

**Operation Liberate Guam: The Guam National Guard fights to reclaim freedom and normalcy after marking one year of COVID-19 response.**

Guam National Guard Public Affairs

BARRIGADA, Guam (March 11, 2021) – On July 21, 1944, American military forces stormed the beaches of Guam and reclaimed the island after a brutal three-year Japanese occupation. The day, which would eventually return the freedoms and normalcy to the people, would go on to be celebrated as Guam's Liberation Day.

Almost 80 years later, the Soldiers and Airmen of the Guam National Guard walk in the footsteps of their military forebears. Activated on March 14, 2020, the Guam Guard's Joint Task Force 671 has served in support of local authorities manning quarantine facilities, emplacing emergency field hospitals, working in emergency rooms and on COVID-19 wards, administering tests, distributing food commodities, and much more. Most recently, the Guard's vaccine clinic has become the island's main vaccination effort, under the umbrella of the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services.

The mission of the clinic, named Operation Liberate Guam, is to help the island reach "herd immunity" via vaccination no later than July 21, 2021 - Guam's Liberation Day.



*Members of Task Force Medical and Task Force Response, under the Guam National Guard's Joint Task Force 671 and in support of the Guam Department of Public Health and Social Services, form up for a pre-shift brief at the University of Guam Calvo Field House in Mangilao Guam on Feb. 26, 2021. The crew of approximately 40, with help from the University of Guam, DPHSS and community volunteers, can administer over 1,500 COVID-19 vaccine doses per day under Operation Liberate Guam. (Mark Scott/GUNG)*

“There are some parallels to an occupation, with the tragic loss of life, the chokehold on our economy, and the loss of our freedoms we’ve come to enjoy,” said Maj. Gen. (GU) Esther Aguigui, adjutant general of the Guam Guard. “We aim to honor and respect the sacrifices of our people and our military liberators in 1944, by fighting the defining battle of our time, and restoring our freedoms taken by COVID-19.”

Operation Liberate Guam, which comprises about 20 combat medics and a platoon of support staff, together with community volunteers and partners from the University of Guam, AmeriCorps, and DPHSS and others, is capable of vaccinating over 1,500 residents per day. Having begun on Jan. 26, the clinic is already responsible for vaccinating a relatively large percentage of Guam’s population of 165,000. On March 11, 2021 Guam ranked #4 among all states and territories in doses administered per 100,000 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control COVID Data Tracker website.



*Spc. Heather Nera of Task Force Medical, Joint Task Force 671, Guam National Guard, administers a dose of COVID-19 vaccine to a patient at the University of Guam Calvo Field House on her birthday, Feb. 6, 2020. On March 11, 2021 Guam ranked #4 among all states and territories in doses administered per 100,000 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control COVID Data Tracker website.*

“I couldn’t possibly be prouder of how our organization and our community partners have come together in this time of need,” said Aguigui. “From the leadership of our commander-in-chief, Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, and Lt. Gov. Josh Tenorio, who’s vision is to build a Guam that is fair, prosperous, compassionate, and safe. To our profoundly skilled JTF leadership over the past year in Brig. Gen. Johnny Lizama, Col. Ronnie Delfin, and Col. Esther Sablan. To our DPHSS partners, the Guam USO and our community for all the support and love you have shown to our troops. But mostly, to the Soldiers and Airmen on the ground who continue to answer the call every single day, and to the families who support them – this chapter will go down in history as yours. You are the Liberators of Guam in our time, and just like our heroes of 80 years ago, you will never be forgotten.”



## **One Year of JTF 671 By the Numbers**

March 14, 2020 to Feb. 28, 2021



### **Joint Task Force 671**

- Requests for Assistance (RFA) received from GovGuam agencies: 103
- Fragmentary orders produced: 111
- Higher Headquarters to five subordinate task forces
- Personnel, Intelligence, Operations, Logistics, Communications, and Command

### **Task Force Response**

- Known positive COVID-19 personnel transported to ISO/FAC: 1,146
- Mass COVID-19 testing sites guarded: 24
- Government facilities sanitized: 22
- Commodities distribution sites: 7 sites with 31,879 served
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance sites: 6
- Vaccination clinic traffic flow and crowd management: 2 sites with 32,173 served

### **Task Force Shield**

- Flights processed: 718
- Passengers processed: 18,519
- Quarantine facilities managed: 7
- Qfac guests received: 18,661
- Meals provided: 420,826

### **Task Force Engineer**

- Construction Labor Hours: 6,084
- Alternate Care facility assessments: 23
- Blue-Med tent emplacements: 3
- Fire Station COVID-19 conversions: 3
- HVAC and power generation units installed:

### **Task Force Medical**

- Civilian COVID-19 vaccine doses administered: 19,173
- Passenger data entry: 14,325
- ISO/QFAC wellness calls: 33,268
- Health screenings: 78,771
- Behavioral health counseling: 1,428

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