt. Joshua Mitchell Hardt
- Sgt. Joshua John Kirk
- Spc. Stephan Lee Mace
- Sgt. Vernon William Martin
- Spc. Michael Patrick Scusa
- Pfc. Kevin Christopher Thomson

2014.

"It did bring back a lot of memories. There was an off-putting eerie feeling," Carter said of the set. He served as a military adviser and co-producer. "A couple times I got emotional just watching or seeing the replay on the screen."

Though Carter has a small acting role in the film, his actions in battle are portrayed on screen by actor Caleb Landry Jones. Romesha, fellow Medal of Honor recipient, is portrayed by Scott Eastwood.

In a way, Carter said seeing the filming was a form of therapy. "You watch somebody else do it over and over again, it removes the anxiety," he said.

Fellow veterans of COP Keating Stoney Portis, Christopher Cordova, Daniel Rodriguez and Henry Hughes also spent time on set, Lurie said. Hughes was a co-producer and actor in the film, portraying Brad Larson. Rodriguez portrays himself in the movie. During the battle he was in the mortar pit when Pfc. Kevin Thomson died — the first of eight deaths.

"He had to recreate the death of his best friend for us to watch," Lurie said.

There is no shying from death — or its impact on survivors — to recreate such a bloody battle. That challenge nearly caused Lurie to walk away from the project after his 27-year-old son, Hunter Lurie, died suddenly of a blood clot in 2018. The movie is dedicated to him in the closing credits.

"I didn't know if I would be able to make the film," he said, noting the closeness in age of his son and the men who died at COP Keating. Most of them have surviving family members who continue to grieve the loss. "What I did know is how to film their deaths because if somebody were to make a movie about the death of my son, I wouldn't want to have sweet music. I wouldn't want to have it glamorized. I would just want the world to see exactly how he died with the



PHOTOS BY SIMON VARSANO/Screen Media

Above: Rod Lurie, an Army veteran, directs Caleb Landry Jones during filming of "The Outpost." Below: Landry Jones portrays Medal of Honor recipient Ty Carter in the film.



precise fanfare in which he died, because that would be the most respectful thing."

With the encouragement of his daughter, Lurie said he was able to return to the movie.

"The deaths in the middle of battle are matter of fact, because you can't stop and sort of memorialize the moment of somebody's death. You have to move on," Lurie said. "They are killed with the indifference of war in our film."

The movie does take liberty with the way it portrays previous commanders of the outpost, 1st Lt. Ben Keating and Capt. Robert Yllescas. Keating died while serving at the base in 2006 and it was later named in his honor. He is played by Orlando Bloom in the movie.

Yllescas died there in 2008 and is portrayed by Milo Gibson. Their stories are the first half of the movie and help build the narrative of the poor placement of the outpost and how closely the enemy observed the base.

"It was one of the great follies of the military that these outposts were ever created," Lurie said. Created for counter-insurgency to stem the flow of weapons from Pakistan, it was "a death trap."

"This outpost was placed in a really godforsaken place," he said.

In the months that followed the Battle of Kamdesh, two Army officers were disciplined for "inadequate planning" in setting up the base and reacting to reports of planned attacks.

CNN anchor Jake Tapper wrote a book about the COP Keating titled, "The Outpost: An Untold Story of American Valor," published in 2012, which spanned the history of the base. He helped transform the 500-page book into a script that included Keating and Yllescas and fit into a 123-minute film.

"Putting them into this narrative required playing with time and taking liberties with the fact that [they] did not serve with

guys from 3-61," said Tapper, who discussed the rewriting in real time with veterans and families through a private Facebook group. "In this case, the desire was to honor [Keating and Yllescas] and illustrate how dangerous it was at COP Keating."

Tapper noted there were other soldiers who died at the base over the years it existed, but he was just not able to write them into the script. "It's sad that they're not," Tapper said. "There's no right decision."

Families previewed the film in late 2019 with the expectation it would premiere at the South by Southwest Film Festival in March. However, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the festival was canceled.

"The Outpost" was released July 3 in select theaters, but also is available for purchase at home through most on-demand streaming services, only in the United States.

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MILITARY

Officials mark 70 years since Battle of Osan

BY MATTHEW KEELER
AND KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

OSAN, South Korea — It was raining 70 years ago when American soldiers engaged in their first ground battle against North Korean forces, just over a week after the Korean War began.

