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# GUAM

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## COVID-19 has changed everything, but Stripes is still here for you

BY DENISSE RAUDA,  
STRIPE GUAM

**T**he Stripes community paper office has been empty since April. Yet, the designers who layout the articles in the newspaper, the team who updates the websites, and your writing team are still as busy as ever.

Like you, our daily life and our daily work life have changed. Though our writing team, spread out in Okinawa, Korea and in Japan,

is used to working together, but apart, what we write about had to change quickly and drastically. Travel and restaurant reviews are our bread and butter — but how do we write about places we can no longer visit or are no longer safe to visit? It's easy — we don't.

Like you, we're no longer dining out at restaurants. We've traded in our cubicles, travel assignments, and restaurant reviews

SEE COVID-19 ON PAGE 8

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# Guam recruiter lauded by Air Force

BY MASTER SGT. CHANCE BABIN,  
AIR FORCE RECRUITING SERVICE

**ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE** — Being an Air Force recruiter can be a tough and grueling job. For one recruiter, years of hard work paid off recently when he was named one of the Air Force’s 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year.

Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Camper, Pacific Operations Recruiting Program Manager for the 369th Recruiting Squadron, was totally surprised to learn he was selected as one of the 12 OAY for 2020.

Recently he was asked to join a video teleconference to talk to the boss. Since he was scheduled for an upcoming TDY, he thought the call was related to his pending trip.

“My commander called me one morning and said she wanted to have a Zoom meeting with the boss. I was about to go TDY to Hawaii, so I figured it had something to do with that,” Camper said. “As soon as I called into the Zoom meeting and saw all the people I knew it had nothing to do with a TDY to Hawaii. I truly had no idea I would actually win this award. My initial thought was just ‘Wow!’”

The video call included Lt. Gen. Brad Webb, the commander of Air Education and

Training Command, and Maj. Gen. Ed Thomas, Air Force Recruiting Service commander, among others.

Camper’s “wow” moment felt like a lifetime away from his initial struggles at the Air Force recruiting schoolhouse at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas, back in 2012.

“When I got to recruiting school, it was pretty tough for me because I was not very outgoing, so talking in front of people then was definitely not my thing,” he said. “I think it was my Day 22 lab assigned I ended up failing. When I failed, I had two people at the schoolhouse tell me that I would never be a good recruiter. I think that lit a fire under me to one day be able to tell them otherwise.”

While he remembers those doubters at the school and others early in his career, he’s moved past their judgments.

“I really think I have humbled myself enough to not really let those folks bother me at all,” Camper said. “However, it is still pretty sweet to win all the awards I did this year when I was told by those folks that I would never be a good recruiter.”

He credits his work ethic for helping him win this honor.

“I think I have a pretty good ability to network and talk to people,” he said. “My paperwork may be lacking, but I can definitely get the recruiting job done.”

He also stressed the importance of having a strong support system to help him excel at his job.

“Everyone across the board has been very supportive and helped me out a lot to be able to win this award,” he said. “If it weren’t for my family friends, mentors, etc..., there is no way this would have been possible.”

Camper said he’s not sure what lies ahead in his future.

“I am really torn because I definitely want to continue to go above and beyond, but I also want to be able to mentor and groom my office partners so they too can shine,” he said. “I feel like I had my turn to shine, but to be able to say I helped someone else shine is big to me as well. Along the way, I have had some awesome mentors to help make all this happen. I would not have been where I am today without my family, friends and mentors who have been with me along the way.”



Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Camper

Camper began his Air Force career as a diesel mechanic. He was inspired to join after seeing some F-16s flying by. After seeing the Fighting Falcons overhead, he was in the recruiter’s office the next day.

Unfortunately, he decided to get out of the Air Force in 2009, just as the country was experiencing an economic downturn. Not long after leaving, he had second thoughts and decided to try and rejoin.

“I started the journey to get back in the Air Force,” he said. “Three years after trying to get back in, my recruiter called and said he had some recruiting jobs. He asked if I would like to give that a shot. A few interviews later, I was in recruiting tech school.”

His experience in recruiting school and his initial years in recruiting give Camper a unique perspective to give advice to any young recruiter who may be doubting his or her ability to recruit the nation’s best and brightest for the Air Force.

“If someone is not feeling great about being a recruiter – like I was at first – they should know they can make big changes if they put their mind to it and let their family, friends and mentors help them along the way,” he said.

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# Sound Off: What military spouses say about COVID-19

## The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



Recently, I decided to change my “lurker” status, and post something in a popular military spouse Facebook group to which I belong. In my first post to the group, I asked how military families had been affected by COVID-19 restrictions.

Most of the 50-plus comments described what I’d expected — delays, disappointments and uncertainty. Marine wife Christine said, “My husband was in Korea for a year. He missed our oldest’s high school graduation due to the travel ban, among other things. I lost my job. Had to do virtual school with my 3 kids. No academic/school support. Solo parenting through it all.”

And Air Force spouse Julie, whose family got orders to Belgium: “I quit my job on Feb. 28 at 30 weeks pregnant. We shipped out stuff, we moved out of our house, and sold one of our two cars. We

had our luggage packed and were staying with my parents for a week. March 13 came around, and the travel ban went into effect. I am currently in therapy for PPD/anxiety and we have no real answer on when we are leaving or if they are shipping our stuff back.”

Brittany and her Navy family moved into a house 40 minutes from base in Italy, two days before the lockdown: “I was terrified for my husband to drive to work ... Police checkpoints and fines if you didn’t have a valid reason to be outside. My one saving grace is that we rented a house with about two acres so we could go on walks. People were only allowed on their balconies, and some were stuck in the lodge for six months.”

Air Force spouse Tanya lamented not being able to travel outside of Japan: “I feel sad that my daughter will almost be two by the time she gets to

meet her grandparents, aunts, uncle and cousins, extended family members. They will be strangers to her, and that breaks my heart.”

There were other predictable themes — mothers giving birth without husbands, couples losing child care, military spouses facing unemployment, spouses handling remote learning alone, etc.

But some comments took me by surprise. I hadn’t realized how travel bans affected divorced military parents stationed overseas. Spouses told sad stories of being unable to see children with whom they share custody.

Also, the effect of COVID-19 restrictions on new trainees was an eye-opener.

New Army wife Kelsey said, “My husband joined the Army and shipped to basic in February, right before COVID-19 made its way to America. We had no idea what we were in

for. My husband’s basic was extended ... By the time he is done, we will have been unable to see my husband for eight months when it was supposed to be just two ... I expect the Army will have a huge retention problem for these unfortunate COVID-19 new soldiers.”

I also had no idea that families were paying thousands to transport pets due to cancellations. During a recent PCS, Marine wife Courtney couldn’t fly her pet from Hawaii to Georgia as planned. Instead, she paid a pet carrier \$2,400 to fly the dog to California, then had to drive him across the U.S. Air Force spouse Alexis who is PCSing to Japan said, “We have two very large dogs and most airlines aren’t shipping pets ... just think about taking out a small loan just to bring your fur babies with you to your next home.”

But the real surprise was the light that some spouses

found in the darkness. Jessica, Navy spouse and reservist, was grateful that virtual drills have allowed her to spend more time with her new baby. Coast Guard wife Myst stated, “We’ve taken more opportunities to go outdoors for hikes, picnics and other activities instead of spending time and money in shops and restaurants. We’ve been able to make better connections with friends, family, strangers, shipmates and coworkers. This is a challenge that can bring people together.”

Extended separation gave Army wife Laura new appreciation: “I think this whole experience with COVID-19 should really put people in perspective with how blessed we truly are, to have homes, jobs, our health and each other.”

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari’s columns at: [themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://themeatandpotatoesoflife.com)  
Email: [meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com](mailto:meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com)

### Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

## Alcohol abuse and the road to recovery

BY HILARY VALDEZ,  
STRIPES GUAM

People can use substances, including alcohol, illicit drugs, or legal prescription medication, and not be addicted. However, when a person continues to use drugs or alcohol or prescription medication beyond the time it is prescribed for, it is substance abuse and dependence, or “substance use disorder.” This disorder involves different levels of severity.

Drugs come in many shapes, sizes and some are even socially acceptable. Nicotine, for instance, is the most abused drug in the world. Another, caffeine, is the most commonly used mood-altering drug. Alcohol, though a drug not considered to be one, is at the core of more personal and social problems than any other drug. Over 112 million Americans drink, as many as 14 million Americans have serious alcohol problems, and about 7 million are considered to be alcoholics.

Alcoholism and alcohol dependence are a chronic disease in our country.



- What is the best thing drinking has done for you?
- What is the worst thing that has happened to you as a result of your drinking?
- How many drinks does it take you to feel high?
- Have you ever received a DUI?
- Have you gotten in fights when drinking with your spouse or friends?

Mental health challenges and the abuse of substances, including and in addition to alcohol, can happen to anyone. Many struggle with their mental well-being or are afraid of being seen as weak, so the denial of issues persist.

#### Traumatic stress

Those who have experienced traumatic events might turn to alcohol as a way to cope after their natural ability to do so and to problem-solve have been overwhelmed.

Military operations place a great strain on military personnel and their families. The strains can lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), suicide, other mental health problems, and family issues.

#### Self-improvement

The road to getting clean, getting healthy, growing mentally and emotionally can be both challenging and painful, but the choice is yours. You need a strong ego to shift gears and admit you need help.

If you compare out and say: “I can’t succeed,” then you won’t succeed. If you compare in and say: “I can succeed,” then you will succeed.

Treatment plans depend on your substance use, but

there is no one-size-fits-all regimen in recovery.

Changing your lifestyle is an alternative to pharmacological treatments, seek out counseling or support groups. “Harm reduction” is a strategy to learning to control substance abuse.

People have a natural inclination to stay in their comfort zone. Enabling toxic behaviors is a common symptom among those surrounding a dysfunctional person. Emotions can get in the way sometimes and if you are emotionally stuck, it’s time to try another way.

Some may choose to do it alone, but you don’t have to. Seek out help from your base chaplain visit Military OneSource, or TRICARE for more information on treatment and other resources for substance abuse.



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◀ Military OneSource

- Where does use end and abuse begin? Take the test:**
- Do you constantly think of drinking?
  - Do you often have hangovers or blackouts?
  - Have you tried to cut down on your drinking?
  - How often do you drink alcohol?
  - Do you sometimes need a drink in the morning to get going?
  - Has anyone told you that you drink too much?

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. He is an experienced Mental Health professional and Resiliency Trainer. Valdez is a former Marine and has worked with the military most of his career and most recently worked at Camp Zama as a Master Resiliency Trainer. Valdez now has a private practice and publishes books on social and psychological issues. His books are available on Amazon and for Kindle. Learn more about Valdez and contact him at [www.hilaryvaldez.com](http://www.hilaryvaldez.com) or at [InstantInsights@hotmail.com](mailto:InstantInsights@hotmail.com)

## Official Approved Notice from Bankruptcy Court



# Sexual Abuse Claims in Boy Scouts Bankruptcy

**Regardless of how old you are today or when the sexual abuse occurred, you need to file your claim by 5 p.m. (Eastern Time) on November 16, 2020.**

The Boy Scouts of America (“BSA”) has filed bankruptcy in order to restructure its nonprofit organization and pay Sexual Abuse Survivors. Please read this notice carefully as it may impact your rights against BSA, BSA Local Councils and organizations that sponsored your troop or pack and provides information about the case, *In re Boy Scouts of America and Delaware BSA, LLC*, No. 20-10343 (Bankr. D. Del.). This notice is a short summary. For more detail, visit [www.OfficialBSAClaims.com](http://www.OfficialBSAClaims.com) or call 1-866-907-2721.

