It’s been almost five years since my husband wore his uniform. But in that time, we’ve continued to be a military family, first and foremost. We can’t help it. Francis’ Navy uniforms may be hanging in a storage closet (and may not fit anymore), but we’ll always wear our service-mindedness on our sleeves.

For some, transitioning out of the military can be challenging. There have been many moments in the past five years when we longed for the camaraderie of our base housing neighbors; clear hierarchies; mutual respect; a strict sense of duty, order and responsibility.

At first, it was difficult for us to understand corporate America. We learned that “I’ll email you next week” actually means “I may contact you in a month or two, but you probably won’t hear from me again.” A big smile, a hearty handshake and a promise to hit the links for a round of golf is meaningless posturing. Unfortunately, some who say “thank you for your service” have no real interest in what an active-duty military family experiences. Fooled many times, we believed naively in civilian professional and social opportunities, until we discovered they were empty rabbit holes.

By Lisa Smith Molinari, Special to Stars and Stripes

Still serving after the service

It’s been almost five years since my husband wore his uniform. But in that time, we’ve continued to be a military family, first and foremost. We can’t help it. After 28 years of service, it’s engrained, rooted, part and parcel of who we are. Francis’ Navy uniforms may be hanging in a storage closet (and may not fit anymore), but we’ll always wear our service-mindedness on our sleeves.

For some, transitioning out of the military can be challenging. There have been many moments in the past five years when we longed for the camaraderie of our base housing neighbors; clear hierarchies; mutual respect; a strict sense of duty, order and responsibility.

At first, it was difficult for us to understand corporate America. We learned that “I’ll email you next week” actually means “I may contact you in a month or two, but you probably won’t hear from me again.” A big smile, a hearty handshake and a promise to hit the links for a round of golf is meaningless posturing. Unfortunately, some who say “thank you for your service” have no real interest in what an active-duty military family experiences. Fooled many times, we believed naively in civilian professional and social opportunities, until we discovered they were empty rabbit holes.
MPSRON 3 sailor meritoriously promoted

PETTY OFFICER FIRST CLASS KHONG DUONG was meritoriously promoted to his current rank by the commodore of Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron 3 in Guam.

“I am so excited and definitely surprised,” the assistant supply officer said.

It was no surprise to his boss. Capt. John Bub, commodore of MPSRON 3, says Duong’s infectious can-do, will-do, did-it attitude contributed to Duong’s selection for promotion.

“He has been performing as a first class petty officer since I reported to MPSRON 3,” Bub said.

“Petty Officer Duong always raises his hand for the more challenging jobs and has volunteered for a number of collateral duties – in addition to superbly executing his primary responsibilities – each and every day."

The Navy's Meritorious Advancement Program empowers leaders like Bub to advance their personnel. The MAP is responsible for 20 percent of all enlisted advancements each year.

"The program is intended to give (commanding officers) the opportunity to recognize their best sailors by advancing them when they are ready for the next level of responsibility. The program gives greater authority to commands to better shape their workforce and the Navy by developing and rewarding our most talented sailors," according to a Navy website.

For his part, Duong says he realizes the additional chevron, higher rank and bigger paycheck mean more responsibilities, and he says he looks forward to the challenges and opportunities.

While he believes a good work ethic, respect for others, hard work and efficiency are the keys to his success, Duong also claims he still has more to learn.

“I decided to join because I wanted to see the world; I wanted to have more experience in leadership and to learn new things,” the logistics specialist said earlier this year when he was selected as Military Sealift Command Far East’s Junior Sailor of the Year.

At the time of his promotion, Duong echoed the sentiment, adding that he’s still learning every day, especially from the MPSRON 3 leadership.

“I could not come this far without their mentorship and their trust in me and without the support of my wife.”

– Capt. John Bub, commodore of MPSRON 3

RING IN THE SAVINGS NOW!

RED NOVEMBER

$300 Off Select Smartphones
Up to 95% off accessories
Big Prepaid Bonus

671-688-CARE
docomopacific.com
Starting November 19 – December 31, 2021

Gift Guide 2021

Let them capture the magic of the season.

With our most advanced dual-camera system, iPhone 13 is packed with powerful new ways to shoot photos and video.

**iPhone 13**

FREE*

**iPhone 13 Pro**

$199*

iPhone 13 Pro (128 GB)

**$299**

iPhone 13 Pro Max (128 GB)

**$394**

Apple Watch 7 41mm

Reg. $419

**$424**

Apple Watch 7 45mm

Reg. $449

* iPhone 13 requires a 2 year Live Limitless wireless plan. Offer available to all new and existing customers. Other terms and conditions may apply.
ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – Students and faculty from the University of Guam (UOG) and Water & Environmental Research Institute (WERI) of the Western Pacific studied karst terrain features on Andersen Air Force Base, Oct. 8, 2021. Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Marianas environmental specialists assigned to Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Blaz escorted and introduced the group to the two major categories of naturally-formed closed depressions of karst terrain during the tour, solution dolines and cenotes, both of which are sinkholes.

Karst refers to the study of subterranean channels formed through the dissolution of rock. Karst hydrogeology expands upon the field of study to include the groundwater that flows within karst systems.

“These two sinkholes are world-class, textbook-quality features for teaching and studying karst hydrogeology,” said John W. Jenson, UOG chief hydrogeologist and professor of environmental geology, and WERI Western Pacific director.

The solution doline at North Ramp is a natural karst drainage feature, capable of handling up to eight inches of stormwater per hour from intense rainfall and tropical cyclones. Solution dolines are created from the top-down dissolution of soluble limestone surface by ponded water, which results in the gentle gradation of terrain with no obvious signs of disturbance on the surface.

Tarague Well 4 is a textbook example of a cenote, a type of sinkhole formed by the collapse of limestone bedrock that exposes groundwater. Cenotes were often used by ancient societies, like the Mayans, as a freshwater source or for ceremonies and rituals.

Jenson described the experience as, “a world-class example of best-practice collaboration in doing and using applied science to solve local practical problems. Incorporating our collaboration into our graduate instruction program is a hugely valuable investment in our local professional workforce.”

“Now that we have these world-class examples of sinkhole and karst terrain, our students will be well prepared for their careers in environmental science,” said Antolin, NAVFAC Marianas environmental compliance specialist lead, MCB Camp Blaz. “Camp Blaz Environmental is thankful for Dr. Jensen’s generosity with time on sharing his wealth of knowledge on hydrogeology which is applicable to our ongoing military build-up construction.”

MCB Camp Blaz works with our partners, by exchanging information and implementing deliberate, cooperative measures to ensure a responsible military build-up process. Additional information and resources can be found on the MCB Camp Blaz website. For the latest news and updates, visit https://www.mcb-blaz.marines.mil/.
BUY BACK EVENT ALL MONTH LONG!

LEAVING ISLAND? WE WANT YOUR CAR.

$1,000*
GET ANY MAKE, ANY MODEL. PAID FOR OR NOT.
MICRONESIA MALL CERTIFICATES WITH YOUR TRADE-IN OR BUY BACK.

THREE EASY STEPS!
1 BRING IN YOUR VEHICLE!
2 RECEIVE AN OFFER!
3 SELL US YOUR VEHICLE!

SCAN TO VALUE YOUR TRADE-IN.

*Conditions apply. See dealer for details. Vector created by freepik.

Atkins Kroll Inc.
443 South Marine Corps Drive,
Tamuning, Guam 96913

Call (671) 648-8481
Showroom Hours: Monday – Friday 8am to 6pm
Saturday 8am to 5pm | Sunday 10am to 4 pm

ONLINE SHOPPER - AKguam.com!
Santa Marian Kamalen, also known as Our Lady of Camarin, is the patron saint of Guam. The 300-year-old Santa Marian Kamalen statue is a revered icon, and although its origins are unknown, they are explained through oral tradition. Every year, several repaintings of the statue are conducted. The origins of the Immaculate Conception are celebrated, and Guam Catholics turn out by the thousands in Hagatña to honor Santa Marian Kamalen in a procession around the island’s capital.

