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OKINAWA SEPTEMBER OCTOBER Bulletin

THE REVIEW OF A PLACE
FRANKEY TAVERN



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Issue 21 >> September 10, 2025



VOICE

P A P E R

VOICE PAPER
features Okinawa's
local events, off-base
locations, and U.S.
military activity on the
island and across the
Asia-Pacific region.

Duty on the island

1st MAW, 3rd MARDIV Marines simulate
alert contingency MAGTF response



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Benjamin Catindig)

U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Frank Albino, left, and Sgt. Stephanie Gutierrez, airframes mechanics with Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, perform maintenance on a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter before an Alert contingency Marine air-ground task force (ACM) drill on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, Aug. 18. The ACM exercise is a simulated crisis response drill that must be executed within 24 hours to prepare Marines to mitigate emergencies, provide humanitarian aid, or counter threats to U.S. national interests within the Indo-Pacific region.

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SEPTEMBER OCTOBER bulletin

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KADENA



Noguni Soka Festival

Oct 4 & 5



GINOWAN



Hagoromo Festival

Sept 27 & 28



URUMA



Uruma City Eisa Festival

Oct 4 & 5



CHATAN



Seaport Chatan Carnival

Fireworks: July 22 ~ Oct 24
Events: Sept 21 ~ Sept 23



NAHA



Naha Great Tug-of-War Festival

Oct 12



RBC Citizen Festival

Oct 11~13



CHATAN



Sunset On The Beach

Sept 13 / Oct 11



KITANAKAGUSUKU



Kitanakagusuku Festival / Youth Eisa

Oct 11 & 12

Pre Festival Eisa

Sept 27



ONNA



Onna Festival

Oct 11 & 12



CHATAN



Mana Fes 2025

Sept 14



GINOWAN



Jungle Hunter in Okinawa

Sept 21



YOMITAN



Yomitan Village Youth Eisa Festival

Sept 27 & 28



GINOWAN



Ginowan City Youth Eisa Festival

Oct 4 & 5



ITOMAN



Itoman Great Tug-of-War

Oct 6



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HMLA-169 Marines play baseball with local youth baseball team



(U.S. Marine Corps Photo by Lance Cpl. Thalia Rivera)

U.S. Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 2 Hunter Hensley, an ordnance chief with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 169, Marine Aircraft Group 36, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, pitches during a baseball game at Hagaromo Elementary School, Aug. 20. This event created an opportunity to connect and strengthen ties with the host nation and explore opportunities that can provide a source of inner strength from a higher purpose.

Passing the Ball, Bridging the Gap



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Luis E. Rios Calderon)

U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Malik Jones, right, 18th Communications Squadron client system technician, dribbles during a practice match with the Okinawa prefectural representative team at Ginowan, Aug. 14. The 18th CS team was invited to a practice game with the Okinawan team in preparation for their preliminary game in Kyushu, Japan.

Kin Sunrise Beach Clean Up

U.S. service members, members of the Single Marine Program, soldiers with the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force, and members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs pick up trash on Kin Sunrise Beach, Aug. 2. Every month, the SMP hosts a cleanup of Kin Sunrise Beach and has done so for three years.



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brody Robertson)

Kamimotobu After-School Children's Club students tour Camp Schwab



(U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Joseph Kreis)

Sparky the Dog, the mascot of the National Fire Protection Association, high-fives a student from Kamimotobu After-School Children's Club on Camp Schwab, Aug. 6. The tour provided students with an opportunity to interact with Marine Corps military working dog handlers and firefighters to strengthen relations between the military and the local community.

Achi-Mura students visit Kadena Air Base



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Luis E. Rios Calderon)

U.S. Air Force Capt. Tyler Wright, 33rd Rescue Squadron HH-60W Jolly Green II pilot, 18th Wing mascot, Kappy and Achi-Mura students and teachers pose for a group photo in front of an HH-60W at Kadena Air Base, Aug. 4. During their visit, the students received a brief on the HH-60W, learned the historical context of Okinawa and the importance of fostering peaceful relations between Japan and the United States.



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Building bridges KLI students tour Kadena Air Base

Story & Photos by Senior Airman Luis E. Rios Calderon
18th Wing Public Affairs

Kadena Language Institute students and teachers pose for a photo outside the Kadena Marina before a tour at Kadena Air Base, July 18.



