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The need for sisterhood

“Hello, honey! It’s ‘Call Your Daughter Day!’” my mother said when I answered my phone last Wednesday. Mom and I talk often, but we’d never established a “call your daughter day.” However, I knew instinctually why she’d said this to me on this particular day.

It was Wednesday, and for many years, it was “Call Your Sister Day” to Mom — the day she and her sister, Charlene, talked on the phone.

Two weeks ago, my Aunt Char passed away. This Wednesday phone call indicated that my role in Mom’s life was expanding beyond daughter. I could never replace my Aunt Char — a tall woman with a big personality and bold sense of humor, ice-blue eyes and high cheekbones like my mom, an excellent cook, a terrific baker, a talented sewer and crafter, a caretaker and giver.

I, on the other hand, am short with brown eyes and a round face. I’m a decent but lazy cook and a lousy baker. I’m crafty and creative, but less so than Aunt Char. Although my sense of humor is well-developed from years of using it as a crutch, ploy for attention and icebreaker, I’ve always admired my aunt’s bold, unapologetic, comedic style.

Growing up, we didn’t see Aunt Char, Uncle Allen, and my cousins, Shari and Margaret, as much as we would have liked because they lived in Kentucky, but my aunt’s unique personality made its indelible mark on people’s lives nonetheless.

I’ll never forget Aunt Char making homemade ice cream on her back porch on hot summer days. Sewing our Halloween costumes from scratch. Yelling at us for riding Pop’s gate like it was a swing. Crocheting nose-warmers for us to wear while sledding in Pennsylvania. Playing piano with my mom. Blaring with her Kentucky twang, “If you’re gonna stir up sh-t, don’t use me as a spoon!” and other classic one-liners. Making everyone in the Ohio river cabin laugh late into the night. Tying ivory bows to decorate the church for my wedding.

I’m honored that my mother called me last Wednesday. Although we’re not sisters, my Mom’s call means that we have a sisterhood.

As a kid, I’d sometimes go home from school with my best friend, Patti,

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



who had two sisters. I’d watch with fascination and horror as Patti and her older sister, Barb, erupted in vicious sibling fights, scratching, biting, beating each other with hangers and hurling brutal insults. Conversely, Patti and Barb protectively coddled their younger sister, Dina, while ironically resenting their parents’ insistence on treating her as “the baby.”

At the time, I didn’t understand that the complexity of loving sister relationships often includes physical altercations and ruthless name-calling, and thought I was lucky I didn’t have one myself.

But as I grew, I found myself seeking out connections with women to fill that void in my life. There’s Patti, still my BFF. Barb and Dina, who’ve become like sisters to me, too. College roommates Heidi and Chris; co-workers Julianne, Cindi and Krista; gym pals Tina and Amy; beach buddy Grace; bunco girls Suz, Lori and Christine; writer friends Suzette, Nancy and Carolyn; sister-in-law Cara; neighbor Rebecca; military spouse friends Karen, Navarre, Jean, Erin, Suz, Natalie, Muffin, Tara, Eileen; and so many more.

And although my blood has specifically dictated my particular roles in my daughters’ and mom’s lives, they’re part of my sisterhood, too.

Sisterhood is not limited by genealogy, but rather, it’s a special relationship safe place, where women can confide and confess, boast and brag, pontificate and ponder, advise and admonish, guide and give, ask and receive, comfort and compliment, fail and flounder, vent and lament, laugh and cry — with unconditional support and without risk of abandonment.

It matters less that you don’t call, write or see each other for weeks, months or even years on end. It matters more that, when you do, you pick up where you left off last time. The recipe for sisterhood has three simple ingredients: lifelong loyalty, no competition and mutual respect.

Oh, and try not to beat each other with hangers.

In honor of Aunt Char. May you always be laughing.

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

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LINEBACKERS OF THE WEEK

SSgt. Quinteria O'Driscoll

'I'm stepping out of my career field'

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SENIOR AIRMAN JASMINE BARNES,
36TH WING

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam – U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Quinteria O'Driscoll, a command support staff member assigned to the 36th Maintenance Squadron, was recognized as the 36th Wing's Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Feb. 2, 2023.

The Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week recognizes outstanding enlisted, officer, civilian and total force personnel who have had an impact on achieving Team Andersen's mission, vision and priorities.

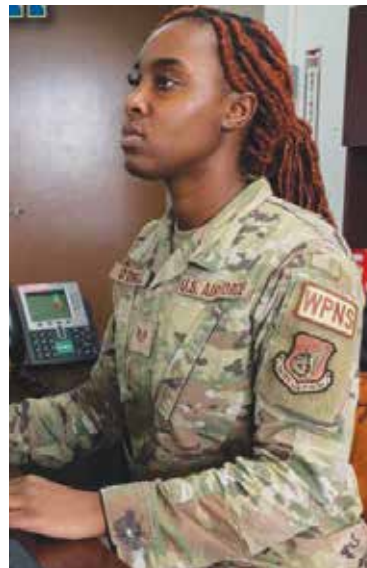
As a CSS member, O'Driscoll monitors and coordinates actions on 37 programs and one contract

for corrosion prevention valued at \$280 million. She performs outside of her primary career field of aircraft armament systems. O'Driscoll coordinates all personnel administrative records, permanent change of station, evaluations, and decorations for the 36th Maintenance Group and 36 MXS. She also performs as the unit training manager for 77 Airmen and ensures all training, skill level upgrades, training TDYs and field detachment trainings are tracked.

Since arriving at Andersen AFB in June 2021, O'Driscoll served as the NCO in charge of the production support section for the Armament Flight. While doing so, she worked hand in hand with seven base agencies to oversee two hazardous material accounts ensuring more than 50 hazardous items

were properly handled, secured and disposed of. As a result of her efforts, the armament section garnered a perfect track record with zero findings through 13 Wing Staff Assisted Visit inspections. O'Driscoll's managerial skills enabled her to step out of her maintenance duties and step up to fill a CSS manning shortfall. With minimum hands-on training, she executed and upheld administrative duties to include coordinating more than 35 records corrections, 22 permanent change of station receptions and departures, and evaluations for 135 personnel.

"I'm a weapons troop filling a CSS role and [leadership] has been so supportive and helpful," said O'Driscoll. "I'm stepping out of my career field and doing personnel work and helping with



Staff Sgt. Quinteria O'Driscoll

training, so I learned firsthand how to show well-roundedness of the

Air Force."

In this unit training manager position, O'Driscoll developed a status of training product which streamlined the most up-to-date status and visibility by all 36 MXS members. Her product remedied a seven-month backlog of overdue training within two months, mitigated the loss of Training Business Area transcripts for seven Airmen in upgrade training, and ultimately bolstered the unit's maintenance qualified personnel by 20 percent.

"Even though we don't have an actual flight mission with aircraft, I'm still showing that as a staff sergeant, I can step out of my career field and fill more leadership positions," said O'Driscoll.

SSgt. Jennifer Sangil

'I love interacting with patients'

STORY AND PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS
BREANNA CHRISTOPHER VOLKMAR,
36TH WING

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Sangil, non-commissioned officer in charge of women's health and pediatrics assigned to the 36th Healthcare Operations Squadron, was recognized as the 36th Wing's Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Jan. 25, 2023.

Since arriving at Andersen AFB, Sangil has been known as a steady and skilled NCO that holds Airmen to standards and works with integrity to make sure the mission is accomplished daily. She is the section supervisor for five Airmen, two of whom she is developing to run

daily operations, three contractors and six providers. Sangil has recently filled the flight chief position for six weeks, overseeing 35 staff, executing 1,600 appointments and \$550,000 in treatment and preventative services. She directly piloted the flight through National Accreditation by validating 10 programs, three operating instructions and averting a discrepancy by providing detailed documentation to the surveyor to which Sangil was selected superior performer for her leadership and initiative.

As the NCOIC of women's health and pediatrics, Sangil oversees clinical operations for 16 personnel within three departments and delivers obstetrics, gynecology and primary care manager services

to 5,700 joint service beneficiaries. She initiates triage, walk-in appointments, telephone consults and facilitates communication between patients and their provider by relaying negative laboratory and radiology results. Sangil is also the property custodian and supply manager, regulating a budget of \$126,000 for three sections and protects \$584,000 in medical equipment, supplies and assets. She is the subject matter expert for infection prevention, upholding Department of Defense standards by planning monthly inspections, enforcing disease control and rectifies any discrepancies.

"I love patient care," said Sangil. "I love interacting with patients and making sure we're giving them the

treatment and care they need."

Sangil leads multiple programs across the group in support of the 196 staff members. She had led the group awards ceremonies, leading 20 volunteers, organizing 13 events and honoring 51 of our enlisted members across two units. She also drove the wing health fair and group pediatric mental health process improvement by delivering women's health education to 75 patients, implementing an appointment system reminder, reducing the no-show rate by 30% and enhancing access to care by 20%.

"It's important to lead by example because we have Airmen watching us on a daily basis and they're going to be next in line in the Air Force generation," said Sangil.



Staff Sgt. Jennifer Sangil

Tech. Sgt. Zarah Padilla

'I feel like every day I'm still learning'

STORY AND PHOTO BY
AIRMAN 1ST CLASS EMILY SAXTON,
36TH WING

Andersen Air Force Base, Guam – U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Zarah Padilla, the commander's executive assistant assigned to the 36th Contingency Response Group, was recognized as the 36th Wing's Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Jan. 18, 2023.

Since arriving at Andersen AFB, Padilla provided support for the Joint Task Force Presidential Support and Joint Task Force Vice Presidential Support and served as the J1 for the President and Vice

President mission. She made it possible for personnel to offer security and communications support for the President at the Association of Southeast Asian nations and Group of Twenty conferences, the United States at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation conference and the United States Secretary of State Pacific engagements on the Pacific Theater.

As the commander's executive assistant, Padilla is the main advisor to the group commander, first sergeant and senior enlisted leader for evaluations, awards, decorations and personnel programs. She manages the LeaveWeb program and maintains a suspense system for personnel actions and

correspondence. Padilla also offered training and report templates for the Contingency Response Support Squadron commander support staff and helped with the migration of the MyEval system. She was chosen to offer training to the 36th Medical Group, 36th Wing Staff Agencies and the 36th Wing commander's executive assistant on the MyEval procedures.

"I like being in the unit I am because it's so different," said Padilla. "We have 52 different Air Force Specialty Codes and I feel like every day I'm still learning."

During the MyEval pause, Padilla created a different routing system to avoid a delay in evaluation processing. She gave training

to four commander's support staff that offered an automated tracking tool that is centralized and safe. Padilla briefed the wing staff on the use of Global Electronic Approval Routing System to transfer routing communication. Additionally, to make it easier for units to access daily Reports on Individual Personnel, Padilla worked with the 36th Force Support Squadron Military Personnel Flight to construct a security group where members can access these documents.

"Airmen see what you do and because of that, if they see you doing something wrong they take that in," said Padilla. "So by doing things the right way, I get to instill those good habits in them."



