

THE SHIELD

JULY-SEPTEMBER 2025

‘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 these threats at 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!*

GUAM CUSTOMS 16TH CYCLE FORGES AHEAD WITH 11 TRAINEES



The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency’s newest trainees have begun their journey toward becoming sworn law enforcement officers responsible for stopping threats at our island’s borders and ports of entry.

As CQA’s 16th Cycle, these 10 men and one woman, bring a variety of competencies, including the handling of hazardous materials, information technology, basic life support, water safety and administrative work. Such skills can be integral to property and evidence management, improving data systems, maritime enforcement operations, and various other advancements within the agency.

Also among them is a Japanese language speaker, who can enhance communications with travelers, document interpretation, and understanding cultural nuances to facilitate smoother customs processes while ensuring compliance with laws and regulations.

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR IKE Q. PEREDO



Buenas yan Håfa Adai!

Welcome to another issue of *The Shield*.

The landscape of customs operations continues to evolve, reminding us of our need for technological advancement.

At present, our agency is focused on two critical components with automation and modernization of our trade, commerce, and border protection capabilities.

In collaboration with the Bureau of Statistics and Plans, we are preparing the necessary procurement documents to acquire the Automated System for Customs Data. Hosted and supported by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, this system comes with a team of specialized customs experts, who can provide essential support, consultation, solutions, and best practices to facilitate the migration of our reformed processes to a digital platform.

Additionally, a working group led by Chief of Customs Vincent Perez is actively reviewing, amending, and updating our antiquated customs rules and regulations found in Title 4, Ch. 2 of the Guam Administrative Rules and Regulations. Not only is this crucial to fully leverage the benefits of automation, but it addresses long-standing deficiencies in our customs regulations, including those that are outdated, vague, or absent for daily operations.

Our progress toward the building of a new satellite inspection facility continues. Though still in the architectural and engineering stage, we have completed the pre-design phase, which consisted of a study visit to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection facility in Seattle, Wash., a site analysis and feasibility study, code research and regulatory compliance review, and conceptual and schematic design. We are now in the design development phase, working on structural plans and requirements.

Last month, we officially announced our 16th Cycle, commencing the training of 11 customs officer trainees concurrent with our 15th Cycle of 30 trainees who are set to graduate at the end of this year.

I am proud of the dedication and resilience demonstrated by our team, and I look forward to continuing this journey with renewed focus and collaboration in the months to come.

Finally, our safety starts with YOU. If you see suspicious or illegal activity that may involve the trafficking of prohibited items or individuals in and out of Guam, please report it to **(671) 642-8071/2** or email intel@cqa.guam.gov.

Thank you and si Yu'os ma'åse'!

16TH CYCLE (continued from Pg. 1)

"We have a group of young and energetic trainees who are looking forward to becoming Guam Customs officers," said CQA Training Supervisor Capt. John Pangelinan. "The training they will be going through is vital for the safety of our island, and we're confident that they will rise to the challenge. We are excited to see them grow as they start this important new chapter in their career."

CQA's officer training program aligns with Guam Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission objectives and is designed to prepare the whole officer through the Guam Community College Criminal Justice Academy, customs and quarantine-centric coursework, on-the-job training, and physical fitness development, among other certifications.

"Expanding our workforce is not just about numbers - it's about building the capacity to operate more sophisticated systems, managing growing trade volumes, and responding to increasingly complex security challenges. With the graduation of this cycle, we will make meaningful progress toward strengthening our units and being prepared amid a more dynamic operational environment," said CQA Director Ike Peredo.

CQA currently has 125 law enforcement officers. The graduation of this cycle, along with CQA's ongoing 15th Cycle, will bring the agency's officer workforce to 166 — approximately 60% of CQA's ideal officer staffing.

GUAM CUSTOMS MUSTERS LAW ENFORCEMENT, MARITIME SECURITY PARTNERS FOR VESSEL OUTREACH AND ENTRY OPERATIONS AT HAGĀTÑA BOAT BASIN

The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency, in collaboration with local and federal law enforcement and maritime security partners, conducted boater outreach and enforcement efforts at the Hagātña Boat Basin this week.

