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You've made your voices heard over the years, and in turn, informed fellow members of the military community like yourselves of the Pacific's best attractions, restaurants, festivals, Sunday brunch, getaways and more.

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Thanks to your input every year we're able to make Stars and Stripes community products to help you enjoy your stay in the Pacific. That's what we're all about. As we are fond of saying, our papers, websites and magazines "are about you, for you, and in some cases, by you."

The votes keep rolling in year after year and it's all thanks to you! We had a great turnout in 2022, and we expect nothing short of a record number of votes in 2023. Vote and share so even more of you can experience the best the Pacific has to offer!

*– Stars and Stripes staff*



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# Frederick Hatch completes successful patrol

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR,  
U.S. COAST GUARD

SANTARITA—The crew of the USCGC Frederick Hatch completed a 41-day, 7,100-nautical mile expeditionary patrol throughout Oceania on Dec. 23, returning home in time for Christmas.

Under Operations Rematau and Blue Pacific, this patrol countered illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in the exclusive economic zones of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Nauru by enforcing applicable laws, regulations, and individual countries' sovereignty. The crew strengthened partnerships through established bilateral maritime law enforcement agreements, shiprider operations, subject matter exchanges, and community engagements.

"This patrol exemplified the operational advantage the Fast Response Cutter provides the Coast Guard in Oceania, displaying our ability to successfully complete fisheries enforcement and search and rescue missions over 1,800 nautical miles from home. Mixed with fantastic port calls and impactful community relations events, the last 41 days were a testament to the Hatch crew's adaptability and diligence that made this patrol so successful. It has been an honor to sail with each of them. Making it home for Christmas is a great reward, especially after being away for Thanksgiving," said Lt. Patrick Dreiss, USCGC Frederick Hatch's commanding officer.

The crew hosted students from high schools and colleges as well as community members during their port calls to share the missions of the U.S. Coast Guard and provide a look at the ship itself. They also participated in local sporting events and cultural activities. When departing the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the team took on an additional temporary crewmember, Staff Sgt. Gary Likiak,



The USCGC Frederick Hatch crew conduct a fisheries boarding in the Federated States of Micronesia exclusive economic zone Dec. 16, 2022. Photos courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard

U.S. Army, and part of the local embassy team. Likiak rode along to Kosrae, which is also home for him – the first time he's been home in six years.

The team conducted 16 boardings, issued five warnings, and found no significant violations. The fishing vessels were tuna longliners and purse seiners.

On Dec. 17, the Frederick Hatch crew, after departing Kosrae, enacted the newly expanded agreement for maritime law enforcement operations, conducting two boardings on licensed fishing vessels operating in the FSM exclusive economic zone.

"It was very fulfilling to have an opportunity to enact the Expanded Maritime Law Enforcement Agreement for the first time after watching the program develop over the last year," said Dreiss. "It provides the U.S. Coast Guard with another avenue to support our regional partners and continues to lay the groundwork for increasing Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Fishing enforcement in the region."

The expanded agreement builds on the existing bilateral shiprider agreement between the two countries. It establishes procedures for authorizing the U.S. to conduct maritime law

enforcement boardings on behalf of FSM to combat illicit maritime activity when an FSM law enforcement officer is not present. More specifically, the agreement provides a coordinating mechanism and process for U.S. law enforcement personnel to work with the FSM National Police, Division of Border Control and Maritime Surveillance to receive approval from the FSM to act under the agreement.

"This was an excellent warm-up of our bilateral relations and fisheries enforcement process following COVID. It was great to have local experts with us again and provide services to our FSM, RMI, and Nauru partners," said Capt. Nick Simmons, the commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia, Sector Guam.

The U.S. Coast Guard regularly exercises 11 bilateral fisheries law enforcement agreements on behalf of the United States with countries throughout the Pacific islands. Shiprider agreements allow maritime law enforcement officers to observe, board, and search vessels suspected of violating laws or regulations within a designated EEZ or on the high seas. These law enforcement activities bolster maritime law enforcement operations and maritime domain awareness and provide

a mechanism to conduct integrated operations within the Pacific. This expanded agreement is the first of its kind. It seeks to overcome the challenges of the Oceania region's vast distances while leveraging limited enforcement resources and the trust built between nations over decades.

The U.S. Coast Guard maintains strong partnerships with the maritime forces in the region through extensive training and subject matter expert exchanges. FSM, also known as the Big Ocean State, has one of the world's largest EEZs, with waters rich in sea life. RMI, located halfway between Hawaii and Australia north of the equator, is an archipelago of 29 atolls, five low coral islands, and 1,151 islets that shares maritime borders with FSM, Kiribati, and Nauru.

In addition to fisheries enforcement, the Frederick Hatch crew conducted a search and rescue case medically evacuating a 31-year-old Vietnamese fisherman to a higher level of medical care in Pohnpei on Nov. 20.

The cutter's boarding team learned of the fisherman's injuries while conducting a bilateral fisheries boarding with an FSM Marine Police Officer aboard the fishing vessel Ocean Galaxy 195 nautical miles (224 statute miles) south of Pohnpei. The ship is a 69.4-meter (227-foot) purse seiner flagged out of Nauru. The fisherman reportedly fell 12 feet earlier the same day, sustaining a head and possible spinal injury. He was conscious and talking but lost feeling and motion in his right arm and both legs, exhibiting severe concussion symptoms.

"It was an absolute team effort by every member of Frederick Hatch to medevac the injured crewmember from the Ocean Galaxy successfully. Witnessing each crewmember perform at the highest level after completing two boardings earlier the same day to help a fellow mariner was awesome to watch," said Dreiss.

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# Excelling at ‘remote’ leadership

NAVY EXPEDITIONARY COMBAT COMMAND

Cmdr. John Keefe has spent the last couple of years commanding one of the Navy’s most preeminent forward-deployed units in the Pacific, leading approximately 230 expeditionary sailors in undertaking some of our Nation’s most challenging and dynamic missions at Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 5.

He was recently selected as the Pacific Fleet recipient of the 2022 Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Award for inspirational leadership. Keefe was humbled to learn of his selection, and said that he continues to evolve as a leader every day and is passionate about the EOD community’s mission.

“Vice Adm. Stockdale is one of the finest leaders our nation has produced,” said Keefe. “I don’t feel like I deserve to be mentioned in the same breath. I just love being part of high functioning teams and I joined the Navy EOD community to do important work with talented and motivated people. I enjoy working with the sailors who make it happen every day.”

The Stockdale Award is peer-driven, meaning only those who are eligible for the award themselves are allowed to nominate others for consideration, so despite his humble acknowledgement of his selection, it’s clear he has a lot of supporters.

Keefe now works at the Pentagon as part of the Chief of Naval

Operations team for Expeditionary Warfare, however, the inspirational work that placed him among the esteemed list of nominees this year actually took place on the other side of the world, and in one of the military’s most remote duty stations.

“Somebody once told me, ‘If you’re looking for a reason to hate Guam, the island will give you one every day. But if you’re not looking for that reason, then you’ll love it,’” said Keefe. “We did quite a bit to focus on building esprit de corps, especially coming out of the COVID pandemic which hit our sailors in Guam especially hard (some of our sailors did more than 180 days of ROM in a 24 month OFRP). We did monthly BBQs, island hikes, and plenty of family events. Members of the command organized Guam’s first ever EOD Memorial Ball, which raised a lot of awareness for EOD-related organizations.”

Keefe’s love of the island life goes well beyond its predictable sunshine, crystal blue waters, and pristine beaches. He expressed that his fulfillment is a combination of the myriad of operational opportunities that exist in the theater and the camaraderie his team built along the way.

“There’s no better place to be an EOD tech than in Guam,” said Keefe. “On any given day, we’d be doing freefall and static line parachute operations, mixed gas decompression diving, underwater detonations, demolition operations on the compound, and rappelling from our

tower. I am also a firm believer that good commands come together to do hard things, so we did command workouts every Monday and Friday. Those were great opportunities to interact with sailors outside of the shop. I felt like those PT sessions really helped us maintain our war-fighting culture and build our sense of community.”