KADENA AIR BASE – Students and teachers from the Kadena Language Institute visited Kadena Air Base on July 18, for a hands-on tour of key operational facilities, including the engine test cell and the KC-135 Stratotanker flight simulator.

KLI is a two-year academy where Japanese students study foreign languages, develop essential computer skills, and learn about international relations. As part of its curriculum, the institute hosts monthly exchange events with U.S. service members, giving students a chance to practice English in real-life scenarios while learning more about American culture and military operations.

“This helps the students gain insight into military activities,” said Aoi Takubo, 18th Wing Public Affairs community engagement specialist. “Many of these students are interested in internships or jobs on base, so tours like this are instrumental in informing them

and shaping their future goals.”

During the visit, students explored the engine test cell, where high-performance fighter engines undergo critical testing to ensure reliability and safety. They also experienced flying firsthand in the KC-135 Stratotanker flight simulator—a vital training tool for pilots of the 909th Air Refueling Squadron.

“I got to fly a plane in the simulator for the first time, and it was very fun!” said Towa Kinjo, a KLI student. “The military members were very kind and took the time to explain things to us.”

The tour concluded with an 18th Wing mission briefing, where students tried on military flight gear and engaged with Airmen about their roles and experiences across the Indo-Pacific region.

Community engagement activities like this not only foster stronger relationships between the Okinawan community and U.S. service members but also reinforce



U.S. Air Force Maj. Justin Robins, right, 909th Air Refueling Squadron instructor pilot, teaches Kanade Ueda, KLI student, on how to operate the KC-135 Stratotanker simulator during a tour at Kadena Air Base, July 18.



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Dave Jan Gabriel, 909th Air Refueling Squadron boom operator, briefs KLI students on the functions of a KC-135 Stratotanker during a tour at Kadena Air Base, July 18.

the broader U.S.-Japan partnership. These exchanges play a vital role in promoting mutual understanding and supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific.

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二童敵討

Nidou Tekiuchi

Saturday, September 20, 2025

Start of performance: 14:00

National Theatre Okinawa Large Theater

Kumiodori Appreciation Class for Foreign People

Part I: "How to Enjoy Kumiodori"

Part II: Kumiodori "Nidou Tekiuchi"

(Start of Ticket Sales)

(General public) Friday, August 1, 2025

(Admission Fee (All reserved seating))

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National Theatre Okinawa Management Foundation

Introduction to Kumiodori

Kumiodori is a traditional Okinawan performing art created by Tamagusuku Chokun in the early 18th century. On this occasion, one of his masterpieces, Nidou Tekiuchi, will be performed. The program is designed especially for first-time audiences and international visitors, with audio guides available in English, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese (free of charge).

Part I: How to Enjoy Kumiodori

The first part introduces the charm of Kumiodori through its history, highlights, and appreciation points with short demonstrations.

Part II: Nidou Tekiuchi

This play is one of Tamagusuku Chokun's five famous works. It was first performed in 1719 at the enthronement ceremony of King Sho Kei.

Synopsis

Characters:

- Amawari, lord of Katsuren Castle
- Gosamaru, lord of Nakagusuku Castle
- Gosamaru's sons, Tsurumatsu (elder) and Kamechiyo (younger)

Story:

Amawari destroys Gosamaru by branding him a rebel. Believing he wiped out the entire family, he feels secure. However, Gosamaru's two sons survive. Learning that Amawari will host a party, they disguise themselves as entertainers, gain his trust, and eventually avenge their father's death.

Saturday, September 20, 2025

Performance starts at 14:00

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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

Al Kahf (The Cave)

"As for that **boat**, it belonged to poor people who toiled upon the sea (for their livelihood)- I but wished to render it unserviceable, for there was a certain king who **seized** every boat by brute force."

"And as for that young **man**, his parents were people of (true) Faith – whereas WE had every reason to fear that he would bring bitter **grief** upon them by (his) overweening **wickedness** and ingratitude (to G-D and humanity):"

"And so WE desired that their Guardian-Lord grant them in his stead (a child) of greater purity than him, and closer (to them) in loving tenderness."

"And as for that wall, it belonged to two **orphan** boys

(living) in the village, and beneath it was (buried) a **treasure** belonging to them (by right)."

"Now their father had been a **righteous** man, and so your Guardian-Lord willed it that when they come of age they would get out their treasure – a mercy (and Grace) from your Lord-Creator."

