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GADAO'S CAVE
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THE LEGACY CONTINUES

Retired submariner returns to Guam 50 years later

SUBMARINE SQUADRON 15

Fifty years after raising the national colors in Guam for America's bicentennial, retired Navy Cmdr. Allan Riggs returned to the island July 4 to commemorate the nation's 250th birthday alongside a new generation of submariners.

Riggs has now participated in morning colors from Guam during both America's 200th and 250th birthday celebrations, a distinction spanning half a century of submarine history.

Now 77, Riggs stood alongside the duty officer aboard Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Annapolis (SSN 760) as the national ensign was raised over the

submarine.

"I served proudly for 27 years," said Riggs. "I'm proud of the country, I'm proud of where it's going, and I'm honored to be able to do this."

On July 4, 1976, then-Lt. j.g. Riggs was serving as the duty officer aboard George Washington-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Theodore Roosevelt (SSBN 600) in Guam. That morning, he had the distinct honor of raising the national colors in recognition of America's bicentennial.

Serving in what he described as "a symbolic location," Theodore Roosevelt was the first submarine to raise the colors that



Lt. James Caliva, left, presents the national ensign to retired Cmdr. Allan Riggs on July 4. Photo by MC1 Bryan Mai, U.S. Navy

SEE LEGACY ON PAGE 4



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Lessons and laundry from summer camp

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



I cautiously reached into the dark, dank cavity and pulled out the filthy, wretched garments. Fearing for my safety, I pinched my nose shut and carried the contaminated bundle with an outstretched arm to be disinfected.

Our son, Hayden, was home from Scout camp, and I had the unenviable job of doing his dirty laundry. He, on the other hand, grunted at us and promptly went to bed.

It was 2010 and our family was stationed in Germany. Hayden's troop had spent a week in the Alps, sleeping in tents, white water rafting, cooking over a fire and hiking almost 30 miles. Hayden had a blast.

Summer camp. There's nothing quite like it. The anticipation, fear, physical challenges, new understandings and relationships formed. For a couple weeks every summer, a child is transported to a place where campers experience powerful emotions and form intense bonds.

Then they go home and give their mothers their dirty laundry.

But I never minded. I was a kid once, too, and I wanted our three children to have the same experiences I had.

Like the 1970s summer when I went off to camp in the Pennsylvania mountains. The two-week church camp attracted an intimidating mix of sheltered do-gooders from the country, preppy snobs from the Pittsburgh suburbs, and a few oddballs like me, all supervised by fresh-scrubbed, born-again college-aged counselors.

Upon arrival, we were randomly assigned to the Galatians or the Romans teams, pitted to wage a battle of biblical proportions through competitions in archery, swimming, canoeing, gymnastics, basketball, macramé and other events.

The first days of camp were hard for me. I thought my kelly green corduroy shorts were fashionably preppy, but they were no match for the city girls' Tretorns, Izods and Docksiders.

When it came to Bible study, I couldn't hold a candle to the country kids who had read the Old Testament by third grade. Little did I know that we'd all bond through unexpected trials and tribulations.

Like the night we packed into a farm wagon for a tractor-pulled hay ride. We were so excited to ride around the lake and sing camp songs.

But as the tractor chugged up the embankment from the lake to the road, something snapped, and the wagon broke loose. Slowly at first, the cartful of campers rolled backwards toward the lake. As the wayward vessel picked up speed, counselors shouted, which triggered the campers to scream. I screamed too, believing that we'd careen into the dark water and all be tragically drowned.

Just then, we hit tall grass and inexplicably slowed, coming to a stop just before the water's edge. It was a miracle! It was church camp after all, and my cabin mates and I bonded over seemingly facing certain death.

Although he still harbors a bit of resentment, my husband, Francis (or "Frank" as he was then), had similar experiences. He, too, was shipped off to the mountains for two weeks in the 1970s.

Quite a husky fellow, Frank was relieved that each camper was entitled to one daily candy bar from the camp's cantina. The only problem was, he couldn't find the cantina.

On the overnight hike, Frank's flashlight went missing. He accused the kid he suspected of stealing it, who flatly denied the charges. The next morning, the boy returned the flashlight, which he had stolen after all, now with dead batteries.

At the camp's Sunday religious service, a guitarist had a seizure mid-song and collapsed on the altar. The counselors rushed to his aid, shoving a wallet into the man's mouth so he wouldn't bite off his tongue. The traumatic event made quite an impact on little Frank. That night in his sleeping bag, all he wanted was a candy bar to comfort himself, but he still didn't know where the cantina was, and his flashlight didn't work anyway.

Fun and adventurous, or traumatic and humiliating, all summer camps offer the same benefit: a kid experiences emotions on his own, without his parents there to guide or comfort him. And by the end, every camper in the world brings home a new understanding of himself, a groovy macramé bracelet and a duffel bag full of dirty laundry for mom.

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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Sailors assigned to USS Annapolis, Riggs, center, and his family, salute the national ensign. Photos by Petty Officer 1st Class Bryan Mai, Naval Base Guam



A sailor raises the national ensign.



Lt. James Caliva left, presents the national ensign to Riggs.

LEGACY: ‘This is the finest military in the world’

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

historic morning in Guam, where America’s day begins.

“It will remain one of the most profound privileges of my career to have executed morning colors on that historic morning in such a symbolically significant location,” said Riggs.

Exactly 50 years later, Riggs returned to the same island to honor that moment and help mark another milestone in the nation’s history.

When Riggs approached Commander, Submarine Squadron 15 with the idea of returning to Guam for the historic anniversary, Capt. Neil Steinhagen immediately recognized the significance of the occasion.

“Having Cmdr. Riggs as a guest aboard Annapolis was an easy decision to support,” said Steinhagen. “We often look back on our history and ask what has carried our nation and our Navy forward. Moments like this provide the answer. Morning colors is a tradition observed

every day, but on the Fourth of July, the flag represents the freedom generations before us fought to secure and the promise today’s Sailors have volunteered to defend. By standing together aboard Annapolis on America’s 250th birthday, we united the legacy of those who came before us with the future leaders who will carry that fighting spirit forward.”

For Riggs, returning to the place where he marked the nation’s bicentennial offered an opportunity to connect two generations of submariners and reflect on a lifetime of service.

A native of Ohio, he arrived on the island Friday after making the journey back to Guam for the anniversary.

“When I discovered I probably could get to Guam and do it to celebrate the 200th birthday and the 250th birthday is a rare opportunity and I couldn’t pass it up and it’s been an honor to do this and I served proudly for 27 years and I’m proud of the country.” This is

a deeply meaningful opportunity to honor the enduring traditions of the Submarine Force, reflect on my service and pay tribute to the ongoing legacy of naval excellence in the Pacific,” said Riggs.

Following morning colors, the color detail presented Riggs with the flag flown aboard Annapolis. Lt. Cmdr. Derrick Simmons, the submarine’s executive officer, also presented him with a commemorative flag certificate honoring the lasting example of his service.

The certificate recognized that “Cmdr. Riggs’ presence serves as a lasting reminder that while generations of submariners may change, their devotion to duty, honor and country remains eternal.”

The moment represented more than a celebration of the nation’s birthday. It served as a reminder that the traditions of the Submarine Force are carried forward by the Sailors who serve, the families who stand beside them and the generations who follow in their footsteps.

For Riggs, the day also provided an opportunity to recognize those who made his return possible—and those who supported him throughout his 27 years of naval service.

“I want to thank the people who helped make this possible,” said Riggs. “My wife supported me throughout all my years of service, as did my sons and all the people here at Submarine Squadron 15. This is the finest military in the world. We’re doing what needs to be done, and we’re going where we need to go. Being here alongside USS Annapolis, a superb U.S. Navy fast-attack submarine, is an honor.”

Fifty years after raising the colors for America’s bicentennial, Riggs once again stood beneath the flag he proudly served—this time alongside a new generation of submariners continuing the watch.

The Sailors may change. The submarines may change. But the legacy of service, sacrifice and devotion to country remains eternal.

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Gadao's Cave

A cave of famous petroglyphs named after Gadao, the ancient chief of Inarajan



This is a fantastically short hike to one of Guam's most celebrated cultural treasures. It is definitely a must-see if you are driving through the South.

