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SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR NO. 5

JULY 16-31, 2026



HAPPY HUG A Marine with Lima Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, is greeted by a guest after being released for liberty during a Family Day event at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, July 9, 2026. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Siwan Lewis

NAVY AWARDS CONTRACT FOR MEDIUM LANDING SHIP ACQUISITION

WASHINGTON – The Navy awarded a \$2.2 billion contract to TOTE Services LLC for vessel construction management, or VCM, to oversee the acquisition of the new medium landing ships (LSM). This contract will maximize commercial practices to accelerate delivery, improve cost

discipline, and expand the U.S. shipbuilding industrial base. The first LSM is anticipated for delivery in fall of 2029.

For the initial production of up to eight LSMs, the Navy will direct the VCM to execute and manage subcontracts with Bollinger Shipyards for the

construction of one LSM and Fincantieri Marinette Marine for the construction of four LSMs. The VCM will have the flexibility to determine the best award strategy for up to three additional vessels.

“The VCM strategy is an innovative shift in Navy shipbuilding. We are changing the way we do business, and leveraging commercial best practices to improve cost, schedule, and performance,” said Will Mahan, performing the duties of assistant secretary of the Navy for research, development and acquisition. “With a five-month duration between RFP release and contract award, we achieved

a nearly 50 percent reduction to traditional contracting timelines. This reflects the immediate impact our Portfolio Acquisition Executives are having to accelerate shipbuilding.”

The VCM will hold the prime contract with the Navy; therefore, it will hold direct contractual responsibility for issuing and managing shipbuilder subcontracts to construct and deliver LSM vessels. This prime contract places the VCM in direct contractual control of shipyard performance and leverages commercial practices and flexibilities that, together with a proven design, are expected to reduce cost and schedule risks.



Illustration of new medium landing ship. Courtesy of TOTE Services

USS *Nimitz* arrives to final homeport of Naval Station Norfolk

NORFOLK, Va. – Nearly 3,000 Sailors of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) arrived at Naval Station Norfolk following a historic and successful four-month deployment to the U.S. Southern Command areas of operations, and participation in Fleet Exercise (FLEETEX) 250 and the International Naval Review (INR) 250, July 9.

“*Nimitz* and its crew performed outstandingly as they demonstrated unity, shared values, and commitment to global maritime security alongside our nation’s partners and allies,” said Rear Adm. Forrest Young, commander of Carrier Strike Group 8. “I am proud to have them join the Carrier Strike Group 8 team and to welcome them home.”

Nimitz, deployed from former homeport, Bremerton, Wash., in support of partnership building, homeland defense, and hemispheric security. *Nimitz* also participated in Fleet Exercise (FLEETEX) 2026 with allied and partner nations in the Atlantic, and proudly represented the nation and the Navy at International Naval Review (INR) 250.

“I am profoundly proud of the way *Nimitz* Sailors professionally represented our Navy and our Nation during this milestone deployment,” said Capt. Joseph Furco, commanding officer of *Nimitz*. “These extraordinary men and women truly embodied the *Nimitz* motto, ‘Teamwork, A Tradition,’ as we helped build America’s global maritime team throughout Southern Seas 2026, Fleet Exercise 250, and finally, International Naval Review 250. All of us onboard are also extremely thankful to the City of Norfolk for welcoming us back to this ship’s first and final homeport.”

Nimitz visited ports in Panama, Chile, Brazil, and Jamaica during the deployment. *Nimitz* will be permanently homeported in Naval Station Norfolk, training Naval Aviation’s next generation of warfighters, while standing ready to answer the nation’s call as it has for the past 51 years.

Notable visitors to *Nimitz* included Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, Gen. Francis L. Donovan; Commander of the U.S. Fourth Fleet, Rear Adm. Carlos A. Sardiello, and numerous foreign military and civilian leaders, including six heads of state.

U.S. 2nd Fleet, reestablished in 2018 in response to the changing global security environment, develops and employs maritime ready forces to fight across multiple domains in the Atlantic and Arctic in order to ensure access, deter aggression and defend U.S., allied, and partner interests. [see photo, page 3](#)

Army issues directive regarding official social media accounts

With the recent release of Army Directive 2026-17, *Optimizing Digital Media*, the official use of social media within the Army is now limited to specific commands, units, organizations and installations outlined in the directive. “Social media is a powerful tool we use to post timely and relevant information to keep our audiences informed,” according to the directive. “It provides commanders with an effective tool to achieve their communication objectives and assists them with meeting the information needs of their audiences. It offers an opportunity to inform and engage with the public. The directive states that “social media is inherently risky. Commanders must understand that they are assuming some risks when posting online, which can result in communication errors, audience misinterpretation and other unintended consequences. With the right knowledge, tools and approach, you can minimize these risks while maintaining public communication with your audience.” This website, <https://www.army.mil/socialmedia/>, will acquaint you with your role in Army social media and provide you with policies, guidance and recommendations on how you can become a more effective communicator and representative of the U.S. Army - creating an environment where trusted information is disseminated to the Army Family and the public.

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Camp Pendleton marks completion of Basilone Road remediation, bolstering readiness

by Mario Icar, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Marine Corps Base (MCB) Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Installation (MCI) West hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to commemorate the completion of Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southwest’s remediation, repair and redevelopment of MCB Camp Pendleton’s critical Basilone Road, July 2 in the San Onofre area of MCB Camp Pendleton.

“What makes this day special is that our very presence here means that war fighting readiness is getting a big boost,” said MCI West and MCB Camp Pendleton Commanding General Brig. Gen. Nick Brown. “It means that quality of life will be improved and it gives us the opportunity to see what happens when an entire civ-mil community is called to action to support our national defense. On any given day here on Camp Pendleton, thousands of Marines are planning, preparing, and training to fight and win in battle. Those marines rely on quick access to the various camp’s ranges, training areas, and facilities to improve their war fighting readiness. So, when access is interrupted, especially by the power of nature, it becomes what I will call an interior crisis and when an interior crisis impact readiness and even more importantly when it jeopardizes the safety of our military members and civilians, it becomes a rallying call for everyone in the installation’s business and all our community partners to find a solution. That’s exactly what our friends in Congress, our state representatives, leaders at Marine Corps Installations Command, and experts at both NAVFAC and Camp Pendleton’s Public Works did. They answered the call and developed solutions to keep us safe and ready to fight.”

The ceremony highlighted MCI West, MCB Camp Pendleton, and NAVFAC Southwest’s collaborative effort to restore and enhance one of the installation’s vital transportation arteries after severe weather impacted the region. In March 2023, a powerful storm washed out a major section of the roadway, disrupting on-base commuter traffic and threatening associated utilities.

“The Basilone Road remediation is a prime example of NAVFAC Southwest’s engineering agility and our commitment to operational readiness,” said NAVFAC Southwest ROICC Camp Pendleton Construction Manager for this project Jordan Bealmear. “By restoring this critical public safety and logistical artery between the San Onofre Gate and the 52 Area, we are directly ensuring our Marines have the reliable infrastructure needed to defend the homeland, while securing the life-support utilities that take care of our people.”

