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**IN PRAISE OF GUAM'S PATRON SAINT**

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Santa Marian Kamalen Illustration from the Department of Chamorro Affairs

# FROM SINGAPORE TO DIEGO GARCIA

Army Veterinary Food Inspectors from Guam see big picture

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
 KATHRYNE GEST,  
 PUBLIC HEALTH COMMAND - PACIFIC

SEBRAWANG NAVAL BASE, SINGAPORE – Three thousand miles from Public Health Activity-Guam's headquarters, a team of three self-disciplined Army Veterinary Food Inspectors safeguard and inspect food consumed by U.S. forces across the entire Pacific Area of Operations.

The team is comprised of three Army Veterinary Food Inspectors: Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth James III, Sgt. 1st Class Mil Pascual, and Sgt. 1st Class

Joel Trudell.

"With any small team, it's important to be disciplined and have that self-drive to contribute to the mission and mission success," said Trudell, the branch's food inspection noncommissioned officer.

The team's food defense mission spans from facilities on Sembawang Naval Base, to visiting ships, and all sustenance supplied to the island of Diego Garcia, site of a U.S. Navy support facility.

In total, the team supports

**SEE INSPECTORS ON PAGE 2**



Sgt. 1st Class Mil Pascual discusses operations with the prime vendor employee during a recent inspection.

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# INSPECTORS: Protecting the troops

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

approximately 50,000 Service Members, retirees, and their families.

"We're out here for the purpose of protecting the joint forces throughout the Pacific," said James, Veterinary Corps officer and branch officer in charge.

Due to its strategic location in the Pacific, Singapore is a natural point for replenishing and refueling U.S. military ships.

In addition to meats and high-cost provisions, foods like fresh fruits and vegetables are transported by the Air Force's Air Mobility Command weekly to Diego Garcia.

"We're inspecting sustenance at our prime vendor here in Singapore that supplies over 16 facilities in Diego Garcia," said Pascual, branch NCOIC. "The prime vendor brings in food from over 13 countries to supply these areas. To say it's filled with complexities would be an understatement."

It's the responsibility of James to audit facilities in those 13 countries who provide food product to the prime vendor.

"As a Veterinary Corps officer, my audit mission includes traveling to these larger name brand facilities and ensure they are meeting the same requirements and standards that we hold facilities in the U.S. to," said James.

The team also provides regional



(Left to right) Sgt. 1st Class Mil Pascual, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kenneth James III, and Sgt. 1st Class Joel Trudell.

support to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command exercises.

"Provisions from the prime vendor here in Singapore, in coordination with Defense Logistics Agency, are supplied and shipped to Indonesia, Korea, Australia, Philippines, and Brunei," Pascual added.

The team is incredibly self-sufficient, PHA-G leaders said, but it realizes the importance of

networking and relies on the joint force to protect the warfighters.

"PHA-Guam is a small but mighty activity," said 1st Sgt. Nickolaus Kersting, PHA-G's senior enlisted advisor. "It takes a lot of independence and responsibility from the three Soldiers stationed out here." They could not do it without the help of contractor allies and joint partnerships across the Department of Defense."

**"PHA-Guam is a small but mighty activity. It takes a lot of independence and responsibility from the three Soldiers stationed out here."**

– 1st Sgt. Nickolaus Kersting

Because of the vast area of coverage and multi-faceted food defense mission, Trudell explained the importance of adaptiveness and being a self-starter.

"There's a lot of work to be done and it's not a typical nine-to-five job," said Trudell. "You must be ready to go anytime, so flexibility and adaptability are key, because you're working around a lot of other schedules, and often-times there's not someone telling you what to do."

Above all, Trudell said, one must be willing to find meaning in being part of a team and mission bigger than yourself.

"This is one of the few assignments where you get to work hand in hand with your brothers and sisters in service. This can sometimes make things challenging, but it is always incredibly meaningful," Trudell said.

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# Local swim teams dive back into competition at Andersen



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

The local swim community has been without a competitive swimming pool since early 2019, leaving the athletes with nowhere to showcase their training and dedication to the sport.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Kelvin Francis, a chaplain assigned to the 36th Wing, planned the second meet back, hosting three local teams and two military teams at the Andersen Air Force Base pool.

“My oldest son has been a competitive swimmer since 2009,” said Francis. “So everywhere we go, the swimming community is the first thing we commit to.”

The last meet held at Andersen AFB was in October 2019 prior to COVID-19. Since then the only competitive pool on the island has been closed down due to the expensive repairs needed.

“The Guam Swimming Federation asked me if it was possible to hold another meet on Andersen AFB,” said Francis. “So I went to work putting it together.”

Without the ability to compete, the athletes have no concrete evidence of their progress, hindering their opportunities to compete at other events off island and even compete for college scholarships.

“Our athletes come from all over the world, with varying experiences and challenges,” said Jeffrey Jorgensen, head coach of the Andersen Marlins swim team. “Seeing them compete and excel in their heats is an amazing experience to witness.”



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# LINEBACKERS OF THE WEEK

Staff Sgt. Austin Lavire

## ‘It’s kind of always been my dream job’

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

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Austin Lavire, a pavement and equipment craftsman assigned to the 36th Civil Engineering Squadron, was recognized as the 36th Wing’s Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Nov. 2, 2022.

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

As a pavement and equipment craftsman, Lavire supervises four Airmen and conducts training on heavy equipment such as graders, loaders, backhoes and dump trucks. He provides concrete, asphalt construction and repair capabilities. He also maintains 15,000 acres of roads, airfields and facilities. Lavire distributes daily work schedule plans and assigns personnel to jobs, and coordinates work order requirements for tenant and deployed units.

Since arriving at Andersen AFB in July 2020, Lavire led 18 joint personnel through a 3,000 square foot asphalt

project that enabled the first austere C-17 landing on the Pacific Region Training Center – Andersen, with an Agile Combat Employment refuel operation. His actions led to his section winning the squadron’s Team of the Quarter award. Lavire directed 24 members in the completion of 40 work orders and the management of 4,000 personnel hours. These actions were critical in transferring the work order tracking system from Navy over to the Air Force during the Joint Region Marianas realignment.

“My favorite part of my job is the hands-on part,” said Lavire.

Additionally, Lavire played a critical role in the replacement of two wells. As one of the only military certified crane operators here, his knowledge played a crucial role in restoring the bases primary water source, but also in sustaining the wing’s humanitarian and disaster relief efforts. Lavire also played a role in the installation of two aircraft arresting systems. He led mission critical crane operations that restored recovery capes in response to four in flight emergencies that saved four pilots.

