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Seeing the bigger picture

Chaplain survived a challenging childhood on Guam caused by father's troubled lifestyle

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
STAFF SGT. JOSHUA JOSPEH MAGBANUA,
39TH AIR BASE WING

Capt. Genesis Guerrero, a chaplain for the 39th Air Base Wing, was 17 years old when his family almost fell apart.

It started with an ugly discovery, then escalated into fits of rage as he witnessed his parents arguing hysterically: his father, Gene, had been caught being unfaithful.

"I walked out of my room to make sure it didn't escalate to violence because dad had a history of hitting mom whenever he was angry," Genesis said.

"They continued to argue in front of my sister and I," he recalled. "Mom was broken and angry, and dad—who I had never seen cry up to this point—was crying and seemed so lost."

Genesis recounted the scene as a whirlwind of arguments and expletives ascending further into chaos, culminating into unexpected terror—Gene picked up his sawed-off shotgun and pointed it at his head, preparing to shoot himself and end it all.

The two siblings pleaded with their father not to pull the trigger, while their fearful mother sat frozen.

"He didn't want to kill himself in front of us, so he grabbed the keys to his red Chevy Blazer, gun in hand, and said we would never see him again," Genesis continued. "As he climbed into his truck, we began to cry with even more desperation. I tried to pry the driver's side door open, but he locked it with his windows sealed shut."

The teenager's mind raced. He frantically ran back into the house and grabbed the first thing he saw: his homecoming portrait. Then he dashed outside just in time to catch his father shifting the truck's gear

into reverse. He pleaded with his father through the driver-side window, telling him how much he loved him and needed him.

"I cried in anguish," Genesis recalled. "I pointed at the picture and told him to think about his family before he killed himself. At that point he opened the door, took the picture and left. I watched him drive away not knowing if I would ever see him again."

"I went back into the house and sobbed uncontrollably with my mom and sister until we couldn't cry anymore," the chaplain added.

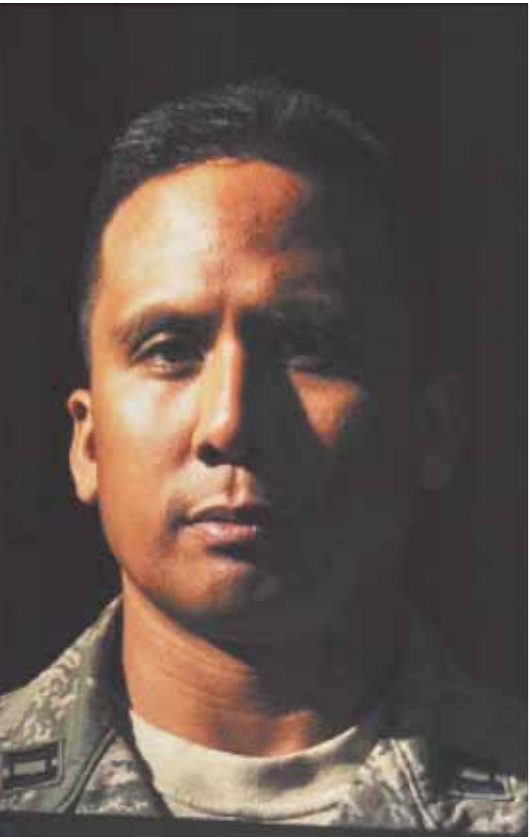
For Genesis, the events of that day served as a climax in a long and painful chain of events which began early in his life.

His family hailed from the U.S. territory of Guam, a small island in the Pacific Ocean. However, due to his father mingling with the wrong crowd and getting into trouble, the Guerreros fled more than 1,000 miles away to the Philippines. After two weeks in the tropical republic, the parents decided to send their two children out even further—across the ocean to the continental U.S. to live with relatives, hoping their offspring could find a brighter future.

Genesis said he felt safe, but overwhelmingly alone during his life in exile; he found himself in a new world, immersed in an unfamiliar culture and living with people he barely knew.

"My sister and I lived without our parents in Colorado for about two years," said Genesis. "There were many nights I cried myself to sleep, not knowing if I would ever see my parents again because I struggled with the possibility that dad could go to jail, or even worse ... get murdered."

There was no one to ease those fears, Genesis recalled, saying although he and



Capt. Genesis Guerrero holds his high school portrait. When he was 17 years old, Guerrero used the picture to successfully dissuade his father from committing suicide.

his sister were in a safe environment, they felt like strangers in their new home.

He described his relatives as "nice people," but added, he couldn't help but feel like a "stepchild" and an "irritating house guest."

"They didn't sign up to raise four kids, two of which were not their own," he said.

Genesis' mother eventually made her way to the U.S. without her husband. She moved with her children to a rural town in Georgia where close to a year later, Gene arrived to reunite with the family.

SEE PICTURE ON PAGE 2

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Guerrero (front) receives a hug from his father, Gene (face shown), on his wedding day in St. Augustine, Fla. Courtesy photo

PICTURE: Beginning path to healing

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Genesis remembered his father being met with a mixed reception.

“I was always told I was a happy-go-lucky kid, so I received dad with open arms,” he said. “My sister had the most difficult time forgiving dad, but mom was relieved because she finally had her husband back to help shoulder burdens.”

Once reunited, Genesis remembered the rocky family dynamic as mostly good until that harrowing night when his father stormed off with his shotgun, threatening to kill himself.

Genesis said he didn’t remember much of what happened the rest of the day, only that he came to grips with the reality his father will make his own decision.

Thankfully, after hours of terrified waiting, Gene returned

home safely.

When Genesis asked his father what changed his mind about ending his life, the homecoming portrait was the answer.

Looking at that photograph helped Gene see the bigger picture.

“It helped him think of his family,” said Genesis. “The picture served as a change in perspective.”

But it wasn’t just his dad who had to change, because the younger Guerrero explained he also needed a new perspective—and a change of heart as well. He harbored bitterness because his father’s troubled lifestyle sent the whole family into exile.

It was not until Genesis said he discovered his faith at the age of 18 when he began yet another difficult journey: the path to healing.

“It helped him think of his family, the picture served as a change in perspective.”

SEE PICTURE ON PAGE 4

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PICTURE: Reconciliation between father and son

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

He described forgiveness as the first step to healing, and the most challenging one as well.

"I blamed my dad for everything at one point," he said. "Dad's immaturity and poor decisions moved us halfway around the world and left us struggling to make ends meet. We went from having everything we wanted and needed in Guam to living in low-income housing in south Georgia."

Genesis didn't want to forgive his dad, but was encouraged by a close friend of his who reminded him about one of the principles of his newfound Christian faith: forgive because you have been forgiven.

And so he made an effort to reconcile with his dad, adding it was a long process with many obstacles. But as he continued working through this

relationship, he found even at the end of a painful history, one could start a new and hopeful chapter.

"I got a chance to develop a good relationship with my dad," Genesis said. "We got a chance to talk about a lot of things. It was cool just to have a man-to-man conversation with him, and to hear his heart behind it all."

This reconciliation between father and son manifested in one of the most poignant ways: on Genesis' wedding day, when Gene served as one of his son's best men.

"I had two best men at my wedding: my dad, and my best friend who helped me forgive my dad," said Genesis. "It was such a privilege to have both my biological and spiritual fathers to encourage me on such an important day in my life."

It was the process of grace, faith, forgiveness and

reconciliation which Genesis said helped him in the journey to healing. It helped him rebuild his relationship with his father and find peace within himself.

Now, as a chaplain in the U.S. Air Force, he strives to help Air-men find inner peace as well.

"In order to truly have peace in your heart, you have to be willing to forgive," he said. "Until then you are suffering in silence."

Genesis added along with forgiveness, a change of perspective is also needed to guide people along in their process of finding peace.

To illustrate his point, he described a cross: once an instrument of death and torment in ancient times, it now symbolizes hope and healing for billions of people around the world—both religious and not.

"For me, that's what faith can offer," the chaplain said.

"It gives you a different lens through which to look at life: a lens of hope that shows me no matter what my circumstances are, they don't define me."

Gene Guerrero eventually passed away in 2012 due to natural causes. Genesis expressed how grateful he was for the opportunities to spend time with his father before saying goodbye for the last time. Although they stumbled on a broken road in separate journeys, he concluded they both saw life through a new lens ... and gazed upon a bigger picture which saved their lives.

"Since then, I've been able to look back and slowly connect the dots that seemed so fuzzy at one point," he said. "And now I want to help people see all of life, both the tragedies and triumphs. For me this begins with serving my wife, four children and the Air-men my God has entrusted me to care for."

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A career counseling, consoling servicemembers

Hilary Valdez is a retiree living in Japan. Prior to his retirement, Valdez was a Master Resiliency Trainer at Camp Zama. Valdez has extensive experience working with the military as a certified Substance Abuse Counselor and Emergency Trauma Specialist. He continues to counsel members of the military community and is also a freelance writer, publishing books on relationships, psychology, mental health and the military. He'll also be writing a column that will appear weekly in Stripes Japan. We recently sat down with Valdez to get to know him a little better. Here's what he had to say.

What does a resilience trainer do?

Resiliency Trainers focus on positive psychology and finding positive elements in a person's everyday life. The aim is improving well-being through enhancing: Self-awareness or identifying strengths emotions and behaviors; Optimism or what is controllable while being hopeful; Self-regulating emotions, and impulses; Mental Agility, or thinking flexibly, identifying a person's top strengths and talents; and, Connection or improving positive communication, asking for support from others and increasing communication and strong relationships.

How long did you serve in the Marine Corps and what made you go into this field?

I served four years in the Marine Corps as an NCO then four years as a Civilian GS worker. When I was about 9 or 10 years old my neighbor had his Dress Blues hanging on the door, I was "wowed" at how beautiful the uniform was. I wanted to wear dress blues and join the Corps when I grew up. But, for the honor of wearing the "Blues" came with a heavy price. Eventually, I worked for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., as a Conciliation Specialist and Field Agent negotiating a broad range of civil and criminal activities. The Department trained me in various aspects of conflict resolution techniques. After that, more schooling and training with the Army and Navy with a focus on Trauma and Critical Incident psychology.

What are some of the mental health challenges troops and retirees face in the Pacific?

For the troops: Loneliness. A degree of social isolation and alienation. Depression, Anxiety, and Stress. For retirees, depending on their retiree status, having limited access to quality medical and dental care; for some, no access to the commissary or PX; having enough money to make ends meet; health related issues from active duty; feelings of being alienated from America and uneasiness of adjusting to American life if they chose to return. Many military retirees are in mainland Japan, Okinawa, Thailand, Philippines, and Korea.

You've spent decades working with our military and their families, how do you cope with all the heartache you deal with? Who takes care of you?

I try not to personalize events. I want to stay objective and concentrate on the immediate needs of the family while keying into their emotional needs and well-being. It doesn't do the client any good if I'm crying my eyes out while they are crying. However, as a helper, there is always a residual emotional side-effect of dealing with sorrow, you get emotionally "singed" to a degree. I have a support group and other Counselors who I speak with. I don't sit around saying to myself: "Poor me, Poor me, Pour me a drink." I don't cope with my emotions by drinking. Alcohol is a depressant: I don't want to be depressed, so, I go to the gym and ride my bike.

You're retired but continue to work with patients. Tell us about your connection with the military community.

I'm retired, but my knowledge, skills, insights, and abilities remain. Concepts of retirement have changed. It's not like great-grandpa days where you hobble around and do very little. Today, no such thing as retirement, you just change your role in society. You shift gears and transition into a livelihood that fits your lifestyle. For me, I enjoy helping people. Currently, I conduct Cultural Seminars to Japanese and I have a private practice catering to young businessmen dealing with international marriages. Occasionally, I give seminars on Substance Abuse and Resiliency when called upon. However, I have active duty, civilian, and retiree friends in Japan, Korea, Manila and Bangkok, who I contact and meet regularly. All my closest friends and support groups are military associated. We chat at the gym, at breakfast, at the food court. My military friendships have become everlasting and meaningful.

– Stripes Guam



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Mental Notes with Hilary Valdez

*A fallen soldier:
A widow's grief*

BY HILARY VALDEZ,
STRIPES GUAM

When my brother died, my mother never recovered. Her grief never subsided. She was perpetually angry. Her despair and mood swings shifted through various states of depression, interspersed with crying spells. My father was quiet and supportive. I didn't know what to do or feel.

Later, I joined the Marine Corps, and during Vietnam, as a bugler, I played Taps at countless funerals, witnessing the sorrow of family members. After one burial, an inconsolable father grabbed my shoulders, and shaking me shouted, "Why is my son dead? Why are you alive?" Then collapsed in my arms, sobbing.

After post-graduate school, I served with Marines from the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines and 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, at the 29 Palms Combat Center. That Christmas, in 2005, 32 Marines were killed during combat operations of Operation Enduring Freedom, followed by two suicides.

As a trauma counselor, I was tasked with providing defusings, which are psychological decompression sessions, for widows, family members and Marine survivors. After this duty assignment, I spent two years dealing with my own post-traumatic stress, compassion-fatigue, bewilderment, nightmares, anger, and remorse. I had to re-wire my head, re-calibrate my psychological senses, re-boot my humanity, and outlook on life.

My next role was with the Army as a Survivor Outreach Manager, while training Casualty Assistance Officers dealing with active duty deaths. A military death is filled with complications. Death does not bring out the best in anyone, it is painful to witness the deep sorrow of the families left behind.