To permanently stabilize the complex seismically active slope, NAVFAC Southwest executed a world-class structural response. A massive 2,100-linear-foot Secant Pile Wall was erected to anchor the hillside. The team drilled 4-foot-diameter concrete and steel shafts deep

into the earth, averaging depths of 25 to 50 feet. Roadway and utility restoration work reconstructed 80,000 square feet of roadway and fully realigning critical infrastructure, which included an 18-inch waterline, 12-inch and 16-inch sewer lines, 8-inch gas line, and a major communications duct bank. Moving these utilities systems from out of the road and positioning them high and parallel to the road while stabilization work was successfully orchestrated, mitigated any damages to the installation’s connected systems from settling of an active landslide.

The road was repaired and replaced where it was damaged. This work included site preparation, paving and site improvements, and addressed associated work needed to construct the main roadway which opened access roads, installed curbs with gutters and guardrails, developed retaining walls, laid new road striping and signage, and maintained access to nearby base housing and training areas.

NAVFAC SW awarded a \$39.1 million contract to Reyes Construction Inc. in July 2024 to execute the work of stabilizing the land, address crucial road slope repairs, and to complete the road’s realignment and renovations.

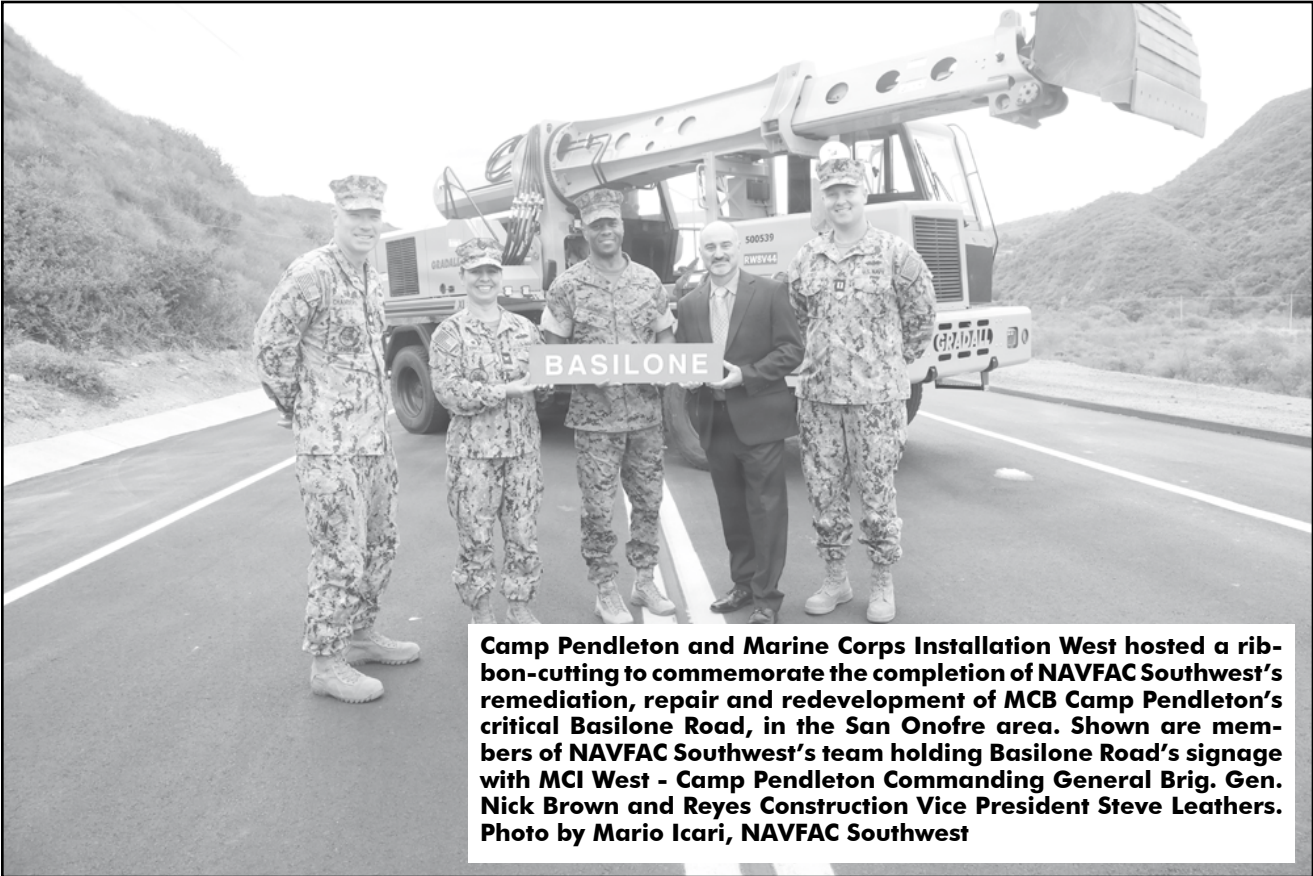
The success of this project relied on seamless integration between NAVFAC Southwest, MCB Camp Pendleton Facilities Maintenance Division Water Department, and Marine Corps’ Environmental team to keep the critical path moving forward. Regulatory hurdles were overcome by successfully managing an 18-day critical path delay caused by a State Division of Drinking Water waiver process. The project team also successfully navigated volatile global steel market fluctuations during construction, mitigated all material cost variances, and delivered this heavily steel-reinforced project strictly within budget and with minimal impact to the project schedule.

NAVFAC Southwest quickly overcame obstacles that the landslide unearthed. The team discovered hazardous materials in the form of buried concrete that was contaminated with asbestos. NAVFAC Southwest partnered with Marine Corps’ Environmental team to immediately implement health protocols and to safely abate the hazard with minimal delay to the project schedule. During excavations, a legacy sheet pile wall was unearthed revealing an active waterline that was still connected to abandoned infrastructure, which was then

successfully isolated.

“This remediation project reflects NAVFAC Southwest’s commitment to the daily lives of the Camp Pendleton community,” said NAVFAC Southwest Project Manager for this project, Michael DeCuba. “By stabilizing the slope and restoring the roadway, the project will provide a safe, reliable transportation route for the thousands of service members, civilian employees, and military families who rely on it every day, while strengthening the installation’s long-term resilience and mission readiness.”

Basilone Road serves as a critical logistical artery for Camp Pendleton. Basilone Road is the main road connecting the northern, central and southern part of Camp Pendleton. This length of road is important to the installation with a daily use of more than 10,000 vehicles and interconnecting to the southern part of the base with northern camps San Onofre, Horno, San Mateo, and the Las Pulgas area. It provides vital connectivity for vehicular traffic to the Marine Corps Air Station, Chappo and Headquarters Area, all located on the southern part of the base. Ensuring its long-term reliability guarantees that Marines, equipment, and essential resources can move safely and unhindered



Camp Pendleton and Marine Corps Installation West hosted a ribbon-cutting to commemorate the completion of NAVFAC Southwest’s remediation, repair and redevelopment of MCB Camp Pendleton’s critical Basilone Road, in the San Onofre area. Shown are members of NAVFAC Southwest’s team holding Basilone Road’s signage with MCI West - Camp Pendleton Commanding General Brig. Gen. Nick Brown and Reyes Construction Vice President Steve Leathers. Photo by Mario Icar, NAVFAC Southwest

across the base, directly supporting training and operational readiness required for national defense.

