

Memorial Day Special

A Memorial Day tribute to a Pearl Harbor hero. Who was Sylvester of San Diego's Sylvester Road?

See page 5

Homecoming Photo Album



A compilation of all the great ship's homecoming photos. See page 10

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SIXTY-FIRST YEAR NO. 5
THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021

WELCOME HOME TO OUR RETURNING SAILORS & MARINES

MAKIN ISLAND, SAN DIEGO, SOMERSET, RUSSELL, BUNKER HILL ARRIVE IN SD

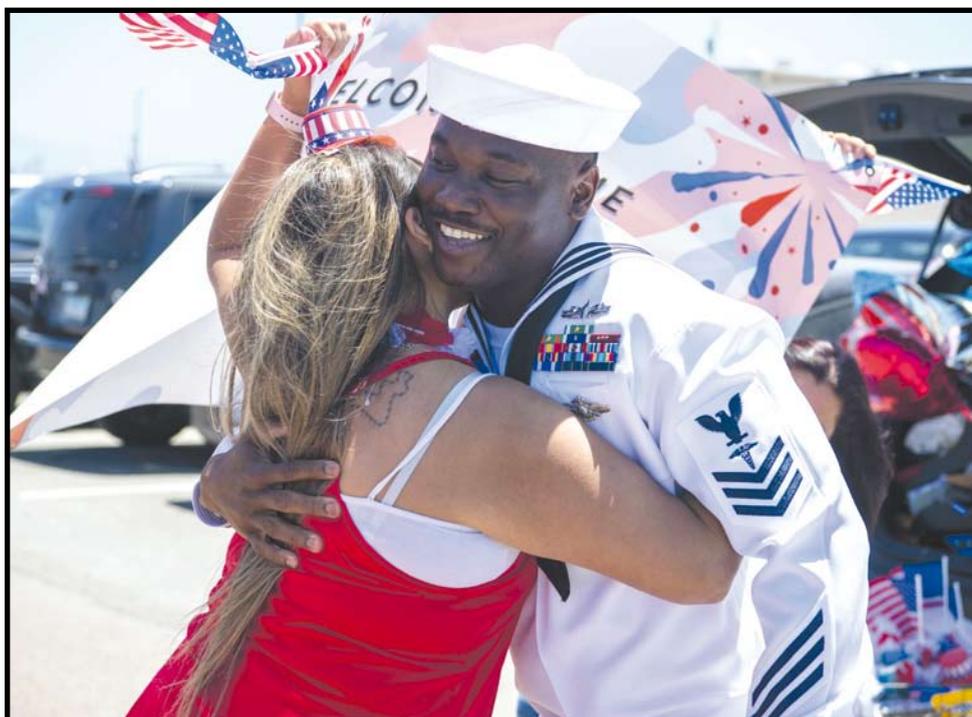
Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet

More than 5,000 Sailors and Marines of the *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) return to their San Diego homeport this weekend, concluding a seven-month deployment to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, 6th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation.

Marines with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), embarked aboard the ships of the ready group, arrived off the coast of Southern California, May 21, to disembark at Camp Pendleton.

USS *Makin Island* (LHD 8), USS *San Diego* (LPD 22) and USS *Somerset* (LPD 25) returned to port at Naval Base San Diego following the offload. A contingent of 15th MEU personnel will remain aboard ARG shipping for the pier side arrival.

"I'm so proud of the resilience and strength of character our Sailors and Marines displayed while serving our nation across four different fleets," said Capt. Henry Kim, *Makin Island* ARG commander. "Despite the additional challenges of protecting a COVID-free bubble within the ARG, our Blue-Green Team determinedly exemplified the mottos of all three ships, 'Gung Ho!' 'Stay Classy!' and 'Let's Roll!'"



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Cord Fraizer greets his family following Amphibious transport dock ship USS *Somerset's* return to homeport of Naval Base San Diego May 23. *Somerset* is part of the *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group the Africa, Central and Indo-Pacific Commands. Navy photo by MC3 Hector Carrera

The *Makin Island* ARG is comprised of *Makin Island* amphibious assault ship and amphibious transport dock ships *San Diego* and *Somerset*, and led by commander, Amphibious Squadron Three. The 15th MEU consists of the Command Element; the Aviation Combat Element, Marine Medium

Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164 (Reinforced); the Ground Combat Element, Battalion Landing Team 1/4; and the Logistics Combat Element, Combat Logistics Battalion 15.

The ARG-MEU team departed November 10, after completing

a pre-deployment sequester and back-to-back at-sea exercises in October.

"The 15th MEU and *Makin Island* ARG deployed during an unprecedented pandemic and demonstrated the ability of the Navy and Marine Corps team to success-

fully and safely execute operations in a COVID-19 environment," said Col. Fridrik Fridriksson, 15th MEU commanding officer. "I am so incredibly proud of the professionalism, toughness and mental resiliency demonstrated by our Marines and Sailors. They have accomplished great things during

this deployment."

During the deployment, Sailors and Marines supported Operation Octave Quartz (OOQ) in Somalia, Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) in Iraq and Syria, Theater Amphibious Combat Rehearsals

See SHIPS RETURN, page 10

Memorial Day: All gave some, some gave all

Memorial Day is the day we honor those who gave their lives in service to their country. In their honor is the following poem titled *In Flanders Fields*, written by Canadian John McCrae, MD (1872-1918) who served as a soldier and surgeon in the Canadian Army during World War I. The poem was inspired by the killing of his friend, Lt. Alexis Helmer, during the Second Battle of Ypres. The poem was written on May 3, 1915.

IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

— John McCrae



USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONCLUDES DEPLOYMENT

USS *Theodore Roosevelt* aircraft carrier returned to San Diego, May 25, marking the completion of its deployment to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of responsibility.

Theodore Roosevelt, flagship of the *Theodore Roosevelt* Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG), departed on deployment Dec. 23, 2020, to the 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operation.

"Whether it was operating in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea or high northern latitudes in the Gulf of Alaska, Carrier Strike Group Nine demonstrated that the U.S. Navy is ready for anything," said Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, commander, Carrier Strike Group Nine. "We met the challenges that COVID-19 brought head-on and successfully deployed forward to work with our allies and partners from Australia, India, Japan, Malaysia, and South Korea."

In U.S. 7th Fleet, *Theodore Roosevelt's* primary mission was conducting maritime security operations, ensuring freedom of navigation and economic trade in the Indo-Pacific region. In support of allies and partners, TR conducted bilateral exercises with the Indian Navy and Air Force, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian

Navy, Republic of Korea Navy, and the Royal Malaysian Air Force, focusing on building capabilities and increasing combat readiness to win the high-end fight. In May, *Theodore Roosevelt* participated in exercise Northern Edge 2021 in the Gulf of Alaska.

"I'm incredibly proud of this crew for all their hard work and sacrifice throughout this deployment," said Capt. Eric Anduze, commanding officer of *Theodore Roosevelt*. "Our presence in the Indo-Pacific had a significant impact on maintaining stability and security in the region that would not have been possible without every single Sailor aboard."

Theodore Roosevelt joined forces with the *Nimitz* CSG to conduct dual-carrier operations and, on a later date, the *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group in the South China Sea for expeditionary strike force operations, increasing interoperability as well as command and control capabilities.

The TRCSG consists of USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11, cruiser USS *Bunker Hill*, Destroyer Squadron 23, and destroyer USS *Russell*. see pages 8 & 9

Virtual Memorial Day Service at Miramar National Cemetery begins May 27

Virtual Memorial Day Service: Go to www.miramarcemetery.org beginning May 27 to watch a 25-minute presentation honoring military and VA nurses who care for our service members in war and peace. Guest speakers: Brig. Gen. Jeannine Ryder, chief of the Air Force Nurse Corps, and Miramar Young Marines Sgt. Maj. Sophia Righthouse. Sponsored by Miramar National Cemetery Support Foundation. No live service at Miramar National Cemetery this year.

Fort Rosecrans Memorial Day
Virtual Service May 31, 10 a.m.
The 121st
Memorial Service
and
Day of Remembrance
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MEMORIAL DAY



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From all they knew,
With hearts of pride
And courage true,

Vowed to serve
As freedom's light,
And through their strength
Our nation's might,

They gave all
Our brave defenders,
Where poppies lie,
We will remember.



PoppyInMemory.com

Nominee for Air Force secretary says his desire for the job is fueled by competition with China

by **Corey Dickstein,**
Stars and Stripes

Frank Kendall, President Joe Biden's nominee for Air Force secretary, told senators on May 25 that he was driven to return to the Defense Department by concerns over China's improving battlefield technology.

Kendall, who served as the Pentagon's top weapons buyer under former President Barack Obama, listed ensuring the Air Force and Space Force retained military advantage over any potential foe among his top priorities, if confirmed. He recalled a "highly classified" 2010 Pentagon meeting in which he first learned of China's push to improve its military capabilities in an eye-opening effort "to defeat the ability of the United States to project power near China."

