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P A P E R

OKINAWA JANUARY FEBRUARY Bulletin

THE REVIEW OF A PLACE LASH BLOSSOM

**Beyond the Surface
Nanjo City**

**Gundam 22
U.S. – Japan
Friendship
Memorial**



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Issue 13 >> January 22, 2025



VOICE

P A P E R

VOICE PAPER, features Okinawa local events, off-base places, U.S. Military activity news on the island and around the Asia-Pacific region.

Duty on the island

Joint Flight Ops with USS Benfold and 33rd Rescue Squadron



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Hannah Fry)

U.S. Airforce HH-60W Jolly Green II assigned to the 33rd Rescue Squadron, Kadena Air Base, conducts joint flight operations with the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Benfold (DDG 65) while underway in the Philippine Sea, Dec. 3, 2024. Benfold is forward deployed and assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest DESRON and the U.S. 7th fleet's principal surface force.

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Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct embassy reinforcement exercise



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Diego Garcia) U.S. Marines with Battalion Landing Team 2/4, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, maintain security from Marines, simulating as protestors, during an embassy reinforcement training evolution as part of Joint Inter-agency Intergovernmental and Multinational Exercise, at Camp Courtney, Dec. 20, 2024. The training strengthens the Marines' ability to rapidly respond to crises by reinforcing embassy security, safeguarding personnel and executing detailed evacuation procedures in realistic, dynamic scenarios.

Ginowan Love One Family gifted Christmas toys to local children

U.S. Marine Corps Col. William Pacatte, commanding officer of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Lt. Col. Jeremy Siegel, executive officer, MCASf Futenma, Sgt. Maj. Jeffery J. Vandentop, sergeant major of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, and U.S. Navy Lt. Anthony Johnson, chaplain, Atsushi Sakima, mayor of Ginowan City posing for the photo with local children during Christmas party at Mashiki Community Center, Dec. 12, 2024.



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Aya Ichihashi)

JGSDF 15th Brigade 14th Anniversary and Camp Naha 52nd Anniversary



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Peter J. Eilen)

U.S. service members, family members and guests, bottom, attend the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force's 15th Brigade 14th anniversary and the Camp Naha 52nd anniversary ceremony, at Camp Naha, Nov. 24, 2024. Marines from 3d Marine Division were invited to attend the ceremony and festival of parades, static displays and performances at the annual event. 3d Marine Division continues to work alongside the JGSDF to increase interoperability and strengthen ties between partner nations.

USAG Okinawa Connects with Local Community

U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa's Santa Claus greets local children from Takenoko and Pono-Pono daycare centers during a Holiday celebration in Yomitan Village, Dec. 19, 2024. More than 100 children and teachers participated in the event, which was filled with laughter, questions for Santa, and plenty of holiday cheer.



(U.S. Army photo by Natalie Stanley)

NMCB-3 Relieves NMCB-5 in Okinawa



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Austin Ingram)

Cmdr. Travis Brinkman, right, commanding officer of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3 officially relieved Capt. John Pergerson, commanding officer of NMCB-5 during a Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority ceremony. The ceremony marks the transition of responsibilities as NMCB-3 assumes the mission to support Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet. NMCB-3 will execute high-quality construction operations, activities, and investments, remaining ready to provide advanced base construction, airfield support, and waterfront capabilities throughout the Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

JANUARY FEBRUARY bulletin

AAT!

KADENA

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2025 01.26日
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Kadena Kids Street Event
Jan 26



YOMITAN

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2025
あなたの青を見つけよう

沖繩の青いモノ集めました。

2/8 sat 9 sun Gala 青い海
10:00~17:00 住所・沖縄県中頭郡読谷村字高志保915

Blue Craft Festival
Feb 8
Feb 9



YAESE

Yaese Cherry Blossom Festival
18th
1/20 ~ 2/2

Yaese Cherry Blossom Festival
Jan 20
~ Feb 2



NORTHERN AREA

Yambaru Art Festival
2024-2025

Yambaru Art Festival
2024-2025
Jan 18 ~
Feb 24



URUMA

Uruma City Industry Festival
1/25, 26日 10:00-17:00

Uruma City Industry Festival
Jan 25
Jan 26



GINOWAN

Yokohama DeNA Baystars 2024 Championship Parade

Yokohama DeNA Baystars 2024 Championship Parade
Feb 1



OKINAWA

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Okinawa City Industry Festival
Jan 25 & 26



MOTOBU

桜まつり
1/18 ~ 2/1

Motobu Cherry Blossom Festival
Jan 18 ~ Feb 2



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桜まつり
1/25 ~ 2/2日

Nakijin Castle Cherry Blossom Festival
Jan 25 ~ Feb 2



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THE REVIEW

★ ★ ★ OF A PLACE ★ ★ ★



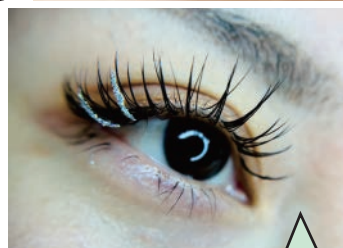
It's on the second floor of the building next to Pet Box in Chatan!



