

USS RONALD REAGAN

NOVEMBER 2017

SEVENTYSIXER

From Reservation
to Reagan: A Tale of
Two Feathers

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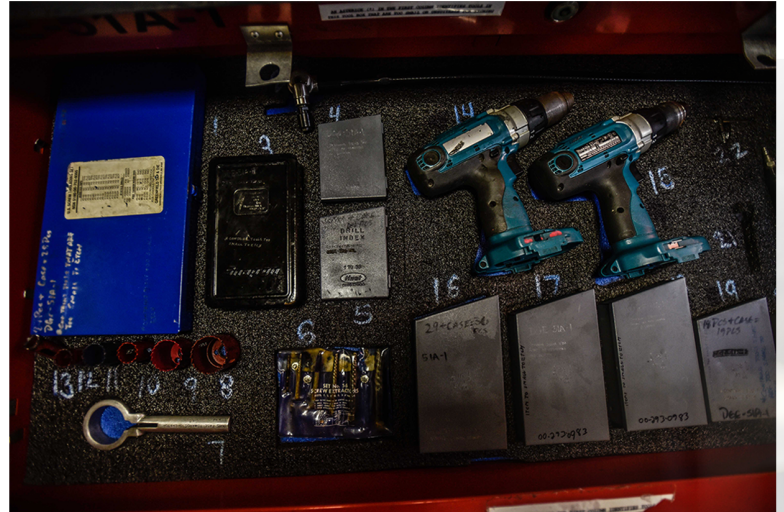


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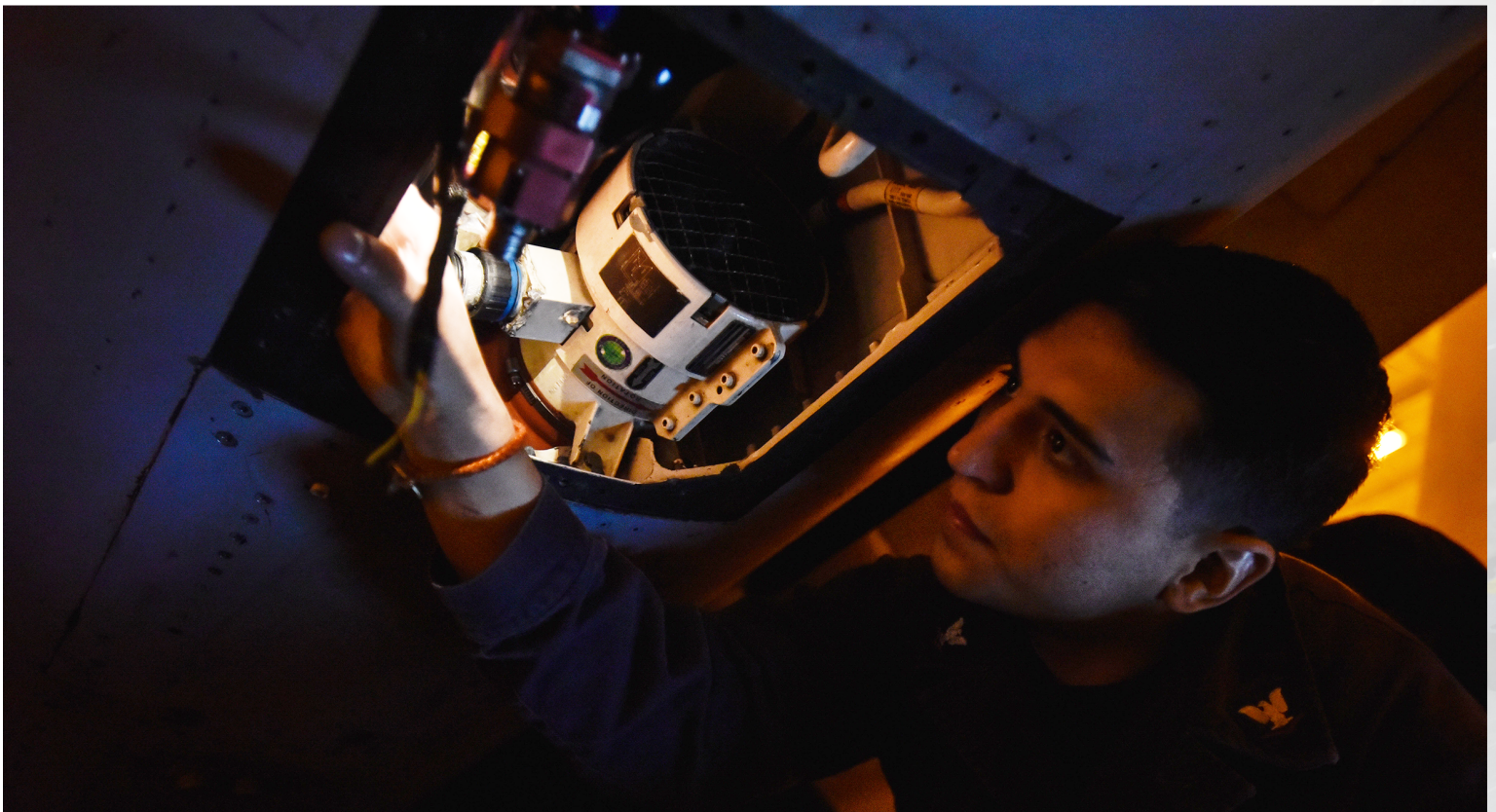
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SAILOR IN THE SPOTLIGHT