Tech. Sgt. Zarah Padilla

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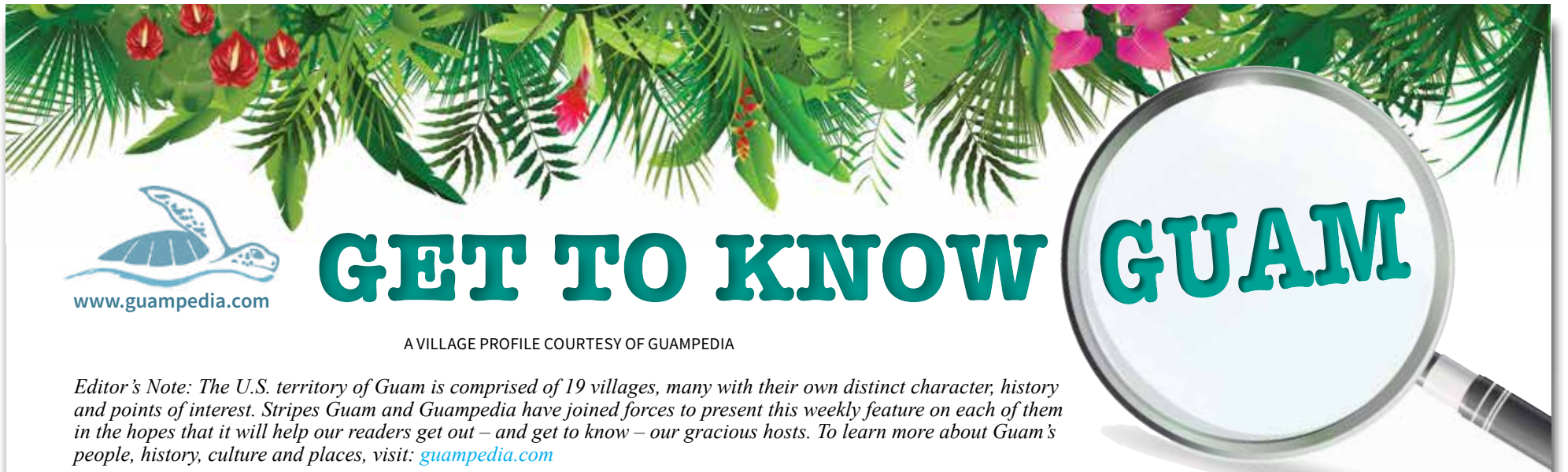
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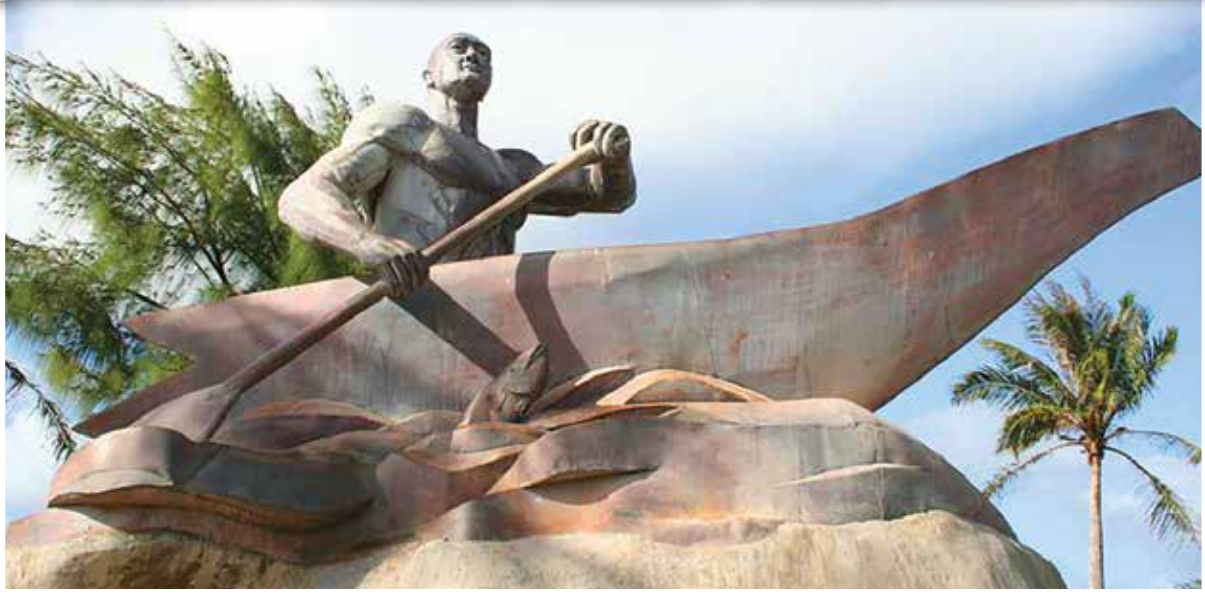


GET TO KNOW GUAM

A VILLAGE PROFILE COURTESY OF GUAMPEDIA

Editor's Note: The U.S. territory of Guam is comprised of 19 villages, many with their own distinct character, history and points of interest. Stripes Guam and Guampedia have joined forces to present this weekly feature on each of them in the hopes that it will help our readers get out – and get to know – our gracious hosts. To learn more about Guam's people, history, culture and places, visit: guampedia.com

Inarajan (Inalåhan) Old-world Spanish-style charm



Legendary Chief Gadao paddles his half of a canoe to Inalåhan after outsmarting a Tumon chief in a contest of strength.
Photo by Nathalie Pereda, Guampedia



statue of St. Joseph that, according to oral tradition, was brought to Guam by the Spanish, who intended to bring it to Humåtak. But a storm prevented the ship from going to Humåtak, and it ended up landing in Inalåhan, where the statue remained.

The church has been rebuilt several times, and the current church was built in 1939. It was damaged during the bombing of World War II, and in the earthquake of 1993, the church's steeple fell to the ground. It was rehabilitated in the late 1990s by the Parish Council, the church Pastor, and parishioners.

The church is famous as being the burial site of Father Jesus Baza Duenas, a local martyr who was one of the only two CHamoru priests on Guam during World War II. Father Duenas was arrested on 8 July 1944 in Inalåhan by the Japanese police on suspicion of aiding the American fugitive, Navy radioman George Tweed. Father Duenas had also angered the Japanese authorities by opposing official directives and calling the two Japanese priests on Guam propagandists for Japan. He was tortured, along with his nephew, former Island Attorney Eduardo Duenas, at Inalåhan and at the police headquarters in Agana Heights. On July 12, the two men were beheaded at Tai, a section in the village of Mangilao. Father Duenas's body was exhumed in March 1945 and reburied under the altar of St. Joseph's, where he had served. The island's only Catholic boys' high school in Tai, Mangilao is named after him.

While Inalåhan, sitting so close to the sea, has been hit hard by a number of typhoons, the most notable include a supertyphoon in 1900 that killed twenty-eight Inalåhan residents when huge waves engulfed the village, and Typhoon Allyn, which destroyed many homes in the village in 1949. ↗

BY LEO BABAUTA,
GUAMPEDIA

The village's CHamoru name, Inalåhan, probably refers to the *åla* or large woven coconut-leaf harvest baskets for which the village was noted. The name could also be derived from the word *hålla*, meaning to pull something or move something with a rope tied to it. In written historical documents, the Spanish changed all the l's in CHamoru words to r's, thus

changing the village's name to Inarajan. The official spelling was changed in 2021 to Inalåhan.

Village history

Not much is known about the early inhabitants of Inalåhan, which was a village before the Spanish arrived on Guam. The village was officially established in 1680 by the Spanish, along with St. Joseph Church, and was one of the main villages on Guam during the Spanish era. The village was designed in the Spanish custom with the church as its focus.

The Spanish were also responsible for an unusual addition to the residents of the village, as the residents of the northernmost Mariana Islands, known as Gåni (including Anatahan, Sarigan, Alamagan, Pagan, Agrihan, and Asuncion), were relocated to Inalåhan and Malesso' in the late 1600s. The Spanish relocation of the CHamorus, including the consolidation of the villages of Guam, was done to better control the local people during the Spanish-CHamoru wars that were going on at the time. There is still a section of Inalåhan known as "As Gani" today.

The St. Joseph Church is named after the village's patron saint of San Jose or St. Joseph. It contains a large



This historic photo, circa 1950, shows Inarajan's main street surrounded by homes some built in the early 1900s. Inarajan is one of two Guam villages (the other is Hagåtña) designated as an historic district. National Park Services



Left: Hungry customers wait for their order at McKraut's Fast Food located along Malojloj Highway. Right: Bear Rock, far right, is a large natural rock formation at the edge of Agfayan Bay. Photos by Nathalie Pereda, Guampedia



Points of interest

↘ Institutions

Inaláhan Elementary School

This school, built in 1997, is a Guam Department of Education elementary school. It is located south of the main village.

Inaláhan Middle School

Inaláhan Middle School, one of eight public middle schools, was constructed in 1973 and served as a high school until the late 1990s. It is now a small middle school that sits atop a hill above the village.



Established in the late 17th century, St. Joseph's Church has been rebuilt several times by the community most recently in the late 1990s. Photo by Nathalie Pereda, Guampedia

St. Joseph Church

Inaláhan's Catholic church was established by the Spanish in late 1680 and has been rebuilt several times, most recently in the late 1990s. It has been the center of the village for several hundred years. The village holds two fiestas for its patron saint: one in March in honor of St. Joseph, Husband of Mary, and another in May in honor of St. Joseph, the Worker.

San Isidro Church

Located in the district of Malojloj, this Catholic church is a more recent structure than St. Joseph's. However, Malojloj residents take equal pride in their celebration of the Malojloj fiesta in May every year in honor of their patron saint, San Isidro.



Ancient pictographs adorn a wall of Gadao's Cave in Guaifan, Inarajan. This particular symbol has become a Guam cultural icon. Photo by Nathalie Pereda, Guampedia

This village at a glance

- **Population:** As of the 2010 US Census, the population was 2,273.
- **Village officials:** Anthony P. Chargualaf, Mayor 2020 - Present; Doris Flores Lujan, Mayor, 2013-2020; Franklin M. Taitague, Mayor, 2001-2012; Jesse L.G. Perez, Mayor, 1993-2001; Juan C. Cruz, Commissioner/Mayor, 1989-1993; Jaime D.S. Paulino, Commissioner, 1981-1989; Alfred S.N. Flores, Commissioner, 1976-1981; Jose P. San Nicolas, Commissioner, 1973-1976; Joaquin S.N. Diego, Commissioner, 1944-1973; Pedro M. Mantanona, Commissioner, 1935-1944; Mariano R. Leon Guerrero, Commissioner, 1935; Enrique Paulino Naputi, Commissioner, 1928; Romaldo C. Diego, Commissioner, 1919; Manuel D. Flores, Commissioner, 1917; Mariano R. Leon Guerrero, Commissioner, 1910; Jesus Aguon Flores, Commissioner, 1900; (No information is available for the century between Jesus Aguon Flores and Juan Mesa Naputi); Juan Mesa Naputi, Commissioner, 1800; Jose Evaristo Duenas, Commissioner, (no date provided); Jose Meno, Commissioner, (no date provided); Antonio (Julian) Mantanona, Commissioner, (no date provided); Enemesio S.N. Diego, Deputy Commissioner, 1935-1944; Pedro M. Mantanona, Deputy Commissioner, 1928; Ramon Guzman Fejeran, Deputy Commissioner, 1919; Jose L.G. Fejeran, Deputy Commissioner, 1917.
- *The preceding list was provided by Konsehelon Mahot Guáhan/the Mayor's Council of Guam.*
- **Village description:** To the outside eye, the village of Inaláhan seems to have been untouched by the hand of change. It is known as the most distinctly Spanish-style village on the island, with the village proper on Inaláhan Bay, remaining basically intact over the decades.
 - A visitor could drive through the small Spanish barrio-style streets, which until recently were one-way streets, and see the history of Inaláhan in its old houses. The houses reflect a mixture of architecture influenced by the Spanish period and the early American period (early 1900s).
 - The village retains many of its traditional ways, with the St. Joseph Church still at the center of many activities, including the village's annual fiestas. Residents of the village are still a small number of families whose roots are deeply entwined in Inaláhan. Very few outsiders have moved into the village, and very few modern structures have been erected.
 - Part of what gives Inaláhan its heritage-rich flavor is one of its more recent additions: the Gef Pa'go Cultural Village, which sits right on the bay. The village,

which consists of ancient-style thatch-roofed huts, is staffed mainly by elder CHamorus who demonstrate traditional CHamoru arts, crafts, and cooking to visitors. A younger group of CHamoru cultural dancers also performs at Gef Pa'go called Inetnon Gef Pa'go.

Residents from all over the island drive south for Inaláhan's famous Hotnu Bakery, at the Gef Pa'go Cultural Village. The bakery serves freshly-made bread and pizzas cooked in the historic place. The bakery is open 10 a.m. to 3 pm Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays as of 2019.

The village was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 as an historic district, and is also designated as a folk arts village receiving federal funds for the preservation of its arts and culture. But to the older CHamorus, or manámko', of the village, there are noticeable changes that have occurred in Inaláhan over the past few decades. The busloads of tourists and schoolchildren that come to visit Gef Pa'go, for example, have changed the pace of the village a bit. To accommodate those buses and other visitors, one of the one-way roads was expanded and paved into a modern two-lane road.

Inaláhan is divided into different sections, including areas known as Lada (near Bear Rock), Belen, Peca, Chagamin Lago, Se'se' (going uphill to Inaláhan Middle School), and Tinaga. One of the biggest sections is Malojloj, which sits uphill and north of the main village. The subcommunity of Malojloj began as a farming community in the 1950s and has grown over the past twenty years, so that it now has its own Catholic church, San Isidro, as well as a gas station, a convent, a solid waste transfer station, and the Inaláhan mayor's office.

Also north of the main village is the Inaláhan public health clinic, the University of Guam Agricultural Experiment Station, the Inaláhan Senior Citizens Center, Fire Station #16, Department of Public Works bus satellite station, US Post Office, and the wastewater treatment plant.

Driving south of the main village, the road passes natural swimming pools known as Salaglula Pools, and the small, seaside Tipogo Cemetery. The road nearly touches the ocean at Agfayan Bay, where visitors can see the famous Bear Rock, which at some angles is shaped like a bear. The newly constructed boat ramp near Agfayan Bridge is an ideal spot to take snapshots of Bear Rock. Further south is the Inaláhan Garden House (a resort reserved exclusively for employees of a Japanese corporation) and privately owned family beaches.

Historical

Baptist Church ruins

Colorful bouganvilla cover the last remaining wall of the church which was initially constructed in the early 1900s adjacent to the Gef Pa'go Cultural Village along Inaláhan Bay. Beside it is a statue of legendary Chief Gadao erected in the late 1980s.

Gadao's Cave

Located in the area of Guaifan, near the entrance to Inaláhan Bay, is a cave with ancient pictographs of stick figure people well known on Guam and often used as cultural icons. Chief Gadao was a legendary chief of Inaláhan who, according to legend, outsmarted a chief from Tumon who came to Inaláhan to challenge Gadao to contests of strength. Part of the legend tells

how the two powerful chiefs rowed a canoe in opposite directions, breaking the canoe in half. A statue of Chief Gadao rowing his half of the canoe back to Inaláhan is located along the shores of the main village.

Historic homes

Some of the oldest homes in the village have been preserved using federal funds, and the Gef Pa'go Cultural Village gives a tour of the Leon Guerrero House, built in 1901, which housed the village commissioner and his 16 children.