“It’s kind of always been my dream job,” said Lavire. “I’ve been to more than 30 countries now, I love it.”



Staff Sgt. Austin Lavire receives the Linebacker of the Week Award from Brig. Gen. Paul Birch and Chief Master Sgt. Jose Ramon at Andersen Air Force Base on Nov. 2.

Staff Sgt. La Toya Ibanez

## ‘They call me an honorary defender’

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



Staff Sgt. La Toya Ibanez works at her computer at Andersen Air Force Base on Oct. 26.

ANDERSEN AIR FORCE BASE – U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. La Toya Ibanez, 36th Security Forces Squadron commander’s executive assistant, was recognized as the 36th Wing’s Team Andersen Linebacker of the Week, at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Oct. 26, 2022.

As the commander’s executive assistant, Ibanez advises the commander and squadron leadership on all personnel issues as well as coordinates and schedules all office and squadron activities. She manages multiple commanders support squadron programs such as the unit control center, recall rosters, and in and out-processing requirements. Ibanez acts as the unit’s alternate unit fitness program manager as well by administering and processing Air Force fitness assessments for 270 active duty personnel. She is also the command sections booster club representative and directs the drug demand reduction program for the unit, ensuring all notifications are sent out in a timely manner.


Additionally, Ibanez not only conducts administrative duties within 36 SFS, she is originally a flight and operational

medical technician from the 624th Aerospace Medicine Flight. She recently partnered with the 36th Medical Group, scheduling and conducting mass flu shots for over 370 personnel. Ibanez also certified the 36 SFS in tactical combat casualty care, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and basic life support, demonstrating the work ethic of a multi-capable Airman.

“They call me an honorary defender with a medical background,” said Ibanez.


Finally, she constantly demonstrates the importance of leading people and strengthening partnerships by advocating for local volunteer opportunities for the squadron. Recently, she participated in a back-to-school drive for the Harvest House where she helped raise \$1,500 for backpacks. Additionally, she continuously volunteers for youth sports as a medic which led to her earning the unit’s volunteer of the 2nd and 3rd quarter award. Her work ethic and unit involvement sets the tone for her peers and Airmen to emulate.

“What I love most about my job is making things happen,” said Ibanez. “Being a part of the commander support staff, we’re providing service to make sure if our members deploy or move on, that they’re ready.”



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# In praise of Guam's patron saint

*Editor's Note: Every year on Dec. 8 – an island-wide holiday – Cathedral-Basilica to honor Guam's patron saint. No source better chronicles the history and mystery behind this centuries-old phenomenon than Guampedia.*

BY LEO BABAUTA,  
GUAMPEDIA

**S**anta 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 on December 8, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception is celebrated, and Guam Catholics turn out by the thousands in Hagåtña 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 the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica in Hagåtña 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 on

three separate occasions in the last few decades. She is one of the most important icons in Guam's history, religious or otherwise. A longtime effort to place a replica of the statue in the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C. was realized in 2006.

## Legendary origins

The origin of the Santa Marian Kamalen statue has not been documented until recently, but by oral tradition multiple versions of a legend exists about her origin.

According to one version of the legend, a fisherman from Merizo went spear fishing in Babang Bay, between Merizo and Cocos Island, and with astonishment spotted a statue of the Virgin Mary on the ocean floor. He swam underwater to try to approach the statue, but to his surprise it retreated. No matter how hard he tried, he could not close the distance between the statue and himself.

Puzzled, he returned to shore and sought advice from the village priest. The priest told the scantily-clad fisherman to dress in his Sunday clothes and try again. He did so, and this time had no trouble in getting the statue.

Another version of the legend has it that the fisherman saw the statue floating in the water, escorted by two gold-spotted crabs, each bearing a lighted candle between its claws. She thus also became known as the Lady of the Crabs.

When the fisherman, who was a member of the Dotacion, or native militia, returned to his required two months of active duty in Hagåtña, he took the statue to the Presidio, or main barracks which were still under construction. There the statue was relegated to a tool shed, in Spanish camarin and in Chamorro kamalen. Thus, she became known as Santa Maria del Camarin in Spanish or Santa Marian Kamalen in Chamorro. She was also known as the Lady of the Barracks.

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

## Origin speculation

When Father Oscar L. Calvo brought the statue to Manila in 1948 to be refurbished,



Across the street from the kombento a small park with a marble statue of Santa Marian Kamalen. Photo by George Miller, 2014.

art connoisseur Maximo Vicente identified the statue's wood as molave, a hard wood native to the Philippines. Vicente determined the statue to be contemporary with the oldest images in the Philippines, such as the Nuestra Senora de Paz y Buen Viaje of Antipolo and Nuestra Senora de Guia in Ermita Church, Greater Manila.

Based on a rusted iron plate found on the bottom of the statue, Calvo speculated that the statue came from a Spanish galleon that sailed between Acapulco, the Philippines, and Guam. Galleon crews, according to custom, gathered before such a statue reciting the litany and singing the Salve Regina. The galleon Nuestra Senora del Pilar sank off the coast of Cocos Island in 1690, before the building of the Presidio.

The legend of the origin of the statue and its name is most commonly accepted by Guam residents. Historian Paul Carano speculated on other possible origins of the name, including one that centers around the statue's probable Philippine origin. He proposes the name could have been related in some way to the names of the provinces of Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur on the island of Luzon in the Philippines.

Carano also said the name might be related to the Spanish word camarin, which means a place behind an altar where images are dressed, and the ornaments destined for that purpose are kept.

## Other Santa Marian Kamalen legends

Numerous other legends exist around the patron saint. Legend has it that when the Spanish militia men were about to retire for the day, if they have indulged in more tuba (fermented coconut palm sap) and aguardiente (high-potency alcoholic beverage) than is prudent, they often fell asleep while saying their prayers or would act immodestly before the statue when drunk. The doors of the niche would slam shut violently, waking the sleepy soldiers so they could finish their prayers.

One of the more famous legends

is that of a great earthquake in 1902, when the Dulce Nombre de Maria church 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 has suffered discolorations, nicks and other minor defects in the course of time, minor repairs have 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 her 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.

## World War II

One of the more well-known stories about the statue took place when Japan bombed Guam and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii as war broke out between America and Japan during World War II in 1941. Guam was bombed on December 8, the day of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Throughout the war, the statue was cared for by a teenager named Mariquita "Tita" Torres (who later became Mariquita Torres Souder), after Father Jesus Baza Duenas, who was beheaded by Japanese soldiers shortly before the U.S. recapture of Guam, took the cathedral's valuables to the Torres family home in Maite.