"I did not do (any of) this of my own **accord**. Such is the meaning and interpretation of (those things) over which you were unable to bear with patience."

*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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Translation of the Qur'an in Japanese 日本語訳版PDF

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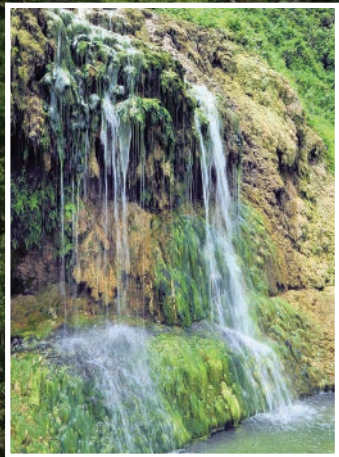
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WATERFALL**
(Kijyoka-no-Nanataki)



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**TODOROKI
WATERFALL**
(Todoroki-no-Taki)



9

**AZAKA
FALLS**
(Azaka Taki)



4

TA-TAKI WATERFALL
(Taa Taki)



Gift of Gab Bridges Cultures at Asakatsu

Story & Photos by Stephen Satkowski
10th Support Group



Spec. Cameron S. Henley, 10th Support Group, engages with Okinawan citizens during a recent Asakatsu engagement between 10th Support Group Soldiers and locals in Yomitan, Aug. 4.

YOMITAN – Cups of steaming coffee, the hum of friendly chatter, and bursts of laughter fill a cozy Okinawan café twice a month as locals and members of the American military gather for Asakatsu, a lively morning language exchange whose name literally means “morning activity.” More than just a meeting, it’s a warm, caffeinated bridge connecting people, cultures, and stories through the simple joy of conversation.

“If you want to learn the Japanese language, dive into the culture, and just about anything else Okinawa has to offer, this is a great place to start that conversation,” said Maj. (CH) Fortune Isaiah Aisabokhae of the 10th Support Group.

The American Consulate in

Naha first brewed up the idea back in 2010, aiming to create a space where Okinawans eager to learn English could meet Americans stationed on the island. Over the years, the tradition has flourished, now involving multiple service branches, with the 10th Support Group proudly supporting the effort for the past four years.

“The program was launched by the U.S. Consulate Naha in 2010 to connect Americans from the bases with local residents eager to learn English,” explained Dawn Suni, Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Consulate General Naha. “Through regular interactions, Okinawan residents can get to know Americans on a personal level, fostering friendship and mutual understanding. At the same time, Americans

gain firsthand experience of Okinawan culture and perspectives. These exchanges not only nurture lasting friendships but also strengthen the ties between the United States and Okinawa.”

The gatherings, held on the first and third Tuesdays of each month, draw a small but enthusiastic crowd, usually a dozen or so Japanese locals and a handful of military participants. Dates and locations are announced on the Consulate’s Instagram page, but the magic happens in person—where language barriers dissolve over cappuccinos and shared laughter.

“I love to speak English,” said Keiichi Yasunaga, a high school student and Japan–U.S. exchange student ambassador. “I feel like speaking English with friends while enjoying a good drink is the best way to start the day. It’s such a cozy, uplifting time.”

Yasunaga, who dreams of becoming a diplomat, already spent a year abroad in Denmark and hopes that gatherings like these will sharpen his language skills. “English is the biggest tool for communication in the world,” he said with conviction.

Local businesses have embraced the effort as well. “Asakatsu brings people together beyond borders,” said Kunihiro Matsuba, owner of Pine Leaves coffee shop, one of the event’s welcoming hosts. “We’re honored to offer a space where trust and warm connections

(Continued on page 22)

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(Continued from page 20)

can begin to grow."

For the 10th Support Group, Asakatsu is one of many ways they invest in their relationship with the Okinawan community. Over the years, they've volunteered in schools, joined cultural festivals, and sought out opportunities to engage with locals on their own turf.

"For me, these language exchanges are one of the most meaningful ways we connect with our Okinawan neighbors," said Col. Torrance G. Cleveland, commander of the 10th Support Group. "It's not just about improving language skills—it's about showing respect, learning the culture firsthand, and strengthening the partnerships we deeply value."

Capt. Boris Oros says the sessions are a refreshing break from routine and an invaluable tool for real-world learning. "These exchanges provide a low-pressure

environment to use a language, beyond textbook learning," Oros said. "You pick up nuances, customs, and perspectives you won't find in a classroom."

