

Defense official says Tinian projects are moving forward

By Cherrie Anne E. Villahermosa
For The Guam Daily Post

TINIAN – The Department of Defense has started renovating the Tinian Health Clinic and expanding its helipad, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Basing Allison Sands told CNMI officials here on Wednesday.

She said the expansion of the helipad area will cost around \$500,000, while renovations to the Tinian Health Clinic will cost \$100,000.

Sands said these projects started the first week of August and are expected to be completed in September.

The Defense Department also will pave the Marpo Heights II roads and improve the seaport area, she added.

Sands said the three infrastructure projects are separate from the divert-airfield project, which is now also moving forward.

While the improvements at the hospital are ongoing, the request for proposals for the Marpo Heights II project is in the works and is expected to be released by next week, she said, adding that the road project will cost between \$3 million and \$4 million.

"The divert airfield is a completely different project," she reiterated. "There will be mitigation measures and other things that will probably be



BRIEFING: Gov. Ralph Torres and Tinian officials pose with Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Basing Allison Sands and military personnel during a briefing Wednesday on Tinian. Cherrie Anne E. Villahermosa/For The Guam Daily Post

done because of the impact of bringing materials here and the construction itself, especially for the pipeline that the Air Force wants to put in for the divert facility. I understand that the community wants to tap into the pipeline for the fuel storage facility so they can benefit from it, too."

Sands said officials are now negotiating the terms of the land lease with the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

'What partnership is all about'

In a separate interview, Gov. Ralph Torres said he is happy that DOD and Deputy Assistant Secretary Sands are fulfilling their promises to the people of Tinian.

"She is true to her word - this is what partnership is all about," he added.

Sen. Jude Hofschneider thanked Sands and the Defense Department for briefing the community on the ongoing military projects.

"I also thank the governor for his support in moving this project forward," Hofschneider said. "This is just the beginning, and we can expect more projects that will benefit the community as we continue this partnership. I am pleased with the outcome and excited to see more projects happening."

The acting director of the Tinian Health Center, Rodney Cabarles, said the work being done at the hospital will improve the services the hospital can provide to the people.

"The (military has) improved the ventilation system and the air-conditioning system, and expanded the helipad to allow for bigger helicopters to land," he said.

Discussion is also ongoing regarding the further expansion of the hospital and the acquisition of new equipment, he added.

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are deficient because they fail to include an analysis of the environmental impacts that will stem from range and training areas on Tinian and Pagan separately.

The plaintiffs said the proposed range and training areas on Tinian and Pagan will add to the environmental effects resulting from the relocation of Marines to Guam, and therefore the additional effects or cumulative impacts should have been addressed in the environmental impact statements relating to the relocation efforts.

In denying the environmental groups' motion and granting the defendants' motion for summary judgment, Manglona said the Defense Department and the Navy took a hard look at the specific needs of the relocating Marines from Okinawa, and reasonably concluded that the more advanced training ranges to be used by all U.S. forces and allied forces stationed in the Indo-Pacific Command Area of Responsibility should be evaluated in a separate environmental impact statement.

However, in the same order, Manglona found that the effects of the range and training areas proposed in the CNMI Joint Military Training Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement could create cumulative impacts that must be addressed in conjunction with the environmental effects of the relocation action.

She ordered the Department of Defense and the Navy to address these impacts during the ongoing CJMT EIS process, and noted the defendants' commitment to do so.

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Regular Board Meeting, Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at 8:30 AM at the Terlaje Professional Building, 194 Hernan Cortez Avenue, 2nd Floor, Suite 209 Health Professional Licensing Office Board Conference Room, Hagatna, Guam.

For more information please contact the Board office at 735-7405 thru 12. Persons with disabilities needing special accommodations may call Jimmy Sian at 735-7172 or the telecommunication device for the Hearing/Speech Impaired (TDD) at 649-1801. Executive meeting may be called if necessary.

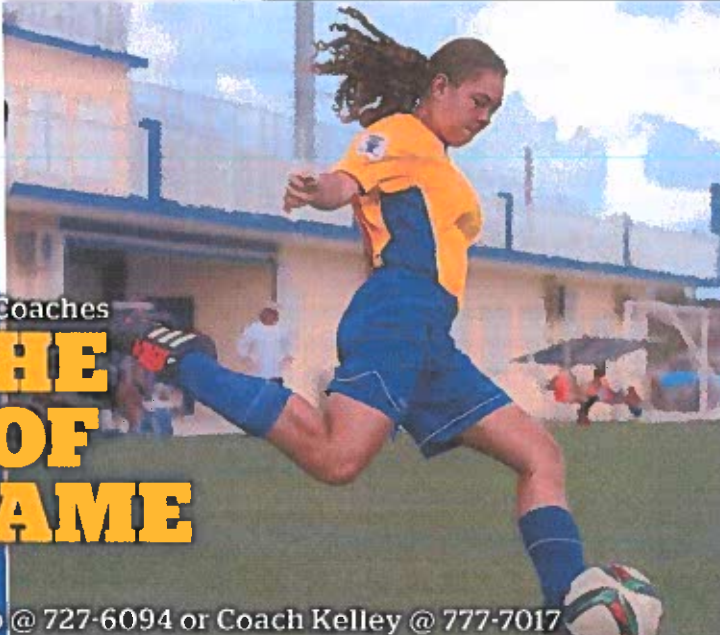


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Accused meth dealer asserts innocence

By Mindy Agon
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Accused drug dealer Vincent Rios, 43, asserts he is innocent and intends to contest the 18 pounds of crystal methamphetamine and other evidence in his case.