PHOTOS BY MC2 JANWEB LAGAZO



"I'M **AM3 MICHAEL HUGUES**. I'M FROM POCA TELLO,
IDAHO. I'M PART OF THE SHOSHONE-BANNOCK TRIBE
FROM FORT HALL, IDAHO."



"I LIKE WORKING WITH MY HANDS. MOLDING THINGS. CRAFTING THINGS. THEY GIVE ME SCHEMATICS, PLANS, AND MEASUREMENTS AND I HAVE TO MAKE IT. I TAKE IT AS A PERSONAL CHALLENGE. EVERYTHING I EXPERIENCE ON A DAILY BASIS CONTRIBUTES TO WHO I AM. BEING NATIVE AMERICAN, I FEEL LIKE IT HELPS ME UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THINGS. THAT'S PROBABLY WHY I LIKE FISHING AND THE OUTDOORS."



From Reservation to Reagan: A Tale of Two Feathers

Story and Illustration by MC2 Brandon Martin

"I am very proud of where I came from," she said as she stared down while twiddling her thumbs. "Growing up in the culture I did, I don't think I'd want it any other way."

"They call it native pride," continued Niizhomiigwanag as she tore her gaze away from her own hands.

There was a discernable calmness about her now and a newfound eagerness in her eyes. The more and more she began to reveal about herself, the brighter the fire hiding behind her brown eyes began to burn.

"It's different than any other culture that I've met. The regalia, the dancing and the things we do. I really don't know what else to say but I love my culture," said Niizhomiigwanag.

Many Sailors on the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) have never heard the story of Niizhomiigwanag (Two Feathers), from the Fon Du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, but many around the ship know her face when they pass her in the passageways.

Niizhomiigwanag, otherwise known as Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Alexis Kettelhut, has lived a unique life. From being crowned a princess at age 3, to moving off her reservation at age 14, and all the way to setting off to see the world at age 18, every step of Two Feather's journey has pieced together an integral part of how she defines herself today.

"Most of what I learned about my heritage was from my mom," said Kettelhut. "My dad is native but my mom is white. She knew a lot about the culture after working on the reservation for 20-plus years. My grandmother was a medicine woman and her father before her was also a medicine man. He was a pretty big spiritual leader for the area."

Kettelhut went on to explain more of her early struggles learning about her background. After her grandfather and great grandfather passed away, she was left with only her grandmother to piece together her lineage for her.

"It was very difficult trying to find out more about my roots, especially after my grandmother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's when I was in the eighth grade. Shortly after that, I moved off the reservation, making it even harder to find out more about my ancestry. From the time I was born until the time I was 14, I lived on the reservation. All of that put together made it really difficult for me to really immerse myself into my culture."