These activities aligned with routine vessel entry operations and were part of an ongoing effort to support and engage the vibrant boating community amid an increase in regional boating activity.

Alongside CQA's special enforcement units were officers with the Guam Police Department (GPD), Guam Department of Agriculture (DOAG) Conservation Law Enforcement, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Law Enforcement.

The joint operations highlight the strong commitment of all participating agencies to educate the community on Guam entry requirements and boating safety, while ensuring broader public safety objectives, compliance, and upholding the integrity of the island's borders through vigilant and cooperative enforcement.

"As Guam experiences a rise in drug-related crimes, CQA continues to screen all inbound persons, cargo, conveyances, and containers," said Col. Franklin Gutierrez, assistant chief of CQA's Special Enforcement Division. "These activities have especially allowed us the opportunity to sharpen interoperability with key entities who help secure our waterways and respond to the threats we work to keep out."

All vessels arriving from any place outside of Guam, or any vessels originating from Guam engaged in activity with vessels outside of Guam, must comply with the entry requirements provided in Title 5 Guam Code Annotated Ch. 73 as they relate to clearances, manifests, unloading, examination, and departures. This includes the authorization of CQA officers to conduct inspections for contraband.

CQA maintains these integral alliances, recognizing they are critical force multipliers.

"The Guam Police Department has shared responsibilities in keeping our waters secure by promoting boating safety through initiatives, educational programs and various enforcement efforts. We work hand-in-hand with fellow local partners and federal agencies to protect lives by ensuring boats and vessels are registered and equipped with proper safety equipment, such as life jackets and fire extinguishers," said Chief of Police Stephen Ignacio.

"NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement values its partnerships with Guam Customs and Quarantine, the Guam Police Department, Guam Department of Agriculture Conservation Officers, and the U.S. Coast Guard. These collaborations enhance our shared mission of educating the public about the importance of our living marine resources and how irresponsible activities harm them, protecting our waters from illegal fishing by foreign fishing vessels and safeguarding our living marine environment. Despite challenges such as budget constraints and personnel shortages, our commitment to protecting our living marine resources for future



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HAGÂTÑA BOAT BASIN (continued from Pg. 3)

generations remains steadfast," said Martina Sagapolu, assistant director for the Pacific Island Division of NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement.

"We want to see everyone come home safely from our beautiful Pacific waters. We know our local boaters are skilled, taking care and preparation out on the water, and we're here to support them with clear safety guidelines and response crews when needed. Together with our trusted partners, we're actively protecting the Marianas, standing united to stop illegal activity, ensuring the security and safety of our region," said Cmdr. Grant Johnson, response department head for U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam.

A total of 31 vessels were screened over a span of 48 hours upon their arrival to the Hagåtña Boat Basin originating from Saipan and Rota.

The community is encouraged to report smuggling and other suspicious activities to (671) 642-8071/2 or email intel@cqa.guam.gov.

CQII ADRIAN MORA COMPLETES FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING CENTER FIREARMS INSTRUCTOR TRAINING PROGRAM



Customs and Quarantine Officer II Adrian Mora displays his Firearms Instructor Training Program certificate of completion at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, a component of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, on Aug. 29, 2025 in Glynco, Ga. Photo courtesy of CQII Mora.

Guam Customs gained another certified firearms instructor, following Customs and Quarantine Officer II Adrian Mora's completion of the Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers' (FLETC) Firearms Instructor Training Program (FITP) Aug. 18-29 in Glynco, Ga.

The FITP prepares firearms personnel to serve as the authority in the safe conduct of their agency's firearms qualification program.

Becoming a firearms instructor had been one of Mora's professional goals.

"I have always recognized the importance of firearms proficiency in law enforcement and aspired to contribute as an instructor who can help raise the standard for others. Achieving this certification is both a personal milestone and an opportunity to give back to the agency by preparing officers to meet the challenges of our mission," Mora shared.

Topics covered during the program included basic marksmanship, instructional techniques, instruction on the firing line, range organization and administration, and reactive shooting.

Participants also gain familiarization with revolvers, shotguns, semiautomatic pistols, submachine guns and rifles, and recent research and developments in the field of firearms training.

He sees this growth as an improvement to consistency in firearms instruction, a reduction to reliance on outside resources, and direct support of the agency's mission readiness.