"We have made progress against these threats, and our adversaries should never doubt the United States, but there is still much to be done," Kendall told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "My hope is that, if confirmed, I will be able to lead the Department of the Air Force in organizing, training and equipping our nation's aerospace forces so that the United States

can continue to deter, and if necessary, fight and win against all adversaries."

Kendall, 72, testified in support of his nomination before the Senate committee alongside Heidi Shyu, Biden's nominee for undersecretary of defense for research and engineering, and

"Previously, you [each have] demonstrated the thoughtfulness, and the integrity, and the commitment that is essential to being a part of the Department of Defense," Reed said. "I look forward to your confirmations."

The committee also voted

administration, serving previously as the Pentagon's civilian policy chief among other Defense Department and National Security Council jobs.

If confirmed, she would replace acting Army secretary John Whitley, who has held that role since Biden's Jan. 20 inauguration. Kendall, if confirmed, would become the 26th Air Force secretary and replace acting Air Force Secretary John P. Roth, who also began that role Jan. 20.

Beyond competition with China and Russia, Kendall said his other top priority would be to take care of his personnel, which includes some 697,000 Air Force and Space Force troops and civilian employees. He committed to working with senators to improve on-post housing and other quality-of-life issues, including looking into command climates throughout the service.

He also endorsed the need for change to the military's approach to solving its longstanding problems with high rates of sexual assault and harassment in its ranks. Kendall called efforts spearheaded by Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, to remove

military commanders from the sexual assault prosecution process potentially "very beneficial in this area."

"Change is necessary," Kendall told Gillibrand. "Hopefully we can move forward."

But Kendall also committed to pushing back against across-the-board cuts to defense spending, which some liberal Democrats have pressed Biden to propose. Budget cuts have the potential to derail a number of critical Air Force modernization programs, including the development of its new nuclear bomber, the B-21 Raider. It could also slow the fielding of advanced F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, which despite well-documented and expensive problems, remains the "best tactical aircraft of its type in the world and will be so for quite some time," Kendall said.

Sen. Dan Sullivan, R-Alaska, said he was worried the Biden White House would not follow the 2018 advice of a congressionally mandated panel, the National Defense Strategy Commission, which recommended the Pentagon's budget increase 3 percent to 5 percent annually to compete with China and Russia, as the 2018 National Defense Strategy prioritized.

"I can commit to you to fight for the budget that's necessary to fulfill the National Defense Strategy, whatever that [number] may be," he said. "So, if it's 5 percent or it's 10 percent, I will try to get the money that is needed by the Department of the Air Force, if I'm confirmed, so that the Air Force can support combatant commanders however they need to carry out that strategy."



FRANK KENDALL III LISTENS DURING A SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HEARING ON CAPITOL HILL, APRIL 26, 2021. KENDALL HAS BEEN NOMINATED BY PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN TO BE THE NEXT AIR FORCE SECRETARY. DOD PHOTO

Susanna Blume, the president's nominee for director for the Pentagon's Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation Office. Like Kendall, Shyu and Blume served in high level Pentagon positions during Obama's administration.

Senators on Tuesday appeared poised to confirm all three, with several praising their selections by the Biden administration and committing to support their nominations, including committee chairman Sen. Jack Reed.

Tuesday to advance Biden's nominee for Army secretary, Christine Wormuth, to the full Senate for a confirmation vote. If confirmed, she would be the first woman to serve as the Army's top civilian.

Like Kendall, Wormuth in a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing earlier this month listed competition with power rivals China and Russia and the Pentagon's ongoing modernization efforts among her top priorities. Wormuth is also a veteran of the Obama admin-





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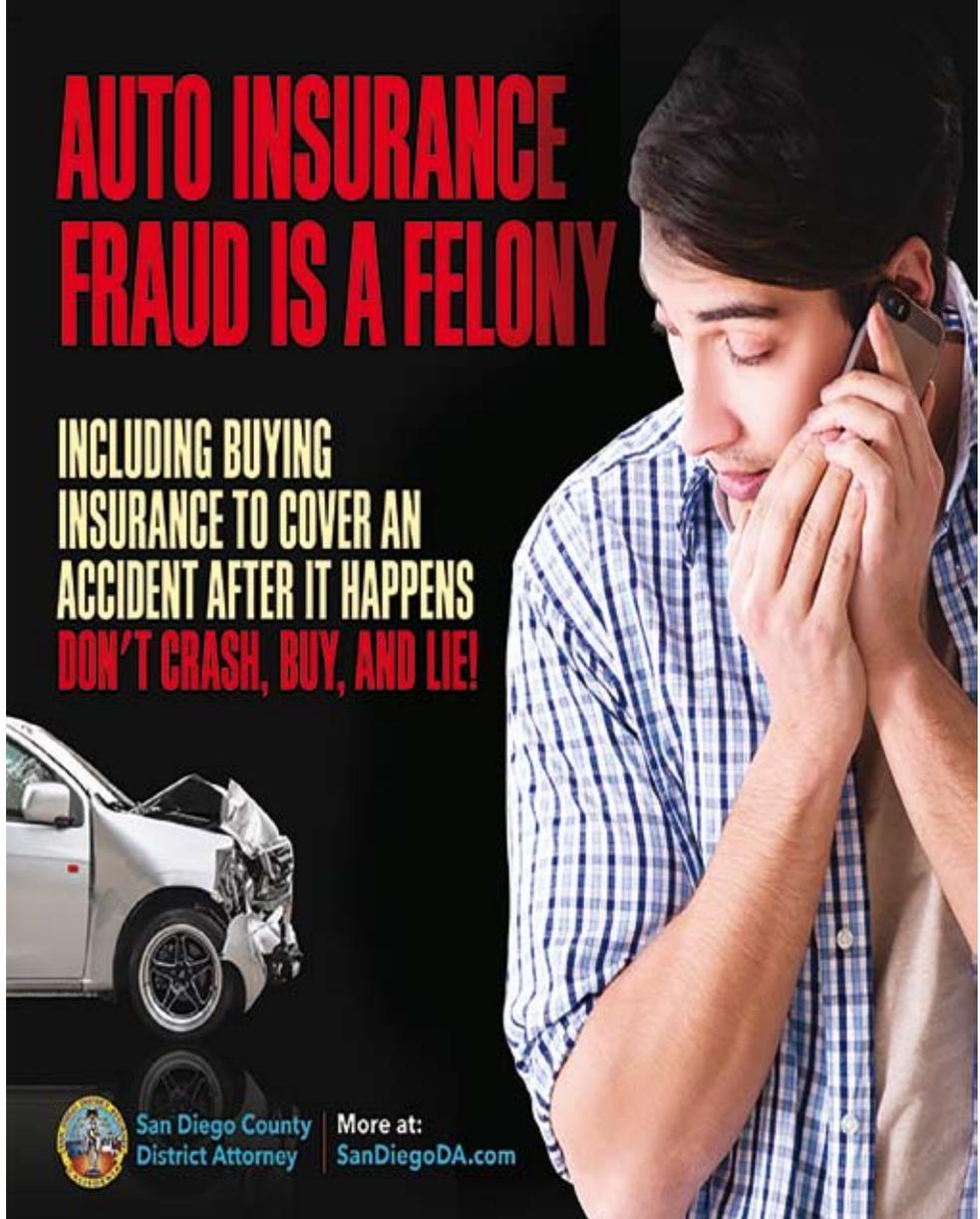
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THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021 www.armedforcesdispatch.com 3

DOD: 'Moral obligation' to help those in Afghanistan who helped U.S.

by C. Todd Lopez,
DOD News

The U.S. military is currently conducting retrograde operations to leave Afghanistan. U.S. military personnel there now will come home, and equipment in the country will also be shipped back, sold, destroyed or moved elsewhere. The deadline for withdrawal is Sept. 11, 2021.

While Soldiers leave the country, many Afghans who provided support to the U.S. and its allies will remain behind. They and their families may face the threat of retribution for having provided support to the Americans. The Defense Department

believes it's important those individuals and their families are taken care of.

"We have a moral obligation to help those that have helped us over the past 20 years of our presence and work in Afghanistan," David Helvey, the acting assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, said during a hearing today before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Right now, Helvey said, the DOD is working with the State Department and other government agencies to look at programs, including the Special

Immigrant Visa Program, as a solution to help partners in Afghanistan who won't be retrograded out of the country along with soldiers, helicopters and weapons systems. But the SIP is limited in its ability, Helvey said.

"We'd like to be able to work with Congress to be able to increase the quotas and the resources for special immigrant visas," Helvey said. "But there are certain categories of our Afghan partners that wouldn't meet the thresholds for special immigrant visas, so we need to look at other tools and other mechanisms to help those that

have helped us."