Even though she was recalling a difficult time in her early life, Kettelhut let every word flow out as if it were running water. There were no tears, no pouts. Only the radiance of pride could be felt in that room while she told of her struggles. As she got deeper into her story, I could see the faintest of smiles creep upon her face, as if the

childish innocence in her story began to overwhelm her for a moment in time.

"When I was in head start, I was crowned the princess of head start," Kettelhut said as she quoted stories her mother told her of her childhood. "When you are crowned princess, you are considered royalty. From there, I got to join the front line in the pow wow."

Two Feathers began to explain the intricacies of the ceremony, such as the order that the lineup entered the arena. While I was listening to her story, I couldn't help but notice some of the subtle differences between my culture and hers.

"When deciding who will be the next princess, the children have a sort of dance-off," continued Kettelhut. "After that, we have a give-away, and during the give-away, the previous winner gives away gifts. That may seem a little unusual, because most contests involve the winner receiving a gift, but for us it's a little opposite."

Without skipping a beat, Kettelhut walked me through all of her memories and stories up until she left the reservation. From what she told me, her high school years were much of a blur. Like the rest of us, by the time she had maturity to ponder such things, the years had long passed by her. When she turned 17, Kettelhut found herself ready to





Alexis Kettelhut, 8, performs a dance to display her regalia.



after me in the Navy. Regardless of my decision to stay in the Navy or not, I have contributed something. The knowledge that I cultivate in junior Sailors will be passed on, and that brings on a degree of pride, because I can know everything I worked for and achieved was worthwhile.” Although she may have joined the Navy to figure out what life is like away from the reservation, Kettelhut found that the Navy has a way of bringing you back home.

“Last year, I took part of the Native American Heritage Month aboard the ship, only to find out that another one of the participants was from the same exact reservation as me,” said Kettelhut. “She knew who I knew, but we didn’t know each other. Meeting someone from the same background or culture immediately provides that home-like connection.” Kettelhut credits this coincidental encounter to the Navy.

“You don’t have just one ethnicity in the Navy,” continued Kettelhut. “You have a lot of different backgrounds, and that diversity is what—I think—makes

dive into a completely different type of culture—the military.

“Both my grandfathers served in the military: my dad’s aunt served with my grandfather and my step-grandfather also served,” said Kettelhut. “I guess it’s something I always kind of wanted to do. I didn’t want to stay on the reservation or back at home. I needed to leave so I could do something bigger than myself. I wanted to travel and see things that most people never get the chance to. I wanted to see something beyond what you get in Minnesota.”

Now the leading petty officer for the security training department, at 21 years of age, Kettelhut has come far in just over three years in the Navy.

“I’ve learned a lot in my time, so far, in terms of what it takes to succeed in this career,” said Kettelhut. “Stepping up and taking initiative has probably been what has helped me advance the quickest. You see, some people kind of just float through

the Navy, and I never wanted to do that. If I was going to join something, then I wanted to do it to the fullest of my abilities. I want to thrive.”

During her two years on the Ronald Reagan, Kettelhut has been promoted twice and become a valuable part of the security team, where she says she can fill any role.

“During my time here, I have worked everywhere from dispatch to training and I honestly feel like that is a compliment from my chain-of-command,” said Kettelhut. “It feels like they trust me anywhere and it serves as a testament to my growth and versatility.”

Being in training, Kettelhut has found her niche. Just like when she was discussing her heritage before, the fire in her eyes returned when she began talking about her role in the Navy.

“I really care about what I do here in training,” said Kettelhut. “I get to have a direct impact on everyone that comes



Alexis Kettelhut poses with a “grass dancer” during a powwow ceremony.

"THIS CULTURE IS MY CULTURE, AND IT MEANS THE WORLD TO ME."



Alexis Kettelhut, 18, performs the "grand entry" dance with her cousin in honor of her grandparents.

us stronger. I likely would have never met this person from my own reservation if it weren't for the Navy, and that's what is so unique about the military. It brings all these different people together, and we all have something different to bring to the table."

No matter how far Kettelhut thinks she may have come since her days on the reservations, those closest to her on the Ronald Reagan insist that at her core, she is still that same 3-year-old princess that can't help her giving heart.

