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U.S. Army Air Corps 1st Lt. Carl Smith was the pilot of the Filthy Fay II, a B-29 Superfortress shot down in western Tokyo on April 2, 1945. Photos by Akifumi Ishikawa, Stars and Stripes

Great-grandson of fallen B-29 pilot makes pilgrimage to WWII crash site

BY SETH ROBSON AND
HANA KUSUMOTO,
STARS AND STRIPES
Published: May 29, 2025

OME — A California man recently climbed a forested mountain-side in western Tokyo to honor the memory of his great-grandfather, one of five American airmen killed when their B-29 Superfortress crashed during a World War II bombing raid over Japan.

Tyler Smith, a recreation planner from San Francisco, made the journey May 25 to a stone

memorial in Ome, not far from the U.S. Forces Japan headquarters at Yokota Air Base. His great-grandfather, U.S. Army Air Corps 1st Lt. Carl Smith, was the pilot of the Filthy Fay II, which was shot down on April 2, 1945.

“This is such a beautiful place,” Smith said, laying flowers at the site where others had left cans of beer as offerings.

The bomber was returning from a raid on a Nakajima aircraft factory in Tokyo when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire and crashed near

what is now Yugi in Ome city. Six of the 11 crew members parachuted to safety; five, including Carl Smith, died in the crash.

The fallen airmen — Smith; 2nd Lt. Cecil Coats; 2nd Lt. Francis McGinty; 2nd Lt. Benjamin Stauber; and Tech Sgt. William McCormack — were initially buried by local villagers at Sokuseiji, a nearby Buddhist temple. Their remains were later returned to the United States and interred at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis.

The crash site, now covered in Japanese cypress trees, became the focus of an annual memorial ceremony in the late 1990s, after local resident Tetsuya Nomura purchased the land and built a monument to honor the crew. Nomura, who was 6 at the time of the crash, accompanied Smith on Sunday’s hike and said it was the first time a relative of a fallen airman had visited the site.

Nomura believes Carl Smith may have steered the bomber into the mountain to avoid crashing



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The crash site, now covered in Japanese cypress trees, became the focus of an annual memorial ceremony in the late 1990s, after local resident Tetsuya Nomura purchased the land and built a monument to honor the crew.



Tyler Smith, a recreation planner from San Francisco, makes a pilgrimage to a western Tokyo mountain where a B-29 Superfortress piloted by his great-grandfather went down 80 years ago.

into nearby homes — a theory he shared with the younger Smith during the visit.

The B-29 was part of the 498th Bombardment Group, 73rd Bomb Wing, based on Saipan. Four of the six surviving crew members were captured and returned home after the war. The others died in captivity or shortly after capture, according to Honor States, an online archive of fallen American

service members.

One, 2nd Lt. John Houghton, died from injuries after a Japanese doctor reportedly euthanized him; another, Sgt. Kenneth Petterson, was killed in an air raid after his capture, according to the archive.

Tyler Smith, who was touring Japan with

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stops in Tokyo and Osaka, said visiting the crash site added a personal and emotional dimension to his trip. Though he never knew his great-grandfather, he grew up hearing stories about him from relatives.

Smith said his great-grandfather was a standout athlete and a student at the College

of Puget Sound, now the University of Puget Sound, in Tacoma, Wash.

“He lived near Mount Rainier — a mountain as prominent and revered as Mount Fuji,” he told Nomura.

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‘I want to be the best I can’

Yokota airman uses powerlifting to inspire, motivate others

BY AIRMAN KAYLA KARELAS,
374TH AIRLIFT WING

YOKOTA AIR BASE – Tightly gripping his hands around the cold metal bar, a rush of adrenaline flowed through his body as the echoing sounds of encouragement from his wingmen, friends and family got louder nearby.

“I want to be the best I can,” Staff Sgt. Wilmer Hernandez, 374th Surgical Operations Squadron ultrasound NCO in charge, repeated to himself as he stepped onto the platform for the USA Powerlifting Military, Police & Firefighter National Championship.

Weighing a total of 148 lbs, Hernandez accomplished squatting over 407 lbs, benching over 264 lbs and deadlifting over 540 lbs. This feat earned him gold in his weight class, top 20 of male powerlifters and the number one lifter at his respective weight.

However, this level of achievement wasn’t always the reality for Hernandez when it came to physical activity.

Before powerlifting, Hernandez focused mainly on being a nutritionist and personal trainer to others. Though a passion, he felt his personal gym routine had become mundane with a lack of mental and physical growth.

“I felt like I hit a plateau,” said Hernandez. “I had lost interest in working out, I was just doing whatever, then going home.”

For Hernandez, a goal-oriented mindset is the key to staying focused and successful and his routine at the time did not satisfy his ambitious needs.

“My brother and best friend had been powerlifting for years,” he recalled. “They had me sign up for a powerlifting competition so I could have something to work toward.”

Immediately after his first competition,

Hernandez found a strong enthusiasm for powerlifting.

“I’m super passionate about the sport,” said Hernandez. “I want to pay it forward by coaching others and bringing those around me up.”

Powerlifting has helped Hernandez both in his personal life and as a service member, where the strength and discipline required to excel in the sport goes hand-in-hand with the demands of being an Airman.

“A big part of being a service member is being fit and strong,” he said. “In my job, for medical, I have to make sure I am strong enough to lift a patient if I need to.”

“It may simply be powerlifting, but as a military member, we work day in and day out, so if I can do it, I know that other people in the community can do it,” said Hernandez. “Sometimes the best thing you can do for yourself is to show up. You don’t have to have all the muscle in the world, as long as you can make the effort to get stronger, make progress and improve – that’s enough.”