The Japanese ordered everything returned to the church and followed Duenas to the Torres residence. While there, a soldier asked for the statue standing in the family's living room, but Tita Torres claimed it belonged to the family, not to the church, and that it was only lent to the church on special occasions. Duenas vouched for this and told the officers that it

was not the church's property.

Torres carried the statue to the family ranch near Tiyan when the family was moved from their home. The family also moved the statue to bomb shelters during the numerous bombing raids to preserve her. When the Americans returned to Guam and bombed the capital and surrounding areas, the statue was miraculously saved from destruction.

## Infamous thefts

Santa Marian Kamalen made front page headlines in Guam newspapers when she was stolen in three separate cases. The first case occurred on May 19, 1968, when police conducted a desperate search and residents flocked to the cathedral to view the empty niche and pray for the statue's safe return. Police took fingerprints of the enclosure from which the statue was taken and sent them to Japan for identification along with records of local suspects. The statue was returned and the incident was closed. Bishop Apollinaris Baumgartner wouldn't disclose the details of who returned the statue as 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 and again 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

A procession is held to honor Santa Marian Kamalen on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Photo by Paul Guerrero, Guampedia



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,



Each year the Santa Marian Kamalen statue is taken down from her niche in the Dulce Nombre de María Cathedral-Basilica in Hagåtña for the procession on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. Photo by Paul Guerrero, Guampedia

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.

This is a reprint from Guampedia.com, an online resource about Guam history and the Chamoru people, used here with permission.

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# Soup of The Day

ANNIE'S CHAMORRO KITCHEN



## Shrimp Kâd



**K**âdu means soup or broth in Chamorro. It refers to any type of broth or liquid in your cooked dish, be it soup, gravy, or a stew.

Shrimp Kâdu is traditionally made with shrimp that still has the head and shell on, which adds so much more flavor to the dish. I actually prefer to cook this dish with headless, shell-on shrimp, but you can use shrimp that has been shelled. One thing is certain, however. You **MUST** use raw shrimp in this dish; it just won't taste the same if you use precooked shrimp.

Fresh green beans, if you can find any, is another "must have" in this recipe. Don't use canned green beans. If you can't find fresh, frozen will suffice—just do not use canned beans. Again, it just won't taste the same.

Tomatoes, on the other hand, can be fresh or stewed. I tend to use stewed tomatoes, mainly because I don't really like cooked tomato skins that you'll get from fresh tomatoes. The type of tomato you use is entirely up to you.

Give my recipe a try. I think you'll like it.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 small onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 cups fresh green beans, cut into about 2" pieces
- 1 can stewed tomatoes, drained (cut them smaller if you like)
- 2 pounds shrimp, uncooked, shell on (no heads)
- 2 cans coconut milk
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- A squeeze of lime juice (about half a lime)

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a medium soup pot, sauté the onions and garlic over medium heat, just until the onions become translucent.
2. Add the green beans; cook for about 3 minutes, or until the beans are JUST starting to wilt (do not overcook).
3. Add the tomatoes and shrimp. Cook for 5 minutes or until the shrimp is no longer translucent (the shells will start to turn pink).
4. Add the coconut milk. There should be enough milk to cover the top of the shrimp; add more coconut milk if you like lots of kâdu over your rice (I like my rice swimming in coconut milk kâdu, so I use lots of coconut milk when making this dish). Simmer over low heat until the coconut milk is warmed through – DO NOT bring the kâdu to a boil or else the coconut milk will separate and the milk will look like it's curdled.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste, then add the squeeze of lime juice. Stir to combine. Serve over hot white rice and ENJOY.



My friend, Yvonne, and her daughter made some shrimp kâdu – this is their version of the dish, made with shrimp with only the tails on. Doesn't it look scrumptious?



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→

Kimchi Jigae (Kimchi Soup)



My name is Annie and I love kimchi. There...I've admitted it, although it really wasn't such a secret. I've eaten kimchi since I was a little girl. I do remember having to rinse it in a cup of water because I couldn't stand how spicy it was, but I grew to love the spiciness of the fermented cabbage.

Kimchi is an acquired taste for sure, but it's a staple in Korean homes, and lots of Chamorro homes too as a matter of fact.

Now on to kimchi soup. I was first introduced to this soup when I was assigned to Korea about 17 years ago. A group of us went to dinner with our Korean partnership officers and the senior officer placed a bowl of the steaming soup in front of me and insisted I eat. "Eat, eat!" he told me, and he even placed a soup spoon with rice in it in front of me.

"Eat! Eat!" Of course, I didn't want to offend him, so I ate....and ate....and ate.... and ate. It was so delicious, with pieces of pork, tofu, and lots of tasty kimchi!

Thankfully I have a Korean sisterinlaw who is an excellent cook. She, along with the Korean ajumma (or ajima) who watched my kids (during my second tour to Korea), taught me how to make the Korean dishes I'll be sharing with you.

This is my version of Kimchi Jigae (or Chigae), one of my favorite Korean soups.

Photos Courtesy of Annies Chamorro Kitchen



Cut the onions into large pieces.



Cut the kimchi into small pieces.



Save that kimchi juice!

- INGREDIENTS**
- 1/2 pound pork belly
  - 1/2 pound lean pork (umm...lean pork cancels out the pork belly in my book)
  - 6 cloves garlic, minced
  - 1 large onion, cut into large pieces
  - 4 cups of kimchi, cut into small pieces (save the kimchi juice!)
  - 6 stalks green onions, cut into 2inch long pieces
  - 6 cups water
  - 1 cup kimchi juice
  - 1/4 cup Dashida beef flavored seasoning
  - 2 tablespoons Gochujang (Korean pepper paste)
  - 1 tablespoon sugar
  - Optional: 1 package firm tofu, drained and cut into small pieces



- DIRECTIONS**
1. In a large soup pot over medium heat, sauté the pork belly, lean pork and garlic for a couple of minutes, or long enough for the pork fat to start to melt a little bit.
  2. Add onions to the pot, along with the kimchi, green onions, Dashida, gochujang, and sugar. Stir to combine.
  3. Pour in the water and kimchi juice. Stir then cover the pot and bring to a boil. Once the soup is boiling, reduce the heat and simmer for about 20 minutes to soften the kimchi. Add the tofu at this point; cook for another 5 minutes.
  4. Serve piping hot with a bowl of rice on the side. Enjoy!

