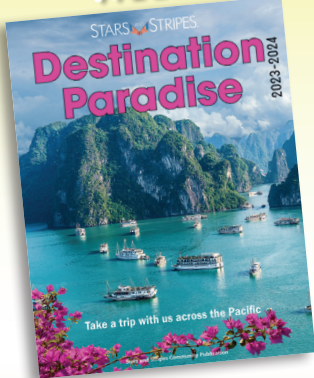


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WAVE MAKER

Love for ocean drives Guam petty officer

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR,
 U.S. COAST GUARD FORCES MICRONESIA / SECTOR GUAM

Beneath the vast expanse of Guam's azure skies, where the endless ocean meets vibrant coral sands, Petty Officer 2nd Class William Naden is making significant strides in marine conservation.

A native of Malesso and a dedicated boatswain's mate at U.S. Coast Guard Station Apra Harbor, Naden has emerged as a pivotal figure in community leadership and environmental stewardship.

From his humble beginnings along the picturesque shores of southern Guam, Petty Officer

Naden's life has been deeply intertwined with the rhythms of the sea. This profound connection to Guam's waters has not only shaped his career path but also ignited a lifelong commitment to environmental protection, a commitment he pursued in college at the University of Guam. As an enthusiastic waterman, his passion for the ocean is a testament to his efforts to preserve its beauty and vitality.

In 2017, driven by a desire to improve the health of his local marine environment, Naden spearheaded the Merizo Pier Cleanup. What began as a small-scale endeavor to clear debris from a specific

SEE OCEAN ON PAGE 2



Photo by by Lani Sablan, U.S. Coast Guard

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Exchanging salutes and smiles, Chamorro children and Navy Lt. Sheldon Dietz have some fun in Agat. Photo courtesy of War in the Pacific National Historic Park



CIVIL SERVANT STILL GOING STRONG AFTER 52 YEARS
 PAGE 4

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Petty Officer 2nd Class William Naden and a team of dedicated volunteers stand for a photo with removed debris at the Merizo Pier Cleanup. Photos courtesy of Petty Officer 2nd Class Will Naden



OCEAN: Educating others key

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

area of the pier has evolved into a comprehensive initiative covering the wider marine and coastal areas. Year after year, Naden leads a dedicated team of volunteers—divers, snorkelers, and land-based supporters—to remove harmful debris from these waters. Together, they have successfully eliminated over 7,000 pounds of trash, including abandoned fishing gear, car parts, and even sunken boats. This is a powerful testament to the impact of collective action in environmental conservation, inspiring us all to contribute to the cause.

Reflecting on his roles as a Coast Guard member and an environmental advocate, Naden said, “Serving as a boatswain’s mate allows me to protect our waters through my profession, but cleaning our shores and educating others about conservation is how I serve my community. It’s about preserving our natural heritage and the scenic beauty that defines Guam for current and future generations.”

The Micronesian Conservation Coalition (MCC) recently recognized Petty Officer Naden’s relentless commitment with the prestigious Tide Changer Award at the 3rd Annual Ocean Gala, held on May 11, 2024. This recognition is a testament to the community’s appreciation for his

efforts toward sustainable marine practices.

“Petty Officer Naden exemplifies the spirit of the U.S. Coast Guard through his outstanding skills as a coxswain and his deep commitment to the marine environment. His leadership in training our crew in advanced boat handling and integrating his extensive local knowledge boosts our operational efficiency and strengthens our ties with the community we are privileged to serve,” said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander of U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

The Ocean Gala is a vital platform for acknowledging individuals like Naden, whose endeavors significantly impact the community. This year’s gala focused on regional projects like the Yap and Guam Manta projects, emphasizing MCC’s broad commitment to marine conservation.

Petty Officer 2nd Class William Naden is a testament to the power of local initiative and global responsibility. Proudly representing the U.S. Coast Guard and his community’s environmental goals, Naden continues to inspire us all to participate in preserving the most critical resource of our planet—the ocean. His story is not merely about personal achievement but a collective call to action, reminding us of the role each of us plays in maintaining the health and beauty of our Blue Continent for generations to come.



Naden stands with fiancé Lani Sablan at the Micronesian Conservation Coalition Ocean Gala in Guam.

Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Sara Muir



Naden and a team of dedicated volunteers gear up for a dive at the Merizo Pier Cleanup.



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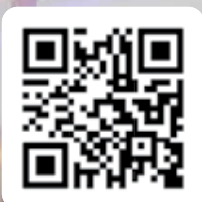


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'It felt like the culmination of my life experiences'

Washington Guardsman reconnects with Palau, Guam roots

BY SGT. 1ST CLASS ELIZABETH PENA,
NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU

KOROR, Palau—Air Force Maj. Marvin Yamada, Jr. was born on the island of Guam, a 30-mile-long island in the Western Pacific Ocean—a place, it is said, where America's day begins—to two native Palauans. Today, he serves in the Washington National Guard as a mission crew commander in the Western Air Defense Sector, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington.

"Both my parents are Palauan," Yamada said. "They met in Guam, and I ended up being born there, which is how I received my American citizenship. Growing up, I spoke English and Palauan. I'd spend my summers in Palau speaking the language, fishing with my uncles, spending time with my cousins, helping my grandmother on the farms, and learning cultural norms, like respecting your elders."

Yamada enlisted in the National Guard in 2006 after attending the University of Hawaii. Four years into his service, he was commissioned as an officer.

"I enlisted in the Hawaii National Guard just to try the military," he said. "I didn't think

it was for me, honestly. Sure enough: 18 years later, it was the best career decision I could have made. Many thanks to my Dad who served in the Guam & Hawaii Army National Guard and recommended I join."

Nearly two decades later, after relocating across the Pacific and becoming a husband and father to six children, Yamada never imagined his time in service would reconnect him to his roots. In his dual role as the Malaysia duty officer, in March of 2024, sitting at an awards banquet next to Air National Guard Maj. Kristina Roberts, the National Guard Bureau's Pacific desk officer, Yamada learned the National Guard's newest state partner was Palau.

"Both my parents are Palauan. They met in Guam, and I ended up being born there, which is how I received my American citizenship. Growing up, I spoke English and Palauan."

- Maj. Marvin Yamada, Jr.

relationships, improve interoperability, and enhance the readiness of the United States and partner nations to meet emerging challenges.

"I shared my story with her and expressed how happy I was for my country," Yamada said. "Then, she told me Palau's state partner would be Guam. I was floored."

Roberts asked Yamada if he would be willing to come on the partnership signing

The Defense Department's National Guard State Partnership Program is managed by the Guard Bureau and executed with combatant commanders to develop enduring relationships, improve interoperability, and enhance the readiness of the United States and partner nations to meet emerging challenges.



Palau President Surangel Whipps, center, poses with members of the National Guard Bureau, including Air Force Maj. Marvin Yamada, Jr., far left, during an event at the Ngarachamayong Cultural Center in downtown Koror, Palau. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Elizabeth Pena, National Guard Bureau

ceremony trip as a cultural expert and duty officer.

"I exercised my 'coconut wireless connections' to help the team get down there and get boots on the ground to ensure logistically everything was working out from the signing ceremony to the reception that followed," Yamada said. With the help of Yamada and others, members of the Guam National Guard, and Palau representatives, the mission was successfully planned and executed.

A week later, in a historic ceremony at the Ngarachamayong Cultural Center in downtown Koror, Palau's president Surangel

Whipps Jr., Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, and Army National Guard Col. Michael Cruz, adjutant general of the Guam National Guard, signed a declaration formalizing the nation's newest state partnership between the U.S. Territory of Guam and the Republic of Palau.

Yamada served as the emcee; his father and family members also attended the ceremony.

"It felt like the culmination of my life experiences - being from Palau, having roots in Guam, and serving in the National Guard to assist the United States military," Yamada said. "I felt incredibly fulfilled throughout the entire experience."

Civil servant still going strong after 52 years

STORY AND PHOTO BY AMY BURRELL,
NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING SYSTEMS
COMMAND MARIANAS

In the summer of 1971, Mildred Rivera Camacho was excelling at her college accounting and bookkeeping classes in San Diego when her older sister came to visit. She asked Millie to return home to Guam to help her mom with her new house, and Millie listened.

When Millie arrived back on the small Pacific island, her mom said she hadn't needed her back home after all. But Millie soon realized, "She already had things planned, my sister." Millie attributes the start of her 52-year career thanks to her sister, who at the time had a job in a human resources department for the Navy.