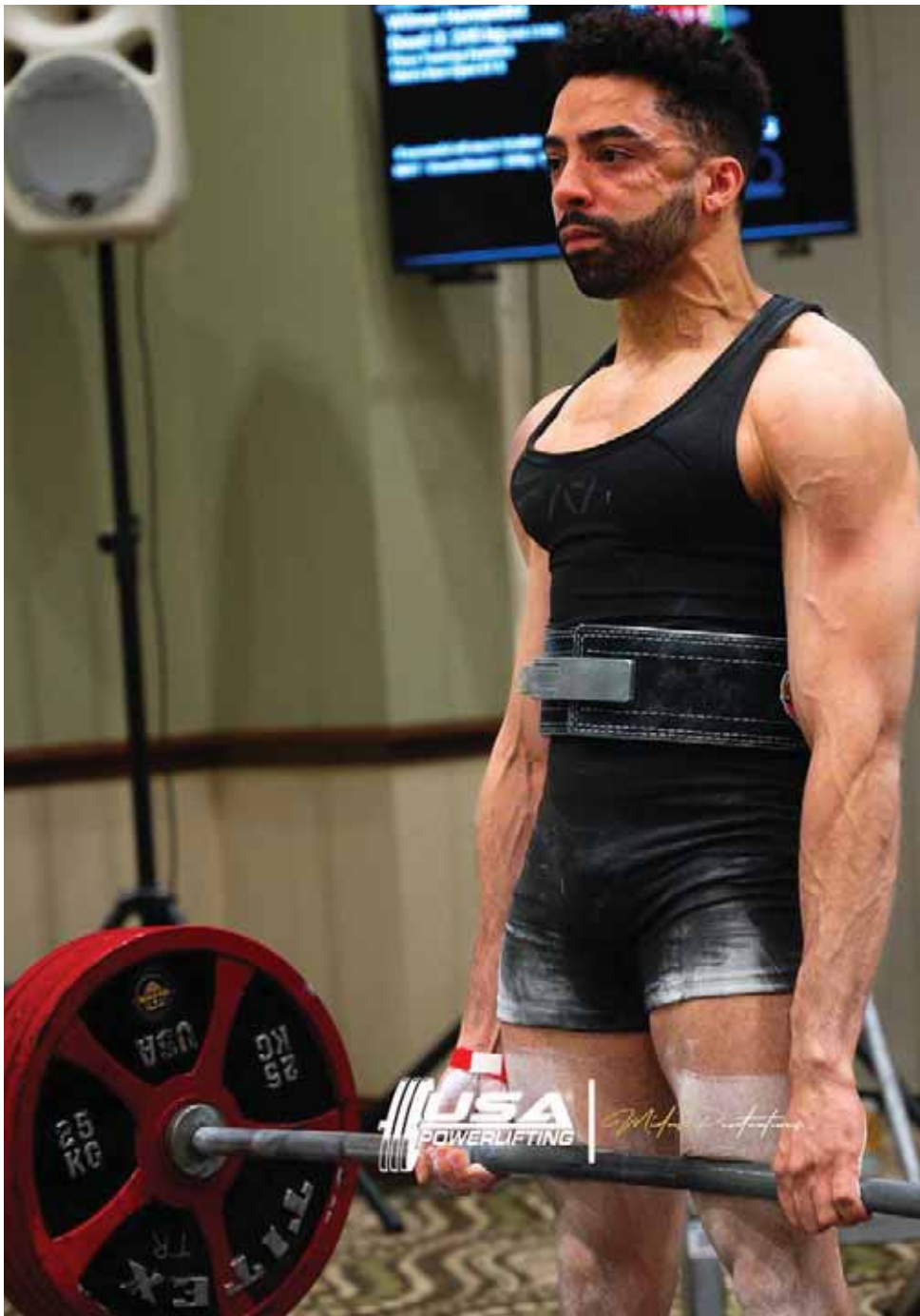
Using his expertise in personal training, nutrition and powerlifting, Hernandez’s devotion to encourage excellence led him to train fellow Airmen, which eventually led to their own gold medal achievements in the same competition.

“Willpower and motivation is not always going to be there,” said Hernandez. “Having the mental momentum of being able to track what you’re doing and keep positive pays off not only in the gym, but everywhere in life.”



“I’m super passionate about the sport. I want to pay it forward by coaching others and bringing those around me up.”

- Staff Sgt. Wilmer Hernandez



Staff Sgt. Wilmer Hernandez completes a deadlift at the USA Powerlifting Military, Police & Firefighter National Championship on March 15. Photo courtesy of U.S. Air Force

Hernandez believes that winning gold at the USAPL Military, Police & Firefighters National Championship proudly demonstrates his commitment to physical readiness and Yokota’s mission.

“Our mission here at Yokota is to be

ready,” said Hernandez. “It doesn’t matter how much muscle you have, as long as you’re dedicated and consistent, you’ll reach whatever your goal is while accomplishing the mission.”

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ANTHEM: 'The parents loved it; the kids loved it'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I'm leaving kind of makes the closing of this chapter in my life a happy ending, like I'm giving something back to the kids and the families."

Davis said he wrote the song for a Month of the Military Child event at Yokota.

"So, I'm going through the internet, Googling songs for military kids and nothing would pop up," he said. "We could sing the National Anthem, we could sing the Air Force song, the Army song, the Navy song, but nothing about the military kids. So, I was like, 'Man, we need a song for the kids and about their experience.'"

A former DODEA student himself, Davis studied music at East Central College in Union, Mo., but left in 1997 to join the Air Force as a geospatial intelligence specialist.

While on active duty, he completed his music degree at Yuba Community College in Yuba City, Calif., and later earned a degree in classical guitar with a minor in education from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

"So that background helped me to be like, 'Oh yeah, we don't have a song, so we're going to make a song,'" he said.

The original version of "The Military Kid Song" included only a few verses and a chorus, with Davis on guitar.

"The parents loved it; the kids loved it," he said. "They were like, 'Oh, we need more, we need more.' So, the next year the song developed even more."

After Davis moved to Sasebo in August 2020, a Yokota parent emailed him asking



Children pose during a recording session for "The Military Kid Song" in Sasebo on April 12.
Photos by Arielle Jones



Behind the scenes video



schools, said Arabella "was having a hard time making friends" after moving to Sasebo from North Carolina. Davis' song helped her connect with others and prepare for another move.

"The students are very lucky to have him as their teacher," Cupa said.

After 18 years of teaching, David said he plans to turn his attention to family, food and live music.

"The DOD community gave me a lifetime of memories," he said. "Along with the great fortune to meet so many extraordinary people from many different walks of life, the memories I've collected will fill my heart with joy for the rest of my days. I'm incredibly grateful for the military life and that's why I'm so happy I could give back with a song."

robinson.janiqua@stripes.com
@JaniquaRob

for a recording of the song. So, he scored it for horns, keyboard, drums and bass, and then found a studio to record it.

"It was a cultural exchange event," Davis said, adding that the studio offered to record the song for free if its students could participate.

The studio houses the Sasebo Jazz Fan Club, which aims to nurture young musicians, according to its website.