"She is one of the kindest people that I have ever met," said Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Cody Hynes, a close friend of Kettelhut. "Whether it is sharing her knowledge of the Navy, or simply taking a little extra time out of her day to help a friend, she is a giver down to her core and I think that's what draws people to her."

As I began winding down my chat with Kettelhut, the bulk of her rhetoric began to harp back to the importance of culture. And for the third and final time, I saw that fire return to her eyes. Nothing else brought out the unbridled passion she exhibited when talking about her background.

"No matter who you come across, you should treat them with respect," said Kettelhut. "Everyone's culture means something to someone. This culture is my culture, and it means the world to me."

Just a B.R.A.T. in Japan

Story by MC2 Jamal McNeill

Growing up as a “military B.R.A.T.,” there were two things I admired about my father: seeing him in uniform - knowing he is serving his country - and his sneaker collection.

I always wanted to fit into my dad's shoes. Looking in his closet and seeing Shelltoes in every color, every pair of Jays released and rows and rows of other types of sneakers, made me wish my feet would miraculously grow and fit his size 10's.

While I never got to fit into my dad's shoes - I only wear a size 9 - I did

follow in his footsteps and joined the Navy, then chose to bring my family to Japan and serve as a forward-deployed Naval forces (FDFN) Sailor.

My dad serving in the Navy afforded me, my mom and brother the opportunity to travel and live in Alaska, Virginia and Texas. While all of these places will hold a special place in my heart, none of them had as great of an impact on me as living in Japan.

I moved to Japan in 1995. My dad, a master-at-arms, worked at the Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka Brig.

Living in Japan as a 7-year old, I was exposed to things that most other American elementary-aged kids weren't. This lifestyle of moving every couple of years, learning new cultures and making new friends, made me and others like me the Broad-minded, Resilient, Adaptable and Tenacious, B.R.A.T., which we are.

Looking back, I can vividly remember eating sushi for the first time and my first time drinking milk tea and melon soda.

The subtle sweetness and flakiness of Japanese desserts, the pride and precision that the Japanese people use in everything they do, the unparalleled architecture and ability to fit as many building as possible in a limited space, and being cramped on a train unable to stick your hand in your pocket but able to hear yourself breath because of people being courteous to one another and not talking too loud stuck with me my whole life.

These are memories and experiences that only come once in a lifetime foremost, however,



I have been fortunate enough to experience them over and over.

I was afforded this because of the sacrifice my dad made to serve his country.

My dad was not the only family member who made sacrifices; we dependents had sacrifices of our own. As kids, my brother and I had to say goodbye to friends over and over again. I will never know what it is like to grow up with childhood friends.

Eventually, I ended up attending four different elementary schools, three different middle schools and four different high schools.

My mom had her own struggles. Always having to find a new job and not being able to establish a career. She put her dreams and career on hold to follow and support my dad. In return she was able to see and do some amazing things and visit and live in some amazing places. The life of a military family member can be tough at times but is also rewarding. I have been very fortunate in my life thanks to my dad. No, I don't have those childhood friends but I have friends all across the world. I also met my wife, while attending Yokota High School,

living in Japan.

Even though I always wanted to fit into my dad's shoes, I never thought I would ever follow in his footsteps to serve in the Navy. To put my family through the ups and downs of being a military family is something I did not want to do. I wanted my daughter to grow up with childhood friends and experience things that I didn't. I wanted my wife to flourish in a career. But that wasn't the plan life had for me.

Once I did decide to join, I knew

I wanted to give my own military B.R.A.T., my daughter, the opportunity to experience Japan.

I joined the Navy as a seaman with three stripes. Growing up with my dad in the Navy has made my transition into a Sailor easier but I still don't have all the answers and I still have a lot of questions after my 3 years in.

So here I am, sacrificing, serving as an FDNF Sailor. My family is here making sacrifices and experiencing everything Japan has to offer.

