

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

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Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

JUNE 16-30, 2026



OCEANSIDE CELEBRATES AMERICA 250 WITH PARADE AND FESTIVAL SATURDAY, JUNE 27

America's turning 250, and O'side is throwing the kind of party that'd make the Founding Fathers loosen their collars.

On Saturday, June 27, from noon to 6 p.m., the Oceanside Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with County Supervisor Jim Desmond, will host the Oceanside USA 250 Festival—a community festival honoring America's 250th birthday at the Junior Seau Pier Amphitheater.

Join us for an afternoon of live music, local flavor, and classic Americana. Country star Craig Campbell headlines the stage alongside a full lineup of performances, while hundreds of local vendors, artists and community groups bring the celebration to life and showcase Oceanside's pride and patriotic spirit.

Enjoy chili cook-offs, pinewood derby races, a full fun zone packed with free kids' activities and plenty



of good eats along the way. Come celebrate 250 years of community, creativity, and freedom the O'side way.

As one of Southern California's most diverse and patriotic coastal communities, Oceanside is the perfect place to mark this historic milestone.

The festival will be held immediately following Oceanside's Annual Independence Parade.

INDEPENDENCE PARADE

Get ready to wave the flag and line the streets!

MainStreet Oceanside is thrilled to invite you to the 2026 Oceanside Independence Parade on June 27 from 10 a.m. to noon. As we join the nation in celebrating America 250, this year's procession promises to be our most historic yet. A beloved tradition since 1892, the parade is a tribute to our community's spirit, our hometown heroes, and our country's heritage.

Q: WHY ISN'T THE PARADE ON THE 4TH OF JULY?

A: We're glad you asked!

Since Oceanside is a Southern California beach community, the time around the Independence Day Holiday is very busy for the city and especially the Oceanside Police Department. The parade

Saturday, June 27

- Oceanside Independence Parade
- 10 a.m.-Noon on Coast Highway
- Free Admission America 250 Festival
- Noon-6 p.m. (right after the parade)
- Junior Seau Pier Amphitheater
- For more information visit: oceansideUSA250Festival.com.

requires the assistance of many city departments. Each year the parade committee consults with the City of Oceanside officials to determine an appropriate date for the parade.

Not staging the Independence Parade on the 4th of July has the added benefit of allowing certain parade participants like the 1st Marine Division Band to participate every year. Furthermore, many of our participants and volunteers prefer to share the actual 4th of July holiday with their family and friends.

USS Carl Vinson earns 2025 Battle 'E' award

SAN DIEGO - Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* earned the 2025 aircraft carrier Battle Effectiveness award, announced recently by Commander, Naval Air Forces.

The Battle "E" award recognizes Navy commands that display superior performance during operations, inspections, certifications, assessments and training events in a competitive cycle, assessing their proficiency and overall effectiveness in all phases of operations.

"The *Carl Vinson* team displayed unrelenting perseverance and superior performance as they successfully carried out sustained operations at sea throughout 2025," said Capt. Joshua Wenker, commander of *Carl Vinson*. "Our Sailors worked together to successfully execute a wide range of missions while operating in the Western Pacific and the Middle East, once again setting the standard for courage and steadfastness. I could not be more proud of my team, and their achievements continue to add to the storied history and legacy that has made this ship America's Favorite Carrier!"

Carl Vinson's deployment accomplishments contributed to their selection for the prestigious recognition. During its nine-month deployment to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operations, the Sailors of the *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group completed more than 10,000 sorties and 23,000 flight hours, carried out 45 replenishments-at-sea and sailed over 275,000 nautical miles combined.

In addition to the overall command achievement, eleven departments earned distinction, and individual Sailors who served aboard in 2025 have been authorized to wear the Battle "E" ribbon as a visual representation of their excellent performance.

Carl Vinson also earned awards for Carrier Maintenance and Environment Protection and Energy Conservation, demonstrating the ship's dedication to comprehensive maintenance capabilities and coordinated logistics as a core component to keeping the fleet ready to fight.

Carl Vinson is America's third Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, and its mission is to conduct carrier air warfare operations and assist in planning, control, coordination and integration of air wing squadrons in support of carrier air warfare. The ship's namesake honors one of the longest-serving U.S. congressmen in history who had a profound impact on naval shipbuilding and strategic operational capacity with the Two-Ocean Navy Act of 1940.

Carl Vinson is the flagship of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, and CSG-1 consists of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2, guided-missile cruiser USS *Cape St. George*, the Zumwalt class DDG USS *Michael Monsoor*, the Flight III DDG USS *Jack H. Lucas* and the guided-missile destroyers of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 1.



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San Antonio tow company to pay \$280K for illegally auctioning servicemember-owned vehicles

In a May 28 release from the Justice Department, they announced that San Antonio-based tow company Vehicle Management Solutions Inc. (VMS) will pay \$280,000 to resolve allegations that the company illegally sold or scrapped approximately 93 vehicles owned by U.S. servicemembers in violation of the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA).

The Department alleges that VMS engaged in a pattern or practice of auctioning or otherwise disposing of vehicles owned by SCRA-protected servicemembers without obtaining the required court orders.

The Department began investigating VMS after receiving a complaint from a servicemember whose vehicle was towed and auctioned by VMS in 2024 while he was serving on an overseas deployment in Kosovo.

The SCRA is a federal law that provides a variety of financial and housing protections to members of the U.S. military. The law prohibits a towing company from selling a vehicle owned by an SCRA-protected servicemember unless the company first obtains a court order authorizing the sale.

Under the settlement, VMS will pay \$220,000 in com-

ensation to the affected servicemembers. VMS will also pay a \$60,000 civil penalty to the U.S. Treasury and will be required to make policy and training changes to avoid committing future violations.

The Department's enforcement of the SCRA is conducted by the Civil Rights Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section in partnership with U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the country.

Department of Justice Office of Public Affairs

A former employee of a shelving and storage distributor pleaded guilty June 2 to two felonies for conspiring to rig bids and defraud the Department of War. As the defendant admitted in open court, his crimes related to the sale of shelving and storage products to the U.S. Air Force to service multiple healthcare and operations facilities.

According to the information and plea agreement filed in the Middle District of Georgia, Scott G. Srodes, 65, of Las Vegas, and his co-conspirators submitted collusive bids for multiple projects at healthcare facilities at Air Force Base Moody in Valdosta, Georgia, and for aircraft maintenance facilities at Air Force Base Nellis in

Las Vegas. Srodes and his co-conspirators exchanged pricing information prior to submitting them, at times instructing each other exactly what price to quote for certain projects.

The projects, which had a total value of more than \$1.8 million, were funded through the Defense Logistics Agency's Facilities Maintenance, Repair, and Operations Program. The guilty plea is the second in an ongoing investigation into bid rigging and fraud impacting U.S. military facilities in the U.S.

Nevada man pleads guilty to rigging bids for healthcare-related and other Air Force projects

“America's warfighters deserve the best healthcare, and bid rigging that distorts healthcare procurement deprives them of free and fair competition,” said Acting Deputy Assistant Attorney General Daniel W. Glad of the Justice

Department's Antitrust Division. “The Antitrust Division's Procurement Collusion Strike Force and its partners will continue to hold accountable those whose schemes increase healthcare-related costs in the United States.”

“The Air Force Office of Special Investigations remains steadfast in our mission to protect the integrity of Department of Defense procurement processes and safeguard resources critical to the readiness and welfare of our Airmen,” said Special Agent in Charge Derrell Freeman of the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Southeast Field Office.

The maximum penalty for a conspiracy to rig bids in violation of the Sherman Act for an individual is 10 years in prison

legally sold. Towing companies must comply with federal laws that protect servicemembers or face serious consequences,” said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. “The Department of Justice stands with our men and women in uniform and will vigorously defend their rights under the law.”

“The Western District of Texas is proud to be home to

countless military members and their families, as well as many veterans of our Armed Forces. Deploying is hard enough. Worrying about the safety and security of one's personal property while deployed is a concern no member of our military should carry,” said U.S. Attorney Justin R. Simmons for the Western District of Texas.