"We went in there, we all knew what

we were doing, and the kids recorded their parts with one take," Davis said. "It was a lot of fun."

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Darby fourth-grader Arabella Sanchez sang in the chorus on the recording, said her mother, Marine Corps spouse Johanna

Cupa, during phone and email interviews on May 16.

Cupa, a mother of four who works as a special education assessor for Sasebo



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4 great attractions in Hachinohe



STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Hachinohe City, only a 30-minute drive from Misawa Air Base, is a good destination to enjoy the great weather and great attractions. Here are four great spots to visit in Hachinohe City.



View Video!



■ Fish Market

To get a look at the freshest catch, make sure to time an early morning visit to Mutsuminato Fish Market. I dropped by the market at around 7 a.m. and over 50 shops at the market and lining the street to the JR Matsuminato Station were buzzing with activity. The “Isaba no Kachha,” literally “fish mothers” is what the women selling fish at the market are called, were hawking a variety of seafood from their stalls.

The market, mostly run by elderly women, is astonishingly open 365 days a year. So, as long as you visit early, you’re likely to catch the fish mothers tending to their stalls. As I browsed the fresh selection, I made sure to stop for a delicious breakfast at one of the market restaurants. For about 600 yen (\$4), I got a sashi and shellfish set with white rice and miso soup on the side.



Mutsuminato Asaichi (morning market)

ADDRESS: Kubo, Minato-cho, Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture
HOURS: Mon. – Sat., 3 a.m. – noon (close Sunday and second Saturdays every month)
TEL: 0178-33-7242



■ Kabushima Jinja

My next stop was Kabushima Jinja, a Shinto shrine known for beauty but also its over 40,000 umineko black-tailed sea gulls. The gulls vacation at the shrine from February through August, so make sure to borrow an umbrella before you start your hike up the shrine steps to avoid getting an aerial splattering.

The shrine itself dates back 700 years, but the main shrine had to be reconstructed after a fire in 2015. Take in the impressive grounds and buildings of the shrine, which is thought to bring good fortune for fishermen.

Kabushima Shrine

ADDRESS: Same, Same-cho, Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture
TEL: 0178-46-4040



■ Tanesashi Kaigan Beach

Near the shrine, make your way through the pine woods along a coastal trail to Tanesashi Kaigan. This unusual beach is not sandy but instead, a green lawn spreading straight to the shoreline. Standing on the green beach, I could not help but keep inhaling the cool, refreshing sea breeze as much as I could.

It was hard to believe that such a scenic coastal area was devastated by the deadly Tsunami triggered by the 9.0 earthquake that shook the nation in 2011. Two days after the earthquake and tsunami, U.S. military members from nearby Misawa AB and beyond arrived to lend a hand as part of Operation Tomodachi. Though the area has recovered in the 13 years since the devastating disaster, the connection within the local community and the signs of renewal remain.



Tanesashi Kaigan Information Center

ADDRESS: 14-167 Tanakubo, Same-cho, Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture
WEBSITE: <http://tanesashi.info/>
TEL: 0178-51-8500





The museum database lets you look into records of 130,000 Japanese immigrants to Hawaii (1885 – 1908)



Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii

Open: Tues. – Mon., 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Location: 2144 Nishiyashiro, Suo-Oshima Town, Oshima-gun, Yamaguchi Pref.

Admission: 400 yen; elementary/middle schoolers 200 yen

Tel: 0820-74-4082

museum curator
Eiko Kawano

WEBSITE



Museum explores 'Hawaii of Setouchi'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPE JAPAN



VIEW VIDEO

Located off the coast of Iwakuni, Suo-Oshima is known as “Hawaii of Setouchi” thanks to its beautiful landscape, sandy beaches and crystal-clear waters, along with Hawaiian-style attire, customs, and look of its residents.

On the island, there are many attractions including shops and restaurants keeping the Hawaiian-style vibe. From late June through the end of August, the island carries out a unique “Aloha Biz” campaign that allows staffers of town hall, banks, post offices and hotels to wear Hawaiian shirts as official attire. On Saturdays, you can catch hula dancing performances at various spots around the island as part of their “Saturday Hula” promotion.

But, why does the island of a short 60-minute drive from MCAS Iwakuni have an Aloha State vibe?

Visit the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawaii for some insight into this interesting history.

Housed in a native wooden building, the museum was founded in 1999 to tell the story of Suo Oshima locals who migrated to Hawaii around 130 years ago. The exhibits in the museum explore the migrants’ stories and documents the evolution of Suo-Oshima after their

children and grandchildren returned.

“With a lot of children, the islander’s life in the 19th century was very harsh. So, they applied for the Japanese government’s recruitment for emigration to overseas countries (1885 – 1894) and emigrated to Hawaii looking for a better life,” said museum curator Eiko Kawano.

According to Kawano, most of the Japanese immigrants worked in sugar cane and pineapple plantations. They kept sending money to their families back home, which then contributed to the building of schools and shrines throughout the years.

Descendants of these original Japanese residents have since returned and with them brought Hawaiian culture and customs. Suo-Oshima even signed a sister contract with Kauai Island in 1963 marking the strong connection and friendship they keep to this day.

In recent years, a lot of Japanese Hawaiians have visited the museum in quest of their origin, according to Kawano. With a database and the documents furnished in the museum, you can look into records of 130,000 Japanese who emigrated to Hawaii from 1885 to 1908.

The unique museum is a short 60-minute drive from MCAS Iwakuni via 3,346-foot-long Oshima Ohashi Bridge. The island and its history make for a great day trip to get a taste of Hawaiian culture without leaving Japan.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



Photos by Yoshihito Morita

Hachinohe Park

As mainland Japan enters the muggy, dreary tsuyu rain season, you mustn’t forget that the humidity is the perfect environment for some of the most stunning flowers of the season. Although not as famous as the cherry blossoms in the spring, summer’s roses, hydrangeas and irises are just as beautiful.

At Hachinohe Park, a short 40-minute drive from Misawa Air Base, you and your whole family can enjoy the sprawling botanical garden as well as a zoo and children’s amusement park. The rose garden at the park boasts over 650 rose bushes spanning dozens of varieties. Some include those named after royal figures like Queen Elizabeth and Japan’s Empress Michiko and Princess Aiko. Roses in the park’s garden are in full bloom, so make sure to get over to the park soon.