See more soup recipes on Page 12

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Continued from Page 11

## Soup of The Day

### Short Ribs Soup (Kádun Kátne)



Photos Courtesy of Annies Chamorro Kitchen

It's cold and rainy right now in the Colorado Rockies... perfect weather for Short Ribs Soup. We call this Kádun Kátne in Chamorro. You can substitute short ribs with your favorite cut of beef—other favorites are oxtails (don't knock it 'till you try it) and beef shanks.

You can even change this up further by adding your favorite vegetables—potatoes, taro, other types of squash, and baby bok choy are delicious in this recipe too!

Give my recipe a try. I think you'll like it.

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



### Dutch

Hi my name is Dutch. I am a male kitten estimated to be about 12 weeks old. I am a friendly little guy who enjoys the companionship of humans and other kittens. I love when the staff and volunteers show me tons of love and give me tons of cat cuddles. I'm waiting for that special family to make me a part of their clan.

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



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- **INGREDIENTS**
- 3 packages (9 pieces) thick cut short ribs (rinse each piece well)
  - 1 large onion, diced
  - 2 tablespoons minced garlic
  - 8-10 cups water
  - 6 tablespoons Dashida beef flavored seasoning
  - Black pepper, to taste
  - 1 small head cabbage, cut into small pieces
  - 4 small yellow squash, peeled and cubed

**DIRECTIONS**

1. Place half of the diced onions in a large soup pot. Add the short ribs and garlic. Brown the ribs on all sides over medium high heat.



2. After the ribs are browned on all sides, add 8 cups of the water, the remaining onions and Dashida. Place a lid on the pot and bring to a boil. Every now and then, skim off and discard any scum that rises to the surface.



3. Cook the ribs for 45 minutes to an hour over medium high heat. Keep the lid covered while cooking; uncover only to skim off any scum on the surface then replace the lid. If you need to, add the remaining water (keep the ribs submerged in liquid during cooking). After an hour, the ribs should be tender. If the ribs are not as tender as you'd like, cook for 15-20 more minutes.

This is what the scum looks like – you want to scoop this out and discard it.



4. When the ribs are done (and as tender as you'd like them), add the vegetables. First, layer the cabbage on top of the ribs. Press down on the cabbage, just slightly so that the leaves are moistened with the broth. Layer the squash on top of the cabbage leaves, also pressing them into the broth (do not stir the vegetables into the soup-they will cook ON TOP of the ribs). Cook for 5 minutes then turn off the heat.



NOTE: Before serving, I usually scoop out a good amount of kâdu (soup broth) into a freezer-safe bowl, then place the bowl in the freezer for several minutes. All of the fat will rise to the surface and harden. After the fat solidifies, I scoop it out and discard it, then reheat the kâdu.



5. After the kâdu is reheated, remove the pot from the heat. Taste the broth; re-season if necessary with Dashida and pepper. Serve with hot white rice and fina'denne'. Enjoy!



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GUAM BOONIE STOMPERS



**Sinisa Falls**

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

Every Saturday, Guam Boonie Stompers offers public hikes to a variety of destinations such as beaches, snorkeling sites, waterfalls, mountains, caves, latte sites, and World War II sites. We meet at the trailhead on Saturdays at 9 AM. Directions to the trailhead will be posted on the Guam Boonie Stompers Inc Facebook page. The cost is \$5.00 for hikers over 17. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult. Hikers should provide their own transportation. Guam's trails are not developed. Weather conditions can make the hikes more difficult than described. No reservations required.

**For more information:**  
[www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompersInc](https://www.facebook.com/GuamBoonieStompersInc)



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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**A member of MLB's 3,000 hit club, Ichiro has more total hits in his career than Pete Rose, if you include his time playing in Japan. The longtime Mariners outfielder racked up 1,278 of his 4,300+ hits while playing for which Nippon Professional Baseball team in Japan?**

**Answer**

Orix Blue Wave (Buffaloes)

## SUDOKU

Difficulty: Easy

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

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**Edited by Margie E. Burke**

**HOW TO SOLVE:**

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

*Answer to Previous Sudoku:*

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

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### Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

**ACROSS**

- 1 Light pats
- 5 Take place
- 10 Rush job notation
- 14 Bryce Canyon locale
- 15 Wake up
- 16 Napa Valley sight
- 17 Flat-topped hill
- 18 Senior diplomat
- 20 Fragrant rice
- 22 Inventor's quest
- 23 Shocked letters
- 24 Soda since 1886
- 27 Anagram for "ruse"
- 29 Distinction
- 33 Blubbered
- 35 Far from poetic
- 36 Tissue layer
- 37 Loathe
- 38 It may be slippery
- 39 Cowboy wear
- 40 Period in history
- 41 Meager
- 42 Abstain from
- 43 Fierceness
- 45 Mr. Peanut prop
- 46 Seasoning for lamb
- 48 Heathcliff, e.g.
- 51 Changes
- 54 Danger for small boats
- 56 Type of test
- 59 Narrow margin
- 60 Prefix with phobia
- 61 Repulsive insect
- 62 Elementary particle
- 63 Despicable
- 64 Shopping binge
- 65 Capone nemesis

**DOWN**

- 1 Disney elephant
- 2 Elite group
- 3 McCartney plays it
- 4 Deception

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					62		
63					64					65		

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5 Man of many words

6 Stand-up guy

7 Windy City athlete

8 Beach Boys song, "Surfin' "

9 "You're welcome," for one

10 Online image

11 A or B, on a 45

12 Auth. unknown

13 Smart-alecky

19 Like most chips

21 Got a perfect score

25 BOLO or YOLO, e.g.

26 Take as one's own

28 "Savvy?"

30 Increase in value

31 Slimy garden pest

32 Beginner

33 White hat wearer

34 In short supply

35 Word with hot or home

38 Tailor's tool

39 Bart, to Homer

41 Disdain

42 Warren's "Bonnie and Clyde" co-star

44 Crater Lake's state

45 Nativity scene

47 Lewis Carroll heroine

49 Felipe's farewell

50 Contract details

51 Eden dweller

52 Tiny parasites

53 Former skater Lipinski

55 Larger-life link

57 Absorb, with "up"

58 Roof stuff

**Answers to Previous Crossword:**

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

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57th Aircraft Maintenance airmen conduct post-flight operations after a combined arms demo during Aviation Nation 2022 on Nov. 4 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.

