GUAM CUSTOMS AND QUARANTINE AGENCY

THE SHIELD

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024

'GUAM'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE' | *PRIMET NA PRUTEKTOT*

As a small island community vulnerable to the various threats met at our borders, we serve at the frontlines of safeguarding our people, our finite natural resources, our economy, and our position in national security. Our officers work daily to intercept illicit drugs and contraband, unsafe goods, counterfeit items, invasive species, communicable disease carriers, criminals and terrorists, and the mishandling of protected wildlife when encountered. Fortifying our partner local and federal regulatory agencies, we strive to enhance the safety and quality of life for all of us where it matters most. Without adequate protection of our island from the these threats from their point of entry, our prosperity is compromised and pressure is placed on inland forces. We invite you to stand by us as guardians of our home. We are ***The Shield***!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR IKE Q. PEREDO



Håfa Adai!

It has been another year of focus on capacity building and modernization at the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency.

We continue efforts to increase our manpower, as we operate at less than 50% of a sufficient officer workforce; secure funding to build a satellite inspection facility at the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port; and acquire additional resources to adequately screen incoming passengers and goods, such as vehicles, computers, detection technology, and an automated system to keep up with the contemporary demands on customs enforcement.

Moreover, we remain hopeful for the passing of new legislation aimed at strengthening our law enforcement jurisdiction and effectiveness at our borders. Just as society, trade, commerce, and travel evolve, so, too, must our scope of oversight and level of enforcement.

I would like to thank all of our employees for their enduring productivity and resilience in making our operations move. Chief of Customs Vincent Perez and I extend our gratitude to our workforce, their families, and our local and federal partners who unite with us in our vital mission.

We wish you all a warm and prosperous New Year!

BIOSECURITY OFFICERS OVERSEE FUMIGATIONS FOR PEST-FREE CHRISTMAS TREES





Our Biosecurity Task Force officers oversaw the required fumigation of imported fresh Christmas trees and other evergreen products before they entered shops, homes, and other establishments this holiday season.

Since Nov. 15, seven shipping containers holding approximately 3,000 fresh trees, wreaths, garlands, and pinecones, in total, were fumigated to help prevent the introduction of invasive pests and other detriments to Guam's flora, fauna, natural resources, and agriculture.

Officers first screen the containers to ensure they are properly sealed and suitable for treatment, and that their contents meet entry requirements.

After caution tape is placed around a safety buffer zone, a calculated measure of methyl bromide gas is applied within the container for a prescribed period of time. Officers conduct a final inspection to determine the success of the treatment.

The containers are released to consignees only after the completion of treatment and inspection protocols.

We are pleased to report this year's shipments carried no species of concern. However, past fumigations prevented the introduction of various species of insects, spiders, a rodent, garden snake, squirrel, and even a skunk. When such organisms are found, they are turned over to the appropriate local or federal agricultural authorities.

In 2016, the Guam Invasive Species Council approved a Guam Department of Agriculture policy requiring that all imported Christmas trees be fumigated upon arrival to Guam.

NEW DRUG DETECTOR DOGS REPORT FOR DUTY





Drug Detector Dogs (DD) Hangos, Evett, Lulu, Xavi, and Hera were welcomed into our Drug Detector Dog Unit in October. All the way from Southern Coast K9 in New Smyrna Beach, Fla., they are among the first additions of a two-phase dog acquisition plan in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General of Guam (OAG) and the Bureau of Statistics and Plans (BSP). They were officially presented on Nov. 12 at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex, alongside DD Drako and DD Lobo, who will be transferred to the Guam Police Department; and DD Inga and DD Filip, who will be transferred to the Department of Corrections. Each dog is trained to detect methamphetamine, cocaine, heroin, ecstasy, and marijuana. They will each be imprinted on the odor of fentanyl by our instructors, as well. This first set of nine dogs cost $112,190. Their breeds are Belgian Malinois, Malinois mix, and German Shepherd. The dogs, along with transport costs, were supported by a contribution of $249,900 from the OAG and $90,000 in Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant funding through BSP.

2 PROMOTED TO CAPTAIN, 6 PROMOTED TO OFFICER III





On Oct. 3, Officers Paul Bernardo and Michael Camacho were promoted from the position of Customs and Quarantine Officer (CQ) III to the rank of Captain during a ceremony at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex.

Both have served our agency for over two decades, and both were initially employed with the Guam Department of Agriculture as Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) officers in 1996 before PPQ was absorbed by our agency in 2003.

Bernardo and Camacho now join 18 other captains serving in key supervisory roles across the agency.

Our last set of captain promotions was granted to 15 officers in October 2022.