Hachinohe Park

ADDRESS: 33-2 Tenma, Tokachi,
Hachinohe City, Aomori Prefecture
031-0012

WEBSITE : <https://www.city.hachinohe.aomori.jp/soshikikarasagasu/koenryokuchika/koen/4659.html>

TEL: 0178-96-2932



Hachinohe is blessed with natural beauty, delicious seafood and rich traditions. Visit it yourself and enjoy what the unusual coastal city has to offer!

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View Video!



BASEBALL

Japan's ballpark experience evolving to attract new fans

BY JUN SAKAHIRA,
STRIPES JAPAN

If you have been to ball games in the U.S., I'm sure you enjoyed not only the game, but also the atmosphere each ballpark has to offer. For a baseball fanatic like me who has been to 17 different stadiums in the U.S. and all 12 of the Japanese stadiums, just going to a new one is a fun experience. What are stadiums like in Japan? From almost century old Koshien and Jingu Stadiums to Es Con Field Hokkaido, which opened in 2023, Nippon Professional Baseball stadiums offer quite unique experiences, too.

Until 2004, when the realignment of the Japanese league took place, organizations did not pay too much attention to stadium atmosphere. Dominated by male audience, a ball game experience was mostly focused on the game itself. Also, during this time, several teams were on the verge of folding because of financial difficulties. So, teams started looking at improving their services and stadium experiences.

Teams started renovating the stadiums by imitating Major League stadiums. Japanese stadiums built or refurbished after the realignment are like those of MLB. Es Con Field is literally in the middle of nowhere, but with a hotel, villa, playground, bar, hot springs facility, etc., the whole complex offers a one-of-a-kind experience. It is by far my favorite stadium in Japan and reminds me of MLB stadiums. Another one I recommend is MAZDA Zoom-Zoom Stadium in Hiroshima. But if you would like to experience more nostalgic Japanese ball game experience, Koshien and Jingu are the ones to visit.

Hope to see you at a ballpark near you!
sakahira.jun@stripes.com



Es Con Field Hokkaido



Photos by Jun Sakahira, Stripes Japan

CENTRAL LEAGUE



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NISHINOMIYA CITY
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YOKOHAMA DENA BAYSTARS
YOKOHAMA
YOKOHAMA STADIUM



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TOKYO
TOKYO DOME



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OSAKA



HOKKAIDO NIPPON-HAM FIGHTERS
SAPPORO

NPB

Home to Japan's boys of summer

BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN



MISAWA AB

Ask your friends what the national sport of Japan is, and although many of them will give you the right answer (sumo, of course), some might say “it should be baseball.”

Called “yakyuu” (literally, field ball), baseball is one of the most popular games in Japan, despite not being the national sport. Baseball is inescapable in Japan these days. In less than 150 years, we have nearly turned an imported sport into our national sport.

Here, the sport can be much like politics and religion – bring up a specific team or a player, and you better be prepared for a conversation that could quickly become heated.

The Nippon Professional Baseball league, or NPB, is the league when it comes to baseball in Japan. With 12 teams scattered from the northern mainland of Hokkaido to the southern mainland of Kyushu, many of Japan's major cities have a team to call their own. And for residents of these cities, the loyalty and dedication to their teams is usually as strong as they come.

The history of baseball in Japan goes back to 1871, when foreigners living in Yokohama would play against crews of the USS Colorado at what is now Yokohama Stadium. Baseball then spread among Japanese through American teachers and residents, with the first professional baseball association being established in 1920. Professional teams then formed one after another, starting with the Tokyo Giants in 1934, Osaka Tigers in 1935 and Nagoya Dragons in 1936.

Today, just like the National and American Leagues of MLB in the U.S., there are two leagues in the NPB – Central and Pacific. The Central League has traditionally been more popular than Pacific League, as the two most popular teams, Giants (Tokyo) and Tigers (Hyogo), belong to the Central.

Many say the recent popularity of Giants has significantly dropped. The team has always been

the most popular, with most manga and animation films on professional baseball in Japan usually featuring heroes from the Giants. The team is likened to the New York Yankees, and it is often said that there are two kinds Japanese – pro-Giants and anti-Giants.

Not a baseball enthusiast myself, I was born and raised in the Kanto Plain, and therefore a Giants fan throughout my childhood, just like most of my friends. I proudly wore a G-marked shirt and ball cap, cried when Shigeo Nagashima retired from the Giants in 1974, and was overcome with joy when slugger Sadaharu Oh hit his then-record breaking 756th homerun in 1977.

Since Hideo Nomo became a historical success with the Dodgers in the mid-90s, star players such as Ichiro, Hideki Matsui and Yu Darvish have taken their world-class capabilities to the MLB one after another. The NPB has become somewhat of a minor league for MLB, and those players who have succeeded in the U.S.,

have become even bigger rockstars in their home country.

I can't forget the enthusiastic moment when Japan with Shohei Ohtani at the helm took the 2023 World Baseball Classic over the U.S. Since the inception of the WBC in 2006, Japan has now won three of the five tournaments.

While there are many similarities between NPB and the MLB, there are some drastic differences that you notice the minute you walk into a Japanese stadium. For one, fans become cheerleaders in the stands while their team is at bat. Each player has a unique song, and every fan knows the lyrics to chant along. Secondly, the cold beer conveniently served at your seat is done so by a petite Japanese “beer girl”. It's a stark contrast to the big and loud “beer guys” yelling “Beer here!” in the U.S.

Visit the nearest ballpark to your base and see these differences for yourself. Check out YouTube in preparation for your team's cheers, and make sure to grab yourself a cold *biru* to wash down that bento box.

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NEED TICKETS?

- To get tickets, you can visit a team's official website. Most teams offer QR code tickets. Make sure to select the option when purchasing tickets. Once you reserve the seats you want, there are several options, but often you can go pay and pick up your tickets at most convenience stores nearby. There is also the option of picking up tickets the day of the game at the ballpark, but be aware that games often sell out, especially on the weekends.
- Some teams adopt dynamic pricing; prices vary according to demand. It's usually the earlier you book tickets, the cheaper they are. All but the Tigers and the Carp (they sell the entire season's before the season begins) usually start selling tickets two months prior to the actual game date. (For all September games, usually from a specified day in July)



SEE MORE
NPB
ON PAGE 10



TOHOKU RAKUTEN GOLDEN EAGLES
SENDAI
RAKUTEN MOBILE PARK MIYAGI



SAITAMA SEIBU LIONS
SAITAMA



YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE
NAF ATSUGI



Photos by Chi-Hung Lin

The belle of the ballgame

BY JUN SAKAHIRA,
STRIPES JAPAN

One of the most unique aspects of Japanese baseball is how fans watch the game. While there are many families at stadiums, a ballgame is also a great social gathering place for businessmen. Many companies own season tickets to entertain clients, and as all Japanese stadiums are located in major cities, businessmen will enjoy a game with a cold beer after work, much like an izakaya or beer garden.