Rios has moved to withdraw his guilty plea, alleging he didn't know what he agreed to when he signed a plea deal admitting to possessing methamphetamine with the intent to distribute the drug.

The Dededo man has been incarcerated at the Hagåtña Detention Facility since his arrest on Nov. 17, 2016, when he was allegedly found in possession of more than 18 pounds of meth.

Rios and his girlfriend, Sue Ann Baker, were picked up by law enforce-

ment after they retrieved packages that had been mailed to their personal post office box. The packages contained meth hidden in inflatable air mattresses, and three clear, plastic heat-sealed bags, court documents state.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives seized approximately \$1.1 million from Rios' safety deposit boxes at two local banks, as well as his Apusento Gardens condominium and Dededo house.

Rios agreed to forfeit the cash, vehicles and property when he pleaded guilty on March 29, 2017.

Baker pleaded guilty and is serving a two-year sentence in a prison in the U.S. mainland.

The government recommended



Vincent Rios

Rios be sentenced to 30 years behind bars despite his guilty plea, as prosecutors noted he had failed to provide any assistance or information about his "highly lucrative scheme." They allege Rios had been involved in a criminal conspiracy for years and brought "unprecedented quantities" of meth to the island.

Rios alleges he made numerous requests to withdraw his plea and review the discovery and evidence in the case. He claims he was refused the opportunity to review the discovery in his case by his previous defense attorney and did not have adequate representation in violation of his constitutional rights, court documents state.

His new attorney, Phil Torres,

contends his client has "always asserted his innocence" and has asked him to contest the evidence and the actions of those allegedly involved.

The defense maintains the government would still be able to take the case to trial and would not be prejudiced by Rios withdrawing his guilty plea.

Torres stated there would be little benefit to his client, who is looking at 34 years or, if he loses at trial, possibly a life sentence.

Rios alleges the key reason he signed the plea agreement is because he was told that if he accepted, he would "get out of jail and was looking at a 10- to 20-year sentence," the defense motion stated.

The prosecution has indicated they are opposed to Rios withdrawing his guilty plea.

Bordallo: War reparations taken from Section 30 funds this year

By Kevin Kerrigan
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Del. Madeleine Bordallo has confirmed that war claims payments will be deducted from Guam's Section 30 funding starting this year.

In a letter to Speaker Benjamin Cruz, Bordallo writes that the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs has advised her that the U.S. Treasury "will withhold ... \$6,442,665" from the 2019 Section 30 Fund payment and deposit that amount into the Guam War Claims Fund, from which settlement claims will be paid.

Section 30 funds are received by the government of Guam one year in advance from the federal government. The 2019 payment is due in September.

The Foreign Claims Settlement Commission has begun hearing the roughly 3,500 applications for compensation from Guam's manāmkō or their spouse, child or parent, who suffered through the Japanese occupation of Guam during World War II.

The first 33 claims were heard at a meeting held by the commission Aug. 9 in Washington, D.C.

Under the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act, the money to cover the war claim comes from Section 30 funds, which are the income taxes paid by federal and military personnel working on Guam that the U.S. Treasury gives to the government of Guam.

Not all Section 30 funds are subject to the war claims deduction.

The Loyalty Recognition Act establishes 2014 as the base year during which \$68.6 million in incomes tax was collected from federal and military employees on Guam.

Only amounts in excess of the base year are deducted and set aside by the U.S. Treasury into the claims fund to cover the settlements.

According to Bordallo's letter to Cruz, in 2015, the U.S. Treasury collected \$75 million from federal and military personnel on Guam.

The 2015 collection, minus the 2014 base year amount of \$68.6 million,

equals \$6.4 million. That's the amount that will be deducted from Guam's 2019 Section 30 payment.

However, it is not yet clear just how much in Section 30 funds Guam will receive this year after the war claims deduction of \$6.4 million is taken out.

"The Internal Revenue Service

continues to reconcile data used to calculate Guam's Section 30 remittance for Fiscal Year 2019," Bordallo wrote.

"The Office of Insular Affairs has indicated to me that it expects this reconciliation to be completed by Aug. 31, 2018."

Editorial

Future war reparations funding an issue in the congressional race. Page 18.

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