“In the Western District of Texas, we will always fight

for those that fight for us, both while they are home and while serving our country overseas. This case is an example of our resolve and commitment to that mission.”

Servicemembers and their dependents who believe that their rights under the SCRA may have been violated should contact the nearest Armed Forces Legal Assistance Program Office. Locations can be found at legalassistance.law.af.mil.

To learn more about the PCSF, or to report information on bid rigging, price fixing, market allocation and other anticompetitive conduct related to government spending, go to www.justice.gov/procurement-collusion-strike-force.

Whistleblowers who voluntarily report original information about antitrust and related offenses that result in criminal fines or other recoveries of at least \$1 million may be eligible to receive a whistleblower reward. Whistleblower awards can range from 15 to 30 percent of the money collected.

For more information on the Antitrust Whistleblower Rewards Program, including a link to submit reports, visit www.justice.gov/atr/whistleblower-rewards.

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Navy establishes NSA Stirling in Australia

by Commander, Naval Forces Japan

The Navy established a new naval support activity in Perth, Australia, May 30, as part of AUKUS, the enhanced trilateral security partnership between the U.S., Australia and the United Kingdom.

This move follows a trilateral joint statement announced the same day, confirming the accomplishment of key milestones for Submarine Rotational Force – West, which will support the rotational presence of U.S. and U.K. submarines at Australia's HMAS Stirling base in Western Australia.

Naval Support Activity Stirling will provide support services and programs for U.S. service members, civilian personnel, contractors and their families assigned to SRF-West.

"Establishment of NSA Stirling with our AUKUS partners demonstrates our command mission to support the fleet, warfighter and family," said U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command. "By providing essential services to U.S. personnel and their families, NSA Stirling will enhance rotational submarine force readiness."

Navy Region Japan was tasked in October 2024 to stand up the support activity. The submarine rotational force was established with the approval of the Australian government.

"We are currently in the early stages of establishing NSA Stirling," said U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Ian Johnson, commander of Navy Region Japan. "While there is still much work ahead, we are confident in our ability to accomplish this task through strong collaboration with our AUKUS partners."

NSA Stirling will provide robust support for U.S. service members, civilians and their families, connecting U.S. personnel to quality housing, healthcare, childcare and recreation to ensure their well-being during their assignment.

The Department of War's Joint Statement, AUKUS Defense Ministers' meeting can be found at <https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4504769/joint-statement-aukus-defense-ministers-meeting/>.

For more information about NSA Stirling, contact Navy Region Japan Public Affairs at <mailto:CNFJ-CNRJ-N00P-PAO@us.navy.mil>.

Commander, Navy Region Japan website: <https://cnrj.cnic.navy.mil/>.

Commander, Navy Installations Command website: <https://www.cnic.navy.mil/>.



Line riggers aboard Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Minnesota (SSN 783) prepare the sub to dock at HMAS Stirling, Western Australia, Feb. 25, 2025. Minnesota arrived in Western Australia kicking off the first of two planned U.S. fast-attack submarine visits to HMAS Stirling in 2025. Minnesota is currently on deployment supporting the U.S. 7th Fleet, the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, operating with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region. U.S. Navy photo by Lt. James Caliva

Pentagon balks at court order allowing HIV-positive persons to serve



Military Times reported June 4 that the Department of Defense has filed a motion to block a June 2 court order that required it to allow recruits with asymptomatic HIV to enlist or commission into the U.S. military.

Attorneys for the Pentagon filed a motion June 3 asking the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit to reconsider its decision in the case, Wilkins v. Hegseth, which lifted a stay on prohibiting HIV-positive people whose infections are controlled by medication and who otherwise qualify from serving while the case continues, reported *Military Times*.

Circuit Court Judge Leonie Brinkema of the Eastern District Court of Virginia ruled that with treatment advances — and previous court rulings that allowed infected personnel to continue serving and deploy — civilians with controlled levels of the virus should be allowed to serve.

<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2026/06/04/pentagon-balks-at-court-order-allowing-hiv-positive-persons-to-serve/>

CENTCOM forces defeat missiles, drones launched by Iran

USCENTCOM

TAMPA, Fla. - U.S. forces intercepted multiple Iranian ballistic missiles and drones launched by Iran toward the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf neighbors in early June.

Iran fired seven ballistic missiles toward Kuwait and Bahrain hours after U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) shot down four Iranian one-way attack drones that were launched toward the Strait of Hormuz. The attack drones posed an immediate threat to regional maritime traffic. U.S. forces subsequently struck Iranian coastal surveillance radar sites in Goruk and on Qeshm Island to defend against further maritime attacks.

Initial assessments indicate six of the missiles launched by Iran were intercepted and a seventh did not reach its intended target. There are currently no reports of harm to U.S. personnel, and Iranian claims of damaging U.S. 5th fleet headquarters in Bahrain are false.

CENTCOM forces remain vigilant and postured to continue responding to unwarranted Iranian aggression in self-defense.

San Diego-based aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* is deployed in that area, and is assisting in the blockade against Iran.

As of June 8, CENTCOM forces have disabled seven non-compliant vessels, redirected 134 ships that complied, and allowed 42 vessels supporting humanitarian aid to pass since initiating the blockade on April 13.

War Department signs \$9.7B deal for tech services

Pentagon News

The War Department announced recently a five-year agreement to purchase Microsoft Services — a move expected to save the department \$422 million annually.

"The Department of War is taking a definitive step forward to advance our digital infrastructure to deter near-peer adversaries by awarding a five-year, \$9.7 billion Core Enterprise Technology Agreement to Dell Federal Systems," said Kirsten A. Davies, DOW chief information officer. "This second-generation blanket purchase agreement will streamline and consolidate critical Microsoft software and services across the Department of War, the intelligence community and the U.S. Coast Guard."

The agreement provides the department with access to Microsoft 365, advanced cloud subscriptions and critical on-premises licensing; it's the department's largest to date.

"This CETA acts as part of the digital connective tissue essential for Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control ... this ensures our warfighters have the tools for just-in-time data sharing, supports our pivot to [artificial intelligence] and data analytics, and undergirds uninterrupted operational continuity for our most sensitive and disconnected environments," Davies said.

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The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These weekly or monthly assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
<https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/>

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War Department leaders observe Kansas City's counter-drone preparations ahead of World Cup

by Lt. Col. Adam Scher

Joint Interagency Task Force 401
Joint Interagency Task Force 401 recently visited Kansas City, to meet with federal, state, and local law enforcement and public safety partners ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The visit highlighted Kansas City's readiness and the inter-agency coordination required to protect facilities, fan areas and surrounding communities from unauthorized drone activity. JIATF 401 continues to share

knowledge and best practices with World Cup host cities for countering illicit unmanned aircraft systems.

Kansas City public safety partners demonstrated how they are integrating air domain awareness, real-time operations and drone response procedures into broader World Cup security planning.

The visit included meetings with security personnel at Arrowhead Stadium and with local police, fire, emergency manage-

ment, intelligence, aviation and federal law enforcement partners in fan zones. Representatives from the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration, Customs and Border Protection, FBI and Federal Air Marshals attended the visit, showcasing a whole-of-government effort in counter-drone preparations.

"Kansas City is ready because our federal, state and local partners have been preparing deliberately and working together

from the start," said Kansas City Police Department Maj. Greg Williams, who oversees the operational support division. "Our focus is on keeping fans, players, staff and the broader community safe, and that requires the kind of coordinated interagency effort we have built here."

The War Department is supporting World Cup counter-UAS preparations in coordination with the White House FIFA World Cup Task Force by enabling access to more than \$100 million in counter-UAS capabilities.

U.S. Army court-martial most recent results

On June 2, at a special court-martial convened at Fort Drum, N.Y., SPC Maxwell I. Hart was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of communicating a threat and one specification of obstructing justice in violation of Articles 115 and 131b, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 7 days, and to be discharged from the service with a bad-conduct discharge. The sentence was consistent with the terms of a plea agreement.