Quick Stats

Location: Inarajan
Region: Southeast
Difficulty: Very Easy
Time: 5 – 10 Minutes, Allow 30 Minutes
Length: .06 of a Mile
Elevation Gain: 22 Feet
Sight: Caves
Cool Stuff: Pictographs, Ancient Chamorro History
What To Bring: Closed-toe shoes for walking on sharp limestone

Directions

FROM CENTRAL AND NORTH GUAM (Inarajan & Talofofo residents, adapt these directions):

- Take Cross Island Road (route 17) from the west to the east, across to Talofofo. You may take route 4a towards the end to head in a more southerly direction. (If starting from the Northeast side just come straight down route 4).
- Whether you stay on 17 or take 4a, you will end up at route 4 (the coastal road) when it ends and turn right, going south. Pass Talofofo Bay and keep going straight.
- When you start entering a slightly more populated area, slow down and look out for the sign to your left (usually covered by trees, which says "Gadao's Cave" and turn left here. This is a long, narrow road that skirts the left edge of Inarajan Bay. If you start the curve to the left around Inarajan Bay where the statue of Gadao in half a canoe, the church ruins, and ancient

chamorro village is, you have gone too far.

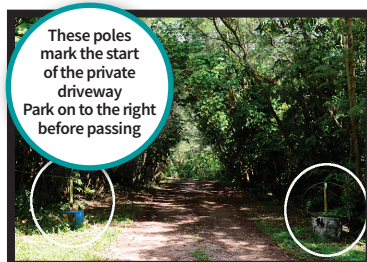
- Take a right turn on the first gravel road that you see.
- Soon you will see private property and "Keep Out" signs. You will park on the side of the road before driving through where there are two polls on either side used to string a wire cable across a private driveway, marking the end of the public road. Oftentimes this driveway is left open to allow the residents to drive through. To your right is a chain denying vehicle access with metal cables fencing in a forested area.
- This chain, possibly with a "Keep Out" sign attached, is what you will be hopping in order to start this short hike.

FROM SOUTH OF CROSS ISLAND ROAD (Including southern Agat, Umatac, and Merizo):

- Drive south on route 2 (the main road), which then technically turns into route 4 and pass the village of Merizo.
- Keep on this road. You will pass the downtown village of Inarajan marked by buildings on your left side, a church ruin and the statue of Gadao in half a canoe on your right. You may have to stop at the stoplight, which is only here until the construction is finished. You will see a mini-mart and old martial arts building in ruins on your left.
- Immediately after these, before you leave Inarajan, you will take your first right, marked by a sign for Gadao's Cave, which is almost always covered by trees. This is a long, narrow road that skirts the left edge of Inarajan Bay.
- Take a right turn on the first gravel road that you see.
- Soon you will see private property and "Keep Out" signs. You will park on the side of the

road before driving through where there are two polls on either side used to string a wire cable across a private driveway, marking the end of the public road. Oftentimes this driveway is left open to allow the residents to drive through. To your right is a chain denying vehicle access with metal cables fencing in a forested area.

⑥ This chain, possibly with a "Keep Out" sign attached, is what you will be hopping in order to start this short hike.



Parking

Park to the side next to the "Keep Out" sign.



Trailhead

Trail begins just past the "Keep Out" chain.



Trail Guide

After you cross the chain, keep straight through the weeds towards the beach for 3 – 5 minutes. Soon the trail will veer to the left along the water. Travel between the large boulders and the shoreline.

The first cave-like structure you may see looking through the trees is not Gadao's cave. Keep walking straight until you see a reddish rock structure, with a ridge along the middle with a clearly etched level to walk along. Climb up to this ridge with just a couple of rocks to step up, and walk along the rock wall on this middle level.

The opening to your left is the mouth of the cave, and the pictographs of the two stick figures are to your left as you enter.

There is a nice spot to sit and over look the ocean if you keep walking forward, to the right, along the shoreline. Either crawl through the small opening in the rocks, outside of Gadao's Cave, towards the tip of the peninsula or carefully walk across the spiky limestone closer to the water. Here is a larger, more open overhang with a lovely view of the ocean.

To leave, return the way you came.

Pictographs in Gadao's Cave

Since it is extremely difficult to date cave art, we have a large period of time from when these painting could be from. An educated guess would place them within the Latte Era sometimes between 800 A.D. until Magellan's presence and the Spanish colonization



starting around 1521. Since we do not know whether or not some of the symbols are crosses (a Catholic symbol brought in by the Spanish) we cannot place if these paintings came before or after the Spanish colonization.

Guampedia says that the paint used for these symbols was made from white lime, which bonds to the wall by a chemical reaction, and may have been applied by finger. On the west wall, to the right when you enter the cave, there are about 50 drawings ranging from 2 to 20 centimeters in height, depicting human- and animal-looking forms. The most obvious and popular pictographs are on the east wall (to the left upon entering the cave), where two human figures stand together, with one perhaps something in his or her hand. It is suggested that these figures are of Chief Gadao of Inarajan and Chief Malaguana of (now) Tumon, as depicted in their folktale (retold to the right). Others suspect it is of a man and woman.

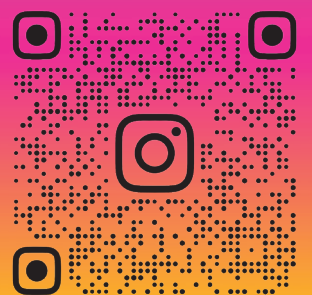
American anthropologist Laura Thompson studied the cave paintings on Guam and other nearby island before WWII. She described cave paintings in Talofofo and Inarajan in the South and Jinapsan and Mergagen (on Andersen Air Force Base, just north of the Tarague Beach boundary) in the North. Other cave paintings have been found at Ritidian Point, Fena, and Fadian Cave (on the east coast). The drawings depict animals such as fish, stick-figured humans (sometimes without heads), circles, and other various symbols.



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Markets and produce

THE GUAM GUIDE

When it comes to produce, “buy local” is especially important — yes, even on Guam! If you’ve been living on Guam for a while or are new to the island, you’ve probably felt the struggle of hunting down some fresh produce without breaking the bank. Many items are imported, which increases the cost and reduces the freshness. Guam’s local produce scene is thriving, along with a growing commitment to sustainability. The island offers a bounty of fresh and vibrant fruits and vegetables. You might stumble upon a new fave when checking out some of the exotic fruits and vegetables unique to this climate and region.

Sure, you can find some locally grown items in grocery stores, but here’s a comprehensive guide to other places to find fresh, local produce on Guam. **Many vendors don’t take credit cards, so it’s best to carry cash.**



6 Marcelino & Nghinh Tropia Vegetable Stand

This vegetable stand is conveniently located in Dededo on Fatima Street. It’s near the Guam Farmer’s Market. If you’re headed south from Route 1, after passing the Farmer’s Market on the right, you’ll see Mobil station on the left. Make that left immediately after the station and you’ll see this vegetable stand on your right. Add this stop to your daily errands and pick up your fresh produce on the way home.



LOCATION



Photos courtesy of The Guam Guide

1 Guam Farmers Market

Kickstart your weekends right here — where you can get your fresh produce from local farmers. It’s a sweet spot to check out the local food and culture scene too. Enjoy breakfast from one of the food vendors while strolling through the market. There’s also a variety of vendors that sell plants and seedlings if you want to try growing your own garden of fruits and vegetables. It gets pretty busy, so we recommend you get there early to snag the best selection of produce and goodies. **Sat. and Sun., 5 -10 a.m.**

Follow Farmers’ Cooperative Association of Guam on Facebook for weekly updates of produce available.



LOCATION



Photo by Bert Duarte

2 Dededo Swap Meet (Old Flea Market)

Also referred to as the Old Flea Market, the former location of the Guam Farmers Market, you’ll find vendors selling fresh fruit, vegetables and plants. You may even pick up a few random items from vendors selling clothes, furniture and second-hand merch. The main stores are open daily but the best time to visit are on the weekends, when most vendors, who are independent farmers, bring out their harvest. It’s the best spot to get local bananas and try the many varieties of the fruit. **Best time to visit: Sat. and Sun., 6- 9 a.m.**



LOCATION



Photo from UOG Triton Farms’s Instagram

7 UOG Triton Farms

The University of Guam Triton Farm is a community-supported education farm open to the public. You can purchase fresh eggs, fruits and vegetables straight from the farm. They offer tours where you can also learn about aquaponics and sustainability.

Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Closed on holidays.



INSTAGRAM



LOCATION



Photo from Guahan Sustainable Culture’s Instagram

8 Guahan Sustainable Culture

Shop for fresh local produce online at Guahan Sustainable Culture’s farm fresh produce website. They offer weekly deliveries, with produce from Guam farmers and other local products. They also have education and training programs and community events. Follow them on Instagram to stay updated with their latest events.