Military widows come in all ages, races and nationalities. Most of the husbands or wives had died suddenly and violently, in a foreign country, many were young. For a widow, the loss is life-changing. Their loved one is never coming home. The widower loses more than that person: they also face losing a part of themselves. And, children only complicate widowhood further.

There is no quick or pain-free way through grief. How and why a servicemember dies has a great impact on grief. The ordeal of military widowhood is just beginning. A nightmare has invaded the person's life. There is a loss of purpose and a heightened sense of fragility emerges. The widows are forced to face their own mortality as the death has erased security from their lives.

Death is a critical time. Depression, anger, fear, emptiness, guilt, are common emotional reactions to sudden death. Grief affects every part of you, physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and psychologically. Pain and sorrow are the price of a love lost to death. Your emotions follow you and there is no geographical cure. Protecting America is a dangerous profession.

A Casualty Assistance Officer (CACO) is assigned to a family member at the time of death. The Primary Next of Kin (PNOK) may be a spouse, parents, siblings or other family members including children, remarried surviving spouses (does not include a divorced remarried spouse). Being designated as PNOK does not, in and of itself, designate a survivor as a beneficiary for benefits. For support, clarification, benefits and on-going help contact: Department of Veterans Affairs, www.va.gov; Social Security Administration, www.ssa.gov; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS); Thrift Savings Plan, www.tsp.gov; Tricare – Military Health Plan, www.tricare.mil; Gold Star Wives, <http://www.goldstarwives.org>; Military One Source, <http://www.militaryonesource.com>; Society of Military Widows, <http://www.militarywidows.org>; Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Inc. (TAPS) <http://www.taps.org>; United Warrior Survivor Foundation (UWSF) <http://www.FrogFriends.com>.

Death is complicated. Prepare for paperwork at a time of severe emotional grief. There are numerous resources for the widow or widower, too many to provide in this article. A more complete list of resources is available at: Military Widow: A Survival Guide/Steen & Asaro.

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



HILARY VALDEZ





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Military beset by pharmacy-middleman headaches

BY MARTY SCHLADEN,
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH, OHIO

Millions of U.S. servicemembers and veterans are among a group that some say is being ill-served by one of the three huge pharmacy middlemen that dominate America's drug marketplace.

Patients, providers and pharmacists across the country complain that those middlemen, known as pharmacy benefit managers, have used their market dominance to drive up prices and drive out competition and force patients into the PBMs' own — some contend inferior — mail-order pharmacies.

In Ohio, PBMs have been accused of overbilling taxpayers, anti-competitive practices and interfering with cancer patients' access to medication. Now, similar complaints are surfacing about the exclusive contract that one of them, Express Scripts, has with Tricare, the program that provides health care to active-duty military and to veterans.

Since 2009, Express Scripts has held the exclusive right to serve as pharmacy benefit manager to 9.5 million active-duty troops and veterans as well as their dependents, who together received \$7.7 billion worth of drugs in 2018, according to statistics from the Defense Health Agency, which runs Tricare. That contract makes the program one of the biggest clients of St. Louis-based Express Scripts, the nation's largest pharmacy benefit manager.

As pharmacy benefit manager, Express Scripts determines reimbursements to retail pharmacies that fill Tricare patients' prescriptions and bills the government for them. It also administers transactions involving government-purchased medicines at military bases and through Express Scripts' own mail-order pharmacy.

In 2011, the program started favoring Express Scripts' mail-order pharmacy over its retail competitors by eliminating copayments for generic drugs from the PBM.

'It's like they're penalizing us'

Now, because the government-purchased brand-name drugs enjoy manufacturer rebates that those dispensed by retail pharmacies don't, the program requires participants to get most of those more expensive drugs exclusively through Express Scripts' mail-order pharmacies or at military facilities.

The system favors Express Scripts at the expense of customer service, said Linda Talley, who lives in Rineyville, Kentucky, near Fort Knox, where her husband retired after a 29-year Army career. She described her sacrifices as his career took her to California and Germany, how she stayed in North Carolina while he was deployed to Korea and how she stayed in California while he was on an island in the middle of the Pacific.

"I served, too," she said.

But Talley, 60, said Express Scripts doesn't do much to serve her. To get most brand-name drugs or less-expensive generics, she has to either obtain them through Express Scripts' mail-order pharmacy — which Talley said often takes two weeks — or she can drive 10 miles to a military-run pharmacy at Fort Knox, where "sometimes you can wait hours."

Recently, Talley was planning a two-month trip and asked the Express Scripts mail-order pharmacy to overnight her a 90-day supply of a new medication. Talley declined to say what malady it was for, but said, "If I don't have my medication, that could cause a lot of harm."



The headquarters of St. Louis-based Express Scripts, the nation's largest pharmacy benefit manager. Photo by Paul Sableman, Flickr

No dice, Express Scripts said. The company couldn't fill the prescription that quickly, and even if she paid the higher copay at a retail pharmacy, "they can only fill it for 30 days at a time" because that's all Express Scripts would reimburse the pharmacy for, Talley said.

"I know a lot of retired military people who are a little bit fed up with how things work," she said. "They think it would be nice if they could just walk into a local pharmacy and get the same price. It's like they're penalizing us because we were in the Army and we're retired."

Talley said she would much rather buy her drugs at one of Gary Hamm's Apothecare pharmacies in the area, where she can get her medicine quickly and because "he knows my name, my history and the medicines I'm on." But Ronna Hauser, vice president of the National Community Pharmacists Association, said even when they can provide the drugs, retail pharmacies are at a strong disadvantage because of Express Scripts' exclusive rebates.

"There's this big incentive to move all of these people to Express Scripts mail order or to military treatment facilities," she said. Making rebates available to pharmacy retailers "is doable. You could have a charge-back system in retail where you purchase the drug and then you do a charge-back to get down to the amount that Express Scripts purchased it for."

Express Scripts spokesman Brian Henry deferred many questions for this story to the Defense Health Agency. Kevin Dwyer, spokesman for the agency, said taxpayers have saved \$130 million annually since 2015, when the National Defense Authorization Act required Tricare patients to get brand-name maintenance medications at Express Scripts home-delivery pharmacies or at military health facilities.

Asked why his agency couldn't achieve similar savings by making the same rebates available to retailers, he said Tricare "utilizes government-contracted medications at both the home-delivery and military pharmacies that are negotiated for by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the DoD for specific use by the government. The government does not purchase the drugs dispensed in retail network pharmacies, rather retail pharmacies purchase their own drugs through their own supply chains and negotiate prices on their own behalf."

Last year, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, joined a bipartisan group of 23 senators calling on the undersecretary of defense to find a way to "restore beneficiaries' access to community pharmacies, regardless of whether their needed

medication(s) are brand or generic manufactured." So far, however, that hasn't happened.

Life and death

The Tricare-Express Scripts arrangement also has come under heavy fire from the people who care for some of the sickest military personnel — cancer patients.

In May, The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch reported the case of Charlotte Ortiz, a 39-year-old Ohio Air National Guard recruiter living in Springfield who had developed a rare, aggressive cancer. The cancer was so rare that there was no FDA-approved drug to treat it. But Express Scripts disallowed any "off-label" use — meaning that it wouldn't pay for the \$11,000-per-month drug her nationally renowned doctors said she needed. That triggered appeals that Express Scripts could take up to 90 days to consider, a period during which all of Ortiz's other treatments could be delayed as well.

Brown intervened to speed up the process, and more than a month after her doctors prescribed the drug, Express Scripts agreed to pay for it. Ortiz had been getting the medicine through manufacturer donations before that. She died last month.

Oncology clinics around the country report other problems with the Tricare-Express Scripts deal. For one, they say Express Scripts often reimburses clinic-based pharmacies for expensive cancer drugs at far below their cost, forcing the clinic to decline to fill prescriptions.

"I have heard from almost every practice about how all of these drugs are underwater," said Ted Okon, executive director of the Community Oncology Alliance. "This is a big, serious problem."

Cancer clinics stress the importance of their pharmacies in the continuum of care. Dosages of expensive cancer medications can be complicated, and doctors can make frequent adjustments. So it makes sense to house the doctors and the pharmacy in the same building, they say. Meanwhile, mail-order specialty pharmacies are prone to delays and other mistakes that can endanger lives, they add.

But Express Scripts reimbursements are disrupting that continuum for Tricare patients, said Nina Chavez, chief operating officer of the New Mexico Cancer Center in Albuquerque.

"We've started losing money on every script we're filling for Tricare," she said, explaining that even with the prescriptions her clinics can't fill, doctors and pharmacists there are still helping patients deal with the complexities of their medications. "We're doing all the work, and (Express Scripts) is getting all the

money."

Lisa Day, a pharmacist with Ventura County Hematology-Oncology Specialists in California, listed a host of problems: Express Scripts reimbursements for a single cancer drug coming in at more than \$1,000 under cost, Tricare patients using the company's mail-order pharmacy and having drugs stolen off their porch, and an elderly patient with dementia struggling to manage his wife's drugs over the phone.

"I've seen so much go down and seen so many of my patients lose hope and just drop out," she said.

Henry, the Express Scripts spokesman, said his company isn't biased against cancer clinics; it's the other way around.

"We reimburse pharmacies and clinics fairly for the work they do and disagree with any inference to the contrary," he said in an email. "Some oncology clinics do have a bias against pharmacy benefit managers, like Express Scripts, as our goal is to provide the most cost-effective care versus dispensing medications at extremely high markups."

Dwyer, of the Defense Health Agency, noted that Tricare patients can get cancer drugs through Express Scripts mail-order, at military facilities and at large-chain pharmacies: Kroger, Walgreens, Rite Aid and Walmart.

"Our patients are the central focus of all Military Health System pharmacy decisions, and Tricare beneficiaries may receive specialty (including cancer) medications through all three points of service when available," he said.

Hidden figures

Henry said cancer clinics' markups are high compared to those of Express Scripts' mail-order pharmacy. But as a general matter, you have to take the big pharmacy benefit managers' word for it when they say what a drug should cost. State Medicaid systems in Ohio and around the country are trying to figure out ways to make the system more transparent, with varying degrees of success.

Hamm, whose Fort Knox-area pharmacies Linda Talley wants to use, said Express Scripts and the other two massive PBMs — CVS Caremark and OptumRx — have been providing low-ball reimbursements based on secret price lists. And for the past eight years, Tricare has taken steps to drive its beneficiaries out of his pharmacies altogether.

"It's just a challenge, and it just took another chunk of business away from us," he said.

Charles Gallagher, a retired naval officer living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, is one of those guys who pores over his monthly explanations of benefits — not because the money is coming out of his pocket, but because he's trying to protect the taxpayer. He noticed that Express Scripts has billed Tricare for omeprazole, a generic heartburn medication, for a 90-day supply at rates ranging from \$8.51 to \$666 since 2017.

He's been writing to anyone he can think of looking for an explanation. Henry, of Express Scripts, said he can't comment without seeing Gallagher's explanation of benefits.

Gallagher said he thinks he knows what the game is: "I'm absolutely sure they're taking advantage of us."

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Soldiers with 1224th Engineer Support "Hita" Company, Guam Army National Guard stand in formation during their mobilization ceremony, Oct. 6.

38th ADA Brigade welcomes Task Force Talon

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. RAQUEL VILLALONA,
38TH AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY BRIGADE

ANDERSON AIR FORCE BASE – The 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade command team personally welcomed members of Task Force Talon to the team during a visit to Guam, Oct. 6-8.

The visit started with a mobilization ceremony for the 1224th Engineer Support "Hita" Company, Guam Army National Guard Oct. 6, placing the unit on active duty status in preparation to assume the security forces 12-month rotation mission of Site Armadillo from Task Force Guahan, 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment, GU ARNG.

"This occasion marks the first step in the official transfer of authority between security force units in one of our nation's most vital and strategic locations," said Col. Patrick M. Costello, 38th ADA Brigade commander. "It marks the continuation of the unique multi-composition of the task force, a model that demonstrates the versatility of our military, but more importantly

demonstrates to the Army, what right looks like. The mobilization marks the continuation of the integration of reserve component and active duty Soldiers as a total force to strengthen the defense of U.S. citizens, U.S. territories, and safeguard our national interests."

The Indo-Pacific region covers 52 percent of the earth's surface, making Guam's strategic location immeasurable to the air defense mission.

"Our geographic location here in Guam, in the Pacific theater, is one that we are seen as the epicenter in the defense for threats in the region," said Guam Gov. Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero, GU ARNG commander-in-chief. "We are here to celebrate the transition of TF Guahan to Hita Company's 71 Soldiers that will deploy for a year to guard and protect the assets in the Pacific and defend the nation."

Hita Company will officially join TF Talon and assume the SECFOR mission from TF Guahan, 1-294th Inf. Regt. during an upcoming transfer of authority ceremony.

"Since 2013, TF Talon has cultivated a strong and lasting relationship with the Guam Army National Guard," Costello remarked. "Today's ceremony and the upcoming transfer of authority symbolizes the continued commitment between both organizations to defend Guam and support the U.S Indo-Pacific Command Regional Homeland Defense mission. TF Talon continues its historic legacy as the Army's only forward-stationed, multi-component air defense task force."

TF Talon is comprised of four elements, each contributing to the holistic mission of defending the Indo-Pacific region from any ballistic missile threats.