"Back then, to get into the civil service, you had to pass two tests," said Millie, explaining how her sister had her tested to enter the civil service. Before long, Millie had been accepted into a position as a clerk typist for Officer In Charge of Construction Marianas. Her office space was in the same building as the accounting department, and once word of Millie's finance background spread, she was asked to join their team.

Today, Millie Camacho works as a financial management analyst for NAVFAC Marianas.



Millie Camacho

This March, Capt. Troy Brown, NAVFAC Marianas commander, presented Millie with the Peggy D. Craig Lifetime Service Award for her 50-plus years of service for the Navy.

"Thank you for all of your years of service with us," said Brown, who nominated her for the award because "[Millie's] lifetime service to the organization is exemplary of what the award stands for."

The Peggy D. Craig Award is presented

annually to individuals who best personify a career of service, selflessness and dedication to NAVFAC, Naval Expeditionary Combat Command, Center for Seabees and Facilities Engineering, or any subordinate units.

Millie, who is active in ministry work with her church, said her trust and faith in her religion has helped her with this achievement.

"You have your ups and downs," she said, reflecting on her life and career in the civil service. "Nothing is smooth sailing, there's rocky waters out there. You just have to learn how to flow and trust in the Lord."

Millie said her favorite work moments have also been her most challenging.

She recollected that when she began working in budgets, she was excited to be assigned utilities as her first cost center, which she said was the most difficult one.

Millie said she still challenges herself in both work and life. Five days a week, she wakes up before sunrise to work out.

"I leave my house at 4:30 in the morning," she said about the important part of her

lifestyle, keeping her healthy since 1996. "I get up early—we start classes at five."

Millie's work with the Navy is still a family affair. Of her five children, one of her daughters, Karianne Camacho, works as a NAVFAC Marianas real estate officer.

"In so many ways she has inspired me in my career and in life," said Karianne, who said her favorite memory of working with her mom is seeing her natural ability to make others feel welcome, whether it be through offerings of food (which is usually something healthy) or to lend a helping hand.

Karianne recalled long nights at the end of the fiscal year when her mom would come home late and said that receiving the award meant recognition of

her mom's endless commitment to helping the Department of Defense meet its mission.

Millie said she was surprised when she found out she was being recognized as the Peggy D. Craig Award winner. "The years of service just came by fast," Millie said. "Gosh, to be honored with this prestigious award—it's something else. I'm very honored."

"You have your ups and downs. Nothing is smooth sailing, there's rocky waters out there. You just have to learn how to flow and trust in the Lord."

- Millie Camacho

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Military spouses find ways to make things work

Every weekday, for six months, I reported to a windowless room in downtown Washington, D.C. It contained a conference table and chairs, file boxes, harsh fluorescent lighting and a dozen temporary law clerks just like me. For eight hours each day, we sat at that table reviewing thousands of documents in the file boxes that were stacked high around us.

We were paid only \$9 per hour.

It was 1993, and my Navy husband and I were newlyweds. I'd resigned from my job as a litigation attorney in a Pittsburgh law firm, to become a Navy wife. In Pittsburgh, I had a cushy office, a secretary, my Pennsylvania law license on the wall, a decent salary and a clear path to success.

In D.C., I was unlicensed, unemployed and desperate for a job to pay my humongous student loan debts. After a month of searching, an agency called "Law Clerk Temporaries" finally placed me at MCI's Legal Office with the other temporary law clerks. We were hired to review documents in preparation for a class action fraud case involving 1-900 "pay-per-call" numbers.

During the first few days, we all kept quiet while completing our task, but eventually we began to speak. By the end of the week, I'd formed mental bios of the key players in the room.

There was Tory, an older clerk with a superiority complex that had permission to leave early on Tuesdays to teach a first-year legal writing class at George Mason University Law School.

Corrine, a Columbia Law School graduate, who actually was superior, but remained sweet and pleasant. She'd eventually get snapped up by a good law firm, but I respected her for slogging away for \$9 an hour rather than

The Meat and Potatoes of Life

Lisa Smith Molinari



The experience taught me my first military spouse lesson: In the face of less-than-ideal circumstances, there's respect in just making do.



File photo

resting on her laurels.

Clayton, a geeky Catholic University Law School graduate with a dry sense of humor and red hair.

Wendy, an accounting major with a huge engagement ring and perfectly painted nails. She spoke often about her upcoming wedding to Joshua and her demanding future in-laws.

And finally, Marcus, a finance major with a flair for pocket squares, pinstripes and wing-tipped shoes. Marcus chattered all day, using big words in the wrong context and leaning dangerously back in his office chair.

I'd go home each night and tell my new husband Francis who said what in the windowless room each day. Francis

was entertained, and I was grateful to at least have good stories to supplement my lousy pay.

Eventually, my initial amusement about my coworkers slowly turned to irritation, which was only natural considering the tedious monotony of our work and our tight proximity to each other. In fact, everyone became annoyed.

"I don't care!" Tory yelled at Clayton one day, before storming out of the room, bellowing, "I'm going to my REAL job, losers!" Clayton grinned, pleased to have pressed Tory to her breaking point.

Corrine was never rattled, but Wendy was in tears one afternoon. "These people are driving me nuts, too," I whispered to console her.

"Huh?" she responded. Apparently she was upset that the custom wedding yarmulkes her in-laws ordered didn't match her color scheme.

My last straw came one day when Marcus was yapping away and lounging precariously in his chair with his wing-tips dangling above the floor. "Marcus, you're full of it!" I finally snapped. Clayton smiled, fully enjoying the drama. "You're so hoydie paloydie!" Marcus retorted.

"Wait, did you just call me 'hoydie paloydie'? I've heard of hoi polloi and hoity toity, but 'hoydie paloydie'? Now that's rich!" I barked, wishing Marcus' chair would finally tip over. On the Metro ride home, I wondered, "Is this job some kind of secret social experiment? Are scientists waiting for us to crack? Is the windowless room nothing more than a human petri dish?"

Eventually, we PCSed to another state in which I didn't have a license to practice law, but I found a better law clerk job, and forgot about my fellow guinea pigs in the windowless room. Strangely enough, I don't regret taking that first job after marriage. The experience taught me my first military spouse lesson: In the face of less-than-ideal circumstances, there's respect in just making do.

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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REMEMBERING GUAM LIBERATION

Song of hope, song of faith

Editor's Note: These stories were first published on the 50th anniversary of the Liberation of Guam.

BY JOSEPH SANTO TOMAS,
WAR IN THE PACIFIC NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

I used to listen to my auntie's stories about the invasion, occupation, liberation and other things concerning the Japanese on Guam back then. She told me all about the "Uncle Sam" song and used to sing different versions of it, all the while a smile upon her face.

Both children and adults learned and sang the song throughout the occupation period though forbidden by Japanese authorities. It was a ditty urging the return of the Americans.

One version of the song, not so silly to the Japanese occupying authorities went like this:

*"Eighth of December, 1941
People went crazy
right here in Guam.
Oh, Mr. Sam, Sam
My dear Uncle Sam,
won't you please
come back to Guam."*

Other versions included a stanza telling the Americans to "Hurry up and come back with Camels and Chesterfields,

because we're tired of smoking the (Japanese cigarettes)."

She said that "Pete Rosario and his gangs" invented the song, and that printed versions of it nowadays aren't always the same as the ones she knew. Additional verses, as written in the Carano-Sanchez "History of Guam" follow:

*Early Monday morning
The action came to Guam,
Eighth of December,
Nineteen forty-one.*

*Oh, Mr. Sam, my dear Uncle Sam,
Won't you please come back to Guam?*

*Our lives are in danger
You better come
And kill all the Japanese
Right here on Guam.*

Part of the ditty's popularity was that one could make up anything about the Japanese, and no matter how silly, it would still be appropriate.

The song got so popular, she said, that even humming the tune around the Japanese infuriated them, and they would "binta" (slap) you or dole out some other kind of punishment.

Rosario and his friends sang a little concert to

some of the first Marines on island in the area of the Agana cemetery, and after that, it became a hit with the liberators.

It wasn't the only song in the psychological fight with the Japanese occupying authorities. One other song, or saying by the Chamorros that made a mockery of the Japanese propaganda effort was about the flag which depicts a sun on a white field.

Chamorros took advantage of the language barrier for a song that they were taught about Japan's flag, the one with the red ball as the sun.