On June 2, at a general court-martial convened at Fort Stewart,

Ga., SSG Thomas J. Gwynn was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of two specifications of indecent visual recording in violation of Article 120c, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be reduced to the grade of E-1, to be confined for 8 months, and to be discharged from the service with a bad-conduct discharge. The sentence was consistent with the terms of a plea agreement.

On May 27, at a special court-martial convened at Fort Knox, Ken., 1 Lt. Innocent Adebisi was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of larceny

and wrongful appropriation in violation of Article 121, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 20 days. The sentence was consistent with the terms of the plea agreement.

On May 21, at a general court-martial convened at Fort Drum, SPC Matthew A. Navejar was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his pleas, of one specification of viewing child pornography in violation of Article 134, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 11 months and to be discharged from the service with a dishonorable discharge.

The sentence was consistent with the terms of a plea agreement.

On May 21, at a general court-martial convened at Fort Bragg, N.C., Private (E-2) Shaun D. Seewald was convicted by a military judge, pursuant to his plea, of six specifications of possession of child pornography in violation of Article 134, UCMJ. The military judge sentenced the accused to be confined for 45 months and to be discharged from the service with a bad-conduct discharge. The sentence was consistent with the terms of a plea agreement.



Top 5

- *Hezbollah rejects Israel-Lebanon truce as Trump scrambles to end Iran war
- *Pentagon balks at court order allowing HIV-positive persons to serve
- *The U.S. needs drones, not Trump-class battleships, Democrats argue
- *Navy eliminates regular performance, fitness reports for select paygrades
- *Hegseth doubles down on Anthropic's security risk designation
- Army**
- *Army's plan for military death row executions is named 'Operation Resolute Justice'
- *Army MP in Germany sentenced to 20 years for child pornography crimes
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- *Navy fires leadership trio of ship repair facility in Japan
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- *Coast Guard to hold ribbon-cutting ceremony for new Alabama training center
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- Cyber, Space & Unmanned**
- *New coalition will enter legal debate over industry's role in government cyber missions
- Defense Industry**
- *Microsoft to tighten human rights measures after inquiry into Israel's use of its tech
- *Dutch plant for combat-zone robots offers fresh supply pipeline for Ukraine
- *Rheinmetall sells struggling auto division to focus on defense

DOW releases list of Chinese military companies in accordance with NDAA for Fiscal Year 2021

On June 8, the Department of War released an update to the names of "Chinese military companies" operating directly or indirectly in the United States in accordance with the statutory requirement of Section 1260H of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, which is available on the Public Inspection Issue of the Federal Register. After the Department conducted its due diligence, it identified 188 entities that meet the statutory requirements for inclusion on the most recent 1260H List.

The Department will update the list with additional entities as appropriate. The U.S. government reserves the right to take additional actions on these entities under authorities other than Section 1260H. The list is available at <https://media.defense.gov/2026/Jun/08/2003945537/-1/-1/1/entities-identified-as-chinese-military-companies-operating-in-the-united-states-in-accordance-with-section-1260h.pdf>.

The Assistant Secretary of War for Industrial Base Policy works with domestic and international partners to forge and sustain a robust, secure, and resilient industrial base enabling the warfighter, now and in the future.

Monthly observances for June: Soul food, fresh fruit, humility

African-American Music Appreciation Month
Nat'l Safety Month
Nat'l Steakhouse Month
Nat'l Fireworks Safety Month
Nat'l Dairy Month
Nat'l Iced Tea Month
Country Cooking Month
Nati'l Soul Food Month
Nat'l Frozen Yogurt Month
Nat'l Lemon Month
Nat'l Fidelity Month
Nat'l Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month
Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month
Idaho Wine Month

Christian Heritage Month
America First Month
Nat'l Papaya Month
Nat'l Dairy Alternative
Nat'l Homeownership Month
Nat'l Ocean Month
Rebuild Your Life Month
Nat'l DJ Month
Nat'l Defensive Gun Use Awareness Month
Nat'l Pet Preparedness
Fight the Filthy Fly Month
Audiobook Appreciation
Nat'l Portuguese Heritage
Women's Golf Month
Nat'l Myasthenia Gravis Awareness Month

Nat'l Migraine and Headache Awareness Month
Nat'l Veteran's Month
Jurassic June
Child Vision Awareness
Nat'l Accordion Awareness
Nat'l Child Safety Awareness
PTSD Awareness Month
Nat'l Rum Punch Month
Nat'l Scoliosis Awareness
Humility Month
Cancer Immunotherapy
Dravet Syndrome Awareness
Lipedema Awareness Month
Nat'l Adult Sex-Ed Month
Wound Healing Awareness
Loeys-Dietz Syndrome

Awareness Month
Nat'l Scleroderma Awareness
NPE Awareness Month
Int'l Cavemous Angioma Awareness Month
Toon June
Sacred Heart of Jesus Month
Nat'l Corn and Cucumber
California Avocado Month
That's A Shame Month
Nat'l Mango Month
Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month
Sorghum Month
Nat'l Sun Safety Month
Lane Courtesy Month
Adopt A Cat Month



Places of Worship



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First Baptist Church of Coronado

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Jim W. Baize, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com
Sunday Adult Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10am
Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook
FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado [email: secretary@fbcoronado.com](mailto:secretary@fbcoronado.com)
445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588

Mesa View Baptist Church

Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CWO3, USMC (Ret.)
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619-733-0621 • www.militaryoutreachministries.org

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church San Diego

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•**Real Relationships (MFR-REL0001)**. This course shows participants how to identify the hallmarks of resilient, meaningful, and healthy relationships. It also helps participants build skills such as communication, conflict resolution, and setting boundaries, to make their relationships stronger. This course is appropriate for anyone interested in strengthening or starting relationships. The course content focuses on familial, work, and romantic relationships.

•**OSCAR Warriors Pre-Deployment Cycle Training (OS-CARDCTWP)** for sergeants and below and OSCAR Leaders Pre-Deployment Cycle Training (OSCARDCTLP) for staff sergeants and above, including officers. These required courses help prevent, identify, and effectively manage combat and operational stress.

•**Journey to Recruiting Duty (MCRCJTRD01)**. This course prepares Marines who are potential recruiters to advance the best personal and professional version of themselves as they work to bring the best warfighters into the Marine Corps. It also builds skills and increases positive behaviors for recruiters and their families to enhance mission readiness, retention, resilience, and quality of life. It is intended to supplement the in-person version of the training, which is offered to Marines who have been identified as potential recruiters and their families to prepare them for this critical duty assignment.

•**Credit and Debt (MFR-CURCRDT)**. This curriculum includes Introduction to Credit, Using and Managing Credit, Introduction to Debt Management, and Addressing Excessive Debt. This group of courses is for anyone who wants to learn more about credit and debt.

•**Developing a Spending Plan (MFRSPEND01)**. Developing a Spending Plan provides instructional content, assessments, and activities that will inform participants on how to create a spending plan and keep track of their financial health. It is appropriate for anyone who wants to build or update a budget

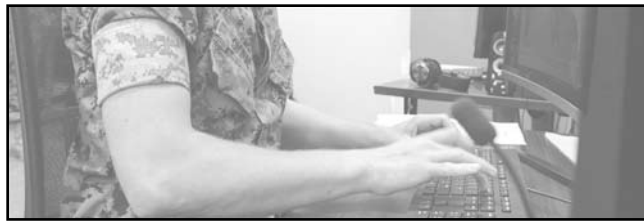


Photo courtesy of Marine Corps Community Services.

and can be a great refresher or a head start before a personal meeting with an installation PFM or unit CFS.

•**Planning Your Retirement (MFRRET0001)**. This course provides instructional content and activities to help participants plan for their eventual retirement



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from full-time employment. If you want to retire someday, this course is for you.

•**Military Non-cash Benefits (MFRCOMP003)**. This course provides instructional content

Secretary of War flag officer announcement

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth announced June 8 that the president has nominated Rear Adm. **Marc J. Miguez** (at right) for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as commander, Third Fleet, San Diego.

Miguez most recently served as Navy chief of Legislative Affairs, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

and activities that will inform you about the value of non-cash benefits and motivate you to use the offered programs and services. It's appropriate for anyone who wants to make the most of the non-cash benefits that make up total compensation for Marines.