"TF Talon is made up of a command and control section/headquarters element; a SECFOR element, currently TF Guahan until Hita Company assumes the rotation next month; and E-3 Air Defense Artillery-THAAD, which provides the air defense aspect at our Guam location" said Sgt. Maj. Dennis M. Petty, TF Talon senior enlisted advisor. "Members of the 307th

Expeditionary Signal Battalion-CPN (command post nodes) detachment from Wahiawa, Hawaii, provide the SMART-T (Secure, Mobile, Anti-jam, Reliable, Tactical-Terminal), which enables satellite maintenance and communications capabilities essential to the mission due to the austere location."

TF Talon, originally established by the 94th Army Air and Missile Defense Command in 2013, joined the ranks of the 38th ADA Brigade on Oct. 1, 2019. The 38th Air Defense Artillery Brigade is also comprised of 1st Battalion, 1st Air Defense Artillery; 10th Missile Defense Battery; and 14th Missile Defense Battery.

Maj. Bryan Z. Lipe, TF Talon officer-in-charge and Petty provided Costello and Command Sgt. Maj. Neil Sartain, 38th ADA Brigade senior enlisted advisor, a guide through TF Talon's area of operations to welcome Soldiers to the Pacific Guardian Brigade and assess what systems and procedures are in place to continue mission success and efficiency. Together, the leaders

gaged what areas required improvement and where Soldiers and processes were excelling.

"It is important for TF Talon to maintain proficiency with the THAAD system and all the components that go into making the defense of the region possible, but we need to start looking at the bigger picture," said Lipe. "The task force seeks to integrate air defense training, not only with the GU ARNG, but also with aviation and maritime elements so that we can train like we will fight."

To move forward with this objective, leadership met with U.S. Navy Capt. Hans Sholley, Joint Region Marianas chief of staff, and U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Gentry W. Boswell, JRM deputy commander, to discuss future multi-domain training, enhance interoperability and synchronize service capabilities, Oct. 8.

As tensions continue to grow with China, Russia and North Korea, the integration of TF Talon's air and missile defense with joint partners remains crucial in the Indo-Pacific region.




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Pacific Griffin 2019

U.S., Singapore navies launch historic SINKEX

BY COMMANDER,
LOGISTICS GROUP WESTERN PACIFIC

GUAM – Live fire from ships and aircraft participating in exercise Pacific Griffin 2019 sank the decommissioned ex-USS Ford Oct. 1 in waters approximately 170 nautical miles off the coast of Guam.

Units from the U.S. and Republic of Singapore Navy participated in the sinking exercise, which provided them the opportunity to gain proficiency in tactics, targeting and live firing against a surface target at sea.

“This exercise provided important opportunities for realistic at-sea training with live ordnance, conditions that cannot be duplicated otherwise,” said Capt. Matthew Jerbi, commodore of Destroyer Squadron 7 and co-commander of the Task Group for the exercise. “Training alongside our Singapore partners in a complex exercise like this is invaluable.”

The SINKEX featured live firing of surface-to-surface missiles by the both navies and a Naval Strike Missile (NSM) from Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10).

Along with USS Gabrielle Giffords, several other units participated in the SINKEX, including missiles launched from maritime patrol aircraft from Patrol Squadrons VP-1, VP-5 and VP-47; bombs released from B-52 bombers from U.S. Air Forces’ Expeditionary 69th Bomb Squadron; and surface-to-surface Harpoon missiles launched from the Republic of Singapore multi-role stealth frigates RSS Formidable (FFS 68) and RSS Intrepid (FFS 69).

RSN Commander First Flotilla and Commanding Officer of 185 Squadron, Colonel Lim Yu Chuan highlighted the value of the exercise in enhancing professionalism between the two navies.

“Exercise Pacific Griffin is a valuable platform for the two navies to strengthen our mutual cooperation and interoperability,” said Lim. “With the vast training space available in the waters off Guam, the exercise also provides the RSN with the opportunity to conduct high-end exercises of substantial scope and complexity.”

Former U.S. Navy vessels used in SINKEXs, referred to as hulks, are prepared in strict compliance with

regulations prescribed and enforced by the Environmental Protection Agency under a general permit the U.S. Navy holds pursuant to the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act.

Each SINKEX is required to sink the hulk in at least 1,000 fathoms (6,000 feet) of water and at least 50 nautical miles from land. Surveys are conducted to ensure that people and marine mammals are not in an area where they could be harmed during the event.

Prior to the vessel being transported for participation in a SINKEX, each vessel is put through a rigorous cleaning process, including the removal of all polychlorinated biphenyls, transformers and large capacitors, all small capacitors to the greatest extent practical, trash, floatable materials, mercury or fluorocarbon-containing materials and readily detachable solid PCB items. Petroleum is also cleaned from tanks, piping and reservoirs.

Additional aircraft was present during the SINKEX to ensure safety precautions were taken for other potential aircraft and boats within the range area.

A U.S. Navy environmental, safety and health manager and a quality assurance supervisor inspect the environmental remediation conducted in preparation of a vessel’s use in a SINKEX. Upon completion of the environmental remediation, the manager and supervisor provide signed certification of the work in accordance with EPA requirements.

Towed to waters near Guam from Washington State, the former USS Ford was a Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigate, decommissioned in 2013 after more than 28 years of service. The ship was named for Gunner’s Mate Patrick O. Ford, who was awarded the Navy Cross posthumously for his heroism as a patrol river boatman in the Vietnam War.

The U.S. and Singapore work together on several initiatives and conduct regular personnel exchanges, routine participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises, such as SEACAT and RIMPAC, as well as combined operations such as multi-national counter-piracy.

As U.S. 7th Fleet’s executive agent for theater security cooperation in South and Southeast Asia, Commander, Task Force 73 and Destroyer Squadron 7 conduct advanced planning, organize resources, and directly support the execution of CARAT and other engagements in the region.

USS Key West participates in exercise

BY PO2 KELSEY HOCKENBERGER,
COMMANDER, SUBMARINE SQUADRON 15

The Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine USS Key West participated in the bilateral exercise Pacific Griffin with the Republic of Singapore navy, Sept. 24 to Oct. 10 in waters off the coast of Guam.

Pacific Griffin is an biennial maritime exercise between the U.S. and Republic of Singapore navies, designed to enhance combined warfighting skills and tactical execution.

“The importance of these exercises in terms of strengthening interoperability among our regional network of partners cannot be overemphasized,” said Capt. Timothy Poe, Commander, Submarine Squadron 15. “It is yet another example of U.S. Navy efforts to maintain a presence in the region, preserve peace and security and preserve open sea lanes through safe and professional maritime interactions.”

This year’s exercise covered the full spectrum of naval operations, from live fire drills and tactical ship maneuvers to air defense and anti-submarine warfare.

“It was an honor for our sailors to participate in Pacific Griffin, and reinforce the robust and enduring partnership between the United States and Singapore,” said Cmdr. Grady Hill, Key West’s commanding officer. “We were able to demonstrate the lethality and proficiency

of our crew in terms of tactics, targeting and live firing. I’m very pleased that my submariners were able to prove their readiness to fight alongside our regional partners.”

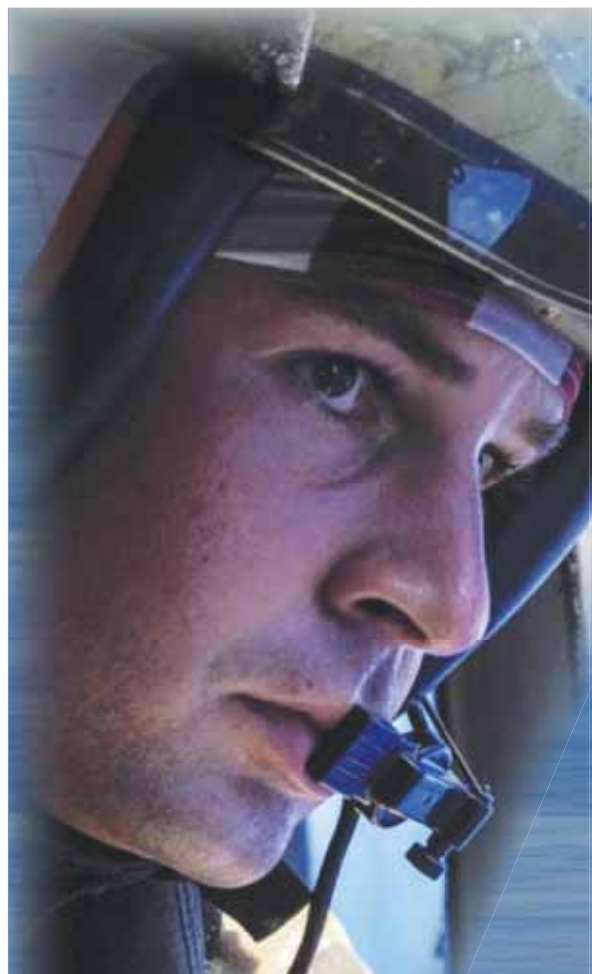
For the crew of Key West, the highlight of their bilateral engagement was a sinking exercise, in which live fire from aircraft, a submarine and surface vessels sank a decommissioned Navy vessel.

“We are always thrilled for the opportunity to participate in complex military exercises like Pacific Griffin,” said Lt. Adam Vieux, Key West’s Weapons Officer. “Pacific Griffin not only strengthened our bilateral relationship with our Singaporean counterparts, but also sharpened our warfighting skills. This exercise proved extremely valuable in our pre-deployment preparations and ultimately makes us better forward deployed warriors.”

CSS-15 is located at Polaris Point, Naval Base Guam in Santa Rita, Guam, and includes four Los Angeles-class attack submarines.

The squadron staff is responsible for providing training, material and personnel readiness support to these commands. Also based out of Naval Base Guam are submarine tenders USS Frank Cable and USS Emory S. Land.

The submarines and tenders are maintained as part of the U.S. Navy’s forward-deployed submarine force and are capable of meeting global operational requirements.



A naval aircrewman observes ordnance from an MH-60S Sea Hawk assigned to the “Island Knights.”

Photos by MC2 Christopher Veloicaza, U.S. Navy



An MH-60S Sea Hawk fires an AGM-114 Hellfire missile at the former USS Ford, a decommissioned frigate.



An MH-60S Sea Hawk approaches the former USS Ford.





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HONDA	RIDGELINE	2013	50170	5FPYK1F28DB017753	BLUE	\$19,995	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	4RUNNER	2012	64291	JTEZU5JR3C5040940	BLACK	\$19,995	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	TACOMA	2015	90690	5TFJX4CN4FX061690	BLACK	\$17,995	AUTOMATIC
FORD	F150	2013	58520	1FTEX1CM6DFB62997	SILVER	\$15,995	AUTOMATIC
CHEVROLET	SILVERADO	2010	116341	3GCRCSEA0AG142311	BLACK	\$14,995	AUTOMATIC
NISSAN	XTERRA	2014	33217	5N1AN0NU7EN804531	SILVER	\$14,995	AUTOMATIC
DODGE	RAM 1500 QUAD CAB	2010	53014	1D7RB1GK4AS196440	SILVER	\$13,495	AUTOMATIC
LEXUS	ES350	2013	62710	JTHBK1GG4D2008459	BLACK	\$13,495	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	4RUNNER	2008	107399	JTEBU14RX8K018318	BLACK	\$11,995	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	PRIUS-C	2012	71619	JTDKDTB31C1522009	SILVER	\$9,995	AUTOMATIC
SUBARU	OUTBACK	2011	87835	4S4BRBCC0B3440362	BLUE	\$9,995	AUTOMATIC
JEEP	PATRIOT	2013	90082	1C4NJRBBXDD253993	SILVER	\$9,995	AUTOMATIC
ISUZU	ASCENDER	2006	151043	4NUES16S266701308	BLACK	\$7,995	AUTOMATIC
HYUNDAI	ELANTRA GT	2014	72269	KMHD35LH5EU164198	RED	\$9,995	AUTOMATIC
CHRYSLER	300	2005	44315	2C3AA53G95H674386	CREME	\$5,995	AUTOMATIC
KIA	FORTE	2014	95826	KNAFK4A67E5078216	GRAY	\$7,995	AUTOMATIC
CHEVROLET	SILVERADO 1500 REG CAB 4X4	2010	36723	1GCPKPEA1AZ210039	WHITE	\$6,995	AUTOMATIC
HONDA	CIVIC	2010	116300	19XFA1F57AE032016	BROWN	\$5,995	AUTOMATIC
DODGE	DURANGO	2008	91449	1D8HB48218F112262	BEIGE	\$5,995	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	RAV4	2008	168287	JTMZD35V685093624	WHITE	\$5,995	AUTOMATIC
VOLKSWAGEN	JETTA	2008	115731	3VVJZ71K58M103505	BLACK	\$3,995	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	RAV4	2003	116730	JTEGH20V730100417	WHITE	\$3,995	AUTOMATIC
MERCEDES-BENZ	E320	2001	165511	WDBJF82J91X058316	BEIGE	\$3,995	AUTOMATIC
BMW	3 SERIES 323i	2000	159045	WBAAM3349YFP78263	BLUE	\$2,995	AUTOMATIC
HONDA	CIVIC	2003	119552	1HGES16333L028774	GREEN/SILVER	\$2,495	AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA	ECHO	2000	121980	JTDBT123XY0011290	GREEN	\$1,995	AUTOMATIC
CADILLAC	DEVILLE	1994	100000+	1G6KD52BXRU215824	WHITE	\$495	AUTOMATIC

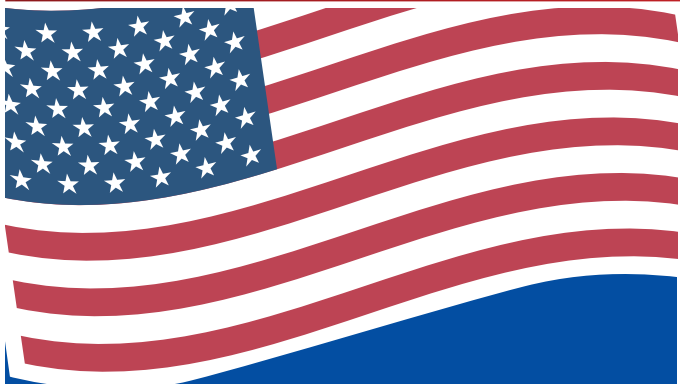
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Two
Lovers
Point

TWO LOVERS POINT

Love, fun
& shoppingBY ANNE JING PING WEN,
STRIPES GUAM

One of the first legends taught to children is the story of the two lovers. Growing up on Guam, few have not visited the famous Two Lovers Point. But did you know the landmark offers more than a nice sunset view of Guam?