The statue of Santa Marian Kamalen is 28 3/4 inches tall and weighs 48 1/2 pounds. It is made of wood, except for the ivory face and folded hands. She is painted with a regal pink and blue gown and sits high in a niche in the sanctuary wall behind the altar.

Santa Marian Kamalen’s origins are shrouded in legend and she was the subject of front-page headlines when she was stolen from her home in the cathedral church of Dulce Nombre de María. She was also known as the Lady of the Barracks.

She was then adopted as the Dotacíon’s patroness and when the Presidio was completed in 1736, placed in its chapel. The Dotacíon celebrated the feast day of their patron on December 8, and this continued until the Dotacíon was disbanded in 1884 after several of its members were involved in assassinating the Spanish governor, Don Angel de Paza Vela-Hidalgo. Santa Marian Kamalen was then placed in the church of Dulce Nombre de María, which later became the cathedral.

Origin speculation

When Father Oscar L. Calvo brought the statue to Manila in 1948 to be refurbished, art connoisseur Maximo Vicente stated the statue’s wood native to molave, a hard wood native to Guam, was severely damaged. Many of the statues of the church were broken but not that of Our Lady of Camarin, which the pastor, Father José Palomo, found standing intact on the ground. The statue also survived fire, when on December 8, 1945, it was rescued from a burning float by Jose D. Leon Guerrero. Because the statue had suffered discolorations, nicks and other minor defects in the course of time, minor repairs had been made. According to one story, during one occasion when repairs were being made, the scraping of her face was too rough, and the face began to bleed. Other miracles attributed to the statue include belief in her powers of intercession, cures of dreadful diseases, and safe removal from great danger. She has long been considered by many the protector of the island and its people.

Famous thefts

Santa Marian Kamalen made front page headlines in Guam newspapers in 1937, 1968, and 1971. Each time the statue was stolen, it was returned to the church. Historian José Palomo, who served as pastor of the Dulce Nombre de Maria church was then placed in the church of Dulce Nombre de María, which later became the cathedral.

In a famous theft, on May 19, 1968, when police conducted a desperate search and residents flocked to the cathedral to view the empty niche, the statue was returned within two weeks. The identification along with records of local suspects. The statue was returned and the incident was closed. Bishop Apolinaris Baumgartner wouldn’t disclose the details of who returned the statue, but he had promised there would be no arrest and the return would be confidential.

Three years later, on May 3, 1971, the statue was stolen for the second time. Church officials asked for it to be returned. In 1971, Mayor Oscar L. Calvo promised that there would be no repercussions and no arrests would be made. After a long search, the statue was returned within two weeks. On December 28, 1992, the statue was stolen for a third time. Once again, Archbishop Anthony
Apuron promised that no criminal action would be taken against the responsible person or people if the statue was returned. The statue was found more than a month later, on Feb. 3, 1993, by a government worker who claimed the sacred statue waved to him. Parks and Recreation worker Juan C. Perez said he was cutting the bushes at about 9:45 a.m. that morning, near the stone bridge in the Serena park in Hagåtña, when he noticed someone waving at him. It turned out to be Santa Marian Kamalen. It was in good shape but was missing its necklace and crown.

Hagåtña procession

While processions are held every month to celebrate the patron saints of the various villages, the procession for Guam’s patron saint celebrated on December 8 each year is by far the largest.

Beginning mid-afternoon on December 8, large numbers of parishioners from each village church begin to assemble outside the Cathedral-Basilica in Hagåtña. A rosary and novena are said, usually starting at 3:30 p.m., and as the thousands of people gathered cannot fit inside the large cathedral, it is held outside, on the lawn and the streets surrounding the cathedral.

Once the novena is over, the procession starts at 4 p.m., making a loop around Hagåtña along the connecting roads of Archbishop Flores St., West O’Brien Drive, and West Soledad Avenue.

December 8 is a government holiday on Guam.

Gown and ornaments

The statue of Santa Marian Kamalen has real human hair and two crowns are used to dress the statue. One of the crowns is made from gold pieces given to the church by the late Ana Martinez Underwood, who donated the gold pieces (given to her by her husband as a wedding gift) in thanksgiving for the safe return of her husband from prison camp following World War II. Preparing the statue for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on December 8 is an honored job that was held by Mariquita “Tita” Torres Souder for many years after the war. She would comb the long black hair of the statue, arrange her crown and jewelry and place roses on her carriage. In December 2003, that job was given to her daughter, Laura M. Torres Souder, after Mariquita Souder died in October 2003. The real Santa Marian Kamalen is used only for the islandwide procession on December 8, and on other occasions a replica is substituted.

National Shrine project

In 2004, former Senator Pilar Lujan, Guam Regent of the Catholic Daughters of America, working with Archbishop Apuron, began a petition for the inclusion of Santa Marian Kamalen into the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C., which includes more than sixty chapels and oratories with various tributes to Mary from around the world.

In October 2004, Lujan made a presentation to the Shrine Iconography and Plant and Facilities Committees. Guam was subsequently awarded a spot in the Shrine and was given one year to design, develop and construct a physical representation of Santa Marian Kamalen’s story. A Guam-based committee was then formed to develop the project. The committee raised $75,000 for construction of the niche, and another $20,000 for accessories, and Father James Benavente personally raised $10,000 for the statue itself. Construction was completed and the ceremony to enshrine a replica of Santa Marian Kamalen at the Basilica took place on September 17, 2006.
A VILLAGE PROFILE COURTESY OF GUAMPEDIA

BY LEO BABAUTA, GUAMPEDIA

The village derives its name from the word uma, which means to carry something on the back or a heavy load on the shoulders.

Village history

The history of Humåtak is among the most rich of all the villages of Guam, especially during the Spanish era. Among other distinctions, Humåtak is the home to Fouha Bay in which a rock called “Fouha” Rock sits. The ancient Chamoros believed this rock to be the resting place of a goddess called Fu’una who, with her brother Puntan, is credited with creating the world and people. The rock is also called Creation Point.

The pre-contact Chamoros made a pilgrimage to the rock every year to pay homage to Fu’una and to have their rice blessed to be used to cure people, according to Spanish accounts. Humåtak is perhaps most famous for being the site, by long oral tradition among the Chamoros, Ferdinand Magellan first landed on Guam. Humåtak residents still celebrate every March with a re-enactment of the 1521 landing on Guam History and Chamoru Heritage Day. The celebration was previously held every March 21, known formerly on Guam as Discovery Day.

The next landing by Europeans on Guam, that of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, 44 years later in 1565, was indisputably at Humåtak. Legazpi anchored at Humåtak Bay for 13 days and formally claimed Guam for Spain. During his stay, a Catholic mass was celebrated in a large cruciform canoe house by the bay.

By the time of Legazpi’s visit, Humåtak was already a Chamorro coastal settlement that included a large communal house raised on latte stones, so spacious it could accommodate 200 people along with large canoes, as described by the Europeans. There were also other low houses in which the Chamoros cooked and roasted food.

Humåtak was the chief port for the Spanish during the early galleon days, when it was visited annually by a galleon from Acapulco, usually in May or June. In late 1680, a Spanish settlement was established at Humåtak for the first time to serve the galleons, along with a supply ship that stopped on Guam from Cavite in the Philippines, usually in August or September. The supply ship brought necessities such as soap, flour, tools, metal, animals, and seeds. The galleon also brought supplies, but mainly Spanish money of Mexican silver to pay soldiers and mission personnel.

These visits were so important that the Spanish governor transferred his residence from Hagåtña to Humåtak when the ships were expected. Governor Damian de Esplana built the governor’s palace, or palacio, or palace, surrounded by a presidio compound in Humåtak in 1690. After the supplies were unloaded from the ships, they were transported by boat from Humåtak around Orote Point to Hagåtña since no road existed between the two towns.

Between 1680 and 1810, the first fortification built in the presidio was the Bateria de Nuestra Senora Del Carmen located in the bay. In 1756, Fort Santo Angel was built at the entrance of the bay on top of a large rock. The third structure, Fort Soledad, was built around 1805 on a hill located north of the village. Lastly, one of the most popular tourists sites on island, is Fort Nuestra Senora de la Soledad or Fort Soledad. It was built around 1810 above the southern part of the bay.