On Nov. 21, Officers Sheena Alvarez, MaryAnn Barcinas, Jonathan Calvo, Patrick Gray, Adam Grey, and Czarina Perez were promoted from the position of CQ II to CQ III during another ceremony at the governor's complex.

Each of them served anywhere between 11 and 21 years in our agency, largely within our Inspection and Control and Special Enforcement divisions. Such divisions require direct interaction with the community and demand immediate engagement in various enforcement operations to address incoming threats.

They now join 20 other CQ IIIs, who make up approximately 20% of our agency's 136-officer workforce.

Our agency's last set of promotions to this position was in November 2022 for 22 CQ III-selects.

TAYAMA FIRST FROM GUAM CUSTOMS TO GRADUATE FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY

Capt. Barbara C. Tayama is the first Guam Customs officer to graduate from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy upon her completion of the academy's 292nd session that culminated with a graduation ceremony on Dec. 12 at the FBI Training Academy in Quantico, Va.



Capt. Barbara Tayama receives her certificate of completion of the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy from FBI Director Christopher Wray on Dec. 12 in Quantico, Va.

Tayama, whose been with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA) for over 27 years, was among 257 graduates hailing from law enforcement agencies across 27 countries, eight military organizations, and five federal civilian organizations.

Leadership, ethics, behavioral science, intelligence analysis, critical incident management, officer wellness, and advanced fitness training were among the focus areas of the program.

According to Tayama, physical fitness was incorporated three to four times a week, to include a weekly fitness challenge that tested participants' strength, endurance, and teamwork.

"These challenges were a key part of the training program and are essential for qualifying to participate in the final obstacle course and test—the Yellow Brick Road (YBR). The YBR is a 6.1 mile run through the woods and hilly trail that includes obstacles, such as climbing walls, maneuvering cargo nets, and rappelling up and down terrain. Earning the coveted Yellow Brick upon completion of the YBR symbolizes one's accomplishment of the FBI NA and is a source of pride," Tayama shared.



Capt. Barbara Tayama

"Balancing academic, physical, and professional demands over 11 weeks was challenging, but manageable," Tayama continued. "The training enhanced my leadership, decision-making, and strategic planning skills, providing tools to manage complex issues and better lead our team."

Selection to attend the FBI National Academy requires nomination based on a candidate's leadership abilities, career achievements, and potential for greater contributions to law enforcement.

Candidates must pass a thorough vetting process by the FBI and a timed fitness test prior to and during the program.

Graduates typically return to their agencies to serve in executive-level positions, according to an official release from the FBI.



Capt. Barbara Tayama displays her yellow brick after completing the FBI NA's Yellow Brick Road obstacle course.

"Capt. Tayama has a proven record of competent performance of duties, commitment to organizational advancement, mental and physical conditioning, and an operational outlook with the potential to posture our agency well in contemporary times," said CQA Director Ike Peredo. "This achievement of hers reflects the capacity building and professional culture we strive to achieve within our agency."

"It's an incredible honor, not only to be the first female, but also the first officer from CQA to attend and complete this prestigious training, paving the way for future officers and setting a path for our agency to pursue greater leadership opportunities," Tayama added. "I hope this accomplishment inspires other women in our agency to pursue leadership opportunities and continuous professional development."

Tayama has also dedicated over 26 years as a member of the Guam Air National Guard, currently holding the rank of master sergeant as a law office superintendent.

She is an active member of the Nuestra Senora De Last Aguas Catholic Church, a volunteer with Victim Advocates Reaching Out, and participates in various community projects, such as the Point-in-Time annual homeless count, island-wide beautification events, food and shoe drives, the annual Mañenggon Memorial Run, and is a blood donor one to two times per year.

Congratulations, Capt. Tayama!

GUAM CUSTOMS RESPONDS TO ILLEGAL ENTRIES IN NORTHERN GUAM

Guam Customs officers responded to alerts of illegal, unauthorized, and unannounced entries in northern Guam Dec. 10-11.

Around 4:45 p.m. on Dec. 10, customs officers were informed a female, of the People's Republic of China (PRC), illegally entered the vicinity of a military installation.

Upon further investigation, officers learned the woman was dropped to Guam by a vessel originating from Saipan, in violation of Guam customs entry requirements. Officers also learned of another female and male in distress on the reef outside the Haputo Beach area, who reportedly arrived by the same vessel.

Within the 9 a.m. hour on Dec. 11, customs officers were informed of a male PRC-national located at the Tanguisson Beach area. He was taken into the custody of our Maritime Interdiction Task Force after completing customs formalities before custody was transferred to federal authorities.

Further investigation led to the discovery of three other male PRC nationals found in the vicinity of a military installation again.

Each of these illegal entries were reportedly transported by the same vessel that dropped the illegal entries located on Dec. 10, and all seven were taken into custody of federal authorities following customs formalities.