### Who Should File a Sexual Abuse Claim?

**Anyone who was sexually abused during their time in Scouting, on or before February 18, 2020, must file a claim.** This includes sexual abuse in connection with Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, or any entity or activity associated with Scouting. Sexual Abuse Claims include, but are not limited to: sexual misconduct, exploitation, or touching, sexual comments about a person or other behaviors that led to abuse, even if the behavior was not sexual or against the law, and regardless of whether you thought the behavior was sexual abuse or not. These acts could be between a: (1) child and an adult or (2) child and another child.

### When and How Should I File a Sexual Abuse Claim?

You should file a claim using the Sexual Abuse Survivor Proof of Claim by **November 16, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern Time)**. **If you do not file a timely Sexual Abuse Claim, you may lose rights against BSA, BSA Local Councils or organizations that sponsored your troop or pack, including any right to compensation.** Only BSA is in bankruptcy. If you have a claim against the BSA Local Councils or other organizations, you must take additional legal action to preserve and pursue your rights.

**Your information will be kept private.** You can download and file a claim at [www.OfficialBSAclaims.com](http://www.OfficialBSAclaims.com) or call 1-866-907-2721 for help on how to file a claim by mail. Scouting participants who were at least 18 years of age at the time the sexual abuse began may also have claims related to sexual abuse and should consult the appropriate claim form at [www.OfficialBSAclaims.com](http://www.OfficialBSAclaims.com).

### ACT NOW Before Time Runs Out:



File a Sexual Abuse Survivor Proof of Claim.



If your claim is approved, you may receive compensation from the bankruptcy.



Have questions? Call or visit the website for more information.

**If a plan to reorganize BSA is approved, it could release claims you hold against certain third parties, including against BSA Local Councils and organizations that sponsored your troop or pack.** Please visit the website to learn more.

### Other Support

BSA will fund in-person counseling for current or former Scouts or their family. To request in-person counseling, please call 1-866-907-2721 or email [restructuring@scouting.org](mailto:restructuring@scouting.org).

**Your information will be kept private.**

**[www.OfficialBSAclaims.com](http://www.OfficialBSAclaims.com)**

**1-866-907-2721**



BY JESSICA ZEN,  
STRIPES GUAM

**W**hether you are homeschooling or sending your kids back to the brick and mortar building, they'll need snacks, and lots of them! Kids are like mini garbage disposals, always hungry for more. Check out these snack ideas to curb your kids' cravings.

## Kid-friendly energy bites

Start to finish: 50 minutes

Servings: 24

### Ingredients

- ☐ 1 cup Quaker Oats, either Quick or Old Fashioned are fine
- ☐ 1/2 cup peanut butter
- ☐ 1/2 cup flax seed
- ☐ 1/2 cup mini baking M&M's (optional – you could also use mini chocolate chips)
- ☐ 1/3 cup honey
- ☐ 1/2 cup coconut

### Directions

1. Add all ingredients to a medium size bowl and mix well. Place the bowl in the fridge for about 15-20 minutes so the ingredients set.
2. Remove from the fridge and use a small round cookie scoop to scoop the mixture out. Use your hands to roll evenly into balls and place on a baking sheet.
3. Once all the dough is rolled into balls, place the baking sheet in the fridge for another 15-20 minutes.
4. Store the energy bites in the fridge in an airtight container.



## Frozen yogurt covered blueberries

Start to finish: 1 hour 10 minutes

Servings: 2

### Ingredients

- ☐ 6 ounces fresh blueberries
- ☐ 6 ounces nonfat blueberry Greek yogurt

### Directions

1. Start by washing your blueberries and lining a small baking sheet with parchment or wax paper.
2. Using a toothpick, dip each blueberry into the Greek yogurt and swirl until the blueberry is nicely coated with yogurt. Place on baking sheet. Continue this until all blueberries are coated.
3. Place baking sheet into freezer, and let freeze for at least an hour.
4. After about an hour, your Frozen Yogurt Covered Blueberries can be placed in a ziplock baggie and stored in the freezer. Take out what you need for snack time and enjoy!



## Ham & cheese mini cracker sandwiches

Start to finish: 10 minutes

Servings: 16 “sandwiches”

### Ingredients

- ☐ 1/2 pound sliced deli ham
- ☐ 4 slices cheddar cheese
- ☐ Apple butter
- ☐ 32 woven wheat crackers - 2 per sandwich
- ☐ Baby spinach leaves (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat your broiler. Line a baking sheet with foil.
2. Cut the ham slices into pieces about the same size as the crackers. Cut each cheese slice into quarters.
3. Spread about a 1/2 teaspoon of apple butter on half of the crackers. Layer the ham & cheese on top of the apple butter crackers. Add a spinach leaf to the layers if desired - I did spinach on half of mine, half without. Top with the remaining crackers to form ‘sandwiches’.
4. Place the sandwiches on the baking sheet & heat under the broiler for just a couple of minutes; until the crackers start to golden & the cheese begins to melt.



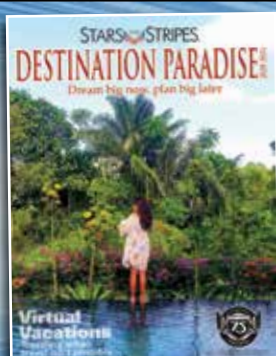
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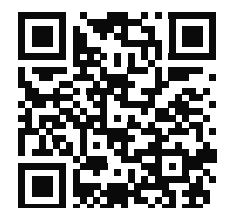
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## Cucumber bites

Start to finish: 15 minutes

Servings: 30

### Ingredients

- ☐ 8 ounces sour cream
- ☐ 1/2 packet ranch Dressing Mix
- ☐ 6 cucumbers
- ☐ 30 carrot sticks
- ☐ 30 celery sticks



### Directions

1. Mix together sour cream and ranch dip and set aside.
2. Wash cucumbers and, using a peeler, make stripes on cucumbers.
3. Cut cucumbers into 1 1/2 slices.
4. Use a melon baller to scoop out center of each to make a cup.
5. Fill with dip and insert a carrot and a celery stick.

## Applesauce cupcakes



Start to finish: 2 hours and 5 minutes

Servings: 24

### Ingredients cupcakes

- ☐ 2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon salt
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- ☐ 1 cup butter or margarine, softened
- ☐ 1 1/4 cups sugar
- ☐ 3 eggs
- ☐ 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- ☐ 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ☐ 1/2 cup apple juice

### Ingredients buttercream frosting

- ☐ 6 cups powdered sugar
- ☐ 2/3 cup butter or margarine, softened
- ☐ 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ☐ 3 to 4 tablespoons milk
- ☐ 1/2 teaspoon red paste food color

### Ingredients decorations

- ☐ 12 thin pretzel sticks, broken into pieces
- ☐ 16 spearmint leaf gumdrops
- ☐ 12 gummy worm candies, cut in half, if desired

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 350°F. Place paper baking cup in each of 24 regular-size muffin cups. Grease and flour muffin cups, or spray with baking spray with flour.
2. In medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon; set aside.
3. In large bowl, beat butter with electric mixer on medium speed 30 seconds. Gradually add sugar, about 1/4 cup at a time, beating well after each addition and scraping bowl occasionally. Beat 2 minutes longer. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in applesauce and vanilla. On low speed, alternately add flour mixture, about 1/3 of mixture at a time, and apple juice, about 1/2 at a time, beating just until blended.
4. Divide batter evenly among muffin cups, filling each about 2/3 full.
5. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until golden brown and toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans 5 minutes. Remove cupcakes from pans; place on cooling racks to cool.
6. Make Vanilla Buttercream Frosting.
  1. In large bowl, mix powdered sugar and butter with spoon or electric mixer on low speed. Stir in vanilla and 3 tablespoons of the milk.
  2. Gradually beat in just enough remaining milk to make frosting smooth and spreadable. If frosting is too thick, beat in more milk, a few drops at a time. If frosting becomes too thin, beat in a small amount of powdered sugar. Stir in food color paste. Frost cupcakes.
7. To decorate cupcakes, poke 1 pretzel piece into each cupcake for stem. Cut each gumdrop leaf into 3 slices. Poke 2 gumdrop leaves into top of each cupcake on either side of pretzel stem. Poke half of gummy worm into each cupcake.

Make some of these delicious snacks ahead of time so that your kids can get something to eat as soon as they are hungry. If you're feeling adventurous, have the kids help make the snacks! This way you're prepared for when they all start saying, "I'm hungry!" Which, inevitably, they will!

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# COVID-19: Looking for w

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

for workstations at home, recipes in the kitchen with our families, and getting creative with bringing you a break from the hard news we're constantly getting bombarded with.

We're looking for ways to keep you (and ourselves, too) entertained. Some of us have taken our acting and camera skills seriously and started creating fun videos to teach you Japanese and Korean phrases. We've found online activities for you to try and used our Netflix time wisely to figure out what recommendations you might have missed on Korea or Japan's streaming services.

For a while, our paper stopped printing and relied on our four community sites to make sure you never missed a beat and there was always something interesting for you to read or watch.

Every day, as the situation is changing in the Pacific both on base and off, you can trust that we're looking out for what information you need. Every day, we're monitoring what the parameters are and how we can get out and enjoy the nice weather, all while doing it safely and within the regulations set forth by leadership.

Despite the changes, know that our mission remains the same, COVID-19 or not. This is your paper you're holding, (or your website, if you're reading online) and all of our publications, including our Welcome to the Pacific, Best of Pacific and Destination Paradise magazines, are yours. Have a story you want to see in the paper? Send it to us! That hasn't changed. We're here for you and because of you.

So, read on and learn about what your writing team is doing to make sure these pages are filled and you're still getting the information you want. And, if you have a story idea or want to write something, drop us a note! We're in this together!

rauda.denisse@stripes.com



## Cooking brings humor, happiness

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SHOJI KUDAKA

If asked about how I feel about my work-from-home days, I would have a hard time finding something positive to say because I like going to work. However, looking back at my life during the last five months, there were things I would not have done unless I had stayed at home.

Before the pandemic, I hardly cooked at home. I'd had enough of instant noodles, and that moved me to make something on my own. It was in early May and with Mother's Day coming up, I chose Andagi, an Okinawan donut, for my first attempt at cooking a recipe in quarantine. As a child, my mother would make this snack for me often and making it for her around this special day was fitting.

Whether American or Okinawan style, a donut is a donut and the recipe seemed easy enough. Once I started rolling the dough into donut holes like Dunkin' Donuts' Munchkins, however, is where I ran into difficulties.