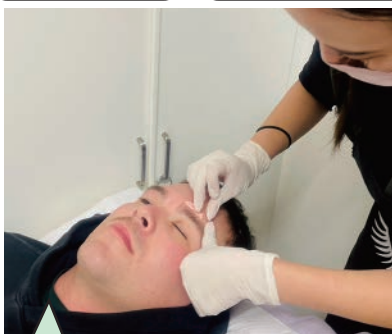
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'TALENT' ARIES 25.1

Story by Cpl. Bridgette Rodriguez
 III MEF Information Group

CAMP KINSER – In between the East China Sea and the Philippine Sea lies a small island formed from uplifted coral rock with dense forests and diverse terrain. The island of Okinawa holds a strategic position between key allies and enemies of the United States. Units stationed on this island train to evolve their capabilities in a dynamic security environment. One such unit is 3d Intelligence Battalion, who aim to expand their expertise in decentralized command and control, data

collection, and sensing operations to pave the way for future battlefield dominance by conducting exercises like Talent Aries 25.1.

Talent Aries 25.1 offered Marines with 3d Intel. Bn. the training opportunity to disperse across Okinawa with different collection assets. A team of Marines equipped with maritime sensors traveled across the island to gather the location of nearby maritime vessels while other teams collected

(Continued on page 8)



U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Brendon Hall, an infantry Marine with 3d Intelligence Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group, maneuvers toward a checkpoint during Talent Aries 25.1 at Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Dec. 9, 2024.

(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Diana Garcia)

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Before

After

Eyebrow wax
Eyebrow Lamination

(Continued from page 7)



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Diana Garcia)

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Dylan DeraimoValentine, a sensor operator with 3d Intelligence Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group, crawls under a log as part of the endurance course during Talent Aries 25.1 at Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Dec. 12, 2024.

information on weather and sea conditions.

“We do have a company of Marines up at Jungle Warfare Training Center, consisting of ground sensor Marines, Marines with maritime radars, and additional weather sensors out there

as well,” said 1st Lt. Nicholas Thomas, a ground intelligence officer with 3d Intelligence Battalion, Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group.

All the data gathered by each team is sent to the combat operations center located in Camp

commanders in the COC train to keep track of all the operation groups during the exercise. Commanders plan the teams’ routes meticulously while considering logistical challenges.

“The training benefits 3d Intelligence Marines by really establishing better SOPs, or standard operating procedures, making sure that our battle rhythm is set, despite dispersing and not having all the organic assets that we would have at our home location,” said 1st Lt. Thomas.

One of the objectives of Talent Aries 25.1 was for 3d Intel. Bn. to streamline the battalion’s standard operating procedures in unfamiliar environments. Marines adapted to effectively accomplish their mission with limited assets and tools.

As threats emerge in the Indo-Pacific Command arena, 3d Intel. Bn. strives to gain advantage over future battlespaces. They plan and utilize exercises like Talent Aries 25.1 to train Marines to become highly effective in small units that can move about the island while collecting information. 3d Intel. Bn. aims to be implement more littoral fighting capabilities that will be essential in winning future conflicts in island chains and similar terrains.

3d Intel. Bn. provides intelligence and counterintelligence support to the III MEF command element and its major subordinate commands.

Kinser. The data is collected to help commanders understand the battlespace surrounding Okinawa, and how to implement their troops accordingly. In Camp Kinser, the Marines and their leadership worked to emphasize detailed mission planning and battle tracking. This included accountability of all personnel, gear, and supplies. As teams move around the island,

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GUNDAM 22
U.S. - Japan Friendship Memorial

The Gundam 22 dedicated cenotaph stands, covered in flowers, at the Tashiro Coast, Japan, Nov. 29, 2024.