The Spanish attempted to link Humåtak and Hagåtña with a monumental road project with the help of Filipino workers, but the road was never completed. Remnants of the project are historical sites today, including stone bridges in Humåtak, Sella Bay, and Hagåtña.
This village at a glance

- **Population:** As of the 2010 Census, the population was 782, which is 105 fewer residents than in the 2000 Census.

- **Village officials:** Johnny A. Quinata, Mayor, 2013-Present; Daniel Q. Sanchez, Mayor, 2005-2012; Tony A. Quinata, Mayor, 2001-2005; Jesus A. Aquiningoc, Mayor, 1997-2001; Jose T. Quinata, Mayor, 1992-1997; Dean Q. Sanchez, Acting Mayor, 1991-1992; Albert T. Topasna, Commissioner/Mayor, 1989-1991; Cecilia Q. Morrison, Commissioner, 1985-1989; Albert T. Topasna, Commissioner, 1969-1985; Jesus T. Quinata, Commissioner, 1961-1969; Jesus S. Quinata, Commissioner, 1952-1961; Gregorio M. Camacho, (no title or dates provided); Helarion Quinata, Commissioner, (no dates provided); Agustin Quinata, Commissioner, (no dates provided); Jose Golgan, Commissioner, (no dates provided); (Courtesy of Konselahan Mahot Guahan the Mayor's Council of Guam.)

- **Village description:** The small village of Humátk is located in southern Guam along Humátk Bay. The community of Humátk is relatively smaller than others on Guam and made up of a handful of residents, many of whom are related to each other. Interspersed between old houses that sit along the bay’s shoreline are ruins that have become prominent reminders of the Spanish colonial era in the village. Plaque placed throughout the village describe the Spanish era to visitors. Remains of this era include the former Spanish governor’s residence, the site of the old San Dionisio church, Fort Santo Angel, and Fort Nuestra Senora de la Soledad.

- **Road description:** After the bridge, the road runs uphill, where visitors can turn off into a small park to see the ruins of Fort Nuestra Senora de la Soledad. A bumply two-lane road runs through the center of the village, and visitors coming down into Humátk from the steep hills in the north will first notice stones placed into a hillside in the shape of the island of Guam, welcoming them to the village. A couple of small stores and the San Dionisio Church, built at its current location in 1939, sit along the road. The road, with houses built in the first half of the last century, then opens up into a spectacular view of the bay before coming to a small park with a children’s playground built by IT&E in the 1990s. Adjacent to the park is the mayor’s office, right on the beach, with perhaps the best view of any mayor’s office on Guam.

- **Historical sites:** At the center of the bay is an obelisk monument to Ferdinand Magellan’s landing in 1521, bearing the inscription, “Magellan landed here.” The bay is also home to some of the island’s best surfing. The road then crosses the Humátk Bridge, constructed with towers reminiscent of London Bridge. The bridge dates not back to the Spanish times, as visitors often assume, but to the 1980s under the helm of Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo.

- **Spanish forts:** After the bridge, the road runs uphill, where visitors can turn off into a small park to see the ruins of Fort Nuestra Senora de la Soledad (commonly referred to as Fort Soledad), constructed with towers reminiscent of London Bridge. The bridge dates not back to the Spanish times, as visitors often assume, but to the 1980s under the helm of Governor Ricardo J. Bordallo.

- **Points of interest:**

  **Fouha Bay/Creation Point**

  Umatac is the home to Fouha Bay in which “Fouha Rock” sits. The ancient CHamorus believed this rock to be the resting place of a goddess called Pu‘u‘uha who, with her brother Punatau, created the world and people.

  **F.O. Sanchez Elementary School**

  Francisco Quintal Sanchez Elementary School, more commonly referred to as F.Q. Sanchez Elementary, is one of 25 public elementary schools on Guam. It was named in honor of Sanchez who was an 20th century pioneer educator and politician of Guam. Because of its small student population, lawmak- ers proposed closing the school and sending its students to Merizo Martyrs Elementary School in the neighboring southern village. Humátk residents, however, strongly opposed this move.

  In 1998, the school was listed in both the Guam and the National registers of historic places. It was constructed in 1953 by world-renowned architect Richard Nueta who also designed the Guam Government House.

  **Guam Veteran’s Memorial**

  The park overlooks the hillside of Humátk and is dedicated to the 74 CHamoru men listed on a plaque at the site who died in the Vietnam War. The park was developed by the Guam Women’s Club in 1971 and is a popular stop for tourists. A special Mass is held at the site each Memorial Day.

  **San Dionisio Church**

  The church of San Dionisio was constructed of wood with a palm thatched roof and dedicated in 1681. It was later burned in 1684 by those CHamorus who opposed the Spanish, rebuilt again of wood, and destroyed again by a typhoon in 1693. It was rebuilt in 1694 of coral masonry.

  By 1690, after two European disease epidemics killed a large number of CHamorus, Humátk was the largest of five parishes on Guam, with 700 people. In the early 1700s, Rota, Guam’s neighbor is-
To ensure delivery of holiday gifts by Dec. 25, the Postal Service recommends that cards and packages be sent to military APO/FPO/DPO addresses overseas no later than the mailing dates listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Mail Addressed To and From</th>
<th>Priority Mail Express Military Service (PMEMS)</th>
<th>First-Class Mail Letters and Cards</th>
<th>Priority Mail Parcel Air Mail (PAL)</th>
<th>Space Available Mail (SAM)</th>
<th>Retail Ground</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 090-092</td>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Service no longer available</td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 093</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Service no longer available</td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 094-099</td>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIP 340</td>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APO/FPO/DPO AE ZIPs 982-985</td>
<td>Dec. 16</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nov. 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 – PMEMS is available to selected military/diplomatic Post Offices. Check with your local Post Office to determine if this service is available to an APO/FPO/DPO address.

Mailing tips
Print names and addresses of both shipper and recipient clearly on packages with a pen or permanent marker.

*Special handling* – Offers preferential handling if you’re sending something that needs extra care.

Holiday mailing deadlines between the Pacific and CONUS

https://www.usps.com/holiday/holiday-shipping-dates.htm

Put an extra label with the addresses inside the package in case the original one is defaced. Also include an itemized list of contents.

Select a box strong enough to protect the contents and appropriate for the amount and size of items inside.

Leave space for cushioning inside the carton, using bubble wrap, Styrofoam peanuts, or newspaper to protect the contents.

Use tape designed for shipping, using enough to secure the opening and seams of the box.

Put newspaper or packing material in hollow items to avoid damage during transport.

Write “fragile” or “perishable” on packages when shipping such items.

Use boxes, envelopes and tubes the post office provides for Express Mail and Priority Mail.

– Military Postal Service Agency
Proud to serve those who serve.

With a great selection of vehicles and convenient locations in Navy, Andersen, and the Guam International Airport, you can do and see more on island with Enterprise.

**Andersen Passenger Terminal**
Open Daily: 0800 - 1630

To reserve, call 653-7368
or 649-0110 (24/7)

**NEX Autoport Service Center**
Open Monday - Saturday: 0800 - 1630
Closed Sundays

To reserve, call 564-1870
or 649-0110 (24/7)

©2021 Enterprise Rent-A-Car. All other logos are the property of their respective owners.
SERVING: Service above self has big impact

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

As a result, we sought connections with people and organizations with familiar military values and experiences. Since transitioning to civilian life and establishing a permanent home in a New England village, Francis joined the local VFW and American Legion to be with other veterans. We’re members of USAA, MOAA and the Naval War College Foundation. We still use the base gym, exchange, pharmacy, clinic, commissary, package store, gas station and thrift shop.

However, last week, we stepped out of the cozy confines of our military comfort zone. A neighbor, Winn, invited Francis of us to attend a Rotary Club breakfast meeting. When the alarm went off at 0-dark-thirty, I groaned. “Why do I have to go? Isn’t it a men’s club?” I asked Francis, who insists on being 15 minutes early for everything.