## Missing the maintenance mark

Many mainstays of US airpower in all branches of military are falling short of being mission capable, GAO report finds **Page 2**

## COVER STORY

# GAO: US aircraft fall short of being mission capable

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

All branches of the military are falling far short when it comes to keeping an array of war planes and attack helicopter fleets “mission capable,” according to a new government watchdog report.

Among 49 aircraft types that were assessed, only two met their operational goals in 2021, while the others were plagued with various maintenance difficulties that hindered operations, the Government Accountability Office said in a report issued earlier this month.

Many of the aircraft assessed are among the military’s best-known and are central to American airpower. The report did not offer recommendations to address the readiness shortfall.

Only four of the aircraft the GAO reviewed met mission capable goals in a majority of years during the 10-year analysis period. The four are the Air Force’s B-2 bomber, RC-135S-W reconnaissance plane and UH-1N Huey helicopter, and the Navy’s EP-3 reconnaissance plane.

“According to officials, a num-

**Only the Air Force’s B-2 bomber, RC-135S-W reconnaissance plane and UH-1N Huey helicopter, and the Navy’s EP-3 reconnaissance met mission capable goals in a majority of years during the GAO’s 10-year analysis period.**

ber of sustainment challenges including aging aircraft, maintenance challenges and supply support issues account for this decrease in mission capable rates,” the GAO said.

Set by the services, mission capable rates are defined as the percentage of total time when the aircraft can fly and perform at least one mission. The metric is used to assess the health and



NICHOLAS PILCH/U.S. Air Force

**57th Aircraft Maintenance airmen conduct post-flight operations after a combined arms demo during Aviation Nation 2022 on Nov. 4 at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.**

readiness of an aircraft fleet.

The GAO found that between 2011 and 2021, 26 aircraft did not meet their annual mission capable goal in any fiscal year. Moreover, mission capable rates steadily declined for most aircraft during that period, it found.

While mission capable rates for selected aircraft have fallen for the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps, the Army has seen its numbers improve even if still falling short of goals, the report found.

Aircraft not capable of meet-

ing mission capable goals were the Air Force’s F-16, F-22 and F-15C/D fighters. Army Apache and Chinook helicopters also didn’t hit their mission targets, the GAO said.

Marine and Navy F/A-18 jets also missed their mark, as did various cargo planes, the GAO said.

The GAO report came at the behest of Congress, which called on the agency to assess aircraft operation and support costs in relation to mission readiness.

Overall, operating and support

costs totaled about \$54 billion in fiscal year 2020 for the reviewed aircraft, a decrease of about \$2.9 billion since 2011 after factoring in inflation, the GAO said.

Meanwhile, maintenance costs became a larger portion of operating and support, increasing by \$1.2 billion since 2011. Such trends have largely been driven by changes in the size of aircraft inventory and reduced flying hours, the GAO said.

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## Study tracks military greenhouse gas emissions worldwide

By PHILLIP WALTER WELLMAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

The world’s militaries are responsible for 5.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions and collectively produce more carbon dioxide per year than nearly every country, according to new data.

“The scale of these emissions is so large that concerted action to reduce them is necessary by all governments,” the authors of the report said in a Nov. 10 statement released with the findings.

The report concluded that military personnel in North America, and an area it refers to as Eurasia, which includes Russia and Ukraine, each produced an average of 13 tons of greenhouse gases per year as of 2020. The figure is expected to be higher following Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February.

Personnel in Asia and Oceania, the Middle East and North Africa produced an average of 9 tons per year; and personnel in Europe produced an average of 5 tons per year. Total emissions figures also accounted for aircraft and mechanical emissions, as well as supply chains.

There is growing concern among environmentalists over the extent to which militaries contribute to climate change, which long has been difficult to determine because of a lack of data collected and



JACOB M. THOMPSON/U.S. Air Force

**A U.S. Air Force B-52 Stratofortress takes off from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam in 2021. Militaries around the world produce about 5.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to new data.**

distributed by the militaries themselves.

But two Britain-based organizations, Scientists for Global Responsibility and the Conflict and Environment Observatory, developed a methodology to estimate a total for the world and its main political regions.

Militaries have a combined carbon footprint larger than that of all but three countries: China, the U.S. and India, they determined.

“The world’s militaries and wars are a very significant but neglected source of carbon pollution, and these emissions are

almost certainly rising with the Ukraine war and the resulting international increase in military spending,” said Stuart Parkinson, executive director of Scientists for Global Responsibility and the lead author of the report.

The 2015 Paris Agreement made military emission reporting voluntary, meaning there are significant gaps in the data submitted to the United Nations.

Because militaries pollute more than any other institution in most countries, environmentalists fear that the lack of data could seriously hamper efforts to tackle climate change caused by rising emissions.

Researchers acknowledged in the report that they made “a number of assumptions” because of the lack of available data.

But they did not include emissions arising from impacts of wars such as fires, other damage to infrastructure and ecosystems, post-conflict reconstruction, and health care for survivors and therefore consider their findings “conservative.”

The full report, including information about the researchers’ methodology, can be viewed at <http://ceobs.org>.

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## MILITARY

# Marine Corps ceremonial unit gets 1st female leader

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

When Capt. Kelsey Hastings took command of the Marine Corps' revered Silent Drill Platoon this month, she became the unit's first female leader — and its first female member.

Hastings, a 2017 Naval Academy graduate, was named the Silent Drill Platoon's commander for the 2023 parade season, the Marine Corps announced. She took command of the ceremonial unit Nov. 21.

"It is exciting to be selected as the Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon commander," Hastings said. "SDP is oftentimes the face of the Marine Corps, showing the world how elite and professional our organization is, and being selected to lead them is truly an honor. I look forward to working with my new Marines and being a face that a little girl can see and envision herself as."

The 24-member Silent Drill Platoon dates back to the 1940s and features hand-selected infantry Marines who perform complicated drill routines featuring elaborate spins and tosses of their signature M1 Garand rifles with fixed bayonets without the benefit of any spoken commands or cadence. The platoon, headquartered at the Marine Barracks in Washington, D.C., performs hundreds of times each year at events across the United States, including in weekly parades during the summer months outside the barracks and at the Marine Corps War Memorial in Arlington, Va.

Hastings, an artillery officer, is already a veteran of the Marine's ceremonial units, according to the Marine Corps. She commanded another of the Marine Barracks-based marching platoons in 2021 and then served through most of 2022 as the executive officer for the Marines' marching company, A Company, which oversees four ceremonial platoons, which includes two marching platoons — the elite Silent Drill Platoon and the Marine Corps Color Guard Platoon, according to the service.