INSTAGRAM



WEBSITE



Photos courtesy Guam Visitors Bureau

Produce stands in Guam



3 Chamorro Village Night Market

Every Wednesday evening in Hagatna, Chamorro Village becomes a bustling center for culture and food. It's a popular event for locals and visitors. Catch a live performance while enjoying some local cuisine and treats while you shop for unique trinkets and gems. Pick up some fresh veggies and get adventurous with some exotic island fruits like starfruit and breadfruit. **Wed., 5:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m.**



LOCATION



4 Mangilao Night Market

The Mangilao Night Market is open every Thursday evening and is located next to the Santa Teresita Catholic Church. It's not as elaborate as the Guam Farmers Market, but there are small vendors that have local produce available along with some other vendors selling prepared food and arts and crafts. Make sure you pick up some hot peppers! The village hosts the Mangilao Donne Festival every year in September, so if you see a giant chili pepper near the market, you're in the right place. There's plenty of open parking and try to get there early because things sell out quickly. **Thurs., 5-9 p.m.**



LOCATION



5 Agat Night Market

Take a trip down south on a Tuesday to visit the Agat Night Market located at the Hagat Sagan Bisita. The market is open every Tuesday night and the vendors have a great selection of local fruits and vegetables. You may even pick up some fresh fish and meat and get some tips from the vendors on how to best prepare them at home. **Tue., 3-7 p.m.**



LOCATION



Photo from Farm to Table Guam's Instagram

9 Farm to Table Guam

Farm to Table Guam, a non-profit organization, was established in 2012 with the mission for every kitchen, cabinet and pantry to contain products made on Guam from crops grown on Guam. You can participate in a CSA (community supported agriculture) subscription program to receive a box of locally grown produce on a weekly basis. See the CSA subscription box options on their website. They offer pick-up time and locations and delivery options as well. They currently don't offer base deliveries, but they can meet outside the gate. You can also purchase local produce every Tuesday, across from the Hagatna Post Office — they accept cash and credit cards. Follow Farm to Table Guam on Instagram for updates. **Tue., 4-6 p.m.**



INSTAGRAM



SUBSCRIPTION

Other local produce on Instagram and FB



INSTAGRAM
@farmerscoop_guam



INSTAGRAM
@almightymicrogreens



INSTAGRAM
@tinygreensguam



INSTAGRAM
@farmtotableguam



INSTAGRAM
@uogtritonfarm



INSTAGRAM
@gusustainable



FACEBOOK
The Gulay Garden



FACEBOOK
Growing on Guam



FACEBOOK
Guam Plant and Seed Share



FACEBOOK
Guam Farmer and Rancher



For more information

SEE MORE QUICK TIPS FOR SHOPPING ON GUAM ON PAGE 10



Photos courtesy Guam Visitors Bureau

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

Quick tips for shopping on Guam

GUAM GUIDE

WHERE TO GET GROCERIES

Once again, say goodbye to your old faithfuls: Costco, Krogers, Albertson, etc. But have no fear, Guam has their equivalents!

■ Pay-Less Supermarkets

You guessed it, this will feel the closest to your classic suburban grocery store.

WEBSITE: shop.paylessmarkets.com

LOCATIONS: Tamuning, Sinajana, Mangilao, MongMong-Toto-Maite, Dededo, Yigo, Santa Rita

■ Cost-U-Less

Can you guess what this is? Yes ma'am — your Costco equivalent to buy in bulk!

WEBSITE: costules.com

LOCATIONS: Tamuning, Chalan Pago Ordot, Dededo

■ Don Don Donki

Your one-stop shop for all things,

particularly Japanese products and produce — snacks, drinks, beauty and more. Located inside the Village of Donki, which also has a food court and other restaurants.

WEBSITE: www.villageofdonki.com

LOCATIONS: Tamuning

■ American Grocery

WEBSITE: facebook.com/AGGUAM

LOCATION: Dededo, Yigo

■ Super Happy Mart

WEBSITE: facebook.com/guamsuperhappymart

LOCATION: Lot 2176, 311 Bamba Way, Barrigada, 96913

DRUG STORES

If you are off base and are sick, here are some recommended pharmacies.

■ Guam Rexall Drugs

WEBSITE: facebook.com/guamrexalldrugs

LOCATION: 646 South Marine Drive Tamuning

■ Mega Drug Pharmacy

WEBSITE: megadrugguam.com

LOCATION: 255 Rte 30A, Tamuning 330W Marine Corps Dr, Dededo 548 S Marine Corps Dr, Tamuning
• They also have a location in Dededo.

■ Pacific Health Care Pharmacy

LOCATION: Guam Business Center Building Suite 108, 16, Harmon

■ Island Family Pharmacy

WEBSITE: islandrxguam.com

LOCATION: 541 S Marine Corps Dr #101, Tamuning

■ Oka Pharmacy Inc.

LOCATION: 241 Farenholt Ave., STE. 101, Tamuning

■ Kmart Pharmacy

WEBSITE: kmart.com

LOCATION: 404 North Marine Drive, Tamuning

MILITARY DISCOUNTS

From discounted hotel rates to savings on tours and attractions, Guam has a wide range of offers available for military members. To take advantage of these exclusive military discounts, simply present your military ID or proof of service at participating businesses. (Advice: Wherever you go, simply ask if they provided military discounts.)

ORDERING ONLINE

Sometimes it's easier to order clothes and goods online. But do they deliver to Guam? Here's a guide of popular brands that ship to island, including some tips and guidelines.



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guam.stripes.com



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ww2.stripes.com/subscribe/newsletters



No matter where you are stationed, this is the most relevant source of news for America's military, other DOW personnel and their families.
www.stripes.com

GUAM NEWS



Pacific Daily News:
guampdn.com



The Guam Daily Post:
postguam.com



KUAM:
kuam.com



Marianas Business Journal:
mbjguam.com



Guam Business Magazine:
guambusinessmagazine.com



Pacific Island Times:
pacificislandtimes.com

GUAM FACTOIDS



This is an online encyclopedia of almost all things Guam, including its history, culture and indigenous language as well as contemporary arts, issues and more.
www.guampedia.com

GOVERNMENT



The official website of the Guam government is loaded with useful info on the island territory, including a handy "how to" section with info ranging from registering a vehicle to starting a business.
www.guam.gov

CULTURE



Fun website and a great source for local activities, attractions, travel and more.
theguamguide.com



Detailed site offers a wealth of information, from dining and shopping to entertainment and maps.
www.guam-online.com

FOOD



Guam native and former Air Force officer can help you create some tasty Chamorro dishes.
www.annieschamorrokitchen.com



All things about BBQing, cooking and eating on
bbqguam.blogspot.com

WAR IN THE PACIFIC



War in the Pacific National Historical Park was established to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those participating in the campaigns of the Pacific Theater of World War II.
www.nps.gov/wapa/index.htm

TOURISM



The official website of Guam Visitors Bureau offers all the essentials needed for a first time visit or extended stay – including a pretty handy island-wide events calendar.
www.visitguam.com

NEARBY ISLANDS



Information – including a handy events calendar – about the neighboring Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian and Rota) is at: **mymarianas.com**

DIVING



Hosted by MDA (Micronesian Divers Association), this site is a great place to start when it comes to getting the basics on diving in Guam. **www.mdaguam.com**

HIKING



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. See where you can join in on the fun at:
www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompers

SEE MORE APPS ON PAGE 12

SUNDAY BRUNCH

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Apps



Klook An excellent travel booking platform where you can discover top attractions and purchase tickets for tours, theme parks, transportation and more at good prices. It covers destinations worldwide including Guam.



Airbnb Offers diverse options for accommodations and experiences hosted by locals.



Agoda Specializes in accommodations with great deals, from luxury hotels to affordable guesthouses. It also provides transportation and activity options.



Trip.com A global app that's also popular in Guam. It offers great deals on accommodations, flights and rental cars. Before booking with other apps, compare prices on Trip.com!



Skyscanner An excellent app for finding the best deals on flights.

Local Radio Stations

Power 98 - FM 97.5: Top 40 hits and some throwbacks

Route 99FM - FM 99.5: Guam's road to all country music

The Wave 105.1 FM - FM 105.1: News, talk, millenium hits, island music on the weekends

Breeze 93.9 - FM 93.9: Adult contemporary music from the 70s through the 2000s

Point - FM 93.3 or FM 104.3: News and talk

Star 101 - FM 101.1: Top 40, contemporary music

Hit Radio 100 - 100.3: Top 40, pop and throwbacks

KPRG - 89.3: NPR, local public radio

Megamixx - 101.9 KTKB: Original Pilipino Music

– Stripes Japan



UP FRONT

BY MAULDIN



"Grab his pistol, Joe—we kin take it to th' rear an' trade it fer some combat boots."