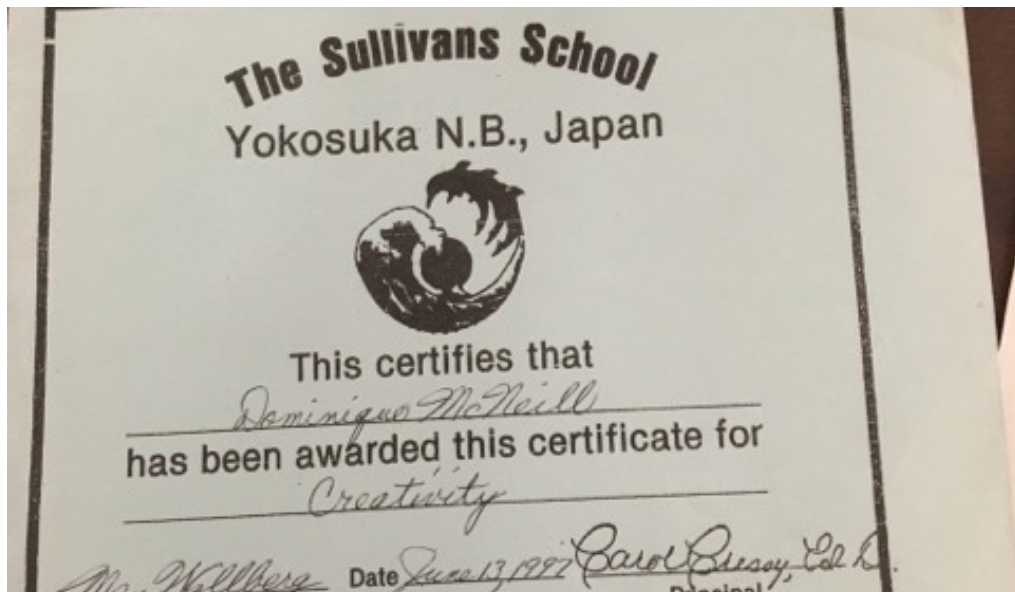
They say things come full circle. For me, the military B.R.A.T., I guess they have. My daughter will attend the same elementary school I did: Sullivans Elementary School. My wife is going through the same struggles and opportunities my mom did.

Then there is me, I am finally fitting into my father's shoes. It is not the 'Jays' or 'Shelltoes' I wanted but his boots and while we may not wear the same size, I am determined for me and my family to leave our footprints on the FDNF the same way my father and mom did years ago.





Jamal McNeill poses for a school photo at The Sullivans School in Yokosuka, Japan.



"I am determined for me and my family to leave our footprints on the FDNF the same way my father and mom did years ago."



Jamal McNeill, center; his childhood friend, left; his mother, Geraldine, above; and his brother, Anthony, left, pose for a photo in front of a dragon statue at a train station in Tokyo.

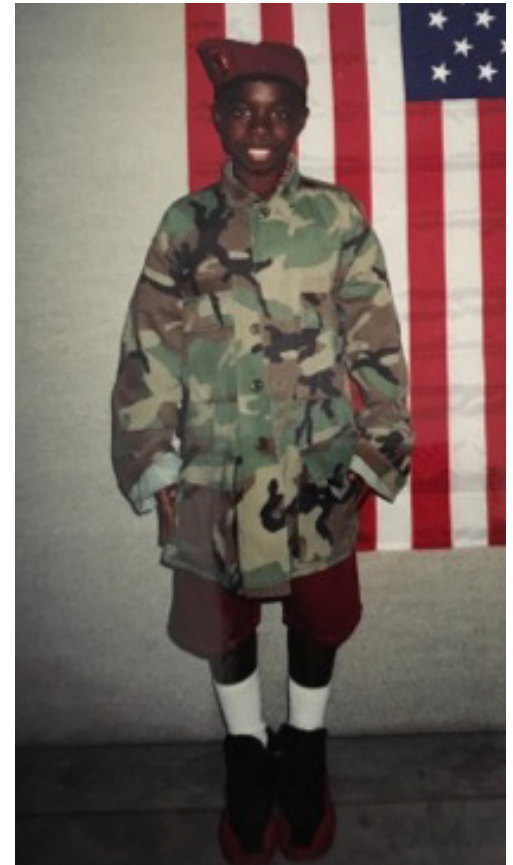


Jamal McNeill, jersey number 32, and his teammates from Yokota High School pose for a photo after taking 2nd in the 2005 Far East Basketball Championship Game.