“When I told Winn we’d be there,” Francis barked, “and no, Rotary’s been open to women since 1987, no jump in the shower, would you please?”

Thirty minutes later, we were in St. Matthews Church rectory, hands on hearts, reciting the Pledge of Allegiance with 15 local Rotary Club members. The club’s blue banner hung in the corner. Dog-eared song books lay on folding tables before us. “Winn, pick one for us to sing this morning,” the club president asked our host.

At Winn’s command, we turned to page 58 and sang “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad,” a tune that hadn’t crossed my windpipes since middle school. “Pie, fi, fiddy i o o ... Be, fi, fiddy i oohohoh!” we belted, as the sky outside the rectory windows heralded another windy New England day.

Dinah hadn’t blown her horn, but we filled paper plates with a hot cooked breakfast in the rectory kitchen, then the meeting commenced. The visiting Rotary District Governor peppered members with questions, and volunteers took turns describing local charity bike races, Thanksgiving gatherings for needy families, Scout troop sponsorships, a grant-funded composting toilet project, donations to the Martin Luther King Center, thousands of giving baskets for needy families, Scout troop sponsorships, a grant-funded composting toilet project, donations to the Martin Luther King Center, thousands of giving baskets for needy families, Scout troop sponsorships, a grant-funded composting toilet project, donations to the Martin Luther King Center, thousands of giving baskets for needy families, Scout troop sponsorships.

We realized that the military isn’t the only place where one can serve their community, and veterans aren’t the only citizens who serve. Civilian service organizations such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Shriners, Circle K, Elks, Moose Lodge, Jaycees and others benefit millions of people worldwide through service initiatives.

Leaving the church rectory that morning, we noticed a familiar motto written on the Rotary keychain given to us by the District Governor — “Service Above Self.” We smiled, because we understood completely.

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. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com

We realized that the military isn’t the only place where one can serve their community, and veterans aren’t the only citizens who serve.

experiencing food insecurity during the pandemic. Impressed by the significant impact this tiny clutch of volunteers had made on the community, I whispered, “We should join.” Francis nodded enthusiastically. We hadn’t known much about the club’s mission prior to attending the breakfast meeting. But it was clear that this group, much like our cherished military affiliations, felt an innate duty to serve.

Gratitude

We realized that the military isn’t the only place where one can serve their community, and veterans aren’t the only citizens who serve. Civilian service organizations such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis, Shriners, Circle K, Elks, Moose Lodge, Jaycees and others benefit millions of people worldwide through service initiatives.

Leaving the church rectory that morning, we noticed a familiar motto written on the Rotary keychain given to us by the District Governor — “Service Above Self.” We smiled, because we understood completely.

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. Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@gmail.com
Support for the smallest
Books for military dependents abound this season

BY TERRI BARNES, SPECIAL TO STARS AND STRIPES

This season is a bountiful one for new books for and about military kids, with picture books and chapter books for children to read independently or enjoy with parents and siblings. Books about military kids often focus — understandably — on deployment or moving, both important topics. But it’s refreshing to find stories about military kids that depict their experiences with more nuance, recognizing their lives are deep and wide as others their age. The lives of military kids — new friends, new schools, getting through deployment, and other adventures — are well represented in this list.

“Make Your Bed with Skipper the Seal” by William H. McRaven, illustrations by Howard McWilliam. This title, which hits bookshelves Nov. 16, is based on a familiar phrase from the author, a retired four-star admiral whose “make your bed” advice in a commencement speech went viral in 2014. In this picture-book version, Skipper the SEAL embarks on Navy SEAL training, where he and his fellow recruits learn perseverance, dealing with failure, and of course, to make their beds. McRaven, a former SEAL and commander of the United States Special Operations Command, said he intended this book to encourage young readers to become their best selves.

“I Move a Lot and That’s Okay” by Shermana Perry-Knights. Drawing on memories of her military childhood, Perry-Knights tells her story to reassure military kids who might not describe moving a lot as “okay.” The book is about a young girl experiencing a new environment, language, and culture when her family moves to Naples, Italy. The author said she wanted to share a message of resilience to help military children overcome the obstacles of moving and readjustment.

“The Islanders” by Mary Alice Monroe and Angela May. This is a chapter book for middle-grade readers interested in nature, conservation, and adventure. The main character, Jake, is a regular kid who happens to be from a dual-military family — Army dad, Air Force mom. After his dad is injured in Afghanistan, Jake goes to spend the summer with his eccentric grandmother, where he meets a group of kids very different from him and learns about caring for nature and the nature of friendship. “The Islanders” came out this summer. It is the first in a series about Jake and friends, with the second installment, “The Islanders: Search for Treasure,” expected in 2022.

“¡Atrapa la estrella!” by Brenda Ehrmantraut, translated by Ana Stevenson, and illustrated by Vicki Wehrman. This is a Spanish picture book, which debuted in October, is a contextual translation of Ehrmantraut’s “Night Catch,” a favorite for kids going through deployment since its first publication in 2005. Ehrmantraut wrote the book for her Army brother’s family during a year-long deployment, to help them connect while they were apart. In the story, a soldier and his son play an imaginary game of catch with the North Star. “Not ball as usual in the park, but something special after dark,” becomes, in Stevenson’s lyrical translation, “No será el mismo juego que solíamos hacer, sino algo muy especial cada atardecer.”

“Good Morning San Diego” (Good Morning Military Books series) by Sarah Murphy and Amy Dobbins. Other titles in the series: “Good Morning Guam,” “Good Morning Okinawa,” and “Good Morning Yokosuka.” Plenty of new ideas were hatched during the pandemic lockdown, and this new series is one of them. Murphy and Dobbins, both military spouses, created the books to introduce kids to various military duty stations. The authors say the Yokosuka book is about the Navy base there, but their other titles are appropriate for kids in any military branch about to move to one of these locations. The books also provide a way for military kids living in those places to start conversations with extended family and faraway friends about where they live. The authors plan to add more books to the series.

“I Fish in a Tree” by Lynda Mulally Hunt. This middle-grade story came out in 2015 but is worth reading because it includes something that is often overlooked — how successive school changes affect learning for military kids. Fifth-grader Ally has a secret; She can’t read. Because of frequent military moves and her clever use of classroom disruptions, Ally has been able to keep her secret from one school to the next. Until a new teacher, Mr. Daniels, discovers Ally is not a troublemaker but a bright girl who happens to have dyslexia. Mr. Daniels helps Ally find effective ways to learn and make friends. She realizes other kids in her class need help and friendship too, and she doesn’t need to keep her secret anymore.

Terri Barnes is a book editor and the author of “Spouse Calls: Messages from a Military Life,” based on her long-running column in Stars and Stripes. A collector and lover of children’s literature, she has been known to give picture books to everyone on her Christmas gift list. Contact her online at terribarnesauthor.com.
Call G.A.I.N. (Guam Animals In Need) Animal Shelter in Yigo at 653-4246 or visit <www.guamanimals.org> for more information on adopting this pet. G.A.I.N. is a shelter-based humane society with a mission to prevent cruelty to animals, educate the public and promote good animal laws. Under Water World will donate one adult admission for every Pet of the Week adopted.

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

Stella
This beautiful female kitten is estimated to be about 22 weeks old. She is a very vocal kitten who wants her presence known. Stella is super friendly and loves to be loved on. She is looking for that special family to come and adopt her.

G.A.I.N.

Halloween photo contest winners

We loved all of your spooky and fun costumes for this year’s Halloween photo contest! Many Stripes readers sent their submissions and many more voted for their favorites. This year, Sara Arellano Santos from Yokota Air Base won the $40 prize for Best Costume; Aaron Valdez from Kadena Air Base is taking home $20 for the Best Pet Costume and Lupita La Buena from Camp Foster won the $40 Special Prize. Check out their submissions as well as some other honorable mentions below.

Sara Arellano Santos from Yokota
Lupita La Buena from Okinawa
Aaron Valdez from Okinawa
Arlene Cruz from Guam
Anna Smack
Sonnet Murray

Thank you for sponsoring 2022 Wall Calendar!