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



Magnolia

Magnolia is a beautiful 7-month-old red-coated pup with a sweet personality and plenty of love to give. She's still young, so she's at the perfect age to continue learning and growing into a wonderful lifelong companion. Magnolia enjoys attention, affection, and spending time with people who will help her build confidence and good manners. With her striking color and loving nature, she's sure to brighten any home lucky enough to welcome her.

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



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Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



Southwest Coast

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 a.m. unless otherwise indicated. Directions to the trailhead will be posted on the Guam Boonie Stompers Inc Facebook page. The cost is \$5.00 for hikers over 13. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Hike fees for active military and veterans are covered by Adaptive Adventures. Hikers should provide their own transportation. Guam's trails are not developed. Weather conditions can make the hikes more difficult than described. No reservations required.

For more information:
www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompers



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

SCHEDULE 2026

July 25 (Sat.)	Korean Airline Memorial (Easy)/ Charlie Corn (Medium)/Hidden Bunkers (Medium)- Nimitz Hill
Aug. 1 (Sat.)	Tenjo SUNSET HIKE (Medium)- Piti *4:30 p.m. Meet Up, 4:45 p.m. Brief, 5 p.m. GO, Sunset 6:37 p.m.
Aug. 8 (Sat.)	Southwest Coast (Very Difficult) - Hagat to Humatak, 1-way *8 a.m. Meet up
Aug. 15 (Sat.)	Masso Reservoir/River & Falls (Easy/Medium)- Piti
Aug. 22 (Sat.)	SUNRISE HIKE-Mt. Jumullong Manglo'- (Medium)- Humatak *4:30 a.m. Meet up, 4:45 a.m. Brief, 5 a.m. GO, Sunrise 6:11 a.m.



FOR EVERYONE'S SAFETY:

No Pets Allowed
No Drones Allowed

NOTE: Schedule subject to change, please check Boonie Stompers' Facebook in advance.

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

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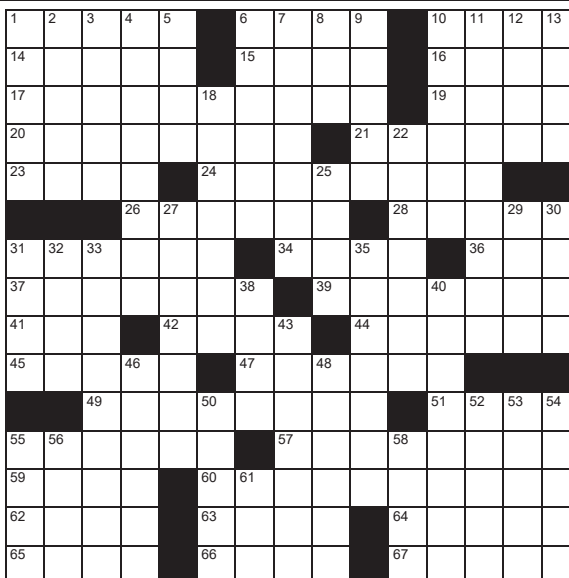
Largest selection of imported Japanese vehicles on island!

Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Yoga position
- 6 Campus mil. grp.
- 10 Firebird roof option
- 14 Chest-maker's wood
- 15 "Dedicated to the ___ Love": 1960s hit
- 16 Endings with aster and human
- 17 Delilah portrayer
- 19 Plural of Mrs.
- 20 Urban blemishes
- 21 One of the Kennedys
- 23 Cry from a crib
- 24 Big name in tortilla chips
- 26 Boot camp reply
- 28 Marriott rival
- 31 Bygone Belgian airline
- 34 Bone-dry
- 36 "C'est la ___!"
- 37 Some may rest on theirs
- 39 Listers on eBay
- 41 Schubert's "The ___-King"
- 42 Vegas lake
- 44 Shoots daggers (at)
- 45 City of India
- 47 Some action cameras
- 49 Believe strongly
- 51 Piece of wood
- 55 Switzerland, to the French
- 57 Prepare oneself
- 59 USAF rank
- 60 At least
- 62 Will-___-wisp
- 63 Persia, today
- 64 Sporty Chevy, for short
- 65 Tolkien series, briefly
- 66 Untouchable Eliot
- 67 Asks too many questions



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DOWN

- 1 Longed (for)
- 2 "I'm outta here"
- 3 Summed up
- 4 Skeptical sort
- 5 Folk singer Guthrie
- 6 Ladies' men
- 7 The "O" in Jackie O
- 8 Artist Gerard ___ Borch
- 9 Wispy clouds
- 10 Peppermint Patty, for one
- 11 Multitasking, e.g.
- 12 Polish border river
- 13 Furtive summons
- 18 Gallery event
- 22 Shakespeare tragedy
- 25 Very, in Vichy
- 27 Combatants
- 29 Grow weary
- 30 Dick Tracy's love
- 31 Snow coaster

- 32 Swiss river
- 33 Matador's event
- 35 Feels sorry about
- 38 Hangs loose
- 40 "Toy Story" director John
- 43 Gen. MacArthur
- 46 Prynne of "The Scarlet Letter"
- 48 Primps
- 50 Red Square figure
- 52 Christine of "Evil"
- 53 "It's ___!" ("You're on!")
- 54 Actress Daly and others
- 55 Small runway craft, for short
- 56 "From all of ___ all of you"
- 58 Invitation letters
- 61 Miner's find

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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

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JANUARY 11 – JANUARY 17, 2019

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What is the most commonly used mascot in Division I athletics?

Answer

Bulldogs

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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

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Edited by Margie E. Burke

HOW TO SOLVE:

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

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

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

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GUAM EDITION

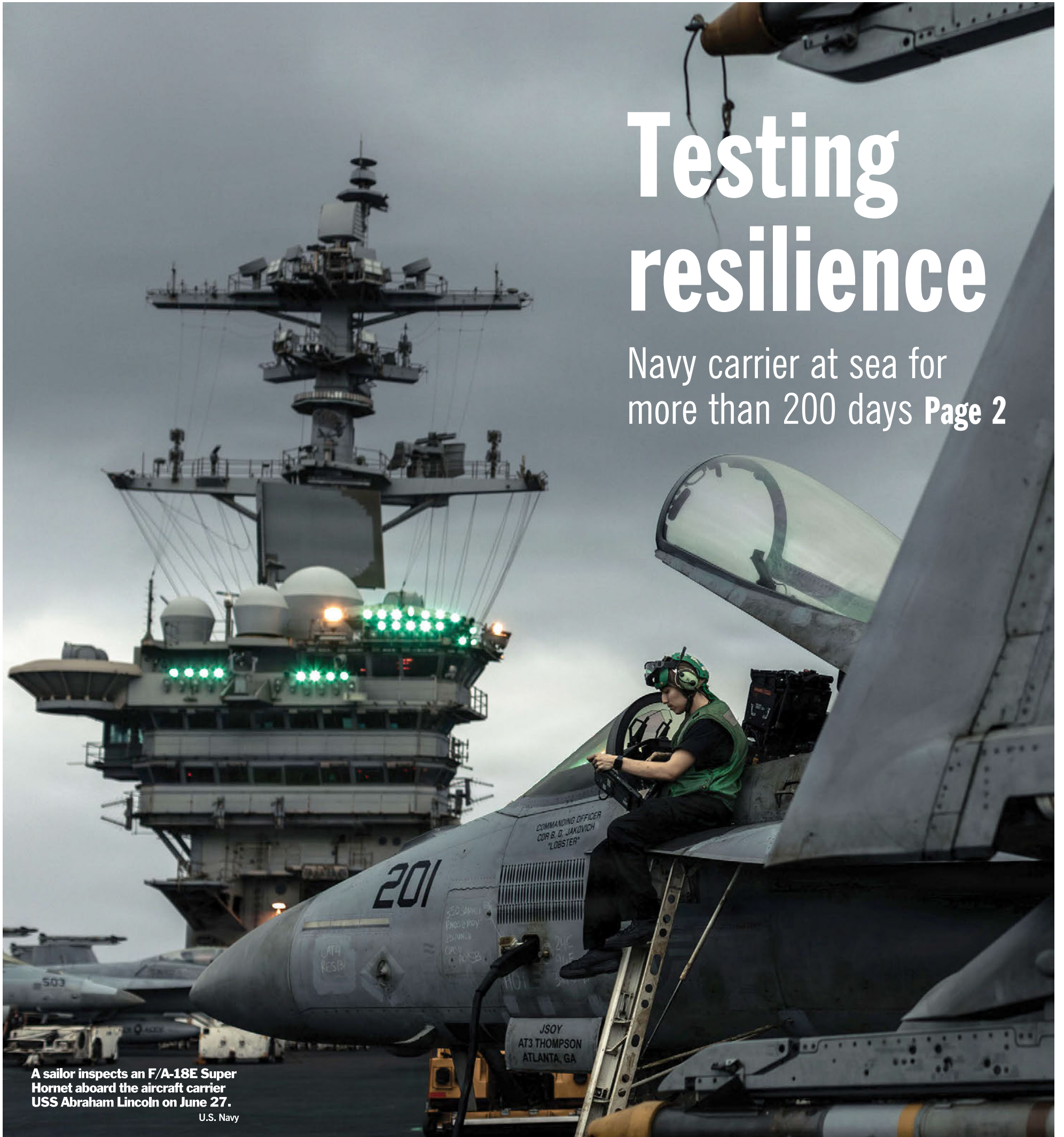
JULY 20, 2026

Testing resilience

Navy carrier at sea for
more than 200 days **Page 2**

A sailor inspects an F/A-18E Super
Hornet aboard the aircraft carrier
USS Abraham Lincoln on June 27.