With sailors continually deployed across the Indo Pacific, conducting operations and exercises in places like Australia, Philippines, Korea, Japan and Indonesia, the need for community was not only important for the sailors under Keefe’s charge, but also their families.

“We had an amazing spouse network and I found that our sailors enjoyed more off-duty time together than I’ve seen in other duty stations,” said Keefe. “EODMU 5 sailors and their families essentially became our family as we were thousands of miles away from home.”

Leadership comes with challenges in every environment. Keefe’s approach to building and maintaining a positive culture in Guam was through challenging his sailors to discover the potential that lay before them.

“When sailors checked into the command, I sat down with them and outlined my expectations during their tour,” said Keefe. “At the end of the conversation, I’d hand them a deck of cards and we’d talk about all of the amazing opportunities at the command and in Guam. I’d tell them that when the Navy cut them



Adm. Mike Gilday presents Cmdr. John W. Keefe with the 2022 Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale Leadership Award at the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon on Nov. 17, 2022. Photo by PO1 Michael B Zingaro, U.S. Navy

orders to EODMU 5, they just got dealt the best hand of their life. But just like in cards, it’s up to them how they play their hand. So the cards were a metaphor for opportunity and responsibility.”

Much like the challenge Keefe gave his sailors in exploring their own realm of possibilities, his journey in leadership has been an evolving process during his career.

“Any of my former bosses will tell you that I demonstrate shortfalls on a daily basis,” said Keefe. “My mistakes as a 22 year old Ensign still teach me lessons today. I am still refining myself as a leader, because I frequently have to adjust after I screw things up. I have had the opportunity to be around some great leaders and a common trait is that they always try to get better. So that’s what I try to do as well.”

Leadership in military organizations is unquestionably a learned skill, and Keefe credits his mentors with helping shape his foundational principles. His late father-in-law,

Navy Capt. (ret) John Pasko, commanded a ballistic missile submarine and shared many tenets of leadership and command during their time together. Keefe said that he tries to honor his legacy by living out those teachings every day. Other influences, like Rear Adm. (ret) Frank Morneau impressed upon Keefe the importance of integrity — a lesson which he now continues to pass along.

“That deck of cards I hand to the sailors at check-in has the command logo and the phrase, ‘Do right, fear no one,’” said Keefe. “I picked that phrase up from Rear Adm. Morneau some years back and it really resonated with me. I felt that the command had a lot of important work to do, and the only way we’d be able to get it done is by doing the right thing. And that means doing the right thing all the time, whether down range or off duty. After all, if you’re doing the right thing, you’ve got nothing to fear.”



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# Arc light defenders ace special training

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
STAFF SGT. DIVINE COX, 36TH WING

For the first time ever, six members from the 36th Security Forces Squadron recently graduated from a Special Enforcement Tactics course, an elite course held by local law enforcement.

SET is specialized training designed to give individuals the skills needed to resolve critical incidents involving threats to public safety which would otherwise exceed the capabilities of traditional law enforcement and first responders.

“The training fully integrates members from across the inter-agency spectrum ranging from U.S. Military and federal law enforcement to local law enforcement agencies,” said Maj. Dayne Foote, 36th SFS commander. “This integration built a diverse team meeting for the first time at the course, ultimately building a bond and creating interoperability in tactical situations.”

Foote stated that this class made history not only for being the first class to ever have U.S. Air Force SFS personnel graduate, but also by having the honor of the first two female graduates of the program, of which one was Junille Robyn L.G. Okada, 36th SFS Department of the Air Force police officer, and the first active-duty member to complete the program, Staff Sgt. Channa Thol, 36th SFS training instructor.

“When I first came to Guam, I immediately started to network with local law enforcement,” said Thol. “As I became closer with local law enforcement, they would talk about how hard the training for SET would be, so when the opportunity came for me to attend, I took my chance and completed it.”

The course covered different advanced

training topics to produce operators with a diverse skill set. These topics include advanced tactical firearm training, close quarters battle, vehicle and bus assaults and close quarters battle within constrained environments, tactical tracking through urban and jungle terrain, repelling, dignitary protection, breaching techniques, small team movements, low light engagement techniques with multiple weapons systems, low light weapons qualification requirements, advanced mission planning, active shooter response techniques, spontaneous knife defense and unarmed combatives, ability to operate in a chemical environment, and confrontation management riot control techniques.

“This course enhances the ability of the 36th Wing to both provide force protection for combat projection across the region as well as provide high quality defense forces capable of integrating with foreign and local partners seamlessly,” said Foote. “These opportunities to build relationships with various agencies give us the ability to create relationships vital to mission success in crisis or contingency environments. The integration of military and civilian partners enhances our overall ability to operate in all environments, request assistance as needed, while also allowing military personnel to take advantage of advanced training to increase Arc Light Defenders’ lethality in high-end conflicts. These partnerships create opportunities to integrate at all levels make everyone better and stronger thus enhancing the overall security of the region.”

The 36th SFS plans to send more Arc Light Defenders through the course to further enhance the capabilities of the unit and provide additional options for commanders at all levels in contingency or crisis operations.



The 36th Security Forces Squadron and local law enforcement personnel.

**“The training fully integrates members from across the inter-agency spectrum ranging from U.S. Military and federal law enforcement to local law enforcement agencies.”**

- Maj. Dayne Foote, 36th SFS commander



Members from the 36th Security Forces Squadron and local law enforcement personnel during a Special Enforcement Tactics course.

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# MAJESTIC MOUNT FUJI

## Secrets of Japan

LIVE JAPAN

**B**oasting the greatest height of domestic single peak mountains in the country, Mount Fuji is loved as a sightseeing attraction representative of Japan throughout the world. In fact, over 300,000 mountaineers flock to it every year.

In addition to being registered as a World Cultural Heritage in 2013, recent years have once more seen various features in the media seeking to express the allure of the mountain, further calling attention to it.

Now, we will reveal 17 of Mount Fuji's unknown secrets, conquering the peak of this majestic symbol of Japan!

### 1 What is 'Red Fuji'?



"Red Fuji" is a phenomenon that occurs during sunrise and sunset when the mountain shines in bright red.

Usually, Mount Fuji impresses with the contrast of the blue mountain range's peak being covered in white snow. Under certain conditions, it changes its appearance to a

crimson color of sublime beauty.

The time between late summer and early autumn brings several factors together that make this possible, including clear air and altostratus clouds that reflect the red light.

A rare phenomenon, "Red Fuji" is a seasonal word. Because the snow on Mt. Fuji's peak begins to melt and exposes the reddish at the beginning of summer, the tinged sunlight emphasizes this and the mountain appears vividly red.

The ukiyo-e artist Katsushika Hokusai's famous work called "Fine Wind, Clear Morning" (gaifukaisei) of the "Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji" series is the reason why the "Red Fuji" became so famous.

Gaifū means southerly breeze; with the cirrocumulus clouds floating in the scenery of a blue sky, the drawing of the revered mountain's crimson-dyed appearance boasts a spectacular impact.

### 2 Mossie, Japan's very own Nessie in lake Motosu

In the 1970s, an unidentified mysterious animal (UMA) later named "Mossie" was sighted in Yamanashi Prefecture's Lake Motosu, and it caused a huge stir at the time.

Mossie is said to be 30 meters (about 98 feet) in length, with a few humps on its back and a crocodile-like rugged body. Like Nessie, however, the real identity of this UMA remains enshrouded in mystery down to this day.

Nevertheless, there are many theories.

One of the most well-accepted one is that it was probably an enormous sturgeon that was released into Lake Motosu during the time of its alleged sighting.

Sturgeons don't usually grow to the size of the reported UMA, but the conjecture is that being released into Lake Motosu gave it a unique growth environment, allowing it to reach the size purported in the claims.

### 3 Mt. Fuji was the first ski site in Japan

Skiing is a representative sport of the winter season, and many today still flock to ski resorts when winter rolls around to have a bit of fun in the snow. Bet you didn't know that Mt. Fuji was actually the site of the very first bout of ski activity in Japan!