The Jose Duenas Cruz (Beck-Ping Cruz) House is still being maintained by the Historic Inaláhan Foundation. The George Flores two-story building is under care of the Guam Preservation Trust, which has led restoration of much of historic Inaláhan.

SEE GUAM ON PAGE 10



Left: Talofofo Bay Beach Park Photo by Guampedia Right: Faithful March, Altar servers lead people in a procession in honor of village patron saint, St. Joseph. Photo by Victor Consaga, Guampedia

GUAM: Beautiful views by the ocean

Points of interest



Gef Pa'go Cultural Village stands along Inarajan Bay and provides daily tours giving visitors a taste of traditional Chamorro life. Photo by Nathalie Pereda, Guampedia

formation of rock that from some angles looks like the shape of a bear. Older residents know the rock as “Las-so’ Gi’ ai,” which refers to male genitalia.

Gef Pa'go Cultural Village

Located along Inaláhan Bay in the main village, the thatched huts of Gef Pa'go are a popular attraction for students, tourists and other interested visitors who want to learn about the island's past. Manâmkô' will tell visitors stories of their childhood and give them demonstrations of traditional CHamoru cooking, crafts and arts. The cultural center also has exhibits of ancient CHamoru tools, tours of historical homes in the village, and cultural dances.

Salaglula Pools

These natural pools of sea water are located toward the southern side of the main village.

Talofofô Bay Beach Park

This black-sand beach, which eroded considerably in the late 1990s, was once a popular park for swimmers and family gatherings. Though the pavilions are mostly destroyed now, the bay remains one of the island's prime surfing spots. Although it is named Talo'fo'fo Bay park, its facilities are on the southern side of the bay, the area most people visit, is actually part of Inaláhan.



Salaglula Pools Photo by Guampedia

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Recreational

Bear Rock

Sitting at the edge of Agfayan Bay is a large, natural

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Photo courtesy of Guam Visitors Bureau

Hafa Adai Celebrating

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOYCE MCCLURE,
GOWORLDTRAVEL.COM

“Hafa Adai!” When arriving in the northern Pacific island of Guam, visitors are greeted with this traditional Chamorro welcome as they step off the plane and begin their journey into the island’s ancient culture.

Located in the Western Pacific Ocean between Japan and Australia, Guam is one of the U.S.’s five inhabited island territories. It sits on the edge of the Marianas trench, the deepest surveyed point in the world, and is only 900 miles north of the equator in the region known as Micronesia.

First settled more than 4,000 years ago by people arriving from the Philippine Islands to the west and subsequently from the Caroline Islands and Southeast Asian islands including Indonesia, the ancient Chamorro culture that evolved from those early settlers is still much in evidence today with 37% of the population identifying as Chamorro.



Tropical dresses



Tropical fruit drinks

CHAMORRO CULTURE OF GUAM

There’s no better place to experience the food, music, arts and crafts of the Chamorros than at Guam’s night markets and village festivals that bring together residents and visitors alike to celebrate the culture of this far-away but accessible tropical island.

One of the most popular night markets is held every Wednesday night in Chamorro Village. Located in the capital city of Hagatna, it’s open every day of the week, but Wednesday evening is when the mouth-watering smoke of barbecue permeates the center court where Guam food trucks and stalls offer a veritable buffet of local foods and fresh fruit juices amid the Spanish-inspired buildings.

Farmers sell their produce and dance groups often entertain the crowd while a karabao, or water buffalo, one of the most well-known images of Guam pulling a two-wheeled cart, is on hand to give rides to children and stand calmly chewing its cud for selfies.

Originally from the Philippines, karabao were introduced to Guam during the Spanish occupation (1668-1898) for farming and today are the image of a slower-paced and less populated time prior to World War II.

Join the crowd and swing and sway to a local band that plays both modern and traditional island music in the village’s main pavilion where families and friends gather to enjoy the warm night air.

CHAMORRO VILLAGE IN GUAM

The mission of Chamorro Village is to promote made-on-Guam products and businesses that are much in evidence among visitors where handmade jewelry, clothing, food and locally produced honey, bath products like soap, oil, and arts and crafts are on display.

Some of the island’s master wood carvers create beautiful furniture made from the durable ifil tree wood that is the territorial tree of Guam.

The authentic Ancient Chamorro crescent moon necklace is also available and comes in many sizes and materials including giant clam shell, whale bone and bamboo.

Just look for the “Made on Guam” sign and strike up a conversation with friendly artisans to learn more about their crafts.

Each of Guam’s 19 villages has its own lively, annual feast day to celebrate its patron saint.



Handmade shell jewelry



Handmade carvings



Coconut art



Guam's Chamorro culture

MALESSO' GUPOT CHAMORU-CRAB FESTIVAL

One of the most popular fiestas is the Malesso' Gupot Chamoru/ Crab Festival in the southern village of Merizo.

A three-day event starring the local land crab, it's held annually in March and features great food and barbeque, live music and dancing, carnival games, culinary competitions and contests that includes a crab-catching contest.

More than 2,000 crabs are released and contestants ages 8 and up scramble to catch as many as they can. Children receive small cash prizes, and the adults get to take home their haul.

Get there early because the stuffed crab and crab cakes sell out before the end of the day.

Other festivals throughout the year include Agat's three-day Mango Festival in late May that celebrates Guam's unofficial fruit. Whether pickled, juiced, or straight off the tree, this festival is dedicated to the juicy, red-gold fruit.

The donne', or hot red pepper, is a staple of Chamorro cuisine, adding heat and spice to almost all dishes from pickled mango and papaya to barbeque marinades and the signature dipping sauce, finadene.

Mangilao's Donne' Festival takes place in September with cooking competitions challenging everyone to see who can stand the most heat. The hotter, the better.



Land crab

MORE FUN GUAM FESTIVALS

The village of Talofofo is a favorite place for hikers where cascading waterfalls rush through green valleys into rivers that run past caves full of stalagmites and ancient cave drawings.

Held annually in April at Ipan Beach Park, the Talofofo Banana Festival celebrates the village's signature fruit. Among the favorite offerings is a deep-fried banana wrapped in a crunchy lumpia wrapper and covered with caramelized brown sugar.

The coconut, or niyok, is the star of two festivals that take place in Agana Heights in March and Inarajan in May. The fruit is one of Guam's most important native plants and appears on the Guam seal and flag.

Inarajan is known for its historic district with narrow streets lined with houses built over a hundred years ago.

Residents fill front yards and porches, and music pours out as they walk to Gef Pa'go Cultural Village along the sea where vendors, tours and games take place. Buy a young coconut bursting with fresh coconut juice and sip the refreshing nectar.

At the height of the festival, a Coconut Queen is crowned and seated at the center of the parade on a Coconut Throne pulled behind a truck to the cultural village where families cheer on their relatives as they compete in various competitions.

Among them is coconut husking with adults racing to tear apart coconut husks using a traditional husker, or heggao, made from a pointed wooden stick.

IF YOU GO

Although Guam is now a melting pot of many cultures including Filipino, Micronesian, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, American, Mexican and Spanish, as a U.S. Territory, English is spoken everywhere, and the American dollar is the currency.

The popular markets and festivals were on hold during the pandemic but are now coming back. For more information and a current calendar of events, contact the Guam Visitors Bureau at the website.



Dance pavilion



Fresh coconut



Loaded corn



Mama Ree's Sweet Treats

Author's Bio: Writer/photographer Joyce McClure joined the Peace Corps as a Response Volunteer in August 2016 and traded the island of Manhattan for the island of Yap after a long career as a senior executive in marketing communications. When her service ended, she stayed on for five years and recently moved to Guam.



Kinkaku-ji Zen Temple

Enjoy old Japan in Kyoto, Nara via quick flight from Guam to Osaka

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MAX DECO, STRIPES GUAM

Recently I took advantage of United Airline’s direct flight from Guam to Osaka (only 2.5 hours by bullet train from Tokyo Station) to get away with some friends from Guam. After a two-day adventure in Osaka, we hopped on a train to Kyoto Station.

After checking into the Hotel Hankyu Kyoto conveniently located in front of the station, we started our much-anticipated sightseeing.

Our first stop was the World Heritage site Nijo-jo Castle built in 1603 on the orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate. The castle consisted of a Honmaru, or main part of the structure, and the Ninomaru surrounding it complete with a moat.

Nijo-jo Castle

The tour took us inside through the castle’s corridors where we could view the huge living and reception rooms accented with magnificent hand-illustrated door panels. The castle also has a unique feature which is an ancient security system built into the wooden floors.



Kinkaku-ji Zen Temple

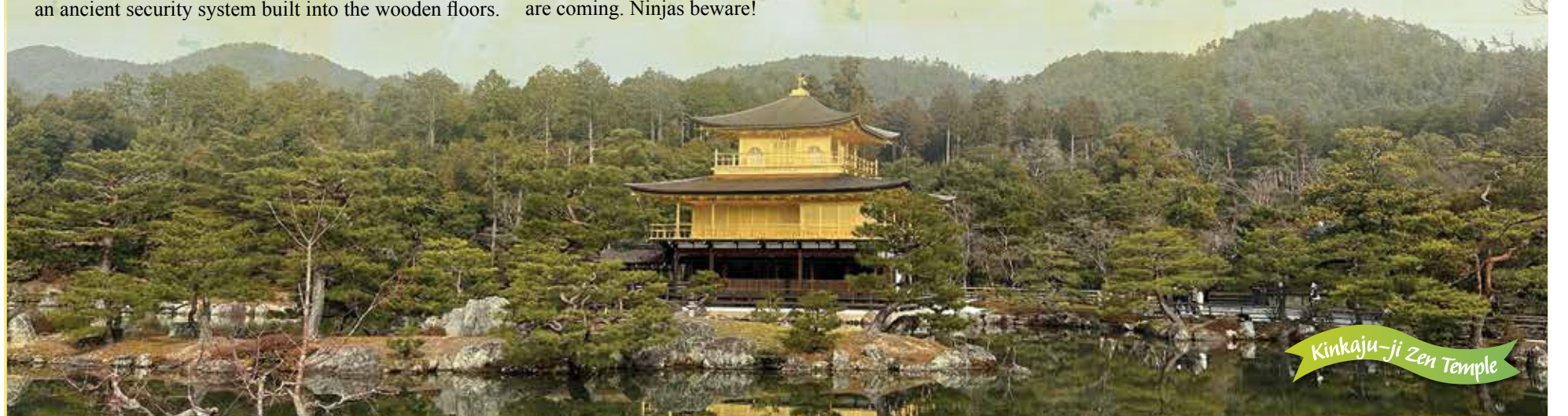
Next, we headed to the famous Rokuon-ji or Kinkaku-ji Zen Temple of the Shokoku-ji school of Rinzaï Buddhist denomination dating back to 1397. This temple was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1994.

The temple’s centerpiece is the three-story Golden Pavilion which sits on a large pond representing the ocean with small pine covered islands in the middle. The top two stories of the pavilion are covered in 0.5mm gold leaf which reflects the sunlight and made the building stand out like a brilliant ball of light when we took pictures. Behind the pavilion, was a giant two-trunk Rikushu pine tree bonsai carefully pruned to look like a ship setting sail.

Kyoto Gosho Imperial Palace

Our next stop was the Kyoto Imperial Palace or Kyoto Gosho, the former residence of Japan’s

Special nails were used to assemble the walkways and when walked upon the nails rub together causing a nightingale-like sound which alerts anyone close by that you are coming. Ninjas beware!



Kinkaku-ji Zen Temple



Nijo-jo Castle

→ emperors until 1869 before the capital was moved to Tokyo during the Meiji Restoration.

At 450 meters north to south and 250 meters east to west, the palace is huge. You'll also notice there is no defensive moat, and the decorative walls are low because nobody dare attack the emperor.

The current palace is the latest of eight incarnations as each of the previous were lost to fires caused by lightning and other natural disasters. The attention to details on the palace grounds is incredible and as we walked the perimeter, we saw workers on their hands and knees plucking individual blades of grass from the immaculate gravel paths.

Because of the lack of defensive architecture, the palace had several unusual carriage gates that were used according to rank and purpose each with their own individual style of architecture.



Fushimi Inari Taisha

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Fushimi Inari Taisha



Fushimi Inari Taisha

The following day, we headed to Fushimi Inari Taisha or the fox shrine. In Japan there are over 30,000 Inari satellite shrines, but the one in Kyoto has been the main branch for the last 1300 years.

The shrine stands at the foot and leads up to the top of the 233-meter-high Higashiyama Mountain, which is considered to be sacred ground.

The path leading to the entrance of this shrine is lined with small shops on each side and because almost everything they sold was fox-themed, it was easy to see where to go. We hiked up to the entrance of the mountain path that was

lined with 1000 red torii gates each donated by a sponsor wishing for good luck as people walk through them on the way to the summit.

Although we did not go all the way to the mountain top we passed through several stages of the gates for good luck before descending to our next adventure.

Sanjusangen-do, hall of 1001 statues

From a place with countless vermilion torii gates we next went to Sanjusangen-do or the hall of 1001 statues. This incredible temple houses 1001 hand-carved cypress statues of the Buddhist deity called Kannon (incidentally the inspiration name for the founder of Canon Corp) who evenly flank a giant seated Buddha in the middle.