U.S. Navy



COVER STORY

Carrier's long time at sea tests resilience

Lincoln has spent nearly 7 months without port call

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — The USS Abraham Lincoln has spent nearly seven months at sea, a grueling pace of operations that has kept the aircraft carrier and its crew on duty in the Middle East since January with no clear end in sight.

On July 6, Lincoln reached its 207th consecutive day at sea, breaking a previous record set by the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The only port call Lincoln has made during its current deployment was a brief stop in Guam on Dec. 11-12, according to the Navy.

The carrier departed San Diego on Nov. 21 for routine operations, the service said.

Lincoln and its crew of about 5,000 personnel have spent months on station in the Arabian Sea supporting U.S. military operations aimed at compelling Iran to release its stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz and abandon its nuclear ambitions.

The U.S. operations have included airstrikes against military facilities and other sites in Iran, protecting ships in the strait and, until last month, maintaining a naval blockade against Iranian ports.

There are signs that the operational tempo may be taking a toll on sailors' physical and mental well-being after months of limited contact with their families and little respite from 24/7 operations.

"Our mental health and physical health is in danger," one Lincoln sailor recently wrote to family members. "We need help."

The family shared the message with Stars and Stripes on the condition of anonymity out of concerns of retaliation.

That plea was especially worrisome for one family member who is concerned that their sailor may be among those potentially facing a mental health crisis.

"It's worrisome and it's kind of heartbreaking," the family member said. "... You can't do anything."

Other sailors aboard the carrier have acknowledged the strain and its impact on mental health but also credited the crew's fortitude.

"We are tired," Lt. Cmdr. Alexis Travis wrote in a public post to Instagram on June 16. "This crew has shown grit,



Photos by U.S. Navy

A sailor stands watch in primary flight control during flight operations aboard the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln on June 26. Lincoln is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

grace, resilience, flexibility, kindness, and unmatched ability to do the darn thing."

The well-being of U.S. forces at sea and on land in the Middle East is a priority, Capt. Tim Hawkins, a spokesman for U.S. Central Command, said in a July 9 statement. He added that service members were receiving the best resources, logistical support and care possible in a forward-operating environment.

"We firmly believe that every operational success begins and ends with our people," Hawkins said. "There is no military on earth that globally supports its warfighters like the U.S. military."

Lincoln is among more than 20 Navy ships and thousands of sailors and Marines in the Middle East. That contingent includes the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush and the Boxer Amphibious Ready Group.

In all, there are more than 50,000 American troops in the Middle East, according to CENTCOM.

Typically, Navy ships on deployment make regular port calls that not only provide an opportunity for vessel maintenance, repairs and resupply but also give sailors and Marines a much-needed break from their jobs.

For example, deployed aircraft carriers usually make a port call



Sailors conduct maintenance on an MH-60S Seahawk helicopter in the hangar bay of the Lincoln on June 26.

every 30 to 45 days, giving sailors the chance to get off the ship, sightsee, dine out and relax.

But operational needs can disrupt those plans. The crew of Eisenhower spent more than five months in the Red Sea in 2024 without a port call defending against attacks on shipping by Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen.

Previously, Eisenhower accrued 206 days at sea in 2020 due to COVID-19 mitigation procedures, according to the Navy. In 2002, the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt spent 160 consecutive days at sea as part of the post-9/11 response,

the service said.

In the case of Eisenhower's Red Sea deployment, officials worked to improve the quality of life for sailors by adding onboard Wi-Fi to improve communication with family and friends.

Special attention also was given to ensuring sailors received adequate rest, and the ship held hundreds of events, such as art sessions, bingo and a singing competition, to help ease the pain of high-stress operations.

Recent social media posts and messages to family are not the first indications from Lincoln sailors highlighting potential

quality of life issues during the ship's current deployment.

A USA Today story published in April highlighted concerns of unidentified families worried their sailors were not getting enough to eat.

The article "grossly mischaracterized" food service aboard the ships and the accompanying photos were not taken on a Navy vessel but rather at an ashore dining facility, Adm. Darryl Caudle, chief of naval operations, said at the time.

Travis also pushed back on Instagram comments suggesting that sailors commiserating about quality of life during long deployments knew what they signed up for and that the conditions were not as difficult of those previously faced by other sailors.

"Actually literally no one signed up for this and yet here we are, still doing it safely and successfully," Travis, a mental health advocate, wrote in a June 17 Instagram post.

The difficulties and struggles of one crew do not diminish the fight against the same issues faced by other crews, she added.

"If we were all on the same team a little more, I bet we'd have fewer problems building community, connecting with civilians and advocating for veterans," she wrote.

PACIFIC

Global Hawks' departure from Guam touted

Experts: Move takes drones from typhoon corridor to more strategic location

By SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — The Air Force relocating a fleet of RQ-4 Global Hawk drones from Guam to this airlift hub in western Tokyo does more than remove them from a dangerous typhoon corridor, according to defense experts.

The movement of three aircraft and 150 airmen assigned to the 4th Reconnaissance Squadron, 319th Operations Group to Yokota from Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, was announced by Japan's Defense and Foreign Ministries on May 28.

The U.S. Air Force has not confirmed the number of aircraft or airmen who have arrived in Tokyo so far.

"The only surprise here is that it took this long to make the (permanent) move," Ralph Cossa, former president of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii, said by email. "This sends a signal of U.S. commitment to Japan and also increases U.S. ability to respond to Taiwan contingencies."

The East China Sea and Taiwan Strait are closer to Yokota than Guam, and the South China



JACOB WOOD/U.S. Air Force

An RQ-4b Global Hawk Block 40 is prepared for flying operations at Yokota Air Base, Japan, in May.

Sea is an equal distance away, Leland Bettis, a director of the Guam-based Pacific Center for Island Security, said by email. Taiwan is 1,300 miles from Tokyo and 1,700 miles from Guam.

Removing the drones from Guam's often intense typhoon season is an advantage, squadron commander Lt. Col. Adam Otten said outside one of the two renovated Yokota hangars occupied by his aircraft.

"It has an impact on operations," he said of typhoon sea-

son, which peaks in Guam between late August and mid-November, according to Andersen's website. "For the RQ-4, this is the right place to be."

Typhoon Mawar in May 2023, for example, left behind damage on Guam that took years to completely repair.

The Global Hawks found their new home on Yokota's east side near the U.S. Space Force Japan headquarters and a yet-to-open campus for Air Force CV-22 Osprey special operations air-

craft. The 4th Reconnaissance Squadron fields the high altitude, long endurance Global Hawk to provide intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance support to the U.S. and its allies.

The drones began temporary deployments to Misawa Air Base in 2014 and have continued to travel there and to Yokota each year during typhoon season.

Getting away from typhoons is likely not the sole reason for the squadron's move, which comes as U.S. Forces Japan reorganizes

itself into a warfighting command, said Grant Newsham, a senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo.

"Generally, it is better for a commander to have his forces and units (and their hardware) in reasonably close proximity to each other," he said by email. "It simplifies operations and makes them more efficient and also tends to create an important level of 'familiarity' between all parts of the command."

B-2 helps sink old ship during exercise 200 miles from Guam

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

American and allied forces sank a decommissioned U.S. warship during a recent live-fire exercise in the western Pacific, the first publicly acknowledged use of a new anti-ship missile from a B-2 Spirit stealth bomber.