Back in 1911, when Austrian soldiers, Major Theodor Edler von Lerch - known as the father of skiing in Japan - and Egon

Edler von Kratzer skied down from the 9th stage of Mt. Fuji, it marked the start of the sport in Japan.

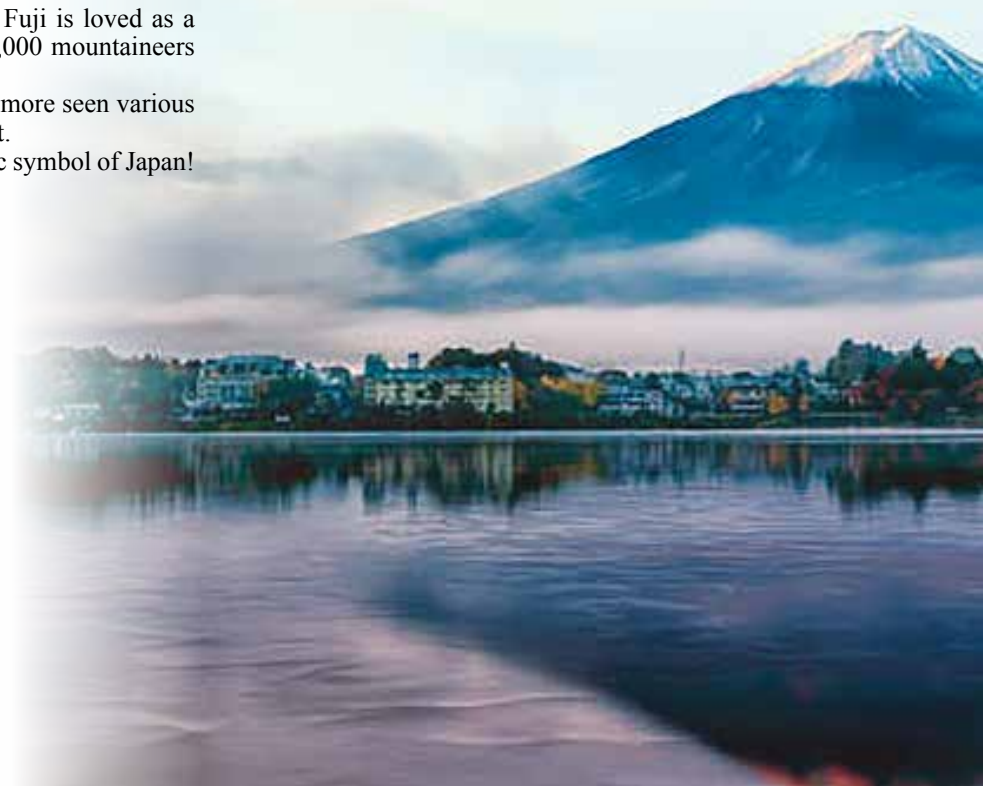
There's still a plaque on the 5th stage of Mt. Fuji commemorating this event down to this day! Here's another trivia for you: The first two Japanese to successfully ski downhill from the Fuji mountaintop were Kōki Takei and Hajime Katsuda in the year 1935.

### 4 The top 3 things Japanese want to dream of!

"1. Fuji, 2. hawk, 3. eggplant" is the top three of things to dream of during the first night of the new year.

If Mount Fuji, a hawk, or an eggplant appears in the first dream of the first night of the New Year, it is said to be an auspicious omen.

There are only speculations about the origin of this, but one explanation states that these three words sound similar to other good things; Fuji sounds like buji (be in good health), taka (hawk) sounds like takai (to succeed), and nasu (eggplant) sounds like nasu (the fulfillment of a wish).



### 5 Where are those famous Fuji pictures taken?



Kawaguchiko



Yamanakako

If you want to photograph Mount Fuji's scenery, you cannot ignore the Fuji Five Lakes! At the lakes Kawaguchiko, Saiko, Yamanakako, Shojiko, and Motosuko, formed when the cave-ins of the mountain's eruptions were filled with water, various pictures of sceneries can be taken, from lake shores to Mount Fuji.

Among them, Kawaguchiko and Yamanakako are famous as locations that numerous photographers visit, regardless of whether they're professionals or amateurs. If

you are especially lucky, you can encounter both the rare Red Fuji and Upside-down Fuji at once!

This world-famous view of Mount Fuji can be seen at Arakurayama Sengen Park in the city of Fujiyoshida, Yamanashi Prefecture. With the sublime slope in the background, the scenery of Chūreitō Pagoda, a piece of sublime Japanese architecture, makes for a magnificent view.

The seasonal cherry blossoms and autumn leaves make it that much more beautiful still;

### 6 Diamond Fuji and Pearl Fuji

Mount Fuji has various different appearances that change with time span and season. Apart from the Red Fuji, there are other rare sceneries of the mountain with curious names.

In the hours of both sunset and sunrise, there is a moment perfectly dancing on Mount Fuji's summit. This looks just like a diamond and is thus called "Diamond Fuji." The

sun right over the mountain shines dazzlingly in a blazing light; this graceful scenery is a true masterpiece of nature!

The full moon sitting on Mt. Fuji's summit is called Pearl Fuji. Compared to the sparkling of the blazing light of Diamond Fuji's sun, Pearl Fuji's soft light of the moon is of a gentle radiance - just like a pearl. This wondrous scenery that can be observed once a month truly leaves one stunned by its sheer beauty.



Diamond Fuji



Pearl Fuji



# MOUNTAIN

## n's iconic Mt. Fuji



Photos courtesy of Live Japan

this is one of the landscapes that are truly representative of Japan.

The Shiraito Falls in Shizuoka Prefecture's Fujinomiya City. The water that pours down the rock cliff as if it was fine white threads is, with the exception of a part of the main falls, mainly spring water from Mount Fuji.

Tender green in spring, the beauty of colorful foliage in autumn, the refreshing breeze of the water in summer, and even in winter, the waterfall stays at a temperature of 12 degrees and does not freeze.



### 7 Counting the climb to the top of Mount Fuji

Mount Fuji's altitude is 3,776 meters, but the unit that is often used to outline the mountain paths, dividing the climb into 10 steps up to the peak, is called "Station."

The starting point is the First Station and Murayamasengen Shrine's torii, the Fifth Station is the middle, and the Tenth Station is the top. In Fuji belief, the Fifth Station is the human realm and the Sixth Station is the heavenly realm; there lies the border between "heaven" and "earth."

Today, Mount Fuji climbers point

upwards from the Fifth Station: from there, they will have to continue on their own two feet with their own strength.

By the way, the Japanese word for "Station" is gō and appears in the shaku-kan system as a unit of volume, used to weighing rice.

There are various opinions as to why gō is used for Mount Fuji's climbing trails, it is said that it comes from 10 gō making one shō, and a pile of rice that weighs one shō resembles the revered mountain.

### 8 Is it true that Mount Fuji has a front and backside?

Mount Fuji seen from Suruga Bay in the central part of Shizuoka Prefecture is called "Front Fuji," while the version seen from the Fuji Five Lakes is called "Back Fuji."

Historically speaking, there seems to have been the general perception that the southern foot of the mountain was the "front," while the northern foot was the "back."

The location where Fuji stands spans both Shizuoka and Yamanashi Prefecture;

especially the portion seen from the Yamanashi side is called "Back Fuji." However, the people of Yamanashi insist that "This is the front!" So the expression "Back Fuji" is rarely used.

There is constant discussion surrounding Mt. Fuji as to whether the view from the Yamanashi or the Shizuoka side is more beautiful and the two prefectures are eternal rivals!

### 9 Mount Fuji originally was called 'Immortal mountain!'

Currently, the way Mount Fuji is written in Japanese (富士山), it means Prosperous Mountain. But a popular theory says the name was originally written to mean Peerless Mountain (不二山) since it is a mountain that is like no other in Japan.