At Sanjusangen-do, all the statues had incredible amounts of sacred arms flanking the left and right sides of their bodies. Among the statues, 124 were made in the 12th century when the temple was founded and the remaining in 876 when the temple was renovated in the 13th century. On the far right and left sides of the 1001 statues we also saw a dynamic statue of the wind god and thunder god for wishes of good crop. Since Buddhism originally came to Japan from India the design of the figures was decidedly different from other traditional artwork we saw in the previous locations. Unfortunately, Sanjusangen-do does not allow any photographs inside.

SEE NARA ON PAGE 16



Kyoto Gosho Imperial Palace



Sanjusangen-do, hall of 1001 statues



Kasuga-taisha deer



Todai-ji entrance



Todai-ji - the giant buddha



NARA: Deer free to roam

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Trip to Nara to visit the local residents

After our overnight stay and action-packed day in Kyoto, we headed to Nara, which is about a 45-minute train ride from Kyoto Station.

Our first stop was Todai-ji Temple or the “Great Eastern Temple,” one of Japan’s most famous and a landmark of Nara in addition to being listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the headquarters of the Kegon school of Buddhism.

Todai-ji and the giant buddha

Todai-ji’s main claim to fame, however, is that it houses one of Japan’s largest bronze statues of Buddha standing at 15 meters tall. After a short 20-minute walk from Nara station, we entered the Todai-ji temple grounds and were soon accosted by the wild but tame deer that live in the park.

The deer are considered sacred messengers of Shinto gods and enjoy complete freedom in the city including the right of way to cross any street in Nara.

As we approached the huge main Todai-ji gate, we passed in between two massive wood guardian kings that flanked the entrance gate carved by famous Japanese sculptors Unkei and Kaikei around the 12th century. The temple itself was originally completed around 752 by Emperor Shomu but due to multiple natural calamities, was rebuilt several times to its present two-thirds-original-but-still-awe-inspiring size.

After passing through the main gate, we crossed the temple grounds and entered the main hall of the temple. The building has a window built into the roof that can be opened so the Buddha can look out. It was raining during my visit, so the door was closed.

After ascending the steps, we entered the dimly lit

main hall to pay our respects to the Daibutsu buddha. Because of the darkness it’s difficult to appreciate just how large the statue is until you’re inside. The buddha’s awe-inspiring face loomed over us in serene meditation.

Behind the buddha, one of the big wooden roof pillars has a hole in the bottom reputedly the size of Buddha’s nostril and it is said if you crawl through you will be blessed.

HELLO MY DEER: Nara Park

Next on our itinerary was the Kasuga-taisha Shinto Shrine built in 768, which like most other ancient wooden structures in Japan, was rebuilt several times because of natural calamities. The shrine is famous for its many stone and more than 3000 worshipper-donated bronze lanterns that lead up to the top of the shrine. The shrine is also registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The birth of the shrine was purported to be when the first god of the area rode on the back of a white deer

to the top of Mt. Mikasa in 768 and a full size model of a white deer is enshrined at the top.

The forest of Mt. Mikasa is considered sacred and has remained untouched for over 1000 years. We hiked up the lantern lined path and were struck by the red columns of the shrine buildings that contrasted with the white walls and cedar bark roofs.

Throughout the shrine, the sacred deer were sleeping and waiting for handouts that were sold from vending machines. After reaching the top gate, we gave prayers at the red gate and descended back to Nara Station for a ride on the special Aoniyo-shi limited express train back to Kyoto.

The Aoniyo-shi Express is a luxurious 84-seat train that travels between Osaka, Kyoto, and Nara and features library cars, salon cars, and a snack car that serves Nara craft beers.



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How to plan a family vacation that everyone will enjoy



STORY AND PHOTOS BY NEVIN MARTELL, SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

I can count on zero fingers the number of times my father consulted me about where we vacationed or what was on our itinerary. When I was a child, he was in charge of travel; my mother, younger sister and I were simply along for the ride. Though we journeyed to some amazing destinations - including South Pacific islands, the Azores, Amazon rainforests and the Caribbean - the activities were Dad-centric, which meant fishing was always on the itinerary. Great for Dad, not so much for the rest of us, who had no interest in spending our days at sea pursuing marlin or learning the intricacies of fly-fishing.

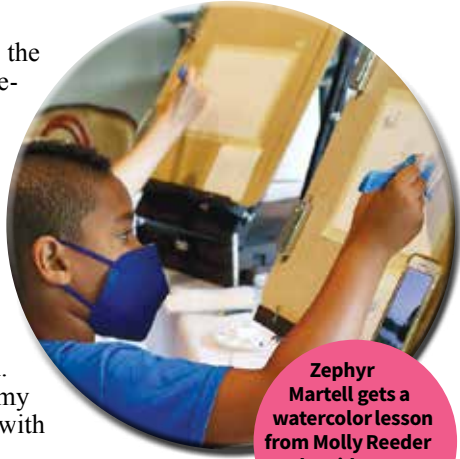
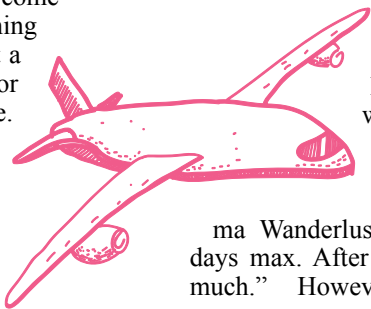
Although I have come to appreciate fishing as an adult, it's not a passion my wife or 9-year-old son share. When we began traveling together nearly a decade ago, I resolved to be a different kind of vacation

planner, with an emphasis on the "we" rather than the "me." It became my goal to design itineraries that engage all of us on multiple levels throughout the journey. This approach takes extra work and some delicate negotiating skills, but it is always worth it. We look forward to our trips and return with great memories, eager to travel together again. Here are some tips, based on my experiences and discussions with travel experts.



Longer isn't necessarily better. There is an expiration date on some vacations. The larger the group and the more generations involved, the shorter it should probably be. "I don't want to be with that

many people for too long," says Tykesha Burton, who writes about culture-focused family travel on her blog, Momma Wanderlust. "Seven to 10 days max. After that, it's all too much." However, when she



Zephyr Martell gets a watercolor lesson from Molly Reeder at the Tides Inn in Virginia in June.

travels with only her husband and their two young children, she doesn't think there are time limits - except those set by their school and work schedules.



Consider everyone.

The first question a trip planner needs to ask is whether a destination will be fulfilling for the entire family. If it's a one-note place mostly catering to a single activity or sensibility, it's not the best idea to drag everyone there. Save that trip for a solo adventure. While a spot doesn't need to be

stereotypically kid-friendly - such as Disneyland or Hershey, Pa. - it does need to offer elements that will appeal to the younger set. And keep your partner's interests in mind, too.



Make a group decision.

Once children are old enough to have strong ideas about travel, ask everyone to suggest a couple of places that interest them, then whittle down the list to the ones with the broadest appeal for your family. From there, either everyone can vote, or you can make the decision based on other important factors, such as budget and whether the destination will truly shine at the time of year you plan to visit. The process will give everyone a sense of ownership, even if their destination isn't chosen.



Space is key.

Although it might be nice to save money by squeezing as many people as possible into the most affordable housing option, a little extra room makes a big difference. Giving everyone their own area to decompress and enjoy downtime alone helps mend moods and keep

vacationers energized. Leveling up to larger lodgings might mean renting an Airbnb instead of a hotel room, but that can have the added benefit of a kitchen, which can help you trim your food costs and cut down on mealtime stress.



Bring a bag of tricks.

Pack goodies to take the edge off travel's smaller aggravations. Burton always has snacks on hand to prevent her children from getting hangry and gum to help them pop their ears when flying. She also brings a bag full of toys from the dollar store. "It doesn't matter that it's a dollar. It only matters that it's new and they've never seen it," she says. "It keeps their attention long enough that they aren't bored for a while."



Be realistic at mealtime.

Travel is a great opportunity to expand your child's palate, so hit a few restaurants



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→ showcasing the region's food. But if you have picky eaters, make sure the menu also includes some classic kid fare. "There has to be chicken nuggets and fries," Burton says, "but I always order one thing that's new and different for them to try."

Discover the unique. "Don't look for things you can find near you, like zoos or amusement parks," says Tamara Gruber, founder of the family-travel-focused website We3Travel. She suggests seeking out experiences unique to your destination that will be entertaining and educational. Travel can be a great way to broaden your children's minds, so don't miss these opportunities for enrichment. This might mean taking an art class tied to the area's culture, hiking to a one-of-a-kind outdoor feature or booking a guide to give you a deep-dive tour of a singular aspect of the place, such as a historical neighborhood or regional cuisine.

Have fun together. Book a few group activities with mass appeal. "What really makes vacations are the experiential things you do together as a family," says Amie O'Shaughnessy, chief executive of Ciao Bambino, a family-focused travel agency. "Immersive activities that are more structured can make the best memories." This

could mean a horse-riding excursion, zip-lining adventure course or cooking class.

Let each person choose something. Allow every family member to pick one activity that will be their special moment on the trip or have them schedule a day. Be warned: A child's choice might force parents out of their comfort zones. "I've done many things that frighten me to death for my daughter, because it's something she wants to do," Gruber says. "We've gone white-water rafting, and I have a fear of water. But it's a bonding and learning experience."

Accommodate both travelers and vacationers. These are totally different mind-sets. One wants to do everything; one wants to do nothing. "I'm definitely a hit-the-ground-running, go-and-see-everything type," Burton says. "My husband is not." To strike a balance that accommodates them both, she always plans a day of chilling after a busy day of excursions or events.

Say yes to babysitting. Before the pandemic, many parents felt as if they didn't have enough time with their children, so they often didn't want to be apart from them on vacation. Now, most families feel as if they have had too much time together, so

some separation can be a great benefit to a trip. Many resorts and hotels offer children's clubs or other independent activities for kids, although travelers should expect to pay for them.

Don't overschedule. There's nothing worse than waking up on a vacation and realizing every minute of the day is jammed. An endless litany of meal reservations, guided tours and timed museum visits can make even the adults cranky. Don't start your itinerary at the crack of dawn, which is not ideal for late-rising teens or smaller children who want time to play before getting in the car. "Leave some downtime, some unplanned time, some time to explore and uncover," O'Shaughnessy says. "At the end of the day, that unknown is the essence of the joy of travel."

Stay flexible. Your travel itinerary will not unfold exactly as you planned, especially with the pandemic still disrupting life around the world. Things are going to go wrong, whether it's a delayed flight, canceled tour or unexpected restaurant closure. "Have the expectation that it isn't



Zephyr Martell rides a unicorn float in the Cayman Islands in 2019.

embrace the unknown. After all, travel is an adventure.

Understand the risks. If you decide to leave the country for your vacation, everyone must be comfortable with the potential ramifications if someone tests positive for the coronavirus. This will probably involve a longer stay in the country you're visiting, along with quarantining, missing work and school, and added costs. If these risks don't work for the family, don't leave the country.

Keep an eye on the future. "I want to make sure my family wants to go on the next vacation, which means they have to have a good time on this vacation," Gruber says. Really listen to your family throughout the process - from the moment you start considering a trip until the moment you come home. If you have their buy-in, the journey becomes a cooperative partnership, which is the secret to being a successful family no matter where you are in the world.

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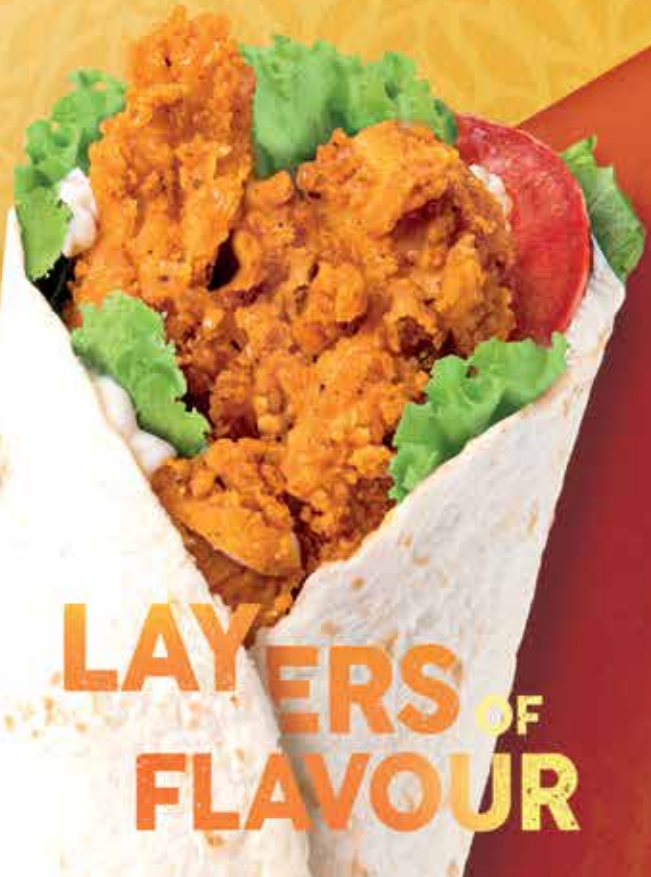
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TSA's weirdest finds of 2022

BY ANDREA SACHS,
THE WASHINGTON POST

Day in and day out, Transportation Security Administration officers uncover items that are not permitted through security checkpoints. Most are removed with little fanfare, such as water bottles, tubes of toothpaste and jars of homemade preserves. However, every year a number of concealed objects — including weapons and drugs — that involve a high level of creativity, sneakiness or gall are inducted into the agency's list of Top 10 Catches.