Col. Robb Sucher, the commander of the Marine Barracks,

described Hastings as a "stand-out performer" and tireless worker in the announcement of her selection.

"I'm excited for her to represent Marine Barracks Washington as a representative of the Marine Corps in this role," he said.

Hastings is a native of Seattle, Wash., where she graduated from the Chief Sealth International High School before attending the Naval Academy. She was a member of Navy's rowing team, helping the team win three consecutive Patriot League women's rowing championships between 2015 and 2017, according to the academy.

She first served in Hawaii, where she was an artillery platoon commander, a fire direction officer and a battery executive officer before attending Ceremonial Drill School, which qualified her to serve in Marine ceremonial units, according to the service.

Just seven years ago, Hastings would not have been eligible to serve in the Silent Drill Platoon or in the artillery field, which for decades were male-only combat positions.

The Marine Corps opened front-line combat roles, including infantry and artillery jobs, to women in 2016 after then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter ordered all military specialties and units open to female troops in December 2015.

The Marine Corps initially opposed opening many jobs, especially infantry roles, to women. But within five years, nearly 300 female Marines had moved into previously closed combat roles, according to the service.

Those numbers have continued to grow. As of Nov. 1, some 559 female Marines had earned jobs in combat specialties previously closed to them, including 388 enlisted Marines and 171 officers, the service said. In all, 1,346 female Marines are now assigned to units that were all-male in 2015, according to the Corps.

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**"I look forward to working with my new Marines and being a face that a little girl can see and envision herself as."**

Capt. Kelsey Hastings



PHOTOS BY AKIFUMI ISHIKAWA / Stars and Stripes

Pier 5, which can support up to three ships simultaneously, was officially opened at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, on Nov. 18.

## US naval base in Japan completes \$128M pier

By ALEX WILSON  
*Stars and Stripes*

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — The largest U.S. naval base in Japan grew a little larger with the completion of a \$128 million pier that expands the base's ship capacity, maintenance capabilities and its ability to host next-generation warships.

Located in Truman Bay in the southwest quadrant of Yokosuka Naval Base, the newly constructed Pier 5 supports up to three ships at a time and is the first small pier in Japan capable of supporting Zumwalt-class guided-missile destroyers, Cmdr. Tyler Scharar told Stars and Stripes.

The newest pier at the homeport of the U.S. 7th Fleet features 480-volt connections for Ticonderoga-class cruisers and Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, Scharar said, but it also has 4,160-volt connections for Zumwalt-class ships. Outside of Yokosuka, the only piers capable of supporting that type of connection are larger piers that accommodate aircraft carriers.

Construction on the pier began shortly after Congress allocated funds in 2020. Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Far East teamed up with Penta-Ocean Construction Co., based in Tokyo, on the project.

The pier replaces a 70-year-old floating pier that was demolished in 2019, largely due to its inability to support crane operations or ship repairs.

Officials with the U.S. Navy, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and Penta-Ocean Construction gathered on the pier Nov. 18 for a ribbon cutting. Base



U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force sailors tour the new Pier 5.

commander Capt. Les Sobol, Naval Forces Japan commander Rear Adm. Carl Lahti, NAVFAC Far East commander Capt. Lance Flood and Penta-Ocean Construction President and CEO Takuzo Shimizu were on hand.

"Today marks a historic moment in this installation's waterfront history," Lahti said during the ceremony. "After two years of hard work across multiple commands and echelons in the Navy, we are now opening the new Pier 5. This Pier 5 represents a \$128 million commitment by the government of the United States and the U.S.-Japan alliance."

At 675 feet long and 115 feet wide, the pier is nearly twice the size of its predecessor, Lahti said in the ceremony, and will provide services for "our Navy's most advanced, 21st-century surface combatants, and those of our partners and allies."

In addition to in-port power,

water and air connections, Pier 5 was also built with several "advanced design features," Scharar told Stars and Stripes after the ceremony. Those include a higher capacity for sea level rise, the ability to support a 140-ton mobile crane and a 75-year design, rather than the standard 50-year design.

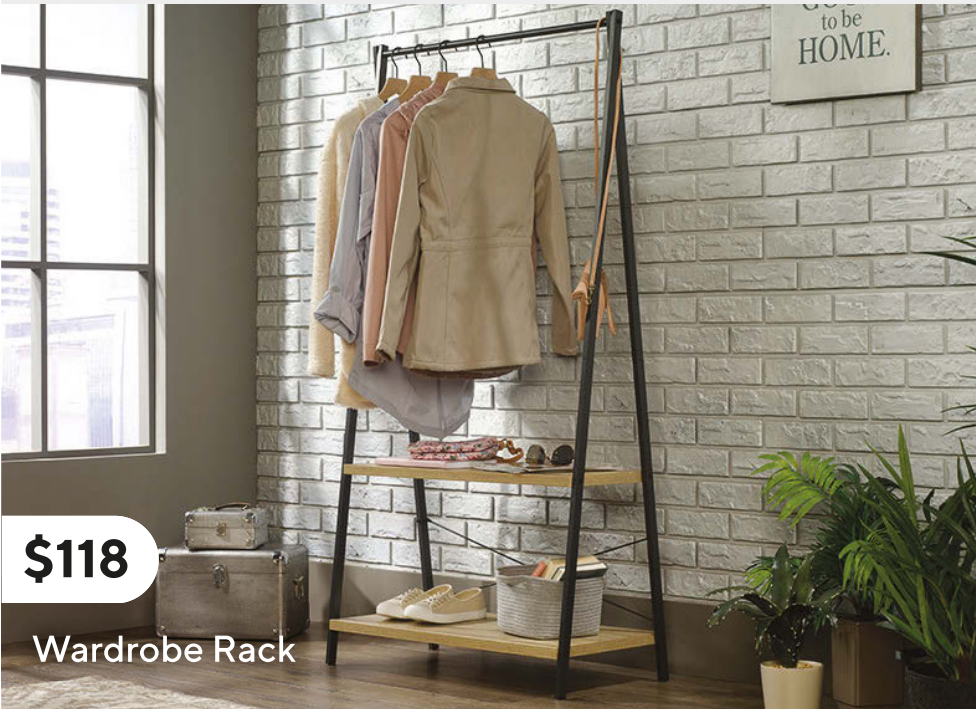
Docked alongside Pier 5 was the Japanese guided-missile destroyer JS Onami, the first ship serviced at the pier, which Lahti described as a symbolic representation of the relationship between the U.S. and Japan.