For Specialist Cameron S. Henley, Asakatsu is as much about personal growth as it is about language. "It gets me out of my comfort zone and helps me open up more," Henley said. "I've always been shy, but the locals make it easier than I ever imagined."

What began as a modest effort to bridge a communication gap has grown into something deeper, a shared space for cultural understanding, mutual respect, and genuine human connection. Here, participants aren't just trading vocabulary; they're exchanging

perspectives, traditions, and pieces of their daily lives.

In a way, Asakatsu reflects the broader spirit of the U.S.-Japan alliance: relationships built not in boardrooms or official ceremonies, but in the everyday moments, over coffee, conversation, and the courage to connect.

For the 10th Support Group, it's a reminder that living in a host nation means more than working side by side, it means showing up, listening, and learning. And sometimes, it all starts with a cup of coffee.



Cpt. Boris Oros, 10th Support Group, engages with Okinawa citizens at a recent asakatsu in Yomitan Village, Aug. 4.

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Kadena's Vet Clinic supports troops one paw at a time

Story & Photo by Airman 1st Class Arnet Tamayo
18th Wing Public Affairs



U.S. Army Capt. Laura Harms, Kadena Veterinary Clinic officer in charge, and Mariana Schmidt, left, Kadena Veterinary Clinic vet technician, performs an ear swab on a privately owned pet at Kadena Air Base, July 24.

KADENA AIR BASE – Tucked between the roar of fighter jets and the hum of island life, there's a team quietly powering mission success, one paw at a time. At the heart of Kadena Air Base, the Veterinary Clinic isn't just a place for shots and checkups. It's a mission-critical hub, supporting everything from beloved family pets to elite military working dogs across the Indo-Pacific.

As the largest military veterinary clinic in Japan, Kadena's Vet clinic supports thousands of privately owned pets and military working dogs. It also processes nearly 80% of all pet quarantine cases for U.S. military installations

across the country.

Headquartered at Camp Zama, Kadena is one out of seven veterinary clinics in Japan under the Veterinary Readiness Activity Japan, and supports 13 military installations across Okinawa.

"We're the only military veterinary clinic on the island, providing care for all branches of service," said U.S. Army Capt. Laura Harms, Kadena Veterinary Clinic officer in charge. "While the Army primarily staffs the Veterinary Corps, we support everyone from Air Force to Navy and Marines."

In total, the clinic provides care for more than 13,000 privately owned animals and a large number of military working dogs, supporting two major kennels: the Provost Marshal's Office and Kadena's Security Forces Squadron.

"We do everything from routine vaccinations and health certificates to minor and major sur-

geries," said U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Richard Schmidt, Kadena Vet Clinic noncommissioned officer in charge. "We also ensure readiness for military working dogs across the Indo-Pacific, since we are the designated emergency facility for the region."

Beyond treating pets, the veterinary team plays a vital role in enforcing Japan's strict rabies prevention and quarantine regulations. They work closely with Japan's Animal Quarantine Services to ensure U.S. personnel can safely bring animals in and out of the country, while preserving Japan's rabies-free status.

"Our Japanese employees are essential," said Harms. "They help with translation, communication with off-base vets, and ensure we're following host nation regulations."

The clinic has a 25-person team made up of Japanese staff, U.S. civilians and soldiers. Despite

being an Army-run facility, day-to-day operations also rely heavily on Air Force support.

18th Medical Group supports the clinic's medical systems, while the 10th Regional Support Group offers Army-level backing.

"Between systems support, biomedical equipment repair, and facilities management, the 18th Wing treats us like one of their own," said Harms.

The Kadena Veterinary Clinic is more than just a place to get pet vaccines. It's a vital, multi-functional unit supporting the health, readiness, and quality of life for thousands of service members, families, and animals across Okinawa.

"Everyone here knows they have a purpose," said Schmidt. "Whether it's a sick pet, a working dog emergency, or just ensuring readiness, we're doing something meaningful every day."

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Social Isolation

Strategies for Reversing the Growing Epidemic of Loneliness

Dr. Ceabert J. Griffith



Two Harvard University researchers, writing for the *Boston Globe* years ago, estimated that loneliness has a similar negative impact on health as does obesity, alcohol use disorder, and smoking 15 cigarettes a day. A 2023 U.S. Surgeon General report entitled “*Our Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation*” echoed similar findings. The report links loneliness to a 29% increased risk of heart disease, 32% increased risk of stroke, and 50% increased risk of developing dementia among the elderly.