But instead of using the given lyrics, which used the word "apaka" which means white in Chamorro, Chamorros hid a devious smile and sang instead the word, "apla-cha," which means dirty in Chamorro. Apparently no one ever caught on.

My auntie insisted that she remain anonymous, but our thanks still go out to her for sharing her enjoyment of that old, that silly, but oh, so precious song.

It may be old and may be silly, but even now the song sings loud of the Chamorro faith in those times, of the hope that kept people's spirits high in a time of despair.

Thank you Uncle Sam.

January 10, 1942

In Guam, American military and civilian personnel, Navy nurses, as well as American and Spanish priests are forced to march to Piti and board the ship Argentina Maru. Their destination: Prisoner-of-war camps in Japan.

The flag of the Rising Sun sways in the wind above the Marine Barracks in Sumay. Though reminded every day of the Japanese presence in Guam, Chamorros never lost hope that America would return to liberate the island.
Photo courtesy of War in the Pacific National Historic Park

With U.S. forces poised to recapture Guam, Japanese acted to prevent any efforts by Chamorros to aid the coming invasion. On July 10, 1944, people were ordered to march to camps far from probable battle lines. Many people weakened from malnutrition, injury or illness, were only able to reach the camps with the help of others. Photo courtesy of War in the Pacific National Historic Park

The journey to Manengon

BY RICARDO J. BORDALLO AND C. SABLAN GAULT,
WAR IN THE PACIFIC NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

The American bombardment began on July 8, 1944, and continued until July 20. The Americans threw everything they had at the island. The continuous pounding nearly drove us insane. There was no escaping the noise. During a barrage, we couldn't speak, couldn't think. We could do nothing but wait for a lull and blessed silence. The lulls were painfully brief. As soon as our ears stopped ringing, the bombardment would begin anew. We would dive back into the shelter, muffle our ears as best we could, and cower in fear again.

At the height of the bombardments, Japanese authorities ordered all civilians into designated campsites around the island. The order was issued on July 10. We learned of the order a day or two later. Once again, we packed our belongings into the bullcart ... we packed only a few items of clothing and some tools. Our main concern was our food supply. Mama had foreseen such an emergency and had stockpiled ample stores.

We didn't know why we were being concentrated or how long we were to be held. We didn't know if we would survive. As usual, Mama took roll before we set out. There was Daddy, Irene, Lorraine, Bobbie, Paul, Norma, Fred, Rodney, Donald, Junie, Josephine, Michael, baby Rosamunde, me, our little Indian bull and Paul's fully loaded bullcart. We left Pado and joined other refugees on the trail. A huge throng of people was already at Tai when we arrived. The larger group had been removed from Yigo to make way for the Japanese stronghold and had been herded to Tai a day before us. Throughout the night and well into the next day, groups of people from other parts of the island arrived steadily. The Tai encampment soon turned into a sea of humanity wallowing in mud.

Later that morning, the Japanese routed the encampment and the march to Manengon began. Thousands of people arose slowly from their makeshift camps and prepared to move out. Precious belongings — pathetic bundles of every size and description — were carefully lashed onto bullcarts or shouldered by their owners. Fear filled the faces of every man, woman and child. At a barked command, a column of soldiers with fixed bayonets began the march. ... The seething chaos of humans and animals compressed and uncoiled slowly, like a huge snake. Flanked by armed soldiers, the great human snake inched forward.



People forced to camp in Manengon used the Ylig River for a water source. In the photo, women are washing clothes as children play in the river's waters. People from throughout Guam camped at Manengon under Japanese order.

More people joined the march when we reached the Chalan Pago crossroads. From there, we descended the steep road down to the Pago River.

Just before we entered Yona, a bullcart, about two or three carts ahead of ours, broke down and halted progress. Hannah Chance Torres and her children were passengers. Like everyone else in the column, I could only watch as a soldier made his way towards Hannah's cart. He then jabbed his bayoneted rifle toward her in a threatening manner. Hannah began to scream. The soldier stormed off in disgust, but Hannah continued to shriek hysterically. ... She never recovered from the terror. Exhaustion eventually reduced her to semi consciousness. She whimpered all the way to Manengon and gave up the will to live.

The Japanese would not allow a slow, careful descent into the Manengon valley; instead, they drove everyone downward at gun point. Just before we began our descent, heavy rain began to fall again. Soon, rivulets of rainwater and mud began to wash down the slopes. Blinded by the darkness and the rain, people slipped and fell, tumbling helplessly until they slammed into rocks, trees, or other people. Men, women and children dug their feet into the mud and tried desperately to keep heavy bullcarts from careening downward out of control.

In the wee hours of morning, I heard a man's voice calling out softly in the eerie silence, "Felix, Felix, mungi hao? Maila sa chachaflik si Hannah." Someone

was calling Felix Torres, Hannah's husband. "Felix, Felix, where are you" the voice had said, "Come, because Hannah is dying." When we awoke at daybreak, Hannah Chance Torres was dead. Felix and his family wrapped Hannah's body in a blanket and buried her near the camp. In the days that followed, many other burials took place in and around the camp.

When we first came to Manengon, the air was clean and sweet. Smoke from thousands of cooking fires would blend with the morning mist but dissipate as the day wore on. Within a few days, however, the smoke and mist began to accumulate into a thick, steamy layer above the hovels. It never dissipated. The blanket of smoke and steam sealed in all the odors in camp. As human and animal wastes piled up each day, the odors grew more and more foul. Soon, the whole camp reeked with a most horrible stench. The small stream that coursed through the valley was our only source of water. With several thousand people using it daily, it quickly turned into a cesspool.

Except to conscript laborers every morning, the Japanese left us alone. Two machine gun squads were posted at the edge of the camp, but otherwise, we were free to forage in the surrounding jungle. On one particular morning, Lorraine was among several women pulled from the ranks. They were loaded onto a truck and taken from the camp. Later, we learned that they were just being used as cooks and domestics at Tai.

Among Lorraine's group was Maria Perez Howard, a pretty woman who once worked as Dad's secretary. Her husband, Edward, was a crewman on the USS Penguin and was among the American prisoners taken to Japan. Maria's good looks and her marriage to an American Navy man made her a favorite target for Japanese harassment. Just days before the American landing, Maria was led into the jungle at gunpoint. She was never seen again.

Once in a while, an American plane would fly over the camp and stir up everyone's excitement. On one such occasion, my brothers and sisters and I were splashing around with some other children in a popular swimming hole not far from the camp. As we splashed in the water, the American plane appeared overhead. It circled directly above us and came in closer. It flew so low that it barely cleared the treetops. Some of the children even

SEE MANENGN ON PAGE 10

Manengon: 'Hurry! The Americans are here!'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

claimed that they saw the pilot's face. Before I could yell, "Wave and smile at him, or he'll shoot us," my companions were jumping up and down and cheering enthusiastically.

When the pilot dipped his wings in acknowledgment, we got even more excited. But seconds later, our excitement turned to fear. The pilot suddenly opened fire with his machine gun. For an instant we thought the American was going to mow us down. Then suddenly, a man tore out of the machine-gunned thicket. His hands were tied behind him and he was barefoot. As he disappeared into the jungle, a Japanese patrol emerged from the thicket. I learned from my cousin, Joaquin Pangelinan, that the man was Ignacio "Kalandu" San Nicolas who had been scheduled for execution that day. The grave in the banana grove was to be his. The American pilot's machine gun fire scattered Kalandu's executioners long enough to allow his escape.

I was sitting in a thicket when I began to hear a strange sound rising from the camp. I could hear people laughing and shouting and whistling. Moments later, I heard my name. It was Paul. He galloped toward me, hollering "Hurry! The Americans are here!" We ran down the hillside and into the frenzy in camp. People were laughing and crying, hugging and kissing, shouting and jumping, dancing and singing. I worked my way into the densest part of the crowd and found Dad. Together, we elbowed our way toward nine dumbfounded American soldiers.

The Americans had not expected such a reception or so large a crowd. One of the soldiers was shouting and holding his rifle above the surging mob. "Follow" was all anyone heard. The word spread quickly: follow the Americans. Within a few minutes, hundreds of people fell into line and followed obediently behind the dazed Americans. The camp guards panicked and fled.