American newcomers to these games are often surprised, not only by the fans' enthusiasm for their teams, but also the in-stadium vendors serving up those tasty cold ones. Used to hearing a male voice yelling "beer here," or

some form of that, in the U.S., spectators get their drinks from something that's unique to Japan: Beer girls.

The Uriko, or so-called beer girls, are young women who have been the belle of the ballgame experience for decades, serving anything from beer to chuhai, soda, ice cream and more. And unlike their male counterparts in Major League Baseball, the beer girls trek around with a 30-plus pound keg strapped to their backs.

A beer girl we interviewed expressed her motivation at Yokohama Stadium, home of the Yokohama DeNA BayStars.

"I started this job because I liked certain baseball players," she said. "I love it because I can work in an environment where my favorite players play baseball."

Serving up ballgame brews is a popular part-time job

among students, even though it is physically demanding and sometimes the weather can be less than ideal.

"There are two types of Uriko: the ones who love baseball and the ones who simply love this job," she said.

Some former beer girls have gone on to become TV stars. Not only are they vendors who serve spectators, but also idol-like figures that enhance the baseball experience for many.

"Even if you have not been to a game before, you can enjoy the Japanese ballgame atmosphere," she said.

As it gets warmer, nothing goes better with a baseball game than a refreshing cold beer, so why not experience one of the many things that'll make you say, "Only in Japan!"?

sakahira.jun@stripes.com

What you need to know

- ⓪ Stand up when your team is batting (in the outfield cheering area, not mandatory but expected)
- ⓪ Each player has a cheer when at bat
- ⓪ The Giants are equal to the Yankees
- ⓪ The Giants-Tigers rivalry is therefore Yankees-Red Sox
- ⓪ Games can end in a tie after 12 innings
- ⓪ 4 foreign players are allowed on the 26-man roster (no more than 3 pitchers or 3 hitters)

NPB NOTES

- The single season record for batting average is not held by Ichiro. It's held by American Randy Bass who hit .389 in 1986. Ichiro's best was .387 in 2000.
- Former Mariners and Reds outfielder Wladimir Balentien hit 60 homeruns in 2013 - the single season record.
- Until it was broken in 2015, former Cubs outfielder Matt Murton held the record for hits in a season with 214.
- Another former Cub, Tuffy Rhodes, won the Pacific League MVP for the Osaka Kintetsu Buffaloes in 2001. Rhodes hit 55 homers and drove in 131 runs.
- The nearly 100-year-old Meiji Jingu Stadium, home to the Tokyo Yakult Swallows, isn't just named after Meiji Shrine - it's actually owned by the famous shrine.

Speakin' Japanese

Baseball Banter

If you are at a ballpark in Japan, here are some phrases to help you to enjoy the ballgame.

"Yakyuu ni tsureteitte kudasai!" = Take me to a ball game, please!
("yakyuu" = a ball game, "tsureteitte" = take me, "kudasai" = please)

"Seki wa douyatte yoyaku dekimasu ka?" = How can we book a seat?
("seki" = a seat, "douyatte" = how, "yoyaku" = book, "dekimasu ka" = can we)

"Kon-ya wa biiru ga hangaku desu!" = Beer is 50 percent off tonight.
("Kon-ya" = tonight, "biiru" = beer, "hangaku" = 50 percent off)

"Biiru wo kudasai." = Give me a cup of beer, please!

"Toire wa doko desu ka?" = Where is the bathroom?
("toire" = bathroom, "doko" = where)

"Sato ga manrui-hoomuran wo uchimashita!" = Sato hit a grand slam.
("manrui-hoomuran" = grand slam, "uchimashita" = hit)

"Mazui. Gettsuu da!" = Oh, no. It's a double-play!
("mazui" = Oh, no, "Gettsuu" = a double-play)

"Kon-ya no Imai wa booru ga hashitteru!" = Imai is pitching well tonight!
("booru ga hashitteru" = pitching well)

"Deddobooru da!" = It was a HBP (hit by pitch)!
("Deddobooru" = HBP)

Pronunciation key: "A" is short (like "ah"); "E" is short (like "get"); "I" is short (like "it"); "O" is long (like "old"); "U" is long (like "tube"); and "Ai" is a long "I" (like "hike"). Most words are pronounced with equal emphasis on each syllable, but "OU" is a long "O" with emphasis on that syllable.

"Suwaroozu gambare!" = Go Swallows!
("Suwaroozu" = Swallows, "gambare" = go)

"Ouenka wo utaimasho!" = Let's sing a cheer song!
("ouenka" = a cheer song, "utaimasho" = Let's sing)

"Kon-ya wa kateso desu." = We are winning tonight.
("kateso" = are winning)

"Enchosen ni totsunyu desu!" = It's going into extra innings!
("Enchosen" = extra innings, "totsunyu" = go into)

"San tai ichi de Jaiantsu no kachi desu!" = Giants won 3 - 1!
("San" = 3, "tai" = -, "ichi" = 1, Jaiantsu = "Giants", "kachi" = win)

— Takahiro Takiguchi,
Stripes Japan



KAGURAZAKA

Trendy Tokyo shopping, dining district filled with French, Edo vibes

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Located in the center of Tokyo and a short 20-minute train ride from Hardy Barracks, Kagurazaka is a fashionable shopping and dining district where traditional Japanese and elegant French feels coexist.

During the samurai era, Kagurazaka was an entertainment district with a lot of geisha houses and eateries. You can still find some geisha houses and traditional Japanese eateries, here and there, in the hilly district. Go off the main street and explore the side streets, and you will find trendy, high-end “ryotei” Japanese restaurants and cafés housed in chic, classical buildings with traditional noren curtains. If you are lucky, you may come across geishas in colorful kimono or hear some nice sound of shamisen and koto instruments on the narrow streets only accessible by pedestrians.

