

To the Editor

A Cautionary Tale

I recently was looking through [The *2009 PCS-TDY Pacific Guide*], and it offers a very nice initial orientation to the Pacific Rim for service members. Having been stationed in the Far East, I enjoy occasionally reminiscing with magazines like this.

However, something caught my eye that gave me pause I wanted to alert you to. In the article "Living in Paradise," the section on Guam mentions the habit of betelnut chewing, often with the leaf. I must say that there should have been a mention of the significant health risks associated with this habit. While it is thought that this habit may confer some resistance to dental caries, the fact is that the oral and aero-digestive cancer risk associated with betelnut chewing far outweighs any possible caries prevention benefit.

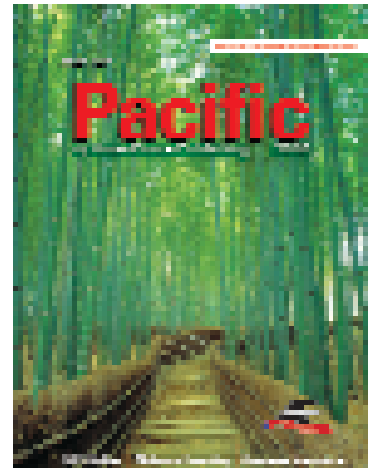
The medical literature over the last 30 years fully supports the significant risk of cancer development in betelnut users, especially those who combine the betelnut with tobacco, wrap it in the leaf and sprinkle on slaked lime (which is the usual manner of use). Due to the 'happy' tone in which this habit is mentioned, a potential carry away message from the article for the service member may be..."look at this, it's harmless and may prevent cavities... maybe it's ok to give it a try." This is clearly the wrong message and I'm certain no one at AmeriForce intended it that way.

However, as an oral healthcare professional and military officer, I feel that it would have been beneficial to have done a little more research into the habit of betelnut chewing and either edited the betelnut reference out of the section, or else added a precautionary note about the well-documented health risks.

But an outstanding magazine otherwise and I truly appreciate the work your organization does in support of military personnel.

CDR Sean C. Meehan,

DC, USN Specialty Leader for Oral Medicine, Pharmacology and Radiology Professor and Chairman, Oral Medicine Naval Postgraduate Dental School National Naval Medical Center



Sagano "Undulating Supple Ethereal Bamboo Grove Path Bamboo"
©Kyoto Convention Bureau /©JNTO
<http://japan-photo.jnto.go.jp/eng>
Copyright 2008 ©Japan National Tourism Organization. All Rights Reserved.

The advertisement is for the Military Star Rewards program. It features a large, stylized logo at the top left consisting of five interlocking circles forming a star shape. To the right of the logo is a gold "MILITARY STAR" card and a smaller image of a rewards card. The text "Exclusive REWARDS" is prominently displayed in the center. Below this, there are five circular icons, each with a different symbol (a dollar sign, a star, a gear, a person, and a star), followed by a list of benefits in a smaller font. At the bottom, there is a call to action: "SEE PAGE 13 for exclusive SMOOTH MOVE promotions from MILITARY STAR!".

Exclusive REWARDS

- 1. Earn rewards on all military star card purchases
- 2. Earn rewards on all military star card purchases
- 3. Earn rewards on all military star card purchases
- 4. Earn rewards on all military star card purchases
- 5. Earn rewards on all military star card purchases

SEE PAGE 13 for exclusive **SMOOTH MOVE** promotions from **MILITARY STAR!**