



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Veterans complete Keep Your Guard Up program**

It's a great start. Under the only program of its kind in the nation, over 140 of the 164 Guam veterans who returned from deployment in January and started with the Keep Your Guard Up program at Guam Community College now have employable skills.

The soldiers will be honored at a KYGU completion ceremony on Tuesday, July 8, at 3:00 PM at the Guam Guard Readiness Center (Bldg. 700). All have earned enrichment certificates, and depending on their program of study, some have also earned completion certificates, National Career Readiness Certificates and valuable industry certifications.

Lt. Col. Robert Crisostomo, who heads the KYGU program, says the program's value is due to its support from Governor Eddie Calvo, Major General Benny Paulino, and Guam's businesses. "While these soldiers were going to school, we worked on the placement process with employers. They worked hard for their country – it's our turn now to give them the opportunity to succeed in the local workforce," said Crisostomo.

Victor Rodgers, GCC asst. director of Continuing Education & Workforce Development, noted that employers like DCK Pacific, Cabras Marine, Cars Plus, the Guam Fire Department, and even GCC have already hired some of these soldiers. "Some of these men and women have even enrolled in associate degree or certificate programs at GCC, in order to further expand their education and their employment opportunities," Rodgers said.

KYGU was implemented after Guam National Guard Adjutant General Maj. Gen. Benny Paulino informed Guam's leaders last year that of the 588 men and women of the I-294th Infantry Regiment deployed to Afghanistan, a full 260 of them would be returning home in January either unemployed or under-employed.

While the soldiers were still in country, GCC surveyed them and formulated a 90-day industry certification program in eight areas: automotive general service technician; A+ computer networking; electrical; emergency medical technician; heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC), supervision and management, heavy equipment/truck driving, and welding.

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Individuals requiring special accommodations, auxiliary aids, or services please contact 735-5597.

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