2022 Stars and Stripes Wall calendar is now available!

Please join us in paying kudos to Docomo Pacific for sponsoring our wall calendar for Guam distribution. We appreciate the support!
Boonie Stomps Guam

Halloween photo contest winners

We visit two beautiful waterfalls in central Guam with swimming and jumping.

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

Special conditions: Steep slopes, walking in mud, rocky river, and climbing with a rope.

Dec 4
Dante River
Very Difficult
6 hours & 6 miles

This long hard hike brings us along a beautiful, pristine jungle river with three big waterfalls, many smaller falls, arguably the third best swim hole on the island, and several other interesting features.

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

Special conditions: Possible mud, sword grass, steep slopes, and walking in water.

Dec 11
Agafayan Falls
Medium
4 hours & 2.5 miles

We descend to the Agafayan River ledges for jumping, sliding, and swimming in personal infinity pools. We then hike up the picturesque middle falls, stop to enjoy the beautiful Agafayan Falls, continue to Cannonball Falls, and circle back to start the hike.

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

Special conditions: Sword grass, steep slopes, and walking in water.

---

Stripes Sports Trivia

The WNBA has had its share of superstars. From Sheryl Swoopes to Lisa Leslie, Candace Parker to Maya Moore, the league has had plenty of faces. To no surprise, many of the its stars played college hoops at powerhouse UConn, including the league’s all-time scorer. Who is she?

Answer

---

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

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

Copyright 2021 by The Puzzle Syndicate

DESTINATION PARADISE

STRIPES GUAM 15
ISLAND DENTAL

WE WELCOME TRICARE!

CALL (671) 989-5999

Open on weekends! Open evenings on weekdays!

Accepting All Major Insurances

Located in Dededo
Next to American Grocery
Sunken World War II-era vessels are rising from the sea near Iwo Jima

Page 2

Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sunken naval vessels to the surface.

Heather Johnson/U.S. Marine Corps
Air Force updates fitness test to give airmen more options

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force has released updated scoring charts for its revamped physical fitness test and is giving airmen more options to meet their fitness requirements. Beginning Jan. 1, airmen performing the cardio portion of the test may choose to run either 1.5 miles on a track or a 20-minute shuttle run set up inside a basketball court, the updated guidelines said. Speed walking one’s way to aerobic fitness, however, is still not an option for most.

Service leaders said the walk would be included as a cardio component when announcing plans for the additional testing options in the summer. Airmen on a medical waiver will still be allowed to do the 2K walk — about 1.25 miles.

In a Facebook post announcing the updated test components and scoring charts, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright said the walk option was removed “until we are able to standardize the VO2 measurement equipment across every installation.”

The Air Force had proposed a 1-mile walk alternative to measure an airman’s aerobic capacity, which is also referred to as VO2 max. Scoring would incorporate time to complete the test along with the member’s age, weight and heart rate at the time of walk completion, the Air Force said in the summer.

The 20-meter high-aerobic multisport shuttle run has been described as a better measure of functional cardiovascular fitness by service officials. It requires airmen to sprint while adjusting their speed and direction, similar to what they might do if taking cover or helping others during a mortar attack.

The Air Force Reserve Command began testing and implementing the shuttle run in January 2020 as an indoor alternative to the 1.5-mile run in lieu of a weather waiver. On average, the command was issuing 1,800 to 2,000 weather waiver exemptions annually, officials said.

For the strength portion, airmen may opt to do traditional pushups or hand-release pushups.

The Army also incorporates hand-release pushups in its new combat fitness test. Soldiers are required to take the weight off their hands when at the lower position in between pushup repetitions and extend their arms out to a 90-degree angle.

Hand-release pushups tend to be harder than traditional pushups, requiring a stronger core, fitness experts say.

To max out the pushups, a 46-year-old female airman would have to complete 37 traditional pushups in one minute or 28 hand-release pushups in two minutes.

For situps, the Air Force has approved a cross-leg reverse crunch and plank, in addition to traditional situps. The alternative fitness components will not apply to the U.S. Space Force, which is developing a service-specific health assessment over the next year, the Air Force said.

svan.jennifer@stripes.com
Twitter: @jilsvan

COVERAGE STORIES

Volcanic activity raises sunken vessels

BY JONATHAN SNYDER AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

Volcanic activity beneath Iwo Jima, site of a defining World War II battle between American and Japanese forces, is pushing sunken naval vessels to the surface.

Two dozen World War II-era ships in the water just off the island’s black-sand beaches were photographed from above and reported Oct. 18 by the All-Nippon News Network. Although the ships have resurfaced previously, according to reports, a video posted online by the network brought fresh attention to the ghost fleet.

The network also reported that an underwater eruption near Iwo Jima — known as Iwo To in Japan — created a new island a half-mile square nearby. It’s the third small island to appear there since 1900. They eventually wash away.

Reports differ as to who owned the ships. The U.S. Navy sank them to create a breakwater to shield an artificial harbor where other vessels unloaded troops and supplies, according to an Oct. 23 report by The Weather Channel.

Other reports indicate Imperial Japan sank the vessels for the same purpose prior to the catastrophic battle in February and March 1945. “The ships were used by Japan to prepare for an invasion of U.S. troops,” the newspaper USA Today reported Oct. 22.

“Iwo Jima has been rising steadily over the years and is now over 50 feet above sea level,” the report said.

A spokesman for the Naval History and Heritage Command in Washington, D.C., said its underwater archaeology team has little information on the ships, even after contacting their Japanese counterparts.

Iwo Jima has been rising for years due to volcanic activity, it said, adding that it is an official with the volcanological department of the Japan Meteorological Agency said. The island has risen about three feet a year since 2014, when the agency started collecting data.

Iwo Jima is rising for years due to volcanic activity beneath it, an official with the Japan Meteorological Agency told Stars and Stripes by phone on Oct. 27. The island has risen about three feet a year since 2014, the official said.

He said the agency started collecting data that year, and the island likely rose at the same pace in previous years.

Iwo Jima lies in the western Pacific about 760 miles south of Tokyo.

The meteorological agency tracks volcanic activity around the island, including reports of water columns along its coast, the official said.

How the island rises is unclear but it may be due to magma accumulating beneath the island and forcing it to rise, the official said.

Iwo Jima is used by U.S. Navy pilots based at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni to qualify for carrier landings prior to shipping out aboard aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan, homeported at Yokosuka Naval Base.

“Carrier Air Wing 5 continually monitors events that could impact training and readiness and works closely with the Government of Japan to always remain ready to operate as part of the U.S. Navy’s only forward-deployed Carrier Strike Group,” Lt. Cdr. Joe Keiley, Task Force 70 spokesman, told Stars and Stripes by email Oct. 25.

Japan’s Defense Ministry said the volcanic activity, the rising island and hulks on the beach do not affect its operations at Iwo Jima, a ministry spokeswoman said on Nov. 1.

Japan’s Self-Defense Forces hold disaster relief and flight training on the island, the spokeswoman said.

“We have been observing closely for any effects it may have on the Self-Defense Force facility and will continue to monitor the situation,” she said.

The Navy and Japanese government have been looking for an airfield other than the one at Iwo Jima, where bad weather and logistics challenges sometimes mean the Navy’s landing practice must be relocated.

The Japanese government is developing a Self-Defense Force facility on Kagoshima prefecture’s Magashima island in western Japan to relocate the Navy’s landing practice. The ministry has acquired most of the land but will be available for use is unclear, according to the spokeswoman.

snider.jonathan@stripes.com
Twitter: @J_Snider
kusumoto.hana@stripes.com
Twitter: @HanaKusumoto
USS Rushmore steams into its new homeport at Sasebo base

By Alex Wilson  Stars and Stripes

The latest vessel to be stationed at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, arrived recently as a replacement for its sister ship, which returned to the United States two months ago.

The amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore steamed into Sasebo, on the island of Kyushu in southern Japan, on Nov. 17 after a journey across the Pacific, according to a news release from the U.S. Navy’s 7th Fleet.

Formerly homeported in San Diego, the Rushmore has been in service since 1991. The Whidbey Island-class ship has served in numerous operations over the years, including Restore Hope and Support Hope in Africa in the early 1990s and Iraqi Freedom in 2005.