The decommissioned amphibious transport dock ship USS Juneau sank on June 27 about 200 miles from Guam after a barrage of live fire during exercise Valiant Shield, Pacific Air Forces said in a news release. The exercise concluded on July 1, according to a news release from the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

As part of Valiant Shield, a B-2 Spirit fired an AGM-158C Long Range Anti-Ship Missile, or LRASM, marking the first time the Defense Department has publicly acknowledged the bomber's use of the weapon, Air and Space Forces Magazine reported.

The recently developed missile



JOSHUA HASTINGS/U.S. Air Force

A B-2 Spirit bomber departs Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, ahead of the live-fire sinking exercise on June 27.

features a range of over 230 miles, semi-autonomous navigation and a 1,000-pound penetrating blast fragmentation warhead, according to developer Lockheed Martin's website.

The Juneau, commissioned in

1969, the following year carried Marines returning from the Vietnam War. In 1989, the ship responded with the dock landing ship USS Fort McHenry to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska; and in 1990, the Juneau sailed in



ANTHONY VILARDI/U.S. Navy

The decommissioned USS Juneau takes a hit from a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine's torpedo during a live-fire sinking exercise as part of Valiant Shield 2026 in the Philippine Sea.

operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, according to the Naval History and Heritage Command website.

Aircraft like the B-1B Lancer heavy bomber and the F-18 Super Hornet fighter jet can carry the LRASM, and efforts to integrate the missile with the F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter, F-15 Eagle fighter and the P-8 Orion maritime patrol aircraft are "ongoing," according to Lockheed Martin.

Additional aircraft, warships and submarines also participated

in coordinated strikes on the Juneau. The sinking exercise was meant to "sharpen critical skills in weapons employment and target engagement under realistic conditions that no simulator can fully replicate," Task Force 70 and Pacific Air Forces said in a separate news release.

Among them were F-18 Super Hornets assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan's Carrier Air Wing 5 and a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force submarine, according to photo captions in the news releases.

PACIFIC

Tracking invasive serpents

Volunteers lend hands capturing brown tree snakes on Guam

By JONATHAN BAEZ
Stars and Stripes

Sixty community volunteers on Guam caught about 20 brown tree snakes, an invasive species on the island, during a snake hunt and workshop recently at Andersen Air Force Base, according to Joint Region Marianas and the University of Guam.

The command and the university sponsored their second brown tree snake workshop on June 23 at Tarague Beach at Andersen, according to an email from Lt. Cmdr. Kristina M. Wiedemann, a spokeswoman for Joint Region Marianas.

The two-part event included a workshop on how to identify, safely handle and humanely dispatch the snakes, followed by a nighttime search for the nocturnal reptile, according to Wiedemann.

She did not describe the methods volunteers used to catch snakes, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture employs professionals to catch the snakes by “spotlighting,” the process of catching the snakes by hand at night.

Their personal protective gear includes snake tongs, steel toe boots and gloves, according to an Andersen news release in January 2008. They also use traps and snake-sniffing Jack Russell terriers to locate the animals.

By spotlighting snake habitats



University of Guam

Visitors line up to see the tables set up to learn about the threat of the brown tree snake on Guam on June 23.



LANCE CHEUNG/U.S. Air Force

Brown tree snakes, which are mildly venomous, have erased many of Guam's native bird and reptile species.

with a flashlight, their scales reflect the light and they become easier to find.

At the workshop in June, the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services set up booths to show participants how the snake negatively impacts the ecosystem and how to identify, safely handle and humanely dispatch the invasive reptile, according to a



University of Guam

Volunteers and partners spread out for a night hunt after a brown tree snake workshop on Guam on June 22.

June 23 University of Guam news release.

The snakes, which are mildly venomous, have erased many of Guam's native bird and reptile species.

The university and the joint region command established the workshop in 2025 through a cooperative agreement to create a brown tree snake awareness campaign. The goal is to have military personnel and their families educated about the ecosystem they live in and actively

assist in preventing the spread of invasive species.

“The University views invasive species management as a collaborative effort that requires participation from government agencies, researchers, conservation organizations, and the community,” Tayah Hawley, extension associate for the University of Guam Island Conservation Lab, said by email June 26.

Joint Region Marianas, which oversees Department of Defense installations across Guam and

the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, has safety measures in place to limit the invasive species, according to Wiedemann. The command plays a role in conserving Guam's natural environment in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Government of Guam, she said.

“Joint Region Marianas employs a comprehensive, multi-layered biosecurity framework combining strict cargo interdiction, physical barriers, mandatory canine and visual inspections, active on-island population control, and targeted community education and training to prevent the spread of invasive species through the Department of Defense transportation network,” she said.

The brown tree snake, native to Melanesia and Indonesia, has affected Guam's ecosystem for more than 70 years, according to the Agriculture Department. The snake may have arrived in Guam during World War II in military cargo.

Pentagon-funded snakebite drug now in animal trials

By JOSEPH DITZLER
Stars and Stripes

A California company partnering with the Pentagon to develop an antidote for venomous snakebites is in animal trials to gauge the drug's suitability for humans after clinical trials fell short but showed promise.

Ophirex Inc. expects the drug will be ready by 2028, four years beyond its first hopeful estimate, according to a company executive.

The Pentagon through the

Army and Defense Health Agency between 2022 and 2025 has partly funded the project with \$34 million and supported the company's application to test the drug, varespladib, under the Food and Drug Administration's Animal Rule.

Animal testing is necessary, according to Ophirex chief operating officer Rebecca Carter, because two trials so far with human subjects could not get close enough in time to an actual snakebite to demonstrate the

drug's effectiveness. Ophirex obtained FDA approval for animal testing in December, according to a company news release.

Studies in animals that mimic snakebite in humans “are underway” to determine the effective dose of varespladib, Carter said.

“The Animal Rule in the United States is set up by Congress and by the FDA for situations where a normal clinical trial is not ethical and not feasible,” Carter said. “I cannot take you to

the hospital, recognize you've been bitten by a snake, and then withhold care from you so that I can enroll you in my study.”

Substituting varespladib for antivenom, the standard treatment for snakebite patients, is not an option.

The FDA Animal Rule since 2022 “applies only to drugs and biological products that are intended to ameliorate or prevent serious or life-threatening conditions caused by exposure to lethal or permanently disabling

toxic chemical,” the FDA website states.

Varespladib alone does not inhibit all snakebite toxins, but studies show it works against sPLA2, a toxic enzyme present in more than 95% of the world's venomous snakes, Ophirex said.

The drug proved inconclusive in clinical trials in India and the United States: BRAVO, from August 2021 to June 2023, and BRAVIO, from May 2023 to February 2025, according to reports on ClinicalTrials.gov.

MILITARY

Marines ink deal for uncrewed vehicles

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Marines could go into battle in the near future flanked by uncrewed vehicles operating as part of their Marine Air Defense Integrated System.

The Marine Corps and Seattle-based Overland AI announced June 29 that they had signed a \$20 million contract for platforms that would enable troops to push farther into conflict areas with fewer personnel by using the uncrewed vehicles to supplement crewed ones.

The Marines use Joint Light Tactical Vehicles with the MADIS — a short-range air defense system designed to “detect, track and destroy drones, helicopters and low-flying aircraft” while accompanying Marine units in the field, the service says.

The new autonomous ground vehicles would be integrated into the manned vehicle force. They could be used for transport, logistics and communications, as well as platforms for other systems.

“Pairing the autonomous platforms with our Marine Air Defense Integrated System will greatly extend the operational reach and lethality of our air defense units,” Joe Klocek, Ma-



Overland AI autonomous ground vehicles are seen at a proving ground.

rine Corps Program Manager for Ground Based Air Defense, said in a statement.

Byron Boots, chief executive

officer of Overland AI, said the Pentagon has signaled an urgent need to field autonomous ground vehicles as rapidly as possible.

“Overland AI is proud to be the first ground autonomy company to prime a production contract,” Boots said.

Boots said the \$20 million contract falls under the “other transaction authority production agreement” awarded through the office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering’s program to accelerate the acquisition and deployment of innovative technologies.

“This is the first step toward integrating fully autonomous ground vehicles at scale in USMC programs of record,” Overland AI said in a statement. “Until now, unmanned assets have been largely tele-operated and remote-controlled, constraints that limit operators to single-vehicle control and create dependence on communications during operations.”

The Overland AI vehicles were developed in conjunction with the Program Manager, Ground-Based Air Defense (PM GBAD).

“PM GBAD is setting the pace, moving past discussion and experimentation to put autonomous capabilities directly into the hands of Marines,” the company said.