Since 2022, our agency has responded to a total of 152 individuals from the PRC who were determined to be in violation of Guam entry laws.

Our agency remains dedicated to executing vital customs operations crucial to local and national security, notwithstanding ongoing challenges in securing sufficient personnel, cross-terrain vehicles, modern surveillance systems, and other essential resources for adequate protection of our borders.

While we maintain a collaborative relationship and conduct joint operations with local and federal partners in the multi-agency task force charged with detecting and responding to illegal entries, we ask the community to be vigilant and keep watch for individuals suspected of illegal entry to the island, or who may be involved in smuggling activities.

Please report any findings to us at (671) 642-8071/2, or email inquire@cqa.guam.gov.

CUSTOMS OFFICERS COMPLETE ANNUAL PHYSICAL ABILITY TEST









In keeping with the Guam Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission guidelines, our agency conducted its annual Customs and Quarantine Physical Abilities Test (CQPAT) in late November. A requirement for all officers, the CQPAT helps to ensure all officers maintain an acceptable level of physical fitness and wellness, and increase their capacity for readiness and performance in their class of work. The course consists of 14 components, including a ladder ascend and descend; weight transfer, push, and pull; a 300-meter run; serpentine maneuver; tunnel; balance beam; over-under movements; push-ups; and other strength-training.

NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT!



Please join us in welcoming our new messenger clerk, Keith Susuico!

As a messenger clerk within our administrative office, Keith would like to contribute organizational skills to help maintain efficiency and compliance with administrative requirements. He strives to foster a supportive team environment where communication and collaboration are prioritized. Furthermore, Keith is confident in his ability to adapt and respond to new challenges, whether it be through additional training or taking on diverse roles within the agency.

"I'm particularly drawn to customs and quarantine work because it offers an opportunity to contribute directly to national security, public health, and environmental protection," he said. "In the Admin section, I could support those efforts through efficient document management, precise record-keeping, and strong communication with both internal teams and external partners."

"I love how, on my first day in the agency, everyone was so welcoming and friendly," he added.

Keith enjoys cooking, hiking, and swimming. His foods and choice are sushi, or Korean and Mexican cuisine.

He leaves us with a this quote:

"It is amazing how much you can accomplish when it doesn't matter who gets the credit."
- Harry S. Truman

OCEANIA CUSTOMS OFFICIALS MEET WITH CQA TEAM





Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Head of Secretariat Nancy Oraka-Pomoso and OCO Human Resources and Logistics Officer Meliki Logaulu visited our agency in October. During their engagements with our agency officials, Oraka-Pomoso and Logaulu shared their expertise and guidance toward the reform and modernization of our agency. CQA is one of 24 member customs administrations within the OCO, which seeks to help its members align with customs international standards and best practices while prioritizing customs leadership, law enforcement and border security, trade management and facilitation, revenue mobilization, and institutional strengthening of small member administrations.

NEW VANS ACQUIRED THROUGH USDA GRANT



U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Business/Community Programs Specialist Anthony Barcinas hands the keys to a new van to Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency Director Ike Peredo on Oct. 11 at the Guam Integrated Air Cargo Facility. Three new vans, which were procured under the USDA Farm Bill, now support the operational needs of our Drug Detector Dog Unit, Agriculture Canine Unit, and Biosecurity Task Force officers.

FOLLOW US!

2024 SEIZURES

DRUGS & NARCOTICS

97,733 gross grams
Methamphetamine

158,752.94 gross grams
Marijuana

511+ pills
Assorted Pills

119 pills
Suspected Fentanyl

10.8 gross grams
Ecstasy

BIOSECURITY

BIOSECURITY TASK FORCE

179,257 + appx. pounds
Foreign & Domestic Plants, Seeds, Produce, Meats, Meat By-Products, & Natural Materials

AGRICULTURE CANINE UNIT

4,442 appx. pounds
Beef, Pork, Chicken, Mango, & Citrus

COUNTERFEITS

12,472 pieces

OTHER VIOLATIONS

11,993 appx. pieces
Dept. Public Health & Social Services Violations

839 pieces
Guam Product Seal Violations

449 appx. pieces
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Violations

366 appx. cartons
Tobacco Violations

269 appx. bottles
Alcohol Violations

200 appx. pieces
Guam Environmental Protection Agency Violations

48 pieces
U.S. Dept. of Transportation Violations

GUAM CUSTOMS HOSTS FAMILIARIZATION TOUR FOR VISITING USDA OFFICIALS







In late October, officers from our Biosecurity Task Force and Agriculture Canine Unit recently accompanied port and plant health directors from the U.S. Department of Agriculture out of Hawaii during a familiarization tour of biosecurity operation sites and assets here in Guam. The tour encouraged knowledge exchange and enhanced cooperation between entities in our joint efforts to defend the island and nation from invasive pests and diseases that are detrimental to our natural resources and human health.