Marines assisting them, people begin to load themselves and whatever belongings they had aboard a truck. This was the kind of scene typical in the liberation as U.S. military officials began to restore order to the island. Photo courtesy of War in the Pacific National Historic Park

From the Manengon valley, the great throng climbed into the hills and headed west. We followed paths beaten down by soldiers who had fought their way up from the Agat beachhead. When we reached the slopes above the coast, we were greeted by the incredible panorama of American military might. Agat Bay was speckled by

hundreds of ships of different shapes and sizes. There were so many, they darkened the ocean all the way to the horizon. The sight was awesome.

SEE LIBERATORS MEET THE LIBERATED ON PAGE 12



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Liberators meet the liberated

BY PAUL J. BORJA,
WAR IN THE PACIFIC NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

The Liberation of Guam was a matter of military necessity. Its people and their suffering aside, Guam was seen as a naval and air base from which to bomb Japan and supply the force needed to subdue the enemy.

But in Guam, the Marine in the jungle and the soldier in the trenches discovered something very special - that his effort was recognized and that he actually made a difference in people's lives.

Marine Cpl. Maury T. Williams, Jr., a reconnaissance scout for the 21st Marines, and Wesley T. Bush, of the 22nd Marines, both recall their experience in meeting Guamanians during the battle to recapture Guam.

For Bush, who wrote to the Guam Veterans Affairs Office asking for information on 50th anniversary activities, he first met with local people when his unit was relieved and he and his fellow Marines were moving back toward more secure areas.

"We had battled continuously for 14 days, then got a

rest. As we marched to the rear, we went through an area where the lovely people of Guam had been gathered. The youngsters ran alongside of us holding on to our rifles. Old men held our hands and the women cried and cheered and patted our backs. All the hardship and misery and wounds we had suffered melted away at that moment and I said to myself, 'It has been worth it all.' I will never forget how grateful the people were."

Bush's unit was to fight in Okinawa but would return to Guam, where he would meet and befriend a local family. Invited to a party by the family, Bush would experience something he never experienced before - tuba, the fermented, and yes, alcoholic product of the coconut tree. The aftermath of the party was predictable.

"I made friends with a family named Cruz. They did my laundry and once, graciously invited us to their humble home, where the father plied us with something called TUBA and we tried to find our way back to camp."

Williams was also affected by the emotions of the people as they passed his unit in Agana where he and his comrades had been assigned positions. Moving to the rear of the battle, Chamorros would walk past the positions held by Williams and other Marines.

"They (the people) were understandably quite emotional as they approached, considering their months of oppression under the Japanese, and nearly all had tears streaming down their faces. Many were on foot but some came in the trucks that had been dispatched to a pickup point a short distance ahead."

"But one large group, being brought through the lines in the back end of a six-by-six truck, were singing a song that must have been composed during the occupation. Their words expressed their love of America and Americans, including a line that said something like, 'Thank you, Uncle Sam.' I noticed that those people were not the only ones having tears streaming down their cheeks that day," wrote Williams, the Marine from Memphis.



As the battle for Guam advanced from the beachheads and the concentration camps were liberated, people began traveling from the camps or their jungle hideouts to safety behind the front lines. Above, boys on carabaos and on foot are part of the stream of people fleeing the fighting between the Japanese and American forces.



Photo and Illustration courtesy of War in the Pacific National Historic Park

February 19 – March 16, 1944

The siege of Iwo Jima nearly takes a month to complete. The volcanic isle leaves behind a legacy written in blood by the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions: U.S. casualties are 6,800 dead, 20,000 wounded, There are practically no survivors of the 21,000 Japanese defenders.

April 1 – June 22, 1944

With American forces nearing the Japanese home islands, the Japanese up the ante at Okinawa. Kamikazes spearhead the defense of the homeland, and nearly 2,000 soar to attack the U.S. fleet supporting the invasion force. It is bloody at battle's end: 12,500 American troops and 110,000 Japanese dead.

GSA in Guam

GSA Global Supply® has partnered with M80 Systems, a local small business, to serve civilian and military customers in Guam. M80 is now storing and delivering approximately 350 high-demand National Stock Number (NSN) items formerly stored in and shipped from the continental United States. The change reduces delivery time to a few days from weeks or months.

Customers can order using GSA websites (GSA Global Supply or GSA Advantage!®) or via existing customer logistics platforms (e.g., GCSS-Army). GSA's systems recognize the items stocked in Guam and fulfill orders locally. Other items will ship from the mainland. An electronic catalog is available.



Brandy Untalan

The program does not replace existing retail stores managed by GSA at Andersen AFB and Naval Base Guam. Instead, the stores and new outlets are complementary. For more information, please contact your local GSA Customer Service Director, Brandy Untalan, at 671-333-4721 or brandy.untalan@gsa.gov.

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Naval Base Guam to host Freedom Rocks fest July 4

U.S. NAVAL BASE GUAM

U.S. NAVAL BASE GUAM– The public is invited to the U.S. Naval Base Guam Freedom Rocks festival scheduled for Thursday, July 4 at NBG - Polaris Point.

In an effort to reduce traffic congestion, the gate will be open for those with normal base access at 2 p.m. Those without base access will be welcomed at 3 p.m. A military ID or visitor pass is not required for access.

During the Freedom Rocks event, there will be live entertainment by the local bands, Precious Metal and Pop Rocks & Soda, and Jimmy Dee's Chamorritas

and Matuas fire show. The event will also feature bounce houses, games, water activities, crafts, food trucks, and vendors. Most vendors will only be accepting cash payment.



The fireworks display will be launched at 8 p.m. from a barge just outside the Point Club and last approximately 10 minutes.

The following are examples of prohibited items: drones, weapons, personal fireworks, back-packs, grills, glass containers, coolers, large bags, tents, recording devices (audio or video), outside alcohol, pets, rollerblades, skateboards, and roller-skates. Marijuana and other drugs are also prohibited on military installations.

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Boonie Stomps Guam

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY
GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



Mt. Tenjo

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/GuamBoonieStompers



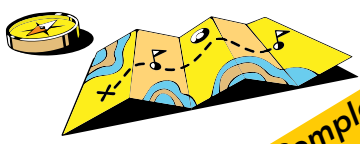
Guam Boonie Stompers is a non-profit Guam corporation composed of volunteer leaders committed to leading hikes to and protecting the unique natural destinations on our island.

SCHEDULE 2024

Dates	Locations
Jun. 29 (Sat.)	Tenjo 10 (Double difficult) NEW

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NOTE: Schedule subject change, so please check Boonie Stomps Facebook in advance.



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Crossword by Margie E. Burke

<p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Nile vipers</p> <p>5 Race segment</p> <p>9 Ladybug's array</p> <p>14 Enticement</p> <p>15 Idris of "Luther"</p> <p>16 Tiny South Pacific nation</p> <p>17 Pine or spruce</p> <p>19 Mink's cousin</p> <p>20 Uncheck, say</p> <p>21 Sour</p> <p>22 Lightbulb measure</p> <p>23 Plumped-up fowl</p> <p>24 Despondent</p> <p>27 Funhouse fixture</p> <p>29 Spiritual leader</p> <p>32 Like a smart kid</p> <p>34 Grabber in an arcade game</p> <p>35 Turbine part</p> <p>36 Let go</p> <p>37 Indian yogurt dip</p> <p>38 "You got that right!"</p> <p>39 Charles Ingalls was one</p> <p>41 Football gain</p> <p>42 In a class by</p> <p>43 "Later"</p> <p>44 Full of gooey dirt</p> <p>46 Wacko</p> <p>48 Trite remark</p> <p>50 Angry letters</p> <p>54 Gossipmonger</p> <p>55 Lowest female voice</p> <p>56 Nasty look</p> <p>57 Fairy tale starter</p> <p>58 Footfall</p> <p>59 Lincoln's in-laws</p> <p>60 Miller, for one</p> <p>61 Pitcher's target</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; font-size: x-small;"> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>15</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>16</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>17</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>18</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>19</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>21</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>22</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>23</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td></td><td>27</td><td></td><td>28</td><td></td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>32</td><td></td><td></td><td>33</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>34</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>35</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>36</td><td></td><td>37</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>38</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>39</td><td></td><td></td><td>40</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>41</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>42</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>43</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>44</td><td></td><td>45</td><td></td><td></td><td>46</td><td></td><td>47</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>48</td><td>49</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>50</td><td></td><td></td><td>51</td><td>52</td><td>53</td></tr> <tr><td>54</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>55</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>56</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>57</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>58</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>59</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>60</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>61</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14				15				16					17				18				19					20							21								22				23							24	25	26		27		28		29	30	31			32			33					34					35						36		37					38					39			40					41					42					43					44		45			46		47				48	49						50			51	52	53	54						55							56						57				58			59						60				61		
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|---|---|---|
| <p>3 Facefuls in slapstick</p> <p>4 Spread around</p> <p>5 Religious dissenter</p> <p>6 Power source</p> <p>7 Be an accessory to</p> <p>8 Go for the bronze?</p> <p>9 Rapper pal to Martha</p> <p>10 "Adam-12" vehicle</p> <p>11 In a risky situation</p> <p>12 Uno y dos</p> <p>13 "Why not?!"</p> <p>18 Alluring beauty</p> <p>21 Neighbor of Earth</p> <p>23 Expression</p> <p>24 Waterfall effect</p> <p>25 Scent</p> <p>26 Keeping at it</p> | <p>28 Makes like a lion</p> <p>30 Word after "ahoy"</p> <p>31 In the loop</p> <p>33 Led an orchestra</p> <p>37 Roof support</p> <p>39 Water barrier</p> <p>40 Move like a butterfly</p> <p>45 Burns a bit</p> | <p>47 Huge hit</p> <p>48 Abnormal sac</p> <p>49 Former NBC host</p> <p>50 Sharpen, as skills</p> <p>51 High in the Andes</p> <p>52 List entry</p> <p>53 Easy stride</p> <p>55 Corn core</p> |
|---|---|---|