Details of the number of vehicles that would be obtained under the \$20 million contract were not immediately available from the Marines.

Overland AI

Navy hits recruiting goal 3 months early

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

The Navy surpassed its annual recruiting goal of signing 45,000 new recruits three months ahead of schedule, the service announced July 2.

“Today’s Navy is stronger because tens of thousands of Americans chose to answer the call to serve,” Rear Adm. Jim Waters, commander of Navy Recruiting Command, said in a statement. “Reaching this milestone is not simply about achieving a recruiting objective — it’s about delivering the talented sailors our Fleet needs to maintain readiness in an increasingly complex security

environment.”

The fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

In June 2025, the Navy met its 2025 recruiting goal three months early, with 40,600 future sailors enlisted. By the close of the fiscal year, it had brought that final number to 44,096 — a figure the Navy hasn’t seen since the early 2000s, Waters said at the time.

The Navy missed its recruiting goal in 2023, as did the Army and Air Force, and took steps to reimagine how it brings in new sailors.

Changes included modernizing marketing campaigns, streamlining administrative processes, tripling its medical



MYKALA KECKEISEN/U.S. Navy

A graduating division marches into Midway Ceremonial Drill Hall during pass-in-review at U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill., on June 18.

waiver review staff, expanding age eligibility and opening a preparatory course to improve test scores for entry.

“Our recruiters never lost sight of what matters most —

people,” Waters said. “Behind every accession is a recruiter who set the foundation for success and a future sailor preparing to stand the watch, support the Fleet and contribute to our

nation’s security.”

The Air Force and Space Force each reached their recruiting goals in April. The Army achieved its recruiting goal in May.

New app to assist with Marine uniform, grooming standards

Stars and Stripes

Marines can now download a new mobile app that puts official uniform and grooming guidance at their fingertips, making it easier to access the latest regulations anytime and anywhere.

The free mobile application,

called Marine Corps Uniform App, was launched by U.S. Marine Corps Education Command on June 29 to accompany Marine Corps Order 1020.34H, the official policy on Marine Corps uniform regulations, according to a service news release.

“The Marine Corps Uniform App gives Marines immediate access to the guidance they use most often. It is designed to make existing standards more accessible while reinforcing the professionalism and attention to detail that define our Corps,” said Brig. Gen. Matthew W.

Tracy, commanding general of Education Command.

Uniform regulations on the app are organized by officer, enlisted personnel and sex.

Although the app answers many of the most common uniform and grooming questions, Marines should continue to use

the official order for more comprehensive and detailed policies, the release said.

The app is available on the Apple App Store while an Android version is expected to be released some time during the Department of Defense’s Fiscal Year 2027.

MILITARY

USAF cancels 135 promotions over error

Outdated scoring key used in tests for security forces technical sergeants

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

More than 100 Air Force staff sergeants who thought they had been promoted won't advance after officials uncovered a scoring error on a key advancement test.

The Air Force announced July 7 that 135 security forces airmen will be removed from the 2026 technical sergeant promotion list after an enlisted promotions team member discovered an outdated scoring key had been used for the Specialty Knowledge

Test. The error caused 27 test questions to be graded incorrectly.

The promotion team then recalculated the scores of more than 2,000 security forces airmen who competed for promotion. After the re-score, officials determined that a different group of 135 staff sergeants should have been promoted. Those airmen are expected to be notified this month.

The security forces career field had 586 promotion slots this cycle.

"We owe it to those affected to address it immediately," Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force David R. Wolfe said in a statement. "This is going to be hard for everyone impacted."

The Air Force said no artificial intelligence products were involved in the error, which it attributed to human error.

The service recently promoted more than 6,500 staff sergeants to technical sergeant in the 2026 promotion cycle. The mistake affected only the security forces career field.

Air Education and Training Command and Air Force Personnel Center have strengthened their internal processes, according to the Air Force. A review is underway.

"We owe it to our airmen to own the mistake and to take the necessary actions to not only make it right today, but to prevent future issues," Wolfe said.

Security forces serves as the Air Force's military police. Often identified by their dark blue berets, they are responsible for base defense, law enforcement



MARK HERLIHY/U.S. Air Force

The Air Force will remove 135 security forces airmen from the 2026 technical sergeant promotion list.

and the protection of high-value assets, including aircraft and nuclear weapons.

Navy doing away with permanent shaving waivers

By COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

Sailors with shaving-related conditions will get one year of medical treatment to meet the Navy's clean-shaven face standard or they will be removed from the service, according to new guidance.

The Navy will no longer issue permanent shaving waivers to sailors who suffer from skin conditions caused by shaving, including pseudofolliculitis barbae, according to a Navy memorandum published this month. The updated policy brings the service into line with guidance issued last year by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth banning most shaving accommodations for service members.

The Navy's July directive instructs all sailors with skin irritation or other conditions caused by shaving — including those with current medical shaving waivers — to report the issue to their supervisors and seek medical evaluation. If recommended for treatment, their commanding officer may issue a temporary

shaving waiver, allowing them to maintain a beard up to ¼ inch in length.

Commanders may grant temporary waivers for up to 90 days, according to the guidance. Those waivers must "align with prescribed treatment." Commanders may only grant a 90-day shaving waiver four times before they must recommend a sailor for administrative separation.

Sailors who cannot meet shaving standards after one year of treatment shall be deemed to have "an unmanageable permanent condition" and recommended for "separation due to failure to comply with grooming standards," according to the memo.

"The operational success of the U.S. Navy demands the readiness of all sailors. Mission accomplishment hinges on stringent compliance with standards and ensuring implementing policies are clear, unambiguous and compliant with law and regulation," the memo reads. "Grooming standards add to sailor and mission safety and ensure the safe and proper utilization of protective equipment in all naval environments and operational conditions."



ERNESTO HERNANDEZ FONTE/U.S. Navy

A sailor shaves during an exercise in 2012 at Camp Shelby, Miss.

ization of protective equipment in all naval environments and operational conditions."

The policy says the Navy will not grant temporary medical waivers to recruits or others entering or reentering the service.

Pseudofolliculitis barbae, commonly known as razor bumps, is a condition that can cause a person to experience painful inflammation after shaving. The condition disproportionately affects Black men, some 60% of

whom may experience it, according to the American Osteopathic College of Dermatology.

Hegseth has lamented the increase in recent years of bearded troops, who he has said do not meet military standards. His September 2025 memorandum also instructed the military services to reevaluate religious beard waivers.

The Navy last month ordered sailors with religious-based accommodations, including for facial hair, to reapply for a

grooming standard exemption and outlined its more stringent evaluation process.

The July memo allows sailors to continue to wear mustaches. It also allows certain special operators to don beards in certain operational environments when they are deemed "mission essential." Those forces — including Navy SEALs — however must "be clean shaven" when deployed in areas with a threat of a chemical, biological, radiation or nuclear attack, the memo said.

Navy unveils reserve aviator bonuses that go up to \$280K

By MATTHEW ADAMS
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has announced a slew of bonuses that offer reserve aviators the chance to earn as much as \$280,000 over a seven-year period.

The incentives are part of the Navy's annual Training and Administration of the Reserve Avia-

tion Department Head Retention program announced in late June.

The bonuses will be paid in three, five or seven annual installments, according to the Navy Administrative Message. The lowest bonus is \$15,000 per year and the highest is \$40,000. Eligible roles among the 16 jobs include helicopter sea combat

pilots, airborne command-and-control naval flight officers and electronic attack squadron pilots.

The bonuses are part of a wider effort in the military to keep experienced pilots in the ranks rather than lose them to the private sector.

United Airlines launched a recruiting pipeline program in

2024 that seeks to hire ex-military pilots.

The Air Force in April announced eligible and active-duty airmen can apply for the fiscal year 2026 aviation bonus offering higher compensation for shorter contract lengths, particularly in the fighter, bomber and U-2 communities. The shortest con-

tracts go for three years while the longest are 12 years. The rates go up to \$50,000 per year, depending on the applicant's field and experience.

All contracts must be received by the Training and Administration of the Reserve Distribution and Augmentation by Aug. 26, the Navy said.

MILITARY

Sailors train to counter swarming drones

Exercise uses lessons from Ukrainian war with Russia

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

BALTIC SEA — These northern waters recently served to show Navy sailors how to spot and destroy deadly surface drones, whose devastating consequences for ships have been demonstrated from the Middle East to Crimea.

The lessons were on display in June during BALTOPS, an annual NATO maritime exercise in the Baltic. Stars and Stripes observed U.S. and U.K. sailors training in rainy, rough conditions.