•**Intro to Tuition Assistance: TA Brief (MFRPRETA01)**. This course provides instructional content and activities that will inform you about what Tuition Assistance (TA) is, who is eligible, and how to apply and maintain user requirements. The course also helps participants find other funding options, including other military education benefits and relevant resources. It is appropriate for any Marine considering using TA and is required for first-time users.

You will need a MarineNet account to access these on-demand trainings. Marines and their spouses are eligible for MarineNet accounts, <https://www.marines.mil/Marines/>.



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Navy optimizes modern approach to health and fitness

by Scott Sutherland
Staff writer

Besides underway replenishments at sea, fueling the fleet now takes on a slightly modified meaning, what the Navy calls a new Food Service Transformation, or fueling the force.

Devised by the Navy's worldwide shore-based Navy Installations Command, the program is in two parts: first, it recalibrates physical fitness to enhance warfighter support, and it promotes the holistic wellness. In general terms, holistic wellness is an approach to healthcare and daily living that treats the mind, body, and spirit as interconnected systems rather than separate parts.

And second, the fit to fight concept deals with optimizing nutrition so Sailors focus on performance readiness through modern, campus-style dining with more of the primary nutrients - carbohydrates, protein and fat.

Called Human Performance Optimization (HPO), the first part of the program kicked off Feb. 2 at the fleet fitness center on the outside of Naval Base San Diego. In a Feb. 6 story by Lt. Drew Verbis, public affairs officer at the naval base, the program is designed to enhance an individual's physical, mental, emotional and nutritional capabilities in order to maximize effectiveness, productivity and overall well-being.

In the story, Capt. Brian Bun-



Navy galleys like Mercer Hall, shown here on NBSD, will soon have a diet of change under the Navy's Human Performance Optimization program. Armed Forces Dispatch photo by Scott Sutherland

gay, base commander, said, "We must treat our Sailors like world-class athletes, and the HPO initiative is a direct reflection of that vision."

The next step is using proper nutrition as fuel to fuel the warfighting requirements - sustaining long distance fitness endurance and muscle endurance. As of Jan. 21, the Pentagon changed body fat standards to 18-26 percent for men and between 26-36 percent for women. The same standards for the general population range from 15-20 percent for males and 25-30 percent for females.

The Navy Food Service Transformation (NFST) initiative is currently being piloted at Naval Base Kitsap, Wash., and Naval Construction Battalion Center Gulfport, Miss., and its hope is to shape the dining experience with high-quality, nutritious and customizable meal options. Navy

culinary specialists are at the head of the line, as some went through a weeklong session in Gulfport in aligning their skills to meet the new health standards.

In a recent story on the Navy Newsstand (navy.mil), Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command, said that by providing Sailors with high-quality, nutritious food and top-tier wellness resources, "we are directly investing in their physical and mental resilience. A well-supported, healthy, and focused Sailor is a more lethal warfighter, and these pilot programs are a critical step toward ensuring our force is always ready to meet any challenge."

In today's environment of technological changes and optimal health and fitness, troops need any edge they can get to stay on top.

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The FFR workforce offers a wealth of expertise from which they recruit and develop leaders. Grow professionally and reach your full potential with Navy FFR. View the current openings at navylifesw.com/careers. A few jobs available include MWR Assistant Golf Operations Manager, MWR Food Service Worker, MWR Motor Vehicle Operator (Greenskeeper) and MWR Fitness Specialist.

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NAVFAC Southwest wins CONUS FEC Fiscal Year 2025 Best of Type award

by **Mario Icarl**
NAVFAC Southwest

SAN DIEGO - Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Commander Rear Adm. Jeffrey Kilian recognized NAVFAC Southwest as Best of Type award recipient for CONUS Facilities Engineering Commands for FY 2025 in late May.

"The initiative and devoted commitment to excellence displayed by all FEC were remark-

able," said Kilian. "This was particularly evident in their approach to innovation and problem-solving, where they actively sought opportunities to improve existing processes and develop novel solutions for emerging challenges. Congratulations to NAVFAC Southwest for outstanding performance throughout fiscal year 2025. A job very well done-Bravo Zulu!"

The NAVFAC Best of Type

program recognizes the most outstanding FEC in both the continental United States and outside continental U.S. for the prior fiscal year. The winning commands demonstrated sustained superior performance across five functional areas of military construction, Performance to Plan, execution excellence, safety performance, fiscal stewardship, and people recognition and development programs.



Rear Adm. Jeffrey Kilian presented NAVFAC Southwest Commanding Officer Capt. Cathy Eyrich a plaque commemorating NAVFAC's Selection as CONUS FEC Best of Type 2025 Award, May 29 in Washington Navy Yard. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Christopher Stachyra

"This award is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and excellence of every single person in our command," said NAVFAC Southwest Commanding Officer Capt. Cathy Eyrich. "This is about aligned teams, shared accountability, and a commitment to mission success, resulting in NAVFAC Southwest delivering meaningful outcomes

for the Foundry. This recognition validates that we are not just meeting expectations; we are setting the benchmark for NAVFAC performance across the enterprise. It's a proud moment for all of us and a direct reflection of the talent and dedication of the Southwest team."

NAVFAC Southwest was com-

mended for its exceptional Centrally Managed Program (CMP) delivery and its effective execution of military construction projects. The command achieved the highest CMP delivery rates among all NAVFAC CONUS commands. Furthermore, the team demonstrated outstanding results in its Cyber Operations Capabilities assessment and maintained mishap rates below other commands through proactive safety training.

As outside continental U.S., or OCONUS, Best of Type, NAVFAC Hawaii is recognized for exceptional management of its Public Works program, demonstrating both strong fiscal stewardship and safety performance. Additionally, NAVFAC Hawaii distinguished itself by achieving the highest Contractor Performance Assessment Report completion rate in the NAVFAC enterprise through its prompt and objective evaluation of contractors and earned the highest Pre-Award Performance to Plan ratings across all NAVFAC OCONUS commands.

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Capstones to commencement: Leadership EDGE cohorts cross the finish line

by **Deidre Patin**

Naval Air Warfare Center

After 18 months of intensive training, 74 aspiring leaders from Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division faced their final challenge: presenting their

capstone projects at Point Mugu and China Lake events on June 2 and 3.

The successful showcase served as the final requirement of the program and was im-

mediately followed by graduation ceremonies celebrating the cohorts' achievements.

The event was a critical milestone, allowing participants to demonstrate how they translated more than 210 hours of training into real-world, actionable solutions. Projects focused on core command concepts, such as building high-performing teams and simplifying strategic planning.

Emceed by Nathaniel Smith at Point Mugu and Thea Snelgrove at China Lake, the ceremonies featured remarks from senior leadership and reflections from graduates Robert Grabendike, John Marcozzi, Kalyn Shubnell and Ann Obligation, who spoke about how the program transformed their perspectives on leadership.

see **Capstones**, page 7



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MSC's newest fleet replenishment oiler *Thurgood Marshall* christened in San Diego

Military Sealift Command's (MSC) newest fleet replenishment oiler USNS *Thurgood Marshall* (T-AO 211), was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego June 6, the 82nd anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

The ship honors Thurgood Marshall, a civil rights leader, turned Supreme Court Justice. Marshall made history as the first black justice to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court when he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 1967 and served on the court for 25 years. He is most remembered for his work toward affirmative action, stopping Jim Crow segregation and the landmark case *Brown v. Board of Education*.

"Justice Thurgood Marshall was the epitome of a trailblazer. He exemplified the timeless principle of service before self and embodied the power of moral truth," said Rear Adm. Benjamin Nicholson, commander, Military Sealift Command. "It is a profound honor that this ship will carry his name, a name that will sail proudly across the world's oceans for decades to come."

Navy Corpsmen train in canine casualty care

TWENTYNINE PALMS - Hospital corpsmen assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command here strengthened their operational medical capabilities late last month through a Canine Tactical Combat Casualty Care course taught by Army veterinary personnel, providing participants with specialized training designed to help save the lives of military working dogs in combat and field environments.