"I can think of no greater way to demonstrate the United States-Japan alliance than opening a new pier built by the United States with the first ship being from our closest ally in the Western Pacific," he said during the ceremony.

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## MILITARY

# Navy flexes medical muscle during exercise

By MATTHEW M. BURKE  
*Stars and Stripes*

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — At an expeditionary medical facility built inside a warehouse on this Marine Corps base, Navy doctors and nurses triaged incoming casualties brought by Osprey tiltrotor aircraft from an imagined battle more than 130 miles away.

It was a drill, of course, part of Keen Sword 23, a honing every two years of U.S. and Japanese armed forces' readiness to fight together. With fighting comes casualties and the medical branch, like the warfighters, rehearse for the job.

The caregivers scanned simulated gunshot, burn and blast victims brought from the Amami Islands to Japan Ground Self-Defense Force ambulances at Camp Foster and then to the expeditionary medical station, also called a Role-3 facility.

"This was an opportunity for us to coordinate with our partners in the region to assess each other's medical assets and see how we can continue to work forward together on other operations and exercises," Navy Capt. Stephen Arles, director of Naval Medical Forces Pacific's maritime operations center, said during a lull in the action. "Exercises like this give us an opportunity to operationalize Navy medicine assets to enhance our readiness in times of conflict and to ensure we have a ready medical force."

Keen Sword, begun in 1986, is designed to increase combat readiness and improve the work-



FRANK ANDREWS/Stars and Stripes

**Troops with the Japan Self-Defense Force prepare to move a simulated casualty as part of emergency medical drills at Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan.**

ing relationship between U.S. and Japanese forces. The exercise this year ran Nov. 10-19 at bases across main-island Japan, Okinawa prefecture and in Japan's territorial waters.

A Role-3 expeditionary medical facility, comparable to a hospital ship, was staffed by sailors from Naval Medical Forces Pacific at Naval Base San Diego and Expeditionary Medical Facility 150-Alpha at Camp Pendleton, Calif., according to a Naval Medical Forces Pacific

news release. A Role-3 facility provides a level of care three steps from the battlefield, according to the release. Role-1, by comparison, is a corpsman providing care at or near the battlefield.

A Role-3 facility provides damage control surgery and resuscitation, along with supplemental support and specialty services like urology, ophthalmology and orthopedic surgery, said facility commander Navy Capt. Elizabeth Smith.

The Camp Foster facility was built for up to 454 staff members, 20 intensive care beds, 130 acute care beds and four operating rooms that can conduct up to 36 surgeries per day, Smith said. The facility is also stocked with medications, ventilators and its own blood supply.

The facility could also be used for humanitarian and disaster relief, Smith said.

"We have all the monitoring needs and the emergency resuscitative equipment necessary

just like in any emergency room," facility acting executive officer Capt. Chris Keith said as corpsmen worked around him.

The expeditionary medical facility is a natural fit for Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David Berger's service-wide redesign called Force Design 2030, Arles said. One of the redesign's main tenets is expeditionary advanced base operation.

The Role-3 facility is too big for the battlefield and is a higher level of care but can be scaled down depending on where it is needed, Arles said.

"This is a scalable facility so it does not have to be deployed in its entirety and therefore can be more mobile and moved to a location where it's needed," he said. "Or, in a larger scale operation, the full facility can be deployed, obviously with less mobility, but with more capacity and more capabilities."

Force Design 2030 cut tanks, towed cannon artillery and some helicopter units for smaller, faster, harder-to-detect fighting formations armed with long-range precision-fire capabilities in the form of light attack munitions. Expeditionary advanced base operations call for these mobile units to disperse inside the range of enemy missiles to seize and hold islands and sink enemy vessels at sea. The Marines on Okinawa have been rehearsing the concept piece by piece since its inception.

Stars and Stripes reporter Keishi Kojima contributed to this report.  
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## Navy's newest carrier joins NATO allies on its first deployment

By ALISON BATH  
*Stars and Stripes*

ABOARD THE USS GERALD R. FORD — The Navy's newest aircraft carrier was testing its mettle alongside allies in the north Atlantic on its maiden deployment, as part of a mission that its leadership said sends a powerful message to adversaries who may be watching.

The USS Gerald R. Ford's deployment comes after major cost overruns, technical issues and other delays since it was commissioned into service in 2017 as the lead ship of its class.

But the sailors aboard the ship in international waters off the coast of France said the technological improvements, which include new radar, aircraft launch and propulsion systems, have made their operations faster and represent a clear upgrade from the Nimitz class of nuclear-powered carriers.

Naval officials wouldn't say whether the Russians were sizing up Ford as it launched planes alongside six NATO allied naval forces recently, but it's not unusual for the Kremlin to do so.

"You always assume your competitors are watching what you are doing and in-



ALISON BATH/Stars and Stripes

**A group embarks aboard the aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford on Nov. 13.**

terested in what you are doing, just as we would be with what they are doing," said Rear Adm. D.J. Patchell, vice commander of U.S. 2nd Fleet.

The Ford Carrier Strike Group left its Naval Station Norfolk, Va., homeport in early October on a two-month deployment designed to continue testing systems and train its air wing, the Navy said in an Oct. 5 statement.

The deployment is a prequel to a longer, more traditional deployment planned in 2023, USNI News reported Sept. 26.

The shorter outing allows the service to evaluate how systems like the electromagnetic aircraft launching system, or EMALS, operate in tune with allied forces, said Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman, commander of Carrier Strike Group 12.

On Nov. 13, storms and rough seas didn't allow for flight operations that would have highlighted EMALS, which replaces the more than 70-year-old technology behind the steam-powered system used on the service's Nimitz-class carriers. So far, the ship has seen more than 10,000 launches and recoveries using the system, which provides a smoother, more controlled launch that puts less stress on aircraft, officials said.

EMALS also offers greater flexibility in launching a range of aircraft, including aerial drones, although the ship hasn't yet launched any, said Capt. Paul Lanzilotta, the Ford's commanding officer.

Huffman characterized the system, once heavily criticized for its high cost and unreliability, as "absolutely performing where we need it to be."

But he also acknowledged that there is more work to do on EMALS, which the Navy says will increase sortie rates and reduce manning needs in part because of better use of space.

Ford's capabilities also include six in-deck fuel positions that allow aircraft refueling without having to drag hoses across the flight deck. Lanzilotta said it took just four minutes to refuel the E-2D Hawkeye he recently was flying.