Another theory claims that because snow never disappears from the summit, the name originally meant Inexhaustible Mountain (不尽山).

And yet another theory suggests that the elixir for immortality mentioned in The Tale of the Bamboo Cutter was concocted at the peak of Mt. Fuji, so the mountain's name was originally Immortal Mountain (不死山).

Japanese children know this ancient book as the Tale of Princess Kaguya, a story about a beautiful princess born inside bamboo. She is courted by nobles and gives each of them an impossibly difficult task and, in the end, even refuses a proposal from the emperor before returning to the moon during the harvest moon in mid-autumn.

While the general tale of Kaguya ends here, the original text of the Tale of the Bamboo Cutter sees her give both a letter and the elixir of life to the emperor.

However, he said that "Without Princess Kaguya, I do not wish to live forever," and burned both the letter and the elixir on top of the tallest mountain.

Even though the princess' thoughts were not able to reach the emperor, this mountain became known as "the mountain that does

not even fall in battle" and was a popular place among samurai of later centuries.

This is the story of how the "Immortal Mountain" became the "Mountain Abounding with Warriors," which is what today's Mount Fuji means.

Other names carry meanings such as "only one in existence" (不二山) or "everlasting energy" (不尽山).

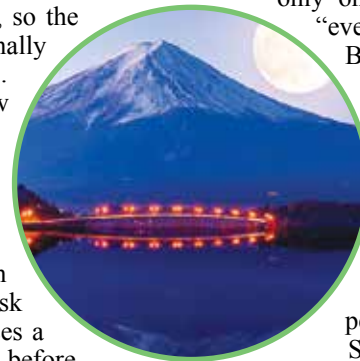
Both of those words portray the thought of worshipping Mount Fuji.

Of course, these are just hypotheses that can't be verified, but it's certainly interesting to know how Mt. Fuji can mean so many different things to different people!

Since ancient times, Mount Fuji has been a symbol of faith for Japanese people; a symbol of admiration. This beautifully formed shape of grandeur leaves a deep impression on the onlooker, filling one's heart with sublime bliss.

How to enjoy Mount Fuji, how to express Mount Fuji – Japanese people agonized over these questions, giving birth to legends and beliefs manifold.

By all means, please savor the stunningly beautiful Mount Fuji to your heart's content, surrounded by lush nature, colored by Japan's four ever-changing seasons!



### 10 Mount Fuji's peak

To think that Mt. Fuji is even found in places like this!

When one's hairline creates an M-shape on the forehead it is referred to as "Fuji's peak" in Japanese.

In English, this is known as widow's peak. It is one of the factors of beauty and can be seen on the foreheads of many women depicted in ukiyo-e and Japanese paintings.



### 11 'Dokkoisho' is said to have originated from Mt. Fuji

"Dokkoisho" is something like the Japanese version of "heave-ho". This is a phrase many Japanese say when making some effort to stand up from a seated or lowered position, and there is a theory going around that the phrase originated from Mt. Fuji.

The mountain has a long history of being a central religious site for the Japanese, and pilgrims were thought to have chanted the phrase "Rokkon Shōjō" as they made their

way up to the peak of this sacred mountain as part of their pilgrimage.

Rokkon refers to the six sense organs of humans – eyes, nose, ears, tongue, body, and mind. The phrase Rokkon Shōjō literally means to purify the six sense organs, and when spoken with an accent, it sounds like Dokkoisho, becoming the basis of this theory.



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# FUJI: Centuries of wonder

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

## 12 This rare Mount Fuji doesn't appear often!



When Mount Fuji is reflected upside-down on the calm, waveless waters of alake, you see “Upside-down Fuji.” This can be seen on days with clear air and without any wind, allowing us to enjoy various different sceneries that change with the season. This is the upside-down image that is printed on the back of 1,000-yen bills!

## 13 You can have a wedding at Mount Fuji?!

At Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha, wedding ceremonies can be held at the main hall on days without festivals or events. The vermilion-lacquered precincts are beautiful; cherry blossoms and wisteria bloom at the lush Asama shrine that is also a popular sightseeing destination.

The wedding ceremony itself is engulfed in traditional court music as the ancient ceremonial

rites are performed; blessed words are not only cast upon friends and family but also on the many tourists that visit the Asama shrine.

Should there be such a ceremony as you visit the shrine yourself, let yourself be engulfed by the warm atmosphere and share the happiness of the couple.

## 14 An active volcano comprised of three volcanoes

Mt. Fuji is a popular place that many mountaineers try to tackle during the summer climbing season, giving the impression that it's completely safe and harmless. But, wait! Did you know that Mt. Fuji is actually still considered an active volcano?

In fact, while it looks like a single mountain, Mount Fuji is made up of three successive volcanoes. At the base of Mount Fuji the Komitake volcano, the first eruptions of which may have occurred some 600,000 years ago. Around 100,000 years ago, the Ko-Fuji (Older Fuji) Volcano was superimposed on it, and on top of this, the Shin-Fuji (Younger Fuji) Volcano formed around 10,000 years ago, forming the mountain

we know today.

Because the last time Mt. Fuji erupted was more than 300 years ago, for a while it was classified as a dormant volcano. Sometime around the 1960s, however, the Meteorological Office changed the definition of an active volcano to all volcanoes that have ever been recorded to erupt before.

Ever since then, Mt. Fuji has been classified as an active volcano. In 2003, the Coordinating Committee for Prediction of Volcano Eruptions redefined an active volcano as a volcano that has erupted before within the last 10,000 years and is still showing signs of fumarolic activity.

Mt. Fuji continues to be classified as an active volcano under this new definition as well.



## 15 Is Mount Fuji on private land? Who owns it?

“Who does Mount Fuji belong to?” is a question that most Japanese would answer with “Everyone.” However, a part of it – from 3,360m to the top – is actually private land!

Mt. Fuji strides across Shizuoka Prefecture and Yamanashi Prefecture, so debates about who actually owns the place come up from time to time.

Many naturally assume as a Mount Fuji fact that such an iconic mountain would be owned by the state. But the truth is, from the 8th stage and upwards, Mt. Fuji is the private territory of Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha, which owns more than 1,300 temples around the island nation.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, the shogun of the Edo period who won the Battle of Sekigahara, constructed around 30 buildings such as the main hall as an expression of gratitude; it is said that in 1606, he donated the area from Mount Fuji's Eighth Station upward to become Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha's shrine grounds.

Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha has its origins in worshipping Asama no Okami to calm the eruptions of Mount Fuji, so the land from the Eighth Station became the sacred area of the rear shrine.

Asama no Okami spread along with the Fuji belief throughout the country, now counting 1,300 affiliated shrines. Fujisan Hongū Sengen Taisha is the head shrine of all Asama shrines in Japan.

For a period of time in 1871, the Meiji government did in fact nationalize Mt. Fuji. After World War II, government-owned sites from around the country were returned to the temples and shrines they originally belonged to, but the mountaintop of Mt. Fuji remained nationalized.

Sengen Taisha took the country to court and won a judgment recognizing them as the rightful owner in 1974. In the year 2004, the land was officially returned to Sengen Taisha.

## 16 The first woman to climb disguised as a man

Nowadays, Mt. Fuji is an enjoyable mountain climbing site for both men and women, but did you know that women were prohibited from this activity until 1872?

Specifically for Mt. Fuji, women were only allowed up to the 2nd stage.

Back then, pilgrims would journey up Mt. Fuji for seclusion training, and having women around apparently interfered with the training, hence the prohibition.

Therefore, when Tatsu Takayama, a woman

who really wanted to climb Mt. Fuji made her climb, she had to clip her hair short and dress up as a man to do so - a show of her steely determination.

In 1833, Tatsu and five other men reached the summit without incident, and that's why she's said to be the first woman to climb Mt. Fuji.

After this, Tatsu became an advocate for gender equality and worked towards lifting the prohibition on women climbing Mt. Fuji.

## 17 The first non-Japanese to climb Mt. Fuji?

Regular visitors to Mt. Fuji will probably know about the Rutherford Alcock memorial plaque near Fujinomiya City's Murayamasengen Shrine Information Center.