As I struggled with the sticky dough that refused to budge from its amorphous state, my mother who had been watching me curiously, started to laugh. Her laugh became even louder when I struggled with frying the dough. Although my slapstick cooking hardly failed to provide

comical relief, the doughnuts themselves turned out much better than expected. Taking a bite, my mother just said, "Wow, this is good."

The donuts were just the start of trying new recipes. Since then, I've cooked at least once a week, trying my hand at Okinawan recipes like rafute, hirayachi, brown sugar crepes, and even an Italian restaurant classic — Pasta pomodoro.

For me, it's been a learning experience. And while it's been the source of laughter for my mom, it's also seemed to make her happy. Cooking has also become a topic I can turn to when I struggle with my writing assignments or finding something to share with the audience. As I tried different recipes, it started feeling like a fun hobby for me. Now I say to myself "Why not continue cooking beyond COVID-19?"

Although my feelings toward work from home stays the same, cooking showed me there's always a way to have fun. And it would be great if the audience feels the same.

These days, I often think about touring big cities such as Tokyo and Osaka, taking photos of skyscrapers and streets lined with Izakaya. Most likely, it will be a while before that becomes possible. However, it seems to be fun at least to wait for the time to come while cooking oden or takoyaki.

kudaka.shoji@stripes.com



**VIEW VIDEO!**  
Okinawan doughnuts



# ways to keep you entertained



## Patience, family and technology

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI

COVID-19 rapidly spread throughout the country, I began reworking just after I had taken around Tokyo's Imperial Palace, park and other sites seeking out and material for a story on the cherry blossoms then at full late March.

Cherry blossom story would have until next year, as I was working me and all of our readers were ed on leaving their bases or off-ces.

Working has saved me from my ly 2.5-hour commute on packed m Yokosuka to Tokyo and back. of the office, away from my co- and the hustle and bustle from owever, has been a e on my daily rou- in finding story

ate of emergency this year meant ular annual spring e canceled, while ts and attractions sed or had limited y focus (and my ad to shift to other , so I turned to Japanese cul-traditional crafts, seasonal top- pending time with my wife and

il, as face masks began to sell res, I observed as my wife used ns she found online to hand- ks for our family. So, I wrote t. I also turned the camera on



**VIEW VIDEO!**  
**Speakin' Japanese**  
Let's try on-nomi

myself and began, along with my fellow writers, to film short videos to teach Japanese phrases for our Speakin' Japanese articles online. I began to sort through travel photos and, using my iPhone, began producing travel videos for our Virtual Vacation series.

With the help of my family, I wrote about the crafts we were making together, like origami and tanabata decorations. My daughter, whose hobby is photography, helped illustrate some of my stories and videos with great images.

SEE PATIENCE ON PAGE 10



## Looking at the bright side of life

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
CHIHON KIM

Though there are only a few months left in 2020, I can still say this will probably the year that started with a virus and will end with one. What started as a faraway virus over in China that we all thought wouldn't be a big deal, quickly spread to South Korea, then onto other countries and, well, you know the rest of the story.

Despite how COVID-19 came into intrude on all of our daily lives, my fellow writers and I remained focused on continuing to provide the stories you want to read. From disaster, we drew inspiration and from all the things we wished we could do — like travel and go out to eat at restaurants — we figured out ways to not let go of that feeling. Our team had to work in a new way, and we had to get creative.

A new project we started was our Virtual Vacation series, which allowed me to take you on my previous trips and through some of my travel photos. We also started sharing some easy phrases in our native languages. I started and continue to share useful phrases on our Facebook page in my Speakin' Korean videos.

For a short while in the summer, while South Korea seemed to have a grasp on coronavirus cases thanks to lessons learned from previous SARS and MERS outbreaks, I was able to write travel stories again. Military families could travel again, while taking necessary precautions and I was happy

to return to some form of normal. But my happiness was short-lived when, in July, the numbers started to go up and bases around the peninsula retightened restrictions. Once again, I'm experiencing deja vu in March due to mass infection in Seoul.

On a personal level, my life has changed as I turned towards my fitness and started cycling in my apartment. Originally, this was supposed to get me ready to cycle around Korea for some stories I wanted to write, but as staying at home was looking like a longer-term necessity, indoor cycling on my home setup has become a way to keep social distance and a stress relief.

I also started cooking at home more. I tried recipes of foods that I like to eat when I go to restaurants or even ramdon, a recipe from the award-winning film Parasite. These were challenging but the results were delicious, and I used these to write stories for the audience who, like me, were stuck at home trying new recipes.

And also, like many of you, when I was bored, I turned to Netflix. In May and June, I wrote a few lists of Korean films and dramas you should check out. I recommend taking a look at these lists, especially if you're over re-watching The Office or Friends.

Truth is, I am trying to overcome this situation with joy by looking at the bright side of being safe and still being able to write with a different goal in mind. I don't know when this will end, but don't forget that Stars and Stripes is always with you.

kim.chihon@stripes.com



**VIEW VIDEO!**  
**Free fallin'**  
Let's jump out of a perfectly fine airplane!



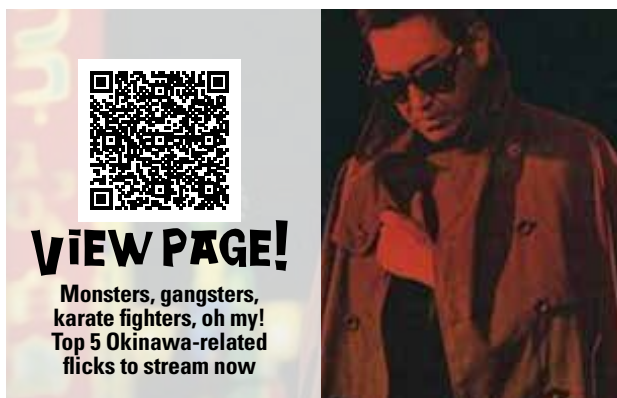
by Shoji Kudaka



by Takahiro Takiguchi



by Chifton Kim



**Speakin' Japanese: COVID-19 useful phrases**

**Speakin' Korean: COVID-19 useful phrases**

**VIEW PAGE!**  
Speakin' Japanese/Korean  
COVID-19 useful phrases  
(printable sheets)

Japanese

Korean

## PATIENCE: A family effort at home

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

My work quickly became a family affair.

I also noticed how, despite being far apart, technology was helping us stay together. Besides our weekly Skype work meetings to discuss what the staff is working on; I have connected with my coworkers for on-nomi (online drinking party) after hours several times throughout this work-from-home period.

Other events moved online for us, too. Like Mother's Day. My wife sat down in front of her computer and celebrated the special day with her 100-year-old mom and two sisters in the Philippines, as well as her two other sisters on Guam and in the States. Cakes were eaten, wine was tasted and laughs were

plentiful. They weren't physically together, but it was a wonderful celebration. Now, online chatting with her mother and sisters in the morning has become a part my wife's daily routine. These events inspired me a lot and gave me some nice story ideas.

The past five months where COVID-19 upended our lives were definitely a struggle for me, but it also gave me the great opportunity to rediscover the importance of warm hearts, love, affection and consideration amongst family and friends. Among them and by far the most, I feel it was my family that kept me alive, enabled me to work at home and have kept me in good shape, both mentally and physically.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



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# Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY  
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



**Brittney's Falls**

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.

**Sept. 19  
Brittney's Falls**

*Very Difficult  
5 hours for 5 miles*

**with Yokoi Cave Option**

*Very, Very Difficult  
7 hours for 9 miles*

We travel to the very center of Guam to explore a small 20 foot waterfall with a deep freshwater swimming hole and a fun jump. For those with an historical interest, we offer the option to continue to the seldom seen Yokoi's Cave.

**Bring:** 4 liters water, hiking shoes, gloves, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch and snacks, and a camera.

**Special conditions:** Sword grass, river crossing, a rope climb, little shade, and a muddy swamp.

**Sept. 26**

**Madofan Falls & Agaga River**

*Medium/Difficult  
4 hours for 2 miles*

We hike down the southwestern savannah to a series of three large waterfalls on the Madofan River, then walk the beach to the Agaga river and head upstream on a narrow jungle river to find more waterfalls. Those wanting an easier exit can walk to Sella Bay.

**Bring:** 3 quarts water, get wet shoes, gloves, swim suit, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch and snacks.

**Special conditions:** Sword grass, steep hills, walking in water.

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

**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.

Find local restaurant reviews, travel information, community news and events in

STARS AND STRIPES

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**guam.stripes.com**

## Annie's Chamorro Kitchen

www.annieschamorrokitchen.com



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

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



### Pickled Green Papaya



Pickled young (green) papaya was a favorite snack growing up on Guam. In fact, it still is a favorite snack, and I make some whenever I find the young, green (unripe) papayas at my local Asian market.

I still remember walking to the village stores for milk or whatever my mom sent me there for. I'd always use the change to buy a small baggie full of pickled papaya and snack on it on the walk back home. My mouth is watering just thinking about it.

Here's how to make it:

Thoroughly wash one medium sized young, green (unripe) papaya. You can also pickle a papaya that's just turning ripe.

Peel the skin off the papaya. Cut the papaya in half and scrape out all of the seeds.

Thinly slice the papaya. I like to use a mandolin to do this; it makes for evenly cut slices and it's quick!

Place the sliced papaya in a mixing bowl. Add the vinegar, salt (to taste), and as much hot chili peppers as you like. Other optional items you can add are sliced fresh garlic and onions. Let the papaya marinate in the mixture for a couple of ours then enjoy!

**Ingredients:**

- 1 medium young (green, unripe) papaya
- Distilled white vinegar, enough to cover the papaya
- Salt, to taste
- Chopped hot chili peppers, as much as you like
- Optional: sliced or chopped garlic and sliced onions

**Directions:**

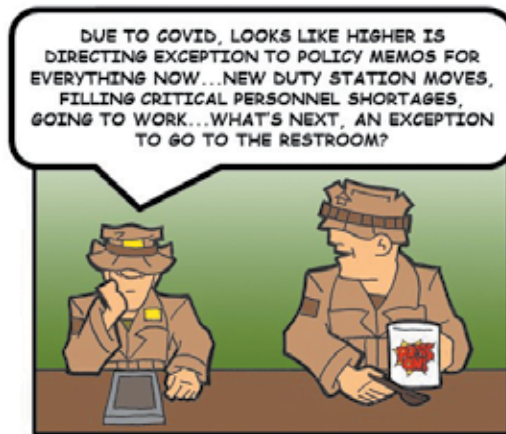
1. Wash and peel the papaya; cut in half and remove the seeds.
2. Thinly slice the papaya and place into a mixing bowl.
3. Add the vinegar, salt, hot chili peppers, and other optional ingredients. Stir to mix well.
4. Allow the papaya to marinate in the vinegar mixture for a couple of hours then enjoy!