The NAVFAC Southwest team who worked oversight of the project included Lead Civil Engineer Norm Sakara, DeCuba, Design Manager Miguel Ramirez, Lead Geotechnical Engineer Michael Fraser, along with ROICC Camp Pendleton’s Director Lt. Cmdr. Justin Chambers and Supervisory General Engineer Lt. Jack James, Bealmear, Contracting Officer Holly Trexler, and Engineering Technician Dennis Redger.

NAVFAC Southwest supports planning, design, construction, real estate, environmental and public works in the Southwest region and in various locations within the INDOPACOM theater to include Southern Australia. The NAVFAC Southwest Area of Responsibility spans a six-state region covering California, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico. It manages facility life-cycle operations and contracting, supporting 19 installations across the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force and other supported federal agencies.

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Skyfall simulation NATO partners rehearse downed aircraft response

by Army Staff
Sgt. Seth LaCount

Kosovo Force Regional Command East's Task Force Aviation and multinational partners conducted a downed aircraft exercise June 25 near Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, rehearsing search and rescue, medical evacuation and aircraft recovery procedures following a simulated UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter hard landing.

The realistic scenario challenged the NATO-led command's aviation, medical, maintenance and security personnel to coordinate a rapid response across the force's multinational footprint, reinforcing their ability to respond to real-world emergencies.

The exercise unfolded in deliberate phases. After an overdue aircraft report from Task Force Aviation's tactical operations center, aviation crews initiated an aircraft search and directed Tennessee Army National Guard medevac aviators to the aircraft's last known location.

Shortly after, medevac crews arrived. Flight medics triaged wounded personnel while two patients were airlifted, and two others were transported by ambulance to the Camp Bondsteel medical facility.

CENTCOM completes another wave of strikes against Iran

USCENTCOM
TAMPA, Fla. - U.S. Central Command completed a new wave of offensive strikes against Iran, July 12, hitting dozens of targets at multiple locations with precision munitions to degrade Iran's ability to continue attacking international shipping flowing through the Strait of Hormuz.

CENTCOM forces struck Iranian military air-defense systems, coastal radar sites, missile and drone capabilities, and small

Finally, the downed aircraft recovery team, with maintenance specialists aboard another UH-60 Black Hawk, assessed whether the downed aircraft could be repaired on-site, recovered or required removal.

Unit leaders said the exercise tested command-and-control procedures and coordination across the force.

"We have a bunch of different battle drills within our [tactical operations center], one of which is an overdue aircraft procedure. The exercise tested communications, battle tracking and the flow of critical information from our TOC up to the brigade joint operations center and back down to maneuver elements."

- Army Capt. Alex Aleu, observer, controller and trainer for the exercise

The training emphasized command relationships and the timing required to coordinate a rapid response.

"When you do an incident rehearsal with aviation, there are certain benchmarks you have to hit," said Army Chief Warrant Officer 4 Jimmy Huck, 53rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team aviation officer, adding that

boats using U.S. fighter aircraft, naval vessels, one-way attack aerial drones, and one-way attack sea drones for the first time.

The Strait of Hormuz is a vital maritime corridor for global trade. Iran does not control it.

U.S. forces are postured and prepared to ensure that freedom of navigation remains available to commercial shipping despite Iran's continued unwarranted aggression, harassment, threats, and arbitrary declarations.



An Army National Guard flight medic renders casualty care and performs triage on role players during an exercise near Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo, June 25. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Seth LaCount

aviation assumes a 15-minute ready posture, tasking medevac assets first while notifying the brigade joint operations center to mobilize military police, maneuver quick-reaction forces and local law enforcement, when necessary.

"The JOC also alerts the brigade commander of all resources that are shifted to assist with a scenario of this kind," said Army Capt. Kevon Harris, Huck's brigade aviation counterpart, noting that within four hours the exercise had all elements in place and patients were routed to appropriate care, a standard he called a success.

Medical response was another key focus of the exercise. 1st Lt. Lauren Sokolowski, 53rd IBCT medical officer, highlighted the importance of standardized casualty reporting and movement.

"Our job in medical ops is to facilitate nine-line medevac requests, making sure ground and air assets are tracking and helping with casualties," Sokolowski said, adding the exercise refined medical equipment and hands-on skills for both medics and nonmedical soldiers tasked with casualty cards and basic life support.

Interoperability remained a recurring theme. Aviation crews from multiple Army National



NORFOLK, Va. (July 9, 2026) - Sailors assigned to aircraft carrier USS Nimitz depart the ship at here following a successful Southern Seas deployment to U.S. 4th Fleet and participation in Fleet Exercise (FLEETEX) 250 and International Naval Review (INR) 250. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Oscar Pichardo

Guard units simulated the downed flight crew; Colorado and Tennessee guardsmen performed the casualty lift; and quick-reaction and security responsibilities flowed between the Florida ANG's 715th Military Police Company and the Latvian armed forces.

Meanwhile, the aircraft recovery team arrived with maintenance personnel to evaluate structural damage and develop a recovery plan — a deliberate, safety-first sequence that ensures the right technicians, tools and approvals are in place before recovery operations begin.

The exercise also underscored the value of rehearsal. Aleu said the training is an annual requirement that gains complexity in

theater, offering opportunities to integrate NATO partners and host-nation responders in ways not possible at home.

"We practice this stuff state-side, but it's definitely more encompassing here with all the entities that can have a piece and play in the exercise," he said.

By day's end, the scenario gave the command vital practice in lifesaving timelines, multinational coordination and the logistics of aircraft recovery that are all core components of maintaining a safe, secure environment and protecting the people of Kosovo.

"These rehearsals keep the force ready when lives depend on speed, precision and teamwork."



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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EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Top 5

- U.S. and Iran exchange intensifying fire across Mid-east, threatening ceasefire deal
- ‘Testing is now underway’: Zelenskyy confirms progress on major U.S. defense deals
- VA claims backlog drops below 70,000 for first time in six years
- Army orders mass shutdown of official social media accounts
- Trump flies old Air Force One out of Turkey, switches to new jet in Britain for trip home

Your Military

- Military members assaulted by fellow troops cannot sue the military. That could change.