The course introduced corpsmen to the principles of canine battlefield medicine - trauma assessment, hemorrhage control, airway management, heat injury recognition, patient stabilization, to name a few. According to Army Spc. Amelia Knosp, an animal care specialist assigned to the combat center veterinary clinic here, providing corpsmen with canine trauma care skills helps bridge a critical gap between injury and definitive veterinary treatment.

"I think that it's very beneficial for hospital corpsmen to train in K9 TCCC because it is a great expansion of their skills and allows them the opportunity to learn something new," said Knosp. "In a field environment, they will often be the first line of medical care. Animal care specialists and veterinarians are spread thin and are not usually going to be out in the field."

SIMA San Diego reestablished to drive Fleet readiness

by Stephanie Higgins
Southwest Regional Maintenance Center
SAN DIEGO - In a decisive move to restore and expand organic ship repair capabilities, the Navy officially reestablished Shore Intermediate Maintenance

Activity, San Diego June 1. This strategic West Coast command will develop Sailors as advanced intermediate-level (I-level) maintenance technicians and in fleet technical assist roles, directly addressing the Navy's critical need

Capstones continued from page 6

This graduating cohort pressed through the 18-month program through some unprecedented organizational and environmental challenges.

Genesis Johnson, NAWCWD chief of staff and operations, underscored the vital role the graduates will play in navigating an unpredictable future.

"As NAWCWD Commander Rear Adm. Keith Hash has continually emphasized this year, 2026 is a 'year of change.' We are navigating significant organizational shifts and, candidly, a great deal of uncertainty," Johnson said. "Investing in your growth is one of the most significant contributions that you can make - that we have made - in the future of our organization."

At Point Mugu, Mark Roth, technical and deputy director of the Spectrum Warfare Department, emphasized how the program was well structured and layered, applauding the cohorts' ability to put theory into practice.

"My mind is full! You all taught me new lessons during

your poster board sessions," Roth told the graduates. "I particularly enjoyed hearing how understanding yourself helped you listen to and value the inputs from each of your team members."

Roth also praised the graduates' ability to break down the Navy's "Get Real, Get Better" principles to make them understandable to their teammates. "My challenge to you is to embody your learning into the culture of our command," he said.

The events also recognized the program coaches, the Human Capital Development Department and the Organizational Development staff who supported the graduates throughout their journey.

In her closing remarks, Johnson expressed her ultimate confidence in the class. "I look forward to seeing the remarkable impact you will make," she said.

Ready to take the next step in your own leadership journey? The next application cycle for the Leadership EDGE program opens in August.

for self-sufficiency at sea.

SIMA SD's return was marked by a June 4 ceremony presided over by Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle.

"The end state of standing up SIMA is in our ability to forge adaptive and innovative Sailors," said Caudle. "Sailors who are empowered to keep our ships ready at sea so they can fight at sea when our nation calls. In the next fight, we cannot assume there will be a safe harbor, a contractor on the pier or the luxury of time."

Originally established in 1978, SIMA SD provided shore-based I-level training for Sailors until its consolidation into SWRMC in 2004. This second standing-up of the command represents a return to a proven model, modernized for today's high-tech Fleet.

SIMA SD will focus intensely

on Sailor development, improving Fleet readiness, and strengthening the Navy's warfighting advantage.

One of the most critical evolutions in this new SIMA model is the shift away from legacy, stove-piped maintenance training. Today's complex operating environments demand technically versatile Sailors who can sense, assess, synthesize, and resolve casualties in real time, thousands of miles from the nearest shipyard.

"This is a new era for SIMA," said Capt. Bill Albert, SIMA-SD commander. "Today's reestablishment marks a strategic inflection point. We are actively reversing the degradation of technical skills at sea by sending highly trained, master-level technicians back to the Fleet where they are needed most."

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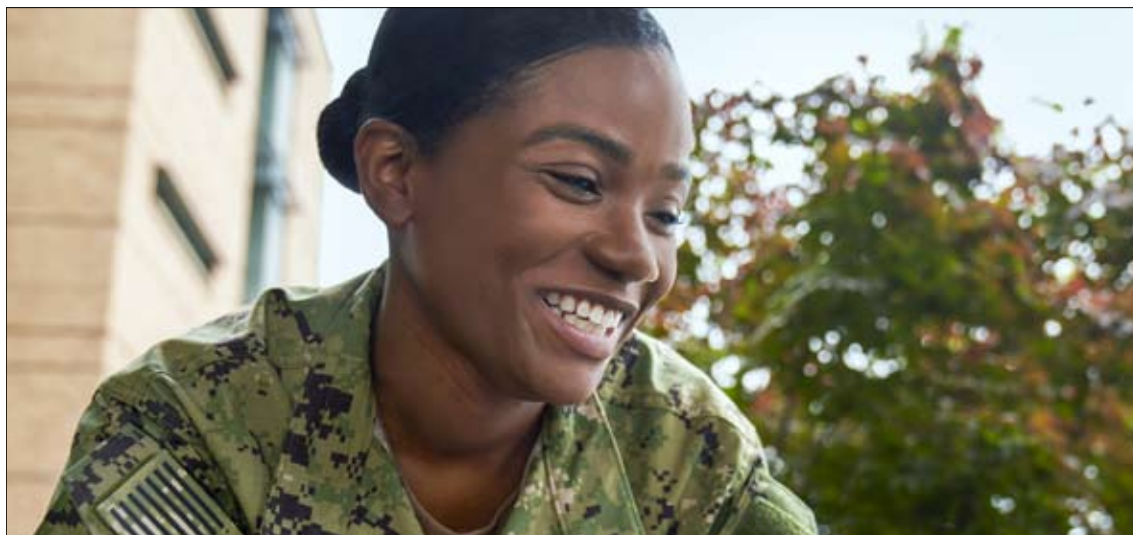
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VX-31 earns seventh CNO Aviation Safety Award

by Tim Gantner

Naval Air Warfare Center

CHINA LAKE - The Dust Devils of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 won the Chief of Naval Operations Aviation Safety Award for fiscal 2025, their seventh since 2003 and their second in three years.

The award, known as the CNO

Safety "S," is given annually to Navy and Marine Corps aviation units operating under Navy chains of command, with one squadron selected per aircraft type per coast.

The honor recognizes squadrons for "exceptional professionalism, commitment to excellence, solid leadership and teamwork,



A VX-31 F/A-18E Super Hornet in flight. U.S. Navy photo by Katie Archibald

the high-velocity outcomes, and in-depth risk management culture which resulted in safe and effective operations."

In January, a new hangar door rolled open at China Lake and 425 people walked through. They had just left their temporary spaces and consolidated under one roof in Hangar 6, a new facility built to replace the one the 2019 Ridgecrest earthquake destroyed. In March, Marine Corps Lt. Col. Timothy Burchett took command. By September, the squadron had retired the AV-8B Harrier after roughly 40 years of testing. And in October, it stood up a new Unmanned Systems Department.

"The squadron had an intense focus on building new habit patterns that leveraged historical best practices and adapted them to our new surroundings," Burchett said. "This diligent focus on basics and procedural compliance at all levels of the

squadron led to a large reduction in ground mishaps and reflected a culture wherein safety was viewed not as a burden but as a critical enabler for mission success."

Compared to fiscal 2024, VX-31 recorded a 19 percent reduction in overall aviation mishaps and a 78 percent decrease in aviation ground operation mishaps. And that from a squadron flying 30 aircraft across seven Type/Model/Series, where 40 percent of flights are tests and every airframe carries experimental hardware or software not yet fielded.

James Coppersmith has been at VX-31, on and off, since 2002. He is now the squadron's technical director. "Our range of missions, uniquely configured aircraft, and workforce composition has no parallel in Fleet squadrons," Coppersmith said. "Our safety culture bridges the gap between high-stakes developmental test flights and the unforgiving environments of high-elevation and Mojave Desert search and rescue missions."

At China Lake, in the Indian Wells Valley between the Sierra Nevada and Death Valley, VX-31 also runs a search and rescue department. Its MH-60S crews rappel into canyons, hoist stranded hikers off mountain ledges, and land in thin air that pushes the helicopter to its operating limits.