That effort builds on lessons learned by watching Ukrainian surface drones batter Russia's Black Sea Fleet and force its ships to stay bottled up close to shore.

It also draws on insights gleaned from surface drone and fast-boat attacks on ships by Houthi rebels in Yemen and, more recently, by Iranian forces.

The training builds the readiness the fleet will need to handle the complexities of dealing with such systems in conflict, said Lt. Nick Anderson, the weapons and anti-terrorism officer aboard the command-and-control ship USS Mount Whitney, which also participated in the exercise.

"Kind of like a football team, if your defensive line doesn't have a plan on how to react to a play and doesn't have a shared mental model, it's much, much harder to stay coordinated in your spots," Anderson said.

BALTOPS aims to sharpen the skills of NATO navies in defending the Baltic Sea and keeping allied forces and supplies moving through the region during a crisis.

In this year's iteration, poor weather added realism to the drone training by making it more difficult to spot the low-profile craft in rain and choppy seas.

Sea state and weather conditions as well as an unmanned boat's low profile and fast speed all make the craft difficult to detect. While radar is useful, a ship's best defense against any threat at sea is sailors' eyes, likely enhanced by a pair of binoculars, Anderson said.

In the training scenario, Mount Whitney and participating allied ships practiced detecting, identi-



ISAAC ESPOSITO/U.S. Navy

The command and control ship USS Mount Whitney transits the strait of Skagerrak during Baltic Operations 2026 on June 11.



CHAD M. BUTLER/U.S. Navy

A Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft assigned to Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron 3 approaches Mount Whitney during the exercise.

fying and evading Navy Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft, or GARC, from the San Diego-based Unmanned Surface Vessel Division 32, established in January.

Surface drones "are intended to be small and sneaky and to exploit blind spots," said Stacie Pettyjohn, a senior fellow and director of the defense program at the Washington, D.C.-based think tank Center for a New American Security.

While sailors may be on the lookout for other vessels, such as enemy warships, surface drones can catch them unaware, she added.

Protecting ships from explosive-laden boats has been a long-

time challenge, Navy officials and analysts note, pointing to the October 2000 suicide bombing of the destroyer USS Cole as it was refueling in a Yemeni port. The attack killed 17 sailors and injured more than three dozen.

Now, the threat of inexpensive, radar-evading drone swarms is pushing the Navy to rapidly shift unmanned systems out of the lab and into active operational training while it works to develop and deploy new technologies to defend against them.

The urgency reflects the rapidly evolving nature of naval warfare. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shown how relatively inexpensive unmanned boats can damage or sink much

"Kind of like a football team, if your defensive line doesn't have a plan on how to react to a play and doesn't have a shared mental model, it's much, much harder to stay coordinated in your spots."

Lt. Nick Anderson
USS Mount Whitney

larger warships, while repeated Houthi attacks in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden have forced commercial vessels and Western navies to adapt to drone and missile threats.

"They're trying to learn on the fly," Pettyjohn said. "They're deploying the prototypes into the exercises, into operations, even as they're still sort of shaping requirements."

Differentiating an attack drone from a fishing boat or other vessel, determining its intent and potentially eliminating it require coordination and clear communication between a ship's bridge and small-craft action team members manning guns on deck, said Petty Officer 2nd Class Marcus Guy, a member of Mount Whitney's small-craft action team.

That can be challenging in the heat of the moment when multiple teams are tracking and

calling out the position of a potential threat, he said.

Lt. Sarah Weinstein, commander of USVD 32, said that for many U.S. and NATO sailors, the exercise offered a firsthand look at drone tactics and a critical opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned in previous training.

The division was operating in support of the Navy's Task Force 66, which is focused on integrating robotic and autonomous systems with manned platforms.

Internal lessons and operational feedback gained during counter-drone training with unmanned surface vehicles in the Baltic have fleetwide implications, she said.

The GARC "operates the same way no matter what ocean or sea you happen to be in," Weinstein said. "The lessons learned while employing it are entirely universal."

MILITARY



AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA/Stars and Stripes

The aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan steams through Tokyo Bay on its way to Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, in 2023.

Sailor’s fatal fall exposed carrier drug ring

Resulting probe found network, led to dozens of punishments aboard USS Ronald Reagan

By ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A sailor’s fatal fall in 2023 sparked a Navy probe that uncovered a drug distribution network aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and led to punishment for 58 sailors, according to service officials and heavily redacted court records.

The investigation resulted in six courts-martial, 24 administrative separations and 28 cases of nonjudicial punishment, Navy officials said. Court records describe a network that used the U.S. Postal Service to ship hundreds of LSD tablets to Japan that were then distributed to sailors.

The Navy acknowledged in 2023 that an unspecified number of Ronald Reagan sailors were under investigation, but the extent of that probe did not emerge until records became public and recent Navy responses.

“The investigation was comprehensive, and every Sailor identified as having been involved in misconduct was held accountable,” USS Ronald Reagan spokesman Lt. Cmdr. James Adams said in an email.

“The investigation was comprehensive, and every Sailor identified as having been involved in misconduct was held accountable.”

Lt. Cmdr. James Adams
USS Ronald Reagan spokesman

The probe began after a 22-year-old boatswain’s mate assigned to the carrier died March 13, 2023, after falling from a Yokosuka barracks. The Navy declined to name the sailor.

An autopsy found LSD in his system, and a search of the sailor’s cellphone provided Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents with additional leads, according to a defense filing. Court records don’t say what caused or contributed to his fall.

The death was “the catalyst for the broader investigation,” Adams said. “Information and evidence uncovered by NCIS during the initial death investigation led them to uncover and dismantle a network of drug

possession, use, and distribution.”

NCIS formally opened its investigation on May 2, 2023. Within weeks, sailors began admitting involvement and identifying others, according to court records.

The six sailors court-martialed in the case were Seaman Apprentice Evelyn Aguilar, Seaman Brandon Dias, Seaman David Posmao, Seaman Apprentice Artur Reykhman, Seaman Allysa Riale and Seaman Angel Tucker, according to the court records.

Tucker’s appellate record provided the most detailed account of the drug ring. He received seven mailed shipments of LSD between February 2022

and May 2023, each containing between 350 and 1,000 tablets, according to the record.

Tucker, a damage control fireman, took the packages to a sailor’s off-base home and distributed some of the drugs to sailors aboard the carrier, according to court records. He also handled a package of psilocybin mushrooms in a similar manner.

He pleaded guilty to seven drug-related offenses, including distribution, exportation, conspiracy and introducing a controlled substance onto a military vessel. He was sentenced to 15 months’ confinement and a bad-conduct discharge, but the confinement was later reduced by six months for his cooperation.

Dias, another damage control fireman, admitted distributing LSD and psilocybin mushrooms to other sailors, court records show. Agents who searched his off-base home seized substances later confirmed to be LSD and psilocybin.

Most of the drug-related charges against Dias were dismissed because of speedy-trial violations, but he was convicted of obstruction of justice and sentenced to 215 days’ confinement,

forfeiture of pay and a bad-conduct discharge.

Aguilar pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice. Posmao and Reykhman were convicted of drug offenses that included possession, distribution and conspiracy. Riale was convicted of distribution and conspiracy. All four received confinement.

Each of the six sailors was reduced to the rank of E-1, or seaman recruit. All but Posmao received punitive discharges. Efforts to contact the six sailors through Naval Forces Japan and social media were not successful.

Another 52 sailors were disciplined in connection with the investigation for use of an illegal substance, said Cmdr. Amelia Umayam, a spokeswoman for Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

The 28 sailors who received nonjudicial punishment were typically given 45 days’ restriction, 45 days’ extra duty, reduction in rank and forfeiture of half a month’s pay for two months, she said by email May 27.

Most of the 24 sailors who were administratively separated received other-than-honorable discharges, Umayam said.

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher

Erik Slavin, Editor in Chief

Brian Bowers, Guam Edition Editor

Scott Foley, Revenue Director

CONTACT US

633 3rd Street NW, Suite 116, Washington, D.C. 20001

Editorial: (202) 886-0005

Advertising: (202) 886-0014

Additional contact information: [strips.com](https://www.strips.com)

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Army bans kratom, aligns with Pentagon policy

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army has banned the use of the drug kratom and related products, underscoring an existing Defense Department directive across the military.

A memo dated June 23 from Army Secretary Dan Driscoll prohibits soldiers from using, possessing or distributing kratom or its primary psychoactive components, mitragynine and 7-hydroxymitragynine.

Soldiers who are identified as having used kratom will be referred for a substance use disorder evaluation and will be required to attend and complete the Army Substance Abuse Program and Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Training.