

THE SHIELD



OCTOBER-DECEMBER 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!*

29 JOIN GUAM CUSTOMS OFFICER RANKS FOLLOWING 15TH CYCLE GRADUATION



The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA) welcomed 29 new officers to the island's border security lines following the graduation of its 15th Cycle on Dec. 18 at the Dusit Thani Guam Resort.

From February through December, the cycle worked toward completion of the Guam Community College Criminal Justice Academy, customs and quarantine technical coursework, on-the-job training, the Customs and Quarantine Physical Abilities Test, firearms qualifications, and all other requirements of the Guam Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission.

"We are fortunate these graduates stayed the course as we continue efforts to restore our officer workforce, and our training cadres have done the important job of preparing them for the critical duties that lie ahead," said CQA Director Ike Peredo. "Threat detection at our borders is our mission. We expect this increase of officers to boost detections and help prevent the compromise of public health and safety, and Guam's environmental and economic resilience."

(continued on Pg. 2)

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR IKE Q. PEREDO



Buenas yan Håfa Adai!

Thank you for taking a moment to view this quarter's issue of *The Shield*!

I want to begin by congratulating and welcoming, once again, the 29 officers who graduated our 15th Cycle earlier this month. Our officer staffing is now at 152.

Our 16th Cycle is currently undergoing training and coursework, and we are pleased to announce recruitment for a 17th Cycle is open until Jan. 16, 2026. The position can be viewed and applied for through the Guam Department of Administration.

Our agency has relied too long on a paper-based documentation system. We remain encouraged in our automation and modernization efforts with the introduction of Bill 234-38 at the beginning of this month, sponsored by Oversight Chair of the Committee on Customs Sen. Jesse Lujan. Bill 234 mandates our adoption of the Automated System for Customs Data, otherwise known as the ASYCUDA.

Prior to the introduction of this bill, a team of customs officers joined members of the legislature, Office of Technology, Department of Revenue and Taxation, the Bureau of Statistics and Plans, and the Oceania Customs Organisation in a study visit to Palau's Bureau of Customs and Border Protection and examined their successful implementation of the ASYCUDA. We extend our gratitude to all involved in helping us apply the same to Guam's customs administration to better serve all of you.

Moreover, we applaud the passage of Bill 183-38, introduced by Public Safety Oversight Chair Sen. Shawn Gumataotao, which extends our deadline and supports our ongoing efforts to develop our very own sterile and secure satellite inspection facility.

This year, we also saw the promotions of several officers to the positions of Officer II, II, Captain, and Colonel. This has allowed us to fill critical vacancies across our agency, see that leadership roles are occupied, and the institutional knowledge we wish to preserve among our workforce remains.

Finally, we, alongside our local and federal law enforcement partners, have worked together to surpass last year's total of methamphetamine seized at Guam's borders—currently tracking at approximately 346 pounds for 2025, as compared to the 215 pounds seized in 2024.

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.

Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

GRADUATION (continued from Pg. 1)

Among the 20 male and 9 female graduates are those of Korean and Taiwanese descent with proficiency in Korean and Mandarin language, to include backgrounds in law, finance, healthcare, physical fitness, and heavy equipment operation - all valuable to various roles performed during a customs officer's career.

During the ceremony, the graduates received their official certificates of completion from CQA and the POST Commission, and certificates of recognition from the Office of the Governor of Guam, the 38th Guam Legislature, and Congressman James Moylan. Their loved ones also came forward to affix their new badges and ranks to their uniforms.

Garnering the top academic achievements among their cycle mates were Valedictorian Victoria Bang and Salutatorian Jeremy Chargualaf.

CQA management extends their appreciation to Gov. Lourdes Leon Guerrero, Lt. Gov. Joshua Tenorio, and all who continue to support the expansion of the CQA workforce.

CQA's officer staffing increased from 106 to 141 following the graduation of its 13th Cycle in November 2023 and 14th Cycle in July 2024. This number increased to just 153 after officer numbers steadily dropped to 124 since then.

FOUR ADVANCE TO CUSTOMS AND QUARANTINE OFFICER III



The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency was proud to elevate four officers to the rank of Customs and Quarantine Officer (CQ) III, reinforcing our commitment to efficient and resilient operational readiness. A ceremony recognizing the new CQIIIs was held Nov. 21 at the Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex.

CQIIIs Jeremy Artero, Walter Gray, Stephen Quichocho, and Shena San Nicolas are ready to take on greater responsibilities and mentorship roles, each having served the agency anywhere from 12 to 17 years.