CAPT. MAYBELLINE MUNA RECOGNIZED BY ESGR



Maritime Unit Supervisor Capt. Maybelline Muna, center, was presented with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award on Oct. 24. She was nominated for the award by Customs Officer Leif Galvez, who expressed his appreciation for the meaningful impact that Muna, and members of her team, made on his fulfillment of duties and upward mobility as a soldier in the U.S. Army. From their administrative support for him to focus on mission priorities, to their consideration of his health and home front in the process, Galvez credited Muna and members of our Maritime team for their thoughtful actions. Congratulations, Capt. Muna!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

AGRICULTURE CANINE UNIT SHARES MISSION WITH DOD STARBASE STUDENTS







Officers with our Agriculture Canine Unit demonstrated how their duty dogs detect and alert at prohibited meats and produce within passenger baggage and cargo during a presentation to U.S. Department of Defense STARBASE students on Oct. 3 at the National Guard Readiness Center.

DRUG DETECTOR DOG UNIT PROMOTES DRUG-FREE LIVING DURING RED RIBBON WEEK






Officers with our Drug Detector Dog Unit demonstrated how their duty dogs detect and alert at illegal drugs within passenger baggage, cargo, and other items during a Red Ribbon Week presentation to students on Oct. 11 at Tiyan High School.

PROPERTY & EVIDENCE CUSTODIAL OFFICERS, ACU ENGAGE IN AIRPORT FAIR






Officers from our Property and Evidence Custodial Office displayed the different types of contraband seized by Guam Customs officers during the Guam International Airport Authority's Safety and Wellness Fair on Oct. 23 at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport. Officer Paul Flores from our Agriculture Canine Unit also conducted a demonstration with his agricultural detector dog.

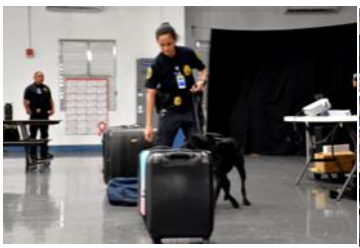
DRUG DETECTOR DOG UNIT CONDUCTS DRUG DETECTION DEMONSTRATION FOR GAA STUDENTS






Officers with our Drug Detector Dog Unit demonstrated how their dogs detect and alert at illegal drugs within passenger baggage, cargo, and other items during a presentation to pre-kindergarten to twelfth-grade students on Oct. 31 at Guam Adventist Academy.

ACU PROMOTES BIOSECURITY AT ORDOT-CHALAN PAGO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Officers with our Agriculture Canine Unit demonstrated how their duty dogs detect and alert at prohibited meats and produce within passenger baggage and cargo during a career day presentation to students on Nov. 15 at Ordot-Chalan Pago Elementary School.

RETIREMENTS





Col. Philip S.N. Taijeron retired from the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency on Dec. 13 after devoting 30 years to our agency and a total of 36 years to the Government of Guam. He was honorarily promoted to the rank of Chief during his retirement ceremony, and also received special certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor of Guam, the 37th Guam Legislature, and the Office of Congressman Moylan.





Capt. Christopher F. Sablan retired from the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency on Dec. 13 after devoting 29 years to our agency and a total of 33 years to the Government of Guam. He was honorarily promoted to the rank of Colonel during his retirement ceremony, and also received special certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor of Guam, the 37th Guam Legislature, and the Office of Congressman James Moylan.





Customs and Quarantine Officer III Joe C. Villagomez retired from the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency on Dec. 13 after devoting 21 years to our agency and a total of 34 years to the Government of Guam. He was honorarily promoted to the rank of Captain during his retirement ceremony, and also received special certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor of Guam, the 37th Guam Legislature, and the Office of Congressman James Moylan.

CQA HONORS LIVES TOUCHED BY CANCER DURING RELAY FOR LIFE





Members of our agency joined the dozens of Government of Guam employees who participated in the American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life on Nov. 9 at the University of Guam Field House. High spirits, cheering, and words of encouragement were shared as supporters, cancer survivors, their families, and others touched by this deadly disease completed laps around the field house, celebrating their strength, perseverance, unity, and remembrance of those who lost their lives to cancer.







CUSTOMS BRINGS CHEER IN GOVERNOR'S CHRISTMAS PARADE






Employees from across our agency came out for the governor of Guam's annual Christmas parade on Dec. 12 around Skinner Plaza. Our parade entries featured our Biosecurity Task Force van and Drug Detector Dog Unit trailer adorned with lights, blow-ups, our very own Detector Dog Viki in a festive holiday harness, and candy for the children!





MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR!