Army

- Army develops new technique for rifling cannon bores

Navy

- USS *Gerald R. Ford* to undergo maintenance after onboard fire and plumbing issues
- Navy carrier *Abraham Lincoln* in Mideast at sea for more than 200 days, testing crew resilience

Marine Corps

- U.S. transfers retired Marine Corps AAVs to allies defending Black Sea region
- Marines open units on East and West Coast to focus on drone warfare
- Marines successfully test-fire new medium-range air defense system

Air Force

- Air Force contingency wing assists Venezuela in earthquake response, aid intake
- Sen. Lindsey Graham, an Air Force veteran, dies at 71
- B-21 Raider to fly with two-pilot configuration

National Guard

- Man charged with killing National Guard member is hospitalized after refusing food, prosecutors say

Space Force

- Space Force officially has its own weapon for taking out satellites

Veterans

- How veterans groups came to clash over a sweeping VA benefits bill

Defense Industry

- UK eyes \$50 billion in pooled NATO funds for new long-range strike initiative
- Germany to buy U.S. Tomahawks in shift toward own long-range capability
- Ukrainian ground robot maker doubles production, eyes ventures with foreign partners
- Thales to buy French underwater-drone maker Exail in \$4.5 billion deal
- Indonesia drops KF-21 co-production plans, eyeing stock warplanes instead
- NATO chief says allies face limits on air defenses for Ukraine



Amphibious transport dock USS *San Antonio* sails towards the port of La Guaira, Venezuela, July 9. U.S. Marine Corps photo

San Antonio assumes relief mission in Venezuela

by Lt.j.g. Paul Archer

VENEZUELA – Demonstrating an unwavering commitment to ongoing disaster relief efforts, amphibious transport dock USS *San Antonio* (LPD 17) arrived pierside in La Guaira on July 9. *San Antonio* relieved USS *Fort Lauderdale* (LPD 28) as the primary maritime component center in support of the Department of State-led humanitarian assistance mission following the devastating June 24 earthquakes.

Following *Fort Lauderdale*’s historic arrival on June 28—the first U.S. Navy port call to Venezuela in decades—*San Antonio* will now assume duties as the primary afloat coordination hub and carry-on sustained recovery efforts. The ship’s robust command-and-control infrastructure enables U.S. Southern Command to work seamlessly with the State Department, interagency partners, and Venezuelan authorities to distribute resources and direct rapid relief operations across the affected zones.

“Sailors and Marines of USS *Fort Lauderdale* and Littoral Combat Force-24 have worked tirelessly to deliver humanitarian assistance to the people of Venezuela,” said Capt. Jiwan

Mack, commander, *Fort Lauderdale*. “Our Navy-Marine Corps team remains ready to respond rapidly to emerging crisis, and I’m confident that Capt. Uhl and the crew of USS *San Antonio* will continue the meaningful work that we have initiated.”

The continuous presence of a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock in port is a critical force multiplier for the interagency relief operation. Designed for extended, self-sustaining operations, the warship requires minimal local security, logistical support, or port resources. This approach ensures that all local Venezuelan assets can remain entirely focused on domestic recovery rather than supporting the U.S. presence.

Beyond serving as a communications node, *San Antonio* brings advanced onboard medical facilities, an expansive flight deck to support ongoing rotary-wing search and rescue operations, and a well deck capable of launching amphibious landing craft to deliver heavy cargo and vital supplies directly to damaged coastal infrastructure.

“We are prepared to continue the vital mission that USS *Fort Lauderdale* began,” said Capt. Tom Uhl, commanding officer of USS *San Antonio*.

<https://www.southcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/>

National photo gallery



SUVA, Fiji (July 3, 2026) Faculty from Ratu Sir Lala Sukuna Memorial School celebrate during a performance by the 25th Infantry Division Band here. The performance was held in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Fiji as part of the America 250 celebration, using music to strengthen the enduring partnership between the U.S. and Fiji. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Oscar Toscano



NEW YORK CITY (July 7, 2026) Marines assigned to the U.S. Marine Corps Silent Drill Platoon perform the “bursting bomb” sequence at the Oculus as part of International Naval Review 250 here. U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Michael Robinson

NORFOLK, Va. July 9, 2026) Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Gipson, assigned to aircraft carrier *Nimitz*, embraces his children on the pier here following a Southern Seas deployment to the U.S. 4th Fleet area of responsibility and participation in Fleet Exercise 250 and International Naval Review 250. U.S. Navy photo



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Career and Education

New Marine Corps uniform app

by Maj. Hector Infante

Marine Corps Training and Education Command

MARINE CORPS BASE QUANTICO, Va. -- U.S. Marine Corps Education Command has launched the official Marine Corps Uniform App, a free mobile application that provides Marines with convenient, on-the-go access to uniform and grooming guidance, June 29.

The app announced in MARADMIN 299/26, is developed as a companion to Marine Corps Order 1020.34, Marine Corps Uniform Regulations, providing a streamlined reference for Marines to quickly locate commonly used uniform and grooming guidance while away from the official publication.

The application organizes uniform regulations by officer and enlisted personnel, as well as by sex. It also includes basic grooming standards, allowing Marines to quickly reference appearance requirements while traveling or preparing for official duties.

“The Marine Corps Uniform App gives Marines immediate access to the guidance they use most often. It is designed to make existing standards more accessible while reinforcing the professionalism and attention to detail that define our Corps.”

*Brig. Gen. Matthew W. Tracy
Commanding General, Education Command*

The application is intended to supplement, not replace, MCO 1020.34. While it answers many of the most common questions regarding uniforms and grooming, Marines should continue to consult the order for comprehensive policy and detailed guidance.

By placing essential information in a mobile format, the Marine Corps is improving access to resources that help Marines maintain the highest standards of military appearance and discipline, regardless of location.

The Marine Corps Uniform App is available free of charge through the Apple App Store. An Android version is expected to be released during Department of War Fiscal Year 2027.

Users are encouraged to submit feedback through the Marine Corps Uniform Board organizational mailbox identified within the MARADMIN.

Reduction expected for Japan COLA rates

by Air Force Staff Sgt.
Skyler Combs

United States Forces Japan

Service members based in Japan will likely see a reduction in their overseas cost-of-living allowance in the coming weeks because of a long-term drop in the value of the Japanese yen and a corresponding increase in the value of the dollar.

The yen recently reached a 40-year low against the dollar. Because the U.S. currency now buys significantly more goods and services on the local economy than it did previously, the supplemental allowance required to equalize purchasing power, commonly known as COLA, is shrinking.

Overseas COLA is a nontaxable supplemental pay allowance designed to offset overseas

prices of goods and services, ensuring purchasing power remains equal to service members stationed in the contiguous U.S. It is not a fixed pay entitlement and is explicitly designed to fluctuate with currency exchange rates.

The COLA index for many installations in Japan is projected to drop to 100 and below, meaning the allowance will be zero. If that number is below 100, no pay is deducted from service members and the allowance simply remains at zero until economic conditions warrant an increase.

While the dollar amount on a member's leave and earnings statement regarding COLA will decrease, their actual ability to purchase goods on the local economy remains the same or better because of the highly favorable exchange rate.



Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Fleet and Family Support Center hosts a free monthly tour for those looking to get more acclimated to life in Japan. Service members living in Japan may soon see a reduction in their overseas cost-of-living allowance because of a long-term drop in the value of the Japanese yen and a corresponding increase in the value of the dollar. U.S. Navy photo by Eryn Navarro

“With the dollar this strong compared to the yen, service members can find a lot of value buying food and household

goods on the local economy,” said Air Force Col. John Severns, U.S. Forces Japan Public Affairs director.