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## COMICS CORNER



PRESS ON!



by Randy Denman

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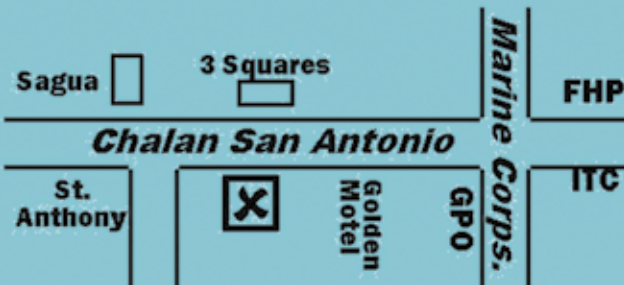
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# How to build and improve your credit score

USAA

**Y**our credit score matters. Those three little digits help financial institutions decide whether to give you a loan and on what terms. The higher your score, the less risky you appear to lenders — and that means you'll pay less interest.

The FICOSee note® score, used by many lenders, ranges from 300 to 850, but there are other scores with a similar point range. All reflect how you handle financial commitments. Knowing what lenders deem risky can help you avoid mistakes.

The FICO score is calculated from these five factors:

- Your payment track record
- How much you owe
- How long you've had credit
- Whether you're requesting



File photo

- new credit
- The types of credit accounts you open

## Raising Your Score

Made mistakes in the past?

The good news is improving your behavior can boost your score:

- Pay all of your bills on time, every time. That affects a

third of your score.

- Don't carry a credit card balance or, at a minimum, keep it below 25% of the limit.
- Responsibly manage a variety of debts, such as a car loan, a mortgage, credit cards and student loans.
- Keep older credit card accounts and avoid opening new ones.

Even if you change bad financial behaviors, improving your history takes time. Late payments remain on your credit report for seven years.

The further you put your missteps in the rearview mirror, the less they hurt your score. If your report is otherwise pristine, a single late payment should stop affecting your score in six to 12 months.

"Your score is a reflection of your overall body of credit work, but it does reflect the

notion of 'what have you done — or not done — for me lately,'" says JJ Montanaro, a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ with USAA.

## Building Credit History

If you have little or no credit history, you'll need to build it.

Retail or gas cards and loans secured by property, such as furniture or a car, tend to be easiest to obtain. Some banks offer secured credit cards for customers who need to establish credit. The cards are secured by a deposit account owned by the cardholder. Most often, cardholders must deposit between 100% and 200% of their desired credit limit.

Another alternative: Consider asking a parent with good credit to add you as an authorized user on his or her card or to co-sign a low-limit credit card application.

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



**Kara**  
A sweet feline looking for some cuddles.

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



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# 8 money moves when you join military

USAA

**V**irtually all military operations begin with some sort of detailed planning process. Take the same approach with your personal finances.

Here are eight money moves to make early in your military career:

## 1. Build a budget.

The first step to managing your money is developing a detailed list of what comes in and a plan for what goes out. Regular saving should be part of your what-goes-out list.

## 2. Save for emergencies.

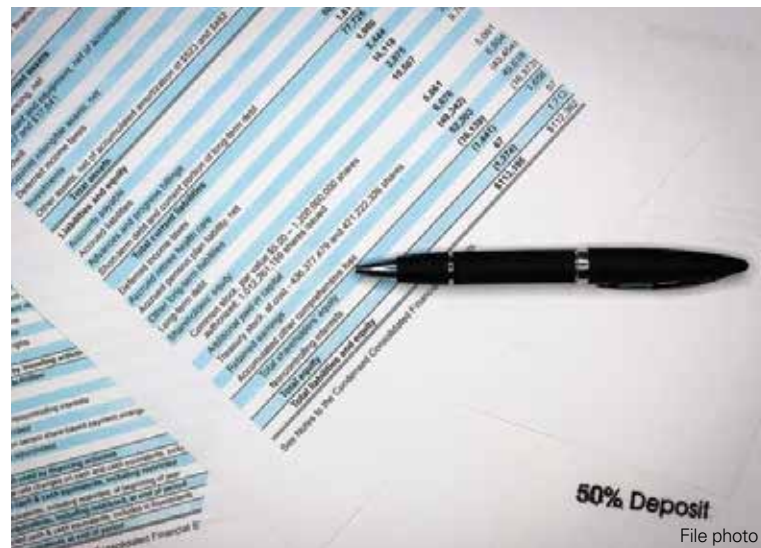
Set money aside in a savings account for the unexpected. Start with an achievable goal, say \$1,000, and then build until you can cover three to six months' worth of expenses. Set up an allotment on the Defense Department's myPay website or arrange an automatic transfer to move money into your savings account each payday. Even \$25 to \$50 a paycheck will get the ball rolling.

## 3. Sign up for the TSP.

The military's version of a 401(k) is called the Thrift Savings Plan, and it's a great way to save for your future. You can sign up to contribute a portion of each paycheck to this tax-advantaged account on myPay.

## 4. Guard your credit.

Your credit report and accompanying score are important — and fragile. Start by using credit responsibly and



File photo

always pay on time. When it comes to credit cards, don't borrow what you can't pay back by the end of the month. Check your report at annualcreditreport.com and get your score for free by contacting the nearest military financial counselor. You can also enroll in credit monitoring and identity protection services, which provide credit tracking and helps safeguard against identity theft.

## 5. Protect your stuff.

A renters insurance policy is a great way to help protect your uniforms, computer, etc. — and what you will accumulate over the years. Having one makes sense even if you live on base, and they're usually fairly inexpensive.

## 6. Use pay increases to your advantage.

You should see plenty of windfalls while you serve:

annual pay raises, promotions, special pays, time-in-service increases and the like. Commit to using half of each raise to boost your savings instead of your spending.

## 7. Read up on the SCRA.

The SCRA provides qualifying military service members an annual percentage rate (APR) of 6% on credit card and other loan debt incurred before qualifying military service. In addition, there may be additional SCRA provisions that can benefit your financial security.

## 8. Visit a financial counselor.

Counseling isn't only for people struggling with money. It can be great help to anyone — especially when it's free and offers you a chance to better understand your finances. Every installation has personal financial managers and classes to help.

# 5 easy ways to teach kids about money

BY ANGELA CABAN,  
USAA

When it comes to parenting, one of the best lessons we can share with our kids is about money. Money talks should start at an early age, and by the time kids reach middle school they should be conscious of how money works as well as the importance of saving.

Being money-wise at different stages requires clear explanations as well as total honesty about your own money situation. You can turn each situation that revolves money into a learning moment, or even a game to make kids more interested.

Here are 5 easy ways that you can teach kids about money:

## 1. Start simple.

The traditional piggy bank is always my favorite way to teach kids about money, as well as saving it. Gift your kid with a piggy bank or perhaps a clear jar so that they can see the savings accumulate. Have them count the money and determine how much they would need to purchase something they like. My kids were always shocked at just how much they had to save to buy a new game or toy that they ended up wanting to save it. A good lesson that money does not



File photo

grow on trees.

## 2. Use technology.

There are so many apps and games available for almost anything today. Why not use it for something useful such as games that teach basic money concepts? Many games are geared towards different age groups, so be sure to load one that your child can understand.

## 3. Play store.

Grab some play money and a pretend cash register or calculator, label some items with how much they cost and have children practice making purchases. This will help them with the basics of adding up as well as managing prices and what they have.

## 4. Clip coupons together.

Make it a weekly event, give

kids the responsibility as well as awareness that coupons help save money. Sit down and talk about the grocery list and what coupons you can use to help lower the bill. It can become a fun game and keep track of what you are saving, and show the total.

## 5. Give them responsibility with real money.

Give them some money to use and head to a local yard sale or even supermarket. Have them shop along with you and keep track of what they have. This will also teach them about making change as well as ensuring they are alert when handling money.

These are some ways to get you started. What other ways have you used to teach your kids about money?

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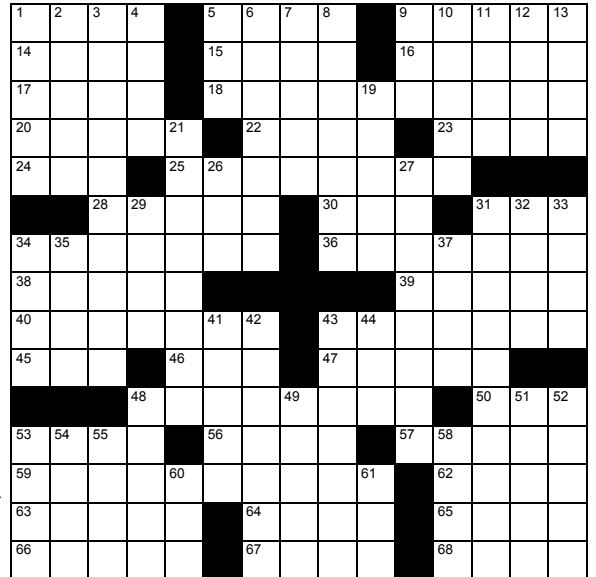
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## Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

### ACROSS

- 1 Puts in stitches
- 5 Tiptop
- 9 Hot sauce
- 14 Cookie for dunking
- 15 Watch-step link
- 16 French farewell
- 17 Kewpie, for one
- 18 Connery film of 1999
- 20 Go off-script
- 22 Trepidation
- 23 Engrossed by
- 24 Match, in poker
- 25 Conclusive trial
- 28 Poe's middle name
- 30 Bic filler
- 31 Long, long
- 34 On the way
- 36 Ammunition wagon
- 38 Arithmetic sign
- 39 Kind of cavity
- 40 Summer beverage
- 43 Unable to sit still
- 45 Hollywood's Danson
- 46 Make a goof
- 47 Mr. T's group
- 48 False show
- 50 Dog reprimand
- 53 Certain dancer
- 56 Staff symbol
- 57 Kind of cap
- 59 One-sided
- 62 Reduce, as expenses
- 63 Money substitute
- 64 iPhone assistant
- 65 Spellbound
- 66 Spartan slave
- 67 Leak slowly
- 68 Telephoto, for one



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- 3 Justly deserved
- 4 Songs for one
- 5 Sailor's assent
- 6 Keep in custody
- 7 Like some colors
- 8 Unpredictable
- 9 Tree trickling
- 10 Cop to
- 11 Bank claim
- 12 Email folder
- 13 Pilot starter
- 19 Gladiator's place
- 21 Railing part
- 26 Felix, for one
- 27 Like beauty, they say
- 29 and clear
- 31 Gathering, as of things
- 32 Capricorn's creature
- 33 One's partner
- 34 Shed
- 35 "Way to go!"
- 37 Sprawling story
- 41 Standing
- 42 Unpretentious
- 43 Showy display
- 44 Computer pros
- 48 Salk's conquest
- 49 Chilling
- 51 Singer Neville
- 52 Bottom of the barrel
- 53 Overdo the praise
- 54 Enough, for some
- 55 Kind of scout
- 58 Translucent gem
- 60 Anagram for "tap"
- 61 Sassy talk

### Answers to Previous Crossword:

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



## Memories with STARS AND STRIPES Pacific

Share your Memories with Stars and Stripes Pacific!

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



# Stripes Sports Trivia

The last 5 NFL teams to lose one game or less in the regular season have all failed to win the Super Bowl. Most notably, of course, is the 2007 Patriots - the 2nd team to ever finish the regular season undefeated. Can you name the most recent team to finish with one loss that failed to win the Big Game?

Answer

Carolina Panthers (2015)

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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.