"These are what we call good catches," Lisa Farbstein, an agency spokeswoman, said of the video compilation that appears on TSA's social media platforms the last week of the year. "The list offers recognition to the TSA officers across the country, because they catch things."

The list dates back to at least 2016, when the champions included dead sea horses in a brandy bottle from the Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport, a bullet-bedazzled gas mask from Miami International Airport and a movie prop corpse at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport. In 2021, the honors went to a chain saw from the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, bullets stashed in deodorant at Atlantic City International and meth wrapped in a burrito at Houston Hobby Airport.

Throughout the year, TSA's regional spokespeople share security checkpoint discoveries with the social media strategy team, which often pairs photos of the unmasked items with a snappy or dad-joke caption. For the annual list, the team's five judges choose the winners from this pool of posts. They weigh several other factors, such as the amount of online engagement, the quality of the photo and the range of the airports. Incidents may also earn points if they contain a certain



Suspected fentanyl pills were hidden in packs of Skittles candy at Los Angeles International Airport. Photo source Transportation Security Administration

degree of genius — or foolishness.

In all seriousness, TSA discovered more than 6,500 firearms last year, of which more than 88% were loaded. This figure breaks the 2021 record of 5,972 guns.

"The video is for the shock value," Farbstein said, "but it also makes for great cocktail conversation."

Here is TSA's Top 10 of 2022:

No. 10: Cash in crutches at El Paso International Airport

A passenger's crutches triggered the alarm when officers noticed an unusual object in the base of the mobility aid. The mysterious wad turned out to be literally dirty money, an object that does not fall under TSA's definition of "things that can cause a catastrophic incident on a flight."

"Why are you trying to conceal something that is allowed through security?" Farbstein asked. "You didn't have to do that."

No. 9: Inert grenade at Milwaukee Mitchell International Airport

Farbstein said officers find a surprisingly high number of hand

grenades. Even if it's inactive, the weaponry is not permitted because it can create panic among passengers on a plane. She recommends stashing the explosive item in your car, handing it over to a non-traveling companion or surrendering it to a TSA officer. Or maybe just leave the hand grenade at home.

No. 8: Cattle prods at Washington-Dulles International Airport

Officers extracted a pair of electric cattle prods tucked inside a guitar case. The bovine pokers ran afoul of the TSA rule that forbids tools longer than seven inches, which could be used as a bludgeon.

"They would have been fine in a checked bag," Farbstein said. The guitar was allowed to board.

No. 7: Gun in a PlayStation at the Atlanta airport

Explosives hidden in electronics are a major concern, so finding a weapon inside the video game console was an especially gratifying catch for TSA.

"PlayStations don't come with guns in the middle of them," Farbstein said.

No. 6: Drug-filled scrunchies at Boise Airport in Idaho

This passenger raised more than a few hairs by trying to sneak small bags containing suspected drugs in the 1980s fashion accessory. TSA handed the perpetrator over to the police.

No. 5: Knife in a laptop at Richmond International Airport

After the passenger's bag set off the alarm, the officers had to re-scan each item. They homed in on the laptop and, after unscrewing its covers, removed a knife from its electronic innards.

No. 4: Gun in a sling at the Greater Rochester International Airport

The X-ray machine noticed something suspicious about the man with the arm sling. Officers asked him to remove his limb support. According to Farbstein, he warned that the sling was "a little heavy." His response to their discovery: "I forgot I put it in my sling."

"It was inches from his skin, and he forgot?" Farbstein said.

This is why TSA checks medical equipment such as wheelchairs, canes and crutches — too many places to stash illicit goods.

No. 3: Firearm in peanut butter at John F. Kennedy International Airport

This event occurred just in time to make the 2022 list: On Dec. 22, officers extracted parts of a disassembled handgun from two jars of Jif peanut butter. The passenger carefully wrapped the weapon in plastic, so that the smooth (not chunky) sandwich spread wouldn't gum up the gun.

Peanut butter is not allowed in the cabin, even if it contains just peanuts, no armaments. Farbstein said passengers can travel with the foodstuff in their checked luggage, though officers may swab the container.

"It always triggers an alarm. It might have explosive material," she said.

The man who thought he could get away with this nutty subterfuge was arrested.

No. 2: Gun inside a chicken at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport

The violated fowl was a fan favorite, receiving more than 34,000 likes on TSA's Instagram account. The passenger had jammed the wrapped gun inside the raw, pink-skinned bird.

"I can see from the X-ray that the chicken was definitely tampered with," said Farbstein, adding, "You should not stuff your chicken with a handgun. Pepperidge Farm stuffing, maybe."

No. 1: Pills in candy packaging at Los Angeles International Airport

Less than two weeks before Halloween, a traveler tried to disguise the drugs as candy, placing 12,000 blue pills of suspected fentanyl inside boxes and sleeves of SweetTarts, Skittles and Whoppers.

"It's not funny; it's shocking," said Farbstein, as her voice turned grave. "It's a good catch."

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March 17-19

LOCATION: Malessos' Veterans Sons & Daughters Pier Park

Experience one of the island's largest annual celebrations—the Malessos' Gupot CHamoru/ Crab Festival. This event is a Chamorro celebration of southern hospitality featuring great food and barbecue, live music and dancing, Guam gifts and handcrafted items, friendly contests and carnival games for children.



But the real stars of the Malessos' Crab Festival are the local land crabs. Crab culinary competitions, as well as contests for talaya (fishing net) throwing, coconut husking and even jet ski racing, take place throughout the weekend.

For more information please contact the Malessos' Mayor's Office at (671) 828-8312/ (671) 828-2941.



GUAM KO'KO' ROAD RACE

April 16

LOCATION: Governor Joseph Flores Memorial Park

The return of the Guam Ko'ko' Road Race features a 10 kilometer out and back running event scheduled for April 16, 2023 located at the Governor Joseph Flores Memorial Park in Tumon. Race information along with access to online registration will be made available as the event draws near.

For more event information please email guaminfo@visit-guam.org



SMOKIN' WHEELS RACING

April 21-23

LOCATION: Guam International Raceway Park

The Legendary Smokin' Wheels Racing kicks off Friday night at the drag strip and continues the next day with moto sports competitions including a Fiesta car show and Drag Racing Finals. Sunday caps off with the Smokin' Wheels Off-Road Buggy Endurance, Smokin' Grills BBQ competition and Mud Drags. With non-stop action, awesome food and racing, you won't want to miss this once a year motorsports festival!

For more Information, go to the website. <https://www.guamraceway.com/>



GUAM MICRONESIA ISLAND FAIR

May 12-14

LOCATION: Governor Joseph Flores Memorial Park

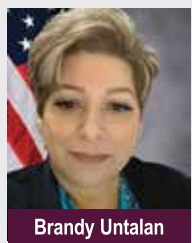
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Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS




Fintasa

REMINDER! We no longer meet at Chamorro Village. We meet at the trailhead.

Every Saturday, Guam Boonie Stompers offers public hikes to a variety of destinations such as beaches, snorkeling sites, waterfalls, mountains, caves, latte sites, and World War II sites. We meet at the trailhead on Saturdays at 9 AM. Directions to the trailhead will be posted on the Guam Boonie Stompers Inc Facebook page. 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



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

Complete 10 Boonie Stomp hikes to earn a free Boonie Stomp T-Shirt.

One of the most adventurous and memorable outdoor activities you can experience on Guam is "boonie stomping," which is what locals call hiking through the jungle. Guam's landscape is dotted with stunning off-the-beaten-path sites including secluded rivers and coastlines, cascading waterfalls, majestic mountain peaks, natural caves, remnants of ancient Chamorro civilization and historical World War II battlegrounds.

Boonie stomping trails range from easy walks across beaches to very difficult treks over rough rocky terrain. Many trails are unmarked and conditions can widely vary depending on weather, so it is recommended to go boonie stomping with an experienced guide or with a group such as the Guam Boonie Stompers.

Founded in 1970, Guam Boonie Stompers is a non-profit organization committed to helping island residents and visitors explore and preserve the natural beauty of Guam. Every Saturday, Guam Boonie Stompers leads groups to remote beaches, snorkeling sites, waterfalls, mountains, caves and cultural and historical sites.

To participate, the group meets at 9 a.m. at the center court of Chamorro Village in Hagåtña. After a short briefing, participants take their own transportation and meet at the trailhead. Children under the age of 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. There is a nominal \$5 fee and no reservations are required.

Guam's tropical climate can sometimes mean intense rain and sweltering heat, so it is best to be very prepared when going on a boonie stomp. Bring plenty of water, wear appropriate clothing and shoes, and always inform someone of where you're going and when you expect to return.

Guam's beautiful landscape and fresh air offers many opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. When it comes to unique activities on Guam, add an element of adventure to your trip with an on-Guam boonie stomping experience.

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Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Part of GMAT
- 5 Gridiron play
- 9 Call's companion
- 13 Some nerve
- 15 Chills and fever
- 16 Astronaut Shepard
- 17 Belt size, basically
- 18 Measuring instrument (var.)
- 19 Roman 57
- 20 Like some angles
- 21 Rented pad
- 23 Less of a mess
- 25 Valentine's gift
- 26 Toward the rudder
- 28 Coffin stand
- 30 Serengeti grazer
- 31 Idle monitor's display
- 37 Dumbo's are jumbo
- 39 "___ Johnny!"
- 40 In person
- 41 Dashboard dial
- 44 Old Navy's parent, with "The"
- 45 Hard to come by
- 46 Vegas attraction
- 48 Less of a risk
- 51 Kind of law
- 54 Platter holder
- 56 Horse's hangout
- 59 Notion
- 60 Dick Van Patten's "Mama" role
- 61 Bert's buddy
- 62 Told a tall tale
- 63 Birch or beech
- 64 Axes
- 65 Rich supply
- 66 "___ It Romantic?"
- 67 Amanda of "Brockmire"

DOWN

- 1 Caesar's garb
- 2 Sony label
- 3 Framework
- 4 Dot above the i
- 5 Heathen
- 6 Open-mouthed
- 7 Sweet vegetable
- 8 Palmist, e.g.
- 9 Royal castle in Scotland
- 10 Keebler's crew
- 11 Duvall's "Secondhand Lions" co-star
- 12 Makes a scarf, say
- 14 Toasting word
- 22 Uno, dos, ___
- 24 Newsroom VIP
- 26 Many moons
- 27 Button alternative
- 29 Ladybug, for one
- 32 Brings to mind
- 33 Before of yore
- 34 Watchfulness
- 35 2007 movie, "___ Almighty"
- 36 Bank take-back
- 38 Woo with a tune
- 42 Old Dodge model
- 43 Pay increases
- 47 Persian governor
- 48 Movie photo
- 49 Part of a TV signal
- 50 Liberated
- 52 Type of wrench
- 53 Odometer button
- 55 Start to freeze?
- 57 Take a shine to
- 58 In the event that

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13				14		15					16		
17						18					19		
20						21				22			
		23			24					25			
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41				42						43		44	
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65						66						67	

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Stripes Sports Trivia

Hockey is known as a tough guy's sport. Playing with broken bones, missing teeth and injured organs is all part of the game. To hold the record for the most games played in the NHL, one would surely have to tough out more than a few of such injuries. The current record holder played in 1,767 games and officially retired at age 52. Who is it?

Answer
Gordie Howe

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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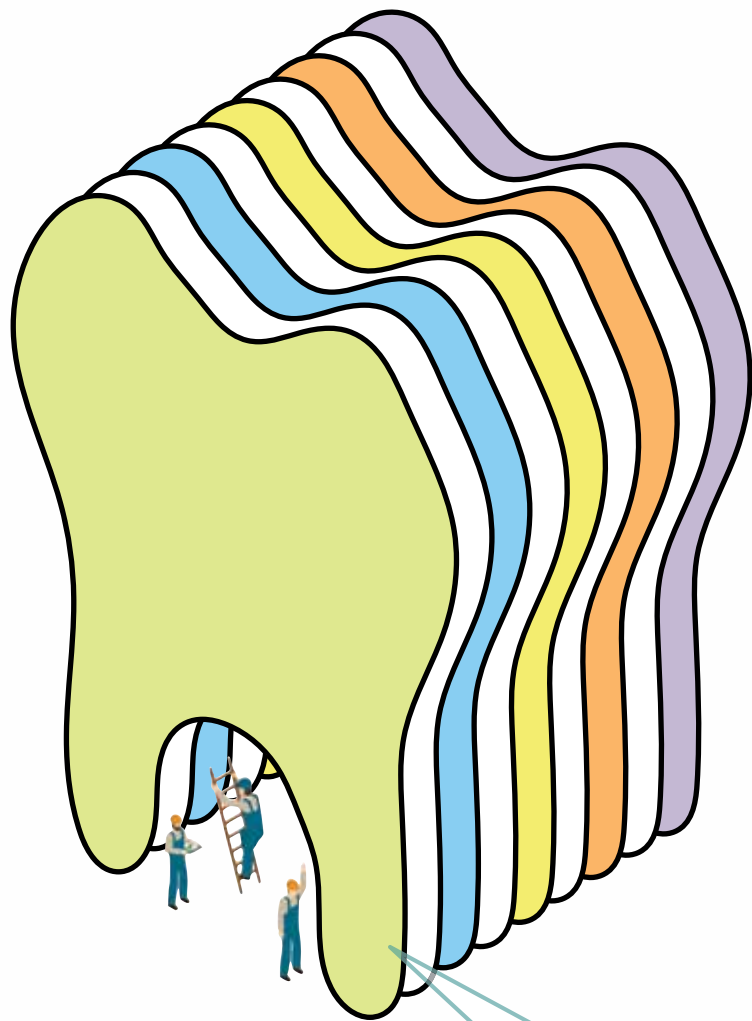
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FEBRUARY 20, 2023



'You can't fake that stuff'

Retired Blue Angel gave authentic touches to 'Top Gun: Maverick' Page 2

PARAMOUNT PICTURES/TNS

Tom Cruise stars as Capt. Pete "Maverick" Mitchell in "Top Gun: Maverick."