The legend of Puntan Dos Amantes

When Spain ruled Guam, a proud family lived in Agaña, the capital city. The father was a wealthy Spanish aristocrat, and the mother was the daughter of a Chamorro chief. Their beautiful daughter was honest and modest, her charm so natural and impressive.

One day, the daughter's father decided to marry her daughter to a powerful, arrogant Spanish captain. When the girl discovered this, she ran from her house and wandered along the north shore.

In her loneliness, she met a handsome Chamorro man from a modest family. The two fell in love, sharing their thoughts and desires. When the father of the girl learned of the secret affection, he demanded his daughter marry the Spanish captain at once. That day, the daughter left home to meet her lover, and together, they visited the high point where they had first met and watched the stars.

When the father discovered that his daughter was gone, he told the captain that his daughter had been kidnapped by the Chamorro boy. The father, the captain and all the Spanish soldiers pursued the lovers up to the high cliff above Tumon Bay.

The couple stood at the very edge of the cliff and knotted their hair. They stared deep into each other's eyes and finally, kissed goodbye. Then they leapt off the deep cliff into roaring waves.

When the father looked over the edge, all he saw was the floating hair of the lovers. He regretted his choice, but his daughter was lost. Since that day, Chamorros revere the jutting peak by Tumon Bay. Visitors honor real love at Two Lovers Point.

Visiting the park

Two Lovers Point (i.e., Puntan Dos Amantes) is Guam's most famous landmark. Annually, the attraction welcomes 500,000 visitors to its park, and nearly 360-400,000 people to the lookout, according to public relations and sales member Terry Debold.

The terraza, is the newest feature at Guam's most famous landmark. "Because of the terraza (terrace), we are finding a lot of people up in the evening for the happy hour, just to relax in the evening," Debold said. "It is a nice open air terraza to feel the island atmosphere."

Tourist arrivals determine customer visits to Two Lovers Point. In the recent years, Guam has seen steady increases in Korean arrivals. Likewise, Korean dialects are heard around the park.

"A majority of tourists that visit Guam are from the neighboring Asian countries; most of them are going to visit Two Lovers Point at some point in their visit," Debold remarked. "It's almost like going to Paris and the Eiffel Tower or going to Tokyo and seeing the Tokyo Tower."

FOR
LOVERS

What to know



TEL: +1 671-647-4107
HOURS: 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
ADDRESS:

- Puntan Dos Amantes (Two Lovers Point) Harmon Cliffline overlooking Tumon Bay Harmon, Guam (Off of Route 1, Marine Corps Drive across Micronesia Mall)
- EMAIL:** info@puntandosamantes.com
- URL:** www.puntandosamantes.com/
- PRICE:** \$2

(Military Discounts: \$1 off regular admission)

- \$150 wedding arrangements: 30-min usage of upper deck, complimentary cider toast, 10 invited guests

Moreover, military personnel make up a large component of monthly visitors. The landmark attracts anywhere from 500-1000 military and dependents on a monthly basis. For a special military rate (\$2 admission), service members can view the lookout and all of Tumon.

"We have a lot of military personnel that come here, but they also bring their family members from the mainland here," Debold said.

At the lookout, one can see a "Lady on the Cliff" on the right and a "Man on the Sand" on the left. The cliff line's rock formation creates a lady's profile; a head and a face jut out from the cliff. On the left corner, one can see its counterpart: Man on the Sand. Most people who come to the landmark hardly notice its features, but after snapping a photo, the profile becomes noticeable. According to Debold, the left side of the lookout is the only place on island where one can take a panoramic view of Tumon.

The park has three distinct features: the Dos Amantes statue, the Terraza, and the Gift Shop.

The Dos Amantes statue was re-installed in 2015. After destruction from the winds of Typhoon Pongsona, bits and pieces were thrown into scrap fields. According to Debold, the resurrection of the statue represents the lasting bond between the two lovers; they were meant to be.

In the Terraza, friendly waitresses greet you as traditional music plays in the background. The new wooden structure offers a view of Guam's sandy beaches and relieves people from the scorching sun. This year, the Terraza will also host its first October Fest. On Sunday evenings, visit the park for a light beer festival.

When one is in need of air-conditioning, the gift shop offers a solution. Local crafts cover the tables, and souvenirs line the walls. Immediately outside, vendors sell refreshing mango smoothies and coconut juice

to help with the heat. Whether you tour the park or the outlook, consider the location an option for a wedding venue.

For \$150, you are entitled to 30 minutes to the upper deck, 10 invited guests, and a complimentary cider toast. What better location to tie the knot than Two Lovers Point?

"We have a lot of weddings because it's convenient. It's easy to reserve, and it's very affordable," Debold said. "We will get military personnel who are stationed in Japan, Korea, and all these places that want to get married on American soil. We are the nearest American soil, so then they'll contact us. They'll come here for two, three days, and we'll make all their arrangements for the wedding."

Wedding couples, and visitors alike, can ring the "Love Bell." - a smaller sister city bell found in the upper deck. In Kashiwazaki and Niigata, Japan, the exact bell is seen in three cities, all of which are Two Lovers Points.

"In Asian cultures, there is a strong belief that if you go to these places, it is a power spot," Debold said. "Two Lovers is unquestionably a power spot in the minds of various tourists that come to Guam. They believe there is a power here that can help your love be eternal."

Whether you are a local or a tourist visiting Guam, jog from Tumon or bike down the wide roads to Two Lovers Point. The power spot pays homage to eternal love and reflects Guam in its entirety: a tropical paradise.



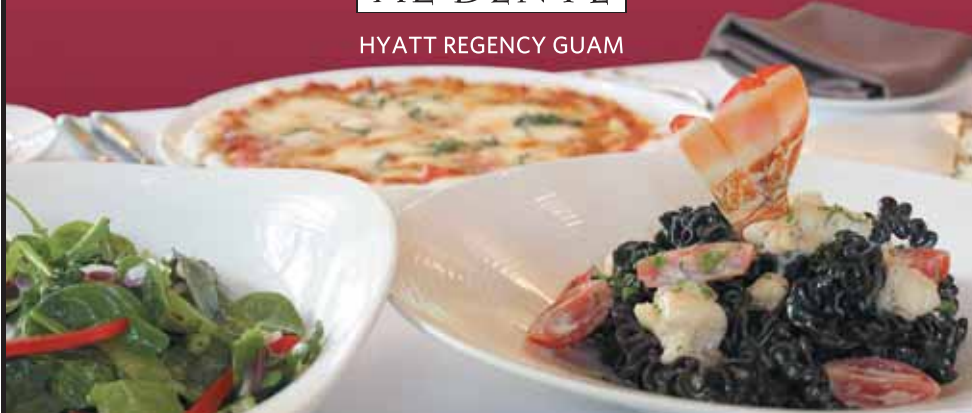
Photos courtesy of Marie N. Guerrero and Terry Debold, Two Lovers Point

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- **DATES:** December 15
- **PHONE:** 483-7773
- **LOCATION:** Central and Southern Guam
- **WEBSITE:** tourofguam.com

New Year's Eve fireworks



As the New Year's Eve celebrations kick off and the countdown begins, local residents and visitors alike look to the skies to enjoy a fireworks display over beautiful Tumon Bay. Each year, witness America's first fireworks celebration!

- **DATES:** December 31
- **LOCATION:** Tumon Bay
- **PHONE:** 646-5278/9
- **EMAIL:** kraig.camacho@visitguam.org

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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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New Made-In Guam craft brews unveiled



THE GUAM BREWERY TAP HOUSE

The Guam Brewery, Guam's newest craft beer production brewery, officially unveiled its freshly Made-In-Guam canned craft beers at a grand opening event on Oct. 1. The event celebrated the brewery's two-and-a-half year journey to offer the island a locally owned and operated brewery.

The Guam Brewery produces Guam's freshest beers in six delicious flavors available in kegs and cans – Guam Gold Cream Ale, Tumon Bay Hoppy Blond, Old Hagåtña Honey Rye, Island IPA, Mansanita Amber Ale, and Paseo Porter. All cans have been designed with a Guam theme to reflect the island's Håfa Adai hospitality.

We set out to make fresh and delicious craft beer for our residents and visitors. Today, that dream became a reality," said Jay Merrill, co-owner of The Guam Brewery. "We want to be Guam's beer. We were sure to enlist the expertise of our award-winning head brewer, utilize state-of-the-art equipment and techniques, and produce beers right here on Guam soil. The designs also proudly reflect our unique culture and people."

The Guam Brewery currently has the largest beer production facility in the region. Located behind the historic San Miguel Brewery in Harmon, The Guam Brewery is a 5,000 sq. ft., 15-barrel production brewery that is actively brewing

all six of its beers. The brewery has the ability to can 60 cases per hour through its automated canning line.

Head Brewer Mike Converse gave guests and local media a tour of the facility and first-taste of the canned beers. He discussed his goal of producing extremely fresh and delicious craft beers that resonate with the local palate. He also noted that Guam's visitors can now enjoy excellent locally produced craft beers while on island.

The newly canned brews will be available through exclusive distributor Island Beverage Distributors (IBD).

EJ Calvo, vice president and general manager of IBD said to the crowd, "Every country must have a national beer to celebrate and enjoy life as a community and give its visitors a taste of fresh local flavors. The founders of The Guam Brewery were able to accomplish that today. This is an exciting day for Guam. We now have the opportunity to offer great export products."

All Guam Brewery beers have been carefully crafted by award-winning Head Brewer, Mike Converse, who has won top honors in craft beer competitions across the United States. He has won gold medals for his honey rye ale, porter ale, Bushwhacker, and amber ale. His passion,

artistry, and love of craft beer are evident in every batch he brews. Converse is also training an assistant brewer and cellar man from Guam to learn the art of brewing.

Calvo added, "We will make The Guam Brewery's products available at restaurants and bars and on retail shelves around the island very soon. We are proud to offer beers to our customers that are brewed and packaged right here in Guam."

Merrill thanked supporters for their positive response to the products. "We are grateful and humbled by the support we've received from our community already. We believe we have a product that our residents can be proud of and hope they can share with their friends and family around the world that Guam can produce a great beer product."

The Guam Brewery is a proud member of the Brewers Association, and all of its beers have achieved the Made in Guam designation. All six flavors can be enjoyed at the brewery's official tasting house — The Guam Brewery Tap House — where they also serve craft foods made with the finest ingredients and served with Guam's warmest Håfa Adai spirit. The Guam Brewery Tap House is located in the heart of Tumon in the Blue Lagoon Plaza.

For more information, visit theguambrewery.com, or engage with The Guam Brewery on social media on Facebook (@[theguambreweryandtaphouse](https://www.facebook.com/theguambreweryandtaphouse)), Instagram (@[guambrewery](https://www.instagram.com/guambrewery)), and Twitter (@[GuamTap](https://twitter.com/GuamTap)).

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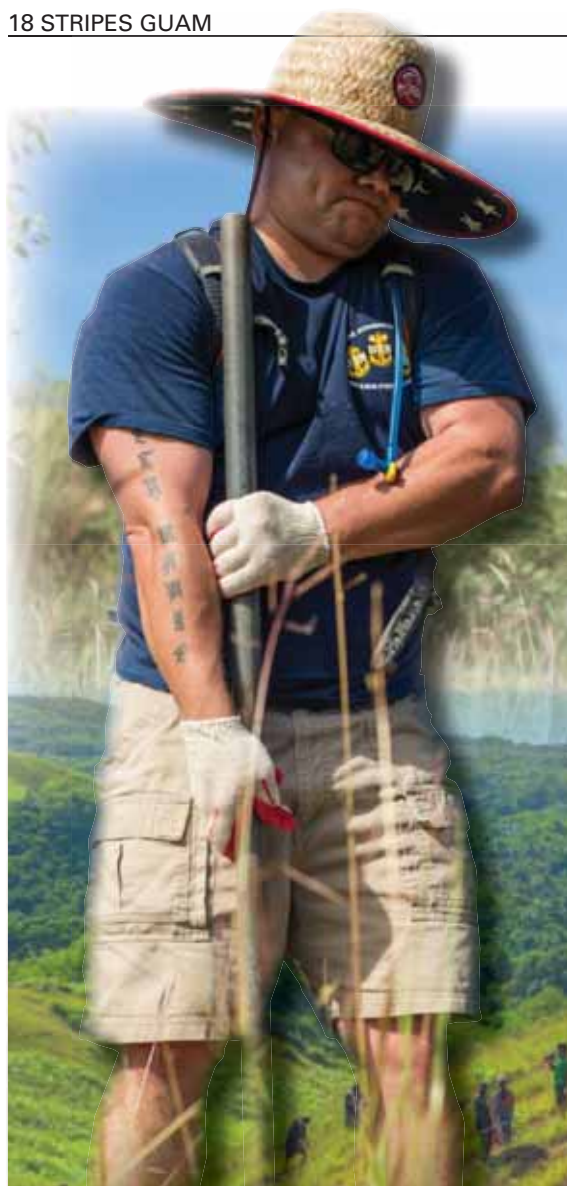
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Electronic Technician 1st Class Alex Hepburn and Chief Information System Technician James Johnson plant trees.