- U.S. Air Force Major Jeffrey "Zack" Hoerneman, 32
- U.S. Air Force Major Eric "Doc" V. Spindler, 36
- U.S. Air Force Major Lance A. Linath, 34
- U.S. Air Force Major Terrell "Terry" R. Hoerneman, 32
- U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Zachary E. Lavoy, 33
- U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Jake M. Turnage, 25
- U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Brian "Kody" Johnson, 32
- U.S. Air Force Staff Sergeant Jacob "Jake" M. Galliner, 24

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防衛省、自衛隊、海上保安庁、警
察といった多くの専門家により、
捜索・回収活動が実施され、この日
うち7名の遺体の回収が完了した。

On the 29th of November 2023, one CV-22B Osprey, calls assigned to the 353d Special Operations Wing at Yokota Air the coast of Yakushima Island, about 1KM north west of thi all eight U.S. service members aboard.

In the weeks following the mishap, an intensive period of rescue efforts – and later recovery and salvage operations – expert teams from the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army Special O Command, U.S. Navy, Special Operations Command – Pac Japan, the Japanese Ministry of Defense, Japan-Self Defens Coast Guard, local police, and many others from Yakushim Japan and the U.S. In over 40 days of these combined eff (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Alexis Redin)

Gundam 22 U.S.-Japan Friendship Memorial

One year on from Yakushima

Story by Capt. Richard Caesar
353rd Special Operations Wing

YAKUSHIMA, Japan – Close to 100 military and civilian personnel from the United States and Japan gathered at the Yakushima Town Hall on 29 November 2024 to attend a ceremony dedicating a cenotaph to the eight heroes who died when their CV-22B Osprey went down just off the coast of the island last year and the joint effort expended to search for and recover them.

The Gundam 22 U.S. – Japan Friendship Memorial, stands more than six feet tall and holds vigil over the Toshiro beach coastline, pointing visitors towards the spot the aircraft impacted the water. One of the only U.S monuments ever erected on Japanese soil,

it represents a months-long, bilateral, volunteer effort that underscored the importance of the cenotaph to the American and Japanese personnel whose actions are now memorialized in stone, alongside portraits of all eight lost crew members.

The gathering at the town hall, which included family members of the deceased, was a fitting representation of the force assembled in the direct aftermath of the mishap. One year earlier, as locals witnessed the aircraft fall from the sky, it was local fishermen who were first on the scene, retrieving the first crew member from the waves near Anbo

port and respectfully standing watch over his remains. The island's fishermen would continue to contribute to the initial search and rescue operation, helping teams locate the site of the wreckage, and facilitating the use of the port for dive and recovery teams.

Among the first Japanese personnel on the ground in Yakushima to support the search and rescue effort was Haruo Morita, Deputy Director General, Bureau of Policies for Regional Society in the Japan Ministry of Defense. Mr. Morita would go on to stay on the island longer than any of his compatriots executing the search mission. As he

(Continued on page 12)



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(Continued from page 10)

delivered remarks at the dedication ceremony, he recalled the support received from the community in Yakushima.

"I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the people of the Kagoshima Prefecture and Yakushima Town, including the Yakushima Town Council and Yakushima Fishery Cooperative, for their great assistance and cooperation for 45 days, including the year-end and new year days, until January 12, 2024, when the search and recovery operations concluded."

A ROBUST FRIENDSHIP CREATED

Yakushima Island is traditionally known for its beautiful peaks, ancient cedar woods and surreal vistas, but as the mammoth undertaking of finding and recovering the crew of Gundam 22 gained momentum and more personnel and equipment converged on the 500 square-kilometer island, this quiet community was about to be thrust into the international spotlight for a much different reason.

"It is an undeniable fact that although in the midst of tragedy of the Osprey mishap, a robust friendship was created between the U.S. Forces and the Yakushima Community. I am certain that continuing to establish such a trusting relationship between our two countries will further strengthen our alliance."

Morita's words found truth in the make-up of the dedication gathering, which included U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in Japan, Chargé d'affaires Katherine Monahan alongside Yakushima Town's Mayor Koji Araki, Kagoshima Prefecture assemblymen, Yasuhiro Matsuzato and Shigeru Hidaka, and senior leaders from the Japan Self-Defense Forces and multiple branches of the

U.S. military.

Of those gathered, few were as intimately acquainted with the mission to recover the lost Airmen and the wreckage of their craft as Rear Adm. Jeromy Williams. Williams, commander of Special Operations Command Pacific, received twice daily briefings on the progress of the search, recovery, and salvage efforts for over 45 days while operations persisted on the island. He witnessed the scope and impact of our Japanese partners' contributions to the search.

"Overall, 21 Japanese Coast Guard and Navy ships came to our aide. Japan Coast Guard employed unmanned underwater vehicles, ROVs, and divers. Japan Ground Self-Defense Forces employed helicopters, activated reservists, and searched the cliffs, beaches, and shorelines. Japan Air Self-Defense Force sent aircraft, while police, business owners, local volunteers, the Fisherman's Association, and Yakushima Woman's association all remained determined in the search."

