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**U.S. AMBASSADOR PARTICIPATES IN WWII MEMORIAL DEDICATION,  
DISCUSSES US-FUNDED EFFORTS IN YAP**

On July 24-28, U.S. Ambassador to the FSM Peter A. Prahar travelled to Yap State to participate in the dedication ceremony of the Ensign Joseph E. Cox Memorial, named in honor of a U.S. naval pilot whose F6F-5 Hellcat fighter plane was shot down over Yap on September 6, 1944. Members of the Cox family, including Joseph's brother, as well as members of the family of Ensign Howard Holding, who was killed in the same mission, were honored guests at the ceremony. Yap State Governor Sebastian Anefal and Lieutenant Governor Tony Tareg also took part in the well-attended event.

Spearheaded by U.S.-based Missing Air-Crew Project and History Flight Organization and with the support of the Yap State Visitor's Bureau and the Yap State Departments of Public Works and Public Safety, the memorial recognizes the over thirty-six American planes shot down in WWII near Yap State and the 110 American men who remain missing in action. In his remarks, Ambassador Prahar stated that: "These individuals and organizations have teamed up to ensure that at long last there is a proper, permanent memorial to Ensign Joseph E. Cox and all the other men who lost their lives near Yap during World War II, some of whose remains have not yet been recovered."

Ambassador Prahar also said "I can't think of any greater honor for an American Ambassador than to stand before the families of servicemen who have fallen in defense of freedom in order to recognize their service and to ensure that their sacrifice will not be forgotten." Speaking about those killed in Yap during WWII, the Ambassador said that "Those who knew these heroes personally carried with them throughout their lives the sacred memory of their beloved son, brother, husband, and father who gave his life so that others may live in peace and freedom.... I can also assure you that their sacrifice and the sacrifice of the other servicemen who died here have not been forgotten by the people of Yap." He quoted the American author James Michener's Tales of the South Pacific: "They will live a long time... They had an American quality."

The Ambassador also recognized Mark Mathow, the brother of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Steven G. Bayow who was killed in action in Iraq in 2005, and Robert Finniginam, father of Specialist Eric Finniginam, who was killed in action in Afghanistan on May 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.

Representing U.S. Navy Commander of the Marianas (COMNAVMARIANAS) Rear Admiral Paul Bushong, Military and Civilian Affairs Commander Bryce Gibb thanked FSM citizens who fight alongside U.S. citizens in the U.S. Armed Forces worldwide. Cdr. Gibb rendered the military honors and presented American flags to the Cox and Holding families.

In addition to his involvement in the memorial ceremony, Ambassador Prahar held meetings with numerous state government officials, private sector and environmental representatives. On Monday morning Ambassador Prahar called upon Governor Anefal and Lt. Governor Tareg to discuss utility issues and infrastructure projects in Yap State. The Ambassador then met with Yap State Legislative Speaker Charles Chieng and the Resources, Education and Development Committee Chairman Senator Ted Rutun to discuss utilities issues.

On Monday afternoon Ambassador Prahar conducted a follow-up visit of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) and College of Micronesia – Yap Campus construction sites. The two-story ECE facility was funded by a \$2.5 million Compact Infrastructure Grant. It will feature classrooms, office space, and conference and training rooms for students and staff. The \$1.9 million-dollar facility COM-Yap Student Services Center was also made possible through a Compact Infrastructure Grant. The Ambassador thanked the contractors and workers for their efforts to complete these two projects on schedule with high quality workmanship.

In addition to his infrastructure site visits, Ambassador Prahar met with Yap Department of Resources and Development and Marine Resources Executive Director Mike Gaan. The Ambassador also toured the Yap Farmer's Organization and conducted a site visit of the giant sea clam project.

To round out his consultations, Ambassador Prahar met with the Yap Civic Action Program (YapCAP) and the Yap Small Business Development Center.



Ellis Cox, brother of Ensign Joseph E. Cox, examines the memorial with an honor guard posted by the Yap State Department of Public Safety.

Yap State Governor Sebastian L. Anefal, Ambassador Peter A. Prahar, Commander Bryce Gibb, Mark Noah of History Flight Organization, Patrick and Cherie Ranfranz of Missing Air-Crew Project, and members of the families of Ensign Joseph E. Cox and Ensign Henry Holding standing before the Ensign Joseph E. Cox Hellcat Memorial.



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