

# THE SHIELD

JANUARY-MARCH 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 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



#### *Buenas yan Håfa Adai!*

There's an exciting year ahead for the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency. We remain fully engaged in daily border protection operations; maintain efforts to modernize processes for data collection, risk assessment, and overall efficiency; increasing

our workforce and critical resources; and building capacity.

We recently held a familiarization tour for members of the 38th Guam Legislature, to include our new oversight chair, Sen. Jesse Lujan. We look forward to the fruits of our partnership and the positive outcomes that lie ahead.

Recent retirements have opened vacancies for us to promote 11 deserving officers, ensuring crucial roles remain filled and institutional knowledge is embedded and sustained.

We are currently in-processing the remainder of our 15th Cycle trainees, and expect to gain 32 new customs officers upon their graduation.

As the current chairman of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Steering Committee, we are in the planning stages of hosting the 27th OCO Annual Conference in Guam. This is a unique opportunity for us to synergize with 23 Pacific countries and territories whose mission is economic prosperity and increased border security in the region.

We commend our employees for their work and those in our community choosing to do what's right to keep threats out and protect Guam.

Thank you and Biba Mes Chamoru!

### CQA EMPLOYEES CONVENE FOR ANNUAL GENERAL STAFF MEETING



**O**n January 23, Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA) employees mustered at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport for the agency's annual General Staff Meeting.

Officers and civilian staff, alike, received updates on agency goals and objectives, accomplishments, challenges, and improvement plans.

Employees were also given the opportunity to ask leadership important questions about agency matters affecting them.

Governor of Guam Lourdes Leon Guerrero and Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio made an appearance toward the end of the meeting to join CQA leadership in recognizing the top-performing employees of 2024, to include all nominees.

Recognized as Supervisor of the Year was Capt. Christopher DeSoto; Customs and Quarantine Officer III Jonathan Calvo as Officer of the Year; Ms. Annabelle Rabago as Civilian of the Year; Capt. Barbara Tayama for her completion of the Federal Bureau of Investigations National Academy; and Public Information Officer Alana Chargualaf-Afaisen for outstanding performance of duties.

All in attendance gathered in front of the airport for an agency photo.

The next meeting will convene in early 2026.

## 11 PROMOTED TO CUSTOMS AND QUARANTINE OFFICER II, III



**E**leven Guam Customs officers were honored during their promotion ceremony on March 14 at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex.

Ten officers, who devoted anywhere from six to 12 years to the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency, were promoted to the rank of Officer II: Officers Joey Almoguera, Danielle Cacayan, Shane Cepeda, Roman Duenas, Christopher Espinosa, James Lujan, Jonathan Lim, Rollie Boy Marquez, Ryan Muna, and Raffaele Sgambelluri.

Officer Ike Jr. Reyes, who has dedicated 17 years of service to the agency, was promoted to the position of Officer III.

"Among them are the friendly faces you've met upon return to Guam at the airport, or in processing at the commercial port and air cargo facility. They are effective detector dog handlers, members of our Maritime Interdiction Task Force, and graduates of the federal Marine Law Enforcement Training Program. They have made significant contributions to biosecurity and our increase in drug interdictions," said CQA Director Ike Peredo.

These officers are assigned to our Special Enforcement and Inspection and Control divisions in roles requiring them to be on constant alert, ready to engage with the community, and respond using high-risk enforcement actions with immediate precision. Whether addressing imminent threats or executing critical interventions, they stand at the forefront of our efforts to safeguard and protect, often under the most challenging and high-pressure circumstances.

"They can be relied upon to provide direction and drive results as they take on greater responsibilities, more complex tasks, and perform independently with an ability to lead and adapt quickly in different environments," Peredo continued.

During the ceremony, the officers' loved ones came forward to affix their new ranks to their uniforms. CQA leadership presented their official certificates of promotion, along with certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor of Guam, the 38th Guam Legislature, and Congressman James Moylan.

The agency's last set of promotions to CQ II was in November 2022, while the last set of CQ III promotions was in November 2024.