MILITARY

Ex-Blue Angel talks ‘Top Gun: Maverick’

Former pilot makes it to the big screen flying for Tom Cruise

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Cmdr. Frank “Walleye” Weisser is a decorated former Navy fighter pilot with decades of experience, thousands of hours in the cockpit and dozens of combat missions under his belt.

But his most famous mission recently made it to the big screen with Weisser flying for Tom Cruise in Hollywood’s big blockbuster of last year — “Top Gun: Maverick.”

“The only reason I became involved is because Tom Cruise and [Producer] Jerry Bruckheimer had a couple scenes they wanted done at extreme low altitudes,” he said. “What’s really cool about this movie is the fact that almost everything you see on that big screen we flew. We really did it.”

Weisser was part of a recent discussion hosted by the Military Officers Association of America, a nonprofit, nonpartisan group comprised of active-duty and retired American service members that advocates for a strong national defense and the welfare of military families. Weisser described what it was like to be a naval pilot and how it felt standing in for Cruise in the \$170 million, years-in-the-making “Top Gun” sequel — an assignment that took about a year and involved several real-life pilots. Weisser, though, was the one who flew F/A-18 Hornets for risky scenes close to the ground.

“The effects on the ground had to be real, had to be legitimate because you can’t fake that stuff,” he said. “There was only one opportunity to do it because the destruction it causes to the set made the set unusable for any future takes.”

For example, Weisser, a two-time member of the famous Blue Angels unit, was in the cockpit for a scene early in the film that shows a prototype “Darkstar” stealth plane swoop in low, kick up a storm of dust and nearly rattle the roof off a nearby military watchtower.

“The roof of the building did, in fact, come off. That isn’t Hollywood special effects,” he said.

Weisser was also the pilot assigned to perform other potentially risky maneuvers for the movie, which turned out to be a gold mine at the box office, earn-



IAN COTTER/U.S. Navy

Then-Cmdr. Frank Weisser, lead solo pilot for the Blue Angels, points to the crowd at a Wings Over Wayne air show in North Carolina in 2017.



THOMAS BRENNAN/U.S. Navy

Then-Lt. Cmdr. Frank Weisser, who was the lead solo pilot of the Blue Angels, signs autographs during Navy Week in Seattle in 2010.

ing almost \$1.5 billion in global ticket sales. The low-level flybys and aerial tricks played out in the movie, it was Weisser portraying Cruise’s Col. Pete “Maverick” Mitchell.

“I thought Tom was super. I actually thought all the actors were super. They kind of function like a military organization, too,” he said. “When Tom walks in the room, it’s like a three- or four-star [general] coming in.”

And Cruise plays that part too. “[Cruise] is exactly what you’d want in a senior leader because he takes himself seriously, works

incredibly hard, he cares about the people underneath him and he was constantly mentoring the entire time,” Weisser said.

He knows about leadership. He joined the U.S. Naval Academy after high school in the late 1990s and received his wings in 2002. In the years that followed, he was an instructor pilot and flew missions over Iraq and Afghanistan in the mid-2000s. In 2007, he joined the Navy’s Blue Angels — one of the service’s aerobatic flight demonstration teams that performs at air shows worldwide.

During his time as an aviator,

“What’s really cool about this movie is the fact that almost everything you see on that big screen we flew. We really did it.”

Frank “Walleye” Weisser
retired Navy pilot

Weisser was given the callsign “Walleye,” which is a bit less flattering than the dangerous-sounding nicknames the pilots have in the Top Gun films. That is pure Hollywood, Weisser said, because pilots are usually given their callsigns — and they usually reflect something they don’t do so well, kind of a way to keep their ego from getting too big.

“In my first fleet squadron, I was flying too close to some of the other aircraft,” he said. “So, the joke was that I had walleye vision and I couldn’t see things properly unless I got too close to them. ... It has this really profound effect of bringing you back down if someone gets a little bit [too cocky].”

Weisser, who became a real estate agent and engagement speaker after his military ser-

vice, said he had an exciting and adventurous career as a Navy pilot, but he backed into the role. Upon entering the Naval Academy, his dream was to be a Navy SEAL.

“On the day of service selection, I was told I was going to be a Navy pilot. And I was heartbroken,” he said. “I was wrecked for years about it, because it’s not what I wanted to do.... At some point, I was able to sort out how to fly these airplanes, and I look back at having had what I think was a very rewarding and exciting job.”

Weisser, along with a handful of other Navy pilots, worked on “Top Gun: Maverick” for about a year in 2018 and 2019. The movie was originally supposed to hit theaters in the summer of 2020, but the coronavirus pandemic pushed the release back several times to Memorial Day weekend in 2022.

So, how did Weisser feel when he finally got to see the movie — and his flight stunts?

“I loved it,” he said. “I was secretly worried that it was going to be a bust and I was going to spend the rest of my life being made fun of for being a part of it.”

“I was just so pleased that the [story] was awesome and they really tied in so well back to the [first] movie. ... It was kind of a feel-good movie at a time in America when we needed it.”

ware.doug@stripes.com

MILITARY

Army unveils new parental leave policy

Soldiers welcoming new child now get 12 weeks, regardless of gender

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Army recently expanded its Congress-mandated parental leave policy, granting 12 weeks of leave after welcoming a new child to all soldiers regardless of gender.

The Army was the last of the military services to implement the new policy in recent weeks, after the Defense Department rolled out its guidelines earlier this year. Congress in the 2022 National Defense Authorization Act, which sets its annual priorities for the Pentagon, had mandated the armed forces adopt a 12-week parental leave policy by Jan. 1 — a target all the services missed.

Like the other services, however, the Army backdated its policy to cover soldiers who have welcomed a new child or had unused parental leave as of Dec. 27. The Marine Corps rolled out its new policy recently, and the Navy unveiled its on Jan. 19. The Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard announced their new parental leave policies on Jan. 5.

In a Twitter statement, Army Secretary Christine Wormuth wrote that she was excited to roll out the new policy, which defense officials believe could bolster morale among military parents.

“The [Army] recruits soldiers, but retains families,” she tweeted.

The Army policy instructs commanders to authorize new

mothers and fathers the full 12 weeks of leave after the birth of their child, an adoption or the placement of a minor child for long-term foster care, according to guidelines published by Army Human Resources Command. The policy replaces the Army’s most recent parental leave policy that granted six weeks of maternity leave to birth mothers and three weeks of leave to secondary caregivers, such as fathers or other non-birth partners.

For birth parents, the 12-week parental leave period would follow convalescent leave to recover from childbirth ordered by a doctor, according to HRC.

The Army’s policy largely mirrors those unveiled by the other military services, including the Marines’ policy. While Marine officials said their policy was delayed until after the Navy could publish its new policy, Army officials did not immediately explain the reason for its delay.

The Army’s policy does have one significant difference from those rolled out by the other services. The other services’ policies — including the Marines’ — largely allowed commanders to deny leave under certain circumstances, though the Army policy allows “only the first general officer in a soldier’s chain of command” to disapprove a parental leave request, according to the service.

Human Resources Command wrote parental leave should only be denied for significant events



Army Spc. Dallas Ochoa, assigned to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, reunites with his daughter, Kaylynn, following a homecoming ceremony at Fort Carson, Colo., in 2018.

that would impact a unit’s combat readiness, such as a “critical deployment” or a “critical training event.” It wrote soldiers denied parental leave must later be granted that leave. Soldiers have up to one year after birth or adoption to use their 12 weeks of leave, which can be taken in a single block or in shorter in-

crements, according to the policy.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Michael Grinston, the service’s top enlisted soldier, tweeted recently that soldiers should work with their chains of command early to develop their parental leave plans to ensure it “balances both the needs of the soldier and the

needs of the unit.

“Work with your leaders to communicate your intent and plan as early as possible,” Grinston wrote. “This should not impact [combat] readiness if we prepare.”

dickstein.corey@stripes.com
Twitter: @CDicksteinDC

Air Force: PCS moves continue despite concerns of pause

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force is processing new assignments and scheduled permanent-change-of-station moves are still going according to plan, the service said, following numerous social media posts referring to a pause in processing the movements of airmen.

“The Air Force Personnel Center is not pausing processing military assignment actions nor canceling assignments for those scheduled” to move in fiscal year 2023, Tech. Sgt. Deana Heitzman, an Air Force spokeswoman at the Pentagon, said in a recent statement to Stars and Stripes.

Numerous comments and screenshots of what appear to be Air Force documents and unit messages were posted to unofficial military social media channels recently, informing

airmen that assignments and moves had been temporarily paused due to a significant shortfall in the service’s PCS budget.

“We are Air Force wide 7-day assignment pause,” said an anonymous post on Air Force Reddit, noting that someone had posted about the issue earlier but had since deleted the post.

The PCS budget is projected to be expended for enlisted members by Aug. 1 and sooner for officers, the post continued.

“They are pausing to ensure that the math is correct and come up with a solution.”

Added to the comments below the post was a screenshot of a message directed to unit leaders, stating that the loading of new assignments into the system was on hold. Heitzman said she could not confirm the authenticity of the note.

Others said they received a similar message.

“Got the same from my Commander today,” said another Reddit post. “He briefed us as soon as he heard so we weren’t caught by surprise. Lots of badly needed career progression about to be put on pause in my work center.”

Similar posts appeared on the popular Air Force amn/nco/scno Facebook page.

But Air Force officials said that no changes had been decided.

An email sent to airmen from the Air Force Personnel Center on backed up that statement, adding that earlier communication on the subject may have been premature or erroneous.

“To be crystal clear — we are continuing to process military assignment actions,” it said. “We apologize for the confusion from

a previous message on this topic.”

The back-and-forth left some airmen skeptical regarding the service’s fiscal standing.

“I’m not trying to stoke fires, but nowhere in the statement did it address the current state of the budget,” said one Air Force Reddit commenter. “Just that assignments will still be processed and assignments won’t be canceled.”

Heitzman did not say whether there is a shortfall in the PCS budget, following an emailed question from Stars and Stripes.

A Government Accountability Office study published in 2015 determined that PCS move costs across the Defense Department increased 28% from 2001 to 2014, to \$4.3 billion, after accounting for inflation.

The report found that the Air Force spent the highest per

move, at an average of \$8,548.

The service asked for \$1.1 billion for 2023 PCS moves, according to Air Force budget documents.

Moving costs in general are on the rise because of inflation, higher shipping rates and gas price spikes, fueled in part by a supply crunch during the coronavirus pandemic and the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

The military services also are now obligated to pay for more temporary lodging expenses. Last fall, the Defense Department mandated an increase in temporary lodging coverage from 10 to 14 days for stateside moves and up to 60 days for service members moving to an area with a housing shortage.

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MILITARY

Military child care good, tough to find

Watchdog report finds accessibility and affordability remain challenges

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department is doing a good job offering quality child care options for military families, but accessibility and affordability remain challenges, a recent government watchdog agency report found.

Waitlists for on-base child care continue to be a pressure point for military families, and some, especially those of lower-ranking service members, are troubled by cost, according to a recently released Government Accountability Office report.

“When on-base child care was unavailable, families needed to use community-based, civilian child care centers, which can be more expensive than on-base care, even with fee assistance,” according to the report, which included interviews with military family association representatives.

That pinch is evident across military communities worldwide, potentially affecting family readiness and hurting military spouses who want to work.

For example, DOD child care centers in the Kaiserslautern Military Community in Germany were managing to handle only about 65% of demand in September, officials told Stars and Stripes at the time. That was due to chronic staffing shortages.

About 440 children were then on the waiting list at Army and Air Force care centers in the

“When on-base child care was unavailable, families needed to use community-based, civilian child care centers, which can be more expensive than on-base care.”

Government Accountability Office

community. That figure was nearly identical to the tally four years earlier, reflecting a persistent backlog, the Stars and Stripes report found.

The 2021 Military Family Lifestyle Survey by Blue Star Families found that 20% of active-duty spouse respondents who were unemployed but wanted or needed to work cited child care unavailability as an impediment to taking a job, and 34% said child care was too expensive, according to the study released in March 2022.

DOD officials acknowledge challenges to meeting demand in some locations, according to the GAO report. Reasons include shortfalls in staffing and capacity.