Sir Alcock was the first British ambassador in Japan. He reached Mt. Fuji's summit in 1860 together with his pet dog and 100 guards and is

said to be the first non-Japanese to climb Mt. Fuji to the top.

This experience was recorded in one of the books he later wrote, The Capital of the Tycoon. The first non-Japanese woman to reach Mt. Fuji's peak was Lady Fanny Parkes in the year 1867.

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**WHAT TO KNOW**

**DATES:** March 2, 2023 - March 11, 2023  
**LOCATION:** various locations throughout Guam

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- March 4 Solo & Small Ensemble Festival
- March 5 Pops Concert "Jazz, Rock & Beyond"
- March 6 & 7 Band & Orchestra Festival
- March 8 - 10 Festival Ensemble Collaborations
- March 11 Finale Concert

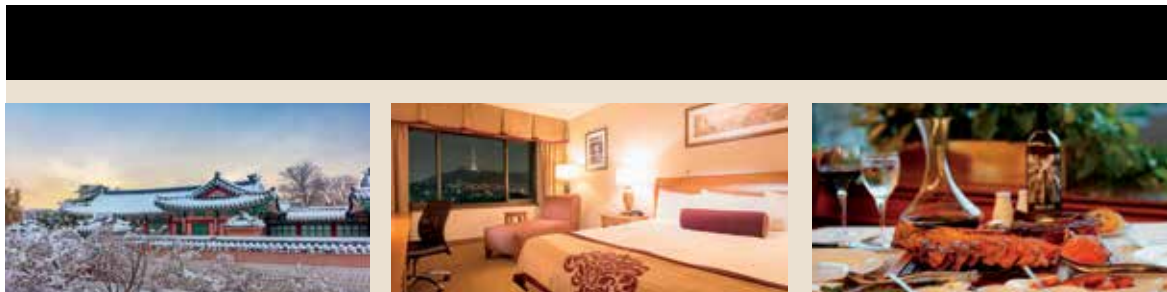
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# Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY  
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS




**Fadian Cove**

**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](http://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.

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 only-on-Guam boonie stomping experience.

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### Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

**ACROSS**

- 1 Markdown event
- 5 Part of a Flintstone's yell
- 10 Kicker's target
- 14 Reunion bunch
- 15 Text alternative
- 16 Beer buy
- 17 4:1, e.g.
- 18 Monaco casino locale
- 20 New Orleans hoopsters
- 22 Set, as concrete
- 23 Soon, in poetry
- 24 Reef material
- 25 Make sense, with "up"
- 26 Symbol of happiness
- 29 Neighbor of Fiji
- 32 Twelve dozen
- 33 Hide-hair connector
- 34 Wind instrument
- 35 Desist's partner
- 36 Elevated ground
- 37 Man of the cloth, slangily
- 38 Get-up-and-go
- 39 Bit of hardware
- 40 Microscope part
- 42 Luggage attachment
- 43 Numbers game
- 44 Hotel room amenity
- 48 Inner-city neighborhood
- 50 Alabama state flower
- 51 Coast-to-coast
- 53 Hold up
- 54 Certain sax
- 55 Birth-related
- 56 Not being used
- 57 Numerical suffix
- 58 Adversary
- 59 Big name in candy

**DOWN**

- 1 Check (out)
- 2 Cabinet wood
- 3 Gravy server
- 4 Preserved fodder
- 5 Price factor
- 6 Honor thieves
- 7 Prohibits by law
- 8 Drill insert
- 9 Place for a pint
- 10 Egyptian emblem
- 11 Inflexible one
- 12 Emerald
- 13 Vegas light
- 19 "Who \_\_\_?"
- 21 Last part, in music
- 24 Glenn of "101 Dalmatians"
- 26 Atlanta athlete
- 27 Kennedy matriarch
- 28 Shootout shout
- 29 Pulled apart
- 30 Listen to
- 31 Short work of fiction
- 32 State Farm rival

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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Answer

Bulldogs & Eagles

### SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

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**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:

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

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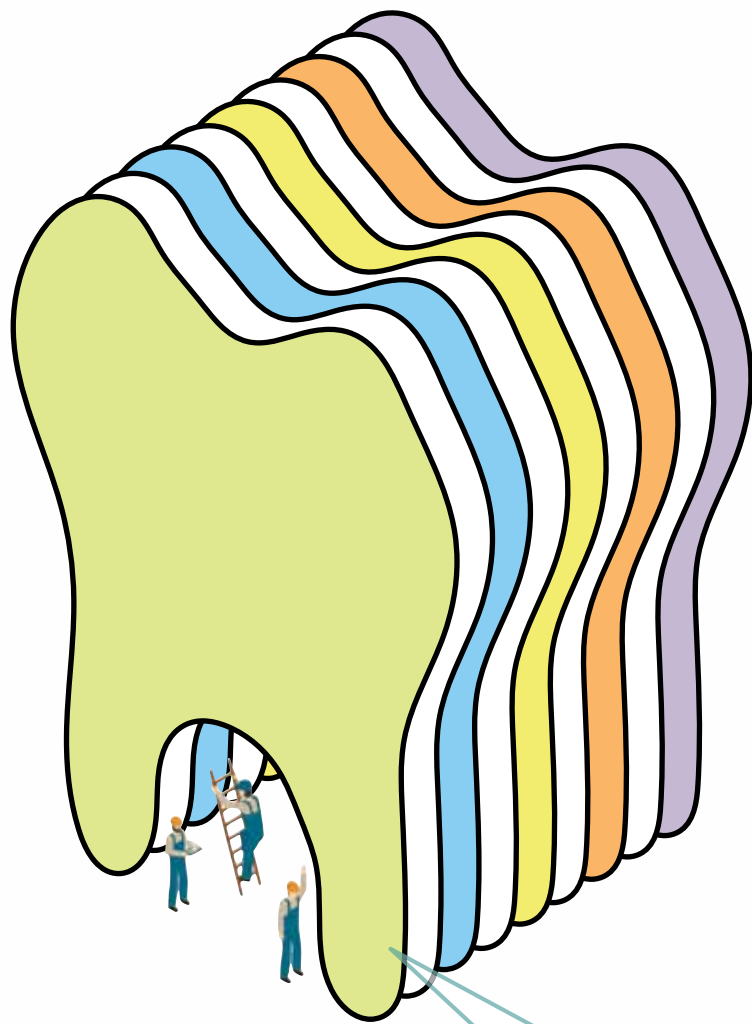
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GUAM EDITION

JANUARY 23, 2023

## Feeding the force

US troops have high rate of food insecurity, study finds

Page 2



ALDO SESSAREGO/U.S. Marine Corps

U.S. Marines and sailors participate in a food bank donation in San Francisco in October. A recent study found that more than 25% of active-duty service members experience food insecurity.

## MILITARY

# Food insecurity seen among troops

## Study finds Army personnel and on-base residents especially at risk

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

More than 25% of active-duty service members lack consistent access to enough food for their households, and Army personnel or on-base residents are especially at risk for food insecurity, according to a new report.

The findings in the Rand Corp. study are at odds with the conventional wisdom that those most prone to food insecurity in the ranks are junior enlisted members with large families.

Instead, the majority of those affected, 67%, were early- to mid-career enlisted personnel between the pay grades of E-4 and E-6, Rand said.

“Food insecure members were more likely than food secure members to report being single with children or married without children,” the report said. “They also were more likely to be a racial or ethnic minority and were disproportionately in the Army, to a lesser extent in the Navy, and rarely in the Air Force.”

But the study also indicated uncertainty about the root causes of the problem. One question that vexed researchers: Why do enlisted personnel who earn more than their civilian counterparts report much higher levels of food insecurity?

Only 9% of civilians with similar characteristics struggle to put food on the table, a difference of 16 percentage points, according to the study.

“The higher rate of food insecurity among military personnel is surprising and needs to be better understood,” the report said.