That meant the Air Force couldn't provide cover as the 540 members of Task Force Smith fought more than 5,000 North Koreans armed with Soviet-made tanks.

More than 150 Americans were killed or went missing in the fighting on July 5, 1950, known as the Battle of Osan. But the unit accomplished its mission to help delay the North Korean advance while U.S. reinforcements arrived on the divided peninsula.

U.S. and South Korean officials gathered July 5 in Osan, about 30 miles south of Seoul, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the battle, saying it also marked the beginning of the longstanding alliance between the two countries.

"Task Force Smith's actions signaled that the free world would not stand by idly and watch communist aggression towards the Republic of Korea," Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of U.S. Forces Korea, said during the ceremony, using the formal name for South Korea.

"Their actions inspired nations from around the world, and the [South Korean]-U.S. alliance emerged from the embers of war," he added.

Osan city also inaugurated the Jukmiryeong Peace Park and an

Read about the 70th anniversary of the Korean War at [stripes.com/korea70](https://www.stripes.com/korea70)

expanded museum in memory of the battle, with dancers and a flyover by the Black Eagles, a South Korean military aerobatic team.

Surviving American veterans from Task Force Smith have appeared at past commemorations, but travel and attendance this year was limited by the coronavirus pandemic. Everybody at the ceremony wore face masks.

Abrams paid homage to retired Maj. Gen. Yoon Seung-kook, who as a young captain was the only South Korean assigned to the unit. USFK also recently renamed an access gate at Camp Humphreys in honor of the 95-year-old Yoon.

The U.S. came to the aid of South Korea shortly after the war began on June 25, 1950, but it initially relied mainly on air and naval support.

The Korean War saw many deadlier battles, but Osan was significant because it marked the start of broader international engagement.

"It showed this is no longer just a Korean conflict. Now you've got American forces with, as the saying goes, with skin in the game," said Cord Scott, an Osan-based history professor with the University of Maryland Global Campus. "It exemplifies the expansion of the war under the U.N. guise."

Task Force Smith was a hastily assembled and understrength battalion sent from the 24th Infantry Division in U.S.-occupied



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

Retired South Korean general Yoon Seung-kook, who served with U.S. troops in Task Force Smith during the Korean War, is greeted by Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of U.S. Force Korea and United Nations Command, during a service at Osan Jukmiryeong Peace Park in Osan, South Korea, on July 5.

Japan after the United Nations Security Council authorized military action by member states.

The outnumbered soldiers were ill-prepared against the better-equipped North Koreans but held the ground for more than six hours before commander Lt. Col. Charles Smith ordered a retreat.

"Because it's raining, the U.S. can't provide air cover and if you don't have air cover, especially back in the 1940s and 50s, you really can't take on a tank with a recoilless gun or an artillery piece," he said.

In all, 22 nations contributed combat forces or medical support under U.N. auspices to the fight against the North Koreans, who were later joined by Chinese forces.

The U.S. maintains at least 28,500 service members in South Korea after the war ended on July 27, 1953, with an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

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People release paper boats, made by children, into a pond as a proclamation of peace during a Korean War memorial service July 5.

US general shows off Global Hawk as Japan prepares for their own

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The top U.S. general in Japan showed off an RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drone to one of his Japanese counterparts last week as the country prepares to field its own fleet of the unmanned aircraft.

U.S. Forces Japan and 5th Air Force commander Lt. Gen. Kevin Schneider, Air Defense Command chief Lt. Gen. Shunji Izutsu and about 20 U.S. and Japanese military leaders visited a detachment from the 319th Operations Group that operates the drones at Yokota, according to an Air Force statement released after the visit.

The Global Hawks support U.S. intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance

missions for joint combatant forces in peacetime, contingency and crisis operations, the statement said.

Japan's Defense Ministry, in its 2020 budget request, revealed that it planned to create a unit of Global Hawks, which are expected to deploy to Misawa Air Base by March 2022.

Guam-based Global Hawks have operated out of U.S. bases in Japan during typhoon season each year since 2014. This summer, several of the high-tech drones are flying out of Yokota.