With a couple of French schools located in the area - l’Institut Franco-Japonais de Tokyo and Lycée Franco-Japonais de Tokyo - Kagurazaka also has an elegant French atmosphere with a lot of trendy French restaurants, cafés, bakeries and cheese shops that are lined along the main street.

On the upper end of the slope, you will see picturesque Shinto shrine Akagi Jinja, which was originally built during the Edo Period (1603-1867) and was recently renovated into a unique, modern exposition of wood and glass by famous Japanese architect Kengo Kuma.

The main street of Kagurazaka is closed to car traffic from noon to 1 p.m. (on weekdays) and from noon – 7 p.m. (on weekends and holidays), so you can enjoy a pleasant walk along the impressive streets.

Check out Kagurazaka Awa Odori Festival held on the fourth Saturday and Sunday of July, as the extremely enthusiastic atmosphere created by thousands of dancers in traditional festive attire, colorful illuminations and countless food and game booths draws over 100,000 visitors annually.

Head to Kagurazaka and stray into a Tokyo wonderland coexisting charms of traditional Japanese and modern French along the hilly district!
takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com



VIEW VIDEO!



OFFICIAL TRAVEL
GUIDE



Collecting stamps of Yayoi ruins gaining popularity

BY HIROSHI TACHIBANA,
THE JAPAN NEWS

Visiting ruins from the prehistoric Yayoi period and collecting goshuin stamps there has recently been seeing a quiet rise in popularity.

The Yayoi period started several hundred years before Christ and continued until around 300 A.D., when rice production began in Japan. Archaeological ruins from the period are found all over the country.

To promote the Yayoi period ruins that they manage, museums and other facilities have begun offering original goshuin stamps, which are usually available at temples and shrines for people to commemorate their visit. It seems that the museums' and other facilities' goshuin stamps resonate with archaeology enthusiasts and others not only due to their unique designs but also because they include catchphrases that capture the characteristics of each individual site.

35 locations

The Tottori prefectural government's "Tottori Yayoi Kingdom" promotion department has arranged a scavenger hunt-like activity, in which participants collect goshuin stamps from Yayoi period ruins throughout Japan. Tottori Prefecture is home to such Yayoi period ruins as the Aoya Kamijichi ruins, where many wooden artifacts and other items have been discovered. The prefecture started the project to help increase the number of visitors to these and other ruins.

The rules of the project require facilities related to Yayoi period ruins to come up with their own catchphrases and for the size of the goshuin stamps not to exceed a length of 15.5 centimeters and a width of 9 centimeters. The project started in October 2022 at 19 ruins and 20 facilities around the country. Currently, 35 ruins and 38 facilities in 16 prefectures are participating.

Among the areas involved in the project, Hyogo Prefecture is first in terms of the number of participating sites it has, with six ruins and seven related facilities. Many sites from the Yayoi period exist in the prefecture, and several of them are known for their unique remains, such as an old village, an iron workshop and burial mounds. The Onaka ruins in Harima, the Tano ruins

in Amagasaki and the Gossa-Kaito ruins in Awaji, all in the prefecture, have been participating in the project since it started.

Catchphrases

The catchphrase for the Onaka ruins refers to the site as a Yayoi housing exhibition. About 140 round, hexagonal and other shaped pit dwellings were discovered there and at adjacent ruins. The Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Archaeology and the Harima town history museum are participating in the project in collaboration with the ruins.

"I hope the activity will provide an opportunity for people to get interested in archaeology," an official of the archaeology museum said.

The catchphrase for the Gossa-Kaito ruins references a Yayoi blacksmith workshop, as iron artifacts were discovered in a pit-type building site at the ruins.

Meanwhile, the Kamo ruins in Kawani-shi, which feature the remains of a settlement surrounded by a moat, have a catchphrase meaning "Yayoi hilltop moated settlement."

For the Shingu Miyauchi ruins in the city of Tatsuno, the catchphrase notes that the site houses one of the biggest Yayoi villages in the Harima region, the southwestern

part of Hyogo Prefecture. The catchphrase for the Une ruins in the city of Ako incorporates an allusion to the burial mounds of powerful leaders that characterize that site. All three of these latter ruins, also in Hyogo Prefecture, joined the project last year.

Outside the prefecture, the catchphrase for the Yoshinogari ruins in Saga Prefecture, where the appearance of a village in the Yayoi period has been re-created, is "Listen to the Yayoi Voice," while the catchphrase for the Toro ruins in Shizuoka Prefecture can be translated to "It all began at the Toro ruins," noting that the ruins of Japan's first rice paddy were discovered at the site.

The designs of each location's goshuin stamps are unique and distinctive.

The goshuin stamp of the Onaka ruins, center, in Harima, Hyogo Prefecture. Photo courtesy of The Japan News



Sample of the goshuin stamps. Photos courtesy of Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Archaeology

The Onaka ruins' goshuin stamp includes the kanji characters of its name and a picture of Hottan, the archaeology museum's mascot. The goshuin stamp of the Ikegami-Sone ruins, offered by the Osaka Prefectural Museum of Yayoi Culture in Izumi, Osaka Prefecture, incorporates an illustration of a dragon believed to have been drawn by a person from the Yayoi period. At the Sugu Okamoto ruins in Kasuga, Fukuoka Prefecture, the site's goshuin stamp carries a picture of a bronze mirror, one of the most representative artifacts discovered at those ruins.

Helping attract visitors

A postpandemic travel boom is partly behind the project's ability to draw interest.

According to the Hyogo Prefectural Museum of Archaeology next to the Onaka ruins, visitors come to collect its goshuin stamp not only on weekends but also weekdays.

"We hope people visit ruins across the country and collect unique Yayoi period goshuin stamps," said Hiroshi Nakamura, an official at the museum.



The goshuin stamp offered at the Gossa-Kaito ruins in Awaji, Hyogo Prefecture. Photo courtesy of The Japan News



The Gossa-Kaito ruins in Awaji, Hyogo Prefecture. File Photo



BY TAKAHIRO TAKIGUCHI,
STRIPES JAPAN

Writer's Note: A recent email from a friend who works on Camp Zama reminded me that it's time to be on the lookout for attacks from above. My friend explained how workers on Camp Zama have been attacked by crows, many from behind as the black birds' target seems to be the back of head, like what happened to me several years ago. He said he remembered an article I wrote in Stripes Japan detailing my attack and shared it with his coworkers. His email prompted me to google "karasu no shugeki," or "crows' raid." Not surprisingly, there have been reports on crow attacks across the nation, including a video clip by RCC Chugoku TV Station near MCAS Iwakuni that aired on television May 26. The video shows pedestrians around Hiroshima Castle, including the reporter, repeatedly being assaulted by crows from behind. May to early July is the nesting and breeding period for crows, so they go on the offensive to protect their chicks. Check out my story below and be on the lookout for attacks from above.