Study participants were asked

a series of questions on food security such as how often they could not afford sufficient groceries and whether they skipped meals because of a lack of money.

The study, which Congress directed the Pentagon to sponsor as part of the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, found that 15.4% of troops would be classified by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as having low food security in 2018.

A further 10.4% could be classified as having very low food security. The USDA defines food security as “access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.”

Among the key findings: 14% reported using government food assistance programs in the past year, while others were concerned that seeking help could negatively affect their career or security clearance.

Food-insecure members also were more likely to report having a second job or a spouse with a part-time job.

Still, the findings suggest that at least some military members are opting to keep money in reserve rather than spend it on immediate food needs.

For example, 69% of food-insecure service members reported having money in savings for emergency expenses.

And 29% reported being “very comfortable and secure” or “able to make ends meet without much difficulty” despite qualifying as food-insecure. Of the remaining 71%, nearly two-thirds reported that their difficulties were “occasional” versus “tough” or “in over your head,” Rand said.

The findings point to “the com-



ALEXANDER FRANK/U.S. Air Force

**Volunteers unload donations during a food drive last month in Portland, Ore. The event delivered canned goods and seasonal staples to service members in need.**

plex nature of food insecurity problems in the military,” Rand said, adding that more research is needed to grasp why food-insecure members do not use emergency savings to address their needs.

As part of the study, Rand examined whether a monthly basic needs allowance that would

bring members’ household income to 130% of the federal poverty line would help. In interviews with stakeholders, opinions were divided.

Those in favor of a basic needs allowance told Rand that having enough money for food was the key issue and that additional compensation would help solve

the problem.

Others argued that since enlisted personnel are better-compensated than their civilian counterparts, pay wasn’t the driving force and other underlying causes needed to be identified.

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## DOD civilians in Japan seek access to military hospitals

By KELLY AGEE  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan – Defense Department civilian employees in Japan recently mounted an email and phone campaign directed at Congress, hoping to reverse a Pentagon decision to reduce their access to medical care at military hospitals.

The group behind the campaign, Japan Civilian Medical Advocacy, also started a petition drive last year after the Defense Health Agency’s Indo-Pacific region announced it would limit civilians’ access to on-base care. The petition had more than 2,000 signatures.

“Let Congress Know We Are Still Here!” reads a post on the group’s Facebook page. “Help us contact representatives across the United States, letting them know that DHA continues to put a chokehold on the [Military Treatment Facilities] here in Japan and has further restricted our access to regular care.”

Many civilians were caught off guard in October when DHA announced they should make plans to find health care in the surrounding Japanese communities. Limited access to care has created a crisis that puts individuals, their coworkers and their families at risk, according to the post.

The DHA Indo-Pacific region director, Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Heck, said in October the agency is mandated by law to prioritize health care for active-duty service members and their families.

As of Jan. 1, DOD employees like schoolteachers, commissary workers and contractors are limited to urgent or acute care and some specialty clinics at base hospitals. Some U.S. civilian employees of Stars and Stripes fall into this category.

For routine health maintenance and ongoing care for chronic conditions like diabetes, heart disease or cancer, they are encouraged to seek Japanese health care providers. The al-

ternative is to rely on space-available appointments after the military hospitals schedule service members and their families.

Yokosuka Naval Base, the homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet, in September became the first installation in Japan to limit civilian employees to space-available appointments for most health care needs.

“At this point more bases are being impacted, so there are more voices wanting to be heard,” Amber Malone, a teacher at The Sullivans Elementary School at Yokosuka, told Stars and Stripes by Facebook Messenger.

Malone, of Carmel, Maine, said

she contacted offices in her home state for U.S. Sens. Angus King, an independent, and Susan Collins, a Republican, whose staff members took her information and promised to pass it on to their offices in Washington, D.C.

Staffers at both offices said they hadn’t heard of the issue, Malone said. She said she provided them with position statements from her Facebook group, the Yokosuka, Atsugi and Zama Civilian Medical Forum, along with updated space-available polices from DHA and other information.

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## MILITARY

# Report: China likely to lose in Taiwan invasion

By DOUG G. WARE  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — If China chose to invade Taiwan, it would likely be defeated by U.S., Japanese and Taiwanese forces, but at great cost and loss of life, according to think tank experts who conducted several war simulations.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, released a report Monday that details 24 different war simulations that featured a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Most of them ended with the island retaining its autonomy and the U.S.-led coalition victorious in defeating China.

“In most scenarios, the United States/Taiwan/Japan defeated a conventional amphibious invasion by China and maintained an autonomous Taiwan,” the 165-page report states. “However, this defense came at high cost. The United States and its allies lost dozens of ships, hundreds of aircraft and tens of thousands of service members. ... China also lost heavily and failure to occupy Taiwan might destabilize Chinese Communist Party rule.”

The military victories depended on several factors, such as immediate Taiwanese resistance, swift U.S. military involvement and use of bases in Japan.

The CSIS analysis concluded, however, “victory is therefore not enough” and recommended the United States “strengthen deterrence immediately.”

Tensions between the U.S. and China have been rising for years, and Pentagon officials recently identified China as the No. 1 competitor for the U.S. in terms of military capabilities and advances.

“My big takeaway here, right up front, is we need to get creative about deterring China from invading Taiwan,” said retired Air Force Lt. Gen. David Deptula, who is the dean of the Mitchell Institute for Aerospace Studies, another think tank based in Washington.

Deptula said Monday at an event about the release of the CSIS report that the only way China will be deterred from invading Taiwan is if there’s tremendous uncertainty about its chances for success and Beijing understands there will be serious consequences for doing so.

**“My big takeaway here, right up front, is we need to get creative about deterring China from invading Taiwan.”**

David Deptula

retired Air Force lieutenant general

For example, he said, the United States should not exclude the possibility of attacking the Chinese mainland.

Believing that U.S. counterattacks could possibly strike inside Chinese borders would have a tremendous influence on Beijing if the country was seriously considering an invasion, he said.

Deptula, who served in the Air Force for almost 35 years, further warned any military fight with China would lead to “massive attrition.”

Concerns that Beijing might seek to “unify” with Taiwan — an island off China’s coast that it considers to be a breakaway territory — grew in 2022 after Russia invaded Ukraine, which was based on similar geopolitical beliefs.

President Joe Biden has said in response that the U.S. military would help defend Taiwan if China launched an invasion.

“The [war games] project does not imply that war is inevitable or even necessarily likely. Just that it’s indeed possible,” said Eric Heginbotham, a research scientist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology’s Center for International Studies. “This project is about uncertainty.”

“A conflict with China would be a disaster,” added William Murray, a professor at the U.S. Naval War College. “We have to deter this conflict.”

Monday’s report identifies several challenges that U.S. involvement would face in a conflict with China, which include moving equipment and personnel to the Indo-Pacific region.

“The task of loading and transporting troops, landing on a hostile shore, building up forces and then moving inland is inherently difficult,” the report states. “In 1944, the United States con-



U.S. Navy

The guided-missile destroyer USS Chung-Hoon sails recently through the Taiwan Strait. A simulation of potential invasions of Taiwan would result in defeat for China.



Justin Stack/U.S. Navy

The USS Antietam transits the East China Sea in the Taiwan Strait.

dered an invasion of Taiwan [during World War II] as the next step in the Pacific campaign. The move was rejected because of the difficulty.”

“What this represents is the most stressing scenario that U.S. military forces could face in the Indo-Pacific,” said Becca Wasser, a senior defense program fellow at the think tank Center for a New American Security. “And because of that, the Department of Defense is purposefully

trying to look at the hardest set of challenges in order to ensure that it can deter effectively. It sheds light on particular problems that need to be overcome.”

The analysis underscores that if deterrence fails, a fight with China would result in scores of casualties.

Matthew Cancian, a senior researcher at the U.S. Naval War College, said the number of casualties would be more than any conflict since World War II.

To conduct the simulations, CSIS used historical data and operational research to model a Chinese amphibious invasion of Taiwan in the year 2026. Information about past military decisions and strategies and theoretical weapons data were also weaved into the rules for the war games. The same set of rules were used for all 24 war simulations.