Two other options, he said, might include humanitarian or significant public benefit parole, which U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services can use to let some classes of individuals who are currently outside the United States into the country.

"We are working within the interagency to be able to identify those and get the proper resources attached to them," Helvey said.

Refer to this story, and others, at <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/>.

Flag officer assignments

The acting secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced May 26 the following assignments:

Rear Adm. (lower half) William E. Chase III, selected for promotion to rear admiral, will be assigned deputy commander, Joint Force Headquarters-Department of Defense Information Network (JFHQ-DODIN), U.S. Cyber Command, Fort Meade, Md. Chase is currently serving as deputy principal cyber advisor to the secretary of defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Washington, D.C.

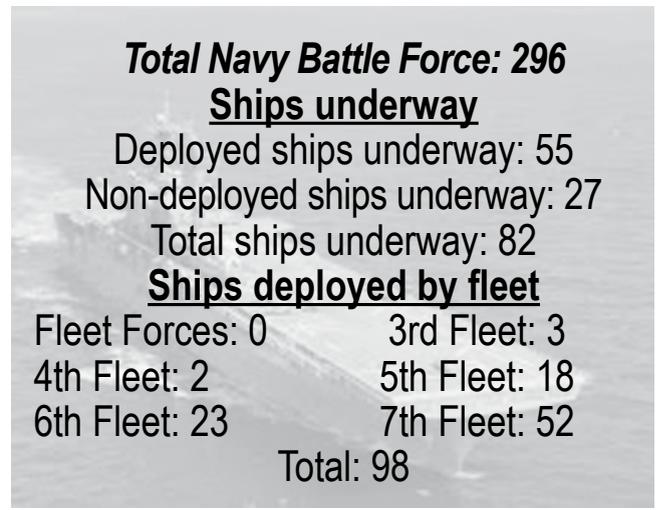
Rear Adm. (lower half) Brian

L. Davies will be assigned additional duties as deputy commander, Second Fleet, Norfolk, Va. Davies will retain all currently assigned duties as commander, Submarine Group Two, Norfolk.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Jeffrey S. Scheidt will be assigned as deputy principal cyber advisor to the secretary of defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Washington, D.C. Scheidt is currently serving as deputy chief, computer network operations, National Security Agency, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, Fort Meade, Md.

Rear Adm. (lower half) Michael J. Steffen will be assigned as commandant, Naval District Washington, Washington, D.C. Steffen is currently serving as deputy commander, Second Fleet, Norfolk.

Capt. Anthony E. Rossi, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as director, Navy International Programs Office, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C. Rossi is currently serving as major program manager, Mission Integration and Special Programs Office, PMA 298, Patuxent River, Md.



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Memorial Day Special Feature

Who was Sylvester of San Diego's Sylvester Road? A Memorial Day tribute to a Pearl Harbor hero

by Karen Scanlon and
Mary Ellen Cortellini

Every day, hundreds of civilian employees and military personnel pass through the front gate of Naval Base Point Loma en route to offices, classrooms, and homes along Sylvester Road.

Interestingly, names of streets running through Naval Base Point Loma (and also



William Sylvester posed for Bakersfield High School yearbook, Class of 1934. Photo courtesy of Ken Hooper/Bakersfield

Coast Artillery gun batteries hidden in the hills) identify some of the men who died serving in the U.S. military. So, who was Sylvester of Sylvester Road?

As we observe Memorial Day on May 31, we remember Lt. William G. Sylvester and his courageous race to man his gun while Japanese aircraft were bee lining toward Hickam's air base. It was December 7, 1941.

Days after this attack on Pearl Harbor, the U.S. declared war against the Japanese Empire, Nazi Germany vowed its provocation against the United States, and the U.S. formally entered the European Theater of World War II.

Commit to our collective memories, 1st Lt. William G. Sylvester

William Sylvester was born in Needles, Calif., on Feb. 19, 1916. His father was an engineer for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, and died in the 1918 influenza epidemic, leaving a wife and two sons. William's mother suffers the loss of a husband and moves her boys some 270 miles west to Bakersfield to be closer to the Sylvester family. She remarries but will ultimately lose both sons to war.

Sylvester attended Bakersfield High School (as it was known then), and starred in varsity football. He was also a member of the California Branch of High School cadets, a paramilitary youth organization whose objectives were to develop leadership, academic excellence, and basic military knowledge.

The pulse of World War II yet tranquil, Sylvester enlisted in the Army and after his commissioning, he reported for training at Fort Rosecrans in July 1938. He then reported to a Coast Artillery Regiment on the island of Oahu, Hawaii.

Army Coast Artillery personnel were responsible for coastal, harbor, and anti-aircraft defense. December 7th's surprise attack found many soldiers at breakfast in the mess hall. Sorrowfully, no anti-aircraft positions were manned, and soldiers dashed to operate their guns, including Sylvester.

"Sylvester jumped into his 1937 Ford roadster at his quarters and attempted to drive to his gun position," notes military historian, John Hamilton.



What became Sylvester Road? The main thoroughfare through Fort Rosecrans, which ran along the bluff below Officers' Row and ended at the Guard House, was initially named Meyler Road to honor engineer 1st Lt. James Joseph Meyler. He had supervised construction of gun batteries and roads on Ballast Point. A three-week bout with pneumonia took his life at age 35 in 1901. Meyler Road exists today as Sylvester Road, renamed after World War II. Postcard image, c. 1910, courtesy of James Phelan

Sylvester fell in behind another car, driven by Sgt. Hazlett Villa of the 97th Coast Artillery Regiment.

"The two cars barreled through Hickam in tandem, enemy aircraft wheeling overhead and strafing and dropping bombs," writes author William Dorrance.

"Just as the two cars passed Hickam's enlisted mess, a bomb struck the hall with horrible effect."

As the cars sped past the ghastly scene, a Japanese plane lined up over the roadway to strike Sylvester. His vehicle riddled by machine gun fire. Villa's car escaped the attack leaving Sylvester as the first Coast Artilleryman to be killed in action in World War II.

Sadly, his brother Robert, a pilot trained to fly the P-38 Lightning, went missing in action over New Guinea 19 months later.

William Sylvester is buried

at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Punchbowl Crater, Honolulu. His mother was presented the Purple Heart medal for her son's sacrifice.

Soon after Sylvester's death, one of the first vessels of the new fleet of Army mine planters was christened the LIEUTENANT WILLIAM G. SYLVESTER. (This ship was later transferred to the Navy and renamed Obstructor.)

Additionally, we remember Sylvester Road in San Diego, and a former gun battery named in his memory on Mokapu Peninsula, Oahu. A memorial plaque bearing his name stands within walking distance of where our hero died at Hickam AFB; and, he is recognized with Sylvester Hall that houses adjutant general functions at Fort Bliss, TX.

Young Lt. Sylvester gave his life for his country. He never came home again. From San Diego, across the Pacific, lies a simple military gravesite to commemorate his loss.

When was the first Memorial Day?

In 1966, Congress and President Lyndon B. Johnson recognized Waterloo, N.Y., as having the first Memorial Day 100 years earlier. However, multiple towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day, and the holiday's long evolution makes it unclear who actually started it. On top of that, there are many persistent myths about how Memorial Day was started.

Origins

While people have commemorated the sacrifices of soldiers for as long as there have been wars, Memorial Day as we know it in the United States got its start during the American Civil War. As the conflict wound down, people across the North and South tried to honor fallen soldiers.

One such ceremony was held on May 1, 1865 in Charleston, S.C. Local all-black churches led a gathering of roughly ten thousand people, many of whom were former slaves, in properly reburying Union soldiers and holding a ceremony to honor their sacrifice and dedicate the new cemetery. The event included speeches, the laying of wreaths and crosses, drills performed by Union soldiers and even picnicking. However, it's unclear if the event influenced any other such ceremonies in the country, so it remains ambiguous if it should actually be considered the first Memorial Day

The birthplace(s) of Memorial Day

There are numerous places in the country that claim to have first celebrated Memorial Day a recurring holiday rather than a one-off event. Boalsburg, Penn., claims that an 1864 gathering of women to mourn the deaths of soldiers at the Battle of Gettysburg makes it the founder of the holiday, while Carbondale, Ill., claims two markers in its cemeteries as well as a parade led by Major General John A. Logan (more on him in a moment) as proof that it held the first annual celebration. There's even a Columbus, Ga., and Columbus, Miss., with competing claims.

While Waterloo, N.Y., eventually won federal recognition because of evidence that its celebrations involved the full closure of the town, it has well over 20 rivals for the title, and all of them - even Waterloo - rely on evidence that is at least somewhat disputed. There's only one event that unambiguously served as a forerunner to Memorial Day.