Conversely, good social connections—solid and reciprocal connectivity to others and positive interactions with social institutions—can help strengthen the immune system and promote overall good health and healthspan. A network of friends and family is like good health insurance and life insurance. What strategies can you employ to combat social isolation? How can you learn to form and foster enduring social relationships? Forming and fostering social relationships can be learned and mastered like any other acquired skill. Shy and socially inept individuals

whose profession (e.g., politics) or avocation (e.g., community organizing) depends on this ability learn to master these skills, and so can you.

Social Connectivity Plan

The first thing you should do is to develop a social connectivity plan and then “work your plan.” In your social connectivity plan, list friends, relatives, co-workers, fellow professionals, and other acquaintances with whom you would like to form enduring relationships and stay in touch (e.g., a sick aunt who lives alone). Identify those who have been positive and supportive of you in

the past.

Next, identify a mechanism for connecting with each person on your list—for example, e-mail every Saturday, call the first Sunday of each month, or have brunch the third Sunday of each month. Enter this into your monthly calendar as you confirm the other individual’s availability. Finally, make a solid commitment to stick to your plan, come rain or shine, snow or heat wave.

Create Opportunities to Connect

In your social connectivity plan, list strategic opportunities to connect. These can be as simple as going window shopping or as in-depth as organizing a family reunion. Family team-building trips are usually a blast, physically healthy, and can help bring family members closer together. Holidays such as Easter, Memorial Day, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving offer excellent opportunities to get together with family and friends.

Connect to Your Community

A common trait among happy people is their connection to their community. During stress and tragedy, socially connected neighbors can provide invaluable support and contribute to your social resiliency. Social clubs, religious activities, and volunteer organizations offer excellent opportunities for community connections.

Join a Social Club

Membership in a social club provides a great opportunity to meet and network with individuals from all walks of life. Social clubs offer recreational activities, such as fishing, golfing, political events, and charity work. These clubs attract a variety of personalities and can be a rich source of social connections.

Attend Religious Activities

A study conducted by Wake Forest and Emory Universities showed that attending religious services contributed to health as much as quitting smoking or getting more exercise. Besides promoting mental health, religious activities foster meaningful relationships based on shared interests and beliefs.

Volunteer

Volunteering is a surefire way to mitigate stress and boost your health. Volunteering helps you to help others and to meet wonderful people. You can volunteer to feed the homeless or take meals to the shut-in one day a week. Many social service organizations always look for people to take the elderly or disabled to medical appointments. You can also volunteer to help your relatives. In the process, you can build and strengthen social ties that can last a lifetime.

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 co-author of “*11 Power Habits to Defeat High Blood Pressure*.” Both books can be purchased from Amazon.com.

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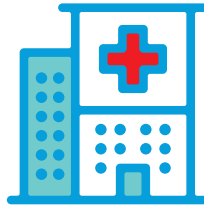
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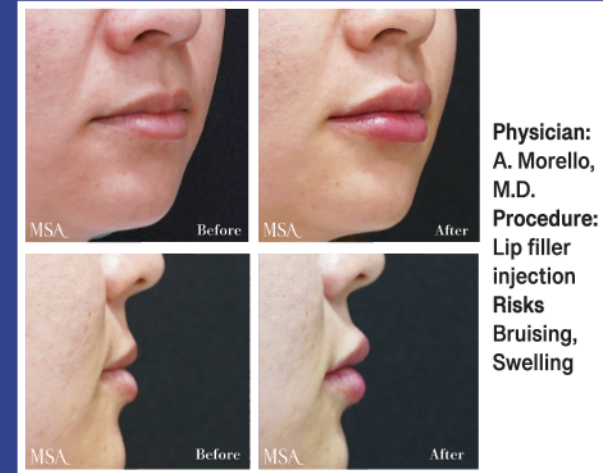
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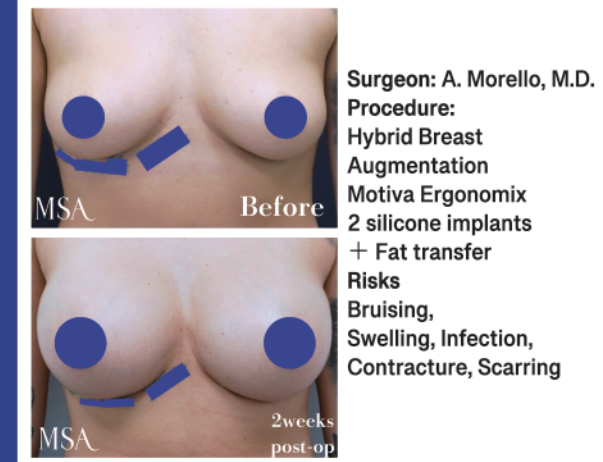
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Brief Background

Dr. Morello was born in South Carolina in 1989. His unique upbringing has given him a global perspective and the skills to communicate with both English and Japanese.