"Even though I always wanted to fit into my dad's shoes, I never thought I would ever follow in his footsteps to serve in the Navy."



Jamal McNeill feeds pigeons at a temple in Kamakura, Japan.



Jamal McNeill, wearing his father's uniform top, poses in front of an American flag. "Growing up as a military B.R.A.T., there were two things I admired about my father: seeing him in uniform — knowing he is serving his country — and his sneaker collection."

Reagan and the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Story by Edwin Meese III, The Heritage Foundation

For years, it has been the fashion in many ideological precincts to argue the collapse of the Soviet Union -- at more or less the moment it disintegrated -- was due almost entirely to Communism's structural weaknesses, and not to anything the West may have done to hasten its demise. In this view, while the two factions may have been at war for decades, the final result was not victory for one side so much as abdication by the other.

This misreading of history unfortunately is motivated most often by a desire to avoid giving President Reagan the credit he deserves for being one of the few Western leaders (Prime Minister Thatcher being a notable exception) to properly understand not just the weaknesses of the Communist system, but also how they could be exploited to hasten the demise of the Soviet Union and bring freedom to millions around the world.

Reagan's struggle against Communists in Hollywood during his acting days is frequently told as a story of an awakening awareness to the Soviet threat. It certainly was that, but what is too often forgotten is just how pivotal Reagan's role was in this fight, with one fellow actor describing him as "a one-man battalion of opposition." It is this same misconception of Reagan as an observer and diagnostician, rather than prime actor, that comes up again and

again in arguments about his role and impact.

For three decades after he left Hollywood, Reagan studied Communism intensively, especially its theory, its aggressive expansionism and the threat it posed to the free world. From this study, Reagan developed a number of ideas beyond the then-dominant prescription of containment, to how the United States and its allies could combat and ultimately conquer a system he described while president as "another sad, bizarre chapter in human history whose last pages even now are being written."

Reagan never stopped speaking out on Communism, even when it was unfashionable to do so. He consistently decried the policy of detente, which had left unchallenged aggressive Communist expansion around the world. In the decade before Reagan became president, 10 new nations had come under Soviet domination, and Communism appeared to be on the

march worldwide.

President Reagan also rejected the gloomy outlook of eternal accommodation and never wavered in his conviction that freedom would eventually triumph over totalitarianism. He came to office with the belief the





United States and other free nations should use all aspects of political, military, economic, diplomatic and cultural power to defeat Communism. Once he got to the White House, he put those ideas into practice.

The biggest shake-up to the status quo was

Union on the horns of a dilemma. They could either watch the West achieve a dominant military and strategic position, or try to match the U.S. build-up, in turn bankrupting their own tottering economy.

Reagan showed the flexibility of his approach, coupling this massive buildup with an open invitation to reduce strategic arms on both sides. In Reagan's words to Mikhail Gorbachev, "We can agree to reduce arms, or we can continue the arms race, which I think you know you can't win."

Reagan also encouraged and influenced other free nations to join in this endeavor. His "Evil Empire" rhetoric, rejected by many commentators at the time as inflammatory and simplistic, instead helped clarify the distinctions between the two sides.

The president's most lasting rhetorical moment came during his second visit to Berlin in 1987, when he memorably urged, "General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization, come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

This Monday, November 9th, marks the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The anniversary will be marked by celebrations, ceremonies and events around the world, including a conference hosted by the Reagan Foundation and Library and the Heritage Foundation in Simi Valley. At all of these events, we should pay tribute to the brave men and women who fought for freedom and justice on both sides of the Iron Curtain, but we would be remiss if we did not make a special note of thanks to President Reagan.