The generals' visit was intended to familiarize the Japanese with how the Air Force conducts Global Hawk air and ground operations, the statement said.

"The United States continues to forward position some of its most advanced capabilities as a part of our commitment

to the defense of Japan and to the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region," Schneider said in the statement.

During the tour, airmen showed their Japanese counterparts maintenance processes and equipment, simulated aircraft takeoff and command and control capabilities. They also explained how the Air Force organizes, trains and equips its reconnaissance forces.

The Northrop Grumman-built drones, which can cost \$100 million depending on configuration, are thought to be capable of operating at an altitude of 60,000 feet, high above civilian air traffic, which normally does not surpass 40,000 feet. They can stay aloft for 34 hours and have a range of 14,000 miles.

Global Hawks have been used to provide imagery to planners during disasters

such as the 2010 Haiti earthquake, tsunami relief in Japan in 2011 and typhoon response in the Philippines. They've also been used to track wildfires, fight piracy and to search for abductees in Africa.

"Since our arrival last month, our squadron of Global Hawks has safely and flawlessly executed each mission daily, virtually unnoticed, without incident," Lt. Col. Ben Craycraft, 319th Operations Group Detachment 1 commander, said in the statement. "Yokota Air Base continues to prove the most ideal location for our operations due to the Kanto Plain's favorable weather and our ability to conduct operations without causing impacts to Yokota's flight operations or the local communities surrounding the base."

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MILITARY

Bill would improve troops' access to mental health care

By **NIKKI WENTLING**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Over the past two years, Patrick and Teri Caserta have tried to create a positive legacy for their son, a 21-year-old sailor who died by suicide June 25, 2018, after throwing himself into the spinning tail rotor of a MH-60s helicopter at Naval Station Norfolk, Va.

A command investigation into Brandon Caserta's death determined that belligerent and brash leadership of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 contributed to his decision to end his own life. He felt alone, stuck and afraid of retaliation, his parents said.

After fighting the Navy for accountability and urging Congress to make changes, the Casertas are finally seeing progress.

On June 25, the two-year anniversary of Brandon Caserta's death, Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., introduced a bill in his name: the Brandon Act. The underlying goal is to create a pathway for service members to seek mental health care in confidence, without disclosing it to their command. It would create a safe word that, when said, would trigger an immediate, confidential mental health evaluation.

"Brandon tasked us with doing something like this, in his final letter to us," Teri Caserta said. "Brandon's legacy is to save lives. The rest of our lives will be focused on that, too."

Fighting for change

The suicide note from their son prompted the Casertas to seek the help of Congress. They were novices at lobbying and unaware of what went into creating a bill, but they set out on a cross-country road trip from their home in Peoria, Ariz., to Washington to give it a try.

For one week last year, they walked through the Senate and House office buildings, meeting with any lawmaker or staff member they could. They told the story of their son and what stood in his way of getting help. He feared retaliation from his command.

Sen. Kirstin Gillibrand, D-N.Y., was one of those lawmakers. She brought up Caserta's case during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in December that focused on suicide prevention. At the time, she urged military leaders to alter a policy that requires mental health professionals to report many service members' mental health concerns to a commander, arguing it "creates mistrust and acts as a barrier to treatment."

"Brandon Caserta felt so unhappy and felt so hopeless," Gillibrand said during the hearing. "He faced personal setbacks, combined with daily abuse from

his superiors and little hope that anything would change."

In response, Capt. Michael Colston, director for mental health programs in the Pentagon's health services policy and oversight office, said the Navy has a zero-tolerance policy for hazing and bullying and "to the extent they happen, they're leadership failures."

It was a small but powerful moment for the Casertas — the first time anyone in the Navy had admitted failure regarding their son's case.

A more powerful moment came June 24, when they learned the Brandon Act would be introduced. Work on the bill had been delayed during the coronavirus pandemic, and the Casertas weren't expecting legislation until later in 2020.

"We were shocked," Patrick Caserta said over the phone. "It's a great start in the right direction. We believe it meets the criteria to help people immediately."

Brandon Caserta was one of 325 active-duty service members who died by suicide in 2018, and one of 68 sailors, according to military data. Less than half, or 44.6%, of troops who died by suicide that year had a documented behavioral health diagnosis, according to a report the Pentagon released in April.