New Navy policy limits medical shaving waivers to one year

Sailors who cannot shave due to medical reasons now have one year before they could face separation over their inability to go clean shaven, according to a Navy policy released July 7.

U.S. Naval Institute reported July 9 that under the most recent Navy administrative message, the sea service will offer shaving waivers for men who are unable to shave due to a medical condition. The waivers can be granted for 90 days, while commands have the option to offer additional 90-day waivers. The waivers cannot exceed one year total, according to the NAVADMIN.

Sailors will be evaluated for administrative separation if they are unable to meet grooming standards of a clean shaven face after one year of medical treatment. Sailors do have the option of maintaining a mustache, according to USNI.

The first separations for failure to adhere to grooming standards due to a medical condition will not happen until July 7, 2027, a year from the NAVADMIN's release.

Men who receive shaving waivers must keep their beards to a quarter inch from their face and be on a treatment plan, according to the policy. Only commanding officers may issue the waivers.

The Navy will evaluate sailors for administrative separation if they have a permanent medical condition preventing them from meeting the grooming standard, under the separation guidelines. Sailors may also be referred to the Disability Evaluation System.

Approximately 6,400 Sailors are diagnosed with chronic skin

conditions annually, which affect their ability to meet grooming

standards, according to an e-mail from Chief of Naval Operations

Adm. Daryl Caudle that was obtained by USNI News.

Celebrating milestone of recruiting 45,000 Sailors

As of June 2, the U.S. Navy has contracted 45,000 future Sailors, achieving its Fiscal Year 2026 recruiting objective and ensuring the Navy remains on track to meet its annual shipping requirement.

This milestone reflects the sustained efforts of recruiters, support personnel, and leaders across Recruiting Nation to identify, inspire, and prepare the next generation of Sailors who will strengthen the Fleet and defend the nation.

“Today's Navy is stronger because tens of thousands of Americans chose to answer the call to serve,” said Rear Adm. Jim Waters, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command. “Reaching this milestone is not simply about achieving a recruiting objective – it's about delivering the talented Sailors our Fleet needs to maintain readiness in an increasingly complex security environment.”

Over the past three years, Navy Recruiting Command has transformed its recruiting enterprise by modernizing processes, accelerating applicant timelines, leveraging data-informed decision making, and equipping recruiters with new tools to better connect with prospective Sailors. Those efforts have resulted in sustained recruiting success, while reinforcing the Navy's high standards for service.

“Our recruiters never lost sight of what matters most – people,” Waters added. “Every contract represents someone who chose to serve something greater than themselves. Behind every accession is a recruiter who set the foundation for success and a future Sailor preparing to stand the watch, support the Fleet, and contribute to our nation's security.”

While reaching 45,000 contracts marks a significant

milestone, Navy Recruiting Command continues processing applicants and filling future training seats to support fleet manning requirements and strengthen the Delayed Entry Program for FY27.

“Our work doesn't stop because we've reached a number,” added Waters. “Every day, recruiters across the country continue building the force that will operate our ships, fly our aircraft, defend our networks, and preserve our maritime advantage for years to come.”

As the Navy continues building the force required to meet evolving global challenges, recruiting remains foundational to maintaining a ready, capable, and lethal maritime force. The achievement of this year's recruiting milestone reflects not only the dedication of Navy recruiters nationwide, but also the continuing willingness of Americans to answer the call to serve.

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NBSD expands Grab-N-Go meal program

SAN DIEGO - Naval Base San Diego's Mercer Hall galley began serving "grab-and-go" lunches July 7.

The move expands the Grab-N-Go pilot program which began earlier this year with breakfast meals. The program is intended to provide greater convenience and flexibility for Mercer Hall patrons.

Grab and go meals are served

daily for breakfast from 7:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., and for lunch from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. The normal operating hours for Mercer Hall galley will remain unchanged, meaning the expanded program adds even more flexible dining options for Sailors.

"At NBSD, our operational tempo never stops, and neither should our Sailors' access to high-quality nutrition," said Navy Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Carlos Escobar, the

acting food service officer for NBSD. "The introduction of these new Grab-N-Go lunches is a direct investment in our fleet's readiness. By breaking down the barriers of traditional dining hours, we are providing our Sailors with flexible, healthy, and high-quality meals they need to fuel the fight and sustain the mission."

Grab-and-go meals are pre-packaged, ready-to-eat meals that allow customers to quickly

pickup their food and continue on with their day with little to no wait time. They are designed to provide fast, convenient, and portable dining options while maintaining food safety and nutritional standards.

"Taking care of Sailors is our top priority," said Capt. Brian C. Bungay, commanding officer of NBSD. "We know that working, maintaining a ship, and standing a watch doesn't always fit neatly into traditional galley hours. Improving our grab-and-go initiative with lunchtime meals



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A culinary specialist stocks food cabinets with Grab and Go lunches at Mercer Hall Galley July 8 U.S. Navy photo by ABAA Ethan Oase

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Imperial Beach wrestler captures state title in major upset

by Cmdr. Ryan Bareng
IMPERIAL BEACH - Ryder Bareng's path to a California state title was shaped long before he stepped onto the mat in Fresno.

A junior at Mar Vista High School and the son of a Navy family, Bareng has attended 10 different schools in his 17 years and endured five family deployments. His father is currently Naval Base Coronado Chaplain (Cmdr.) Ryan Bareng.

Ryder's life has taken him across the country and overseas; from Camp Pendleton and San Diego to Hawaii, Rhode Island, Virginia Beach, Stuttgart, Germany, and Imperial Beach - instilling in him a level of adaptability and resilience that was on full display at the California USA Wrestling State Championships in late May.

At Selland Arena, Bareng delivered a standout performance, claiming the Junior Division Greco-Roman title at 106 pounds in dramatic fashion. Entering as an underdog, he defeated both the #1 and #2 seeds, including the reigning state champion in freestyle and folkstyle. His run is already being described as one of the biggest upsets of the tournament.

"It feels really good to have the hard work pay off," Bareng

said after his victory. "During the match I was just thinking about staying solid, capitalizing on mistakes, and trusting the training I've put in for moments like these."

Bareng's journey through constant relocation and change has helped forge the mental toughness that defines his wrestling style. Each move meant new schools, new teams, and new environments; but also new opportunities to grow. That experience now translates into composure under pressure and the ability to adapt quickly in high-stakes matches.

He currently serves as team captain of the Beach Boyz Wrestling Club here, a program known for its unconventional and demanding training methods. Practices take place on the sand, in outdoor gyms, inside Coach Adam Feckley's garage, and wherever mats can be rolled out.

"Our athletes earn everything they get; we're just here to guide them," said Feckley. "With Ryder, it's easy because he's completely committed to becoming the best version of himself. Training on the beach builds a different kind of toughness, and he represents that fully."

The Beach Boyz program is built on its core philosophy,

DBAP; Discipline, Bravery, Accountability, and Perseverance; principles that mirror the lifestyle Bareng has lived growing up in a military family. That foundation is evident in both his work ethic and his performance.