Answers to Previous Crossword:

P	A	P	A	L	A	M	I	D	A	R	A	B
A	G	A	P	E	N	O	N	E	S	A	L	E
T	R	E	E	S	D	I	V	E	R	S	I	O
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Stripes Sports Trivia

I am a former competitive bodybuilder, martial artist and a martial arts film actor who once fought against Van Damme and also took part in 'Enter the Dragon.' Who am I?

Answer
Bolo Yeung

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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:

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

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GUAM EDITION

JUNE 24, 2024



Preparing for drone war

Navy working with allies to establish standards for emerging technology
Page 2

JAN EENLING/Dutch navy

An underwater drone is prepared on a Dutch navy ship during mine countermeasure training at the Baltic Operations exercise earlier this month.

COVER STORY

Navy adopting 'startup approach' to drones

US Navy officials meet with allies and partners on new technology

BY ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — U.S. Navy officials met with allies and partners in Portugal recently to discuss common standards for drones and emerging technology, as the service learns from trends in warfare playing out in Ukraine and other global hot spots.

The talks at the Portuguese Navy Operational Experimentation Center in Troia included devising guidelines for industry contractors and creating the standardization needed so NATO forces can work together effectively.

The Navy wouldn't offer specifics, but the conversation was productive and it was "exciting to have this kind of dialogue with

allies and partners, sharing ideas and knowledge in such an evolving battlespace," U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet said in a state-



Mattis

ment Thursday.

The center, affiliated with a NATO project aimed at spurring technological advancement, is recognized for its expertise in drones and new technologies.

The discussions come as the Navy in Europe and Africa endeavors to rapidly add drones and other systems to the surface, underwater, air, land, information and space domains.

In November, the service established Task Force 66 at its base in Naples. The task force was integrated into the fleet last month.

The 40-member military and civilian team works alongside government, industry and academic experts to develop and field capabilities throughout Europe and Africa, said Rear Adm. Michael Mattis, director of strategic effects for NAVEUR-AF and commander of the task force.

"It's really driven by the evolving threat environment ... and the need for the Navy to evolve," said Mattis, who likened the task force to the Air Force's 603rd Air Operations Center in Ramstein, Germany, and the Army's 2nd Multi-domain Task Force in Mainz-Kastel, Germany.

The use of drones in the Russia-Ukraine war, their prolifer-



HANNAH FRY/U.S. Navy

Joe DiBenedetto, a civilian contractor aboard the guided-missile destroyer USS Higgins does flight pre-checks on a Mk. 4.7 Golf Aerosonde drone on the flight deck while operating in the Philippine Sea on March 30.



U.S. Sixth Fleet

MQ-4C detachments are forward-deployed to Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily.

ation in the Red Sea and concerns about how the fleet would fare against the technology in a South China Sea conflict have spurred the Navy to step up its efforts.

For example, an MQ-4C Triton drone detachment recently was deployed to Naval Air Station Sigonella in Sicily.

The service also is experimenting with drones in Africa, and unmanned undersea vehicles are being used to counter mines during the multinational BALTOPS exercise in the Baltic Sea.

"The nations which adapt quickly to new technology and integrate these capabilities will have the advantage," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti told Stars and Stripes

during a visit to Naval Support Activity Bahrain earlier this month.

European allies such as the U.K., France and Latvia also are driving drone experimentation and innovation, said Sebastian Bruns, a German maritime security expert and senior researcher for the Institute for Security Policy at Kiel University.

Those efforts are rooted in concern that Russia's industrial base likely will outmatch that of the West for the foreseeable future when it comes to churning out ships, submarines and other conventional vessels, Bruns said.

That means the U.S. and its NATO allies and partners must become more savvy, nimble and

focused on developing new technologies and using them in unconventional ways, he said.

"NATO realizes that it has to outsmart and outthink and outinnovate the Russians," Bruns said. "What we see now is the need, the desire really, to connect these dots and tie these efforts together ... into a cooperative and really coordinated endeavor."

Among CTF-66's objectives is adopting the mentality of a startup business, Mattis said.

"That's a very different and challenging way of doing business compared to how the Navy does business in the standard way," Mattis said. "We're going to try to fail fast and learn from that failure early on."

"It's really driven by the evolving threat environment ... and the need for the Navy to evolve."

Rear Adm. Michael Mattis
director of strategic effects
for NAVEUR-AF

Recently, team members coordinated with the manufacturer of a surface drone being tested in Africa to quickly identify a problem with how data was being collected.

That response is an example of how the task force will offer feedback to industry to spur quick, cost-effective solutions, he said.

The lessons the task force learns may apply well beyond Europe and Africa, as the team coordinates with other fleets and the Navy's Disruptive Capabilities Office.

"We're trying to create an ecosystem across the Navy to really solve these problems in a really integrated manner where we cross-collaborate and learn from each other," Mattis said.

PACIFIC

Advocates decry health care struggles

Report finds DOD workers in Japan are routinely denied by hospitals

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — Japanese hospitals are denying health care for Defense Department civilians and military personnel once every two days, on average, according to a recent report by the Japan Civilian Medical Advocacy group.

More than 340 people were denied access to routine, specialized or emergency care between February 2022 and April 2024, and at least 13 died between 2021 and 2024 due to denials or failure to receive timely medical attention, states a research report recently released by the group.

“The state of healthcare for military personnel and civilians in Japan has reached one of its lowest points in decades,” Randi Wilson, a spokeswoman for the group, told Stars and Stripes.

The advocacy group, a grassroots organization that began as an online forum for DOD employees to share tips on accessing health care, cites 140 sources in its research. Those include surveys, testimonies and personal correspondence gathered by the group, media coverage and reports from the DOD and U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Japanese hospitals are not required by law to accept patients for care and routinely deny patients at their discretion. Reasons for denials can vary but often pertain to a preference for Japan’s national insurance plan or the belief that they lack ade-

quate resources to treat a patient.

“Currently, no one — whether active duty, retiree, civilian employee, or contractor — is guaranteed medical care for themselves or their loved ones during emergencies,” Wilson said.

Defense Department employees have struggled to receive care at U.S. military hospitals and clinics in Japan and at local hospitals since the Defense Health Agency began implementing changes in February 2022.

The changes were a bid to prioritize health care for active-duty patients on overseas military bases and reduce wait times.

That plan, which significantly reduced access to health care for DOD civilians, has “done nothing to alleviate this crisis” and has potentially made the situation worse, according to Wilson.

“Instead, these measures backfired, causing civilian healthcare providers to resign and military members to leave their contracts, further reducing access,” she said.

Wait times at Yokota Air Base in Tokyo, for example, have not “significantly changed” over the past three years, according to the report.

Services responsible for areas such as ship repair, education, health care, and others also reported a 20% to 80% drop in employment applications due to concerns over accessing medical care.



ALEX WILSON/Stars and Stripes

Active-duty service members and Defense Department civilians alike are facing issues with access to health care at Japanese hospitals and at military treatment facilities such as U.S. Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan, seen here in 2022.

DHA spokesman Peter Graves acknowledged Stars and Stripes’ request for comment on the report in an email but was unable to immediately provide a response.