The Brandon Act creates a system modeled off the process available to victims of sexual assault, which would allow service members who experience mental health issues to receive care without notifying their command or opening an official investigation of any allegations they raise. The Casertas feel the change would help reduce the perceived barriers of self-reporting for mental health evaluations and ease service members' path to care.

It was uncertain whether the Senate would follow with its own version of the bill. The Casertas have been in talks with several senators, including Gillibrand and Sen. Tim Kaine, D-Va.

A summary of the House bill, shared by Moulton's office, says Brandon Caserta tried to find help "but was unable to get the treatment he wanted."

"This bill will ensure our service members can get help and have no fear of retaliation for doing so as it's the right thing to do," Moulton said. "Although we'll never get Brandon back, his

legacy will be the lives of many more great Americans he saves through this bill, and I'm proud of his parents who have fought so hard to tell his story and make this change."

Troubling leadership

Brandon Caserta — described by his parents as a friendly and caring person who always looked out for his friends — joined the military after high school. Patrick Caserta, who had a 22-year Navy career, unsuccessfully advised him against it.

"He wanted to be a SEAL," Patrick Caserta said. "He was so adamant about it ... there was nothing we could do. It was the right thing to support him."

Caserta, though, had to drop out of special warfare training after he broke his tibia in SEAL school.

While in Norfolk, where he was an aircrew aviation electrician's mate striker, Caserta was under the command of a lead petty officer who demeaned him and other members of his unit and frequently cursed at them.

Despite the toxic leadership, Caserta's evaluation reports indicate he was a "proven self-starter" who required minimal supervision and consistently strove to achieve personal goals.

"Airman Caserta is a dedicated individual who shows great ability and initiative," one of his evaluations from 2017 reads. "Highly recommended for retention and advancement."

Caserta wanted out of his command, but another injury — a broken collarbone — blocked his efforts to be designated an aircrewman and make a transfer. On June 22, 2018, Caserta was recommended to a disciplinary review board over an argument about whether he had a driver's license and could operate vehicles on the flight line.

His parents believe the factors all compounded to make Caserta feel trapped.

Brandon Caserta wrote several notes before his suicide, in which he criticized the Navy and the command of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28. In a letter to his parents, he asked them to expose the problems with the unit and hold the wrongdoers accountable.

On June 25, 2018, Caserta went to the flight line at Naval Station Norfolk and yelled an apology to the onlooking plane captain before jumping into



Patrick and Teri Caserta

Brandon Caserta, a member of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 28 in Norfolk, Va., is shown here during his senior year of high school.

the spinning rotor. Emergency responders declared him dead at the scene.

A command investigation, shared with Stars and Stripes, determined that "belligerence, vulgarity and brash leadership was likely a significant contributing factor" in Caserta's decision to end his life. His leading officer — whose name is redacted from the report — was verbally abusive, demeaning and created a hostile working environment, the investigation found.

On June 27, 2018, two days after his death, Caserta's lead petty officer made derogatory remarks about him. Patrick Caserta said they'd been told the LPO had bragged about driving Caserta to suicide. A counseling record shows that the LPO was transferred June 28. The record

notes, however, that the move was "not punitive" and was going to happen anyway.

In November of that year, squadron commander Duane Whitmer wrote that the lead petty officer "has been removed from his leadership position and will be held accountable for his actions."

"While I do not believe there is any single driving force that led to the suicide, I do believe that findings concerning the work center's leading petty officer at the time of the incident are both troubling and valid," Whitmer wrote.

Patrick and Teri Caserta believe there was no true accountability.

While they push to get the Brandon Act through Congress, the Casertas plan to keep fighting for justice for their son, too.

"We're determined to get justice for him, but we realize it's against all odds," Patrick Caserta said. "That's going to be a battle we're going to have to continue to fight, and we're prepared to do that."

'We're determined to get justice for him, but we realize it's against all odds. That's going to be a battle we're going to have to continue to fight, and we're prepared to do that.'

Patrick Caserta
father of Brandon Caserta

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MILITARY

'Deltas' replacing wings for Space Force

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

The new Space Force has streamlined its structure by going without wings.

Instead, the intermediate echelons above squadrons in the country's newest military branch will be known as "deltas," and they will be led by whatever the service decides to call its equivalent of a colonel.