Medal of Honor recipient Charles C. Hagemester dies at age 74

Former combat medic Charles C. Hagemester, 74, who received the Medal of Honor after he raced through withering enemy fire during a Vietnam War ambush to care for wounded comrades, died May 19, in Leavenworth, Kansas.

As of the day of his death there remained 66 living recipients of the nation's highest award for valor in combat, according to the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, which announced Hagemester's passing. A cause of death was not stated.

"Like so many Medal of Honor recipients, Charles Hagemester put the lives of his fellow soldiers above his own," said National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation CEO James T. Connors. "Under attack from fortified positions on three sides, he used his comrade's rifle to neutralize an enemy sniper, soldiers and machine gun devastating his platoon with lethal fire."

Hagemester's Medal of Honor actions took place March 20, 1967, in Vietnam's Binh Dinh province. At the time, he was a specialist fourth class serving as a medic with 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

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Weed out fake: How to find truly good advice

by **Dr. Daneen Skube**,
Tribune Content Agency

Q: People complain about fake news, but I think there is even more fake advice out there. When I try to learn about leadership, success or influence, much of what I find seems inaccurate or unrealistic and comes from people who seem perfect. How can I wade through all the fake advice and spot the good advice?

A: There are four attributes that will help you spot good advice and weed out the fake advice. First, look for advanced education (M.A. or Ph.D.). Second, look for genuine humility

and wicked intelligence. Third, seek experts that integrate multiple disciplines, and lastly, look for people who make new and controversial points.

You're right that with the advent of platforms like YouTube, anyone can make a video and present themselves as an expert. Developing discernment and raising critical questions is key to telling the good from the bad.

No one with high intelligence, wisdom and useful advice will claim they've found the perfect answers to work and life. Ar-

rogance and wisdom exist on opposite ends of the human spectrum.

Anyone you listen to who seems to have all the answers will actually have nothing useful to offer you. Worse yet, these

INTERPERSONAL EDGE:

people will make you feel inadequate, invalidated and like you are not smart enough to apply what they say.

Smart people are humble enough to give advice that encourages adequacy, validation and understanding. Experts who understand their stuff can present their ideas with humility, humor and simplicity.

Good advice also comes from those who have spent time receiving higher education and learning from experts. No musician or dancer can improvise before they spend decades learning and mastering the basics. Similarly, no expert can invent useful theories and solutions if they didn't study the greats and become masters in their field.

Experts who have passion for their fields want to get advanced degrees because it is great fun hanging out with other weirdos as fascinated by your field as you are. I remember how excited I was in my doctoral program to be in the company of people that

thought a good book at the beach was something by Freud.

Also seek out experts who go beyond their own field of study into other areas. In my field of psychology, I'm interested in and admire other professionals who study biology, neurology, holistic health, nutrition, meditation, sociology, environmental science and other unrelated fields that actually broaden understanding.

Look for experts with an insatiable curiosity about the world around them. Notice whether these experts embrace their flaws and strive for continued growth. Pay attention to whether these professionals are authentic and transparent with the human frailties and struggles we all have or whether they hold themselves apart from the human experience.

When you listen to good advice, you should feel more compassionate with yourself, inspired to be just a little better tomorrow, and validated that this being human thing is a tough challenge. You should also walk away with a few more tools and ideas that encourage you to keep putting one foot in front of another.

People who tell you to reach for the stars are a dime a dozen. People who encourage you to strive for a little less self-hatred, a tad more self-care and a sprinkle of greater knowledge are the real gems in the world of advice.

The last word(s)

Q: I often end up spending way too much time lecturing my subordinates on how to do their jobs. I find myself exhausted by

all this guidance. Is there a better way to mentor my people?

A: Yes, ask more questions and force your people to think a whole lot more. As Socrates said, "I cannot teach anybody anything. I can only make them think."

Daneen Skube, Ph.D., executive coach, trainer, therapist and speaker, also appears as the FOX Channel's "Workplace Guru" each Monday morning. She's the author of "Interpersonal Edge: Breakthrough Tools for Talking to Anyone, Anywhere, About Anything" (Hay House, 2006). You can contact Dr. Skube at www.interpersonaledge.com or 1420 NW Gilman Blvd., #2845, Issaquah, WA 98027. Sorry, no personal replies.

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Local Military

Coast Guard offloads over 11,000 pounds of cocaine in San Diego



Rear Adm. Brian Penoyer (see inset), the Eleventh Coast Guard District commander; speaks to the crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Active (WMEC 618) during a drug offload in San Diego, last week. The drugs, worth an estimated \$220 million, were seized in international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean during April and May. Coast Guard photo by PO3 Alex Gray.

USS Russell returns to NBSD

Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet

SAN DIEGO—Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) returned to San Diego after a deployment to U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleet areas of operations, May 21.



Russell left San Diego in early December 2020 to take part in a sustainment exercise with the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG) before deploying to the Indo-Pacific, Dec. 23, 2020.

“Russell’s ‘Red Dragons’ demonstrated that no matter the tasking, whether it is assisting those in need, supporting partnerships with allies, or integrating with joint forces, from the Southern Hemisphere to the Arctic region, we are able to accomplish an incredible variety of missions wherever we are needed,” said Cmdr. James Hopp, commanding officer of Russell. “This crew has shown remarkable resilience and skill, and should be especially proud of what they accomplished this deployment.”

While operating in U.S. 7th Fleet, Russell conducted maritime security and presence operations in Oceania, to enforce a rules-based international order and support a free and open Indo-Pacific. Operations included Economic Exclusion Zone enforcement operations and a coordinated patrol with Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) Maritime Law Enforcement units. Russell also supported partner nation security objectives with the Republic of the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea. While operating in the Indian Ocean, Russell participated in a joint force maritime exercise with the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, and TRCSG, strengthening proficiencies and interoperability

SAN DIEGO (May 21, 2021) Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Russell (DDG 59) returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego. Russell, a part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, returned to Naval Base San Diego May 21 after a deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet in support of maritime security operations to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jessica Paulauskas.

with our natural partners, with a shared commitment to regional security and stability.

“I am unbelievably proud of the performance of the entire Russell crew during this challenging deployment,” said Capt. Steven McDowell, commander, Destroyer Squadron 23. “The work they did as part of the Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group helped to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific and ensured security and prosperity in the region.”

In February, Russell participated in dual carrier operations with TRCSG and the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group that showcased the all-domain capabilities of two carrier strike groups and their ability to quickly aggregate in any area of operation. Additionally, Russell executed expeditionary strike force operations with TRCSG and the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group in the South China Sea demonstrating the U.S. Navy’s commitment to fly, sail, and oper-

ate anywhere international law allows.

Most recently, Russell participated in Exercise Northern Edge (NE) 21 in the Gulf of Alaska. A U.S. Indo-Pacific Command exercise hosted by U.S. Pacific Air Forces, NE 21 provided high-end, realistic war fighter training, developed and improved joint interoperability, and enhanced the combat readiness of participating forces.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy’s role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

USS Bunker Hill returns from deployment

From USS Theodore Roosevelt Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO—The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) returned to San Diego, marking the successful completion of its deployment to U.S. 3rd Fleet and 7th Fleet areas of operations, May 22.

Bunker Hill, part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG), departed on deployment to the Indo-Pacific, Dec. 23, 2020.

“The Bunker Hill crew should feel very proud of what they’ve accomplished over the last six months,” said Rear Adm. Doug

Verissimo, commander, Carrier Strike Group Nine. “The ship, her CO, and the Sailors provided forward-operating presence throughout 7th Fleet as a key component of our strike group.

As the air defense commander, they answered the call every step of the way even during a challenging double-pump deployment under COVID conditions. I could not be more pleased with their performance and resilience.”

Bunker Hill’s primary mission was conducting maritime security operations while in U.S. 7th Fleet, ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific. In support of allies and partners, Bunker Hill conducted bilateral exercises with the Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, Royal Australian Navy and Royal

Malaysian Air Force, focusing on building capabilities and increasing combat readiness to win the high-end fight. Most recently, Bunker Hill participated in Exercise Northern Edge 2021 in the Gulf of Alaska.

“Following our second 7th Fleet deployment in less than a year, Bunker Hill remains one of the most capable and storied warships in the fleet today,” said Capt. Shea Thompson, commanding officer of Bunker Hill. “This crew’s commitment to excellence was critical to demonstrating U.S. resolve in maintaining regional stability



SAN DIEGO (May 22, 2021) Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Bunker Hill (CG 52) returns to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego. Bunker Hill, part of the Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group, returned to Naval Base San Diego May 22 after a deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet in support of maritime security operations to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jessica Paulauskas.

through freedom of navigation operations, and bilateral and joint exercises all while remaining postured to project power throughout 7th Fleet.”

Bunker Hill joined forces with the Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group in the South China Sea for expeditionary strike force operations. They also participated in dual carrier operations with TRCSG and the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group that showcased the tactical power of two carrier strike groups, increasing interoperability as well as command and control capabilities.