Original article may be found at: <http://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/reagan-and-the-fall-the-berlin-wall>

Reagan's military buildup, the largest "peacetime" defense expansion in U.S. history. Reagan's clear aim was to put the leaders of the Soviet

WANDERLUST: TOKYO TOWER

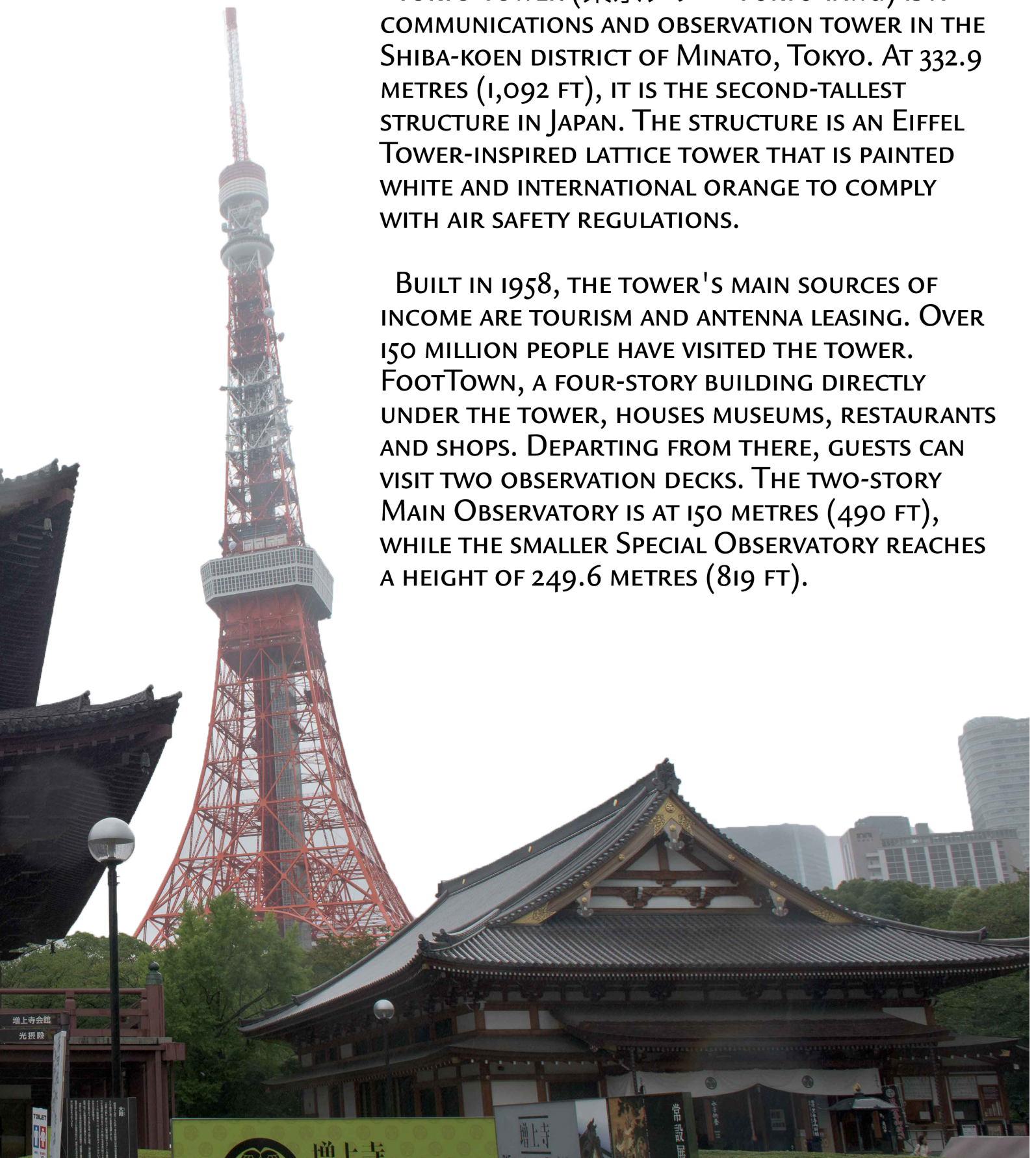
PHOTOS BY MC2 KENNETH ABBATE



The Zojoji-temple is a great way to take in the local culture and area.