Troops plant trees in Merizo



Chief Information System Technician James Johnson digs a hole for a tree during a community relations project for the Guam Department of Agriculture-Forestry and Soil Resources Division. During the project, military members from multiple commands and locals planted trees in an effort to protect the hills and people's homes from fire. Photos by MC2 Kelsey J. Hockenberger, U.S. Navy

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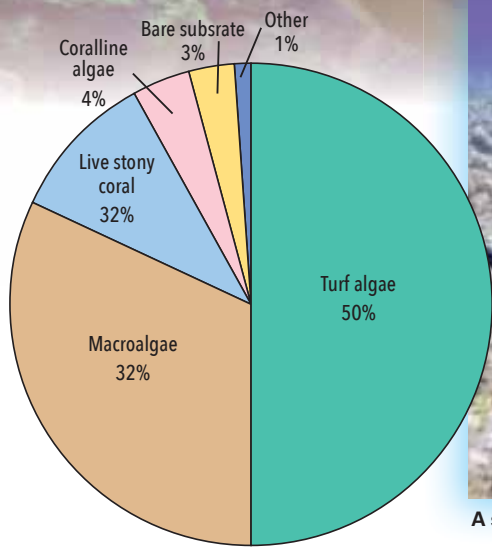
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Guam's cool coral

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

An astounding number of organisms make their homes on the coral reefs of War in the Pacific National Historical Park in the waters of Guam—in fact, more species of corals, fish, and invertebrates live on these reefs than on the coral reefs of Hawaii or Samoa. This incredible biodiversity makes for an amazing and complex ecosystem. On Guam reefs, you will find herbivores such as kichu, (convict tangs), and palakse (bullethead parrotfish), and predators such as I'e (jacks) or gadao, (groupers). Traditionally, these fish were an important part of the Chamorro diet, and are still fished for food today. The diversity of the plants and animals found on these reefs is rarely matched anywhere in the world.

Coral cover at War in the Pacific National Historical Park in 2009



A stingray makes its home along the reef in Agat Bay. Photos by NPS

Though there is high coral diversity, few juvenile corals are growing on the reef

In addition to historical

resources, the park also contains over 1,000 acres of marine ecosystems. Fringing coral reefs provide shelter and food for a wide diversity of corals and fish. Yet scientists have observed a decrease in the number of new or juvenile corals on the reef. Monitoring suggests that low coralline algae cover (4%)

could be one cause of this decrease in juveniles (NPS 2009). Corals settle and grow on coralline algae, and when there is not appropriate algae cover, fewer corals can grow. In this park, low coralline algae cover may be connected to low live stony coral cover (10%; NPS 2009). If the number of juvenile corals

does not increase, live stony coral may become increasingly rare on these reefs. Cover refers to the space covered by a particular organism on a reef or seafloor when viewed from above. Scientists often use changes in coral cover over time to monitor the overall health of a coral reef.

Coral Threats

Climate change, sedimentation, and overfishing impact corals in War in the Pacific National Historical Park

As we enjoy the beautiful biodiversity of the coral reefs in the War in the Pacific National Historical Park, we need to understand that natural and human processes are threatening the health of coral reefs in this region. For example, using fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere that contribute to global warming, clearing and burning vegetation allows more sediment to wash into the ocean and on to coral reefs, and taking fish from the reef faster than the population can reproduce reduces the number of fish on the reef and alters the balance of the food web.

Coral reefs at the park may be less resistant to ocean acidification and bleaching

Current threats to coral ↗

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Sedimentation along the coral reef.

reefs at War in the Pacific National Historical Park will only be increased by climate change. For example, low numbers of herbivores (a result of overfishing) and poor water quality (caused by sedimentation from run-off on the land) put stress on corals. If corals are already living under stressful conditions, they become less resilient or less able to adapt to changes in the environment (Burdick et al. 2009). In the face of climate change, corals must contend with changing conditions, such as rising water temperatures and ocean acidification. Those corals already under stress will become less healthy as the alterations brought on by climate change become even more pronounced.

Ocean acidification also affects coral populations. Already, reef monitoring has recorded low coral recruitment (the number of juvenile corals that settle on a reef) in this park (NPS 2009); Warmer water temperatures and the ocean acidification associated with a change in water chemistry (lower pH) will reduce or prevent coral growth (Kleypas et



Bleached corals and algal overgrowth in Guam (2013)



An NPS scientist taking measurements of an eroded landscape which has led to massive sedimentation on the reefs.



This feather plume worm sweeps up small particles and helps to keep reefs clean.



Corals are becoming increasingly rare due to impacts from land-based sources.

Threats to coral reefs

- **Climate changes** - Changes in air and water temperatures and alterations in long-term weather patterns
- **Overfishing** - Removing fish from the reef faster than fish populations can regrow
- **Sedimentation** - Sediments from bare land and development reduce water clarity and smother corals

al. 2006). With low coral recruitment and slowed coral growth, coral reefs are less able to maintain their structure and are more easily damaged by waves and storms.

Although severe bleaching events have not been observed in the park, increased water temperatures make strong, regularly-occurring bleaching events more likely in the future (Burdick et al. 2009).

Land clearing causes sediment runoff on coral reefs

Each time it rains, soil on bare land washes into streams and into the ocean. Lands become bare when wildfires are set for ease of hunters or when bulldozers remove plants and trees to make room for development or agriculture. Without plants and trees to soak up the rainwater and trap sediments, loose soil erodes from the land as runoff and clouds waterways. When soil is carried to coral reefs, it reduces water clarity and smothers corals by settling on the reef. As more and more land is cleared of plants and trees, larger and larger amounts of soil make their way to coral reefs, sediment runoff increases, and the threat to coral reefs grows. As a result of a

lack of vegetation, park lands are more susceptible to erosion and sediment runoff on park coral reefs increases.


Scientists at War in the Pacific National Historical Park have observed low coral recruitment on the reef and believe that sediment runoff may be the cause (PACN 2006). With low numbers of coral recruiting to the reef, coral reefs are less able to grow or maintain their structure. In order to reduce soil delivery to coral reefs, park staff will continue to work with communities to support replanting programs, to discourage fires, and continue to monitor sediment on the reefs (NPS 2009).

Overfishing and modern fishing methods are reducing the number of large reef fish

In recent years, people have seen fewer and fewer large fish on the coral reefs of Guam, even on reefs with healthy coral communities (Burdick et al. 2009). One reason for this decline is modern fishing practices that allow people to take large numbers of reef organisms such as parrortfish, surgeonfish, octopus, and other commercially important species (Porter et al. 2005). Of particular concern are the sets the balance of the coral reef food web. Without herbivores to control the amount of algae growing on a reef, algae can grow rapidly and smother corals. Overfishing also impacts our diet. If the fish caught for food become more and more scarce, it will be harder to prepare daily meals and traditional dishes.




When there is more bare land, more sediments flow into the ocean via rain and runoff.



Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



Cetti 7 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
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Oct. 19
Cetti 7 Falls

Very Difficult
5 hours for 2 miles

We descend into the Cetti Valley and then climb up all 7 waterfalls using set ropes. This requires good upper body strength to climb up to 60 vertical feet on slippery rock.

Bring: 3 quarts water, hiking shoes that can get wet, swimsuit, gloves, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch and snacks, and camera.

Special conditions: Steep slopes, sword grass, walking in water, and serious rope climbing. This stomp is for experienced boonie stompers.

Oct. 26
Upper Lonfit

Difficult
5 hours for 4 miles

We hike to Upper Lonfit Falls, then continue to the upper reaches of the Lonfit River past an endless series of waterfalls and cascades, including swimming, jumping, a flume canyon, and a rope swing.

Bring: 3 quarts water, get wet shoes, gloves, sun screen, insect repellent, lunch and snacks, and a camera.

Special conditions: extensive walking in water, slippery rocks, steep slopes, mud, sword grass, mosquitoes, relentlessly uphill and slippery trail.


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Stomp Tip:

- 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) Do not hike alone and let someone know where you are going and your return time.
- 5) Always carry a well stocked personal first aid kit.
- 6) When hiking, lots of little snacks are better than one big meal
- 7) Always bring a small flashlight in case you get lost, or delayed.

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Guam Boonie Stompers is a non-profit Guam corporation composed of volunteer leaders committed to leading hikes to and protecting the unique destinations on our island.





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Lessons your children learn from traveling

BY MARY DEL ROSARIO,
STRIPES GUAM

To quote Gustave Flaubert, "Travel makes one modest, you see what a tiny place you occupy in the world." Even children can become humble during their travels. Below are eight lessons your kids will learn from traveling.

They learn to be humble and appreciate what they have. If you're traveling to a third world country or even a country that is less fortunate than the one you live in, children will learn to appreciate their off-brand cell phone when they see other kids their age without any phones or devices.

They are cultured and experience new cultures other than their own. By the time your children are of age where they will be off in the "real world," they will be able to tell their peers and colleagues about different countries and their customs. They may even adopt a custom that they resonate with.

They can see the world from different perspectives. Often times, we tend to only see our side when it comes to having discussions and/or debates. However, traveling will teach your kids that although it is ok to have your own opinion, they should see the other side of the argument. For example, I feel a bit inconvenienced when shops and restaurants are closed in certain European countries. On the other hand, I always think of the workers' perspectives and whether it be because of the hot weather or the fact that a better work-life balance is needed, I see

the need for these closures.

Their confidence is higher. Have your kiddos order from the menu in Spanish if you find yourselves in Spain, especially if they've taken Spanish in high school. After all, immersing yourself is the best way to learn!

They learn more about themselves. This is especially true if your children are older. If you're all on a family vacation, perhaps they'll be able to tell you their preferences of what a perfect vacation to them would look like. Would they prefer a city trip, or would they rather lay on the beach? The only way to find out is by traveling and learning about what you like or don't like!

They learn to try new things and be more open. A simple example of this would be food. Perhaps there is a specialty belonging to the country you're visiting. If you have a picky eater, encourage them to try new things!

They can engage in a world other than their own. You know those people that only want to venture out to their local grocery store and not even try to explore the newest one a couple of towns away. Don't let your children be like that! Seeing the world will break them free of wanting to stay inside their own bubble and get them to explore the world around them.

They can unplug from technology and learn to relax and be ... kids! One of the saddest things to see is when a family is out to eat, and all you see is their heads bowed down because everyone is attached to their devices. Traveling will get your kids to put the phone down and live life! No one will be looking at their phone if they have the view of gorgeous Santorini as the backdrop! Traveling will also be good conversation starters with your family, so everyone can be engaged in talking about their favorite part of holiday!

Whether you travel near or far, long or short, globe-trotting to a new destination and country will not only be beneficial to you, but also to your children! Who knows? They may be more confident and cultured leaders of the world someday!



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The Weekly Crossword by Margie E. Burke

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| <p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Dieter's lunch</p> <p>6 Church area</p> <p>10 Cry from a crib</p> <p>14 Brady housekeeper</p> <p>15 Calc. prerequisite</p> <p>16 Black, in poetry</p> <p>17 Putting on the ballot</p> <p>19 Alliance est. in 1949</p> <p>20 Title of property</p> <p>21 Garden lane</p> <p>22 Spiked, as punch</p> <p>23 Laundry item</p> <p>25 Take on</p> <p>26 Big name in blenders</p> <p>28 Leader of a procession</p> <p>30 Lethal loop</p> <p>31 Promotion basis</p> <p>32 Kitchen meas.</p> <p>35 Artist's composite</p> <p>37 Mixed-breed dog</p> <p>39 Compass heading</p> <p>40 Starter home, for some</p> <p>42 Athletic venue</p> <p>43 Baggage handler</p> <p>44 Unlike vegan fare</p> <p>45 Pace</p> <p>48 Conical quarters</p> <p>50 Split-second</p> <p>51 Ghana money</p> <p>52 Sculptor's subject</p> <p>55 Insurer's calculation</p> <p>56 Like some circles</p> <p>58 Biblical shepherd</p> <p>59 Teensy bit</p> <p>60 Nut-bearing tree</p> <p>61 1995 film, "While You ___ Sleeping"</p> | <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 Ocean liner?</p> <p>2 Moisturizer additive</p> <p>3 Quarry rock</p> <p>4 Conclusive trial</p> <p>5 Lion's lair</p> <p>6 Email file</p> <p>7 Please, to Shakespeare</p> <p>8 Hyperbolic trig. function</p> <p>9 ___ roll</p> <p>10 Word in a "Star Wars" prequel title</p> <p>11 Way to be taken</p> <p>12 "Psycho" setting</p> <p>13 Positive terminal</p> <p>18 30-day mo.</p> <p>22 Pitt or Paxton, e.g.</p> <p>24 Seattle's 206, e.g.</p> <p>25 Three on stage</p> | <p>26 "It's ___": "I'm buying"</p> <p>27 Any day now</p> <p>29 Brinks vehicle</p> <p>32 Money manager</p> <p>33 On its way</p> <p>34 Wiggle room</p> <p>36 Reason for an R rating</p> <p>38 Chinese brew</p> <p>41 Thaw in hostilities</p> <p>43 Predicament</p> | <p>45 Animal bedding</p> <p>46 Sioux, e.g.</p> <p>47 Stair separator</p> <p>49 Diner staple</p> <p>51 Chicken enclosure</p> <p>53 Casino cubes</p> <p>54 Genuine, in Germany</p> <p>56 Cloak-and-dagger org.</p> <p>57 SNL network</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

Answers to Last Week's Crossword:

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

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JANUARY 11 - JANUARY 17, 2019 FREE

Stripes Sports Trivia

The 1999 NFL Draft saw three quarterbacks go in the first three picks. Kicked off with Tim Couch to the Browns with the first overall pick, four other signal callers went within the next 11 selections. How many of those four can you name?