Behind his success is a strong support network. Bareng trains closely with Coach Christian Hodges and works with nutrition coach Dan Moller to maintain peak performance. He sharpens his skills through consistent drilling with teammate Mikey Valadez and his father, whose influence has been central throughout his journey.

The program's emphasis on resilience and adaptability; running the shoreline, training outdoors, and competing in non-traditional settings; reflects the same qualities Bareng developed through years of moving and adjusting to new environments.

Bareng's state title is more than an athletic achievement. It represents the culmination of years of perseverance shaped by a military upbringing; learning to start over, stay grounded, and push forward regardless of circumstances.

With this championship, he has established himself as one of California's top wrestlers in his division and a rising name in



(from left) Ryder and Ryan Bareng share a moment.

the sport. For the Imperial Beach community and the Beach Boyz Wrestling Club, his victory stands as a powerful example of how discipline, resilience, and life experience can come together to produce something exceptional.

Cahill assumes command of Naval Surface Forces

by Lt.j.g. Kristina Aown
Vice Adm. Joe Cahill (in photo, at right) relieved Vice Adm. Brendan McLane as commander, Naval Surface Forces and commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, during a change of command ceremony at NAB Coronado July 3. During his tenure, McLane released "The Competitive Edge 2.0", an improved surface force strategy for sustained development, fleet alignment, and increased production of ships to the fleet. McLane oversaw a continued push for fleet readiness exemplified by the re-establishment of Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity commands. Cahill, with more than three decades of service afloat and ashore, assumes his new role following his tour as the 61st commander of Naval Surface Force, Atlantic. He previously commanded coastal patrol ship USS Monsoon and guided-missile destroyer USS Preble. In major command, he led cruiser USS Bunker Hill as the Integrated Air and Missile Warfare Defense Commander for Carrier Strike Group 9. His shore assignments include tours with the Joint Staff, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, the Chief of Naval Operations' staff, the Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center, the Naval War College, and Carrier Strike Group 15.





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Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum: A major milestone takes shape

by Scott Sutherland
staff writer

IRVINE, Calif. - A powerful milestone has been reached for the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum - the first truckload of structural steel for the new museum building was officially delivered recently, according to information from their website.

“After an extended delay, construction began June 15,” said Brig. Gen (USMC-Ret.) M. J. Aguilar, president and CEO of the Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation.

The Museum is undergoing a massive development milestone, constructing a 132,000-square-foot facility at the Orange County Great Park here. Set to open in first quarter 2028, the state-of-the-art site will house over 40 restored aircraft, immersive AR experiences, and a dedicated research library.

The arrival of the steel represents far more than materials arriving on site, according to the website. It marks the beginning of vertical construction and brings the museum one step closer to transforming a long-held vision into a lasting home for Marine Corps aviation history.

Each beam delivered is a symbol of progress, of the dedication, generosity, and belief from the community of supporters who have helped move this project forward. Soon, this steel will form the frame-

work of a world-class facility that will preserve historic aircraft, share powerful stories, and inspire future generations through education and innovation.

Could the new location and structural changes draw more visitors to the area? “Absolutely,” said Aguilar. “The museum is part of the Irvine City Great Park Framework which is transforming the former MCAS El Toro into one of the largest if not the largest community parks in the nation, even larger than New Yorks, Central Park.”

“And, of course, the ‘FLAM’ will be the gem of the Park attracting tourists and aviation enthusiasts.”

Key highlights of the ongoing project include an aircraft collection featuring more than 40 vintage and modern Marine Corps aircraft, and interactive exhibits - a hands-on with Air Traffic Control & Flight Simulators as well as augmented reality features currently in development.

There will be Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics-focused programs for youth and college students. Eighty UC-Irvine engineering students are building an authentic full-scale replica of the World War I-era Jenny to hang in the museum’s rotunda.

<https://www.flyingleathernecks.org/>

FRCSW celebrates opening of new Osprey hangar

by Michael A Furlano
Fleet Readiness Center Southwest

Earlier this year, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) marked a significant milestone in naval aviation sustainment with a ribbon cutting ceremony for its new V-22 Osprey maintenance hangar, a state-of-the-art facility designed to increase capacity, improve efficiency, and ensure the command remains ready to support the Navy and Marine Corps for decades to come.



The new facility represents a multimillion-dollar investment completed in just 25 months and delivers a modern, purpose-built environment dedicated to sustaining, repairing, and modernizing the V-22 Osprey fleet.

“This facility is more than a building, it is an investment in readiness, our workforce, and the sustainment of naval aviation,” said Capt. Shannon Thompson, FRCSW commanding officer. “Increasing capabilities and exploiting our constraints at FRCSW aligns us in pursuit of the Chief of Naval Operations “North Star” goal of 80 percent Combat Surge Ready

forces.” Spanning more than 64,000 square feet, the new hangar provides FRCSW artisans, engineers, and support personnel with the advanced infrastructure needed to meet increasing fleet demands. The facility includes 39,781 square feet of high bay hangar space and 24,556 square feet of dedicated back shops and administrative areas.

The hangar features four full size V-22 aircraft maintenance bays, allowing multiple aircraft to be supported simultaneously while increasing aircraft throughput capacity for the command by approximately 25 percent. Integrated 400Hz aircraft power at each bay improves troubleshooting and testing efficiency, while two 5 ton bridge cranes provide artisans enhanced overhead lift capability throughout the entire maintenance space, a significant improvement over the command’s previous facility.

The new hangar was also designed to improve the way FRCSW performs maintenance. The modern layout eliminates much of the aircraft and equipment movement previously required, reducing delays, improving workflow, and allowing maintenance teams to focus on returning aircraft to the Fleet faster and more efficiently.

Advanced features throughout the facility include integrated digital tracking tools to better manage parts, processes, and workflow; dedicated sheet metal, composite, and machine shops; storage and kitting areas; an improved tool room; and a HAZMAT issue center. These capabilities allow critical maintenance processes to occur under one roof, improving coordination and reducing turnaround time.

The facility also reinforces FRCSW’s drive to provide a safe, modern, and efficient environment. People are our number 1 asset and worker safety remains a top priority. The hangar incorporates specialized systems including underground fuel cell ventilation, integrated fall-protection systems, dedicated HAZMAT and HAZWASTE spaces, and improved tool control areas to support safer maintenance operations.

The new hangar was also designed with sustainability in mind. High efficiency lighting, energy management systems, and advanced environmental controls reduce energy consumption and water usage while helping the command maintain its commitment to responsible operations and compliance with all environmental standards.