Their collective experience ranges from screening and inspection of passengers and goods at all of Guam's ports of entry; special enforcement operations toward successful drug interdictions, homeland security investigations, and response to biosecurity threats; and detector dog handling, training, instruction and deployment for both narcotics and agricultural interdictions.

"Promoting these officers not only allows us to address critical vacancies, but also strengthens the leadership and exemplary level of care that are essential to our mission. Each of these individuals bring proven results, and their advancement ensures that our agency is positioned for long-term success," said CQA Director Ike Peredo. "I thank the administration for their support in strengthening our workforce, as well as the officers' families as an extension of their service and sacrifice."

During the ceremony, the officers' loved ones came forward to secure their new ranks onto their uniforms.

CQA management 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.

These promotions brought CQA's CQIII staffing to 27 officers, making up approximately 22% of our 124-officer workforce.

CQA last promoted an officer to CQIII in March this year, and six to CQIII in November 2024.

GUAM CUSTOMS DELEGATION RETURNS FROM PALAU FOLLOWING STUDY VISIT ON AUTOMATED CUSTOMS DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Photo courtesy of the Palau Bureau of Customs and Border Protection.

A team of representatives from the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency returned from Palau this week, following a study visit with members of the Palau Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (BCBP) on their customs operations and successful implementation of the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) Nov. 18-21.

CQA continues its pursuit to modernize antiquated agency processes through the acquisition and application of the ASYCUDA as its official customs management system through collaborations with the 38th Guam Legislature, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Oceania Customs Organisation, and other key partners.

CQA has relied on paper-based documentation for decades and is eager to migrate to this computerized system to efficiently document, process, and assess information amid an evolving customs landscape and in alignment with international standards. The ASYCUDA is now a key tool in more than 100 countries around the world.

"Use of the ASYCUDA platform will enable us to effectively and sustainably accept submissions of required customs documents and capture vital data to manage trade facilitation and interdict threats with improved security, record accessibility, revenue tracking, risk assessment, and other advanced capabilities" said Acting CQA Director and Chief of Customs Vincent Perez. "This type of capacity building is highly necessary for more precise threat detection and the targeted enforcement needed to keep our community safe."

CQA appreciates the warm welcome and insightful opportunity for knowledge exchange with Palau's BCBP, a critical step toward digital transformation and modernization for stronger customs enforcement in Guam and across the Pacific.

Furthermore, CQA thanks Sen. Jesse Lujan, oversight chairperson for the Committee on Transportation, Tourism, Customs, Utilities, and Federal and Foreign Affairs for his introduction of Bill 234-38, which mandates the adoption of the ASYCUDA and authorizes formal agreements with UNCTAD for the system's implementation and maintenance.

CQA also expresses gratitude to the bill's nine co-sponsors, Senators Tina Rose Muña Barnes, Vincent Borja, Christopher Dueñas, William Parkinson, Joe S. San Agustin, Eulogio Shawn Gumataotao, Shelly Calvo, Frank Blas Jr., and Sabrina Salas Matanane.

GUAM CUSTOMS UNITS CONDUCT SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS AT JOSE D. LEON GUERRERO COMMERCIAL PORT

Contributed by CQIII A. Grey

From Oct. 27 to Nov. 29, 2025, the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency's Special Enforcement Division (SED), in collaboration with other local and federal agencies, conducted specialized operations encompassing various border interdiction efforts within the Jose D. Leon Guerrero Commercial Port.

This five-week operation tackled various mission objectives ranging from extensive container inspections to intensive vessel searches.

The dedication of members from CQA's Contraband Enforcement Team, Drug Detector Dog Unit, X-Ray Unit, and Maritime Interdiction Task Force ensured that Guam's borders were especially secured during the length of this operation, while working countless hours aimed at identifying potential contraband.

The teamwork displayed by SED personnel resulted in a safe conclusion of operations covering the inspection of eight maritime vessels, 30 vehicles, and 45 shipping containers.

SED personnel also discovered one broken seal and effectuated one arrest for an outstanding warrant while at a satellite inspection site.

This multi-faceted operation strengthened current relationships with other specialized units from outside agencies and identified the need for increased awareness of CQA's border enforcement capabilities.

SED continues to provide a critical role in detecting and disrupting any smuggling of narcotics, illicit contraband, and other prohibited items through Guam's borders and ports of entry.

SED will continue to conduct more extensive interdiction initiatives to detect, disrupt, and deter the potential trafficking of drugs and other contraband into Guam.