Answer
Donovan McNabb (2), Akili Smith (3), Daunte Culpepper (11), Cade McNown (12)

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

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 Last Week's Sudoku:

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

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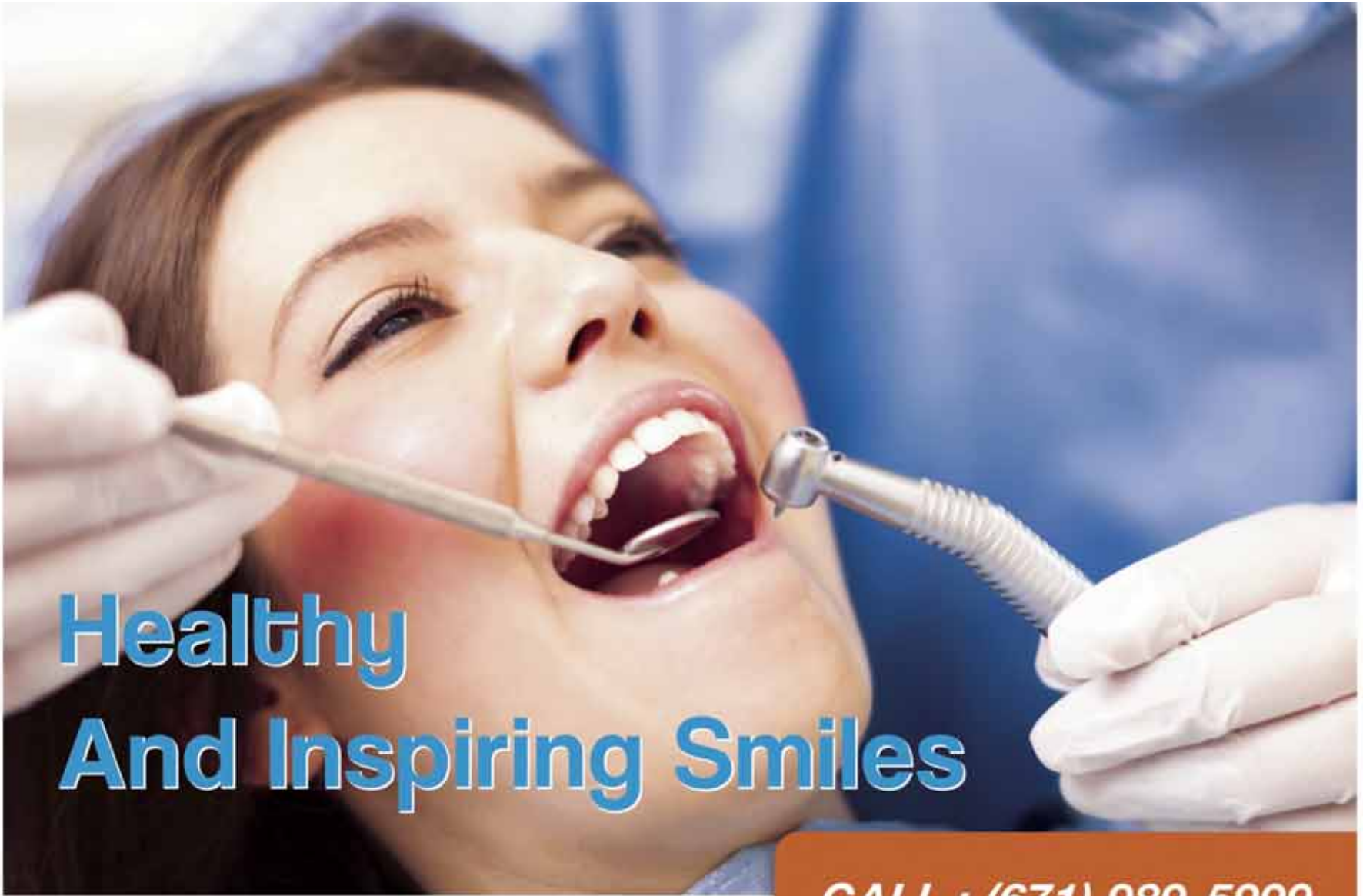
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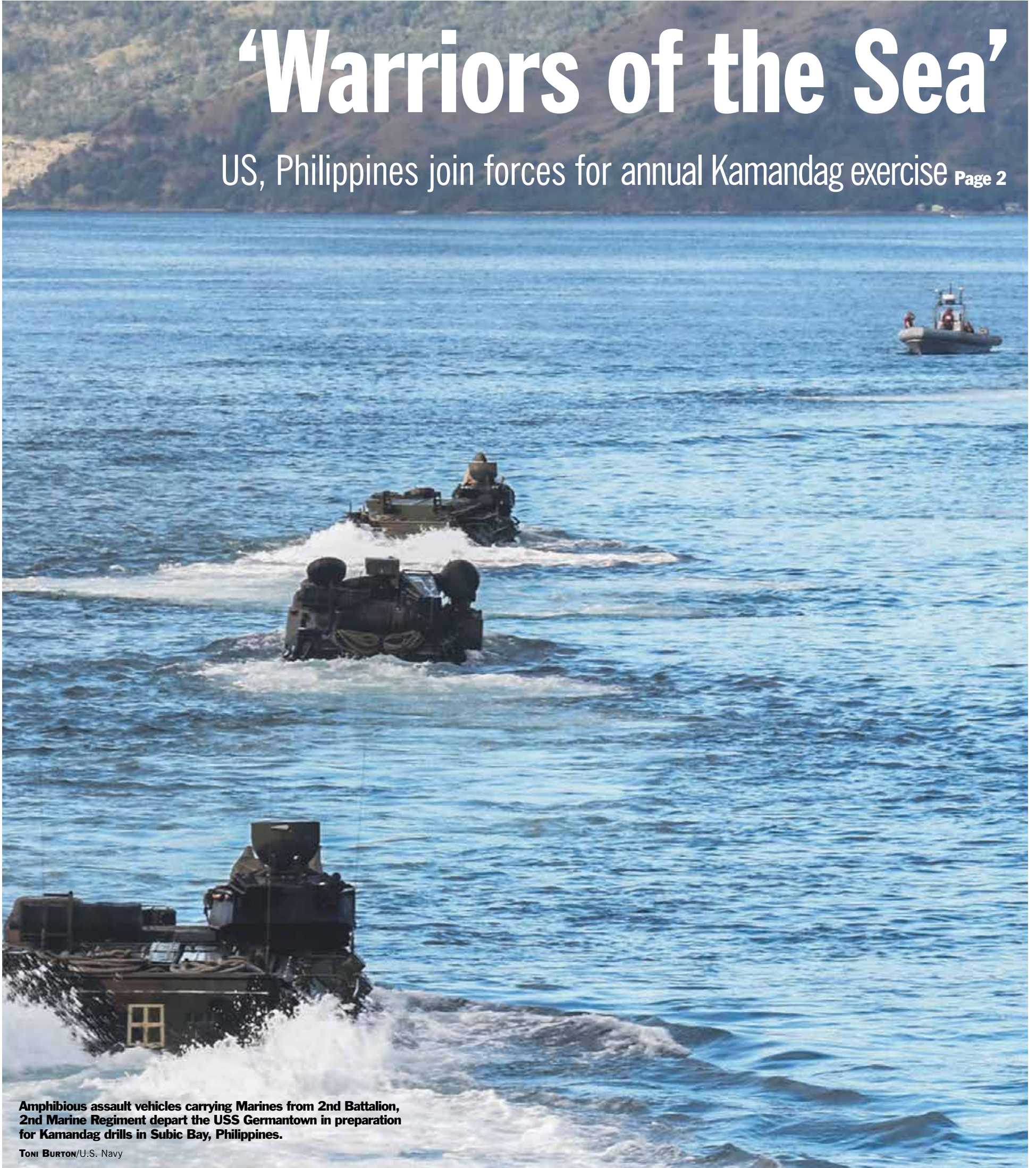
GUAM EDITION

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2019

'Warriors of the Sea'

US, Philippines join forces for annual Kamandag exercise Page 2



Amphibious assault vehicles carrying Marines from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marine Regiment depart the USS Germantown in preparation for Kamandag drills in Subic Bay, Philippines.

TONI BURTON/U.S. Navy

COVER STORY

US, Philippines join forces for Kamandag

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

U.S. and Philippine forces practiced amphibious operations, live-fire training, urban combat, aviation ops and counterterrorism during the third-annual Kamandag exercise on the islands of Luzon and Palawan.

The activities at Kamandag — which runs through Oct. 18 — represented an increase in military capability and demonstrated the ability to deploy forces in the event of a crisis or natural disaster, the U.S. Embassy in Manila said in a statement.

Kamandag — short for “Kaagapay Ng Mga Mandirigma Ng Dagat,” or “Cooperation of Warriors of the Sea” — also involved Japan Self-Defense Forces conducting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions with U.S. and Philippine troops, the embassy said in its statement.

About 1,850 troops — 1,400 Americans, 350 Filipino and 100 Japanese — were involved in the drills, according to information provided by the embassy.

U.S. participants included the Okinawa-based III Marine Expeditionary Force and the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit out of Camp Pendleton, Calif. Ships included two San Diego-based amphibious vessels, the USS Boxer and the USS John P. Murtha, along with the Sasebo, Japan-based dock landing ship USS Germantown.

“New for this year’s KAMANDAG, U.S., Philippine, and Japanese forces will conduct assault amphibious vehicle training together,” the embassy said in its statement ahead of the exercise.

“It will also be the first to include U.S. and Philippine low-altitude air defense training and threat reaction training.”

Manila, which has clashed with Beijing over island territory in the South China Sea, is expanding its amphibious capability. Last year, the Philippine navy commissioned a second sealift vessel, called the BRP Davao del Sur.

Last month, Philippine marines trained for the first time with eight amphibious armored vehicles purchased from South Korean company Hanwha Defense, according to Jane’s Defense Weekly.

The vehicles, like those operated by U.S. Marines and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, can each carry up to 25 troops and can be armed with a 40 mm automatic grenade launcher and a 12.7 mm machine gun, as well as smoke grenade launchers, according to Jane’s.

Kamandag also featured health and community relations events throughout Luzon, according to the statement.

“The purpose is to exchange information on hygiene skills, life support, first response, and safety protocols, as well as conduct religious ministry, primary education and athletic events,” the statement said.



PHOTOS BY BRIENNA TUCK/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines and Philippine Airmen compare methods on how to set up a range card during a subject matter expert exchange as part of exercise Kamandag 3 at Colonel Ernesto P. Ravina Air Base, Philippines, on Oct. 9. Kamandag 3 is a Philippine-led, bilateral exercise with participation from Japan.



U.S. Marines and Philippine Airmen perform a practical application of setting up a team position.

It’s unclear whether the exercise has been boosted since last year, Carl Baker, executive director of Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii, said in a telephone interview. “The media in the Philippines don’t have much about it. It’s sort of a nonevent in the Philippines.”

However, local reporters were interested in a recent exercise involving about 500 paratroopers from the U.S. and Philippine armies who parachuted onto Luzon late last month.

The Manila Bulletin newspaper posted video on its website of some of the soldiers jumping out of planes over Basa Air Base on Sept. 22.

“This training will enhance our troops’ technical expertise in airborne operations, enabling our combat units to better respond to future contingency operations and other security challenges,” Lt. Gen. Macairog Alberto, commanding general of the Philippines’ army, said of the “friendship jump,” according to

the newspaper.

The embassy’s statement on Kamandag doesn’t mention the 2014 Enhanced Defence Cooperation Agreement, which allows the U.S. military to construct facilities, position defense assets and deploy troops on a rotational basis on five Philippine military bases.

Last month, Pacific Air Forces commander Gen. Charles Q. Brown told reporters in Hawaii that the Pentagon is considering expanding beyond the five

locations.

“There is discussion about trying to do maybe more sites,” he said. “I think it’s important that we actually make sure we get the initial sites right.”

However, to date, the only facility built is a “Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief warehouse” at Cesar Basa Air Base that opened on Luzon in January.

“There doesn’t seem to be a lot of movement in terms of actual construction,” Baker said.

There may be more engagement between U.S. and Philippine forces but “they have gone away from the big, splashy exercises,” he said.

Kamandag replaced PHIBLEX, an annual amphibious landing exercise that involved 1,500 U.S. troops and 500 Filipino servicemembers, in 2017.

The exercise was established after Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte — then at odds with the U.S. and Europe over his crackdown on drug dealers — called for U.S. special operators to leave Mindanao Island and advocated scrapping future drills with U.S. forces.