Then there was Marine Corps Maj. Joseph Tom. In August, Tom was preparing for an Automatic Terrain Awareness Warning System test flight when he caught a configuration mismatch during pre-flight. The aircraft was outside asymmetry limits for takeoff. Left unnoticed, it could have caused a mishap after rotation. So Tom flagged it, maintenance corrected it, and the test flew successfully. He later earned a Safety Pro award.

"It's a culture where every single person is empowered to use the No Vote and stop an evolution for safety," said Kristine Sweigart, VX-31 safety officer.

"VX-31 earning the Safety 'S' is a direct reflection of a command that executes some of Naval Aviation's most demanding test missions with discipline, professionalism, and sound risk management," said Navy Capt. David Halpern, Naval Test Wing Pacific commodore.

LOCAL MILITARY



MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS (June 5, 2026) Marines with 4th Marine Aircraft Wing extinguish a simulated aircraft fire at an aircraft rescue and firefighting event during Integrated Training Exercise 3-26 here. ITX is designed to generate combat readiness and ensure the Reserve Component provides critical strategic depth to the Total Force. From complex combined arms maneuvers to all-domain integration, these Marines are proving that they are ready to augment, reinforce, and fight alongside the active component at a moment's notice. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Van Hoang

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<p>Mon., March 23, 6pm</p> <p>Fri., April 17, 5pm</p> <p>Sun., April 26, 4:30pm</p> <p>Sat., May 23, 7pm</p> <p>Fri., June 19, 7pm</p> <p>Mon., July 6, 6pm</p> <p>Sat., July 18, 8pm</p> <p>Fri., July 24, 6pm</p>	<p>NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>Quad City Steamwheelers at San Diego Strike Force</p> <p>Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>Vegas Knight Hawks at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>Arizona Rattlers at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>New Mexico Chupacabras at San Diego Strike Force*</p> <p>Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*</p>
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Solime Royal Hair, NBSD*

"I'd give 50 percent to my fiancée and 50 percent for myself to pay off bills."

*BM1 Cory Shields
Littoral Combat Ship Training Facility Pacific*



"I'd buy a house in Massachusetts, where I'm from."

*RP1 Elizabeth Hatten
NAS North Island
Chaplain's Office*

"Give some to my mom and pay off some of my debt."

*BM3 Asia Thomas
NAS North Island*



"Donate it to a food bank. What comes around goes around."

*Javier Fernandez
Pep Boys, NBSD*

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Get close to sharks, experience all-new drone show & more at SeaWorld's Summer Spectacular



by Jan Wagner

There is much to see and do — now — at SeaWorld San Diego!

Just opened is the all-new Shark Encounter, with eleven shark species in a fully reimagined, immersive experience. Informative, interactive panels throughout the exhibit teach you about the sharks, their behaviors and habitats, and how conservation helps to protect these essential predators.

Your journey will begin at a coastal beach scene, where — in the Shark Up-Close Encounter — you can access a brand-new walkway above the shark habitat, where you can come face-to-face with, and safely learn about, sharks from mere feet away — with nothing between you and them! This truly one-of-a-kind perspective is Southern California's only opportunity to safely feed sharks while enjoying an intimate, behind-the-scenes look at their care. Participants will observe feeding practices, learn about shark behavior and diet, and gain a deeper understanding of the critical role sharks play in ocean ecosystems.

Further into the Shark Encounter, your breath will be taken away as you watch sharks swimming above you, in through a 180-degree window. Shark Encounter replaces fear-based myths with facts that show the vital role that over 400 species of sharks play in helping to keep oceans healthy, worldwide.

Dolphin Adventures are all-new, with fresh music and scene-stealing marine stars that bring this reimagined, high-energy, unforgettable show to life in exciting ways that thrill audiences.

Not to be missed is the educational and truly spectacular killer whales show at Orca Stadium.

Also new this year is the nighttime Dolphins: Touch the Sky drone show. Playful dolphins fill the sky, accompanied by a high-energy musical soundtrack, celebrating the special connection between humans and the natural world. You can enjoy this from several vantage points throughout SeaWorld San Diego.

Do not miss the return of Pirates Ahoy! The Battle for Mermaid Cove. You'll see a lively, swash-buckling adventure on the high seas, with Jet Skis, mermaids, water stunts, acrobatics and more.

Also returning, by popular

demand, is BMX Blast! Powered by body armor. This high-energy stunt show features BMX bike riders performing stunts and catching plenty of air, accompanied by a live band.

The entire family can dance into the night at the Deep Sea Disco under the Sky Tower, accompanied by lively music and high-energy performers in vibrant costumes.

There is much more to see and do at SeaWorld San Diego. To learn more about the all-new Shark Encounter, Ocean of Dreams Drone Show, Dolphin Adventures, Wonders of North American Wildlife, Deep Sea Disco, Light Up the Night Shamu killer whale celebration, the returning Pirates Ahoy! Show and MX Blast! stage shows and more of the Summer Spectacular entertainment that is waiting for you now, so visit: <https://seaworld.com/san-diego/>.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse.

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

It's my birthday today. I don't want anything, I mean it.

I just want to relax. Sit out on my porch in the sun and relax. That's all.

Sure, I might want a cocktail while I sit out there. Nothing fancy. Maybe a beer or wine. No big deal. Or, maybe sangria, but not the fake ones that people make with 7-Up and bad wine. Authentic sangria that has been soaking in fruit all day. Yeah, that'd be good.

Then again, I do like frozen drinks when it's sunny. Just a simple frozen margarita or daiquiri. Oh wait, I know — an icy, creamy Piña Colada, made from scratch of course, served straight out of a real coconut. Now that's the ticket.

Mind you, I wouldn't want to be pathetic all by myself, so it would be better if a friend sat with me on the porch. I don't want anyone to feel obligated. Just a good friend who isn't trying to get the check in the box. Someone who really appreciates me. That's all. And of course it'd be great if she brought the drinks so I wouldn't have to make them myself.

Actually, now that I think of it, it'd be neat if other friends got word and were like, "It's Lisa's birthday! She's so cool, let's celebrate with

Spouse doesn't want anything for birthday... really

her!" Not friends that think, "Oh crap, it's Lisa's birthday . . . I'll regift that candle I got for Mother's Day."

Just sincere friends on the porch with drinks, that's all I want. Although, if they chipped in without me knowing and bought me something special, I'd be so touched. Nothing expensive, just something meaningful that they knew I'd love.

But seriously, I'll be happy as long as I don't have to cook, so I hope my husband Francis picks up some take out. I don't care what it is. Just something light. Maybe Mediterranean? A big Greek salad with crumbled feta, tzatziki, fresh dill, Kalamata olives and marinated grilled chicken, thinly sliced of course, would be fantastic. Ooh, and he can't forget flat bread warmed on the grill to give it that smoky taste.

I'm so easy to please, I don't even need a birthday cake. If a friend brings a cupcake with a candle in it, that's all I need. Hell, I'd take a pan of brownies. Personally, like Duncan Hines Fudge Brownies with walnuts, served warm and gooey with vanilla ice cream. Add a drizzle of Baileys and a few dark chocolate curls, and that's a real dessert.

Whatever happens, I just don't want to clean. I'm so sick of cleaning. I just want Francis to load the dishwasher and wipe the crumbs up. It'll only take a few minutes. Wouldn't it be outstanding, though,

if he secretly hired a cleaning person? It'd be unbelievable if I came inside from my Birthday Cocktails & Greek Dinner Party and found a professionally cleaned house.

Our three children are so busy with their own lives, I'm perfectly okay with cards this year. As long as they take the time to write something meaningful inside. Nothing elaborate, just a few words that will express their gratitude for the decades that I gave up my law career to become a military spouse and mom, selflessly dedicating my life to raising them into successful young adults. Really, anything to bring a little tear to my eye. That would be nice.