“Bunker Hill excelled this deployment, and this team’s performance honors the sacri-

ifice of past Bunker Hill crews that have gone before us,” said Thompson. “The 2021 Bunker Hill crew can hold their heads high and take pride in knowing they did it right. They are disciplined, fearless and lethal. Bunker Hill remains the ‘sword of the fleet!’”

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and

provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy’s role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.



SAN DIEGO (May 17, 2021) Capt. Kim Davis, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) San Diego’s commanding officer, poses for a photo in front of the hospital May 17. Davis is scheduled to take command of NMRTC San Diego May 26. NMRTC San Diego’s mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMRTC San Diego employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Luke Cunningham.



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Navy volleyball player, corpsman is proud of her Samoan roots

by David Vergun,
DOD News

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have shaped the history of the U.S. and have had their lives dramatically influenced by moments in its history. Every May, DoD joins the the nation in celebrating Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Denise "Tolo" Atualevao was born in Honolulu. Her mother, Koroseta Ululima Atualevao, and father, Tafale Atoa Atualevao, are both from American Samoa.

Atualevao's mother grew up in the villages of Nua and Se'tega and her father in the village of Leone. "I'm a proud full-blooded Samoan teine," she said, noting that teine means girl in Samoan.

Although she was born in Hawaii, Atualevao grew up in San Diego. Atualevao said she was fortunate to have been able to visit American Samoa twice a year during summer and winter breaks, every year in college until 2014, when she graduated from Graceland University.

Atualevao is fluent in the Samoan language and is knowledgeable about the history and culture of the island.

Since enlisting in the Navy six years ago, Atualevao has been a hospital corpsman, stationed for her first two years at Naval Hospital, Pensacola, Fla., then three years on USS *Blue Ridge* amphibious command ship, homeported in Yokosuka. She is now working at Naval Medical Center Point Loma Clinic.

Besides working as a corpsman, Atualevao is also a member of the All-Navy Women's Volleyball team.

Playing volleyball has given her an added boost in competitiveness, teamwork, leadership



Petty Officer 2nd Class Denise "Tolo" Atualevao, right, a member of the All-Navy Women's Volleyball team, and her competitor, Staff Sgt. Salaia Salav'a, with winning medals (Navy silver, Army gold), at the Armed Forces Tournament May 2019.

and confidence - attributes that are so important to have in the Navy, she said.

"Being one of the team captains has definitely helped build my leadership skills and to not

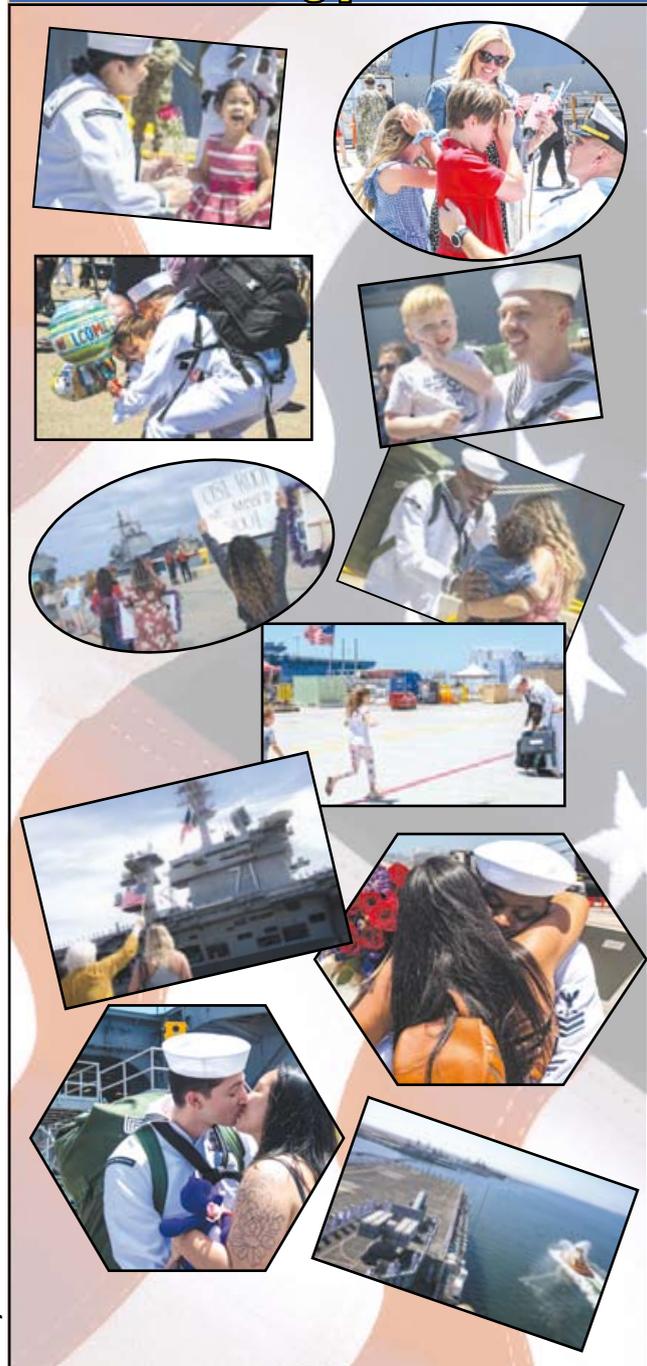
be afraid of whatever adversity we might face together," she said.

Making the cut for the team wasn't too difficult, because Atualevao said she's been playing volleyball continuously ever since she was in the third grade.

Since her team plays against other teams from around the world, Atualevao said she's made a lot of friends in other countries.

Atualevao said her future goal is becoming a health care administrator as a civilian, a Reserve naval officer as a health care administrator, and opening a club for Polynesian volleyball players.

Homecoming photo album



Ships return from deployment to Naval Base San Diego

Continued from page 1
in Kuwait and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Exercise Northern Edge 2021 in Alaska.

Less than two months into deployment, the ARG-MEU team, operated under U.S. Naval Forces Africa, and supported repositioning efforts in the U.S. Africa Command area of responsibility. From Dec. 20, 2020 to Jan. 31, 2021, the *Makin Island* ARG and 15th MEU conducted operations in Somalia and off the coast, as part of the Joint Force Maritime Component Command to Joint Task Force-Quartz, to provide support to OQQ in relocating Department of Defense forces in Somalia to other East Africa operating locations while maintaining pressure on violent extremists and supporting partner forces.

"From aboard the *Makin Island* ARG, the 15th MEU provided contingency response forces on a 24-hour alert status and security forces to facilitate the safe and expedient repositioning of troops from within Somalia," said Lt. Col. George Flynn, commanding officer of BLT 1/4, 15th MEU. "Operation Octave Quartz demonstrated the 15th MEU's ability to flex the entire Marine Air-Ground Task Force to meet combatant commander requirements."

In 5th Fleet, from February to March 2021, the ARG-MEU team operated in the Gulf of Aden, Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, and conducted Theater Am-

phibious Combat Rehearsals in Kuwait, Ras Al-Khair and Tabuk in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance proficiency and readiness while maintaining a tiered crisis response posture in the U.S. Central Command AOR. Ships of the ARG also participated in Group Arabian Sea Warfare Exercise 21 with the French Marine Nationale's Charles de Gaulle carrier strike group. GASWEX 21 was a multilateral maritime exercise in the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman with France, Belgium, and Japan, which allowed participating naval forces to effectively develop the necessary skills in maritime security, anti-air, anti-surface, and anti-submarine warfare to address threats to regional security, freedom of navigation and the free flow of commerce.

Additionally, Marine Corps F-35B Lightning II joint strike fighters with Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 164 (Reinforced), 15th MEU, conducted nine OIR missions as part of broader counterterrorism operations.

While operating in 7th Fleet supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, VMM 164 conducted bilateral operations with the Republic of Singapore Air Force in international waters near Singapore. Somerset participated in La Perouse, a multinational exercise conducted with ships from the Royal Australian Navy, French Navy, and Japan Maritime Self-

Defense Force (JMSDF). The exercise was designed to strengthen interoperability and enhance cooperation in maritime surveillance, maritime interdiction operations, and air operations amongst all participating nations.

The ARG conducted expeditionary strike force operations with the *Theodore Roosevelt* Carrier Strike Group and USS Port Royal guided-missile cruiser in the South China Sea. ESF operations demonstrate U.S. capability to quickly aggregate an integrated naval force to operate all-domain warfare anywhere international law allows.

After returning to U.S. 3rd Fleet, the ARG-MEU team supported Northern Edge 2021 (NE21) from May 3 to 14. Approximately 15,000 U.S. service members participated in a joint training exercise hosted by U.S. Pacific Air Forces on and above the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, the Gulf of Alaska, and temporary maritime activities area. NE21 was one in a series of military exercises designed to sharpen the joint forces' skills; to practice tactics, techniques, and procedures; to improve command, control and communication relationships; and to develop cooperative plans and programs.