“Rushmore and her Sailors look forward to continuing our service to the Navy and the Nation while forward deployed to the tip of the spear,” said the ship’s skipper, Cmndr. Emily Royse, in the news release. “Our crew is ready to join the elite blue-green team of the America Expeditionary Strike Group, and to establish positive relationships with our new host country, and our partners and allies.”

“A taste of home’

New AAFES bakery in S. Korea produces Krispy Kreme doughnuts, Wonder Bread

By David Choi  Stars and Stripes

CAMP HUMPHREYS, South Korea — The Army and Air Force Exchange Service celebrated the grand opening of a new bakery that produces American-brand goods such as Wonder Bread and Krispy Kreme doughnuts in South Korea.

The 255,800-square-foot Korea Distribution Center at Camp Humphreys, which actually began operating late last year, is AAFES’ largest product center in the Pacific. It delivers goods to federal employees in Korea, Japan, Guam, Saipan and American Samoa.

“This is all about becoming more efficient and being better able to serve our service members and our families,” Army Col. Seth Graves, Humphreys’ garrison commander, told Stars and Stripes. “I know the community is thrilled about it.”

The project took nine years and cost $20 million, according to data provided by AAFES corporate headquarters in Dallas. The center replaces an older one at Camp Market in Incheon composed of nine buildings, some of which dated to the 1930s. The relocated center will save $225,000 in transportation costs over five years.

AAFES is the 54th-largest company in the United States, with 2018 revenue of $15.2 billion, according to a company factsheet. All of the company’s earnings go toward quality-of-life programs.

“The project took nine years and cost $20 million, according to data provided by AAFES corporate headquarters in Dallas. The center replaces an older one at Camp Market in Incheon composed of nine buildings, some of which dated to the 1930s. The relocated center will save $225,000 in transportation costs over five years.”

“AFFES is the 54th-largest company in the United States, with 2018 revenue of $15.2 billion, according to a company factsheet. All of the company’s earnings go toward quality-of-life programs.”

The 255,800-square-foot Korea Distribution Center at Camp Humphreys, South Korea.

“Products made in the exchange bakery are made fresh with American flour — so it’s a true taste of home for those serving far from the comforts of friends and family,” Henson said in his email. “Our products taste just like they do back in the United States.”

Graves said the doughnuts baked at the center “taste like they just came off the factory line.”

The amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore arrives at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, on Nov. 17.

“Rushmore has a fantastic reputation, and I am certain that the team will seamlessly pick up where Germantown left off,” said Capt. Greg Baker, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11, in the release. “Commander Emily Royse brings a wealth of [forward-deployed naval forces] and Sasebo experience, and I am excited for her return to set an even higher bar of excellence as Rushmore operates with the ships, Sailors and Marines of the America Expeditionary Strike Group.”

As an amphibious dock landing ship, the Rushmore can embark, launch and recover 500 Marines and their landing craft during missions in foreign territory or far from established bases. Named for Mount Rushmore National Memorial in the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Rushmore holds a place in naval history as the first “smart ship” in the Navy’s arsenal.

In 1997, it was outfitted with updated technologies such as an electronic chart display and an integrated bridge system, effectively increasing the efficiency of the ship’s systems and crew.

The amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore steams into its new homeport at Sasebo base.

“Rushmore has a fantastic reputation, and I am certain that the team will seamlessly pick up where Germantown left off,” said Capt. Greg Baker, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11, in the release. “Commander Emily Royse brings a wealth of [forward-deployed naval forces] and Sasebo experience, and I am excited for her return to set an even higher bar of excellence as Rushmore operates with the ships, Sailors and Marines of the America Expeditionary Strike Group.”

As an amphibious dock landing ship, the Rushmore can embark, launch and recover 500 Marines and their landing craft during missions in foreign territory or far from established bases. Named for Mount Rushmore National Memorial in the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Rushmore holds a place in naval history as the first “smart ship” in the Navy’s arsenal.

In 1997, it was outfitted with updated technologies such as an electronic chart display and an integrated bridge system, effectively increasing the efficiency of the ship’s systems and crew.

The amphibious dock landing ship USS Rushmore arrives at Sasebo Naval Base, Japan, on Nov. 17.

“Rushmore has a fantastic reputation, and I am certain that the team will seamlessly pick up where Germantown left off,” said Capt. Greg Baker, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11, in the release. “Commander Emily Royse brings a wealth of [forward-deployed naval forces] and Sasebo experience, and I am excited for her return to set an even higher bar of excellence as Rushmore operates with the ships, Sailors and Marines of the America Expeditionary Strike Group.”

As an amphibious dock landing ship, the Rushmore can embark, launch and recover 500 Marines and their landing craft during missions in foreign territory or far from established bases. Named for Mount Rushmore National Memorial in the Black Hills of South Dakota, the Rushmore holds a place in naval history as the first “smart ship” in the Navy’s arsenal.

In 1997, it was outfitted with updated technologies such as an electronic chart display and an integrated bridge system, effectively increasing the efficiency of the ship’s systems and crew.
Seeking Santa’s helpers

Volunteers needed at military mailrooms overseas ahead of holiday package surge

By Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Post offices on military bases are calling for volunteers to help sort mail with thousands of holiday packages expected in coming weeks.

At the home of U.S. Forces Japan in western Tokyo, officials are looking to put five volunteers to work each day with package deliveries expected to peak in mid-December, 374th Airlift Wing spokesman Staff Sgt. Juan Torres said in a Nov. 16 email.

“Having an adequate number of volunteers enables postal workers to process the packages while volunteers assist by delivering mail and sorting letters,” he said.

Most months Yokota’s mailroom receives between 15,000 and 17,000 packages, he said.

“During the month of December, we see an increase in mail of up to 27,000 packages,” he said. “Due to this increase, we ask that customers remain patient as we work diligently to process your holiday mail for you and your loved ones.”

The post office at Misawa Air Base, home of the 35th Fighter Wing in northeastern Japan, expects between 700 and 800 parcels per delivery through the holiday season, Misawa spokesman Tech. Sgt. Chris Jacobs said in an email.

The post office there will be soliciting mailroom volunteers for Dec. 1-14, he said.

“As of yet, we do not have a solid number of how many volunteers will step up, but any organization that wants to volunteer more than 10 members at a time needs to arrange their volunteers through the local Post Office,” he said.

At Camp Humphreys, home of the U.S. Eighth Army in South Korea, postmaster Demetrius Palmer said the post office receives up to 8,000 packages per month from November to January.

The facility employs about 50 volunteers to help out over the holidays, he said by phone.

On Guam, Andersen Air Force Base is expecting 50,000 pounds of holiday mail for airmen living in dorms and is looking for 118 volunteers.

They’re delivered before the holidays, Torres said. “The earlier a package is sent out, the better the chances of it arriving before the holidays.”

The Postal Service recommends shipping priority and first-class mail by Dec. 1 and express mail by Dec. 15, he said.

Members of the postal service team at the Brunssum Site of U.S. Army Garrison Benelux move a load of packages last year.
‘Unknown’ burials may no longer be likely

BY WYATT OLSON Stars and Stripes

Twenty-three years ago, then-Defense Secretary William Cohen publicly pondered whether any American warfighter would ever again need to be buried as an unidentifiable “unknown.”

Cohen’s rumination came after DNA testing conclusively identified the remains lying in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for the Vietnam War as 1st Lt. Michael Blasie, a 24-year-old Air Force flyer shot down May 11, 1972, in South Vietnam.

“It may be that forensic science has reached a point where there will be no other unknowns in any war,” Cohen told reporters during a Pentagon briefing on June 30, 1998.

“I could be proven wrong, but it would seem to me that given the state of the art today, it’s unlikely that we’ll have future unknowns,” he said.

Almost a quarter-century later, DNA technology has only gotten better, and no American service member killed in action ever again need to be buried as unknown.

But could today’s forensic science succeed in the aftermath of a conflict such as World War II, a cataclysm out of which the remains of roughly 8,500 American troops were recovered but deemed unidentifiable?