However, the special operators remained to help Filipinos battle Islamic militants, and a scaled-down version of the annual Balikatan exercise between the U.S. and Philippines went ahead that year.

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MILITARY

Airmen in S. Korea develop apps to curb stress, DUIs

Ideas will be pitched at annual Spark Tank

BY MATTHEW KEELER
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — Airmen in South Korea have been hard at work in their free time developing concepts for phone applications that could reduce the number of DUIs in the force and provide airmen a means to deal anonymously with daily stressors.

Members of Osan's 51st Fighter Wing worked with the organization's Innovation Engine Room, led by Master Sgt. Courtney Christiansen, to prepare their ideas, perfect their pitch and build video presentations in preparation for the Air Force Spark Tank 2020 competition. The room was created to give innovative airmen the resources and connections needed to turn their ideas into reality.

Spark Tank is an annual competition in which airmen pitch innovative ideas to top Air Force leadership. The goal of the competition is to find new ways of maintaining Air Force readiness, cost effectively modernize its operation and drive innovation within its ranks, Christiansen said.

Senior Airman Emma Poveromo, an emergency room medical technician with the 51st Medical Operations Squadron, is developing a phone app that would streamline the Airmen Against Drunk Driving program for its volunteers and its inebriated

users.

The program is a volunteer-based transportation service that provides a ride home for airmen who have been drinking.

Poveromo successfully ran the volunteer service while stationed at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

"Within two months of my team taking over and revamping the program we had already saved 65 people," she told Stars and Stripes. "We actually lowered DUIs at Ramstein by 38% within six months."

Poveromo realized at the time how much of the work involved could be automated using a ride-sharing application.

"The current system requires calling volunteers, hoping they answer the phone in the middle of the night and are willing to go help an airman," she said. "Now it will be a quick notification to the volunteers who are signed into the app, and they can confirm or decline the pickup request."

Seeking \$60,000, Poveromo intends to hire a professional team to create the program. The app will feature an interface like the one used by paid services Uber and Lyft, only free. Using GPS features and a preset home address, intoxicated users can request a ride with a single click.

"A dollar value can't be placed on the lives and careers this app could save," she stated in her pitch.

Wing commander Col. John



MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

A bar customer uses his phone after consuming an alcoholic beverage near Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Sunday. An Osan emergency medical technician developed a phone app that streamlines the Airmen Against Drunk Driving ride program.

Gonzales announced that Poveromo's design would advance to the Pacific Air Forces competition, along with an app designed to help airmen cope with daily stressors.

First Lt. George Cooksey, a bioenvironmental engineer for the wing, has designed a social interaction application for airmen who are reluctant to talk with co-workers, leadership or mental health professionals for fear of damaging their careers.

"We have created an app to connect two anonymous airmen, either through text or voice chat, to speak open and honestly, and have a genuine human interaction without having that fear of my career will be impacted," Cooksey said.

"Because people have that fear they choose to not talk to anyone, and that causes those stressors and issues to build up until it reaches a point that is now at an impactful level," he said. "We

seek to tackle that far before it reaches an issue by providing a safe space for individuals to connect."

Airmen will be required to sign up using their official email so no military users will be filtered out. That also provides a means to permanently ban abusers, or "trolls," who are reported for negative interactions.

Capt. Felicia Keith, a clinical psychologist at Osan, encouraged Cooksey to add a texting feature based on her experience in the clinical field.

"In some of my patients I've noticed a fear of reaching out to others, and especially voice seems to be much more difficult," she said. "Texting provides an extra layer of anonymity and usually feels a bit safer to some folks, especially those experiencing social anxiety."

After the 78th Air Force suicide this year, Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. David Gold-

fein ordered a daylong halt in operations, a Resilience Tactical Pause, for leaders to engage with airmen to better understand what is causing the rise in suicides.

"It's not the outreach programs that are going to necessarily help airmen," Keith said. "It's about really connecting to another human being. If this is a way we can reach airmen where they are and help them connect, as a mental health professional, I think this is a great way we can do that."

Only one airman can claim the winning title in February at the Air Force Association's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando, Fla. However, other Spark Tank ideas received senior leader support last year to advance in development.

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SARAH DOWE/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Staff Sgt. Sebastian Godsey plays a video game with airmen at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., on Sept. 18. The Games to Grunts program allows active-duty troops to download free video games.

Plan offers free video game downloads to troops, vets

BY CHRISTIAN LOPEZ
Stars and Stripes

Active-duty servicemembers and veterans can expand their Steam video game library free through the Games to Grunts program from a nonprofit called Operation Supply Drop.

Games to Grunts is offering digital download codes for several titles, including the most recent additions to the fighting-game franchise titans Tekken 7 and SoulCalibur 6.

However, only a limited number of codes and games are available, according to a program announcement.

Some of the most popular titles have already gone quickly. Those include Gears of War 4, a third-person shooter that follows a conflict between humanity and a race of ravenous subterranean reptilian hominids known as the Locust Horde. The

latest edition of the series, Gears of War 5, was released Sept. 10.

To redeem the free game codes, gamers need a military ID to register for an account at gamestogrunts.weareosd.org.

OSD defines itself as a "veteran support ecosystem" that supports programs in social connectivity, professional development and community service, according to its website.

"We've become experts at putting games in the hands of troops and have learned a lot while distributing over 1 million games since 2010," OSD states on its Games to Grunts program page.

Steam is an online video game distribution platform created by Valve Corp. for personal computers.

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PACIFIC

Typhoon pummels Tokyo

US bases escape deadly storm with minimal damage

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS,
HANA KUSUMOTO
AND SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Typhoon Hagibis pummeled the Japanese capital last weekend with wind gusts as high as 104 mph, hours of record-breaking, torrential rain and flooding in some places. Then, suddenly, the storm left the Tokyo metro area, leaving many to wonder on social media if the ordeal was really over. Oct. 13 dawned beneath calm, blue skies as the curious emerged to take stock of fallen trees and swollen rivers.

U.S. military bases in the area reported minimal damage and returned to their routines after a full day hunkered down against the rain and forceful wind.

At Yokota Air Base — home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo — Senior Airman Mitchell Krause, 24, of Chaska, Minn., was shopping at a base mini-mart early Oct. 13. The security forces airman said he worked the night shift during the storm but experienced no emergencies.

“I didn’t really think it was that bad,” he said, adding that he hadn’t heard much wind.

But in harder hit regions like Nagano and Miyagi prefectures, helicopters plucked people from their flooded homes as rescue efforts went into full force from a powerful storm, according to Fuji TV.

Hundreds of thousands of households were without power around Tokyo and in the Tohoku region north of the metro area, according to The Associated Press.

“We intend to exert all-out efforts for the earliest recovery of blackouts, water outage and suspension of transportation,” Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

He added that 2,700 Japan Self-Defense Forces personnel, along with police, firefighters and the Japan Coast Guard conducted rescue and relief efforts.

In Hachioji — not far from Yokota and Camp Zama — about 16 inches of rain fell over 24 hours, topping a 1999 record rainfall of 14 inches, according to the Japan Meteorological Agency. In Hakone, southwest of Yokohama, a record 37 inches fell, the agency reported.

What local fire authorities believed was a tornado struck a neighborhood in Ichihara, in Chiba prefecture, east of Tokyo, on Oct. 12, killing one person and damaging several homes, according to The Mainichi newspaper.

Just as Hagibis approached landfall, a magnitude 5.3 earthquake, centered in the Pacific southeast of Tokyo, rumbled through the area around 6:20 p.m. There was no tsunami threat and no damage reported at U.S. military bases.

Yokota facilities reopen

At Yokota, the storm brought down branches and leaves and felled a large tree in front of the 374th Airlift Wing headquarters.

Storm conditions there suddenly ceased about 10:20 p.m. Oct. 12; two hours later, the base sounded the “all clear.”

In a Facebook post early Oct. 13, authorities announced that most facilities — including the commissary, exchange, fitness center, dining facility, theater, clubs and restaurants — would open on their normal schedules.

As part of recovery efforts, members of the 374th Civil Engineer Squadron planned an aerial survey of base rooftops using a small drone.

At Yokota’s Kanto Lodge, staff said 11 people who evacuated from their off-base homes due to a risk of flooding from the



SETH ROBSON/Stars and Stripes

Airmen cut up and clear out a large tree that was downed by Typhoon Hagibis at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Oct. 13.



CAITLIN DOORNBOS/Stars and Stripes

Workers assess debris from Typhoon Hagibis that collected along the water’s edge at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Oct. 13.

Tama River had stayed there overnight.

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Jeanette Mullinax and her friend, Shannon Wilde, a visitor from Tampa, Fla., left Mullinax’s home along the Tama River in Fussa city Oct. 12, they said.

“My neighbor told me he was leaving,” Mullinax said. “A little bit later, my supervisor told me to evacuate.”

Trees and nighttime dark shielded the surging river from view, they said.

“We’re pretty used to hurricanes in Florida, but it was interesting that there was such a big one here,” Wilde said as the pair relaxed in the hotel lobby.

Meanwhile, residents of Fussa and neighboring Hamura walked the levee path along the river, photographing the waves of foaming brown water that shouldered their way downstream.

That section of the river, which flows into Tokyo Bay, appeared to have remained in its channel overnight, but farther downstream it overran its banks and flooded homes and roads in Setagaya ward and Kawasaki city.

At Yokosuka Naval Base, south of Tokyo and close to where Hagibis made landfall, the memory of Typhoon Faxai in September is still fresh. This time, the damage was not as severe. Cleanup crews tied caution tape around downed fences, fallen trees and leaning power poles. They filled truck beds with tree branches strewn about base by the powerful winds.

No injuries were reported there, according to Yokosuka spokesman Randall Baucom. “The base did not receive any significant damage, although assessments are ongoing,” he said in an email. “Our

focus now is on getting base services back to normal operations.”

Along the base’s eastern edge, Seamen Hannibal Mendez and Brandon Cook, both of the USS Blue Ridge, examined piles of debris blown in from the ocean.

“It doesn’t seem as bad (as Faxai), but it’s still as messy,” Mendez said. “I expect a lot out of them, but I guess a divine being was looking out for us.”

“Yeah, but we were in the ship,” Cook said, “the safest place possible.”

Out to sea

Many Yokosuka-based vessels were put out to sea to avoid the storm or, like the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, were already deployed.

A handful undergoing maintenance or renovations stayed behind. These included the destroyers USS John S. McCain, USS Benfold and USS Curtis Wilbur, the guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh and the 7th Fleet’s command ship, the Blue Ridge.

The Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force canceled its Oct. 14 international fleet review, which before the storm drew in navies and ships from more than 10 countries, including China. A JMSDF spokesman said the event won’t be rescheduled and the next one is expected to be held in 2022.

Southwest of central Tokyo, Naval Air Facility Atsugi returned to its routines. The commissary reopened, and all services, including recreational facilities, the Navy Exchange and health clinic, were reopening.

At Camp Zama, in Kanagawa prefecture, U.S. Army Garrison Japan issued its “all clear”. In a Facebook post, Zama officials said teams were still “conducting final assessments, but we appear to have seen minor damage overnight.”

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MILITARY

Sculptures honor military dogs, servicemembers

By MARTIN EGNASH
Stars and Stripes

A traveling exhibit of sculptures depicting wounded military working dogs seeks to get people talking about the servicemembers who worked, and sometimes died, with the canines, while also honoring the dogs' service.

"This exhibit shows the sacrifices dogs have made in battle, but it also shows the human sacrifice of their handlers," Ohio-based sculptor James Mellick said in a recent phone interview.

The sculptures are scheduled to begin a two-month run from Nov. 8 to Jan. 21 at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force on Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. There are now eight dogs carved out of cedar, walnut, poplar, sycamore and other woods in Mellick's collection, his website says. Through the dogs, the exhibit takes viewers from World War II up to the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

Among the stories Mellick tells in his sculptures is that of Lucca K458, a Marine Corps service dog trained to detect explosives.

Lucca completed more than 400 missions during her six-year career, but in 2012, on patrol in Afghanistan, she barely survived a bomb blast.

A sculpture of Lucca, who lost one of her legs in the explosion, was sculpted out of laminated basswood that has been bleached, stained and burned for coloring. Its tongue is carved cherry and its teeth are maple.

It wears a medal awarded in 2016 for conspicuous gallantry by the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, a British group.

"The dogs' wounds are an allegory for all the human suffering that's harder to talk about,"



U.S. Air Force

An exhibit featuring sculptures by artist James Mellick of wounded military working dogs will be on display at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force in Ohio from Nov. 8 to Jan. 31.

Mellick said.

Another sculpture depicts Cooper K154, who was killed with her handler, Cpl. Kory Wiens, in July 2007 by a bomb hidden in a haystack in Iraq. Cooper and Wiens' ashes are buried together in Wiens' Oregon hometown, and a dog park has been named after

the two at Fort Carson, Colo.

The sculpture of Cooper has a carved dove on its back and a football in its mouth. The dove signifies that Cooper has "earned her angel wings" and the football represents the playfulness she showed during her lifetime,

Mellick's website says.

The exhibit has been touring museums and events around the U.S. since 2015, when Mellick took three of his wooden sculptures to the Ohio State Fair and the Vietnam Dog Handlers Association reunion in Nashville, Tenn.

"People can relate to dogs in a way that's hard for most people to relate to soldiers," he said. "I just want to bring awareness to the real wounds that our soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors suffer from."