"With this achievement, our agency now has two FLETC-certified firearms instructors, which strengthens our ability to train officers in-house to the highest standards of proficiency and safety," Mora added.

"The successful completion of the firearms instructor training equips CQA with new training methods and safety procedures for firearms use," said Guam Customs training section supervisor, Capt. John Pangelinan. "Having our own instructors is beneficial for improving policies, procedures, and updating firearms standards to prepare our officers to respond effectively and safely in high-risk situations."

GUAM CUSTOMS DISCOVERS VENOMOUS BLACK WIDOW, OTHER SPIDERS ABOARD VESSEL AT COMMERCIAL PORT



A venomous black widow spider sits in a specimen dish after Guam Customs officers discover it onboard a vessel arriving from Hawaii on July 15, 2025 at the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port.



A juvenile spider, identified to be an *Argiope* or *Neoscona* of the Araneidae family, is spotted on wooden material aboard a vessel arriving from Hawaii on July 15, 2025 at the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port.

Officers with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency's Biosecurity Task Force (BSTF) responded to an alert from Port Authority of Guam personnel of potentially harmful spiders among cargo arriving on a vessel from Hawaii on July 15 at the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port.

BSTF officers initiated a physical inspection of the flat rack the spiders were discovered on, as well as the shipping vessel carrying it.

As a result, officers confirmed the presence of two kinds of live spiders - one species that appeared brown in color, and another that appeared to be a venomous black widow spider.

The officers collected specimens of the spiders, which were referred to Guam State Entomologist Christopher Rosario with the Guam Department of Agriculture (DOAG) and University of Guam Extension Entomologist and Assistant Professor of Entomology Alfred Daniel Johnson, Ph.D.

Rosario confirmed one specimen to indeed be a black widow spider, while the other specimen was forwarded to Johnson, who determined it to be an *Argiope* or *Neoscona* juvenile spider of the Araneidae family.

"While the spiders were found on open flat racks, unlike fully enclosed shipping containers, flat racks give less protection against invasive species, which can contaminate other containers incoming and transshipping through Guam," said Rosario.

With concurrence from Rosario, BSTF officers successfully treated the areas where the spiders were found. The vessel was cleared with no further action required.

"This type of coordinated response reflects the strong value of our continued collaboration with the Guam Department of Agriculture, the Port Authority of Guam, all partners in environmental protection, and the effective execution of established response protocols. Through such efforts, we enhance Guam's operational readiness and biosecurity posture, helping to prevent the entry of detrimental and injurious species that pose risks to our island's resilience and security," said CQA Director Ike Peredo.

Then DOAG Acting Director Christine Fejeran advised, "Successful multi-agency collaborations, such as these, reinforce the message that we are stronger and more effective when we join forces and work together in the defense against invasive species."

"At the Port Authority of Guam, we take our role in safeguarding the island's biosecurity seriously," said Port General Manager Rory Respicio. "The discovery of these spiders underscores the effectiveness of our established protocols, which are designed to quickly report and address potential risks to the respective agency. Our ongoing collaboration with the Customs and Quarantine Agency, along with the swift action of our personnel, ensures that we are always prepared to protect Guam's borders from threats. This incident reinforces the importance of our protocols and proactive measures in preventing harmful species from entering our island community."

GUAM CUSTOMS OFFICERS COMPLETE NOAA'S INTERNATIONAL SEAFOOD TRADE, SIMP CONTAINER INSPECTION TRAINING



Guam Customs officers completed the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) International Seafood Trade and Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) Container Inspection Training administered Aug. 4-8 at the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency headquarters.

The training, attended by officers with CQA's Maritime Interdiction Task Force (MITF), Agriculture Canine Unit, and Airport and Maritime sections, focused on combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing to ensure that seafood harvested illicitly are not supplying the United States seafood industry.

With instruction about the International Fisheries Trade Permit, chain of custody, and record keeping, officers participated in table-top exercises to review the chain of custody material and on-site inspections of both importers and cargo to enhance document review processes and physical inspections.