"A PHYSICAL ARTIFACT OF A ROCK-SOLID BOND"

The monument itself is an extension of Yakushima, built by local craftsmen from monolithic stones taken from the same jagged shorelines where the crew of Gundam 22 met their fate. Across the top of the structure, eight portraits, chosen by the heroes' families, are etched into the stone alongside their ranks and names. They're held up on each side by two massive stone pillars each with inscriptions, one in English, the other in Japanese. They detail the crash, the scope of the search and rescue operations, and the contributions of the Yakushima Town community.

The inscription reads:

On the 29th of November 2023, one CV-22B Osprey, callsign GUNDAM 22, assigned to the 353d Special Operations Wing at Yokota Air Base, crashed off the coast of Yakushima Island, about 1KM northwest of this cenotaph, killing all eight U.S. service members aboard.

In the weeks following the mishap, an intensive period of 24/7 search and rescue efforts –and later recovery and salvage operations –were conducted by expert teams from the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, U.S. Navy, Special Operations Command –Pacific, U.S. Forces Japan, the Japanese Ministry of Defense, Japan Self-Defense Forces, Japan Coast Guard, local police, and many others from Yakushima and elsewhere in Japan and the U.S. In over 40 days of these combined efforts, the remains of seven out of eight Airmen were recovered and returned to their loved ones.

Throughout these operations, local public authorities, notably those from Yakushima town and Kagoshima prefecture, as well as civilian volunteers such as the Fishery Association and Women's Association, extended generous and dedicated support to the search, rescue, recovery, and salvage efforts.

This cenotaph commemorates the souls of eight Heroes and enshrines the eternal commitment of all those involved to never again endure the same kind of mishap. May this monument also forever celebrate the steadfast friendship forged between U.S. Servicemembers and the people of Kagoshima who so warmly offered their unwavering support and partnership in our darkest days of shared tragedy.

(Continued on page 14)

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U.S. and Japan service members, Government of Japan officials, and family of the fallen Airmen of the Gundam 22 mishap gather at the dedicated cenotaph at the Tashiro Coast, Japan, Nov. 29, 2024. Families of the eight Airmen had the opportunity to visit the site of the memorial cenotaph and meet the service members that worked diligently to find and return the Airmen home.

(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Alexis Redin)

(Continued from page 12)

Looking out to the ocean, the pillars and crossbeam frame a small area of the water, just shy of a kilometer away from the island's lone airport, where the fateful flight ended.

Rear Adm. Williams, in his remarks at the town hall, summarized the symbolism of the cenotaph:

"Today's dedication provides a physical artifact of the rock-solid bond between Japan and the United States. It memorializes the faces of our fallen heroes, and

records for posterity the benevolence of our Japanese allies. The memorial stands watch over the waters that are the final resting place of our last missing teammate. It will serve as inspiration for generations to come that in our darkest hours, Japan and America will stand strong together."

As the sun rose over the monument the day after the ceremony, it was evident that the Yakushima community had already embraced it, just as they had embraced the U.S. service members who came

to their island a year ago. Groups of school children, elderly couples, and individual visitors came steadily throughout the morning, leaving traditional Japanese offerings, taking pictures, and praying. A day earlier, commander of the 353rd SOW, Col. Shawn Young said to the audience gathered at the dedication, "My hope is that this can now be a place of healing for two communities - American and Japanese together - who experienced this loss not just as allies, but as family."

In memoriam: the crew of Gundam 22:

U.S. Air Force Maj. Jeffrey T. Hoernemann, 32, of Andover, Minnesota, was a CV-22 instructor pilot and officer in charge of training, assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Eric V. Spendlove, 36, of St. George, Utah, was a residency trained flight surgeon and medical operations flight commander assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Luke A. Unrath, 34, of Riverside, California, was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Terrell K. Brayman, 32, of Pittsford, New York, was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Zachary E. Lavoy, 33, of Oviedo, Florida, was a medical operations flight chief assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jake M. Turnage, 25, of Kennesaw, Georgia, was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Brian K. Johnson, 32, of Cincinnati, Ohio, was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob "Jake" M. Galliher, 24, of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, was a Direct Support Operator assigned to the 43rd Intelligence Squadron, Detachment 1, Operating Location - Alpha, 363rd Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan. 43 IS Det 1 OL-A is a tenant unit in support of the 353rd Special Operations Wing.