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Jim Mellick

Mellick poses with his wooden sculptures of Lucca K458, left, who lost a leg in an Afghanistan bomb blast, and Cooper K154, who was killed with her handler, Cpl. Kory Wiens, in July 2007 by a bomb in Iraq.



U.S. Air Force

This Malinois wears the service ribbon from Afghanistan and is a double amputee aided by a sling wheelchair. The wheels are free-turning, more like those designed for wheelchairs for humans.

MILITARY

Navy sets changes to help retain sailors

By SCOTT WYLAND
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The Navy is going more digital and making it easier for sailors to access information on their phones as it seeks to attract new recruits and retain sailors, the service's top human resources officer said.

"The way we're configured now doesn't support how we need to manage talent in the 21st century for high-end warfare," Vice Adm. John Nowell, chief of naval personnel, told sailors at an all-hands call at the Navy's base in Naples.

"We're driving most everything to mobile devices, where most of you live in your personal lives," Nowell said.

The changes are part of the "Sailor 2025" program, which is trumpeted as changing how the Navy recruits, promotes and delivers information to sailors.

Several phone apps and websites were developed in the past year, and databases

'We're driving most everything to mobile devices, where most of you live in your personal lives.'

Vice Adm. John Nowell
chief of naval personnel

have been consolidated on a digital cloud to make them easier for sailors to access, he said.

Before policy changes are made, discussion groups are held with sailors of all ranks, Nowell said. Input from those discussion groups is then used by thousands of people working under Nowell to research and draft new policies.

The end of permanent shaving waivers for sailors suffering razor bumps is a change that arose from the new policymaking method, Nowell said. Eighteen months of research and review confirmed that beards impede breathing

devices such as gas masks, and the waivers were scrapped, he said.

The Navy has also stepped up efforts to recruit and retain sailors in the past several years as U.S. relations with Russia and China have grown more tense and adversarial, Nowell said.

The ultimate aim is to build a stronger fighting force in "the great power competition," Nowell told Stars and Stripes in an interview before the meeting.

The recruiting efforts are yielding results, he said. The Navy added 39,000 sailors both this year and in 2018, compared with 30,000 in 2016, he said.

The overall retention rate is 79%, which is near an all-time high, Nowell said.

Paying bonuses for high-demand jobs, offering more opportunities for career advancement and better accommodating sailors and their families all help to boost retention, he said.

The Navy continues to look for and implement ways to ease the stress of military life, he said. One new retention incentive reimburses sailors up to \$500 to cover the cost of their spouses' professional licenses if they must move to a different state.

Another policy, enacted last year, lets sailors' spouses move earlier or stay behind for up to six months to allow their children to complete the school year, wrap up a job or care for a chronically ill family member.

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Program gives enlisted sailors a new way to advance

By THERON GODBOLD
Stars and Stripes

The Navy made permanent this month a pilot program that allows petty officers second class in certain high-demand career fields to advance to petty officer first class.

To qualify under the Advance-to-Position program, or A2P, petty officers second class must complete necessary training and be within 12 months of transferring to a new command, the chief of Naval Personnel said in an announcement.

Sailors selected for A2P billets are eligible to wear the petty officer first class rank insignia, a practice called frocking, when they complete all schools and training for the position, the statement said. They will be advanced to the E-6 pay grade when they check into their new duty station.

The eligible career billets haven't been finalized but are likely to be mostly within operational and technical ratings, Naval Personnel spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Adam Cole said in an email.

The Navy is planning to have a finalized list Oct. 25 available for sailor applications online at

CMS-ID, the Navy's career management system, Cole said.

The Navy will primarily consider ratings where there are large numbers of unfilled E-6 billets open and sufficient numbers of E-5s available to advance without adversely affecting manning at the E-5 level, Cole said.

Eligible candidates must have taken the E-6 exam with posted results.

Only active-duty sailors are eligible for the program and they may apply to sea-duty billets regardless of their sea and shore duty rotation.

However, sailors on shore duty who are due to rotate to sea duty will not be considered for shore duty billets in this program.

Petty Officer 1st Class Shawn Fuller, a Navy career counselor at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, told Stars and Stripes by phone Tuesday that the program is "a great opportunity for sailors to fill priority jobs and make rank."

Interested sailors can get more details by talking with their career counselors or by visiting the MyNavy portal at <https://my.navy.mil>.

Stars and Stripes reporter Joshua Karsten contributed to this report. godbold.theron@stripes.com
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RYAN DELCORE/U.S. Navy

A sailor is pinned to petty officer first class during a frocking ceremony at Naval Air Facility Misawa, Japan, in 2016. The Navy has announced a new way for enlisted sailors to become a petty officer first class.

Japan sets up Patriot anti-missile battery in Tokyo park during drill

By HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — The Japan Air Self-Defense Force deployed Patriot missile launchers to various spots, including a park in central Tokyo, during an exercise, according to government officials.

The training aimed to improve the force's "tactical capability involving ballistic missile measures and build a sense of

safety and security among the public by showing readiness and preparedness," Defense Minister Taro Kono told reporters during a news conference.

The drill was an "extremely important opportunity" for the Japan Self-Defense Forces to be ready for every kind of threat, he said.

The exercise involved about 30 troops from the 1st Air Defense Missile Group setting up and

then dismantling the PAC-3 battery in about 20 minutes at Tokyo Rinkai Disaster Prevention Park.

JASDF plans to conduct similar exercises throughout Japan, according to a statement.

Earlier this month, North Korea confirmed that it successfully test-fired a new submarine-launched ballistic missile days before the communist state was due to restart nuclear talks with the United States.

The Pukguksong-3 missile was launched Oct. 2 from the water near the eastern city of Wonsan, the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported.

Japan's missile defense training was just the fourth time troops had conducted such a deployment exercise outside of Japanese or U.S. military bases, officials said.

The last off-base exercise was held at a park in Osaka in 2013.

In August 2017, JASDF demonstrated a Patriot missile defense system at Yokota Air Base, home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo, just hours after a North Korean missile flew over Hokkaido.

A similar drill was held at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni that month, officials said.

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VETERANS

Marine who led critical Vietnam attack dies at 75

'Cajun Bob' mounted assault on tower in Battle of Hue

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps staff sergeant who mounted an assault to take a crucial tower in the bloody 1968 Battle of Hue in Vietnam died Oct. 1 in Wasilla, Alaska. He was 75.

Robert L. Thoms — nicknamed "Cajun Bob" for his thick native Baton Rouge accent — was awarded the Silver Star medal for "conspicuous gallantry" during the assault on the Arch Tower on Feb. 15, 1968, during some of the most ferocious fighting of North Vietnam's Tet Offensive.

Stars and Stripes photographer John Olson captured an image of Thoms leading his men during the Battle of Hue, a photograph that was featured in a double-page spread in Life magazine.

In the photo, a crouching Thoms is surrounded by decimated landscape, his men hunkered behind him. He points ahead, his mouth wide open as he barks out a command.

Cindy Caserta, his wife of 17 years, said he died of lung complications after being hospitalized. Within the past year Thoms had been diagnosed with bladder, prostate and skin cancers, she said.

Services will be held Oct. 20 at Janssen's Funeral Home in Palmer, Alaska, followed by burial at Sacred Heart Cemetery featuring bugle taps by active-duty Marines. A celebration of life will follow at VFW Post 9365 in Wasilla that will include a 21-gun salute.

'A tough Marine'

Thoms received six Purple Hearts during his two combat tours to Vietnam in 1967 and 1968. He had hoped to make a career in the service but received a medical retirement because of complications with the final wound he had suffered in his stomach, Caserta said.

"He was a very brave Marine and a wonderful leader," Myron



Stars and Stripes

Marine Staff Sgt. Robert Thoms, also known as "Cajun Bob," leads his men in the Battle of Hue during the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive in 1968.

Harrington, who was Thoms' company commander in Hue, said when reached at his home in Charleston, S.C. "He was one of those folks that showed up at the right time at the right place and did the right thing. I'm forever indebted for his service during that time."

Selwyn Taitt, who fought beside Thoms in Hue, said "he was my best friend in 'Nam. This has hit me hard."

Thoms experienced post-traumatic stress from his Vietnam experience, Caserta said. He found some modicum of peace through his conversion to Christianity in the 1990s and his extensive work with veterans through Veterans Affairs.

But the PTSD was always near, and his choice to live a more isolated life in Alaska where there were fewer "triggers" was a reflection of that, Caserta said.

"He never avoided a fight," she



Read more about Vietnam at stripes.com/vietnam

said. "He was a tough Marine, a warrior even after he had to retire from the Marine Corps, often with a heightened sense of justice to fight for what was right and to protect the defenseless from anyone who tried to take advantage of them."

'He led the charge'

For good or bad, the Battle of Hue remained a defining mo-



Stars and Stripes

Robert Thoms, 75, the Marine Corps staff sergeant known as "Cajun Bob," died in Wasilla, Alaska, on Oct. 1.

ment in his life.

During the initial assault on Dong Ba Tower, Thoms' lieutenant was wounded and evacuated, Harrington said. "Bob took over the platoon, which was actually probably more like a reinforced squad at the time. He led the charge."

The tower was one of the crucial objectives for U.S. forces in Hue, Harrington said. "It was the high ground overlooking the [1st Battalion, 5th Marines] zone of action," he said. "The enemy was up there pouring down fire on us, so it had to be eliminated. Bob was one of the folks who

was instrumental in helping us secure that."

Thoms repeatedly exposed himself to enemy hand grenades and automatic weapons fire as he led his men to within yards of the tower, the Silver Star citation said.

"When his attack was momentarily halted due to casualties and the increasing intensity of hostile fire, he moved to the point of heaviest contact and aggressively led an assault against the tower,"

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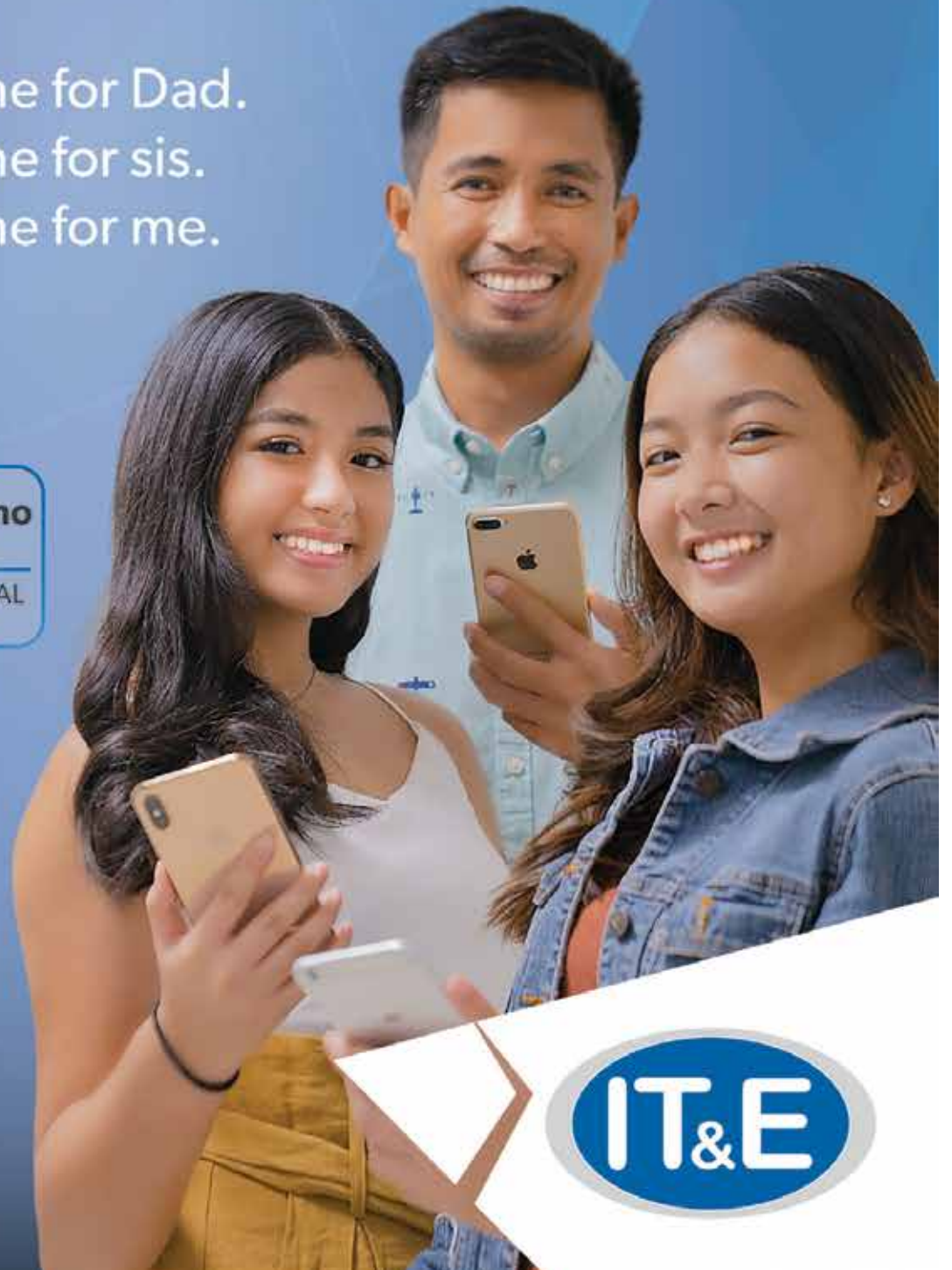
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