BAILEY TAKES HELM AT NMCS D



Capt. Jerry J. Bailey reads his orders before assuming the duties as director of Naval Medical Center San Diego during the Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) San Diego change of command and NMCS D transfer of directorship ceremony at NMCS D, June 30, 2026. NMRTC San Diego supports Navy and Marine Corps readiness by ensuring its medical forces are ready to deploy and provide medical support, ashore or at sea. The mission of NMCS D is to optimize health and enhance readiness. NMCS D employs more than 5,500 active-duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors to deliver care afloat and ashore. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Marcus Stanley

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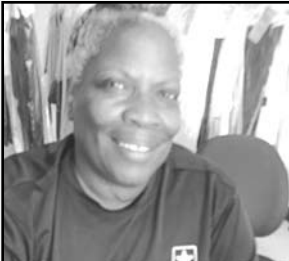
“Mashed potatoes and gravy.”
AD2 Dylan Cervantes
NAS North Island



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Steve Howington
PepBoys, NB San Diego



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by Jan Wagner

In a year that has been notable for some especially memorable movies — many of which have been memorable for positive reasons, this week I saw a pre-release screening of a movie that truly made me forget about all the other recent releases. That movie is “The Odyssey,” written for the screen and directed by Oscar-winning director, writer and producer Christopher Nolan. It was shot entirely with IMAX 70mm film cameras, a feat that required new technology.

Very briefly, “The Odyssey” is an incredible reimagining of Homer’s story about the Greek hero Odysseus (Matt Damon), the Trojan War and the ten years that followed. Odysseus often reminds his men to honor Zeus’ moral imperative of being hospitable to others — even, or perhaps especially, to enemies.

An insufficient number of superlatives come to mind to describe this movie, but some are truly epic, monumental, mind-blowing, breathtaking, a masterpiece, incomparable, intense, stunning, spectacular and, yes at times even cringe-worthy — but in ways that positively move the narrative forward. If “The Odyssey” doesn’t sweep the Oscars in next year’s Academy Awards, it will be shocking.

Nolan brings us a brilliant new interpretation of a familiar tale from Greek mythology. The movie’s timeline begins with the siege of Troy and the role that the Trojan Horse played

Review of ‘The Odyssey’ by Christopher Nolan

in ending that siege, but much of the movie is about what happened afterwards, about Odysseus and his 10-year journey home that featured encounters with the Cyclops, sirens, sorceresses and monsters.

Whereas most films extensively rely heavily on computer-generated special effects to show what is not practical, due in large part to their limited budgets, Nolan made extensive use of live stunt-work,



huge casts of extras, real locations around the world, fierce ocean storms, deafening thunder, battering tides and practical effects wherever physically possible, no matter the cost to do so. Nolan’s past movie Box Office successes gave studios the confidence to invest huge sums of money to construct what he wanted done. He pushed his cast to the limits of what they were able to endure physically, to perform what can be seen in the action sequences of “The Odyssey.” The use of some visual effects was also necessary, and those too are absolutely incredible, as in the Cyclops scenes.

I also highly recommend that you watch the excellent July 13th interview of Christopher Nolan about “The Odyssey” by Jon Stewart on “The Daily Show. In that interview, Jon referred to Nolan’s film “Openheimer,” noting similarities in the main characters’ soul-searching reflections about the life-changing

impacts that their actions had on the world around them.

In their description of this interview on YouTube, The Daily Show highlights “Nolan’s process of constructing movies through diagrams and structures, his embrace of the fantastical while showing respect to the film’s source material, and finishing ahead of schedule despite filming with an IMAX camera in three-minute increments.” We learn that IMAX cameras are especially noisy — so much so that until now they have not been useful for shooting dialog. In order to use IMAX cameras to also shoot “The Odyssey’s” dialog scenes, technically sophisticated enclosures were created to house special IMAX cameras to silence the noise.

Those custom enclosures bring to mind the off-the-shelf enclosure that I had bought decades ago to muffle my noisy Epson dot matrix printers, as they slowly worked for hours, noisily printing their way through stacks of fan-folded, tractor-fed sheets of perforated printer paper to print my college history papers.

To see an official Universal Pictures trailer for “The Odyssey,” visit <https://youtu.be/Mzw2tJJD2qQ?si=KKC4TIV8LiH6KJDC>.

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. Copyright © 2026 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #936

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

One evening, my cell phone rang while my husband and I were watching television. When there was no response to my answer, I knew that our youngest child, Lilly, had butt-dialed me.

“It’s Mom! You butt-dialed me!” I yelled. Lilly was a nurse on the night shift at the local hospital, and I could hear her interacting with patients and coworkers. I tried for several minutes to get her attention to no avail, then I began to eavesdrop.

I heard Lilly speaking calmly and kindly to a woman crying out in pain. Lilly attended to other patients, but returned to the woman later. “I’m so glad it’s you!” the woman cried, and I heard Lilly’s sweet voice putting her at ease. With an electronic “click,” the call ended abruptly.

HIPAA violations aside, I’d been given a rare glimpse at the outcome of Lilly’s unique upbringing, and I was so proud. The youngest of our three children, Lilly had been a “Glass Child,” the term for the child of a sibling with special needs. These children feel “transparent” because their parents’ focus is on their needier siblings.

Despite our best intentions for our three children, Lilly was the one we ignored.

The pivotal moment that predetermined Lilly’s destiny happened long before she was born. In an Air

The many facets of our ‘Glass Child’

Force pediatrician’s office at RAF Lakenheath, we were told, “Your son has autism.” Hayden, our firstborn, was three years old, and Anna had just been born. Francis and I were stunned.

In an instant, our expectations for our future changed drastically. We decided that, no matter what it cost or the impact it would have on Francis’ Navy career, we would provide what Hayden needed for his development.

Our family odyssey began. By the time Lilly came into the world, two-year-old Anna and I were accustomed to revolving around Hayden’s treatment plan: gluten-free casein-free diet, weekly OT and PT appointments, daily home “floor time” therapy sessions, school IEP meetings, doctor’s appointments, prescription vitamins, and special playdates for socialization.

Sensing our stress, Anna seized control, demanding the role of “oldest daughter” with decision-making power. She gladly acted as a surrogate mother to Lilly, becoming her sister’s benevolent dictator, ally, protector and confidant.

A home movie I shot in 2002 on our front porch showed Hayden in one wicker chair, and Lilly and Anna in another munching pretzels. “She likes me,” Anna smiled from ear to ear, while slobbering Lilly looked up at her, adoringly.

Before Lilly could walk, I was a master of multitasking with Lilly perfectly content in a baby sling strapped to my torso. I fired up our gas-powered leaf blower, blasting leaves off our driveway. I grocery shopped, vacuumed, and walked the dog. One late afternoon, our

neighbor Bob made the mistake of opening our kitchen door, to find me nursing Lilly in the sling using one hand, while simultaneously chopping onions with a knife in the other.

Lilly was seemingly content being low-priority in our familial hierarchy. As she grew from baby to toddler, to school-aged child, to teenager, Lilly became known as the “happy-go-lucky” one in our otherwise attention-seeking family. We thought we’d discovered the key to parenting happy children — Just ignore them!

We thought we were good parents for putting so much effort into Hayden’s development, and encouraging Anna and Lilly’s interdependency. We had no idea that Lilly would eventually feel pressure to be the people pleaser, and bury her fears when Anna left home for college.

Lilly hid her anxiety from us until her freshman year in college, when she could no longer cope with making her own decisions without her sister there to guide her. Lilly broke down and was diagnosed with Panic Disorder and Depression.