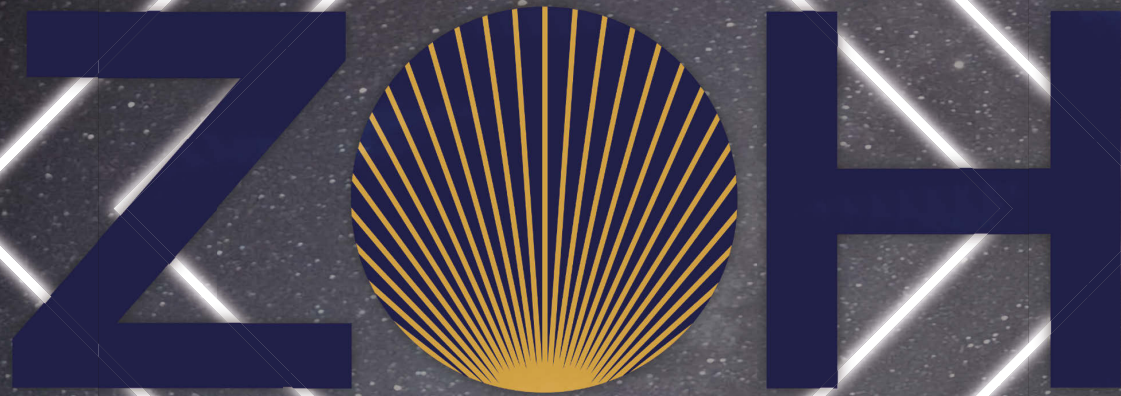
In the end, the report concludes, projecting a military victory over China isn’t much of a victory because such a scenario would include too many dead and injured, too much physical and economic damage, and too much long-term effect. Paying such a heavy price, it concludes, is why deterrence is the most valuable takeaway.

“Taiwan should become a porcupine,” Murray said. “What I mean by that is, Taiwan should become so difficult to subjugate that it’s not worth the effort. Just like a porcupine rarely gets attacked in the wild, so should Taiwan be in the strategic world.”

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## MILITARY

# Air Force sets new tape test requirements

BY ALEXANDER RIEDEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

The Air Force tape test is returning to base gyms and fitness testing facilities, two years after the service dropped the abdominal circumference measurement in fitness assessments.

The service is introducing a waist-to-height ratio that will determine whether airmen and Space Force guardians meet their annual fitness standards, according to a statement.

The ratio is calculated by dividing waist circumference by height and cannot exceed 0.55.

For example, a person measuring 70 inches tall, or 5-foot-10, with a 38-inch waist would just barely pass with a ratio of 0.54.

The ratio aims to measure excess fat distribution in the abdominal region, the Air Force statement said.

Instead of the top of the hip bones, as before, measurements will be taken at the midpoint between the lowest rib and the top of the hip bones, which is normally the narrowest portion of the abdomen, according to the statement.

The new body composition assessment is mandatory but separate from the annual fitness test.

Initial failure to meet the body composition standard is “nonpunitive,” the service said. Instead, overweight personnel will have to complete a yearlong “informal, self-directed body composition improvement program,” the statement said.

During the program, airmen will receive education on risk

factors and may be referred for further medical evaluation.

Space Force members will be referred to so-called guardian resilience teams, which the service plans to establish soon.

While the abdominal circumference measurement under the new format may be less intimidating, it can still affect airmen’s careers.

Missing scheduled measurement appointments can cause “commander-driven administrative actions.”

Measuring in the high-risk category after the 12-month grace period will be considered failure to meet standards and may result in reprimands, delayed promotions or separation.

Studies have found that waist-to-height ratio is a good indicator of body fat distribution and is strongly correlated with body mass index and other measures of body composition.

Excess fat in the abdominal region is associated with increased health risks such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, diabetes, and hypertension.

As recently as 2019, service officials explored options for a gender-neutral fitness index. Initial proposals of the policy would have divided an airman’s running time by a waist-to-height ratio for a universal measurement of fitness among troops. The plan was ultimately scrapped.

In 2020, fitness testing was paused because of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the time, the service told airmen it would do away permanently with waist



CASSIE MORLOCK/U.S. Air Force

**Airmen perform a waist measurement at Gowen Field, Idaho, in 2015. The service announced a new requirement for waist-to-height ratios independent of the annual fitness test requirement.**

measurements.

A Defense Department policy updated last year, however, continues to require all services to maintain a body composition program for their members.

Airmen will complete their

measurement each year in the month of their birthday. Guardians get a bit more leeway and have to log their composition in the quarter of their birthday.

Results will be tracked via myBodyComp, a new application

under the troubled myFSS platform, the service said.

Assessments are expected to begin in April.

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# Adam Driver’s charity to fold in next month

BY JOSEPH DITZLER  
*Stars and Stripes*

The organization founded by actor and Marine veteran Adam Driver to involve U.S. service members in the theater is dissolving on Feb. 1, the organization announced Monday.

Driver, known for playing Kyo Ren in the recent “Star Wars” films and twice nominated for an Academy Award, cofounded Arts in the Armed Forces with his wife, actor Joanne Tucker, in 2006 to bring artistic experiences in film and theater to service members and U.S. military bases.

AITAF involved professional artists and contemporary American content, according to its mission statement.

“Unfortunately, given a number of circumstances facing the organization heading into 2023, after a strategic review, the Board has made the incredibly difficult decision to dissolve the



RYAN NOBLE/U.S. Army

**Actor and Marine veteran Adam Driver, cofounder of Arts in the Armed Forces, performs with other actors at Camp Humphreys, South Korea, in 2016.**

organization in its current operating structure, effective February 1,” the charity announced in a news release from its office in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The organization provided grants for playwrights with military service, brought high-quality theater productions to military bases and connected ser-

vice members and veterans with an artistic bent with the theater community, according to a November 2017 report by The New York Times.

“We’re reaching out to cadets, current servicemen and women, veterans and providing a space” where they can tap into their inner scribe, Driver told the Times. “The military has acronyms for acronyms that can explain everything, but when it comes to explaining an experience, a post-traumatic experience, there’s not a lot of opportunities.”

That year, AITAF brought a production of “Jesus Hopped The ‘A’ Train” to a community center at Yokota Air Base, the Air Force’s airlift hub in western Tokyo, for two nights in March, according to the 374th Airlift Wing.

“This was the first play I saw that moved me,” AITAF actress Samantha Soule told the wing for its report. “Before I saw this I

used to think plays were only like Shakespeare. I’m so grateful for the chance to bring this to military members overseas.”

The organization’s board will look for ways to continue some AITAF programs, according to the release.

“We have produced impactful artistic experiences on 26 military bases in 7 countries, and awarded \$50,000 to veteran playwrights and screenwriters through the Bridge Awards,” the release states.

AITAF served more than 18,000 members of “our military community” over its 14 years, according to a recent tweet by the organization.

An email message to the organization’s public relations representative seeking further information was not immediately returned.

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## MILITARY

# Intel report cites UFO-type sightings

## Unclassified version notes roughly 350 new UAP sightings in 18 months

By **DOUG G. WARE**  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — There have been hundreds of new reports of unidentified aerial phenomena — the government's term for UFO-type sightings — and many of them remain unexplained, according to a new intelligence report.

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence issued the report and sent the classified version to Congress. The unclassified 11-page version notes roughly 350 new UAP sightings from March 2021 to Sept. 1, 2022.

The intelligence agency is required by law to produce the UAP report, and the Pentagon's All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office is tasked with investigating the sightings.

The AARO determined 163 of the new sightings appeared to involve balloons or balloon-like entities, according to the report. About two dozen appeared to be drone or drone-like vehicles, and a handful of others appeared to be "clutter."

The Pentagon office is putting more

effort into studying the other 171 reported sightings for which investigators have no preliminary explanation, the report states.