"It's a little bit like a Formula 1 (race car pit) stop compared to having to pull those hoses," said Lanzilotta, who noted the fueling stations not only make easier work for crew members but also help keep the flight deck taxi area clear.

Not all of Ford's advantages are high-tech, though, sailors said.

Some quality-of-life improvements, such as private bathrooms in officers' state rooms and higher-output air conditioning, are making conditions better for the crew, he said.

"This is a really nice way to live," Lanzilotta said.

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## MILITARY

# Navy spouse finds comic voice on Tokyo stage

By KELLY AGEE  
*Stars and Stripes*

TOKYO — For the 17 days in 2020 that he spent in a COVID-19 quarantine at his home near Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, Sean Flanagan sat in front of a mirror, eating Rice Krispies Treats nonstop while talking to himself.

Two years later, Flanagan stood before a tightly packed audience in the heart of Tokyo, eliciting laughter with the comedy routine he polished in front of that mirror.

Flanagan, 34, a native of Boston and military spouse to Navy Lt. Cmdr. Simon Kwak, a foreign area officer at Yokosuka where he works with foreign navies in the Indo-Pacific, said performing stand-up comedy helps him maintain his own identity.

“Even though it’s a package deal to the Navy, or whatever branch, as the family unit, the spouse is still their own individual person and you need your own identity,” Flanagan told *Stars and Stripes* in October.

Kwak, 36, of Summit, N.J., is very supportive of Flanagan’s burgeoning career in comedy, Flanagan said. The two were married in May in New York City.

Kwak is his most important critic, Flanagan said. It’s no matter if 50 people don’t get the joke, if Kwak isn’t sure of it, Flanagan said he’s truly dismayed.

Maintaining a career is tough for military spouses. The frequent moves sometimes undermine career continuity.

“It is definitely great to see him being able to pursue his passion as a career and finding that drive through comedy.

“And it is translatable to anywhere we get posted,” Kwak said.

“I think he is a natural at it. It is great that he has been able to find this creative outlet in Tokyo.”

## Cheesecake inspiration

Flanagan has performed since 2018, starting in New York City on a comedy tour bus called *The Ride* for two years.



Simon Kwak

**Sean Flanagan performs his comedy routine at the Tokyo Comedy Bar in Shibuya, Japan, in June.**

Passengers sat sideways facing a wall-sized window. At the bus stops, musicians, dancers and magicians performed on the sidewalk.

As the host, Flanagan performed a scripted routine, but always improvised for the sometimes-rowdy crowd. He speaks Japanese, and in a couple of weeks will attempt his first bilingual performance.

In Tokyo, his bids for audience engagement from the stage are sometimes met with silence.

“Literally, like, I’ll do a bit ... ‘Do we have any straight people in the audience?’ Nobody raises their hand,” he said.

“Do we have any gay people in the audience? Nobody raises their hand. Oh,

good ... so you’re all bi. And you just kind of roll with it and let the audience know that some level of back-and-forth is good.”

Coming up with jokes happens in different ways for Flanagan.

Some just pop into his head, so he always carries a notebook.

“The other day I was on a train and out of nowhere the idea came to me that isn’t the Cheesecake Factory menu in the Bible, like what are the similarities between those two things,” Flanagan said.

At other times, Flanagan will sit down for a writing session, which is usually drawn from personal experiences.

## How to comedy

Flanagan says his comedy routine is

partially storytelling; he likes to take people through a journey during his 5- to 20-minute sets. About 80% of his performance is scripted, with the remainder improvised.

Flanagan said he talks a lot about coming out late in life as LGBTQ and “joining the military” by way of marriage.

“One bit that I do talks about how if you really want to confuse Japanese people when you’re speaking Japanese try to tell them that you’re in a same-sex relationship, because they just think you’ve slipped the genders accidentally,” Flanagan said.

“I knew that I wanted to do this premise, because it’s happened several times where I’ll say, ‘my husband’ and they will be like ‘no, no, you don’t mean that.’ I’m like ‘no, no, I do. I really do.’”

Flanagan performs three or four times a week at the Tokyo Comedy Bar in Shibuya, where he first went on stage in June.

“One of his superpowers I have seen is the fact that he can talk to different audiences,” said BJ Fox, founder of the Tokyo Comedy Bar.

“He can speak to an international audience, and he speaks good enough Japanese to be like ‘I can skitch into this gig,’ in terms of his audience.”

Fox, 41, originally of London, said the Tokyo Comedy Bar attracts an audience of people from nearby bases like Yokosuka, Yokota Air Base and Atsugi Naval Air Facility but even from bases on Okinawa.

Flanagan enjoys playing to the Department of Defense crowd.

“I love when we have DOD members in the audience, because I can tell my DOD-specific jokes,” Flanagan said.

“Personally, I don’t like the term dependent. I mean the only things I rely on my partner for are health care, an income and keeping a roof over our heads — I just don’t think that’s that much.”

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# Study finds military service improves Blacks’ quality of life

By JOHN VANDIVER  
*Stars and Stripes*

Black veterans are less likely to be chronic marijuana smokers than their white counterparts and enjoy a higher standard of living than African Americans who never joined the military, according to a new study that examined

life outcomes for veterans.

The Rand Corp. report, released last week, found that in many respects past military service was associated with a high quality of life for African Americans when they return to the civilian world.

The report aimed to fill an

information gap in an area often overlooked: how military service influences the future lives of Black Americans, said Rand, a nonpartisan research group that is often commissioned by the Defense Department.

Among the positive indicators are higher income, improved

ability to cover health care costs, higher rates of homeownership and decreased reliance on food assistance programs, compared with Black people who were lifetime civilians.

Black veterans also have “a substantially lower” likelihood of marijuana use disorder than Black civilians as well as white veterans and civilians, the report said.

“This suggests that there might be some downstream protective effect of military service for Black veterans for this outcome or that there might be a bias against marijuana use among Black people who join the military,” Rand said.

Despite their strong representation in the armed forces, “there is little research on the impact of military service on Black people,” Rand said.

African Americans represent 13.4% of the overall U.S. population and 11.7% of the roughly 18 million American veterans, according to Rand.

Another finding was that military service corresponds with higher marriage rates for Black veterans compared with Black civilians.

Still, Black veterans do not have economic equity compared with white civilians and veterans, when examining indicators like annual income and need for food assistance, the report said.

Black veterans also have higher odds of experiencing chronic pain and other ailments such as hypertension and high cholesterol, when compared with Black civilians, Rand said.

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