



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Guam to Commemorate 100th Anniversary of SMS Cormoran Scuttling

Friday, February 10, 2017; Tamuning, Guam – On Friday, April 7, 2017, the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB) will commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the scuttling of the SMS Cormoran II. The peace memorial event will include a series of educational, promotional, and diving opportunities to expose the public to the history of the German ship and its connection to Guam prior to World War I. The Cormoran's incredible story includes being part of the first shot fired by the United States upon entering World War I on April 7, 1917 and how it became part of one of the world's most unique diving sites.

The SMS Cormoran II initially came to Guam in December 1914 out of coal and weary from avoiding enemies throughout the Pacific. While the US was not involved in World War I, Guam's military governor decided against refueling the vessel, but did allow the German sailors to come ashore. The Cormoran and her crew stayed in Guam for two and a half years, becoming very friendly with the people until the day the United States officially entered World War I.

On that day, with the US now at war with Germany, the Guam military governor ordered Captain Adalbert Zuckschwerdt to surrender the Cormoran. Unaware of the new conditions, a supply boat returning to the Cormoran with supplies failed to stop when ordered to by US sailors who then fired a warning shot over its bow. This was the first official shot fired by the US in World War I.

Rather than surrender his ship, Captain Zuckschwerdt decided it would be more patriotic to scuttle her instead, which he did. For the next 26 years, the SMS Cormoran II lay undisturbed on the sea floor, until August 27, 1943. On this day, a US submarine torpedoed the Tokai Maru, a Japanese freighter during World War II. The Tokai Maru came to rest lying perpendicular against the Cormoran. The two ships are the only place in the world where divers can touch shipwrecks from two different World Wars at the same time.

The commemoration of the 100th year since the scuttling of the SMS Cormoran will include special dive packages to Guam. Divers and visitors will participate in dive tours to the historic wreck site, history lectures at Guam Museum and T. Stell Newman Information Center, exhibits, and inclusion in special ceremonies. There will be a wreath laying ceremony at sea and at the monument in the U.S. Naval Cemetery in Hagatña where six sailors who perished during the scuttling of the Cormoran are buried.

Guam has a well-established reputation as a site for outstanding scuba diving. The Guam Visitors Bureau regularly promotes the island's underwater clarity, beautiful seascapes and marine life to diving enthusiasts at the largest dive shows like the Dive Equipment & Marketing Association (DEMA), the Marine Dive Fair in Tokyo, the Asia Dive Expo (ADEX) in Singapore, and the Scuba Show in Long Beach. Diving enthusiasts are excited to learn about sites like the Blue Hole and The Crevice, but historic sites from World Wars like the twin shipwrecks of the SMS Cormoran and the Tokai Maru always captivate.

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About Guam Visitors Bureau

The Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB), a non-profit membership corporation, is the official tourism agency for the U.S. Territory of Guam. Among its responsibilities, GVB develops and implements Guam's strategic marketing plans for tourism, as well as manages programs and activities that enhances and showcases Guam's people, natural beauty, and culture to deliver an incomparable visitor experience. GVB also conducts tourism-related research, event planning, and outreach activities. The Bureau serves as a critical bridge linking the local government and private sector. Guam's tourism industry aims to contribute successfully to a better quality of life for all who call Guam home.

About Guam

Guam is the southernmost island of the Marianas and is the largest island in Micronesia with a total land area of 550 square kilometers and 170,000 in population. Guam is an ideal vacation destination for visitors seeking a taste of the USA and a luxury island experience. Guam has exotic beaches and lush tropical forests brushed with colorful flowers. There are many activities to enjoy—experience the island's culture, water sports, diving, sightseeing, golf, and duty-free shopping at brand name stores, luxury goods boutiques, and shopping malls.

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