DHA rolled back some restrictions in 2023, and civilians can now seek care for acute or chronic conditions on a space available basis.

However, accessing that care can be difficult.

“A lack of codified policies and protections for DOD civilians allows leaders of [military treatment facilities] to independently set rules, often with no public transparency, causing available care to vary drastically between MTFs,” the advocacy group’s report reads.

Some bases offer only same-day, space-available appointments, while others offer limited appointments up to three days in advance. The range of services also varies, with some bases allowing civilian access to OB-GYN care and others prohibiting it, according to the report.

In early 2023, Gilbert Cisneros Jr., undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, and Seileen Mullen, at the time the acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, along with Army Maj. Gen. Joseph Heck, the DHA Indo-Pacific director at the time, held a series of town hall meetings on these topics at U.S. bases in Japan.

To sometimes raucous crowds of civilian employees and their

families, the three promised to establish working groups with the DOD to address those complaints, but Wilson said there’s been no follow-up or communication on the matter.

The advocacy group is proposing a variety of short- and long-term solutions, including temporarily rescinding space available restrictions, funding translation services, and communication, billing and administration reform.

“What we need now — what we have always needed in the Pacific — is timely access to quality preventive and emergency care,” she said.

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RIMPAC set to feature largest-ever disaster exercises

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

This summer’s Rim of the Pacific will include the maritime exercise’s largest-ever humanitarian aid and disaster relief drills and the sinking of a decommissioned U.S. Navy amphibious assault ship.

The disaster-relief portion will involve eight countries, five ships, five landing craft, five aircraft and more than 2,500 participants, the Navy said in a news release.

Those drills will include support from the Hawaii Healthcare Emergency Management Coalition, the Defense Department’s Honolulu-based Center for Excellence in Disaster Management, the University of Hawaii’s Pacific Disaster Center, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, and

Singapore’s Changi Regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Coordination Centre, the Navy said in a news release.

This year’s RIMPAC will include the sinking of a vessel that was formerly designated USS Tarawa, the EurAsian Times newspaper reported.

A Defense Department official contacted by Stars and Stripes declined to speak on the record about the Tarawa report but confirmed that the ship, which was towed into Pearl Harbor several weeks ago, would be used in a sinking exercise.

RIMPAC, touted by the U.S. Navy as the world’s largest international maritime exercise, kicks off June 27 and runs through Aug. 1.

Forty ships from nearly 30 nations are slated to participate in the exercise on and around the Hawaiian Islands.

The biennial exercise, which has been held 29 times since it began in 1971, will also include three submarines, 14 land-based units, more than 150 aircraft and about 25,000 personnel.

Aircraft will include F-35 Lightning II fighter jets, P-8 Poseidon reconnaissance planes and V-22 Osprey tiltrotors, which will operate out of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam and Marine Corps Base Hawaii on Oahu.

Participating armed forces are coming from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Ecuador, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Ma-

aysia, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, South Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tonga, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The sinking of obsolete ships during RIMPAC has become routine.

During RIMPAC in 2022, units from Australia, Canada, Malaysia and the U.S. sank a decommissioned U.S. Navy frigate, formerly designated as USS Rodney M. Davis.

Four years ago, ships and aircraft sank a decommissioned U.S. Navy amphibious cargo ship that was formerly designated USS Durham as a finale to the exercise.

This year’s target, The former USS Tarawa was commissioned in 1976 and named for the Battle

of Tarawa in the Pacific during World War II.

It deployed U.S. Marines to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Desert Shield against Iraq in 1991.

The ship later supported Operation Iraqi Freedom in the early 2000s. It was decommissioned in 2009.

Among the other drills planned for RIMPAC 2024 are “multi-domain warfare in a range of scenarios from anti-submarine warfare, multi-ship surface warfare, multinational amphibious landings, and multi-axis defense of the carrier strike group against live forces,” the news release states.

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PACIFIC

US plans missile tests over decade on Guam

BY WYATT OLSON
Stars and Stripes

The U.S. military plans to conduct up to two live-fire missile defense tests each year over the next decade from Guam as it develops an integrated defense system for the strategically important island.

The Missile Defense Agency released a 378-page environmental assessment laying out its plan to track and destroy target missiles in cooperation with the Air Force, Army, Navy and Coast Guard. The tests would begin sometime in the last three months of this year.

The assessment concluded “no significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental impacts” would occur from the testing.

The agency is soliciting public comment on the assessment through July 2.

“A missile defense system provides a layered defense consisting of various land-, sea-, and air-based weapons; sensor and communications systems; and command and control platforms that are used to defeat incoming ballistic, cruise, and hypersonic missiles in all phases of flight,” the assessment states.

Indo-Pacific Command sees completion of the Guam Missile Defense System as a top priority for the region.

The U.S. territory is home to Andersen Air Force Base, Naval

Base Guam and Camp Blaz, a massive Marine Corps base. The island would serve as a crucial hub in the event of a conflict with China because it is the westernmost American territory and closest to the South China Sea, a flashpoint in the region.

Guam’s acting governor has asked for a two-month extension for a comment period.

In a letter to the head of the Missile Defense Agency, Acting Gov. Josh Tenorio requested that the 30-day comment period for the environmental assessment on the proposed tests be extended to 90 days.

“The Government of Guam recognizes the importance of national security and the role of our island in that mission,” he wrote. “However, the proposed activities have the potential to significantly impact our environment, our economy and the daily lives of our residents.”

An extension of the July 2 deadline would give the Guam government additional time “to review the assessment thoroughly, consult relevant experts, and engage in meaningful discussions with our community stakeholders,” Tenorio wrote.

The assessment was greeted warily by the Pacific Center for Island Security, a Guam-based group that describes itself as “an action-oriented research institute that aims to anchor this island and islander perspective.”

“In view of the coming plans for Guam that are not of our making or choosing, it is imperative that an all-Guam approach be launched to protect the essential value of our island and our future,” the center’s chairman, Robert Underwood, said in a recent statement.

“As billions of dollars are flowing for military projects, the community in Guam is not being planned for,” he said. “Today, the military has not planned for enough housing for their own troops and contractors that they plan to bring to Guam.”

The two annual flight tests or tracking exercises would be conducted from Andersen or from a U.S. Navy ship afloat in the Western Pacific, the assessment states.

“A flight test represents a target missile flight, an interceptor missile flight, an intercept of a target missile, or a test of sensors independent of missile flight,” the assessment states. “For a single flight test, multiple interceptors and targets may be utilized.”

A tracking exercise uses sensors to scan and trace a target, but an interceptor is not typically used.

The first test later this year would involve launching an interceptor called Standard Missile-3 using the Aegis Weapon System from Andersen



MARK SCOTT/U.S. National Guard

Brig. Gen. Michael Cruz, adjutant general of the Guam National Guard, left, and Lt. Col. Jonathan Stafford, commander of Task Force Talon, during a recent visit to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, site, on Guam.

against a medium-range ballistic missile, the assessment states.

That target would be air-launched from a C-17 Globemaster at an altitude greater than 20,000 feet and at least 800 nautical miles east of Guam over the Pacific Ocean.

The first-stage booster from the interceptor would separate and land in a remote area of Andersen, the assessment states.

Debris from the intercepted target “would fall to the surface of the ocean greater than 88 nautical miles from Guam and sink to the ocean floor,” the assessment said.

Future flight tests and tracking exercises would use the interceptors from the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, or THAAD, and Patriot systems.

The tests would eventually include the not-yet-fielded In-

direct Fire Protection Capability — a mobile, ground-based system used to defeat cruise missiles, drones, rockets and mortars.

The tests will validate the military’s capability of integrating multiple sensors and interceptors that will become the “backbone” of the Guam Missile Defense System, the assessment states.

The assessment is available at www.mda.mil/system/GuamFT/ea.html. Comments can be emailed to info@GFT-EA.com or mailed to ManTech International Corporation, Attention: Guam Flight Test EA Project Support, PMB 403, 1270 N. Marine Corps Dr., Suite 101, Tamuning, Guam 96913-4331.

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Outgoing Guam chief will stay and lead a new command

BY ALEX WILSON
Stars and Stripes

Leadership of Guam’s three major military bases, along with other installations in the region, changed hands recently as the former commander prepared to assume a new role.