## CQA DIRECTOR HEADS OCO STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency Director Ike Peredo, chairperson of the Oceania Customs Organisation (OCO) Steering Committee, presided over a meeting in late February at the OCO headquarters in Suva, Fiji.

During these meetings, members are informed of issues relevant to the operations of the OCO Secretariat, updated on work program activities, discuss regional trends in the areas that influence customs administration and border enforcement, and engage in constructive dialogue to address matters requiring the committee's consideration and decisions.

"I managed to see the operations of OCO and talk with the employees under the OCO Head of Secretariat. Part of my responsibility as chair is to see that the work plans for the year

have been accomplished and that all OCO members are given the opportunity to share their challenges within their administrations," Peredo said.

The OCO aims to facilitate and help member organizations align with international customs standards and best practices. Among its objectives are to help members develop sound legal framework; intelligence-based risk and information management; modern procedures, techniques, technology and equipment; strategic business and government partnerships; and professional capabilities and culture.

"It's important for our agency because we are a member of this organization, and that we help contribute to the administration of customs procedures within the Pacific region," he concluded.

Peredo took helm of the committee after Guam, one of 23 member nations of the OCO, was designated the host island of the 27th OCO Annual Conference.

## SENATORS ATTEND MISSION BRIEF, FAMILIARIZATION TOUR OF GUAM CUSTOMS FACILITIES, OPERATIONS



Guam Customs leadership and senior officers hosted a familiarization brief and site visits for members of the 38th Guam Legislature March 5-6.

Legislative Committee on Customs oversight chairman, Sen. Jesse Lujan, Sen. Joe San Agustin, Sen. Shawn Gumataotao, Sen. Sabrina Matanane, Sen. Vincent Borja, and representatives for committee co-vice chairpersons, Sen. Christopher Duenas and Sen. Shelly Calvo, Sen. William Parkinson, and Sen. Tina Muna Barnes participated in the events.

The group had the opportunity to see and discuss the agency's operations at the A.B. Won Pat International Airport, the Guam Integrated Air Cargo Facility, Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port, boathouse and Drug Detector Dog Unit facilities, and the designated property for the agency's first satellite inspection facility.

CQA is hopeful that the knowledge exchange accomplished during the familiarization tour fostered positive relationships and inspired action toward key legislation to build capacity and strengthen Guam's border protection capabilities.

## 'ANYONE CAN LEAD FROM WHERE THEY'RE AT': SAN NICOLAS COMPLETES PACIFIC WOMEN'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Guam Customs Officer Shena San Nicolas completed the 2025 Pacific Women's Professional Development Program (PWDP): Advancing Future-Ready Customs Leadership. The experience involved an online component Jan. 27 to Feb. 14 and a residential component Feb. 20 to Feb. 28 in Suva, Fiji.

The PWDP is an innovative leadership development program for emerging customs leaders in the Pacific, hosted by instructors from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University and funded by the Australian Border Force and Oceania Customs Organisation.

San Nicolas established networks with customs officers across the Pacific. With her understanding that drug trafficking organizations are getting better at avoiding detection, this network will be instrumental to stay informed and get ahead of criminals.

"Through the networks and friendships that have been cultivated at this PWDP training, I've learned that 'It takes a network to defeat criminal networks—and we are the network!'" she stated.

San Nicolas believes that Guam Customs officers can grow as leaders through continuous learning and development.

"I was taught that anyone can lead from where they're at. You don't need the rank or title to lead, just the right mindset," she explained.

"There are so many leadership styles being practiced. This training helps you find the right mixture or balance in becoming a better version of yourself."

According to San Nicolas, the network Guam Customs officers gain from training abroad is a very valuable takeaway.

"It opens up dialogue between all customs officers in the Pacific region. With the network I've cultivated during my training, they are all a phone call away," she concluded.



Photo courtesy of Officer Shena San Nicolas.



Photo courtesy of Officer Shena San Nicolas.

## MANDATORY CUSTOMS DECLARATION FORM NOW FULLY ELECTRONIC

### Guam Electronic Declaration Form

Access it here:



[www.cqa.guam.gov](http://www.cqa.guam.gov)



### Save your unique QR Code



As of Feb. 4, the mandatory Guam customs declaration form required of all arriving passengers is available only electronically.