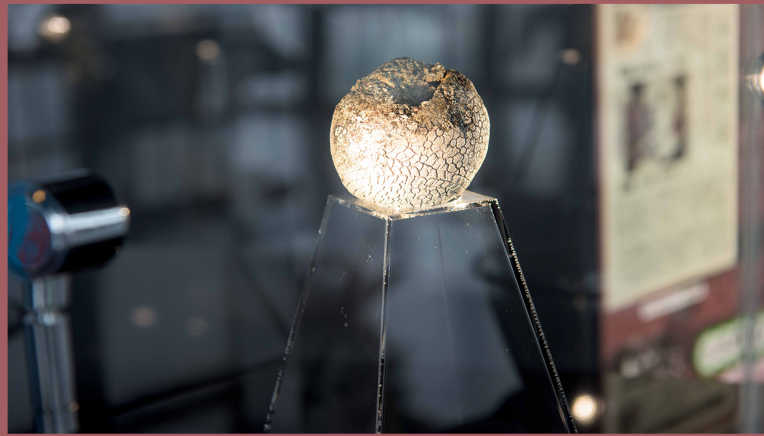
TOKYO TOWER (東京タワー TŌKYŌ TAWĀ) IS A COMMUNICATIONS AND OBSERVATION TOWER IN THE SHIBA-KOEN DISTRICT OF MINATO, TOKYO. AT 332.9 METRES (1,092 FT), IT IS THE SECOND-TALLEST STRUCTURE IN JAPAN. THE STRUCTURE IS AN EIFFEL TOWER-INSPIRED LATTICE TOWER THAT IS PAINTED WHITE AND INTERNATIONAL ORANGE TO COMPLY WITH AIR SAFETY REGULATIONS.

BUILT IN 1958, THE TOWER'S MAIN SOURCES OF INCOME ARE TOURISM AND ANTENNA LEASING. OVER 150 MILLION PEOPLE HAVE VISITED THE TOWER. FOOTOWN, A FOUR-STORY BUILDING DIRECTLY UNDER THE TOWER, HOUSES MUSEUMS, RESTAURANTS AND SHOPS. DEPARTING FROM THERE, GUESTS CAN VISIT TWO OBSERVATION DECKS. THE TWO-STORY MAIN OBSERVATORY IS AT 150 METRES (490 FT), WHILE THE SMALLER SPECIAL OBSERVATORY REACHES A HEIGHT OF 249.6 METRES (819 FT).





There are plenty of chances to buy souvenirs in the shops below the Tower.



“The Mystery Ball” is a rubber baseball found from the inside of the antenna post in August 2012 after replacing the antenna.

THE TOWER ACTS AS A SUPPORT STRUCTURE FOR AN ANTENNA. INTENDED FOR TELEVISION BROADCASTING, RADIO ANTENNAS WERE INSTALLED IN 1961, BUT THE TOWER NOW BROADCASTS SIGNALS FOR JAPANESE MEDIA OUTLETS SUCH AS NHK, TBS AND FUJI TV. EVERY FIVE YEARS TOKYO TOWER IS REPAINTED. IT TAKES ONE YEAR TO REPAINT IT.



The view of the Shiba-koen district from the the main observatory of the tower.

HOW TO GET TO TOKYO TOWER

TRAIN FROM YOKOSUKACHUO STATION COST 890 YEN

YOKOSUKA, KANAGAWA PREFECTURE, JAPAN

WALK

0.3 MI (8 MINS)

YOKOSUKACHUO STATION

KEIKYU LINE 快特 TOWARDS KEISEI-TAKASAGO

DAIMON STATION

WALK

0.6 MI (13 MINS)

TOKYO TOWER, 4 CHOME-2-8 SHIBAKOEN, MINATO, TOKYO 105-0011, JAPAN



Street signs point the way to Tokyo Tower.



Outside of the shop's at the base of the tower, the surrounding is full of other site's to explore.



The Tokyo Tower is the second-tallest structure in Japan at 1,092.



SEVENTYSIXER
USS RONALD REAGAN

Sailors restow an aircraft barricade net during flight deck drills aboard USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). (Photo by MC2 Kenneth Abbate)