"Illegal fishing threatens the sustainability of fishery stocks worldwide, especially highly-migratory species in the global commons of the high seas. Fishing is also critical to the island nations as a source of economy and food supply," said Murray Bauer, acting deputy special agent in charge of the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement Pacific Islands Division. "Our efforts are to make sure fish imported anywhere under U.S. jurisdiction are harvested lawfully, and not through forced labor."

CQA is a part of NOAA's Cooperative Enforcement Program with deputized officers trained to support enforcement of federal import regulations as they relate to living marine resource conservation, protection of endangered species, and critical habitat enforcement.



Martina Sagapolu, assistant director for NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement, Pacific Islands Division, emphasized the critical importance of collaborative efforts with territorial partners, like the MITF, in the fight against IUU Fishing and the rising issue of seafood fraud.

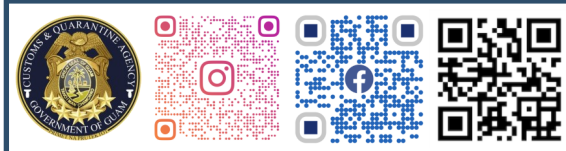
Sagapolu noted that partnerships with territorial agencies like MITF act as "force multipliers". By working together, we strengthen the ability to address the complex challenges posed by IUU fishing and seafood fraud. Specifically, the MITF is involved in physically inspecting containers of seafood to verify products and ensure proper labeling. This hands-on approach helps to detect mislabeled seafood products, a key aspect of seafood fraud.



For MITF Officer Christopher Espinosa, the training expounded on regulatory laws, such as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the Lacey Act, and the Endangered Species Act.

"NOAA was able to clarify key points within these specific regulations to allow for a better understanding on how to enforce requirements effectively. The training also emphasized and placed into perspective the reason for such stringent and meticulous documentation requirements with regard to the importation of specific species of seafood, and how customs officers play a crucial role in the regulation and preservation of marine life," he said.

"The MITF has been implementing the SIMP for several years now. This training offered additional details and understanding to improve the enforcement of seafood fraud in the territory," said Capt. Anthony Doyle, MITF supervisor. "The MITF has uncovered violations through document reviews, and both cargo and container inspections within the SIMP, by several businesses."



10 YOUTH COMPLETE SIX-WEEK SUMMER EMPLOYMENT AT CQA



Participants in the Governor's Summer Youth Employment Program completed six weeks of paid job experience with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency on July 19, 2025. Ranging from ages 15 to 17 years, each participant accomplished tasks at the CQA headquarters within our Director's Office, Administrative Division, Logistics and Support Division, at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport, our Biosecurity Task Force, and Agriculture Canine Unit. We are grateful for their many contributions and the lasting memories they made with our team!

USPIS VISITS CQA, TALKS PARTNERSHIP, INTEROPERABILITY



U.S. Postal Inspection Service San Francisco Division Inspector-in-Charge Stephen Sherwood, center, Deputy Chief Inspector Rafael Nuñez, second from right, and Postal Inspector Darin Oda, second from left, visited with Guam Customs management and Special Enforcement Division members to foster enhanced partnership and continued collaboration July 24, 2025 at the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency headquarters.

THREE CIVILIAN SUPPORT STAFF PROMOTED TO ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE, PAYROLL CLERK I



Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency management was proud to present three administrative division civilian staff certificates honoring their promotions, effective Aug. 18, 2025. Elsa Manglona, a CQA employee of six years, and Veronica Mantanona, an employee of 15 years, were promoted to Administrative Aide, while Mary Perez, an employee of 22 years, was promoted to Payroll Clerk I. Congratulations to them all!

GUAM CUSTOMS HONORS WAR VICTIMS DURING ANNUAL MAÑENGGON MEMORIAL FREEDOM RUN



Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency employees and family participated in the Mañenggon Memorial Foundation's Freedom Run on July 6, 2025. The run began at the World War II monument in Mongmong-To'to-Maite' to the Ylig Bridge in Yo'ña—the entryway to the Mañenggon concentration camp site. This annual run is a time to remember those who faced the brutalities of WWII in Guam, particularly at Mañenggon, where residents from different parts of Guam marched and suffered while under occupation of Japanese imperial forces. Hasso Mañenggon. We will never forget.