### Answers to Previous Sudoku:

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

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

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GUAM EDITION

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2020



## Confused response

Miscommunications,  
delays plagued reaction  
to deadly rollover  
accident in S. Korea

Page 2

The helmet of Spc. Nicholas Panipinto is displayed on a battlefield cross during a memorial service Nov. 15, 2019, inside the Warrior Chapel at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

MATTHEW KEELER/  
Stars and Stripes

## COVER STORY

# Confusion, delays plagued response to rollover

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — Ordered to conduct a road test, the pair of Bradley Fighting Vehicles pulled out of the motor pool and turned right.

That was the first mistake, according to an investigation into the Nov. 6, 2019, rollover that killed Spc. Nicholas Panipinto, 20, and injured four others on Camp Humphreys.

The nearly 28-ton tracked vehicles should have gone left toward the base's vehicle wash rack, turned around and returned to their starting point, investigators found.



Panipinto

That was the approved road test route relayed to the company by its executive officer via WhatsApp more than a week earlier.

Instead, they ended up on a multipurpose training range and began making two loops.

Panipinto, of Bradenton, Fla., enlisted in the Army on Jan. 9, 2018, and completed training as an infantryman at Fort Benning, Ga. From there, he joined Arrowhead Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, which traveled to South Korea as part of the 3rd Armored Brigade Combat Team for a nine-month rotation beginning in June 2019.

Kimberly Weaver said her son had only recently become a driver, didn't have the proper license to drive a Bradley, had received only six hours of hands-on training and had no classroom instruction.

The 130-page investigation, completed at the end of December, said the primary causes of the accident were speeding and a corrective oversteer. It also said the convoy had not been authorized to enter the training field, which was already being used by another unit.

But details in the sworn statements and other information obtained by Weaver show a series of training and medical response lapses, including a medevac helicopter that went to the wrong place.

## Three soldiers punished

The Fort Hood, Texas-based 1st Cavalry Division has moved to oust the company commander, the platoon leader and the Bradley commander from the Army, according to a slide provided to Weaver when she met with the combat team commander Col. Kevin Capra on Aug. 23.

The three "received letters of reprimand and were initiated for involuntary separation," it said. "In addition, the Bradley commander received non-judicial punishment and was reduced in rank."

All 37 companies in the 3rd Brigade Combat Team were ordered to reassess their driver's training programs, to brief battalion commanders on the status of those programs and to ensure the programs are enforced to Army standards.

The slide also said U.S. Forces Korea, the main command on the divided peninsula, has ordered an examination into emergency medical care on all of its bases.

However, the changes are not enough for Weaver, who says her son's death had been preventable and the soldiers being punished are being used as scapegoats.

"This whole thing has just so many problems on so many different levels," Weaver said Saturday in a phone inter-



MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

**A photo of Spc. Nicholas Panipinto is displayed during a memorial service inside the Warrior Chapel at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, on Nov. 15, 2019.**

view. "Why are these three lower-level unit soldiers being thrown under the bus while the higher-ups are not being held accountable when all these failures happened under their watch?"

Weaver also received a copy of the emergency room report and the redacted Army investigation, which she shared with Stars and Stripes.

Capra "did say that none of this was Nicholas' fault. The commander said he was never supposed to be behind the wheel to begin with," she said.

In a separate statement, Capra called the deaths of Panipinto and Spc. Octavius Lakes Jr., who was killed in a separate Bradley rollover in January in California, "terrible tragedies."

The investigation had "resulted in non-judicial punishment for those found at fault for actions that contributed to the incident," he said, without providing more details.

Capra expressed confidence that lessons learned from the accidents would ultimately help make training safer.

"As a result of these investigations, the unit increased its focus on driver's training; improving the quality, frequency and record keeping for the driver's training program to ensure all those operating combat vehicles were trained and licensed properly," he said.

However, that was not the only problem. The road test was supposed to have been done the previous day in preparation for an upcoming gunnery exercise but apparently had to be pushed back. Senior leaders said in sworn statements that they didn't know it had been planned and were caught by surprise when informed about the rollover.

## Confusion and delays

The accident happened about 2:30 p.m. during the second loop.

"The driver of A31, SPC Panipinto, conducted the left-hand turn and missed the paved road with his right side tracks,"

the investigation said.

"SPC Panipinto then continued to steer to the left, digging the right track into the soft dirt" and prompting the vehicle to roll over.

The exact speed couldn't be determined, but investigators cited witness testimony and a simulation to place it at 17 to 40 miles per hour. The speed limit at the range is 6 to 15 mph. Weaver pointed out that some witnesses gave slower speeds.

Panipinto was trapped in the driver's position with a severe head wound, two crew members were thrown from the vehicle and two others were stuck in the back. Other troops on the scene had to use a sledgehammer to break the lock on the rear escape hatch to get them out.

Meanwhile, the other Bradley was used to tip the crashed vehicle with tow chains so Panipinto could be pulled out.

Combat medics and civilian first-responders raced to the scene, many of them saying they literally ran or flagged down cars to hitch a ride on the vast base, which is in the rural area of Pyeongtaek, south of Seoul. One rode a bicycle.

"There was some initial confusion amongst leadership as to the location of the accident — many personnel from the company initially moved toward the vehicle wash rack instead of the (training range)" according to the investigation summary.

The battalion surgeon and the other medics were praised for their efforts to treat Panipinto in an ambulance at the scene, but some testified that oxygen and suction supplies ran low and had to be replaced.

At one point, Panipinto was taken out of the ambulance on a stretcher to prepare for the airlift that was said to be about 10 minutes away. But the helicopter mistakenly went to the Rodriguez Live Fire Training Range near the border with North Korea, and the second was delayed by mechanical problems, witnesses said.

Camp Humphreys, which serves as the military's main headquarters in South

Korea and is the largest overseas U.S. base, had recently completed the construction of a new hospital, and the state-of-the-art facility was just over a week from fully opening.

Even after it opened, the Brian D. Allgood Community Hospital, which replaced an older facility that had been closed on the former main base in Seoul, is not equipped to treat trauma so those cases are sent to a nearby South Korean hospital.

"By the time he got to the ER, they gave him nine pints of blood and five pints of plasma," Weaver said. "He was pretty much completely drained of fluid because it took two hours to get him to the hospital."

## Calls for reform

The rollover was one of an alarming number of training accidents that have prompted calls for reforms.

A Congressional Research Service report showed that 32% of active-duty military deaths between 2006 and 2018 were the result of accidents, while 16% were killed in action.

Earlier this month, Rep. Vern Buchanan, a Florida Republican, called on the House Armed Services Committee to hold a public hearing on the issue. The House also passed an amendment to the defense budget authored by Buchanan that would require the Pentagon to examine emergency medical services at U.S. military bases.

Weaver said she also will continue to fight for changes to prevent future accidents from killing other soldiers like her son.

"He was my best friend and I can't just let him go without doing something," she said. "If we can do anything in his name to force change and save lives, then that's what I have to do."

Stars and Stripes reporter Corey Dickstein contributed to this report.  
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MILITARY

# Navy kicks off Valiant Shield drill near Guam

**By SETH ROBSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

Some of the United States' largest warships, along with 100 aircraft and 11,000 service members, were practicing finding, tracking and engaging targets in the air, on land and in the sea around Guam this month.

Exercise Valiant Shield, which ends Sept. 25, involves forces working on Guam and around the Mariana Islands Range Complex, the Pacific Fleet said in a statement.

Participants include the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, amphibious assault ship USS America, amphibious transport dock USS New Orleans and dock landing ship USS Germantown, according to the statement.

Joining them were about 100 aircraft and 11,000 personnel from the Navy, Air Force, Army and Marine Corps.

"It is vitally important that we demonstrate to our allies and partners our strong commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," the fleet director of maritime

operations, Rear Adm. Michael Boyle, said in the statement. "Exercises such as Valiant Shield allow U.S. forces ... to continuously improve joint lethality."

This is the eight Valiant Shield exercise since 2006, according to the statement. The last one took place in September 2018.

Participating forces were practicing providing maritime security, performing anti-submarine and air defense and conducting amphibious operations, the statement said.

Valiant Shield follows last month's Rim of the Pacific exercise off Hawaii, which involved navies from 10 nations with 22 surface ships and one submarine.

RIMPAC, which typically includes plenty of action ashore, was held entirely at sea this year because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Valiant Shield planners have taken steps to protect troops, their families and local residents from the virus, according to the fleet.

The U.S. territory has been under a government-mandated



KAILA PETERS/U.S. Navy

**The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan leads its strike group in the Philippine Sea during Valiant Shield 2018. This year's Exercise Valiant Shield, which ends Sept. 25, involves forces working on Guam and around the Mariana Islands Range Complex, the Pacific Fleet said.,**

"Pandemic Condition of Readiness 1" since Aug. 15 that shuts nonessential businesses; forces schools to use virtual instruction; prohibits most public gatherings; and closes parks and beaches to most visitors.

A stay-at-home order, in effect until at least Sept. 18, requires "all persons in Guam" to remain in their residences, except for essential activities such as food shopping, visiting a doctor or commuting to and from work.

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# Navy, allies conduct four-nation Pacific Vanguard exercise

**By CHRISTIAN LOPEZ**  
*Stars and Stripes*

Warships of four nations assembled in waters off the coast of Guam on Sept. 12 for another round of exercises on the heels of Rim of the Pacific drills, according to the U.S. Navy.

Pacific Vanguard involves naval forces from the United States, Japan, South Korea and Australia that steamed together to Guam after the scaled-down multinational RIMPAC exercise that concluded Aug. 31.

RIMPAC, conducted in waters near Hawaii, is considered the world's largest naval exercise but the coronavirus pandemic trimmed the number of navies involved this year to 10.

The eight-ship, one-submarine flotilla that transited the Pacific from Hawaii to Guam used that opportunity to train together, too, according to a previous Navy statement.

The same eight ships are taking part in the third iteration of Pacific Vanguard, along with more than 1,500 sailors, one unnamed submarine and a patrol aircraft, according to a Navy statement. The service did not say when the exercise would end, but last year's Pacific Vanguard lasted 11 days.

During the exercise, the four navies will work together on live-fire, surface warfare, combined maneuver, anti-submarine warfare and replenishment-at-sea drills,



U.S. Navy

**Warships from the United States, Australia, Japan and South Korea are training together during exercise Pacific Vanguard, which started Sept. 12 near Guam.**

according to the Navy.

"Participation in Pacific Vanguard provides realistic, relevant training that fosters each nation's abilities to plan, communicate and conduct complex maritime operations together, at sea," the Navy quoted Cmdr. Christopher A. Gahl, commander of the guided-missile destroyer

USS Barry, as saying. "The United States, along with allies and partners, is committed to preserving stability and freedom of access to the global commons."

The U.S. strategy to offset China's goals in the western Pacific includes building "stronger alliances and partnerships" that allow "interoperability," a frequently employed U.S. military term describing the ability of one country's armed forces to use another country's training methods and military equipment.

The U.S. military works with partner nations in the Indo-Pacific region such as Japan, South Korea and Australia to multiply their collective military strength and "deter and deny" aggression by China, according to the "United States Strategic Approach to the People's Republic of China," a 16-page statement released by the White House in June.