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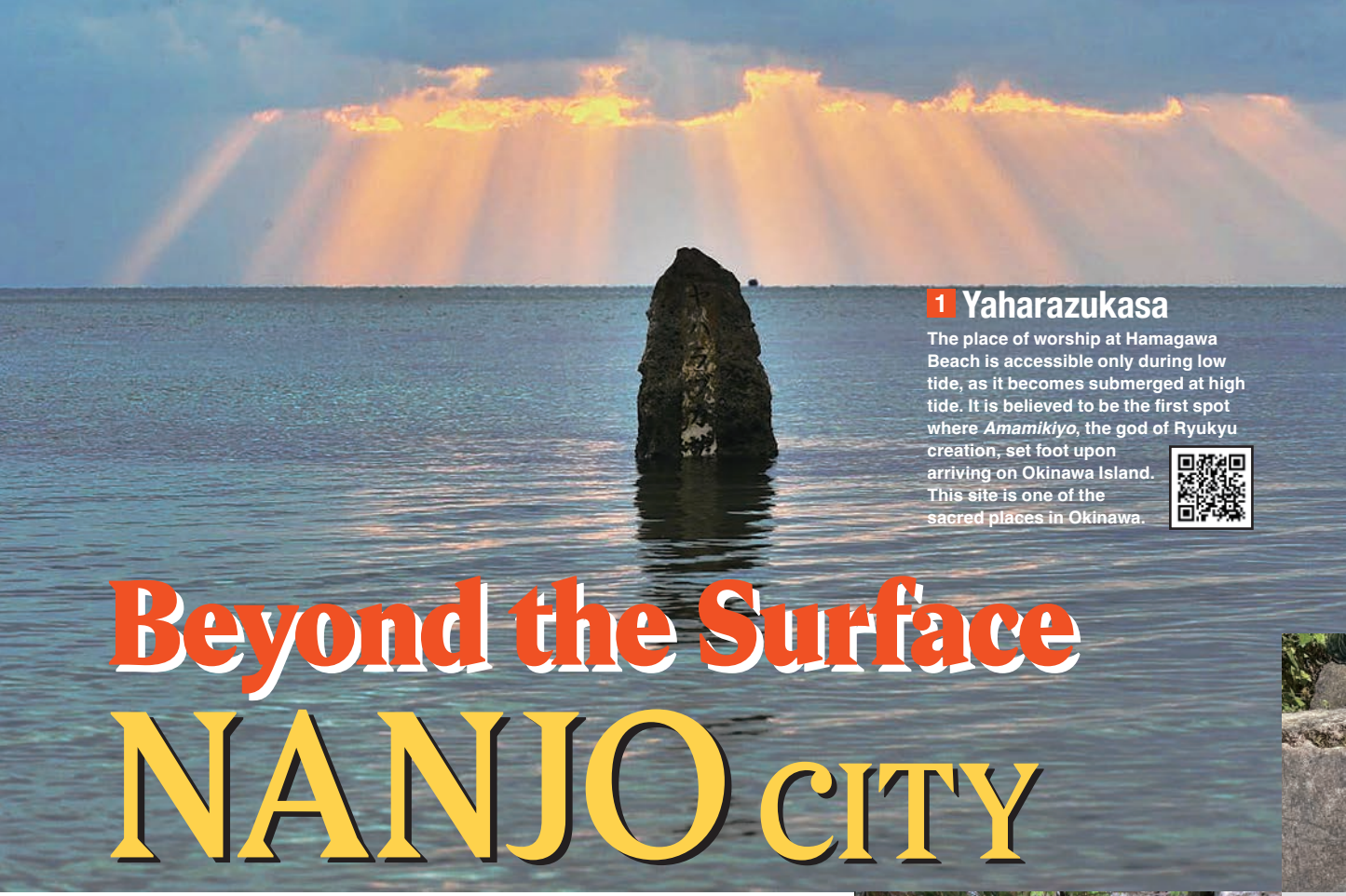
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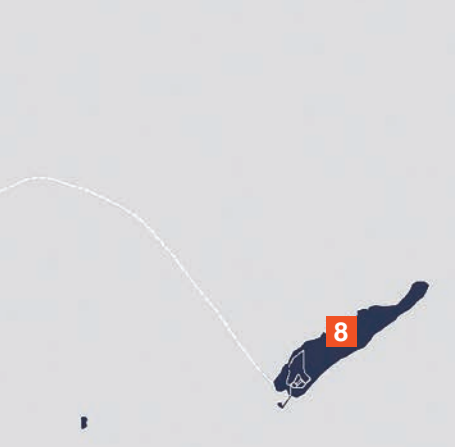
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1 Yaharazukasa

The place of worship at Hamagawa Beach is accessible only during low tide, as it becomes submerged at high tide. It is believed to be the first spot where *Amamikiyo*, the god of Ryukyu creation, set foot upon arriving on Okinawa Island. This site is one of the sacred places in Okinawa.