TV NEWS VIDEO



Takahiro's Illustration and photo by
Yukiyo Oda, Stripes Japan

droppings on your car or picking at bags full of garbage, these birds sure know how to get under people's skin.

And when they attack, the metaphor can become literal.

When I reached my office, I went to the Safety Office and had them disinfect the wound on my head.

I was so angry that I nearly tried to call a local Health Center to catch the harmful crows.

Why me? Was it my shiny bald head?

When I googled "crows and their behavior," to my surprise, I found there were many pedestrians with similar "when crows attack," type of stories as me.

The website for the Environmental Ministry of Japan says that crows get nervous and go on the offensive during their nesting and breeding period (May to

early July). In this period, they nest on high trees or pylons and lay three or five blue-green eggs with brown spots. Then they raise their chicks for over a month. Throughout the period, especially in June and July when the chicks become ready to fledge out, parent crows get extremely aggressive in protecting their chicks from enemies.

I wish I would have known this before I was attacked!

But, at least now I knew it wasn't my bald head. Their nest must be on my route to the office.

I also learned that crows are protected by the Wildlife Conservation Laws, and legally, you're not allowed to fight back, catch them or kill them.

Crows in Japan, mostly Jungle Crows or Carrion Crows, often take to cities when nesting and breeding, as it offers plenty of tasty garbage for them and the newborn chicks.

So, what should you do the next time you run into a murder – yes, murder – of crows? Good question.

According to Japan's Environmental Ministry, when the crows caw short and sharply, like

"guatt, guatt," drops a branch, or shows you their poking at power line, they sure are angry. Don't get close to them. They typically attack from behind, so maybe use a hat or umbrella to cover your head or walk along a wall or building for protection.

And be sure to keep an eye on them because you know they've got a couple on you.

takiguchi.takahiro@stripes.com

It was a hot summer morning in early July a couple of years ago. I was walking along the residential district of central Tokyo on my usual commute to the office.

I heard crows cawing over my head. I thought nothing of it.

When I turned the corner into a small path, I noticed cawing got closer and louder. I thought they must be high on a tree branch just over the path claiming for their territory.

I started to feel something ominous when all of a sudden a crow flew over my back and passed an inch or so over my head! That was their warning shot.

"No, no, I'm not your enemy at all!" I thought. A little frightened, I tried to run out of the area as soon as possible.

But it was too late. I couldn't escape from the second air raid, and this one was not just a warning. It was an intentional shot and a direct hit. The back of my head was fiercely hit with a pair of sharp claws that felt as if Barry Bonds had hit my head with a bat.

Stunned by the sudden attack, I turned around, glared at two large crows sitting on power line about 10 feet over my head. With shock and anger, I shouted at them, "Bakaya-roo!" (Damn it!) I swung my arms and kept shouting, "Nanisunda, kono bakagarasu" (Why the heck did you do this, you fool crow!)

The two crows continued cawing and flapping their wings furiously. They appeared ready to launch the next attack.

I wish I had a bat to fight back. But I could do nothing more than walk away, shouting at them as I walked backwards.

In Japan, the crow is often considered a bad omen.

Some believe if a crow settles on the roof of a house and begins cawing, a funeral will soon follow.

Others believe crows cawing at midnight is a sign that disaster is about to strike.

Even though these are merely superstition, the bird is still disliked by many Japanese because of their every-day behavior. Whether it is

**The back of my head
was fiercely hit with
a pair of sharp claws
that felt as if Barry
Bonds had hit my head
with a bat.**



Japan Drugstore Guide Insect Repellent

Editor's Note: This information is based on interviews with Japanese drugstore employees and available product data as of May 2025. Always read the product packaging and instructions carefully, and consult with a healthcare professional if you have any concerns or questions regarding treatment.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY TABITHA WILDERS,
METROPOLIS MAGAZINE



Summer in Japan calls for insect repellent for mosquitoes. Fortunately, the risk of contracting a mosquito-borne disease in Japan is very low. However, it is still important to protect yourself from mosquito bites if you want to avoid being disrupted from your daily outdoor activities.

In this article, we round up a list of the best insect repellents in Japan to protect yourself from those pesky bloodsuckers.



Earth Chemical Saratekuto Unscented

アース製薬 サラテクト 無香料

A gentle, powder-in insect repellent spray that feels smooth and non-sticky on the skin. Sweat and water-resistant, it offers all-day protection when applied from morning to evening. With 4 moisturizing ingredients- sodium hyaluronate, collagen, ceramide, and vitamin C- it keeps your skin protected and hydrated.

HOW TO USE: Shake the can well before use. Hold the spray about 10–15 cm away from your skin. Spray evenly onto exposed skin or over clothing. Avoid spraying directly onto the face. Instead, spray onto your hands and gently apply to the face, avoiding the eyes and mouth.

PRICE: Varies by pharmacy; approximately ¥660 for 200ml

WHAT PHARMACISTS SAY: Pharmacists recommend this insect repellent spray for its gentle formula, making it suitable for sensitive skin. It's effective against mosquitoes, ticks, black flies, and bed bugs. Reapply often if you sweat or wipe your skin.

Insect repellent character sticker Chiikawa

虫よけキャラシールちいかわ

A special shoutout to the Chiikawa bug repellent stickers. Available in 15 cute designs, these stickers are safe for young children and gentle on the skin. Infused with natural lavender oil, they give off a pleasant scent and provide protection for up to 12 hours. Just stick them on your clothes to keep insects away.

HOW TO USE: Carefully peel one sticker from the sheet and apply it to exposed areas of your clothing, such as sleeves, collars, or pant cuffs. Make sure the sticker does not come into direct contact with your skin.

PRICE: Varies by pharmacy; approximately ¥640 for 45 stickers

WHAT PHARMACISTS SAY: Pharmacists say these stickers are popular with children, helping keep them safe from insects while they enjoy the cute Chiikawa designs. They're safe for all ages and convenient for parents to carry, thanks to their lightweight and portable size.