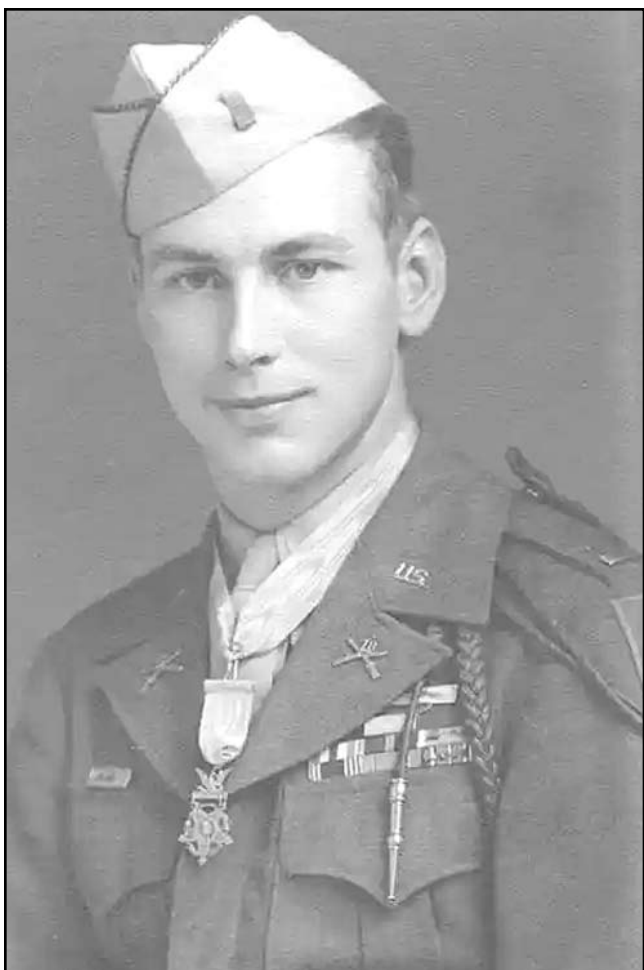
But definitely no gifts. Nothing more than a refrigerator magnet. Knowing them, they probably snuck away with their father and picked out something that I would've never asked for, because I never demand anything. Like a piece of stylish real gold jewelry that is symbolic in some way. Or maybe an iPad. Or a Mediterranean cruise.

Any old thing will do. Like I said, I don't really want anything. I just want to relax.

I'd better go charge my camera. It would stink if my friends showed up with cocktails and gifts for the Greek Dinner Party and no one records me when I cry over the kids' cards and the necklace, and when I open the new iPad and the cruise tickets.

I should be prepared, just in case. You never know.

Veterans News



Army 2nd Lt. Walter D. Ehlers poses for a photo wearing his Medal of Honor. Courtesy photo

Medal of Honor Monday: Army 2nd Lt. Walter D. Ehlers

by David Vergun

Army 2nd Lt. Walter D. Ehlers served in Europe and North Africa as an infantryman during World War II.

He was born, May 7, 1921, on a farm in Junction City, Kansas, to John and Marie Ehlers. He married Dorothy Decker in 1955. They had three children and many grandchildren.

Ehlers and his older brother Roland enlisted in the Army in October 1940 and completed basic training at the Presidio of San Francisco.

They served together in the 1st Infantry Division, fighting in North Africa from November 1942 to May 1943, and in Sicily in July and August 1943.

After Sicily, the brothers were split up and assigned to different units to lessen the chance that both would be killed. Both were squad leaders with the rank of sergeant during the June 6, 1944, D-Day landings on Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.

The landing craft that Roland was on was hit by a German artillery round, just as it hit the beach, killing him and his entire squad.

That day, Ehlers led his squad — 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon, Company L, 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry — across the beach and up a bluff, where they captured German machine gunners manning a pillbox.

On June 9, 1944, Ehlers was leading his squad through a field when they were ambushed by German machine guns. Ehlers ran around the German flank, killing a number of them.

The next day, his squad crossed an open field toward enemy positions. When the Germans opened fire, Ehlers and his automatic rifleman jumped up out of cover and began shooting into enemy positions, drawing all attention to themselves while the rest of the men escaped. Although he was wounded, Ehlers carried a wounded comrade to the rear for treatment.

His Medal of Honor is for

valor on those two days.

Shortly thereafter, Ehlers was promoted to staff sergeant and then to second lieutenant, in recognition of his leadership. In March 1945, he led his platoon across the Rhine River at the bridge over Remagen, Germany. The following month, he was wounded in the leg and hip by friendly fire.

His Medal of Honor was presented to him by Army Lt. Gen. John C.H. Lee in Paris. Lee had also made the D-Day landings.

After World War II ended, Ehlers moved to California and worked for the Veterans Administration.

On June 6, 1994, marking the 50th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, Ehlers returned to France and gave a speech on Omaha Beach. President Bill Clinton and Queen Elizabeth were also in attendance.

"I pray that the price we paid on this beach will never be mortgaged, that my grandsons

and granddaughters will never face the terror and horror that we faced here," Ehlers said in his speech. "But they must know that without freedom there is no life, and that the things most worth living for may sometimes demand dying for."

Ehlers appeared in the 1955 film "The Long Gray Line," starring Tyrone Power. Power served in the Marine Corps during World War II.

Ehlers died Feb. 20, 2014. He was the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient who participated in the D-Day landing in Normandy.

He is buried at Riverside National Cemetery in Riverside, Calif. His medal is on display at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans.

This article is part of a weekly series called "Medal of Honor Monday," which highlights one of the more than 3,500 Medal of Honor recipients who have received the U.S. military's highest medal for valor.

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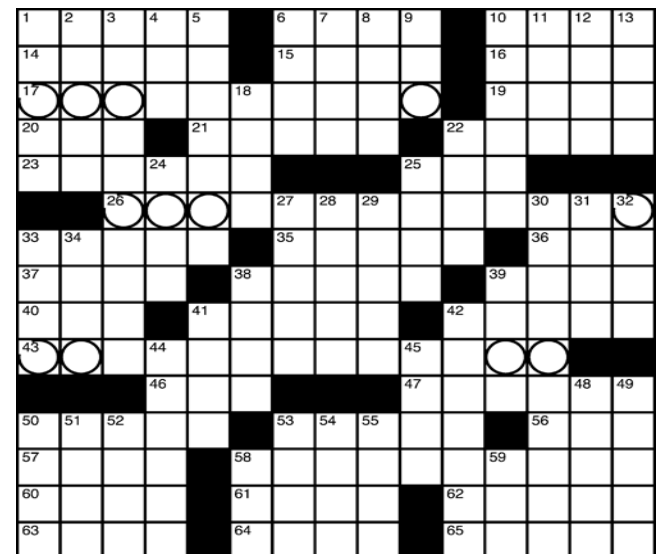
Across

- Some artists' quarters
- Come to a halt
- About, on a memo
- All-_: versatile machine
- Bizet's "Habanera," for one
- Handle roughly
- Holiday bloom
- Sketchbooks
- USO show audience
- All lathered up
- Magical lamp dweller
- Jong and Durance
- Oscar winner Kingsley
- Taft's University of Cincinnati position
- Things sometimes found under a tree
- Wolf cries
- 1959 folk hit with the line "Charlie couldn't get off of that train"
- Burden
- Gave out cards
- Animal house
- Time of your life
- Prolonged battle
- Number that's part of a nap
- UPS vehicle
- Plaines
- Familiarize
- Rice or wheat

- "Dilbert" creator Adams
- Day for voting: Abbr.
- Sleek, in car talk
- Parlor pieces, and a hint to each set of circles
- Dryer trap target
- MLB Tiger, for one
- Artist Max
- Grandson of Adam
- Heap affection (on)
- Continues intensely, as a storm

Down

- Feudal lord
- Broadcasting
- Natural gas, coal, etc.
- Atlanta-based station
- Goes up and down
- Pamplona parlor
- Vacation choice
- Like a slippery garage floor
- Remit
- Be about to happen
- Palindromic bread
- Designer Gemreich
- "What ___ can I do?"
- Singer Diana
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The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. <http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>
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USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal. FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758

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Health & Fitness

Creating a healthier home: Simple steps to reduce everyday exposures

Home is where we eat, sleep, relax, and spend time with family. It's where children grow and develop. Because we spend so much time there, scientists say the home is one of the most important places to think about health.