Makin Island supported every unit's operations and hosted five embarked units in addition to the MEU, while supporting a broad

cross-section of mission areas.

"This deployment has been operationally diverse - from operating in the heat during Operation Octave Quartz to the cold weather for Northern Edge," said Capt. Tom Ulmer, *Makin Island* commanding officer. "We have sailed independently as well as formed expeditionary strike forces with partners, allies, and other U.S. forces including the French carrier, Charles De Galle and USS *Theodore Roosevelt* strike groups. We have conducted operations in all warfare areas, while building a strong *Makin Island*/15th MEU team - Team Raider - that excelled in all of our challenges—including overcoming COVID. I'm very proud of all our Sailors and Marines for their hard work and dedication. We are excited to be home to reunite with family and friends."

The ARG-MEU conducted more than 10,000 hours of flight operations, 6,800 launch and recoveries, and traveled more than 135,000 nautical miles of open ocean and restricted water transits.

The *Makin Island*/MEU team provided numbered fleet and combatant commanders with a responsive, flexible and forward-deployed asset capable of maritime power projection, contingency operations and crisis response. Their capabilities enabled the shaping the operational environment to protect the U.S. and allied interests in any threat environment.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Social Security Matters Will SS disability hurt SS retirement benefit?

Dear Rusty: My husband turns 65 later this month. He has started having health issues - so much so that we are thinking about talking to his doctor about Social Security Disability. How would this affect him in applying for his Social Security benefits? Should we exhaust disability efforts before applying for his retirement benefits?

--Signed: Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned Wife: In order to qualify for SS Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits, your husband's disability must be considered total and must be expected to last for at least one year. And that will need to be substantiated by medical evidence from his doctor. So, having a discussion with his doctor is the right first step.

Since SSDI benefits are based upon your husband's full retirement age (FRA) benefit amount, if he is awarded SS disability it would have no effect on his FRA benefit amount. In fact, if he is awarded SSDI benefits, they will automatically convert to his regular SS retirement benefit (at the same amount) when he reaches his FRA. SSDI benefits are replaced by SS retirement benefits once FRA is attained.

So, should your husband exhaust disability efforts before applying for his SS retirement benefit? Provided that his doctor will support that he is totally disabled and expected to remain so for at least a year, your husband should apply for SSDI online at www.ssa.gov/applyfordisability. This will establish a base date which will be used to establish a disability onset date, which is what his SSDI benefit will be based upon if later awarded. You should be aware that it takes several months to receive an initial SSDI determination, and that about 2/3rds of all SSDI applications are denied. But there is an appeals process in place which can be used in the event of an initial denial and if he believes that is an unfair decision.

It is also possible for your husband to claim his personal early SS retirement benefit at the same time he applies for SSDI, so he can get some early SS income flowing while his SSDI application is being considered. Then, if his SSDI is later awarded, his smaller SS retirement benefit (reduced for claiming before his FRA) will be replaced by his higher SSDI benefit, and his higher SSDI amount will automatically become his SS retirement amount when he reaches his FRA. However, if your husband's SSDI is not awarded, his reduced SS retirement benefit will be his permanent benefit amount (except, of course, for annual Cost of Living Adjustments).

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

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Military appreciation and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

by John Grimaldi

Take the time to remember those who died so we could live: the men and women of our armed forces by Rebecca Weber, CEO, the Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] Memorial Day will be celebrated on May 31 this year and, once again, it will be defined as the unofficial beginning of summer -- a time for raucous parties and barbecues and the opening of beaches, pools and amusement parks. Have fun, is the motto. And, that's not necessarily a bad thing, as long as you take the time to reflect on the true meaning of the holiday.

It's a day to remember the brave men and women who gave their lives to protect our lives. In fact, May is Military Appreciation Month remembering. And this year it pre-ages the celebration come November of the 100th Anniversary of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

Sergeant Major Gavin McIlvenna served in the U.S. Army over a period of 23 years, including distinguished service as a sniper team leader and operations sergeant major in Iraq, Bosnia, Baghdad and Africa. He also was an Honor Guard at the Tomb of

the Unknown Soldier. Fewer than 700 soldiers have served as Honor Guards at the Tomb since it was dedicated on November 11, 1921. You don't hear much about the Tomb or about the Honor Guards, so McIlvenna, along with three fellow guards, created the Society of the Honor Guard in part to "continue to serve as we did at the tomb" by creating a group dedicated to spreading its history. In a recent interview published in the monthly magazine of the American Legion he put it this way: "this tomb is not just a big piece of marble, or as some have described it, 'a rock.'

There is an unknown American resting under the tomb and in each of the crypts. Each one represents so much more than conflict; they represent the heart of America and what it truly means to serve and sacrifice for others.

I look back fondly on my time at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and like most former tomb guards wish I could be there again standing watch." Find a complete list of the Unknown Soldier events taking place between now and November at <https://tombguard.org/assets/images/news/TUS100-List-of-Events-as-of-050521.pdf>.

Public invited to honor service members, veterans and fallen heroes with a DAV True Patriot Salute

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is holding the 'True Patriot Salute,' a free, customizable video platform that allows the public to pay special tribute to those who have heeded the call to protect our freedoms through May 31. By visiting www.DAVTruePatriotSalute.org, individuals can create and share a personalized video message honoring a service member, veteran or fallen hero in their life.

The DAV True Patriot Salute tool allows users to easily create a personalized video in just a few clicks: (1) add the first name and the branch of service of the person you want to honor, (2) select a description of your honoree, (3) add your first name, and (4) once final, your custom video will be available on your personal video page for easy sharing with family and friends on social media. www.DAVTruePatriotSalute.org

FFSC CLASSES

If you are interested in attending one of these virtual classes, please call our Centralized Scheduling Center at 866-923-6478.

Thurs., June 3 | 0900 - 1030
Wed., June 9 | 1400 - 1600
Thurs., June 17 | 0900 - 1030

If you would like to connect with someone regarding a command-specific training, please email FFSCSDTrainingRequest@navy.mil.

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President awards Medal of Honor to retired Ranger for Korean War heroism

by Devon L. Suits,
Army News Service

President Joe Biden presented the nation's highest military honor to retired Col. Ralph Puckett Jr., May 21, for his actions as a first lieutenant and the Eighth Army Ranger Company commander during the Korean conflict Nov. 25-26, 1950.

After more than a decade of effort ... I'm incredibly proud to give Col. Ralph Puckett's act of valor, the full recognition he always deserved."

-- President Joe Biden

It has been seven decades since the Battle on Hill 205, where Puckett led his 57 Rangers and Korean soldiers against six battalion-sized attacks, marking the start of China's involvement in the Korean conflict against U.S. and U.N. forces.

The company dealt with freezing weather conditions without proper cold-weather gear. Food, ammunition, and supplies were also limited, as supply lines struggled to keep up with the Army's advance.

"The intelligence briefing indicated that there were 25,000 Chinese troops in the area," Biden said. "[Puckett] believed in the fundamentals. It was how he trained his men, and how he had hand picked them, chosen from the ranks of cooks, clerks, and mechanics to [become] the first Ranger company since World War II."

Outnumbered nearly 10-to-1, Puckett directed his company and waves of artillery support through the constant barrage of heavy enemy small-arms and mortar fire. He continually exposed himself to enemy fire as he maneuvered out of this foxhole to scan his defense perimeter and motivate his Soldiers.

Puckett was injured three times throughout the attack. A mortar attack severely injured him during the final Chinese assault. As the enemy overrun Hill 205, he ordered his Rangers to leave him behind and withdraw.

Puckett watched as three Chinese fighters drew closer, bayoneting and shooting the wounded. Disobeying their commander's orders, two of his



President Joe Biden presents the Medal of Honor to Army Col. (Ret.) Ralph Puckett Jr. for conspicuous gallantry during the Korean War at a White House ceremony, May 21. Courtesy photo

Rangers charged and killed the three enemies and pulled their commander out of harm's way.

"They did not hold the hill but the Rangers extracted a high price," Biden said. "[The Korean Conflict] is sometimes called the 'Forgotten War.' Those men who were there under 1st Lt. Puckett's command will never

forget his bravery. They will never forget that he was right by their side throughout every minute of it."

As he reached the base of the hill, Puckett requested a final white phosphorus incendiary munition attack at the top of Hill 205 to secure their egress.

"After more than a decade of effort ... I'm incredibly proud to give Col. Ralph Puckett's act of valor, the full recognition he always deserved," Biden said.

Puckett was offered a medical discharge after the Korean conflict, but he refused. He endured a long recovery, which also led to a chance encounter with Jeannie, the lady who would become his lifelong wife as she visited him in the hospital

on Fort Benning, Georgia, with a close friend. The two married nearly two years later.