Helpful vocab

Insect repellent – 虫よけ(むしよけ)
Mosquito – 蚊(か)
Tick – ダニ
Flea – ノミ
Bed bug – トコジラミ
Black fly – ブヨ / ユスリカ
Mite – ダニ
Leech – ヒル
Scent / Fragrance – 香り(かおり)
Unscented – 無香料(むこうりょう)

Moisturizing – 保湿(ほしつ)
Water-resistant – 耐水性(たいすいせい)
Reapply – 塗り直す(ぬりなおす)
Shake well – よく振ってから使う(ふってからつかう)
Apply evenly – 均等に塗る(きんとうにぬる)
Avoid eyes and mouth – 目や口に入らないように注意
Safe for children – 子供でも使える(こどもでもつかえる)
Not for infants – 乳児には使用不可(にゅうじにはしょうふか)
Face application – 顔への使用(かおへのしょう)



Fumakilla Skin Vape Mist

フマキラー スキンベープミスト

This gentle, water-based mosquito repellent is safe for the whole family and protects against mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, black flies, leeches, mites, bedbugs, and more. It contains moisturizing sodium hyaluronate, blends smoothly into the skin, and has a fresh citrus marine scent. Its compact size makes it easy to carry.

HOW TO USE: Shake the plastic spray bottle container well before use. Hold the spray about 10–15 cm away from your skin and apply evenly to areas like the arms, legs, and neck. For the face, spray onto your hands first, then gently apply, avoiding the eyes and mouth. Reapply after sweating, swimming, or wiping the skin with a towel to maintain effectiveness.

PRICE: Varies by pharmacy; approximately ¥550 for 60ml

WHAT PHARMACISTS SAY: Pharmacists say users love this repellent for its long-lasting effect. It's safe for daily use, but not for infants under 6 months. For ages 6 months to 2 years, use once a day; for ages 2 to 12, up to three times a day. Apply sunscreen first, let it dry, then use the repellent.

Earth Chemical Hadamamo Mist

アース製薬 はだまも ミスト

Released this year, this gentle insect repellent mist has a mildly acidic pH similar to human skin and contains moisturizing ingredients like sodium hyaluronate, collagen, ceramide, and vitamin C. It effectively protects against mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, and many other pests.

HOW TO USE: Spray an appropriate amount from about 15 cm away onto exposed skin like the arms and legs, as well as on footwear and clothing. For the face and neck, spray into the palm of your hand first, then apply gently to the skin.

PRICE: Varies by pharmacy; approximately ¥660 for 200ml

WHAT PHARMACISTS SAY: Pharmacists recommend applying this gentle yet effective insect repellent in the morning for all-day protection. It's safe for daily use but not for infants under 6 months. Use once daily for ages 6 months to 2 years, and up to three times daily for ages 2 to 12.



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METROPOLIS
HOMEPAGE



METROPOLIS
EVENTS

Stripes Sports Trivia

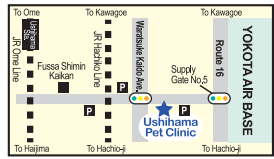
What school will always be remembered for becoming the first No. 16 seed to knock off a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Men's Tournament?

Answer

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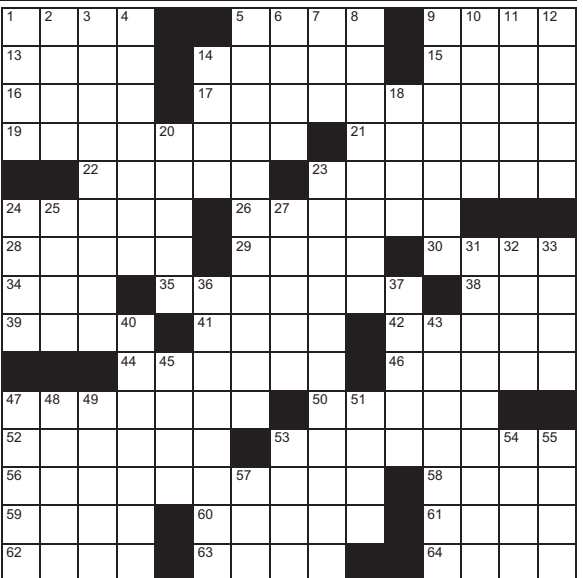
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The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- German automaker
- Russian news agency
- Litter noises
- Chimney pipe
- Something to kick
- Medicinal plant
- Cabbie's customer
- Mental lapse
- Ski resort's wish
- Left the free-way
- TV remote button
- Telethon donors
- Declares
- Preserved, in a way
- Enjoys a book
- Cut back
- "Cast" anagram
- Go for the gold?
- Cameroon's capital
- Gardening tool
- Part of a.k.a.
- Be an omen of concern
- Tree trimmer
- Donut filling
- Comes about
- Insomniac's wish
- Loved to pieces
- Made jump, maybe
- Wrongdoer
- Confused state
- A long time
- English subjects?
- Dublin's land
- More, in a saying
- Word after dial or earth
- Like some decisions



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DOWN

- "Tip" or "rip" finish
- Map out
- Spaniards and Serbs
- Not on the windy side
- Recipe units
- Genesis victim
- Knight's title
- Jogged untogged
- Road Dahl title character
- Upper crust
- Serenader, maybe
- Drops in the mail
- Lukas of "Witness"
- Wheel turner
- Fastidious
- Building block
- Harp, in Italy
- Calf meat
- "All in the Family" spinoff

- New England lake
- Like some restaurant orders
- "Scene" homophone
- Plentiful
- Swiss math great
- Crush
- Is in a tizzy
- Snorkeling spot
- Muslim porter
- Old saying
- Ends of the earth
- Metallica drummer Ulrich
- Knock for a loop
- Pound of poetry
- "Star Trek: _____ Space Nine"
- Pigeon sound

Answers to Previous Crossword:

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



DID YOU KNOW?

Shin-Okubo, one stop away from Shinjuku Station, is one of the largest Koreatowns in Japan. When Japan opened its doors to foreign students and laborers in the 1980s, many of the Korean immigrants flocked to this town because of its cheap rent and willingness of landlords to accept foreign tenants. With the popularity of Korean movies and K-pop music, Shin-Okubo continues to grow in size and popularity.

Kanji of the week

手
Te [hand]

Language Lesson

Where is Mt. Fuji?

Fujisan wa doko desuka?

SUDOKU

Difficulty: Medium

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:

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

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

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