The use of hard copy forms has officially been discontinued, encouraging sustainable practices through conservation of supplies, materials and costs associated with printed forms accommodating the more than 700,000 passenger arrivals per year, as of recent.

All arriving passengers must complete and submit the form, and can do so up to 72 hours before arrival. Only one form is required per family, meaning "all individuals living in the same household who are related by blood, marriage, domestic partnership, or adoption."

Passengers, who are unable to complete the form online prior to their arrival, may complete the form at the kiosks in the A.B. Won Pat International Airport baggage claim area before proceeding to the Guam Customs inspection counters.

Banners depicting the QR code to access the form, along with the free airport Wi-Fi login information, are also available in the baggage claim area for passengers' to complete on their personal devices.

To view the form, visit [cqa.guam.gov](http://cqa.guam.gov).

## PROHIBITED PORK PRODUCTS AMONG CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS IMPORTED IN 20-FOOT SHIPPING CONTAINER



*Photo courtesy of Capt. Michael Camacho*

During a March 24 canine sweep of a 20-foot shipping container that originated in China, officers with the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency's Agriculture Canine Unit (ACU) intercepted prohibited pork packaged among construction materials.

Amid metal tubing, metal gates, and like items was a styrofoam box holding four 1.5-gallon plastic bottles containing a total of 48 pounds of undeclared pork sausages and pork belly soaking in pork fat.

The presence of this prohibited meat was confirmed by Detector Dog Charlie, and his handler Officer Walter Gray. Assisting Officer Gray were ACU Officer Ian Basto and Officer Jonathan Lim.

The ACU cargo team regularly inspects containers arriving through the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port in partnership with CQA's maritime officers. Officers were particularly interested in this shipment upon learning the container held more than just construction materials.

The pork was seized and held at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Plant Inspection Facility in Tiyan. A report of violation was submitted to USDA personnel.

According to ACU Supervisor, Capt. Michael Camacho, China is known to have African Swine Fever, a contagious and deadly viral swine disease. While this disease may not be a direct threat to humans, it is deadly to pigs. Camacho

said the virus can survive for several months in fresh pork and processed pork products, which can transmit the disease.

"One of the most common ways ASF is spread from country to country is through people feeding pigs uncooked food scraps that are infected with the virus," Camacho shared. "This can result in pork product shortages, and disrupt trade and the economy."

The items are up for destruction at an approved establishment at the importer's expense.

If the importer is found guilty of intentionally smuggling a prohibited meat product into Guam, they will be subject to a civil penalty upwards of \$25,000.

ACU handlers and their canines undergo an extensive three-month training to detect specific target odors at the USDA National Detector Dog Training Center in Newnan, Ga. These odors include beef, pork, chicken, mango, and citrus. Such items are prohibited in Guam, as they may carry diseases and invasive pests detrimental to the island's plants and animals.

## 14 NEW, USED VEHICLES ADDED TO CQA INVENTORY

The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency gained 14 vehicles this quarter, which have already proven as valuable assets to support daily operations.

Five new Hyundai Kona crossover SUVs and four Ford F-150 pickup trucks were purchased for a total of \$376,130 using excess revenues from Fiscal Year 2024.

An additional five federal vehicles were purchased from the General Services Agency for a total of \$63,000 using funds from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Equitable Sharing Program. This purchase included three Chevrolet Colorado pickup trucks, a Ford Transit 350 cargo van, and a Ford Focus sedan.

The vehicles certainly enhanced CQA's resources to support mission objectives, helping improve efficiency, responsiveness, and overall delivery of services, ensuring that the agency can better meet the needs of the community and border enforcement actions.



## **‘RESPECT, DIGNITY, AND COMPASSION’: GUAM CUSTOMS SUPPORTS SPECIAL OLYMPICS ATHLETES IN TORCH RUN**



Employees, friends, and family of the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency participated in this year's Special Olympics Guam (SOGU) Law Enforcement Torch Run in the early morning hours of March 29 in Tamuning.