"It is not just the person who wears the uniform who serves," Biden said as he addressed Jeannie in the audience. "Military families make enormous sacrifices for our nation. So let me add our thanks to you and your life of service as well."

See MOH page 15

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Withering Heights: The humbling of a seasoned milspouse

As my car wound along Lexington Street through the neat rows of tidy duplexes in Coddington Cove military housing community near Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island, I breathed a long sigh of relief. I'd taken this shortcut to Home Depot many times before, but today it felt like therapy — a comforting and familiar routine.

I had just returned from a two-day apartment-hunting trip to New York City with our daughter, Anna, who was moving there to start her career. In 48 hours, we walked 16 miles, climbed 40 flights of stairs, and toured over 20 apartments. I was sore, tired, and somewhat troubled by the whirlwind trip.

As a "seasoned" military spouse who moved eleven times in 23 years, lived six years overseas, and traveled extensively, I considered myself a model of resilience, adaptability, and grit. But New York City had jackhammered its way through my hard-earned callouses (literally ... I have a blister the size of Fort Bliss on my big toe) and rendered me a pathetic jellyfish, quivering in fear among the shadowy depths of its towering and complex personality.

I was excited to experience Anna's eccentric new locale, with only mild apprehension about my lack of city-savvy. I figured, how different could it be from Rome, London, Paris, and all the other cities we'd visited as a military family? As we'd done before, we'd figure out the subway, find our bearings, hit major landmarks, and sample indigenous cuisine. Easy peasy!

Walking from our Midtown hotel the first morning, I was too distracted

by interesting architecture, charming parks, gargantuan billboards, ethnic restaurants, and fascinating characters to notice the city's seedy underbelly. But soon, the wormy side of the Big Apple exposed itself. Several tiny apartments we toured

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

in the East Village were filthy, with entrances wedged between noodle shops and tattoo parlors. Some had dank basement laundry rooms where rapists might lurk, and others forced tenants to patronize nearby laundromats where heroine addicts nap. In Midtown, I was shocked at what constituted an apartment bedroom: a "flex" space with just enough room for a twin bed, no closet, and if you were lucky to get a window, a lightless view of a brick wall.

The next day, we crossed the Williamsburg Bridge, believing we'd find charming apartments among matcha bars and organic grocers. Our tour began at a bakery with massive wedges of sticky, nutty baklava, but then we saw six apartments, each one with its own appalling deal-breaker.

The last straw happened five feet from a train trestle so crumbling with rust, I thought it might collapse. "Don't worry," our painfully thin and jittery agent told us as we

trudged up another grimy stairwell, "the apartment has noise-cancelling windows." Minutes later, I looked out a bedroom window as a train rumbled by, mere feet from the sill. Not only was the noise deafening, I had to grab my chin to keep my teeth from chattering.

Back in Rhode Island, as I pressed my sore foot to break for military children on their way to Coddington Cove community playground, I shuddered at the memory of two dead rats (one flattened and displaying hideous fangs) among scattered garbage I side-stepped in Brooklyn.

Should I trust our daughter to live in a place that reduced me to a withering pantywaist? Had military life really "toughened me up"? Did I take safety, camaraderie and order for granted after 23 years of living in military communities? Does our daughter have the resilience to succeed in New York City?

Short answers: Yes, yes, yes, and yes.

While military life forces military spouses out of comfort zones, it also coddles us with secure housing, safe neighborhoods, and close-knit communities. Our children, on the other hand, learn from a young age to adapt to new and sometimes frightening situations. They know they might need to climb a few stairs, avoid the dark alleys, and side-step a scary rodent or two before they'll learn the ropes.

It may be hard for a seasoned military spouse like me to admit, but my military child's unique courage sometimes makes her better suited for "the real world" than I am.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Last week I was excited to go out on my first of hopefully many major photo shoots since I began to shelter in place for the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020. I missed taking pictures and, judging from feedback that I received, you missed seeing them.

However, it occurred to me that I am already sitting on a treasure trove of my old photos that you might also enjoy seeing: Can-Am racing from the 1970s, travel around the world, visits to places and events that no longer exist, and so much more. In addition to the photos, I have vivid memories that will enable me to tell you their stories, but there has been a problem: how can I efficiently and affordably digitize them to show them to you?

Back then my pictures were in the form of prints and color slides, not digital. I tried to digitize a few of them a few months ago using a 20-year-old flatbed scanner and a photo adapter, but digitizing just four negatives took me forever to do, and they required a lot of painstaking editing. I have thousands of old slides and negatives. I needed to find a better, much quicker and affordable way to digitize my photos — or they would remain hidden, probably forever.

Thankfully, I am now able to quickly take digital photos of my old images using one of my high resolution Nikon cameras, ES-2

The 'good old days' - Alberta's Rocky Mountains in the 1970s

digitizing adapter and 60mm lens, as well as a bright LED light. Then I edit the images quickly and easily using Adobe's Lightroom.

My first 'good old days' journey back in time takes us back to the Canadian Rocky Mountains in the 1970s.

As a boy, I used to go skiing to the Mt. Norquay, Sunshine and Lake Louise ski areas in the vicinity of Banff, Alberta. We stayed at the majestic Banff Springs Hotel and the Chateau Lake Louise, and the rustic Timberline Hotel.

The upper runs on Mt. Norquay were particularly steep and difficult — black diamond runs.

I was what you might call an advanced intermediate skier. I could ski down almost any steep run — as long as it was covered in packed (not deep powder) snow — through a combination of traversing back and forth across the slope, and then turning on either side on the steep moguls with Stem Christie turns; or snowplowing straight down especially steep, narrow parts.

Stem Christie turns were the 1960s predecessor to parallel turns of the 1990s, which were facilitated by the advent of parabolically sculpted sides of skis.

My first pair of skis were wooden Gressvig Jets. Their "rat trap" bindings consisted of a coiled metal cable that was positioned by metal guides around the base of the (lace-up) ski boots, going up and over the back of the boot's sole, along a groove molded into the sole. The tension of that cable was tightened by pressing down on a lever located

just past the front of each boot, until it snapped into place on the top of each ski. If a ski released during a fall on a steep, black diamond run, it could be quite difficult to put the ski back on.

To go skiing at Sunshine, we had to ride a Brewster Rocky Mountain Gray Line bus from Banff, because from the midpoint of the mountain on up, the narrow gravel road was slippery and barely passable. On one very steep section with very sharp turns, the bus had to back up one of the switchbacks, because there was not enough room to turn. Heavy chains were mandatory.

I fondly remember two of the old railroad-built hotels in Alberta: the beautiful and stately Banff Springs Hotel, and the Chateau Lake Louise. Long ago, the rear of the Banff Springs Hotel had a grand motor coach entrance, leading inside towards a beautiful, rustic, soaring interior, complete with taxidermy animals on the walls. Sadly, when I last visited, that classic hotel entrance had been replaced with a 'brass & glass' entrance at the front of the hotel.

The Timberline Hotel, at the foot of Mt. Norquay, was known for the wild deer that would walk right up to the windows of the dining room as they ate grass.

To see additional photos, visit www.drivetribe.com, click on the magnifying glass, select "POSTS" and enter "AutoMatters & More #693" in their search bar. Please send your comments to AutoMatters@gmail.com.

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NMCS D News Bits



Make note of changes to Pharmacy Hours



Beginning May 29th, 2021, Naval Medical Center San Diego Pharmacy will be closed on Sundays for routine prescription drop off.

The new Pharmacy Hours:

Mon-Fri: 0800 – 1800

Saturday: 0900 – 1700

Sundays: *Closed*

You can stop smoking!

May 31 is World No Tobacco Day, and NMCS D's Health and Wellness Department has resources to help anyone quit their tobacco dependency! Call 619-532-7764 for more information!

Masks still required at NMCS D

Remember, masks are required on board Naval Medical Center San Diego.

MASK UP!

Masks are still required for all staff, patients, and visitors to military hospitals and clinics.

While recent guidance from the CDC and the Department of Defense reduces mask wearing requirements for fully vaccinated individuals, military health care facilities will continue to require face coverings and follow strict infection prevention measures to keep our patients and staff safe.

Throughout the Naval Medical Forces Pacific region, our team is committed to providing the safest environment for the care and treatment of every patient.

As the Defense Health Agency provides more detailed guidance for military treatment facilities, we will adjust our requirements accordingly.



DLA ships Pfizer vaccines overseas for DOD youth

by Beth Reece, Defense Logistics Agency

The Defense Logistics Agency has shipped first and second doses of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine for 12-to-17-year-olds in the U.S. European, Central and Indo-Pacific Commands areas of responsibility.