"The majority of new UAP reporting originates from U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force aviators and operators who witnessed UAP during the course of their operational duties," the report states. "Regardless of the collection or reporting method, many reports lack enough detailed data to enable attribution of UAP with high certainty."

In 2020, the Pentagon created a task force to study mysterious aerial phenomena reported by military personnel. With a dedicated team now available to study strange flying objects, it was expected the government would receive many more UAP sightings — an expectation confirmed by the report.

In early 2021, for example, the national intelligence office said there had been just 144 sightings reported in the previous 17 years. Some of the reported sightings have been captured on video, including three from the Navy that were declassified in

**"UAP events continue to occur in restricted or sensitive airspace, highlighting possible concerns for safety of flight or adversary collection activity."**

Office of the Director of National Intelligence

early 2020.

The assessment found none of the sightings have yielded evidence or indications of extraterrestrial life — but one of the ongoing concerns, it notes, is that the unexplained objects might still be dangerous.

"UAP events continue to occur in restricted or sensitive airspace, highlighting possible concerns for safety of flight or adversary collection activity," the report states. "This may result from a collection

bias due to the number of active aircraft and sensors, combined with focused attention and guidance to report anomalies."

The report underscores that some of the sensitive areas tied to the sightings include nuclear power plants and military depots where nuclear weapons are possibly stored.

"Analyzing and understanding the potential threats posed by UAP is an ongoing collaborative effort," Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the Pentagon's top spokesman, said in a statement. "The safety of our service personnel, our bases and installations, and the protection of U.S. operations security on land, in the skies, seas, and space are paramount. We take reports of incursions into our designated space, land, sea, or airspaces seriously and examine each one."

The study concludes greater awareness for UAPs will continue to produce more sightings and government agencies will have to try to determine what they are and where they came from.

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# Navy adopting leaner and more agile hospital ships

By **WYATT OLSON**  
*Stars and Stripes*

The massive defense spending bill signed into law last month includes funding for a new breed of Navy medical ship with the speed and agility to serve more as ambulance than hospital.

The vessels, dubbed expeditionary medical ships, will be built by Austal USA in Mobile, Ala. The design is based on the Navy's existing expeditionary fast transport vessels, which are capable of operating in shallow waterways and can moor in austere port conditions.

Fast transport ships are used by the Navy to "support a wide range of operations including maneuver and sustainment, relief operations in small or damaged ports, flexible logistics support, or as the key enabler for rapid transport," according to an online Navy fact sheet.

"We took the best of the EPF



Austal USA

**A concept image by shipbuilder Austal USA shows the expeditionary medical ship to be built for the Navy.**

concept, such as high speed and shallow draft, and put it into bigger platform," Larry Ryder, vice president of development and external affairs at Austal USA, told Naval News. Ryder was interviewed at the Sea Air

Space show in Maryland, where the company unveiled the design in August 2021.

An expeditionary medical ship is a "smaller package" but with all the capabilities of the Navy's two hospital ships, USS Comfort

and USS Mercy, Ryder said.

Ryder said the concept would allow the Navy to field a much greater number of medical ships globally, which could then quickly reach hotspots should the need for more hospital beds arise.

The 417-foot-long catamaran-style expeditionary medical ship will have three operating rooms and 66 beds, six designed for intensive care, according to an Austal fact sheet.

The ship will have a top speed of just over 30 knots and a range of 5,500 nautical miles, Austal said.

The ship's deck is big enough to land a tilt-rotor Osprey.

By comparison, the USS Comfort, at almost 900 feet long, has 12 operating rooms and 1,000-bed capacity if double-bunked in the event of mass casualties. Its top speed is just over 17 knots.

"I don't think it makes sense to have one big thousand-bed facility rather than two or three ships spread out really supporting the forces," Ryder told Naval News.

A hospital ship that can weave through shallow-water littorals dovetails with the emerging focus by the Navy and Marine Corps on a potential conflict with China in and around the South China Sea.

Both services are moving toward the concept of dispersing forces throughout a battlespace in lieu of a concentration of ships or troops.

The Navy has in recent years moved toward decommissioning at least one of the existing hospital ships but has been stymied by lawmakers. Navy officials cite the high cost of maintaining the aging ships and that they don't fit the paradigm shift to a more agile force.

"The problem with those ships is, there's only two of them and they're big, and we're moving to a more distributed maritime operations construct," Vice Adm. Bill Merz, deputy chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Systems, told the House Armed Services during a hearing in 2018.

The Navy expects delivery of the first expeditionary medical ship by December 2026, with two more to follow, according to a recently published report by Sandboxx News.

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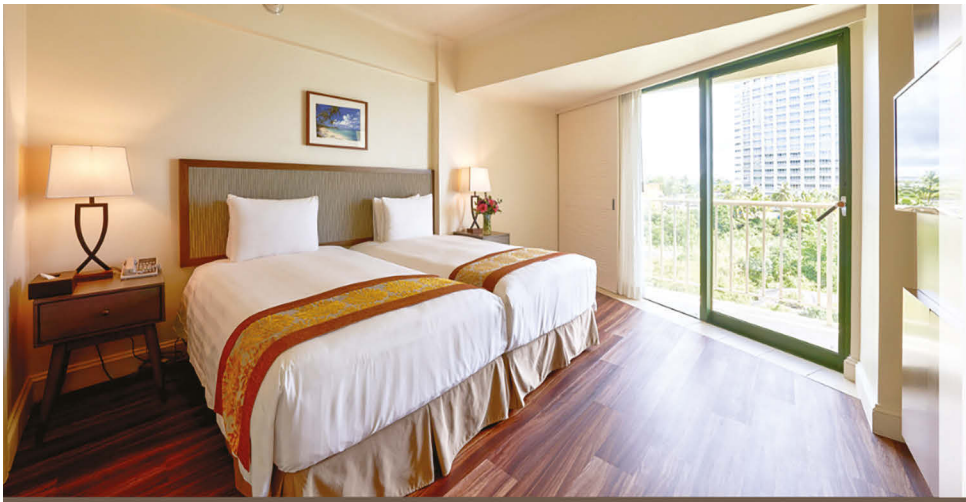
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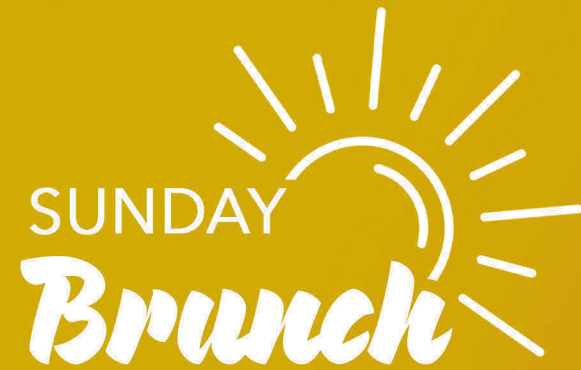
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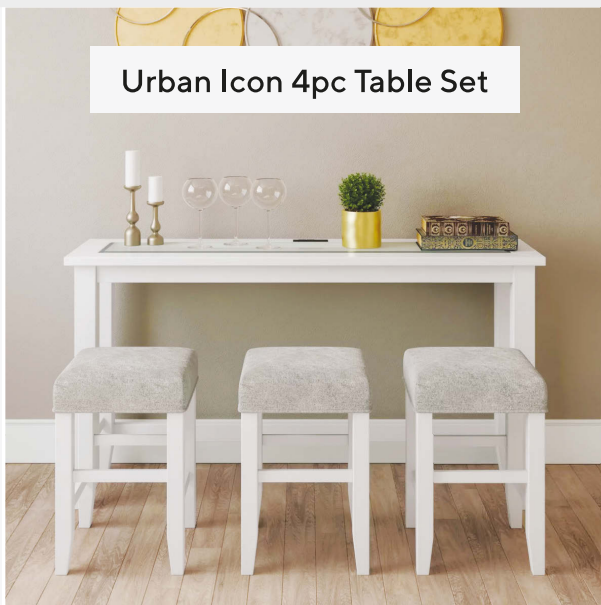
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