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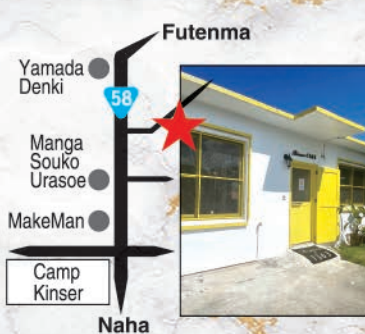


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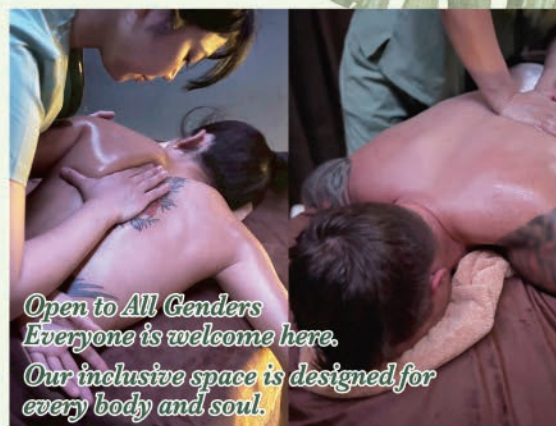
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NEWSPRINT



(U.S. Army photo by Noriko Kudo)

Camp Zama's 66th Bon Odori Festival

Col. Erik A. Davis, USAG Japan commander, center, dances with his wife, right, on the Bon tower at the 66th Bon Odori Festival the U.S. Army Garrison Japan and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force co-hosted at Camp Zama, Aug. 2.

Nebuta Festival 2025



(U.S. Air Force photo by Airman Hannah Bench)

U.S. Air Force Col. Paul Davidson, right, 35th Fighter Wing (FW) commander, dances with festival participants during the annual Nebuta Festival at Aomori City, Aug. 6. Participating in the Nebuta Festival alongside the community strengthens base-host nation cohesion, enhancing the 35th FW's operational readiness and joint response capabilities.

Six years later, Yokota returns to Fussa Tanabata Festival



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

Volunteers carry a mikoshi during the Fussa City Tanabata Festival in Fussa City, Aug. 8. After six years of disuse primarily due to COVID-19, the mikoshi was repaired by the 374th Civil Engineer Squadron and used during the 2025 Tanabata Festival in Fussa City.

2025 Yokose Summer Festival

Naval Beach Unit (NBU) 7 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Frederick Crayton, Commander, Fleet Activities Sasebo (CFAS) Chief Staff Officer Cmdr. Tyler Maness, House of



(U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sophia H. Bumps)

Representatives, Nagasaki 4th District Representative Yozo Kaneko, Saikai City Mayor Mitsuyuki Segawa, and CFAS Public Affairs Officer Aki Nichols toss lucky mochi rice cakes and candy to the crowd during the Yokose Summer Festival at Yokoseura Park in Saikai, Aug. 10. The festival was held to celebrate the 463rd anniversary of the founding of Yokose Port, which is home to the CFAS Yokose Fuel Facility and NBU 7, forward-deployed to Sasebo.

SRF-JRMC 53rd Annual Bon Odori Festival



(U.S. Navy photo by Aya Stewart)

U.S. Naval Ship Repair Facility and Japan Regional Maintenance Center's (SRF-JRMC) Command Master Chief Command, Master Chief Dean Howell (left), dances during the 53rd Annual Bon Odori Festival on board Commander Fleet Activities Yokosuka (CFAY) Aug. 8. Japanese Bon Odori is a traditional style of dancing performed during Obon, a multi-day Buddhist holiday to honor the spirits of our ancestors. The SRF-JRMC Bon Odori Festival is a mainstay for the command and has occurred annually since 1968.

9/11



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