Deltas will fall under field commands like Space Operations Command, or SpOC — an abbreviation that may keep it from being confused for other services' special operations commands, if not the Vulcan from "Star Trek." The field commands report to the service headquarters.

The use of three echelons instead of the five levels used by its parent service, the Air Force, reflects a focus on being "lean, agile and mission-focused," the service said in a statement.

"Innovation and efficiency are driving our mission as we position the Space Force to respond with agility to protect our nation's space capabilities and the American way of life," Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett said in the statement.

What's the difference between the branches?

Air Force major commands fall under the service headquarters, fol-

'This is an historic opportunity to launch the Space Force on the right trajectory to deliver the capabilities needed to ensure freedom of movement and deter aggression in, from and to space.'

Gen. Jay Raymond

lowed by numbered air forces, wings, groups, squadrons and flights. Space Force eliminates one command level headed by a general and one headed by a colonel-equivalent.

The service, which will draw thousands of airmen, is expected to grow to 15,000 personnel, though it has still not announced what it will call its members or what many of its rank titles will be.

Deltas were named after the triangular symbol frequently used in space logos, Air Force Magazine reported. They will be organized to support individual functions such as operations, base support or training.

Space Force squadrons will operate similarly to their Air Force counterparts, focusing on missions like satellite operations or intelligence, the magazine reported.

The structure brings together vari-

ous former Air Force space-related units under the new branch, which was created in December in response to increased commercial and military use of space.

"This is an historic opportunity to launch the Space Force on the right trajectory to deliver the capabilities needed to ensure freedom of movement and deter aggression in, from and to space," said Gen. Jay Raymond, the service's top officer.

Headquartered at Peterson Air Force Base, Colo., and led by a three-star general, SpOC will be one of three field commands with specific mission focuses, along with Space Training and Readiness Command — STARCOM for short — and Space Systems Command, abbreviated as SSC.

SpOC will be the main provider of forces to combatant commanders, coalition partners and the joint force, the service

said. An existing unit of the same name, based at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., will be renamed once SpOC gets off the ground, slated for later this summer.

Also activating this year is SSC, headed by a three-star, which will oversee science and technology activities and manage development, acquisition and fielding of "lethal and resilient space capabilities," the service said. It will also handle launch, testing, sustainment and maintenance on space systems.

SSC will be built from existing acquisition and development organizations, including Space and Missile Systems Center, the Commercial Satellite Communications Office and other space programs within DOD.

STARCOM, which will train and educate Space Force personnel, will be led by a two-star and is expected to stand up in 2021. In the meantime, a Space Training and Readiness Delta will be stood up in July at Peterson and will oversee related units transferring into the service.

"This is the most significant restructuring of space units undertaken by the United States since the establishment of Air Force Space Command in 1982," Barrett said.

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Alaska-based paratroopers drop on Guam

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

About 350 soldiers parachuted into Andersen Air Force Base to complete a training mission that began with a marathon flight from Alaska.

Five C-17 Globemasters flew the paratroopers from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska to Guam, where they secured the air base as part of an emergency deployment readiness exercise, the Army said in a statement June 30.

The soldiers are with the 25th Infantry Division's 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team — the Army's only Pacific airborne brigade. They learned of the mission several days before the jump, the Army said.

"This scenario tested our ability to execute real-world missions and demonstrated that we are capable of deploying anywhere in the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area at a moment's notice," Col. Christopher Landers, commander of the 4th Brigade, said in the statement.

The coronavirus pandemic has challenged the military's ability to train in groups and conduct missions involving travel.

The aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt was sidelined in Guam for about six weeks this spring to deal with an outbreak that infected more than 1,150 crew members.

More recently, 35 airmen who arrived in Guam on May 25 subsequently tested positive for the virus and were quarantined on the air base.

"We wanted to show that despite [the coronavirus] going on we can still really answer any call that comes our way, that



RICHARD EBENSBERGER/U.S. Air Force

Hundreds of paratroopers assigned to U.S. Army Alaska jump onto Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, as part of a training mission.

we have the ability to do that — and still be tactically proficient no matter what the situation is," U.S. Army Alaska spokesman Maj. Charlie Dietz said Tuesday in a phone interview.