Beyond the Surface NANJO CITY

Nanjo City is a region rich in religious ceremonies and festivals rooted in nature-worship beliefs. It is home to many sacred sites, historical ruins, and nationally designated historic landmarks, including places registered on UNESCO's World Heritage list, offering a fascinating glimpse into the history of the Ryukyu era.

2 Nakandakari Hijaa (Spring)



3 Sefa-Utaki



7 Kakinohana Hijaa (Spring)



8 Kudaka Island



9 Ou Island (Oujima)



10 Tamagusuku Castle Site



11 Girmui Utaki (Grimuigusuku)



4 Cape Chinen Park



5 Sashiki Ui-Gusuku



6 Shimashi-Ozato Castle Site



Where to eat



12 Asian Herb Restaurant Cafe Curcuma



13 EM Tamaki Bokujou Milk Stand Shop



14 Cafe Mori no Terrace



15 Vegetarian Cafe Fuku Mame



U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa Spreads Christmas Joy to Local Japanese Children

Story by Isaac Savitz
U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa

OKINAWA – 17 December
Naha-City, Okinawa, Japan Staff from USNHO comprised active-duty civilians and MLCs joined Capt. Kathleen Cooperman will deliver toys to the Okinawan children. Community Relations Specialist Sachiko Medoruma coordinated a toy drive benefiting local Okinawan children in the Nambu Children's Hospital and the Rehabilitation Hospital for Children with Special Needs for the second year in a row. Sailors, civilians, and MLCs contributed the toys to be distributed to the children and Dr. Dinh Ngo, Chair of the Japanese Fellowship Program, Lt. Cdr. Amy Aparicio, Department Head for Obstetrics, Dr. Tatsunori Shizuku, and Dr. Hiroka Yoshikawa Japanese Fellows helped spread the holiday cheer.

The first stop was the Nambu Children's Center, where the Director, Dr. Fukuzato, and Administrative Officer, Mr. Oshiro, led the group on a tour that ultimately ended with a presentation of toys for the sick children who were in-patients at the hospital. The children, some hooked up to IVs, others in bandages, all unable to live the carefree lives children their age should be doing, were shy and reluctant at first to point out a toy they would like. Eventually, all the kids had smiles on their faces and a new toy to occupy and pull them away from the realities they were facing. The children were so thankful.

Nambu Hospital is an incredible partner to USNHO and often cares for sick children who need



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Trey Fowler)

specialized care not found at the Naval Hospital. The hospital also cares for adults and patients from Okinawa's smaller, more remote islands. With 120 pediatric beds and 440 beds total cared for by 500 nurses, this hospital is extremely busy and important to not just the Okinawan population but also the patients from USNHO. That is why it is important to nurture these important relationships that ultimately lead to the best care for our patients.

The day's second stop was the Okinawa Association for the Physically Challenged Children, Okinawa Dr. Jun Toyama, Director of the center and Chief of Staff. Mr. Asahiko Ikeda hosted the party from USNHO and brought in a group of disabled children who were very excited to see the visitors and receive a toy. The kids then sang "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" in Japanese and thanked the group for the toys. The facility takes care of many patients ranging in age and disability. The facility was remodeled ten years ago and was bright, happy, and well-maintained. The staff were all very attentive to their patients. They seemed so genuinely nice and caring for such a vulnerable segment of our society. The services provided were

Capt. Kathleen Cooperman, commanding officer, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Okinawa, left, and Dr. Fukuzato pose for a photo with NMRTC Okinawa leadership during a toy drive at Nambu Medical Center & Nambu Children's Medical Center, Dec. 17, 2024.

so beneficial to the patients and their families. Services ranged from helping one young, physically disabled high school student navigate his education to speech therapy, as well as physical and occupational therapy for other patients.

The visit ended, and the toys were distributed. Everyone involved was touched by many emotions and likely will recount the day in a positive light. In a world filled with politics and opposing agendas, it is nice to set aside all the differences between each other to just share some happiness and love and spread some Christmas cheer!

The U.S. Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Okinawa (USNMRTCO) supports the Defense Health Agency's U.S. Naval Hospital, Okinawa (USNHO) as the largest OCONUS Navy Medicine medical treatment facility and stands at the ready to respond to contingency operations to support the INDOPACOM region. It is a critical regional asset for direct care delivery, regional referrals, and medical contingency operations. The staff of USNHO understands their vital role as pre-positioned, forward-deployed naval forces within the first island chain, aligned and in support of the joint military commands and operations.