CQA JOINS FLAG RAISING HONORING 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORGANIC ACT OF GUAM



Guam Customs management, officers, civilian staff, and trainees gathered for the Government of Guam's historic commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Organic Act of Guam on Aug. 1, 2025 at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex. The Organic Act of Guam was signed on Aug. 1, 1950 and provided a framework for Guam's self-governance as an unincorporated territory of the United States, leading to the establishment of the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency on Oct. 1, 1994.

CQA COMES TOGETHER FOR ANNUAL GOVERNMENT OF GUAM LABOR DAY PICNIC



Friends and family of the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency came together on Aug. 31, 2025 at the Gov. Joseph Flores Park for the Government of Guam's annual Labor Day Picnic. This year's theme was Lumå'la' i Estoriå-ta—History Comes Alive. During the event, Customs and Quarantine Officer III Jonathan Calvo was honored with the Director's Choice Award while retired Officer Melvin Cruz garnered the Longest Service Award out of CQA. Team CQA also took second place in this year's tug-of-war competition.

GUAM CUSTOMS REPRESENTS IN FIRST-EVER RUN FOR WISHES



Guam Customs officers and trainees participated in the Make-a-Wish Foundation's 2025 Run for Wishes 2K, 5K, 10K and half marathon event on Sept. 13, 2025 at the Leo Palace Resort Guam. The event benefited the Make-a-Wish Foundation of Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, a nonprofit organization that aims to grant life-changing wishes, in the form of experiences, for children with critical illnesses. Job well done to all the runners who supported this worthy cause!



REPORT DRUG TRAFFICKING

ONE TIP CAN SAVE LIVES,
EVEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW.

SEE IT. SAY IT. SHUT IT DOWN.

 **(671) 642-8071/2**
 **INTEL@CQA.GUAM.GOV**

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COMMUNITY OUTREACH

FATHER DUENAS MEMORIAL SCHOOL STUDENTS WATCH DRUG DETECTOR DOGS IN ACTION



Guam Customs Drug Detector Dog Unit handlers and recruits demonstrated how their canines seek and alert at illicit drugs carried by arriving passengers and baggage on Sept. 19, 2025 at Father Duenas Memorial School during the school's annual career day. The students also witnessed how a luggage inspection is conducted and watched a brief video sharing our local customs mission. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity, Friars!

GUAM CUSTOMS REACHES COMMUNITY AT NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH GRAND FINALE



We had a great time sharing about the good work our Guam Customs officers do and how our community comes together for a safer Guam during this year's National Preparedness Month Grand finale on Sept. 27, 2025 at the Agana Shopping Center. We'd like to thank our partners at Guam Homeland Security/Office of Civil Defense for inviting us to engage alongside so many of our valuable partners.

RESIDENTS EDUCATED ON BIOSECURITY AND CONSUMER SAFETY DURING DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION FAIR



Capt. Jessica Iglesias and Officer III Dolores Flores, who led key roles in our defense against biosecurity and consumer safety threats, shared helpful information and significant interceptions by Guam Customs during the Department of Public Health and Social Services 13th Annual Food Safety Education Month Fair on Sept. 27, 2025 at the Micronesia Mall. We stand committed to supporting safe goods and commodities, and environmental health!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

AIRPORT INSPECTION AND CONTROL OFFICERS ENGAGE WITH STUDENTS, GUESTS DURING AIRPORT TOURS



Officers with our Inspection and Control Division (ICD), who are responsible for screening arriving passengers and baggage at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport, greeted students from Tamuning Elementary School on Sept. 30, 2025, and familiarized them with our inspection area operations at the airport terminal. Throughout this quarter, this ICD team also welcomed tours from the Nagoya Hospitality Academy, Oceanview Middle School, and Girls in Aviation Day participants.



Photos courtesy of the Guam International Airport Authority.



REPORT SUSPICIOUS COASTAL ACTIVITY

LOOK FOR:

-  BOATS AT UNUSUAL LOCATIONS
-  OFFLOADING AT ODD HOURS
-  HIDING OF PEOPLE OR GOODS
-  LIGHTS TRAVELING IN DARKNESS
-  PERSONAL ITEMS LEFT ON SHORE
-  UNUSUALLY DRESSED PEOPLE

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