Rear Adm. Brent DeVore relieved Rear Adm. Greg Huffman as commander of Joint Region Marianas during a ceremony at Naval Base Guam. The command is responsible for all military installations in the U.S. territory — primarily Andersen Air Force Base, Naval Base Guam and Marine Corps Base Camp Blaz — along with the surrounding Northern Mariana Islands.

Huffman, who led the command since June 2023, won’t be leaving the island. He’ll head up an entirely new command — Joint Task Force Micronesia — which began operations June 14.

The task force will represent the senior military officer in the

region and be responsible for operational defense. Huffman, in his new role, will also serve as a direct representative to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and provide military support to the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency, according to task force spokesman Cmdr. Joseph Hontz.

The new command, headquartered alongside Joint Region Marianas at the Nimitz Hill Annex in Asan, Guam, has about 30 personnel but plans to grow to about 40, Hontz told Stars and Stripes.

The task force represents a “strong commitment” from the Department of Defense to work closer with regional partners and build “operational capability and flexibility,” Huffman said at the ceremony, which was live-streamed on Joint Region Marianas’ Facebook page.

“With these capabilities, we will ultimately drive towards



SAMANTHA JETZER/U.S. Navy

Rear Adm. Greg Huffman, outgoing commander of Joint Region Marianas, right, and Rear Adm. Brent DeVore, incoming commander, left, pose with Adm. Stephen Koehler, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, on Guam.

deterrence,” he said. “Adversaries will see the work that we are doing and the posture we’re setting throughout the region and think, ‘Not today — today is not the day to risk conflict.’”

The DOD’s presence on Guam has grown steadily over the past decade with the establishment of

new training areas, commands and other facilities both on the island and on nearby Saipan and Tinian.

The buildup is tied to Guam’s proximity to China, North Korea and the contested South China Sea, which has led to the U.S. military calling the island the

“tip of the spear” in the Indo-Pacific. The Defense Department particularly sees China, which claims nearly the entirety of the South China Sea and aspires to annex Taiwan, as its pacing challenge.

“The threat from China continues to grow every day,” said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, head of Navy Installations Command, at the ceremony. “Any major conflict today has the potential to impact our population and the people of Guam like we haven’t seen in many years.”

The job of Joint Region Marianas and Joint Task Force Micronesia is to keep Guam and the U.S. safe and “present a posture that will make any foe seek to think twice before they mess with the United States,” he added.

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MILITARY

Army expands spouse business benefit

Service will reimburse up to \$1,000 for expenses of relocating businesses during PCSing

By JEREMY STILLWAGNER
Stars and Stripes

The Army will now reimburse soldiers up to \$1,000 for costs associated with the relocation of their spouses' businesses.

The new program covers all spouses who owned their businesses and were married to their soldier prior to a permanent change of station, or PCS, according to a recent memorandum.

The program is the latest Army effort to increase its support of soldiers' families. A similar program first took effect in 2018

under an Army directive of offering a maximum \$1,000 reimbursement for spouses who transferred professional licenses to a new area.

The program has been updated several times since then, with the latest expanding coverage to include some business-related relocation fees.

"Support from spouses is essential for their Soldiers' successful and continued service," Army spokeswoman Ellen Lovett wrote in an email. "The Army is committed to helping spouses achieve their career goals, which

is part of our ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life and financial stability of our families."

To take advantage of the new program, the soldier and spouse must submit required documents to their unit finance office, which will process the request.

The documents include a copy of the soldier's PCS orders, a copy of the spouse's previous professional license or certification or their previous business license or permit, a copy of their new license or certification and

proof of fees paid for the new license, certification or recertification. If the spouse relocated a business, a copy of the business license from the new duty station must be provided to be reimbursed.

"The goal is to send reimbursements as soon as possible," Lovett wrote. "The process will be expedited when Soldiers and units provide the required documents for the approving official."

The program is not limited to moves within the United States. Soldiers who PCS to an overseas location with their spouses can

be reimbursed for fees required for their spouses to get licensed and certified or operate their business in the host country so long as they held a valid U.S. version of that professional license or owned their business before the PCS.

"This program applies to all spouses, regardless of nationality or citizenship, as long as they were married to their service member prior to the PCS," Lovett said.

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DOD to repay cost of shipping breast milk during PCS moves

By JOHN VANDIVER
Stars and Stripes

The costs of shipping breast milk during service members' moves will now be covered under a new Defense Department policy aimed at curtailing out-of-pocket expenses for military families.

The Pentagon will reimburse up to \$1,000 for such expenses, according to the policy issued this month.

The policy allows "the breastfeeding service member to ship that milk back to the previous, permanent duty station where the dependents still are," said Christopher Woods, policy branch chief at the Defense Travel Management Office.

The benefit applies to service members who are breastfeeding children up to 12 months old and covers a range of expenses associated with transportation of

breast milk such as dry ice, commercial shipping and excess baggage fees, DOD said in a statement.

Family members often have to travel separately to new assignments, which means breastfeeding parents may be separated from their children, Woods said.

Even when not separated during moves, military families still can face costs associated with the storage for long car rides or international flights, DOD said.

"The fact is that this milk must be stored in a cold environment, and service members are having to purchase things like ice and dry ice in order to keep the milk frozen or cool," Woods said.

Service members seeking reimbursement must obtain authorization included on their orders prior to incurring any breastfeeding expenses, DOD said.



BETH HOLLIKER/U.S. Air Force

A mother and her newborn daughter snuggle following an evaluation of the infant at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Okinawa, Japan, last year. The Defense Department will now cover the costs of shipping breast milk during PCS moves, according to new policy.

DOD said the policy change aligns with a recent revision in federal law that requires employers to create accommodations for breastfeeding parents.

Frequent moves are a mainstay of military life, with families packing up every couple of years for new assignments. DOD said more than 400,000 service mem-

bers change duty stations each year.

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'Lactation pods' open for nursing moms at Okinawa base

By JONATHAN SNYDER
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force recently opened three private compact rooms for nursing mothers at the home of the 18th Wing on Okinawa.

The "lactation pods" are available at the Rocker Enlisted Club, the Officers' Club and the Schilling Community Center, according to a post on the base's official Facebook page.

The pods are not the first at a Pacific air base; last year Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo installed one in its passenger ter-

minal.

The post credited the Air Force Women's Initiative Team with helping to create pods at Kadena. The service-wide initiative was created to identify and "advocate to eliminate" barriers to women's service in the Air Force through policy changes, according to its mission statement posted online.

The Air Force mandated in 2019 that units provide nursing mothers access to a lactation room that is private, secure and sanitary with proper ventilation.

According to the policy, lacta-

tion rooms must have a table, a place to sit, electrical outlets, adequate lighting and comfortable temperatures. The rooms are also required to be near a source of hot and cold water for handwashing and sanitizing breast pumps and parts.

A medium-sized pod with a lounge chair and sink costs around \$13,000, said 1st Lt. Mary Davison, the 18th Wing women's initiative team leader.

"There will be more lactation pods at different locations around Kadena Air Base in the

future, as multiple units have requested pods for their facilities," she said. "This fiscal year, we plan to purchase the last few lactation pods needed to bring the Wing into compliance."

The new lactation pods received positive feedback from some nursing mothers at Kadena.

"I think they're a wonderful much needed addition," Katie Borgen, Air Force veteran and active-duty spouse, told Stars and Stripes recently by Facebook Messenger. "Having somewhere

I can take my 4-month-old and feed him comfortably is a necessity."

Borgen said she couldn't find a place to comfortably feed her baby, 6 weeks old at the time, during a March event at the enlisted club.

"I had to sit in a corner of the hallway against the window and try to drape a blanket over his head so I could have some privacy and modesty," she said.

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MILITARY

Additional kosher, halal options urged

DeCA is working on improving its selection, a spokeswoman says

By **KELLY AGEE**
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Commissary Agency is working on improving its selection of kosher and halal foods to accommodate members of the Jewish and Islamic faiths, according to a DeCA spokeswoman.

Tens of thousands of military beneficiaries practice a religion that carries unique dietary requirements, but commissaries have limited supply, integration and promotion of certified kosher and halal options, according to a recent letter to the agency from two congresswomen.

“We request DeCA urgently address issues regarding access to foods that meet religious dietary restrictions,” Reps. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., and Chrissy Houlahan, D-Pa., wrote to commissary director John Hall.

“This neglect undermines the diversity and appreciation of the military community and discourages specific religious groups from serving,” the lawmakers wrote. “No active-duty personnel should have to sacrifice their faith to serve in our military.”