Prior to leaving Alaska, all personnel involved in the mission were screened for COVID-19, the disease caused by the

coronavirus, he said.

The paratroopers were expected to return to Alaska within a day of landing.

The soldiers were tested for the virus throughout the preparation process and will remain separated from Andersen personnel during their short stay, Dietz added.

"There have been no cases that have come back positive," he said. "They're kind of in a bubble, and they're not interacting with anybody that isn't part of their group."

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MILITARY

Army moving forward with new fitness test

By STEVE BEYNON
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Army might have hit another obstacle in its endeavor to replace its long-time physical fitness test as the Senate's version of the defense funding bill calls for a delay in implementing the new Army Combat Fitness Test.

The Senate Armed Services Committee's draft of the 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, which funds the military, states Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy "may not implement the Army Combat Fitness Test" until a study is completed by an "entity independent of the Department of Defense."

The committee wants the study to determine whether the new fitness test would adversely impact soldiers deployed or stationed in areas with conditions that frequently preclude outdoor training and impact recruitment and retention in support roles such as medical personnel, according to the NDAA draft. Senators and committee staff contacted Tuesday did not respond to questions about the ACFT provision.

More so, there is no plan by the Army to delay the test at the moment, despite the Senate commit-



DAVID MEYER/U.S. Army

Soldiers from the U.S. Army Medical Command participate in the semi-annual physical fitness test in May 2019 at Fort Belvoir, Va.

tee's version of the bill,

"As of today, we're still set for the ACFT to replace the Army Physical Fitness Test as our organization's test of record this fall," Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston said in a statement. "We'll continue to work with our congressional leaders to keep our soldiers ready to answer our nation's call."

The ACFT is set to be the physical fitness test of record for the Army on Oct. 1, but scores

will not negatively impact troops for the time being, Grinston announced last month.

Soldiers were expected to start taking the ACFT for record by Oct. 1, which is the start of the fiscal year, but the coronavirus lockdown and gym closures forced the Army to delay implementation.

The ACFT eliminates the difference in fitness standards in age and gender, and instead bases standards on a soldier's job. More

physically demanding jobs such as infantry have significantly higher benchmarks to meet versus other jobs. The new standards also come amid more women taking on ground combat roles.

Soldiers take a physical fitness test once a year, and it is a critical part of military careers. The test can dictate whether soldiers progress in their careers or take part in training such as Ranger and air assault school. A failing score could result in removal from the service.

The House Armed Services Committee still must approve its version of the NDAA. The 2021 NDAA is not expected to be finalized until the fall. It must be passed by both chambers of Congress by Sept. 30 to provide the Pentagon an on-time budget.

The Army has tentatively set March 2022 for when soldiers must be able to pass the ACFT.

The ACFT's six events are leg tucks, deadlifts, a standing power throw, hand-release pushups, a two-mile run, and the sprint-drag-carry. Army officials spent years evaluating tasks soldiers typically do in combat — like loading rounds into cannons or tanks, dragging a wounded comrade, or moving across a

battlefield — to develop the new test, which they say better correlates to those activities than the decades old, three-event test. The old test includes two minutes of pushups, two minutes of situps, and a two-mile run.

Grinston said the Army might still tweak the ACFT and recently made one significant adjustment to the test — adding an alternative test to its leg-tuck event, which primarily tests core strength. The service will allow soldiers who cannot do a leg tuck to instead complete a two-minute plank.

Even beyond unforeseen delays, implementing the new test has tangled the service in a web of logistical issues. Soldiers have long expressed concern about the equipment needed to complete the ACFT, which includes a hex deadlift bar, a pullup bar, a weight sled, and a medicine ball. Without access to the equipment, they cannot train for all events, troops have said. The issue is more prevalent with some National Guard troops who do not have access to fully equipped gyms or have to pay for costly memberships.

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First Air Force 'Echo Flight' class graduates basic training

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

A group of mostly native Spanish speakers from Puerto Rico recently completed the first Air Force program to provide them English-language training and cultural immersion before basic training.

The 10 men, including one South Korean, were part of a "beta test" of the Echo Flight program, a replica of an Army program that since 1975 has trained prospective soldiers in the language skills needed to join the military.

