



CUSTOMS & QUARANTINE AGENCY, GUAM

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Director's Office

*Director of Customs – Ike. Q. Peredo
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Guam Expands K-9 Drug Detection Force with 7 Newly-Certified Handlers

BARRIGADA, Guam – Through a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA), Guam Police Department (GPD), and Guam Department of Corrections (DOC), seven new K-9 handlers and their dogs are certified and ready to detect illicit narcotics trafficked in Guam. The handlers were recognized during a ceremony this morning at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport.

After three months of intensive training, GPD's Sgt. Harrilee Matsumoto-Webber, Officer Hurao Iriarte, and Officer Joshua Togawa; and DOC's Cpl. Bruce Flores, Officer Jesse Cruz, Officer Ron Joseph Hocog, and Officer Ryan Ruiz completed the Basic Canine Narcotic Detection Course, proctored and administered locally by instructors from our Drug Detector Dog Unit Canine Training Academy.

The handlers received curriculum and conducted practical application of various skills required in canine handling, including kennel maintenance; animal husbandry, safety, and bonding; occupational health and stress management; canine drives and character traits; capabilities and limitations in various conditions; search rituals and patterns; and proper record keeping.

CQA Director Ike Peredo said the course lends more than just certification.

“It's an investment in capacity building across Guam law enforcement, and we are honored to have been able to offer this training. The strength of our public safety network lies in our ability to support one another in the face of evolving threats. These certified K-9 teams are now part of one of the most effective tools we have in drug interdiction. Their presence is a powerful deterrent to illicit activity, and a symbol of the vigilance we maintain to protect Guam,” he shared.

Chief of Police Stephen Ignacio expressed excitement for GPD's involvement in this multi-agency effort to combat the island's illicit drug epidemic.

“Our shared goal is to keep the community safe by training more uniformed officers with specialized skills,” he stated. “Our K-9 handlers and trained K-9s are vital resources in our war against drugs and crime. We hope to see more training opportunities.”

“On behalf of all personnel at the Department of Corrections, we appreciate and extend our gratitude to CQA for their support of our K-9 unit,” said DOC Director Fred Bordallo Jr. “The collaborative relations, with reference to the team efforts provided with the quality training, is

expected to benefit our agency's security force and the island for the goal of interdiction of illegal drugs, aligned with strategic drug enforcement programs.”

The handlers received their official K-9 handler pins and certificates of completion from CQA. They also received certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor, 38th Guam Legislature, and Congressman James Moylan.

For more information, contact CQA Public Information Officer Alana Chargualaf-Afaisen at alana.c.afaisen@cqa.guam.gov, or call (671) 475-6202 or (671) 971-1408.

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