“Yes and no,” said Josh Hyman, director of the DNA sequencing facility at the University of Wisconsin’s Biotechnology Center.

“I say yes because the technology is capable of giving us pretty good detail on a genetic level,” he said during a phone interview Oct. 28.

Add to that, he said, the Defense Department maintains blood samples taken from inductees into the armed forces over the past 25 years that can be used for flawless DNA comparisons.

“The reason I say probably no is because in a lot of situations it’s not that you can’t identify something coming from a bone or a tooth,” he said. “It’s just that — especially in World War II — you had mass graves and things got mixed. We have a lot of bones in our body. The difficulty back then and now is that if you ever have a mass grave, if you ever have a mixture and you don’t have any way of definitively separating them out to begin with, well, it’s simply not feasible to test every single bone to make a decision.”

DNA misconceptions

Forensic anthropologist Denise To agrees, toutling the advances in DNA technology while offering up similar caveats.

“One of the common misconceptions is that DNA is the end-all be-all of all identifications,” said To, who manages the forensic laboratory for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii, during a phone interview Oct. 27.

“If it’s not that simple,” she said. “It’s complex enough that we require multiple lines of evidence to make an identification, such as dental evidence, forensic anthropology, forensic archaeology.”

Today’s capacity to identify American war dead stands atop a painful history.

“At Arlington, there are over 4,000 unknown soldiers from the Civil War,” said Philip Bigler, a former historian at Arlington National Cemetery and author of “Tomb of the Unknown Soldier: A Century of Honor” published in 2019.

Fights from both North and South sometimes carried little in the way of identification, often not even wearing a uniform or insignia, Bigler said during a phone interview Oct. 19.

“If you were killed on the battlefield, you had a pretty good chance of not being identified during the Civil War, just by the nature of the combat,” he said.

Safeguarding records

Thorough medical record-keeping, including detailed dental diagrams and X-rays, were maintained on the vast number of service members during World War II. Those records have been invaluable in identifying unknowns from that war, but they also revealed a weakness in relying on such documentation.

In July 1973, fire broke out at the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, which held millions of official military files spanning the 20th century. The massive blaze destroyed the records of about 18 million veterans, including roughly 80% of Army personnel discharged between 1912 and 1960 and 75% of Air Force personnel discharged between 1947 and 1964.

“We learned the lesson that, forensically, you want to keep medical records better,” To said.

DNA identification technology emerged in the late 1980s. In a nutshell, the method compares unique DNA markers in an individual with that of a close relative or descendant. In some cases it is compared to a database of individuals.

The key to the method’s success, then, is procuring that comparable sample, but when no relative can be found, the DNA test is of little use.

For example, DPAA recently concluded a multiyear project to exhume and identify 388 sailors and Marines buried as unknowns from the battleship USS Oklahoma, which was destroyed during the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

The agency identified many of the remains — which had been badly burned and commingled — through DNA testing. But a handful are slated to be buried once again as unknowns next month because in some cases comparative samples from next of kin could not be found.

Blood sample collection

Congress moved to fix that shortcoming in 1992 by mandating the collection of blood samples from incoming service members. The collection’s sole purpose is to maintain “self-reference” DNA samples that will exactly match that of any service member who dies on the battlefield.

As of early 2019, the Armed Forces Repository of Specimen Samples for the Identification of Remains at Dover Air Force Base, Del., held almost 8 million blood samples taken from inductees into the armed services over the past 25 years. The index cards carrying two splatches of blood are vacuum sealed and held for 50 years.

“Identifying the deceased with a self-reference is superior to identifying the deceased through DNA with a comparative sample to a relative,” To said.

Still, even DNA science could be stymied by unidentified remains under certain circumstances in future wars.

“For example, right now, we can’t really obtain DNA sequences from samples that are heavily burned,” To said. “Fire destroys DNA so there could be some remains that have been thermal-ly altered where the DNA cannot be extracted.”

Hyman said that even badly burned bodies yield some DNA samples, particularly from the teeth.

“But it’s true that if you incinerate things at certain temperatures, then all you have is ash,” he said. “There’s nothing there to get. I mean, at that point, there aren’t any remains, only ashes.”

Dillon Dowling/U.S. Air Force
Hidden victims
USAF survey finds thousands of abuse cases go unreported

BY COREY DICKSTEIN
Stars and Stripes

The Air Force wants to create a one-stop shop for abuse victims after a survey administered last year found more than half of respondents had experienced psychological or physical abuse during the prior two years, but few reported it, service officials said recently.

Self-identified abuse victims lacked confidence that reporting harmful incidents would accomplish anything, and those who sought help were largely dissatisfied with their experiences, according to an Air Force report released Nov. 9.

Top service officials involved in administering the survey, which was set as a basis for the report titled Interpersonal Violence in the Department of the Air Force, said the Air Force needed to do more to bridge a gap between victims and their commanders, who generally believe abuse victims receive proper care, the report found.

“It seems to be uniformly true that people at the lower levels who have experienced these things are telling us that there’s a problem, and the senior leadership is not perceiving that there is that problem,” Air Force Secretary Frank Kendall told reporters in a news briefing to discuss the report’s findings. “So, we’ve got an open right here.”

The survey was sent out in 2020 by the Air Force Interpersonal Violence Task Force, which was set up by service leaders during the summer in the wake of the Army’s troubling findings of widespread abuse and harassment at Fort Hood, Texas.

The task force, led by Air Force Brig. Gen. April Vogel, issued the survey to the Air Force Department’s about 654,000 airmen, Space Force guardians and civilian employees. The task force conducted more detailed follow-up surveys and focus groups to understand victims of interpersonal violence, which it defined as 81 behaviors in which abusers use “power or force resulting in psychological or physical harm or that detracts from a culture of dignity and respect.” They described such abuses as ranging from “stalking and bullying to domestic violence and sexual assault.”

About 54% of the 68,000 Air Force Department personnel who responded to the survey reported they had experienced such abuse during the previous two years. This includes airmen, Space Force guardians and Air Force civilian employees. The report also found more than half of the respondents in each component of the department — the active-duty Air Force, the Space Force, the Air National Guard, the Air Force Reserve and the civilian employees — reported facing such abuse.

Workplace bullying, reported by about 36% of survey respondents, was the most common abuse reported. About 29% reported workplace harassment. Some 9% reported intimate partner violence, and another 21% reported violence from others.

Less than 40% of victims reported their abuse to commanders or law enforcement authorities, according to the report. Most who did not report the abuse said they did not believe anything would happen if they did report it or they were concerned they would face negative consequences for reporting, the Air Force found. Those who did report the abuse or sought help found mixed results in the services offered to victims by the Air Force.

Vogel said many victims reported they were discouraged after struggling to find the right location to receive help or report abuse. She said the Air Force should work to build a single location within the service for abuse victims to seek help or report an incident.

“The hope is that if our airmen and guardians knew that they had one place to go, where they would get help or support for whatever challenge they were facing … [where] they wouldn’t be turned away and told to go to a different location, that they might be more likely to come forward and ultimately get … the help they need,” Vogel said.

She said the report was a starting point for the Air Force to improve its response to victims of abuse, and that further analysis and data collection would be needed to draw more conclusions.

The data collected via the survey might not be a true representation of the prevalence of such abuse in the force, Kendall said. He said he believes the roughly 10% of Air Force Department personnel who did respond are “more likely to have experienced some form” of abuse than those who did not.

Nonetheless, the Air Force secretary said that he did take the issue seriously and was not attempting to downplay the survey’s findings.

“Even if this is all there is [within the department] it’s way too many,” Kendall said. “This is a great many people who have experienced some form of interpersonal violence in this department. It does not tell you what the total numbers are, but the numbers are big enough that you have to take this incredibly seriously, and I am.

Report: Japan is prepared to pay more to support US forces

BY SETH ROBSON
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO — Japan is set to increase funding for American troops stationed in the country starting in fiscal 2022 with an agreement possible next month, according to government sources quoted by the Kyodo news agency.

Washington and Tokyo extended an agreement in February on Japanese financial support for approximately 54,000 U.S. troops. The agreement was due to expire in March but was extended for a year.