The Barry, a P-8 Poseidon patrol aircraft from Patrol Squadron 1, fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Ericsson and the submarine are taking part in the exercise for the United States.

Also taking part are the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force destroyers JS Ashigara and JS Ise; the Australian navy frigates HMAS Arunta and HMAS Stuart; and South Korean destroyers ROKS Chungmugong Yi Sun-sin and ROKS Seoae Ryu Seong-ryong.

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## MILITARY

# 'A no-fail mission'

## Soldier recalls hostage rescue for which he received Medal of Honor

BY COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — Gunfire ripped through the air and suicide-vest explosions rattled the ground as then-Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Patrick Payne peered inside the burning building where dozens of prisoners held by Islamic State remained locked in cells.

He knew he needed to move quickly or the hostages would burn to death, the longtime Army special operator said. He entered the building, exposing himself to machine gun fire, and with a set of bolt cutters, freed the prisoners from the jail in the northern Iraqi city of Hawija.

For his actions in the Oct. 22, 2015, raid, which ended with the first American service member killed by ISIS since the U.S. return to Iraq in late 2014, Payne, now a sergeant major, received the Medal of Honor on Sept. 11 from President Donald Trump. The award is an upgrade of the Distinguished Service Cross that Payne was initially awarded in 2017. He will become the second living service member to receive the nation's highest honor for combat valor for actions in Iraq.

In an interview, Payne, 36, struggled to describe his feelings about receiving the Medal of Honor, which he said should be credited to the troops with whom he served on the battlefield that day and the dozens of mentors who shaped him into one of the Army's most elite special operators.

"It's a different feeling," said the veteran of 17 combat deployments. "It's hard to describe. You hear stories of other Medal of Honor recipients. And for me, I don't consider myself a recipient, I consider myself a guardian of this medal, and the legacies of my teammates will live on with this Medal of Honor."

That includes the legacy of Master Sgt. Joshua Wheeler, who was killed by enemy fire during the raid, and who posthumously received the Silver Star, the nation's third highest honor for valor, for his own actions that day.

### 'No fail mission'

Payne's unit — a task force of elite members of the U.S. Army Special Operations Command and special forces from the Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga — spent more than a week preparing for the hostage rescue mission behind enemy lines. By nature, hostage rescues are among the most dangerous missions that U.S. troops execute.

It was not Payne's first hostage rescue mission. Twelve years earlier as a young private, he had participated in the operation to free Pfc. Jessica Lynch from her Iraqi military captors. There were other hostage rescues in between, he acknowledged.

Like the others, Payne said, the 2015 operation was "a no-fail mission."



ANDREW HARNIK/AP

**President Donald Trump awards the Medal of Honor to Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne in the East Room of the White House on Sept. 11.**

The task force was alerted ISIS had dug new graves at the prison compound, where some 70 hostages were being held in Hawija. At that point, Payne said, quick action became critical.

"If we didn't [raid] this target then these hostages would probably be executed," he said.

The firefight broke out immediately as the CH-47 Chinook helicopters dropped off Payne and the other U.S. and Kurdish soldiers under the cover of darkness. The teams split into two forces, sending Payne into the first prison building, where 37 hostages were held.

The firefight grew heavier at the other building as Payne prepared to enter the first prison. They heard over the radio that a U.S. service member was hit — Wheeler. Payne recalled the Kurdish fighters struggling with the news that one of the Americans had been shot. But the mission had to continue, he said.

"Our partner force needed some strong inspiration and leadership, and that's when one of my teammates looked them right in the eyes and said, 'Follow me,'" Payne recalled. "I mean, it was kind of one of those moments, you're like, 'Wow. This is pretty awesome.' And at that point, you know that personal courage is contagious on the battlefield."

"Once you're able to control your fears, that's a bridge to personal courage."

The team entered the first building and freed the hostages with bolt cutters. The prisoners' eyes lit up, Payne recalled.

Some cried.

Meanwhile, a fire had broken out at the other building where the battle continued. Payne made his way there.

"I told my teammate, 'Hey, let's get in the fight,'" he recalled. "It was just, 'Hey, let's go.'"

### Second building

Payne and another soldier made an unsuccessful attempt to enter the burning building from the roof. Suicide bombs shook the building as he tried to find an entry point.

With cover from his comrades, Payne entered the building with the bolt cutters, freeing hostages from several cages.

"That's when we hear over the radio that the building is starting to collapse," he said. "So, we're being shot at, the building's on fire, and it's starting to collapse. We have hostages still inside and part of our partner forces inside the building, too."

Mission leadership called for a mandatory evacuation. The team worked to get the hostages and Kurdish forces moving out of the building. Payne stood, pointing the way out "basically like a third base coach," he said.

He noticed one hostage, a large man, was not making any effort to flee.

"He had basically given up on life," Payne said. "I basically grabbed him by the back of the collar and pulled him out of that building."

The grueling nature of the bat-

tle did not dawn on Payne until he was back on the helicopter traveling out of ISIS-controlled territory.

"It hit me for the first time, you know, it was like what did we just do?" he said. "It was the epitome of teamwork to liberate these hostages."

He learned of Wheeler's death shortly after landing. Payne lauded Wheeler's actions that day.

"He knew what had to be done, and he didn't hesitate," Payne said of Wheeler. "He looked at his teammates and gave the order, 'On me.' And then he ran to the sound of the gunfire."

### A special moment

Payne received the Medal of Honor on the 19th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the primary event that convinced him to join the military, as thousands of other Americans did.

He said that he would be thinking of the firefighters and others who rushed to respond that day in New York City and at the Pentagon and the other service members who have volunteered to fight since 2001.

"You think about them, you think about our country," he said. "I'll think about my teammates, you know."

Payne enlisted in the Army shortly after graduating high school in South Carolina in 2002.

After watching live news coverage of the twin towers collapsing, he knew he wanted to fight.

After some research, he aimed

to join the Army's elite 75th Ranger Regiment, whose Rangers were among the first soldiers sent into Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks.

After initial entry training and completing the Rangers' grueling selection process, Payne arrived at the 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga., early in 2003. He was sent to Iraq, where the United States had just invaded, for his first combat experience not long after his arrival at the unit.

"I wanted to have the opportunity to serve with the best, and that's why I chose to serve in the [Ranger] Regiment when I first joined the military," Payne said.

In 2007, he was selected to join the Army's most elite units within its Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, N.C., where he has since served several deployments to Afghanistan, Iraq and in support of counterterrorism operations in Africa.

Now an instructor at Fort Bragg, he has earned numerous valor awards for battlefield heroics, including Bronze Star Medals with combat "V" for valor, a Joint Service Medal with Combat "V" and Army Commendation Medals with Combat "V."

He also received a Purple Heart after he was injured in battle in Afghanistan in 2010. It was while recovering from those wounds, which left shrapnel permanently embedded in his leg, that he met his wife, Alison. Payne credits Alison with helping him get back in shape, which ultimately saved his Army career.

"She was a dual-sport athlete in college, and she just helped me start running again and got me on my feet," he said. "If I didn't get my knee to bend again, basically ... I was going to have to think about different career paths."

Instead, as he recovered, he decided he wanted to accomplish another feat in the military — to win the grueling 60-hour Best Ranger Competition. In 2012, alongside his Ranger partner Master Sgt. Kevin Foutz, he accomplished that goal.

It was one of the highlights of his career, he said.

"Looking back at it, [I] learned a lot from that competition," Payne said. "It teaches you ... that you've got to push yourself to a limit that you didn't know existed, to actually win that competition, and you can take the lessons learned from that competition and apply it to combat."

Those lessons were critical as he cleared that burning building under fire in October 2015, he said. They will be critical as he continues his Army career, which he aims to extend well into the future.

"I still want to serve to this day," Payne said. "We're still a nation at war, and I still want to serve my country."

**'I consider myself a guardian of this medal, and the legacies of my teammates will live on with this Medal of Honor.'**

**Sgt. Maj. Thomas Patrick Payne**

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## MILITARY

# Army study: Good night sleep better than naps

By J.P. LAWRENCE  
Stars and Stripes

Catching up on sleep by taking cat naps during the day isn't as beneficial to the brain as getting a good night's sleep, and could increase the risk of developing neurological disorders including Alzheimer's disease and dementia, an Army study has found.

That's because the brain is better at flushing out toxins during normal sleeping hours, so at night, said the study published recently in *Nature Communications*.

"These findings suggest that people who rely on cat naps during the day to catch up on sleep or work the night shift may be at risk for developing neurological disorders," Dr. Lauren Hablitz, lead author of the new study, said in an Army statement.

"In fact, clinical research shows that individuals who rely on sleeping during

daytime hours are at much greater risk for Alzheimer's and dementia along with other health problems," said Hablitz, a research assistant professor at the Center for Translational Neuromedicine at the University of Rochester Medical Center, where the study was conducted.

The findings could be bad news for service members, who often resort to short naps during the day to make up for a lack of sleep at night.

More than 60% of service members are estimated to sleep less than 6 hours per night on average, and those who have previously or are currently deployed get even less shut-eye, said a 2019 article in the journal *Neuropsychopharmacology*.

Lack of sleep significantly decreases performance, and increases the risk of developing major depression, the article said, also citing pre-deployment insomnia as a significant contributor to post-trau-

matic stress disorder and suicide ideation.

For the study, researchers focused on the glymphatic system, the central nervous system's waste clearance system. When a person sleeps, their glymphatic system pumps fluids through their brain tissue to wash away toxic proteins and other waste.

Disrupted sleep or trauma can cause the system to break down and allow toxic proteins to accumulate in the brain, the study said.

When researchers anesthetized mice for an entire day, they found that their glymphatic systems peaked only during the hours they would typically be sleeping.

"These findings show that glymphatic system function is not solely based on sleep or wakefulness, but on the daily rhythms dictated by our biological clock," said neuroscientist Maiken Nedergaard,

co-director of the Center for Translational Neuromedicine at URM and one of the study's authors.

Funded by the Army Research Office, the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, the National Institute of Aging, and the Novo Nordisk and Lundbeck Foundations, the study is part of the Army's efforts to help soldiers sustain performance, even when they don't have time to rest, said Dr. Frederick Gregory, a program manager for ARO's neurophysiology of cognition initiative.

"This knowledge is crucial to developing future countermeasures that offset the deleterious effects of sleep deprivation," he said.

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## Lawmakers push to honor Black D-Day hero

By STEVE BEYNON  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Four congressional lawmakers are pushing to award the Medal of Honor posthumously to a Black Army medic who was wounded on D-Day and spent the next 30 hours treating injured men on the beach until he finally collapsed from his own wounds.

Cpl. Waverly B. Woodson Jr. was with the all-Black 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion and



Woodson

treated 200 troops on the battle-ripped landing area known as Omaha Beach, the stretch of French coastline that saw the worst fighting on D-Day when allied troops launched their amphibious invasion of Nazi-occupied France.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., backed by Sen. Pat Toomey, R-Pa., introduced legislation last week to award Woodson with the Medal of Honor. The same measure was also introduced in the House by Rep. David Trone, D-Md. and backed by Rep. Anthony Brown, D-Md.