To address them, the Pentagon is building more Child Development



MARY BOWERS/U.S. Air Force

A group of children play with a Child Development Center staffer at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Mont. In areas with limited availability of community child care facilities, such as Montana, on-base CDCs are an essential service for military families.

Centers, starting nationwide recruiting for workers and expanding options for off-base care, the report stated.

DOD spent more than \$1 billion on child care programs in fiscal year 2021, the GAO said.

About 76,700 children were enrolled in DOD child care programs as of September 2021. And the agency was offering fee assistance for the care of about 25,800 children of service members as of March 2022, the GAO said.

Unlike at most civilian child care centers, meeting national accreditation standards is required for on-site development centers, school-age care programs and a majority of off-site child care providers.

The Defense Department also does a good job ensuring training of child care employees, inspecting care centers and implementing quality educational programming, the report found.

However, the report cited a

lack of studies pertaining to the effectiveness of DOD child care programming on the development and learning of young children.

DOD did not plan to evaluate its child care program and instead will focus resources “on meeting child care needs, including recruiting and retaining staff,” the GAO said.

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Air Force program to help spouses find jobs overseas

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL
Stars and Stripes

An Air Force pilot program aims to address high unemployment among military spouses stationed overseas by helping them more quickly land a new job.

The new direct-hire authority program is designed to provide civilian spouses who face restrictive employment laws in foreign countries with easier access to base employment, the service said in a statement.

Employers participating in the effort would be able to allow spouses to skip the line of a longer, competitive hiring process for open positions.

“We recognize that spouse employment is a fundamental quality of life issue for our air-

men and guardians, especially for families in overseas locations,” John Carbone, the Air Force’s director of civilian force management for manpower, personnel and services, said in the statement.

Direct-hire positions must be permanently located overseas and compensated under the general schedule or federal wage system grade of GS-15 or below and equivalent, according to the Air Force statement.

The Air Force said it will use public notices via civilian personnel offices and will identify qualifying jobs on usajobs.gov and afcivilianservice.com.

U.S. citizens who are dependents with command sponsorship are eligible for the program, Air Force spokeswoman Laurel Falls

told Stars and Stripes recently. Non-citizen spouses with U.S. resident visas and green cards would not be eligible.

The number of jobs that will be made available under the program is unclear because it will be up to hiring managers to choose whether to participate. Additionally, the availability of positions will vary over time, Falls said.

Initial appointments to jobs under the program are limited to two years and can be extended twice for a maximum of six years, according to the Air Force statement.

The employment also would end when the military member moves to another assignment or in the event of divorce, death, retirement or separation from active duty by the sponsor.



WHITNEY GILLESPIE/U.S. Air Force

An Air Force couple discusses employment opportunities during a career fair at Moody Air Force Base, Ga. A new direct-hire program offered by the service aims to make it easier for qualified civilian spouses stationed overseas to find employment.

Military spouses face significant unemployment and wage disparities compared with their civilian counterparts because of the challenges posed by frequent relocations and deployments, according to the Air Force Per-

sonnel Center and several outside studies in recent years.

The pilot program is scheduled to run through 2026.

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MILITARY

Delays dogging Navy warships

GAO report finds costly and lengthy repairs leading to less time at sea

By SVETLANA SHKOLNIKOVA
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Navy's warships have been spending less time at sea and more time under costly and lengthy repairs since 2011, according to a recently released government watchdog report.

A review of 151 surface warships by the Government Accountability Office showed worsening maintenance delays, more breakdowns requiring repairs and a rising number of working ship parts removed and used elsewhere due to parts shortages in the industry supply chain.

"We have made dozens of recommendations to address these issues, but the Navy has yet to fully implement them all," the agency wrote.

Navy officials argued in the report that a decrease in time at sea is not necessarily bad and does not always reflect a ship's inability to perform its mission. They also explained the allocation of "steaming hours," or a ship's hours at sea, is driven by budgetary concerns and the cost of fuel.

But the Government Accounta-

bility Office said persistent ship sustainment issues have prevented the Navy from reaping the full benefit of its forces and contributed to significant readiness challenges during the past decade.

Congressional lawmakers have pressed the service to build a fleet powerful enough to counter China as it expands its influence in the Indo-Pacific region and eyes a possible invasion of Taiwan. China's Navy is now the largest in the world, according to the Pentagon, while the U.S. Navy's 293-vessel fleet falls short of the 350-ship force desired by some lawmakers.

Navy officials told the GAO that significant maintenance backlogs influenced their decision last year to seek the recommissioning of nine ships before the end of their service life. Congress has routinely stepped in to prevent certain early vessel retirements, most recently the guided-missile cruiser USS Vicksburg.

"Congress is willing to build more ships than the Navy," Rep. Rob Wittman, R-Va., wrote in an editorial last year. Wittman was recently named vice chairman of



ERIC COFFER/U.S. Navy

Sailors paint the side of the guided-missile destroyer USS Porter during regularly scheduled maintenance in Norfolk, Va.

the House Armed Services Committee.

Maintenance delays per ship have multiplied since 2011, increasing from five days on average to an average of 19 days in 2021. Maintenance costs grew by \$1.2 billion during the same period, according to the report.

Navy officials said growth in the magnitude of previously planned work and the discovery of the need for new work caused maintenance delays for all nine surface ship classes reviewed by the agency.

The Navy spent about \$17 billion during fiscal 2020 to operate and sustain the 10 ship classes assessed in the report, a \$2.5 billion increase from fiscal 2011. The selected ship classes repre-

sent about half of the Navy's ship battle force.

Though the Navy has added 33 ships to those classes since 2011, the number of hours at sea declined and became more expensive, according to the report.

The GAO said the service's growing reliance on pulling working parts from ships for installation in ships under repair contributed to the higher costs. Cannibalization of parts increases workloads, lowers morale and takes expensive weapons systems out of service for long periods of time, according to the report.

The Arleigh Burke-class of destroyers saw seven more cannibalizations per ship in fiscal 2022 than in fiscal 2011. The 68 ships in the class also had 19 more serious

failure reports per ship than a decade ago, according to the report. Maintenance costs increased by \$661 million for the Arleigh Burke class.

Analysts with the Government Accountability Office said the Navy has generally agreed with their recommendations to improve ship sustainment but is failing to fully or accurately track operational and materiel availability. The Navy also needs to establish measures to manage depot maintenance backlogs, better track data on maintenance periods and take steps to ensure new ships are reliable, the agency wrote.

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Navy's Super Hornets aging worse than F-18 predecessors

By WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The Navy's fleet of Super Hornet fighter jets introduced in the late 1990s are aging more poorly than the preceding fleet of F-18 Hornets, according to a recently released Congressional Budget Office report.

The report compared availability of the newer F/A-18E/F Super Hornets with the older F/A-18C/D Hornets introduced in the mid-1980s and still in use.

Availability refers to the percentage of time an aircraft can be flown for training or operational missions instead of down time for undergoing repair or maintenance.

The CBO's analysis found the newer Super Hornets had lower availability rates than the F/A-18C/Ds had when compared at similar ages.

"For example, Super Hornet availability at age 10 was about 18

percentage points lower than F/A-18C/D availability at age 10 and is comparable to F/A-18C/D availability at age 20," the report states.

"These findings suggest that age has had a more adverse effect on Super Hornets than it did on F/A-18C/Ds," the report states.

The fleet of F/A-18s is the Navy's "mainstay" of its carrier aviation operations, according to the report. The twin-engine Super Hornets have a top speed of Mach 1.7 and can carry Sidewinder and Harpoon missiles.

The differing rates of availability were not attributable to a greater number of flying hours for the newer jets, which would subject the aircraft to greater wear and tear, the CBO concluded from a review of flight data.

"Monthly flying hours of Super Hornets modestly exceeded those of F/A-18C/Ds only in the initial years of operation of both fleets,"

the report states. "By age 10, however, Super Hornets were flying four fewer hours per month than 10-year-old F/A-18C/Ds flew."

The Navy told the CBO that many factors contributed to differences in availability between the two generations of F-18s, highlighting "the greater levels of galvanic corrosion arising from the greater use of composite metals in Super Hornets," the report states.

The report's footnotes describe galvanic corrosion as "damage induced when two dissimilar materials are coupled in a corrosive electrolyte. It occurs when two (or more) dissimilar metals are brought into electrical contact under water."

The future of availability rates for aging Super Hornets is up in the air, the report states.

"The experiences of the oldest Super Hornets suggest that their



CAYLEN MCCUTCHEON/U.S. Navy

An F/A-18F Super Hornet prepares to launch from the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz last month in the South China Sea.

availability is likely to continue to decline as the fleet ages," the report states. "A similar trend has been observed for many fighter and attack aircraft. But some fleets have had lengthy periods with stable availability rates.

"Because the Super Hornet is a relatively new aircraft, the Navy could take actions that might increase or stabilize the aircraft's availability rate, such as increasing funding for maintenance."

The Defense Department announced in December that it had awarded Boeing \$2 billion to upgrade and modernize software and hardware on the Navy's fleet of Super Hornets over a five-year

period.

Diminishing availability is not just an issue for Navy aircraft.

A January 2022 CBO report found that availability rates for all aircraft in use by the Air Force and the Department of the Navy, which includes the Marine Corps, had declined between 2001 and 2019.

But the decline of availability for Navy aircraft was greater, driven by a "marked decline in the availability of F/A-18C/D legacy Hornets," the 2022 report stated.

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MILITARY

DOD to study military pay and benefits

Biden directs review to ensure troops are being properly compensated

BY DOUG G. WARE

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden recently directed the Pentagon to begin reviewing military pay and benefits to make certain service members are being paid fairly and can afford basic needs such as food and housing.

The study — known as the Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation — is conducted every four years to examine whether military pay and other benefits are suitable. Its goal is to make certain service members are being paid comparatively to what they would see in the civilian market and can afford necessities. The review is Biden's first as president.

"Our great nation has the finest fighting force in the world and it remains our sacred obligation to take care of our men and women in uniform," Biden wrote in a memo ordering the review. "Our service members deserve a 21st century military compensation system that recognizes and rewards their contributions, reflects the values of our nation, and incentivizes the next generation of men and women to serve."

The president outlined five areas of focus for the review:

- Compensation and benefits, including special pay, to ensure

the Pentagon is "appropriately" paying service members, while also being responsible with taxpayer money.

- The basic pay table to ensure it strengthens "economic security" for troops, improving the Pentagon's ability to recruit and retain service members.

- Compensation as it relates to future requirements in technology and other defense-critical fields.

- Formulas that are used to calculate the costs of housing, food and other necessities and cost-of-living allowances — including the military's new Basic Needs Allowance — to make certain troops are food secure and able to afford suitable housing.

- Evaluate the military's benchmark for compensation to learn how a shift toward dual-income households and other income factors might warrant foundational changes, including military spouse unemployment, frequent moves and the cost of child care.

The Basic Needs Allowance is a supplemental payment given to active-duty troops who have dependents and a gross income below 130% of federal poverty guidelines. The allowance was authorized last year by Congress and the first payments started going out this month. Troops can



MARCUS BULLOCK/U.S. Air Force

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden interact with service members at Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va., in May 2021.

inquire about eligibility, but officials said each of the military services will proactively screen and notify troops who qualify for the supplemental income.

The order for the new pay and benefits review comes just weeks after the Pentagon announced the largest year-to-year increases in food and housing allowances in decades. The department said food allowances would increase 11% for 2023 and housing payments by an average of 12%.

The study will be the first since research in the past couple of years has found military families to be experiencing hunger disproportionately compared to

nonmilitary families — something the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, views as a national security concern.

A 2019 survey by the U.S. Army Public Health Center and U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, for example, found 33% of 5,600 respondents at one military installation were marginally food insecure. For comparison, the Agriculture Department found among all U.S. households it is 18%.

In 2020, a Blue Star Families survey found 14% of about 4,500 enlisted active-duty family re-

spondents reported low or very low food security, compared to 10.5% of all U.S. households, according to USDA data. Further, the Rand Corp. reported this month that roughly 25% of active-duty service members lack sufficient access to food, adding personnel and people who live on-base are especially at risk.

"The higher rate of food insecurity among military personnel is surprising and needs to be better understood," according to the report by Rand, a California-based think tank.

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Air Force announces changes to its ROTC scholarship program

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

A new Air Force ROTC scholarship will award up to \$18,000 annually to all third- and fourth-year cadets selected for commissioning at the time of their college graduation, according to the service.

The Brig. Gen. Charles A. McGee Leadership Award, named after one of the legendary Tuskegee Airmen, is aimed at helping would-be officers finish their education.

The award "is one way we can support those who demonstrate talent and desire to serve on their path," Gen. CQ Brown Jr., the Air Force chief of staff, said recently at a ceremony at the University of Maryland to introduce the scholarship with McGee's relatives. McGee died a year ago at the age of 102.

It provides up to \$18,000 per year for tuition or \$10,000 an-

nually in housing assistance. All cadets who have successfully completed field training and entered the Professional Officer Course at the start of their junior year and who are not already receiving ROTC scholarship money are eligible.

For the first time, all qualified cadets will be offered a scholarship at some point in their college career under the new program, the Air Force said.