Over the past decade, researchers have learned much more about the harms we're exposed to indoors. They have also learned how to reduce some of these risks. The science has advanced. So have the tools for measuring what's in our air, water, and dust.

"The home environment plays a powerful role in shaping health," says Dr. Heather Patisaul, an environmental toxicology expert at NIH. "The good news is that there are simple, manageable steps people can take to lower common exposures."

Chemicals in Everyday Products

Many everyday products in our homes contain chemicals that can be slowly released into the air or settle into dust over time. These include flame retardants in electronics and furniture, plastic additives, pesticides, dyes in fabrics, and PFAS. PFAS stands for a group of chemicals called perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances.

"As building materials have evolved and we've shifted to newer construction standards, we're introducing a lot more chemicals and a lot more plastics into our homes," says Dr. Heather Stapleton, an environmental chemist at Duke University.

Flame retardants are chemicals added to products to slow the spread of fire. Years ago, certain flame retardants were widely used in couch cushions and other items in the home. Over time, research raised concerns about some of these older chemicals. Some were linked to problems with brain development and thyroid hormones.

Many of the older flame retardants have now been phased out, Stapleton says. But she adds that scientists continue to pay attention to newer flame retardants used in electronics and products, like home insulation.

Make Your Home Healthier

- Cut down on dust. Vacuum regularly using a HEPA filter, if possible. Wet-mop floors and wipe surfaces with a damp cloth to trap dust.
- Take off your shoes. Leave shoes at the door to avoid tracking pesticides, dirt, and other pollutants into the house.
- Prevent mold. Fix leaks, dry wet areas quickly, improve airflow, and clean mold.
- Improve indoor air. Open windows when possible to bring in fresh air. Use kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans to reduce moisture and pollutants.
- Choose products with fewer added chemicals. Look for fragrance-free soaps, cleaners, and personal care products. Try to avoid products marketed as stain resistant or nonstick.
- Check your drinking water. If you use a private well, have the water tested regularly. Use a certified water filter if testing shows contaminants.
- Practice healthy habits. Balanced eating and regular physical activity can help support overall health even when environmental exposures occur.

Many products are now available without flame retardants, such as furniture, mattresses, and clothing.

Air, Dust, and Mold

One key way chemicals move through a home is by attaching to dust. "They're very sticky," Stapleton explains.

"They're going to stick to particles that are in the air or in settled dust. So dust becomes a sink for these chemicals."

Dust can especially affect children's health. Kids spend more time close to the floor. They touch surfaces and often put their hands in their mouths, increasing exposure.

"Home hygiene plays a big role in reducing exposures coming from dust," Patisaul says.

Stapleton's NIH-funded work suggests that cleaning routines can make a difference. In her ongoing study, families are using a robotic vacuum on a set schedule at home.

After 10 weeks, Stapleton says her team saw exposure go down for many types of chemicals. This included flame retardants and plastic additives.

Cooking, smoking, pets, candles, cleaners, and building materials can

all add harmful particles and gases to indoor air, too.

"If you burn something in your house, it's going to release toxic chemicals," she says. "What you need to do is ventilate it." Ventilation means bringing in fresh air and pushing out stale air. Use a vent hood or open windows when possible.

Moisture indoors can also affect health because it can lead to mold. Mold is a fungus that grows on damp surfaces, such as around leaks or in humid bathrooms. It releases spores that can irritate the nose and lungs. So, it's important to control moisture in the home.

Water Quality

Water quality is another important part of a healthy home. "It's something that people are consuming frequently and directly, across the lifespan," says Dr. Abby Fleisch, a pediatrician and environmental health researcher at MaineHealth.

Most public water systems in the U.S. are regulated and monitored for some contaminants like lead, arsenic, and pesticides, but not all. Drinking water levels of PFAS are monitored or regulated only in certain areas. And problems can still occur, especially with corroded pipes that can leach lead or other harmful chemicals.

Filtering your water can be an effective way to protect against contaminants. But be sure to check what the filters can be used for. Different filters protect against different contaminants.

Private wells are not regulated the same way. That means well owners should test their water regularly. Some contaminants, like PFAS, often have no taste, smell, or color.

"People need to do testing to be able to identify contaminants in well water," Fleisch says. She adds that even small levels can matter because exposure can add up over time.

A recent report linked higher PFAS levels to higher cholesterol, lower response to some vaccines, higher risk of kidney cancer, and low birth weight in babies.

Fleisch stresses that exposure does not mean someone will get sick. "Having been exposed to PFAS doesn't mean that a person is definitely going to develop a particular health outcome," she says. She describes PFAS as a risk factor. That means it may raise the chance of some health problems, but it is only one part of the picture.

Build a Healthier Home

Experts say that you don't need to make drastic changes all at once. Small steps, taken over time, can create a healthier home.

Fleisch points to an encouraging finding from her own NIH-supported research. In a large study, she looked at adults at risk for diabetes. People with higher PFAS levels were more likely to gain weight and develop high cholesterol or diabetes over time. But people who followed a program focused on healthy eating and regular exercise did not show this increased risk.

The lifestyle changes appeared to undo the health risk in the study. That's an important takeaway.

"People shouldn't feel overwhelmed," Patisaul says. "They should feel empowered to ask questions and stay informed, so that they can make choices that support their families' health."

Take charge of your skin health: How TRICARE supports skin cancer screening and treatment

TRICARE Communications

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — As summer approaches and outdoor activities increase, it's essential to protect your skin from harmful ultraviolet rays. TRICARE is committed to supporting your skin health by covering skin cancer exams and providing resources for prevention and treatment.

"Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the U.S.," said Jeannine Pickrell, MS, RN, Director of Population Health at the TRICARE Health Plan. "It's also often preventable, and treatable if caught early."

Cancer screening, including skin cancer, is covered as part of TRICARE's Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Examinations. In general, there are no copayments for HP&DP exams. TRICARE covers one HP&DP exam annually. Your provider will decide if you have the risk factors for a skin cancer screening.

TRICARE covers skin cancer exams for individuals:

- With a family or personal history of skin cancer,
- Increased occupational or recreational exposure to sunlight, or
- Clinical evidence of precursor lesions (unusual spots noticed by your provider)

What to know about skin cancer

A few facts

The sun's ultraviolet light can damage skin cells and is the main cause of skin cancer. In the short term, this damage can cause sunburn. Over time, UV damage adds up, leading to changes in skin texture, premature skin aging, and sometimes skin cancer. UV rays can reach you on cloudy and cool days, and they reflect off surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow.

Prevention is key

The UV Index forecasts the strength of UV rays each day. If the UV index is 3 or higher in your area, protect your skin from

too much exposure to the sun. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends several ways to protect your skin when the UV index is 3 or higher:

- Stay in the shade.
- Wear clothing that covers your arms and legs.
- Wear a hat with a wide brim to shade your face, head, ears, and neck.
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block both UVA and UVB rays.
- Use a broad spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher.

You're in charge

Knowing the signs of skin cancer is your first line of defense, as detailed by the CDC. Not all skin cancers look the same. For melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, it's good to know the A-B-C-D-Es of its appearance:

A. Asymmetrical: Does the mole or spot have an irregular shape with two parts that look very different?

B. Border: Is the border irregular or jagged?

C. Color: Is the color uneven?

D. Diameter: Is the mole or spot larger than the size of a pea?

E. Evolving: Has the mole or spot changed during the past few weeks or months?

Talk to your doctor if you notice changes in your skin such as a new growth, a sore that doesn't heal, a change in an existing growth, or any of the A-B-C-D-Es of melanoma. The National Cancer Institute has more information on what to look for, when to go for a screening, as well as possible treatments for skin cancer.

Protect your skin this summer and beyond. Schedule your annual TRICARE exam, use sunscreen, cover up during peak sun hours, and consult your provider about any skin changes. Early detection and prevention are your best tools for staying healthy. Learn more about how TRICARE covers preventive services.



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