Van Hollen said the award is long overdue, and upgrading Woodson's Bronze Star to a Medal of Honor would right a historical wrong. He is confident both chambers of Congress will quickly and unanimously approve the medal. However, a lack of documentation partly due to records being lost in a fire has gridlocked the effort.

"Beyond that 1973 fire that destroyed 80% of Army personnel records. There are very few records left from WWII," said Linda Hervieux, a journalist who wrote "Forgotten: The Untold

Story of D-Day's Black Heroes, at Home and at War," which chronicles Woodson's segregated battalion. "Only 1% of Army records from WWII have been retained. The Army maintains that in order to recommend a Medal of Honor they need a trail of records, which do not exist in this case."

In the early hours of June 6, 1944, Woodson landed with his unit on Omaha Beach as part of the Allied invasion. Despite having been struck by shrapnel in the inner thigh and rear when the landing craft that Woodson was in hit a mine and was blasted by a shell, he spent 30 hours saving the lives of his fellow soldiers, according to Hervieux. Woodson set up a casualty collection point at a rocky embankment on the beach, which provided some protection from the fire from German machine guns.

Roughly 4,400 Allied troops died in the Normandy landings.

"He dug out bullets, cleaned wounds, reset broken bones, and did an amputation while the battle raged around him," Brown said in a news conference.

Woodson was previously recommended to receive a Medal of Honor at the time of his actions, though his commanding officer had recommended him for the Distinguished Service Cross. He was ultimately awarded a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart.

"The higher-ups recommended the Medal of Honor, but he didn't receive it because of the color of his skin," Trone said. "As we look at the systemic racism the country is grappling with now, this is part of that. This is a piece of the Jim Crow that sprung from slavery. It's a continuing journey. We're here to correct a wrong. The systemic racism led the government to this decision."

More than 1 million African Americans served in World



LINDA HERVIEUX/AP

In this undated photo provided by Linda Hervieux, Joann Woodson kneels at the gravesite of her husband Cpl. Waverly B. Woodson Jr. at Arlington National Cemetery.

**“He dug out bullets, cleaned wounds, reset broken bones, and did an amputation while the battle raged around him.”**

Rep. Anthony Brown  
D-Md.

War II, but none were awarded the Medal of Honor during the conflict. Seven medals were eventually awarded in 1997 by President Bill Clinton. At the ceremony, Clinton said the men were “denied their nation's highest honor” because of the color of their skin but “their deeds could not be denied, and they cleared the way for a better world.”

Woodson died in 2005 and his widow, Joann Woodson, has been advocating for years to upgrade his Bronze Star. If her husband is awarded the Medal of Honor, she plans to donate it to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washing-

ton, D.C.

“He's my husband, we had a long marriage and we want to have a legacy for our family,” said Joann Woodson, 91. “He deserves it. We have to keep his story alive and history has to be as correct as it possibly can.”

Joann Woodson said her husband faced racial bias in the Army beyond being passed over for decoration. Waverly Woodson was activated to serve again in the Korean War. He was set to be stationed at an Army base in Georgia to be a medical instructor. But he was reassigned when it was discovered he was Black.

“When he got there that's

when they discovered he was a Black man. And then it was decided there's no way he could be a Black instructor in the South at the time,” Joann Woodson said. “He was then sent to work at [Walter Reed National Military Medical Center].”

Last year, the Congressional Black Caucus, along with Van Hollen, sent a letter to Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy asking him to open a formal review of Woodson's case, saying he was not awarded for his bravery “because of the color of his skin.” Van Hollen and the other lawmakers also intend to send a letter to President Donald Trump asking him to speed up the process for issuing the long-sought decoration.

Trone said Trump can act immediately and there wouldn't be a need for the legislation.

“We have two bites at the apple,” he said.

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## MILITARY

# Report: Palau offers to host military bases

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

The Republic of Palau, east of the Philippines in the Western Pacific, has offered to host new U.S. military facilities, including ports and air bases, The Wall Street Journal reported earlier this month.

The offer came during a recent visit by Defense Secretary Mark Esper that coincided with bomb-clearing and airfield repair by U.S. Marines on the islands of Peleliu and Angaur, the newspaper reported.

"Palau's request to the U.S. military remains simple — build joint-use facilities, then come and use them regularly," Palauan President Tommy Remengesau Jr., who visited the White House last year, wrote in a letter to Esper, according to the report.

"The government of Palau is not only receptive, but is enthusiastic about the United States military broadening and deepening its operations, exercises and training in and around Palau," Heino Klinck, deputy assistant secretary of defense for East Asia, told the Journal.

The offer "suggests that Palau is feeling vulnerable to China's strategic ambitions and is seeking a counterweight," Jeff



NOGA AMI-RAV/Stars and Stripes

Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University's Tokyo campus, said in an email.

The islands occupy territory east of the Philippines that's becoming more important to U.S. military planners contemplating China's massive military buildup and occupation of disputed sea territory to the west.

Palau, with a population just under 18,000, includes 340 islands covering nearly 180 square miles of land, just slightly less than Guam, where the U.S.

military is building massive new bases for Marines to facilitate the drawdown of forces from Okinawa.

In addition to Guam, the U.S. has military facilities on other Pacific islands, such as Kwajalein and Wake Island.

The U.S. and Australia also have plans to establish a presence on Papua New Guinea's Manus Island, to the south, by refurbishing a World War II-era navy base.

A plan to build facilities for visiting American forces on

military bases in the Philippines, which has a mutual defense pact with the U.S., has proceeded at a snail's pace since it was agreed in 2014. Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte has tried to terminate the agreement that governs visiting U.S. forces and offered warm words for China and Russia.

The U.S. and Australia, meanwhile, are scrambling to shore up relationships in the Western and South Pacific, where China has been making military inroads and investing millions in construction projects, buying influence in the process.

China "seeks to reorder the region to its advantage by leveraging military modernization, influence operations and predatory economics to coerce other nations," former acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said in an Indo-Pacific Strategy Report last year.

About 100 U.S. Marines and sailors from Task Force Koa Moana of the I Marine Expeditionary Force were in Palau last month.

The Army sent 200 soldiers to train there last year for the first time in 37 years.

Palau was the scene of fierce battles during World War II. About 1,800 Marines and soldiers

were killed in the Battle of Peleliu in the fall of 1944. Another 8,000 were wounded.

Palau remained under U.S. administration for a half-century after the war.

In 1986, Palau and the U.S. entered a Compact of Free Association, which ushered in the nation's full independence in 1994. Under the compact, the U.S. is responsible for Palau's military defense for 50 years.

Through a Compact Trust Fund, the U.S. Congress appropriated financial aid packages for Palau.

The trust fund undergoes a review and amendment process every 15 years, with the next review due in 2024.

Meanwhile, Beijing made inroads with Palau through direct investment and a steady flow of tourists to the country.

But in 2017, China banned tour groups from traveling to Palau because the island nation refused to drop official diplomatic relations with Taiwan, which China maintains is a renegade province and must return to its control.

Palau is one of fewer than 20 countries that formally recognize Taiwan.

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## USAF offers \$100K for improved bladder relief for female pilots

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is offering at least \$100,000 to whomever comes up with a way for female pilots to answer the call of nature while strapped into the cockpit of a jet.

"Let's develop an improved, reliable and effective system to enable female aircrew to relieve themselves while flying sky high," said a document announcing the "Sky High Relief Challenge" last month.

The Air Force "needs an improved bladder relief system that allows female aviators to hydrate adequately and relieve themselves during flight without interfering with operations or compromising flight safety," the document said.

Solving the problem has become urgent, with flight times running up to 16 hours, it said.

Female aircrew often deprive themselves of liquid to avoid having to urinate in flight, a practice called tactical dehydration, that can reduce physical and cognitive performance and impair a pilot's ability to withstand G-forces, the document said.

Bladder relief during flight has long been a challenge for the services. Male pilots have also run into problems.

For example, in 1992 an F-16 crashed in Turkey after the pilot undid his lap belt so that he could relieve himself in a "piddle

pack" — which at the time consisted of a dehydrated sponge in a plastic container — only to send the aircraft into a spin when he wedged the belt's buckle between the seat and the stick that controls the plane.

The pilot ejected safely and no one was hurt on the ground, but the \$18 million jet was a write-off.

Piddle packs evolved over time, but never with female pilots in mind. Some women have reported stripping off clothes in the cockpit just to use one, Wired magazine reported in 2000.

Many pilots use the "old proven standby" of adult diapers to avoid having to resort to in-flight relief systems, the Wired article said.

Piddle packs are being replaced by the ominously named Advanced Mission Extender Device, a battery-operated device worn underneath the uniform and designed to collect urine.

For men, the urine is collected in a cup, and for women in a pad, before it's pumped into a collection bag strapped to the leg.

The maker of the device, Vermont-based Omni Medical Systems, reassuringly notes that it's made from fire-retardant materials. The female version "fits like a sanitary pad," Omni said.

The competition to find a solution for female pilots seeking in-flight relief is being



MARLEAH ROBERTSON/U.S. Air Force

**Lt. Col. Christine Mau, 33rd Operations Group deputy commander, puts on her helmet before taking her first flight in the F-35A in 2015. The Air Force is offering at least \$100,000 in prize money to inventors who develop systems that allow female pilots to relieve themselves in flight.**

run by AFWERX, an Air Force program that promotes and invests in new technology and ideas to solve problems.

"Providing them with female-specific equipment that functions safely and reliably will lead to vast improvements in their physical and mental health and enable them to focus on their missions with minimal distraction," AFWERX said on its webpage.

An evaluation team will review submis-

sions beginning Sept. 21. Prizes range from a minimum of \$100,000 for categories such as urine transfer and storage technology to at least \$250,000 for a complete pumpless bladder relief system.

"Your solution could potentially provide female aviators the relief needed to navigate the skies with the ease and comfort they deserve!" AFWERX said.

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## MILITARY

# US Army bans masks with valves for soldiers in S. Korea

By KIM GAMEL  
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — The U.S. Army has banned masks with valves for soldiers and other personnel in South Korea, joining a growing consensus that the high-tech face coverings may do more harm than good in preventing the coronavirus' spread.

The decision followed new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which said last month that such masks "allow air to be exhaled through a hole in the material, which can result in expelled respiratory droplets that can reach others."

South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety also recommended against wearing masks with valves.

U.S. Forces Korea made it mandatory for people to wear masks when in public off-base, in accordance with rules set by local communities after another coronavirus outbreak began last month.

On base, people must wear them inside stores and other crowded facilities, or anytime it's not possible to maintain a safe distance from other people, USFK said.

However, the Eighth Army announced last Tuesday that masks with valves were no longer authorized.

"Neck gaiters and other cloth items, such as bandannas and scarves, are authorized as face masks along with masks without valves," it said in a post distributed on social media.

"Face coverings or masks must cover both the mouth and nose and extend to the chin or below as well as to the sides of the face. Stop the spread!" it added.

Many commenters expressed frustration about the decision, noting that the high-tech masks had previously been recommended as most effective against pollution.

Some also asked if refunds would be provided since the Vog-masks sold at the post exchanges cost about \$30.

The Eighth Army said the ban applies to all personnel including troops, civilians, contractors and their family members.