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Strategies for Restorative Sleep

Dr. Ceabert J. Griffith

According to results from the National Sleep Foundation 2020 Sleep in America poll, approximately 55% of the American population—181 million people—suffer from poor sleep quality. Among the elderly, 50% report difficulty falling asleep and/or staying asleep. An estimated 90% of individuals with chronic diseases also experience chronic insomnia. While Americans today average 6.5 hours of sleep each night, Americans in 1960 averaged 8 hours of slumber. Moreover, an estimated 40 million Americans suffer from one or more of the 70 sleep-related disorders, such as sleep apnea, restless leg syndrome, insomnia, and narcolepsy. Adults 18 to 64 require 7 to 9 hours, and adults older than 65 require 7 to 8 hours of uninterrupted sleep each night, according to sleep experts at the National Sleep Foundation.



Why Do We Sleep

We spend approximately one-third of our lives sleeping and for a good reason. Like eating, exercising, and breathing, sleep is necessary for life. Sleep rejuvenates and retools the body's immune, nervous, muscular, skeletal, and endocrine systems. Sleep is a complex behavior influenced by circadian rhythms, hormones, enzymes, neurotransmitters, and environmental factors. Contrary to previously held beliefs, sleep is not a passive "downtime" where the brain is inactive, and the body does nothing.

On the contrary, during sleep, the brain and the rest of the body go through an impressive set of measurable neurochemicals and electrical changes. Electroencephalography (EEG), a recording of the brain's electrical activity, can demonstrate these neurochemical and electrical changes. These highly specialized events begin during wakefulness and continue during the four cyclic stages of sleep.

The Four Stages of Sleep

The human brain is designed to stay awake for approximately 16 hours without sleep daily. During the last few hours of wakefulness, the brain gradually shuts down, characterized by reduced alertness and cognition. During sleep, the brain enters four distinct patterns of electrical activity that mark the various levels of sleep: stages 1, 2, 3, and rapid eye movement (REM). A good night's sleep involves multiple

cycles of these four stages of sleep.

Good pre-sleep rituals make it possible for the brain to traverse the four stages of sleep.

Create a Pro-sleep Environment.

Good pre-sleep rituals include a warm bath, light reading, soft music, prayer, meditation, and positive affirmations—whatever works for you—for about one hour before bedtime. A warm bath can help relax the body and slow a racing mind. It might help to place a few drops of a calming aromatherapy essential oil, such as lavender, vanilla, or sandalwood in your bath water. You can also spritz lavender on your pillow and listen to soothing music.

The temperature and humidity in your bedroom should be comfortable. Use a dehumidifier, heater, or air conditioner to create the ideal ambient temperature. The amount of clothing you wear can contribute to overheating or cause you to feel too cold. Cold feet can negate all pro-sleep strategies—you should wear socks to bed if needed.

The area of the brain that regulates circadian cycles is very sensitive to darkness and light. Darkness is one of the most potent influences for shifting from wakefulness to sleepiness. An hour before bed, dim your room light to the lowest practical level. If you have a light in your bedroom all night, select a soft light that can be dimmed, as needed. Use curtains and shades to block streetlights and other external sources of light.

Engage In the Right Activities.

Reading non-stimulating materials can quiet an agitated mind and facilitate quality sleep. Your choice of reading material is very important. For example, reading suspense novels or violent materials may over-excite the brain and impede all sleep efforts. Carefully select your pre-sleep reading materials from a list of "soft" topics, such as inspirational literature that can help you wind down and relax.

White noise or natural sounds, such as the sound of forest or ocean, can help relax and prepare the body for sleep. Conversely, watching television, playing video games, and working on a computer provides excessive visual and auditory inputs that can overstimulate the brain. Remove unneeded background noises from your bedroom, such as a ticking wall clock. Use a clock radio instead of a battery-operated clock, which often produces sleep-disrupting noise.

Consider journaling to dump intrusive thoughts and concerns and quiet the mind. Writing down your feelings for a few minutes can help set the stage for falling and staying asleep.

Don't Give Up. If, despite a good pre-sleep ritual, you cannot fall asleep after 20 minutes in bed, get up, go to another dimly lit room, and engage in light activities, such as reading or positive affirmations. Return to bed only when drowsy.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Ceabert J. Griffith is trained in public health and family medicine and is an Adjunct Professor of Health Sciences at Touro University Worldwide. He is based in Okinawa and is the author of the recently released book "15 Power Habits of Wellness" and the co-author of "11 Power Habits to Defeat High Blood Pressure." Both books are sold on Amazon.com.