DeCA already stocks more than 16,000 kosher products and nearly 400 halal products, DeCA Headquarters and Support Center spokeswoman Tressa Smith said.

After reviewing its kosher and halal offerings, DeCA solicited additional halal options from the food industry, Smith said.

“From giving notice to getting newly selected products onto the shelf, the process takes several months,” she said. “DeCA is

looking for an opportunity to create a Ramadan promotional package, in addition to its Passover package.”

DeCA recently added Pre Brands beef, which is certified halal, to all stateside commissaries after testing it in smaller markets, Smith said.

“The Defense Commissary Agency has a mission to deliver a benefit that improves the quality of life and readiness of its military patrons,” she said. “Providing an assortment that speaks to its patrons’ preferences and needs — including religious dietary options — is a vital component of DeCA’s effort to be its patrons’ grocery provider of choice.”

Approximately 10,000 Jews serve on active duty in the United States military, Lauren Magy, a spokeswoman for the Jewish Community Centers of North America, said.

Approximately 5,000 Muslims are serving, according to Department of Defense data from 2023.

“The Jewish and the Muslim population are kind of struggling to source food, especially here in Japan,” Air Force spouse Alaa Rodriguez said recently at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo.

Rodriguez, a Muslim from Manama, Bahrain, follows the halal diet. She bought meats from Tokyo Camii and Diyanet Turkish Culture Center in Shibuya, more than an hour by train from Yokota, until she found Haijima Halal Food, a five-minute drive from the base.

“For people that are here on a longer term, they have other options and know where to get



PHOTOS BY KELLY AGEE/Stars and Stripes

A shopper enters the commissary at Yokota Air Base in western Tokyo.



The Defense Commissary Agency stocks more than 16,000 kosher and nearly 400 halal products, according to DeCA Headquarters and Support Center spokeswoman Tressa Smith.

the food that they’re comfortable eating,” she said. “But for people that are here for a short period of time and want a quick solution, they don’t find it at the commissary, and it makes their life challenging.”

At Yokota alone there are 10 Jewish and 16 Muslim service members, Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Joseph Friedman said.

Friedman, a rabbi, said many military Jews are nonobservant, partly because fresh kosher

items usually appear on commissary shelves around Passover in spring and tend to run out during the year.

“Kosher food is something that we can’t wait on once a year for,” said Friedman, who holds a Sabbath dinner at Yokota every Saturday.

Kosher markets in Tokyo are hard to come by, he added.

“There are little things [that] could be added by DeCA that would make a difference to Jewish service members,” Friedman said. For instance, the commissary could stock the kosher variety of many ordinary items, such as macaroni and cheese, that are acceptable to people of any faith.

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Austin considering turning USFJ into a 4-star command

By **SETH ROBSON**
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin is looking “very closely” at a proposal to put a four-star general in charge of U.S. Forces Japan.

The secretary told reporters about the plan at the Shangri-La Dialogue defense forum in Singapore.

“This is something that we’re looking at very closely,” he said, according to a transcript of his remarks posted on the Defense Department website.

Austin said he had no announcement to make at the time about changes to USFJ. “We want to get it right the first time.”

“In terms of the command-

and-control capability, we absolutely support Japan’s decision to stand up a joint headquarters,” he said in Singapore.

USFJ, headquartered at Yokota in western Tokyo, is led by Air Force Lt. Gen. Ricky Rupp, who is also in charge of 5th Air Force. The command serves as a liaison between the U.S. military throughout the country and the government of Japan.

“We are unable to speculate on any potential future decision points for our senior leaders,” a USFJ spokesman, Air Force Maj. Thomas Barger, said by email. “USFJ leadership and staff continue to advance the U.S.-Japan Alliance amidst an increasingly severe security environment in

the region.”

Upgrading the USFJ commander’s rank is symbolic but it’s unclear what the practical benefits are, said Ralph Cossa, a retired Air Force officer and former president of the Pacific Forum think tank in Hawaii.

“The most logical rationale would be to make USFJ and USFK (U.S. Forces Korea) commanders equivalents given the plan to upgrade the U.S.-Japan [military-to-military] relationship,” he said by email.

Combined Forces Command, which unifies USFK with the South Korean armed forces, is led by USFK commander Gen. Paul LaCamera, with a South Korean deputy commander. In a

conflict, it would serve as the operational headquarters for all U.S. and South Korean forces.

A higher ranked commander makes no difference in terms of improved ability to fight and win a war, said Grant Newsham, a retired Marine colonel and senior researcher with the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies in Tokyo.

“What USFJ needs is the structure, resources, forces, command authority, and mission to be a real warfighting command — not a force that just apologizes to [the government of Japan] now and then when U.S. forces misbehave and passes messages back and forth,” he said by email. “Without the aforementioned, it really

doesn’t matter if USFJ is a four-star or any other star.”

Plans to restructure USFJ were reported by The Financial Times in March. The aim is to boost military planning and drills involving the allies, according to the report newspaper, which did not reveal its sources.

Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said at the time that discussions were underway about strengthening cooperation on command and control to improve the militaries’ readiness, training methods and ability to use each other’s equipment.

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MILITARY

Coast Guard leader berated at hearing

Admiral blasted for her handling of sex-assault scandal, cover-up

BY ROSE L. THAYER
Stars and Stripes

Senators berated the Coast Guard's top admiral for her handling of the service's sex assault scandal, chiding her for not punishing anyone for the cover-up and stalling their request for more documents about the mishandling of the crisis at the service's academy.

The Coast Guard "is refusing to provide us with documents deemed 'sensitive,' which is another word for embarrassing," said Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn. "This situation demands unsparing truth telling, following the evidence where it leads and being willing to face that truth, even though it may be embarrassing to friends, colleagues, predecessors and current leadership."

Blumenthal is the chairman of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' subpanel on investigations, which is examining the cover-up of Operation Fouled Anchor — a 2020 report based on a five-year inquiry into the handling of sexual assault and harassment at the Coast Guard Academy prior to 2006.

The Coast Guard only notified Congress about the existence of Fouled Anchor after CNN reporters began digging into it in 2023 — three years after the service decided not to disclose the investigative report.

Adm. Linda Fagan, the Coast Guard commandant, sat before the subpanel and faced heated questions and statements from senators about transparency, accountability and the Coast Guard's ongoing efforts to quiet the voices of sexual misconduct survivors.

Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, the top Republican on the subpanel, fanned pages of Coast



MARIAM ZUHAIB/AP

Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Linda Fagan testifies during a recent Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs subcommittee hearing on June 11 in Washington.

Guard documents covered in black-ink redactions.

"This is not full transparency," he said. "The sooner that the Coast Guard comes clean, becomes fully transparent, holds people accountable ... the finest among us can feel safe at the academy and in service to this country."

But Fagan said she has been compliant, providing roughly 18,000 documents to the subpanel — and she will hold people accountable as investigations conclude and require it.

The service's inspector general has an open review into Fouled Anchor's cover up, and the admiral said Congress provided \$1.5 million for a third-party to investigate. A contract is nearly complete for that to begin, she said.

"This is not a cover-up," Fagan said. "I am committed to providing documents in good faith. This is an incredible organization and I am committed to bringing the organization forward and making the culture change necessary."

The hearing room was packed with people and required an overflow seating area. The crowd included Coast Guard veterans who have previously testified to the subpanel about Operation Fouled Anchor. They were joined by Shannon Norenberg, who recently resigned as the sexual assault response coordinator at the academy after she said she discovered she was used in 2018 to mislead victims.

Some in the crowd applauded when Blumenthal told Fagan the investigation "cannot be used as



JACK SAUER/AP

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn.

a shield for inaction."

Yet the admiral continued to deflect pointed questions on several occasions, stating she is complying with the inspector general's investigation.

Johnson said he wanted Fagan to provide the original 11-page report written to summarize the Fouled Anchor investigation. The subpanel has only received a six-page version.

Fagan said she has not read the early draft of the report to which he was referring, but Johnson could review the requested document "in camera," which means he is not allowed to take notes or retain a copy for

himself.

Fouled Anchor reviewed the mishandling of sexual assault reports at the academy from the early 1990s to 2006, though Blumenthal said Norenberg is among 40 whistleblowers to contact the subpanel in last few months.

"This problem is not one of the past," he said. "It is real and present. It is persistent and unacceptably prevalent. The evidence is not my voice, it's the voices and faces of the whistleblowers."

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 & DROP OFF
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 THE JUNE 29 DRAWING:
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JUNE 28, 2024
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