"The U.S. CDC and Army Public Health Command state the exhalation valves allow unfiltered exhaled air and droplets to escape the mask that may contain viruses," the public affairs office said in response to questions from



MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

**Tech. Sgt. Jessica Smith of the 51st Communications Squadron wears a valved face mask at Osan Air Base, South Korea. The masks have been banned for soldiers and other personnel in South Korea.**

Stars and Stripes.

The post exchange, which still had valve masks on display at Camp Humphreys last week, said its standard return policy applies.

The Air Force has begun encouraging people not to wear them based on the CDC recommendations but hasn't issued a ban, according to the 51st Fighter Wing.

Face masks have long been a controversial topic for the U.S. military in South Korea, where people commonly wore them even before the pandemic as protection against high levels of pollution.

USFK previously banned soldiers from wearing masks while in uniform but reversed that

last year to allow face coverings under certain conditions following complaints that more protection was needed against poor air quality in South Korea.

As the coronavirus took hold earlier this year, the policy evolved to encourage face masks as one of the simplest and most effective ways to save lives.

Masks with valves, a common site among construction workers, may be more comfortable and make it easier to breathe.

However, recent studies have found that they are less effective at preventing the spread of the coronavirus because they put people near the wearer at risk.

Research published recently

in the scientific journal *Physics of Fluids* included dramatic visualizations showing that vented masks and face shields allow large plumes of particles to escape.

"Masks with exhalation ports include a one-way valve, which restricts airflow when breathing in, but allows free outflow of air," the article said. "The inhaled air gets filtered through the mask material; however, the exhaled breath passes through the valve unfiltered."

Stars and Stripes reporters Yoo Kyong Chang and Matthew Keeler contributed to this report.  
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## Mandatory masks, widespread testing set military apart

By NANCY MONTGOMERY  
Stars and Stripes

VICENZA, Italy — Real patriots wear masks. At least those in the military do.

Since the beginning of April, the Defense Department has required all troops, family members and civilian workers to wear masks in commissaries, base exchanges, offices, aircraft, ships, while on maneuvers and anywhere else they can't stay 6 feet away from others to prevent transmission of the coronavirus.

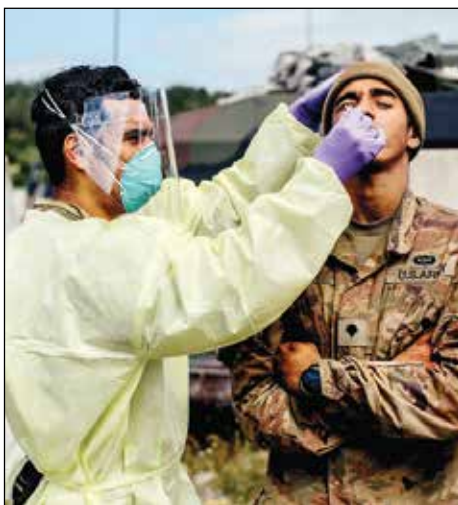
"At the end of the day, it's a rule; it's part of the uniform," said Maj. Chris Bradley, a spokesman for the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which recently tested and deployed thousands of paratroopers from Italy to Germany and back without a single case of the coronavirus.

There's no federal mask-wearing mandate for American civilians, despite recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control for face coverings and studies showing they reduce viral transmission by an average of 40%.

Mandating masks is just one way the military response to the pandemic has been more rigorous than that of the civilian community.

"We changed the way we conducted physical training, requiring physical distancing and limiting group sizes," said Col. Ken Burgess, 173rd Brigade commander.

"Ultimately, it's hard for a squad auto-



RYAN LUCAS/U.S. Army

**A U.S. Army medic paratrooper assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade swabs a soldier for COVID-19 at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, last month during Exercise Saber Junction 20.**

matic weapons gunner to telework. We recognized the need for a culture shift in our operations to preserve readiness, but also maintain our proper mitigation measures," he said.

The brigade placed curfews on paratroopers, restricted travel, limited alcohol consumption and made bars and restaurants off-limits.

"All of this helped to ensure our force was protected from exposure and, in the event of an outbreak, we limited the risk of spread," Burgess said.

Testing is also more widespread in the military community than in the U.S. population at large.

The active-duty force and reserve component number a little more than 2 million.

A direct comparison of the military versus the U.S. population for virus infection and death rates isn't possible for a number of reasons including the fact that service members are generally in good shape and able to fight off the virus, the low mean age of service members compared to the population at large and stark differences in testing rates. But, by way of comparison, New Mexico, where about 2 million people live, 26,268 people have tested positive for the virus and 813 deaths have been blamed on it.

"You don't have too many 80-year-olds in the military's population," said Dr. Josh Sharfstein of Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "The risk is going to be way lower. But if (the military) are able to do rapid testing and contact tracing, they're definitely doing better than parts of the country."

U.S. Army Garrison Italy tests all incoming personnel and their families during a mandatory two-week quarantine. The garrison also has a robust system to track and test close contacts of those

found to have the virus.

In much of the United States, in contrast, contact tracing has been stalled by long waits between testing and results, contacts who can't be located or are uncooperative and the virus's pervasiveness.

"Since the military has such a critical mission to accomplish and has to do so in environments where you can't control a lot, we've had to be more scrupulous maybe than our civilian counterparts," said Col. Rodney Coldren, chief of Preventive Medicine Services at Public Health Command Europe.

The military also has "within our culture less of an individualistic and more of a protect-your-buddy ethos baked in," he said.

It also feels it has the responsibility to avoid spreading the disease, he said. "Not only do we want to keep COVID out of our own populations, but also those of our host nations," Coldren said.

Testing continues to show "extremely low" levels of the virus within the Europe-based military community, he said.

With schools back in session and more people mixing, the military expects to see more cases — but it's also confident of its response to the virus and that of the military community, he said.

"If people keep doing the right thing, we can get through this," Coldren said.

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MILITARY

# Family reunion

## Stepbrothers reconnect for first time since 2001 while on deployment in Afghanistan

BY CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

Staff Sgt. Johnathan “Ben” Cox had just joined the military and his stepbrother was still a baby the last time the two had seen each other.

When he shook hands with Pfc. Tyler Rowland at Afghanistan’s Bagram Airfield in late July, it was their first meeting since 2001 — the year the war began — an Army statement quoted Cox as saying.

“Now here he is in front of me, a grown man in the same uniform I’m wearing, on his first deployment and me coming off my sixth,” Cox said.

A wheeled vehicle mechanic with 1st Battalion, 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade, the elder of the two brothers said he was “floored” to see Rowland, who is 18 years his junior and deployed as a helicopter repairer with the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

“It felt surreal,” said Rowland, who didn’t recognize Cox until they clasped hands on the second floor of the passenger terminal at the sprawling American base north of Kabul. “Actually meeting him for the first time, it was amazing.”

Their conflict-zone reunion came in what might be the final months of America’s longest war, as the Taliban and the Kabul government inched toward peace talks under a U.S.-brokered deal that seeks to reconcile the warring sides and is expected to see American troops depart within the next year.

The stepbrothers had been in touch before. When Cox heard Rowland was considering joining the Army, he offered some advice from his own experience, suggesting his younger brother consider his long-term goals.

“I told him being in the Army, one thing I regret is not changing my military occupation specialty,” said Cox, who said auto mechanics was his passion. “Working on cars is fun and all, but working on Humvees and military equipment, you get burned out.”

Both mechanically inclined soldiers



Tyler Rowland

**Staff Sgt. Johnathan “Ben” Cox, 3rd Security Force Assistance Brigade, and Pfc. Tyler Rowland, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, met for the first time in almost 20 years on July 21 at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.**

grew up in Gig Harbor, Wash., where Rowland’s mother, Andi Larsen, helped raise Cox as his stepmother from the time he was five until he joined the Army.

“Tyler has heard me talk about his older brother Ben his whole entire life,” Larsen said in the statement. “It was strange that he never met him, but by talking about

**‘Now here he is in front of me, a grown man in the same uniform I’m wearing, on his first deployment and me coming off my sixth.’**

**Staff Sgt. Johnathan “Ben” Cox**

him and showing Tyler pictures, I kept him alive and made Ben real for him.”

Rowland’s Fort Carson, Colo.-based command worked to make the reunion happen, the statement said. It served as a reminder for leaders to care for their troops, said Rowland’s boss with the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, also known as the Mustangs.

“I want the Mustangs to understand nothing is more important to Ivy Division leaders than our soldiers and their families,” said Lt. Col. Tyler Partridge, commander of the battalion, whose helicopters have recently been ferrying relief supplies to areas of Parwan province devastated by flooding.

Cox’s chain of command also accommodated the 20-minute meeting, which took place as the older sibling was preparing to depart Bagram with his Fort Hood, Texas-based unit, the statement said.

“I said, ‘Are you kidding me right now? This is crazy!’” Cox said. “I never heard of this before. I was absolutely floored. I was so ecstatic I didn’t know what to say.”

Rowland’s mother was thankful they had a chance to reconnect, her voice cracking as she spoke about the event, according to the statement.

“It was special,” she said. “I am so proud of both of them. They’re both so brave, and they are good men. They put the right things first. They deserved this.”

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# Navy bans certain ‘herbal’ shampoos, lotions and soap

BY CHAD GARLAND  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Navy has banned sailors and Marines from using shampoos, lotions and soaps made with hemp or cannabidiol, one of the main active compounds in cannabis plants, it said in a statement.

At issue is the possibility that such products could contain

too much of the psychoactive compound found in pot called tetrahydrocannabinol, or THC, and their use could “negatively impact mission readiness and disqualify a sailor from continued service,” said the statement released earlier this month.

The Navy banned the use of topical products made with hemp or its derivatives in a July 24 administrative message, saying

it’s impossible for consumers to determine how much THC such products contain based on label claims that may be untrustworthy. The policy warns that the use of hemp-based or products containing cannabidiol, or CBD, risks interference with the department’s drug testing program.

The policy’s goal is to prevent service members from unknow-

ingly consuming THC in any amount, the Navy said last week.

The new rule follows a ban imposed last summer by the Navy on the ingestion of products containing hemp or hemp derivatives without a valid prescription, after a 2018 farm bill removed low-THC hemp from the Controlled Substances Act.

Many health and beauty products now contain hemp seed oils or other derivatives, and their manufacturers boast of their ability to hydrate skin, heal damaged hair, battle acne and more — without getting users high.

The Army, Air Force and Coast Guard already have policies in place that forbid military members from using products made with hemp or hemp seed oil. The Navy’s previous policy only banned the ingestion of hemp-derived products or use of others, such as transdermal patches, that are designed to put CBD into the bloodstream.

The new rule still allows for

the use of CBD-containing products that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration, if a service member has a valid prescription. The rules do not prohibit the use of “durable hemp goods” such as rope, twine or clothing.

Sailors who test positive for THC or other substances without a prescription will be processed for administrative separation, and could receive an “other than honorable” discharge, the Navy said. That could affect their eligibility for veterans’ benefits and employment opportunities.

“We have to be fit to fight and can’t take a risk in allowing our sailors to consume or use these types of products,” said L.A. Parker, head of the drug detection and deterrence branch of the 21st Century Sailor office.

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