CQA completed a 1.5-mile stretch of the 15-mile route, beginning at KN's Sandwiches and ending at Don Don Donki. The full run, held to commence SOGU's Track and Field Event, covered the entrance area of U.S. Naval Base Guam to Okkodo High School.

Trainees with CQA's emerging 15th Cycle proudly received the symbolic torch, running in cadence and honoring the talent and inspiring determination of Guam's SOGU athletes.

SOGU is about Respect, Dignity, and Compassion, states the nonprofit organization's official website, further stating that their Revolution of Inclusion is a mindset; a movement a goal for everyone to open their minds and hearts, and to commit to including people with intellectual disabilities.

The organization works to create an environment in which athletes are nurtured through sports and life skills that will empower them with confidence and build their self-esteem to be independent and productive citizens of Guam's community. Biba, Special Olympics Guam!

## **TRANSFORMING MINDS: UNITS SHARE CQA MISSION WITH 1,000+**



This quarter, officers across the agency imparted core knowledge of our mission to nearly 1,500 students and spectators in their execution of 15 outreach events throughout February and March.

Inspection and Control officers immersed students in airport passenger screening processes, while dog handlers demonstrated canine baggage inspections for narcotics and prohibited agricultural items, property and evidence custody officers displayed examples of prohibited items, and our Marianas Fusion Center representative fostered greater understanding of Guam Customs fundamentals.

These are just a handful of insights into how our officers protect Guam's people and resources through law enforcement at our borders. We anticipate a lot more time with the community before this school year comes to a close!

## CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF FEMALE OFFICERS

*By Capt. Jessica Iglesias*



As we observe Women's History Month, the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency proudly acknowledges the significant contributions of our female officers who have taken on various roles within our agency. We recognize that diversity is a key driver of success and are committed to fostering an inclusive workplace where women feel empowered to thrive.



Under the leadership of Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero and CQA Director Ike Peredo, we've seen a notable increase in the number of female officers joining our ranks, particularly in the Special Enforcement Division. This includes the recent graduation of Capt. Barbara Tayama from the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy, a first for Guam Customs. Additionally, women are making valuable contributions to our Federal Task Force units Biosecurity Task Force, Agriculture Canine Unit, and Drug Detector Dog Unit.



Our commitment to gender equality is further demonstrated through our participation in the Oceania Customs Organisation's (OCO) training on Gender Mainstreaming in Customs Agencies. This training has equipped our officers with the knowledge and skills to promote gender equality and inclusion in our daily operations.



This Women's History Month, we're reminded that, despite progress, law enforcement remains largely male-dominated. However, our agency is working to change this narrative. Our Gender Action Plan submitted to the OCO has identified areas for improvement, including recruitment and rotation policies, and we've made significant strides in addressing these challenges.

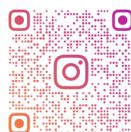


One of our successes is the increased representation of female officers who are a part of the school K-9 demonstrations, outreach programs, and public guest speaking. These opportunities not only showcase our agency's capabilities, but also serve as a powerful inspiration for young ladies considering careers in law enforcement, that becoming a law enforcement officer is possible. How fitting that this year's Women's History Month theme is "Moving Forward Together! Women Educating and Inspiring Generations".

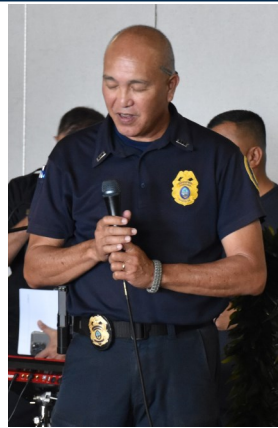
We're excited to welcome our emerging group of new cycle trainees, which includes nearly a dozen female officers. This is a positive step in promoting gender diversity and inclusion.

As we continue to work towards a more inclusive and equitable workplace, we recognize the important contributions of our female officers and celebrate their achievements during Women's History Month.

**FOLLOW  
US!**







## BIBA MES CHAMORU!

CQA CELEBRATES GUAM HISTORY  
&  
CHAMORRO HERITAGE