CQA extends its appreciation to the Port Authority of Guam for their support and cooperation during the execution of these activities.

To report suspicious activities that may be related to the trafficking of drugs and other contraband into Guam, please call us at **(671) 642-8071/2** or email intel@cqa.guam.gov.



FRESH EVERGREENS FUMIGATED, FREE OF INJURIOUS PESTS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



The Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency is pleased to announce that the fresh evergreens adorning homes and establishments this holiday season are free of injurious pests after officers with our Biosecurity Task Force (BSTF) conducted oversight of their required fumigation.

The first shipping container of evergreen products was treated on Nov. 12. Since then, a total of five shipping containers, holding a combined total of over 3,033 fresh trees, wreaths, and garlands, have been fumigated.

In 2016, the Guam Invasive Species Council supported a mandate requiring all imported Christmas trees, to include like evergreen products, to be fumigated upon arrival to Guam for the prevention of injurious pests, diseases, and other detriments to Guam's flora, fauna, natural resources, and agriculture.

Fumigation Process

BSTF officers screen each container to ensure the contents meet entry requirements and that the container is suitable for treatment. Caution tape is then placed around a designated safety buffer zone before a calculated measure of colorless, odorless methyl bromide gas is applied within the container.

Once the methyl bromide gas has sat within the container for the prescribed period of time, officers conduct a final inspection of the container's contents to determine the success of the treatment.

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

Potentially Invasive, Injurious Pests Prevented

While this year's shipments carried no species of concern, fumigations of years past prevented the introduction of various species of insects, spiders, rodents, a garden snake, and skunk.

When such organisms are found, they are turned over to the appropriate local or federal agricultural authorities.



MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT: GUAM CUSTOMS CONTRIBUTES TO HARVEST HOUSE CHRISTMAS DONATION DRIVE TO BENEFIT FOSTER CHILDREN, FAMILIES



Employees and families across the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency came together to support Harvest House's Christmas Donation Drive, delivering toys and necessities this morning to the nonprofit organization in Barrigada.

Moved by the warmth of the holiday spirit, this was a chance for CQA to help bring cheer and comfort to our island's increased population of foster children and limited number of foster families striving to provide for their every need.

Our employees collected a variety of toys and equipment that encourage learning, creativity, and sports, along with shoes, clothing, hygienic products, and other essential items.

"We recognize the unique and often challenging circumstances that Guam's foster children experience, as stable and nurturing homes amid life transitions that can be confusing or difficult," said Acting CQA Director and Chief of Customs Vincent Perez.

"In hand with our mission to interdict threats at Guam's borders, with emphasis on the drugs that plague our community, and contribute to unstable home settings and the need for foster care, it's important to us to serve and uplift one another through initiatives like this."

CQA extends its gratitude to Harvest House for the opportunity to partner in this worthy cause, and wishes all a safe, prosperous, and merry holiday season!

AGRICULTURE CANINES DETECT PROHIBITED MEAT AND PRODUCE IN CARGO, ON AIRLINE PASSENGER



In early October, officers with our Agriculture Canine Unit and their trustee detector dogs successfully intercepted a combined weight of over 60 pounds of various prohibited meat and produce items in cargo and on a passenger coming through the A.B. Won Pat International Airport. The prohibited items originated from the foreign locations of the Philippines and Taiwan. The items, which posed the risk of injurious pests and diseases, were referred for destruction before they could threaten consumer safety, public health, and Guam's environmental resources.

GUAM CUSTOMS OFFICERS COMPLETE ANNUAL PHYSICAL ABILITIES TEST



Our officers and trainees completed their annual Customs and Quarantine Physical Abilities Test (CQPAT) in early December. The CQPAT consists of over 14 obstacles likely to be encountered by an officer in the course of their duties, timing their ladder ascend and descend, weight transfer, side straddle hops, flutter kicks, weighted sled push, 300-meter run, stair climbers, tire run, serpentine maneuver through cones, tunnel and balance beam crossing, going over and under hurdles, pushups, return from the supine position, a four-foot leap, and a weighted rescue drag. Employees holding a law enforcement position are mandated by law to undergo this testing by the Guam Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission.

GUAM CUSTOMS OFFICERS UNDERGO TRAINING ON NARCOTICS SCANNERS



Approximately 80 officers across our agency underwent training on the use of handheld narcotics analyzers on Nov. 19 at the Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency headquarters. This came with CQA's acquisition of four new handheld narcotics analyzing devices for customs officers to detect hazardous or illicit substances in their screening and inspection of people and goods arriving to Guam. Under the instruction of Mr. Seamus O'Brien, the officers gained knowledge about the device, safety measures, and practiced testing different substances.