This is the agency's first handling of the minus 80 degrees Celsius vaccine, which is now included in the Federal Drug Administration's emergency use authorization for adolescents. Employees at the DLA distribution center in Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, packed and shipped more than 46,800 doses on May 14 to 10 service-operated distribution centers in Europe, Japan, Korea and Bahrain. DLA Distribution's Navy Cmdr. Chuck Mielkie said the centers were chosen based on proximity to dependent youth populations and cold-storage handling capability.

"Some already had the minus 80 degrees [Celsius] freezers and others had to procure them, but each site is best suited to further distribute to smaller [administrative] sites and treatment facilities," he said.

DLA has already shipped almost 600,000 doses of the minus

20-degrees Celsius Moderna and 2-to-8 degrees Celsius Johnson & Johnson vaccines for adults outside the continental U.S. or deployed on Navy ships.

"The intent is to provide a safe, authorized and viable vaccine to protect the adolescent population before the fall school year begins. We had a short timeline to get this done, faster than our normal process for flu vaccines or the other two COVID-19 vaccines," said Army Col. Anthony Bostick, head of DLA's operational planning team for COVID-19 vaccine operations.

DLA and Defense Health Agency officials have worked since fall 2020 to plan and distribute Moderna and J&J vaccines to the services with DLA being responsible for shipping doses for Defense Department populations overseas and the Navy fleet. Both agencies have teamed with the services and combatant commands since spring to identify the number of dependent youth who would need the vaccine and assess cold-storage capabilities for Pfizer's version at DLA and military facilities.

Mielkie said initial vaccine shipments to overseas DOD locations are almost complete.

Health Capsules

County will soon make overdose reversal medication available to anyone

by Anita Lightfoot, County of San Diego Communications Office

A COVID-19 related spike in overdose deaths in San Diego County has fueled a behavioral health crisis. In 2020, the County reported 457 fentanyl-related overdose deaths. This is a 202% increase in one year, from 151 recorded deaths in 2019. To help save lives, the County will begin offering nasal Naloxone to the general public at several community-based locations and clinics throughout the region. Naloxone is a medication designed to rapidly reverse an opioid overdose and quickly restore normal respiration and alertness. The overdose reversal drug will be available at no cost and without a prescription to any person at risk of an overdose or to a family member or friend willing to administer the drug. The expanded distribution is part of a harm reduction strategy that will be introduced at the Board of Supervisors meeting next month. Time is critical as overdose patients need immediate intervention to improve their chances of survival. An overdose from opioids may take hours to cause death, but other drugs such as fentanyl can cause death in a matter of minutes. Nasal Naloxone is a prefilled, needle-free device that requires no assembly and is sprayed into one nostril while patients lay on their back.

County mask requirements to be lifted June 15

The County of San Diego joins the State of California and will also wait until June 15 to align current mask requirements to the Center for Disease Control. According to Nathan Fletcher, "San Diego County is aligned with the California Department of Public Health and will wait until June 15th to adopt CDC mask guidance. This short time frame allows us to ensure everyone has access to the vaccine and time for business and entities across our county to prepare for the change...Our careful posture during the pandemic has resulted in a low positivity rate and one of the lowest death rates; continuing the mask requirements for a few more weeks provides an added layer of protection as we work on getting more San Diegans vaccinated. Masks definitely help more than they hurt."

Health news compiled by Madison Campbell



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MOH for retired Army Col. Ralph Puckett Jr.

Continued from page 13

Puckett was initially awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions on Hill 205 in 1951. He served in Vietnam in 1967, where he received a second Distinguished Service Cross for his efforts.

Throughout his career, he received two Silver Stars; two Legions of Merit; two Bronze Stars with V device for valor; five Purple Hearts; ten Air Medals; the Army Commendation Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal, among others.

After retiring from the Army in 1971, he moved to Columbus, Georgia, and continued to serve in different capacities.

In 1992, he was selected as an inaugural inductee into the U.S. Army Ranger Hall of Fame. He also provided a wealth of experience to the 75th Ranger Regiment



Army Col. Ralph Puckett Jr.

that it was a great honor to be invited to the ceremony as the first foreign leader to participate in an event.

“Col. Puckett is a true hero of the Korean War,” Moon said. “Without the sacrifice of veterans including Col. Puckett and the Eighth Army Ranger Company,

Col. Puckett is a true hero of the Korean War.”

--South Korean President Moon Jae-in

are a link that thoroughly binds Korea and the U.S. together.”

Puckett’s wife, kids, and grandkids, along with retired Lt. Col. John Lock, a military historian that pushed for the Medal of Honor upgrade, were in attendance. Also joining them was retired Master Sgt. Merle Simpson, a former technical sergeant and heavy weapons squad leader that fought in the battle.

“I never thought I would be picked for the company,” Simpson said, during an interview on Thursday. “Puckett impressed me. If you made a mistake, you would do 50 pushups, and he would do 50 with you. There is no telling how many a day he did.”

Puckett’s influence pushed Simpson to be a better Ranger and leader. He was defending the other side of Hill 205 when he heard his commander was severely wounded. The news was hard to accept for him and the rest of the company, he recalled.

“It was hard for Ralph to lose a man, and he has never forgotten that,” Simpson added. “I cannot speak for all those that passed away, but I am honored to be part of this. He was the type to influence everybody, including me.”



Army Col. Ralph Puckett Jr. went above and beyond the call of duty as the Eighth Army Ranger Company’s commanding officer during a multiday operation in North Korea that started on Nov. 25, 1950.

as the regiment’s first honorary colonel starting in 1996. What was supposed to be a conditional two-year term lasted until 2006.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in attended the ceremony to pay his respects to Puckett, his family, and the Eighth Army Ranger Company.

“I find it truly meaningful to join the Medal of Honor presentation ceremony for Col. Ralph Puckett Jr.,” Moon said, adding

freedom, and democracy we enjoy today couldn’t have blossomed in Korea.”

“From the ashes of the Korean War we came back and that was thanks to the war veterans who fought for Korea’s peace and freedom,” Moon added. The Republic of Korea and the U.S. alliance was forged in blood from heroes has become a linchpin of peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and beyond. Col. Puckett and his fellow warriors

New partnership allows Project Recover team to go beyond discovery to recovery

A new partnership between Project Recover, an organization whose mission is to repatriate Americans missing in action (MIA) since World War II, and Legion Undersea Services, a veteran-owned team of former U.S. Navy divers, has expanded Project Recover’s mission to go beyond discovery to recovery of MIAs around the world to provide recognition and closure for families.

Project Recover uses innovative science and technology to search for MIAs. By partnering with Legion Undersea Services, Project Recover can leverage the commercial divers and marine professionals’ expertise in surface-supply diving to recover MIAs from underwater crash sites. Legion Undersea Services was founded by John Marsack and Nick Zaborski, two former U.S. Navy deep-sea divers, and the majority of team members have been on at



Zaborski

least one mission to recover MIAs with the Navy.

“Legion Undersea Services’ decades of experience and expertise as Navy divers will significantly expand Project Recover’s underwater capabilities, while adding a higher level of safety,” said Derek Abbey, Ph.D., Project Recover president. “Our partnership will



Abbey

aid in the return of our nation’s MIAs.”

Zaborski brings extensive experience to the partnership. He served as a diving supervisor on a recovery mission conducted by JPAC in 2008, helping to recover 8 MIAs from B-24 ‘453 located by Project Recover.

“Doing this type of mission in the past was the highlight of my career as a Navy diver, as it was for many others on our team,” said Nick Zaborski, Legion Undersea Services co-founder and managing partner. “Each of us has a vast set of underwater skills that we’ve been honing over a lifetime, and I simply cannot imagine a more rewarding way for us to put them to use.”

Zaborski and Marsack were inspired to form a company combining their deep-sea diving expertise and the code of honor and ethics they learned as divers in the US Navy.

“There is no higher honor than helping to bring American heroes home,” said John Marsack, Legion Undersea Services co-founder and managing partner. “Our mission

lead to more opportunities to partner with the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency and

gets us up in the morning, and makes us work harder, longer, and refuse to quit until the job is done.”

All findings are turned over to the Defense POW-MIA Accounting Agency for MIA’s identification and repatriation to their country and family. Learn more about Project Recover and the science behind the search for MIAs at projectrecover.org. Discover all the services provided by the veteran-owned Legion Undersea Services at legionundersea.com.



Marsack

Project Recover began as Dr. Pat Scannon’s vision to bring MIAs home from Palau in 1993. Formerly known as The BentProp Project, the organization has grown from a grassroots effort to a team of dedicated professionals and volunteers using innovative science to bring our MIAs home. Over nearly three decades, the team has located more than 30 US World War II aircraft associated with more than 100 MIAs in missions around the globe.

In 2012, Project Recover was informally founded as a collaborative partnership between Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, and University of Delaware. In 2016, the partnership was formalized. In 2018, The BentProp Project officially changed its name to Project Recover. The organization works in close partnership with Scripps and UDEL.



Scannon

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