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	Nakagami Hospital	601 Noborikawa, Okinawa / 098-939-1300	

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VERSES FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN

With The Name of The One True *G-D,
The Merciful Benefactor, The Merciful Redeemer
Luqman (A man of Wisdom)

Do you not see that G-D merges Night into Day and HE merges Day into Night; that HE has subjected the Sun and the Moon (to HIS Law). Each running its' course for a term appointed; and that G-D is well acquainted with all that you do.

That is because G-D is The (only) Reality, and because whatever else they call upon besides HIM, is Falsehood; and because The One G-D – HE is The Most High, Most Great.

Do you not see the ships that sail through the Ocean by the Grace of G-D –That HE may show of HIS Signs? Verily in this are Signs, for all who constantly persevere (in righteousness) and give thanks.

When a wave covers them like a canopy (of clouds); they call to G-D, offering HIM sincere devotion. But

when HE has delivered them safely (back) to land; there are among them those that halt between (right and wrong).

But none reject **OUR Signs except only a dishonest, ungrateful (wretch). O Mankind! Do your duty to your Lord-Creator, and be regardful (of the coming) Day; when no father can be beneficial for his son, nor can a son be beneficial for his father.

Verily, the Promise of G-D is true: Let not then this present Life deceive you; nor let the Chief Deceiver, deceive you about The One True G-D.

*G-D instead of God. God when spelt backwards is *dog*. This is not a proper spelling for a word, that is used for The All-Mighty Creator of the Heavens and Earth.

** WE, Ourselves, US as revealed in the Qur'an is a reference to the Angels who have been assigned by The Creator to control everything in HIS creation.



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BOSS Drives Car Care Skills at Torii Station

Story & Photo by Natalie Stanley
U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa

TORII STATION – U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa’s Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program hosted a car care event at the Torii Auto Skills Center, Dec. 19, 2024.

The event, designed to teach basic car maintenance, featured safety checks, tire inspections, instructions on how to change a tire, and guidance for handling roadside emergencies. Participants learned practical skills under the guidance of experts from the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Torii Auto Skills Center.

“This year, BOSS has hosted three car care events and hopes to continue in 2025 with quarterly sessions,” said Bob Chesser, BOSS coordinator.

The BOSS team collaborated to secure sponsorships for food and giveaways, making the event a success. Their efforts highlighted the program’s mission to improve quality of life for single Soldiers



U.S. Army Garrison Okinawa Yasutomi Shimabukuro, Morale, Welfare and Recreation Torii Auto Skills Center specialist, explains vehicle maintenance to Soldiers during a Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers car care event at the Torii Auto Skills Center, Dec. 19, 2024.

while offering opportunities for education and personal development.

Single Soldiers interested in participating in future events are encouraged to sign up through the BOSS program.

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NEWSPRINT

7AF F-16s join ROKAF F-15Ks for live close air support training



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Maria Umanzor Guzman)

Three Republic of Korea Air Force F-15K Slam Eagle aircraft, and two U.S. Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon aircraft fly in formation prior to conducting live munitions training in Pilsung Range, ROK, Dec. 16, 2024. During the training event, two F-15Ks employed two GBU-38 Joint Direct Attack Munitions, while two F-16s employed Mk-82 general purpose bombs, on separate simulated targets.

Sling Stone enhances warfighter capabilities, defense of Guam



(Missile Defense Agency courtesy photo)

A Standard Missile-3 Block IIA is fired from a Vertical Launching System on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam as part of Flight Experiment Mission-02. The Missile Defense Agency, in cooperation with U.S. Department of Defense partners, successfully conducted FEM-02, Dec. 10, 2024.

Multinational Aircrews Showcase Interoperability During OCD 24 Interfly



(U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Taylor Slater)

A multinational formation of C-130J Super Hercules and C-130H Hercules aircraft from the U.S. Air Force, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, Republic of Korea Air Force, Royal Canadian Air Force, and Royal Australian Air Force taxi into position during an "elephant walk" on Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 14, 2024, in support of Operation Christmas Drop 2024.

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USO Coffee Connections are gatherings happening around the world to connect military spouses with new friends or reconnect with old ones! Join USO Okinawa for Coffee Connections at the following locations:

January 15th: USO Kadena @11am
January 15th: USO Foster @10:30am
January 16th: USO Kinser @10:30am



[USO.org/CoffeeConnections](https://www.uso.org/CoffeeConnections)

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