Officials have not disclosed the amount of support requested by the U.S. government in future years but it’s likely less than former President Donald Trump had demanded, Kyodo reported, quoting an anonymous Japanese diplomat.

“Prime Minister Fumio Kishida will make a final decision,” the diplomat said, according to Kyodo.


This fiscal year, which ends in March, Japan is paying $1.76 billion to support utilities, wages for local national staff and training and relocation costs for U.S. forces, Kyodo reported.

Japan wants the U.S. to spend any additional funds on things such as the maintenance of facilities that U.S. forces share with the Japan Self-Defense Forces rather than the cost of base utilities, government sources told Kyodo.

Japan is looking at adding a clause in the cost-sharing agreement to stipulate that its increased contribution go toward joint training and other activities, according to the sources.

Japan’s new prime minister is eager to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance and increasing his country’s contribution to the cost of hosting American forces is an easy way to do that, Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan, said in an email.

Tokyo slow-walked negotiations with the Trump administration in the hopes of securing a better deal, he said.

“But the security environment in Asia remains tense,” Kingston said, “so Kishida is eager to demonstrate that Japan is a reliable partner and willing to shoulder expanded burden sharing.”

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshima Hayashi could sign the agreement during a meeting of the allies’ defense and foreign ministers, Kyodo reported. That meeting was expected within the year but could be delayed until early 2022.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hanna Kasemoto contributed to this report.

dickstein.corey@stripes.com

Twitter: @CDicksteinDC

Minister's meeting to stipulate that its increased contribution go toward joint training and other activities, according to the sources.

Japan's new prime minister is eager to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance and increasing his country's contribution to the cost of hosting American forces is an easy way to do that, Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan, said in an email.

Tokyo slow-walked negotiations with the Trump administration in the hopes of securing a better deal, he said.

"But the security environment in Asia remains tense," Kingston said, "so Kishida is eager to demonstrate that Japan is a reliable partner and willing to shoulder expanded burden sharing."

Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshima Hayashi could sign the agreement during a meeting of the allies' defense and foreign ministers, Kyodo reported. That meeting was expected within the year but could be delayed until early 2022.

Stars and Stripes reporter Hanna Kasemoto contributed to this report.

dickstein.corey@stripes.com

Twitter: @CDicksteinDC
Study tracks military jobs with best earning power

By Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

Enlisted service members working in intelligence and information technology are more likely to find higher paying civilian jobs than troops in the combat arms or medical and transportation fields, according to a newly released study from Rand Corp.

“We can see from this work that there are certain types of occupations that seemed to have lower earnings, and that therefore would be the best places to concentrate (transition resources),” said Charles Goldman, senior economist and lead author on the study titled “Navigating a Big Transition: Military Service Members’ Earnings and Employment After Active-Duty Service.”

By matching more than 1 million military service records from 2002 to 2010 with tax records from the U.S. Social Security Administration, researchers tracked the first three years that troops are out of the military to see how the newly separated veterans’ income fared over time and compared to their final pay on active-duty service.

It can take several years to acquire this type of data because it has to be scrubbed to protect people’s privacy, Goldman said. Though it is a decade old, he believes there is still value in understanding trends and patterns to inform policy decisions and resource allocation.

Outside of military occupations, the 72-page report also breaks down how wages vary in regard to gender, time of service, deployment history and discharge status.

While men serving in the Army as human intelligence operators averaged a first-year civilian salary of $49,503, an infantryman and medic earned about $21,680 and $21,569, with those amounts back to 2013, according to the report.

Those military jobs that launch into higher civilian wages typically have more transferable skills, Goldman said. Looking at enlisted health care fields, such as combat medic, those skills typically transfer to the role of emergency medical technician, which is a low-paying job in the civilian sector.

Given the time frame of the data, he also thinks the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the growth in civilian contractor jobs requiring a top-secret security clearance might have benefited troops serving in intelligence and information technology positions. People who hold that level of clearance typically earn higher wages, Goldman said.

Each of the services has made substantial improvements to their transition programs since the time period for this data, but Goldman said he still believes it shows insight into how and where to focus those programs and resources. Some of those changes include new programs to help troops earn civilian certifications through their military jobs and allowing more time before separation to prepare résumés, look for employment and participate in specialized training through partnerships with corporations, businesses and trade organizations.

Looking ahead, Goldman said future research could use this data to focus on those time periods where changes were made to transition programs to see what impact they had.

Better civilian employment helps with recruiting and retention, but also the Pentagon’s bottom line, he said. The Defense Department paid more than $900 million annually in unemployment to former service members during the early 2010s when the country experienced a “weak job market followed by the Great Recession,” according to the report, which cited the Congressional Budget Office.

“These costs have come down markedly in recent years, perhaps because of a strong job market and deliberate introduction of credentialing, employment training and transition assistance programs. Nonetheless, the U.S. economy goes through cycles, and (as this report is being prepared in 2020) a very negative cycle could just be beginning with the economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, highlighting the importance of maintaining and targeting transition support,” according to the report.

During the three years that researchers tracked veterans’ income, their pay did increase on average, but many were starting out at an income less than what they made in the military. Determining why this occurred is slightly beyond the purview of this data, because the civilian income data didn’t show researchers whether veterans were working full time, part time or perhaps going to school. It just showed the amount of money that they brought home.

People can have an anecdotal sense that there are more opportunities made in civilian life,” Goldman said. “Our analysis shows that for many members, their incomes are beginning when they’re on active duty, and that actually making this transition to civilian life is a significant challenge.”

Submarine crews to review navigation safety

By Alex Wilson
Stars and Stripes

Submarine crews have been ordered to review navigation safety as the U.S. Navy continues to investigate a nuclear-powered vessel’s undersea collision last month.


Unlike stand-downs issued to aviation crews, the order doesn’t mean submariners will cease operations. Instead, the crews are slated to review navigational training and safety procedures, Macapagal said.

The message comes as the Navy continues to grapple with fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut’s collision with a sea mount, or undersea mountain, on Oct. 2.

“Submarine crews will be reviewing the lessons learned from USS Connecticut and governing doctrine to reinforce sound navigation practices,” Macapagal said. “Submarine crews will review required procedures in navigation planning, operations, risk management and best practices as part of this training.”

Illustration of submarine collision

Macapagal said he couldn’t release the original message to Stars and Stripes because portions of it contain classified information. He also couldn’t specify a timetable for the stand-down, but he did say it’s a “near-term” situation rather than a long-term one.

Details on the Connecticut’s collision have remained sparse, but Navy investigators revealed on Nov. 2 that the Seawolf-class submarine struck an “uncharted seamount” in international waters in the Indo-Pacific region.

The exact location of the incident was not publicly disclosed, but an unnamed defense official said it occurred in the South China Sea, according to an Oct. 8 report from U.S. Naval Institute News.

The collision, which resulted in minor injuries to about a dozen sailors, also led to the removal of the Connecticut’s commander, executive officer and enlisted chief. Vice Adm. Karl Thomas, commander of 7th Fleet, relieved the three on Nov. 4, citing “lack of confidence” in their leadership.
BLACK FRIDAY SALE
EVERYTHING ON SALE 20% - 65% OFF STOREWIDE
FROM NOW UNTIL NOVEMBER 30, 2021
SHOP EARLY FOR THE BEST SELECTION!

3 Piece Reclining Sofa Set
was $2,699 NOW $1,999

BUY 1, GET 1 FREE Selected dining chairs & barstools

Upholstered Bed Frames
QUEEN FROM $299
KING FROM $399

7 Piece Dining Set
was $1,999 NOW $1,699

20% OFF Leather Sectionals and Sofa Sets

(671)300-9590 | OPEN EVERYDAY 10am-6pm | www.furniturekathystyle.com | @furniturekathystyle
Main Showroom: 118 Martyr St, Hagatna, GU | Mattress Gallery: 114 Unit C Taitano Rd, Harmon, GU

WE PROUDLY CARRY
ASHLEY klaussner home furnishings VIOLONO caracole
AND MANY MORE!