As a result, there will be less scholarship funding for high school seniors seeking a four-year Air Force ROTC college scholarship. Fewer than 500 of the awards are likely to be offered in the 2022-2023 application cycle, according to Military Scholarship Consulting, a team of retired and former military officers that help students navigate the ROTC scholarship process.

That compares to 1,000 last year and more than 2,000 the

year before, the company says on its website.

The Air Force has said it's "rebalancing" its ROTC scholarship offerings rather than adding more money to the program, according to a recently published Air and Space Forces magazine report.

Historically, about 40% of Air Force ROTC cadets received scholarships, and most were awarded to high school seniors, according to the service.

The remainder generally were given to college freshmen and sophomore cadets. But the Air Force did not always see a return on its investment with younger cadets on scholarship.

Cadets who receive a scholarship out of high school can drop out of the ROTC program after their freshman year without having to pay the money back. Those who leave after their sophomore year are not required to



ANDY MORATAYA/U.S. Air Force

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown Jr. greets University of Maryland ROTC cadets before a ceremony in College Park, Md., last month. Brown unveiled the Brig. Gen. Charles McGee Leadership Award, which will provide up to \$18,000 annually to all third- and fourth-year cadets selected for commissioning in the service when they graduate.

join the Air Force.

Cadets typically incur a service obligation during the last two years of a four-year ROTC program.

The new scholarship is not tied to any academic majors but may

be used only for undergraduate studies, according to the Air Force. Cadets must commission by age 31 to be eligible for it.

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PACIFIC

High levels of toxins reported on base

Report says no threat posed to Camp Kinser population

BY MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND KEISHI KOJA
Stars and Stripes

CAMP KINSER, Okinawa — A Marine Corps report in 2019 detailed high levels of toxins at this seaside logistics base on southern Okinawa but concluded they posed no risk to the base population.

A “human health risk assessment” by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, from Oct. 16, 2019, revealed high levels of dioxin and pesticides at three spots on Camp Kinser.

The Okinawa Times obtained the document through the Freedom of Information Act and first reported on it last month. Marine Corps Installations Pacific responded to the Times article afterward and later provided Stars and Stripes a copy of the health center’s report.

While the levels were reportedly not high enough to induce cancer, they exceeded U.S. Environmental Protection Agency safety standards, according to the document’s authors.

However, in November and December 2018, when the soil samples were taken, the toxin levels potentially posed a “substantial impact to human health and safety” in at-risk populations like children and landscapers, the report states.

“Measures including fencing and signage were implemented in those specific areas to prevent exposure to Camp Kinser workers and residents,” Marine spokeswoman 1st Lt. Ashleigh Fairrow said in a statement emailed last month. “There is no current risk to human health in these areas.”

The fencing around the problem areas was completed in March 2021, Fairrow said in a recent email. The pollutants presented no threat outside the base, she said, citing information in the report.

The health center launched the study in 2018 due to a congressional inquiry from U.S. Rep. Julia Brownley, the report said. The California Democrat made the inquiry after receiving a letter from a concerned constituent with a grandson stationed in Japan.

Kinser was once home to the Makiminato Service Area, where “large amounts” of Vietnam War-era chemicals were stored in the late 1960s to early ‘70s, according to a 1993 U.S. Forces Japan position paper. The chemicals included insect, rodent and plant killers, along with acids, alkalis, degreasers and solvents.

The health center found the toxic equivalent of 0.0025 milligrams per kilogram of the diox-

in 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzodioxin in the area of Maintenance Building 1304, an outdoor exercise facility and the base’s skatepark, the health center’s report said.

That is more than 500 times the EPA’s carcinogenic screening level of 0.0000048 milligrams per kilogram for dioxin, according to data on the EPA’s website, and more than double Japan’s safe soil standard of 0.001 milligrams per kilogram, a spokesman from Japan’s environment ministry told Stars and Stripes last month.

The EPA considers values below the carcinogenic screening level to be “negligible,” the health center’s report said. EPA classifies 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzodioxin as a “probable human carcinogen,” according to a factsheet from 2016.

The fields surrounding the base medical clinic registered 0.00066 milligrams per kilogram of 2,3,7,8-Tetrachlorodibenzodioxin, more than 100 times the EPA carcinogenic screening level, the health center’s report said. This area was deemed potentially hazardous to children.

An area along the fence line, halfway between the dental clinic and a fenced drainage area, recorded 24 milligrams per kilo-



MATTHEW M. BURKE/STARS AND STRIPES

A “human health risk assessment” by the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center, from Oct. 16, 2019, revealed high levels of dioxin and pesticides at three spots on Camp Kinser, Okinawa.

gram of dichlorodiphenyldichloroethane, or DDD, which is similar to the banned pesticide DDT, according to the report. That is more than 10 times the EPA carcinogenic screening level.

DDT has been banned in the United States and Japan for decades, according to the EPA’s website.

The health center also recorded elevated levels of PCBs, arsenic and dieldrin, the report said. The center recommended its findings be communicated to the base community.

The Urasoe city assembly

expressed concerns over the contaminated soil and recently voted unanimously to request its removal prior to the handover of any base land back to local authorities, which is slated to begin after 2025, a city spokesman told Stars and Stripes by phone.

The request is being sent to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Japan’s defense and foreign affairs ministers and other top political authorities.

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Space Force plans massive soil cleansing on Maui

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — A vast amount of contaminated soil must be removed after a catastrophic storage tank failure recently saturated the ground with diesel fuel at a mountaintop observatory on Maui operated by U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific, its commander said.

Workers will remove 200 cubic yards of soil to a depth of 6 feet, Brig. Gen. Anthony Mastalir said during a news conference at the Maui Space Surveillance Complex, where the spill occurred last month.

At that point, samples will be taken to assess how much more soil will need to be removed, he said.

“Right now, it’s impossible to know how deep we will need to go,” Mastalir said.

All soil will be cleansed of fuel residue and then laid back in the ground.

Several telescopes in the complex atop the 10,000-foot summit of Haleakala, a dormant volcano, are used to track satellites and

space debris.

The diesel fuel powers a backup generator needed during power outages, such as during storms, Mastalir said.

Maintenance personnel discovered the spill on the morning of Jan. 30.

“We have examined the fuel storage tank and the generator equipment,” Mastalir said. “We currently assess that the cause of this spill was the damaged float within the generator’s main fuel tank. Specifically, the evidence suggests that a power surge was the likely cause of this damage.”

He likened the operation of the float to that of a household toilet bowl.

“When the fuel drops to a certain level, the float calls for more fuel,” he said. It should then signal the transfer pump to shut off.

Furthermore, the float is designed to set off an alarm warning in event of a potential overflow.

“This float failed in a way so that that never happened,” he said, reiterating that it “failed



Defense Media Activity Pacific

Brig. Gen. Anthony Mastalir, commander of U.S. Space Forces Indo-Pacific, speaks to reporters at the Maui Space Surveillance Complex, Hawaii, earlier this month.

catastrophically.”

Flanked by uniformed and civilian personnel who are assisting in the assessment and planning for remediation, Mastalir apologized profusely and repeatedly during the brief news conference.

“I want to express my sincere apologies for what happened

here one week ago today,” he said.

“Words cannot describe the tremendous remorse that I, and the rest of the team on the summit, have experienced over this past week. We have a solemn responsibility to protect this sacred ground upon which we have the privilege to operate.

And it is a privilege, not a right.”

The leak came at a time when many in Hawaii are fed up with military snafus.

A fuel leak on Oahu from the Navy’s World War II-era Red Hill underground fuel storage facility in late 2021 contaminated drinking water for thousands of residents living in military communities on and near Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

In the fall, while Navy officials were preparing to drain the Red Hill tanks for the site’s permanent closure, a toxic firefighting foam was accidentally released at the facility.

The Hawaiian rights group Kakao Haleakala recently called for the removal of all telescopes from the peak of Haleakala.

The military “showcased their incompetence and lack of human decency when they allowed more than 700 gallons of diesel fuel to be spilled atop Haleakala,” the group said in a statement.

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MILITARY

Soldiers remove unexploded shell

3-inch casing was unearthed at Gettysburg Civil War battlefield site

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

An unexploded 3-inch shell casing from the Civil War stopped traffic recently in Gettysburg while U.S. military technicians investigated the Pennsylvania battlefield finding.

U.S. Army explosive ordnance disposal soldiers, who made a 92-mile journey from their headquarters at Fort Belvoir, Va., removed and destroyed the round, which was discovered during an archaeological dig recently at Gettysburg National Park.

"This type of munition was historically used during the Civil War and most likely came from the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863," Capt. Matthew Booker, the commander of the 55th Ordnance Company, said in a statement.

The round was identified by

Staff Sgt. Alexander Campbell, the EOD team leader, as a 3-inch Burton case shot, which was commonplace at the time.

It was found by Steven Brann, a contract archaeologist who was sweeping the Little Round Top area under renovations with a metal detector.

"He laid it gently on the ground, took a picture of it and ran for the hills," said Jason Martz, spokesman for Gettysburg National Military Park, according to a CNN report.

Concern over the tiny 160-year-old casing was significant enough that the National Park Service closed nearby roads after the discovery.

Campbell determined that the item was safe to transport to a disposal area and the roads were subsequently reopened, the Army said.



Gettysburg National Military Park

An unexploded 3-inch shell casing dating to the Civil War lies on the ground after being unearthed at Gettysburg National Military Park, earlier this month. Army explosive ordnance disposal soldiers from Fort Belvoir, Va., removed and destroyed the round.

The Battle of Gettysburg was the bloodiest of the Civil War, with more than 51,000 estimated dead and wounded over its three-day span.

The find comes about six months after a 3-inch Hotchkiss shell was found lodged in a historic building in the Gettysburg park, the Army said.

Gettysburg is one example of battlefields around the world that continue to bear the hazards of war long after the outcomes have

been decided.

In February 2022, archaeologists found an unexploded 10-pound Civil War artillery shell at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park in Georgia, according to the National Park Service.

Meanwhile, about 2,000 tons of unexploded bombs and other munitions are found each year in Germany, which was heavily bombed by Allied forces during World War II.

In December, a phosphorus bomb was accidentally struck during construction work at the U.S. European Command headquarters in Stuttgart, which resulted in the release of poisonous gas.

A German explosive ordnance disposal team managed to safely remove the bomb without incident.

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Navy ends medical testing on sheep at Wisc. university

By DOUG G. WARE
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals claimed a small victory recently after learning the Navy ended years of what the group called "crude" medical testing on sheep at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

PETA said the Navy paid for two testing programs at the campus, which involved subjecting sheep to high-pressure environments to learn more about decompression sickness in humans, commonly known as "the bends."

"That sheep will no longer have the life literally squeezed out of them in crude and archaic decompression tests at UW-Madison is cause for celebration," PETA Vice President Shalin Gala said.

PETA called the end of the

testing on sheep "a victory" and encouraged the Navy to go further and bar all similar animal testing at all Navy-funded research locations.

"We urge the Navy to fully ban the conducting and funding of all decompression sickness and oxygen toxicity experiments using any animal at any institutions, given the extreme cruelty of these tests and their irrelevance to human physiology," Maggie Wisniewska, science policy adviser at PETA, wrote in a letter to Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro.

Decompression sickness is caused by nitrogen gas bubbles that form in the bloodstream and organs as the human body rapidly goes from a high-pressure environment, such as underwater, to a normal-pressure environment. The bends is often seen



HEIDE COUCH/U.S. Air Force

The Navy has ended medical testing on sheep at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

in divers who rise to the surface too quickly and can be deadly if not treated quickly.

PETA only recently discovered the testing programs ended after receiving records from UW-Madison through a Freedom of Information Act request. The

Navy confirmed recently that the decompression sickness testing with sheep at UW-Madison ended in July.

"The contract for the project came to its natural conclusion at the end of the performance period," a Navy spokesperson said, adding the testing was done to determine whether emergency procedures would "safely and successfully allow submariners trapped in a disabled submarine on the sea floor to escape or be rescued."

However, a PETA spokesperson said the testing programs were authorized to continue until August 2023 and June 2024.

PETA sent letters to Del Toro and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin last year asking for the tests to be halted. In its campaign, the group specified several instances in which sheep were subjected to unpleasant experiments. Having undergone repeated stressful tests, the sheep were often left with a variety of maladies, including "crippling" joint pain, seizures, paralysis and deep chest pain, and in at least one case, a sheep had to be euthanized during the test when the compressing chamber malfunctioned, PETA said.

The group argued the tests are harmful and painful for the sheep and offer little value because the results don't translate well to humans. Further, the

group said there are better non-animal test methods that provide better results.

This is not the first time that PETA campaigned against sheep being used in research testing at UW-Madison. In 2010, the group successfully helped to stop similar experiments. At the time, PETA called for a criminal investigation because it said the tests violated Wisconsin law. However, state lawmakers later changed that animal cruelty law to exempt research scientists and the Navy authorized testing to resume a few years later.

Animal testing in the military has long been a concern for advocates such as PETA. Last September, the group sent a letter to Army Secretary Christine Wormuth asking that the service revive a ban on "wounding experiments" involving animals. In those tests, researchers use weapons to wound dogs, cats, marine animals and some primates to see how their bodies react and heal.

Wounding experiments were banned at the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command in the 1980s, but PETA said the service reversed the ban in 2020 and has not been forthcoming about whether it's actively conducting those types of experiments again.

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