GUAM CUSTOMS JOINS SOUTHERN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, DOAG FORESTRY IN SENIOR CENTER TREE PLANTING



In a refreshing collaboration with the Southern Soil and Water Conservation District, Guam Department of Agriculture Forestry and Soil Resources Division, and Yo'ña Mayor's Office, officers with our Biosecurity Task Force and Inspection and Control Division helped plant native trees around the Yo'ña and Talo'fo'fo Senior Citizen Center on Oct. 27. This was a valuable opportunity to encourage environmental stewardship and our shared values to preserve Guam's flora and fauna, and assist in their resilience through preservation efforts and defense from injurious pests and diseases.

THOSE TOUCHED BY CANCER HONORED DURING ANNUAL RELAY FOR LIFE



Guam Customs and Quarantine Agency leadership, officers, 16th Cycle trainees and families participated in Guam's annual Relay for Life on Nov. 9 at the University of Guam Calvo Field House. Hosted by the American Cancer Society, the event and its many supporters recognized the strength, courage, sacrifice and suffering experienced by those with cancer, their loved ones, and supporters. From the starting line, to the final stride, we walked for them!

GUAM CUSTOMS PROUD TO ASSIST IN TRAVEL OF AMERICA 250 U.S. FLAG FOR SOJOURN CEREMONY AT GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL



Capt. Eric Delfin, hailing from our Inspection and Control Division, helped facilitate the timely delivery of the traveling America 250 U.S. flag in late October. Guam, on Oct. 28, was the first U.S. territory to receive the flag as it journeys through all U.S. states and territories leading up to the 250th anniversary of the U.S. on July 4, 2026. The Guam America 250 U.S. Flag Sojourn ceremony was held that day at George Washington High School (GWHS) in Mangilao, and Capt. Delfin was instrumental in the honorary arrival and handoff of the flag to Guam America 250 Commission Program Director Arlene Santos and GWHS Assistant Principal Joni Serisola in preparation for the big day.

GUAM CUSTOMS BRINGS X-RAY FUN TO GOVGUAM HALLOWEEN TRICK-OR-TREATING EVENT



Hundreds of trick-or-treaters received candy out of luggage and a model X-ray scanner on the evening of Oct. 29 at the Paseo de Susana Park in Hagåtña. Guam Customs employees and their family members had an enjoyable time engaging with trick-or-treaters during the *Night of the Duendes* Halloween event hosted by the Office of the Governor of Guam in partnership with the Department of Parks and Recreation. All candy hauls were cleared for maximum safety!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

DRUG DETECTOR DOG TEAMS MAKE ANNUAL APPEARANCE AT THS RED RIBBON WEEK ASSEMBLY: "LIFE IS A PUZZLE, SOLVE IT DRUG FREE!"



Teams from our Drug Detector Dog Unit came out for Tiyan High School's (THS) Red Ribbon Week assembly at the Barrigada campus on Oct. 17. This year's Red Ribbon Week theme was "Life is a Puzzle, Solve it Drug Free". We'd like to thank the THS students, faculty, and staff for hosting us again this year for the important opportunity to spread awareness about the danger of illicit drugs in our community and celebrating life drug-free. Biba Titans!

TAMUNING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS GET SPECIAL K-9 DEMO DURING ARFF TOUR



What an exciting day for Tamuning Elementary School students, as they got to tour the Guam International Airport Authority's Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighting facility on Sept. 30, which included a special collaboration with our Drug Detector Dog Unit for a quick demonstration on drug dog narcotics detection. Every smile and intuitive question from the students made our day. Thank you, ARFF and Whales!

CHRISTMAS IN PARADISE: CQA SHOWCASES DOGS IN GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL HOLIDAY LIGHT PARADE



CQA came out with candy, lights, and K-9s during the 4th Annual Governor's Holiday Light Festival on Dec. 17 at Skinner Plaza in Hagåtña. We had a merry time connecting with those we serve alongside our government counterparts. We are here for you, Guam! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

An advertisement for the Customs and Quarantine Agency (CQA). It features the CQA seal on the left and a large image of a K-9 dog on the right. The text reads: "REPORT DRUG TRAFFICKING", "ONE TIP CAN SAVE LIVES, EVEN SOMEONE YOU KNOW.", "SEE IT. SAY IT. SHUT IT DOWN.", with contact information: "(671) 642-8071/2" and "INTEL@CQA.GUAM.GOV".

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