"Language shouldn't be a barrier to joining our ranks," said Col. Kouji Gillis, commander of the 637th Training Group and commandant of the Defense Language Institute English Language Center at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland in Texas, which runs both the Army and Air Force Echo programs. The airmen graduated from basic training on June 18.

Staffed by over 400 military and civilian employees, the center teaches English language and American culture to international military trainees and domestic students — many of them U.S. citizens or legal residents.

Officials hope the Echo Flight program will help the Air Force and the new Space Force recruit in places like Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory where English isn't the primary language, the service said in a statement last week.

"Echo Flight removes that [language] barrier and allows the Air Force to tap into individuals that can go on to be in much-needed

career fields, like linguistics," Gillis said.

The first intake of Echo Flight trainees arrived at the language institute in late March, as the coronavirus was spreading across the U.S. After quarantining for two weeks, they began distance learning, the service said.

Initial testing allowed instructors to tailor the curriculum and a later exam gauged what the trainees learned. They also retook the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery to see whether improved language skills led to better scores on that test, which would qualify them for more military specialties. The service did not say whether it had.

The flight graduated the course alongside 11 Echo Company trainees, in a class of 57 students from 20 different countries, the language center said on Facebook.

One of the graduates, Airman Alexander Piniero-Tulier, who said he joined to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, hopes to work in personnel. Others in his cohort hope to go into specialties such as medical logistics and aircraft metals technology.

"This will help a lot of people in Puerto Rico and around the world," said Airman 1st Class Eliezer Hernandez Vidal, who already had a bachelor's degree when he enlisted and said he joined in search of "opportunities that I could not have in Puerto Rico."

The Echo Flight opportunity, he said, "is a dream come true."

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Above: Ten airmen prepare to graduate basic military training last month at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas. The airmen took part in the Air Force's Echo Flight English-language immersion program at the Defense Language Institute English Language Center. Left: Airman Jose Vazquez-Vera goes through the Leadership Reaction Course last month.

Photos by Sarayuth Pinthong/
U.S. Air Force

MILITARY

Navy dog donates blood to save USAF canine colleague

By CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

When an Air Force working dog suffering a heat injury in Saudi Arabia needed a blood transfusion, he got it from a Navy dog named Army, in what officials are calling a joint service lifesaving effort.

Cvoky, a 120-pound Belgian Malinois, was rushed by helicopter from Prince Sultan Air Base to Kuwait's Camp Arifjan last month, after his temperature reached nearly 110 degrees — a potentially life-threatening situation — the military said in two recent statements.

"He did not seem like himself" during a training event on June 9, said Cvoky's handler, Air Force Staff Sgt. Juan Reyes, in a statement a few days after the incident. "We rushed him right to the medical tent."

In recent years, a rash of heat injuries among the troops — some fatal — has plagued the military, which last year saw its first decline in such cases in five years. Still, more than 2,000 troops suffered heat exhaustion in 2019 and some 500 had heatstroke, a military report said in April.

At the Saudi air base, 5-year-old Cvoky was treated just like



Task Force Spartan

Air Force military working dog Cvoky has made a full recovery and is returning to the U.S.

a human would be — taken out of the heat and cooled with ice, said Maj. Valentina Merola, a public health officer there, in a statement.

While common for both humans and canines during the hotter months in the Middle East, heat injuries can have severe and lasting consequences for dogs, such as internal bleeding, said Capt. Jon Drake, veterinarian in charge in Kuwait.



GIOVANNI SIMS/ U.S. Air Force

U.S. Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Jessica Fleschner comforts Cvoky, a military working dog assigned to the 378th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, after he suffered a heat injury at Prince Sultan Air Force Base, Saudi Arabia, on June 9. Cvoky was medically evacuated to Kuwait where he received treatment from U.S. Army veterinary workers.

"Many dogs that reach high temperatures like this one did, do not survive," Drake said. "We were very lucky [Cvoky's injury] was caught quickly ... treatment was given right away, and we were able to medevac the dog."

A UH-60 Black Hawk from the 1st General Support Aviation Battalion, 189th Aviation Regiment flew him to the Kuwait base, which was the nearest facility with the necessary veterinary specialists. The aviation unit, part of the Army's Task Force Spartan, includes National Guard soldiers from Indiana and Montana.

"This is a first for us doing an international country transfer of a working dog," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Brett Milton, the pilot in command.

While the helicopter was in-transit, members of the Army's 994th Medical Detachment (Veterinarian Services) in Kuwait readied for a blood transfusion, and Capt. Melody Mullin found the right donor with the appropriate blood type — the Navy dog named Army.

"We came in and he donated a pint of blood for the dog in need," said his handler, Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Sera Tamez. "It

feels really good to help one of our own."

Drake credited Cvoky's handler with recognizing the need to act fast. That early recognition, as well as the joint service teamwork contributed to what Kimbrell called a "success story."

"Cvoky is totally back to himself," said Reyes, his handler with the 378th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, who deployed with the dog from Hill Air Force Base, Utah. "Right now he is just relaxing and enjoying life. This was definitely a happy ending."

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Military family's photo session ends with 'photobomb'

Stars and Stripes

Kristin McKenzie and her kids stood in a field off a road near MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., smiling for the camera as a white SUV pulled up in the background. Kristin knew what was coming, but the children had no idea that they were about to see their dad for the first time since his deployment.

"They were honestly stunned and not sure what they were looking at when he walked up behind us," said Kristin McKenzie of his arrival. "After a few seconds of pure shock they let out screams and squeals of joy."

Army Lt. Col. Simon McKenzie had been in Qatar since

February and ended up returning a few months ahead of the original plan, so Kristin decided to surprise their three youngest kids, 8-year-old Blake, 7-year-old Grey and 5-year-old Lawton. The couple's son Caleb, 21, is working in Colorado for the summer. She told them the photos would be a Father's Day gift.

Photographer Hannah Sanchez jokingly described the session on Facebook, saying, "Can you guys believe that a car pulled up right behind this adorable family right when we started shooting?! And then someone just jumped out and photobombed the entire session!?"

Even before the deployment,

the family had been apart a lot. Kristin was diagnosed with cervical cancer in mid-2017 while they were living in Washington, D.C., and stayed there for medical reasons as her husband moved for a new assignment at MacDill in May 2018. They saw him every month or two, and she and the kids joined him in August last year.

For the McKenzie family, the photos are precious.

"Our kids already remember it as the moment we were whole again after what seemed like an eternity to them, between cancer keeping us apart and the deployment," Kristin said.

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Hannah Sanchez

Lt. Col. Simon McKenzie smiles as he gets ready to photobomb his wife, Kristin, and children, from left, Grey, Lawton and Blake, as he surprises the kids with an early return from a deployment to Qatar.

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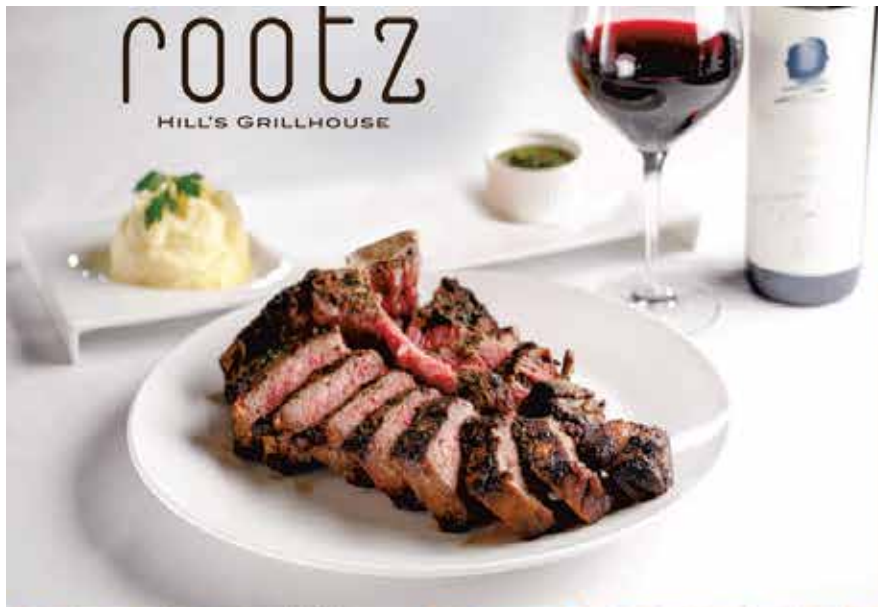
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