For a few years, Francis and I made Lilly the priority, giving her the undivided attention she’d always needed. Through it all, Lilly learned to turn people-pleasing, unselfishness, and empathy into a successful nursing career. And we learned that our Glass Child is not transparent at all — in fact, she is as multi-faceted and beautiful as cut crystal, and her light shines through her facets in many brilliant colors.

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Veterans News

Medal of Honor Monday: Army Pfc. William Kenzo Nakamura

by David Vergun
Pentagon News

Army Pfc. William Kenzo Nakamura was a World War II hero. He received the Medal of Honor for risking his life to save his platoon during combat in Italy, July 4, 1944.

Nakamura was born in Seattle, Jan. 21, 1922, and grew up with a brother and a sister. His parents worked as barbers in Seattle after immigrating from Japan.

After graduating from Garfield High School in 1939, he attended the University of Washington.

His mother died of cancer in January 1942, two months before Japanese Americans living in the Puget Sound area were moved to relocation centers.

Nakamura and the rest of his family arrived at the Minidoka War Relocation Center in Jerome County, Idaho, Aug. 21, 1942, according to the final ac-

countability roster from the War Relocation Authority.

His father and sister remained in the center until 1945, but Nakamura and his brother left the center for military service in July 1943.

On the day of his Medal of Honor action, Nakamura was assigned to Company G, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, in the hilly countryside near Castellina, Italy.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, his platoon became pinned down by enemy machine-gun fire from a concealed position during a fire-fight. On his own, he crawled 20 yards toward the hostile position with enemy machine-gun fire barely missing him.

After getting within 15 yards of the enemy, he threw four grenades, killing or wounding at least three of them. With their weapons silenced, Nakamura crawled back to his platoon,

which was able to continue its advance thanks to his courageous action.

Later, his company withdrew from their position so a mortar barrage could occur. However, Nakamura remained in position to cover his comrades’ withdrawal.

While moving toward the safety of a wooded area, his platoon again became pinned down by machine-gun fire. Nakamura acted quickly, crawling to a point where he could fire on the enemy. He engaged and pinned them down, allowing his platoon to withdraw safely.

Nakamura was not so lucky, he was killed during this heroic stand.

In the years after the war, only one Japanese American soldier received the Medal of Honor: Army Pfc. Sadao Munemori, who died in battle. Nakamura instead posthumously received the Distinguished Service Cross, the



Army Pfc. William Kenzo Nakamura is pictured in his uniform. U.S. Army photo

nation’s second-highest military award for valor.

During the war, the approximately 14,000 Japanese American soldiers who served in the 442nd received 18,143 awards, including seven Presidential Unit Citations.

In 1996, legislation sponsored

by Sen. Daniel Akaka of Hawaii led to an official review of the many Distinguished Service Crosses received by Japanese Americans for their heroics during World War II, despite the discrimination they faced at the time. The review resulted in the military upgrading 19 of the 52 Distinguished Service Crosses to Medals of Honor, as well as one Silver Star Medal.

The Medal of Honor was awarded to several Japanese American soldiers assigned to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team during a June 21, 2000, White House ceremony.

June Oshima, Nakamura’s sister, was at the ceremony to accept the medal on his behalf from President Bill Clinton.

She gave an interview to the Longview Daily News newspaper, which was published in the May 29, 2000, issue.

They, Nakamura and his

brother, “thought if they joined, they could get rid of the prejudice,” she said. “They wanted to show that Japanese Americans were not the enemy. It makes me sad to think of it.”

Decades since Nakamura’s brave actions, tributes have continued. In 2000, Congress voted unanimously to pass legislation officially naming the Seattle federal courthouse the William Kenzo Nakamura United States Courthouse. There’s also a memorial for him at the University of Washington.

Nakamura is buried at Evergreen Washelli Memorial Park in Seattle.

This article is part of a weekly series called “Medal of Honor Monday,” in which DOW 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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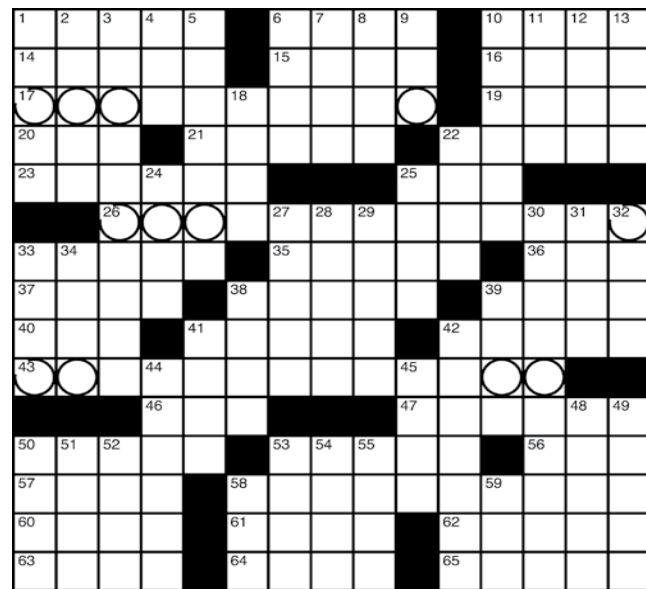
Across

1 Some artists' quarters
6 Come to a halt
10 About, on a memo
14 All-__: versatile machine
15 Bizet's "Habanera," for one
16 Handle roughly
17 Holiday bloom
19 Sketchbooks
20 USO show audience
21 All lathered up
22 Magical lamp dweller
23 Jong and Durance
25 Oscar winner Kingsley
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33 Things sometimes found under a tree
35 Wolf cries
36 1959 folk hit with the line "Charlie couldn't get off of that train"
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41 Prolonged battle
42 Number that's part of a nap
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4 Atlanta-based station
5 Goes up and down
6 Pamplona parlor
7 Vacation choice
8 Like a slippery garage floor
9 Remit
10 Be about to happen
11 Palindromic bread
12 Designer Gerreich

13 "What __ can I do?"
18 Singer Diana
22 Hair products
24 Lions and tigers
25 Lightning flash
27 Support the team
28 Composer Carmichael
29 Young hooter
30 Online advertising
31 Arguing
32 __ a one: none
33 Prod
34 "Bus Stop" playwright
38 Fizzles out
39 Centers of activity
41 Norse name similar to Stephen
42 To a greater degree
44 Numskulls
45 Campus cadets' org.
48 Care for
49 Exams
50 __-force winds
51 Equestrian's strap
52 River of Pisa
53 Farm storage unit
54 Tech news site
55 Shrek, e.g.
58 Bundle of cash
59 Altar in the sky



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The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open Mondays 10am-2pm

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From wagons to air ambulances: Medevac keeps the fight alive

by Robert Hammer,
MHS Communications

Safely transporting injured service members from the battlefield has always been a challenge, but tools, technology — and the people behind them — have enhanced the medical evacuation process to save warfighters.

Racing against time

Before the Civil War, the wounded often had to wait for whoever could reach them first, using a wagon or cart to carry them off, explained Bryant Macfarlane, curator of the U.S. Army Aviation Museum at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

During the American Revolution, “regimental bands often carried wounded troops from the field,” said Alan Hawk, historical collections manager at the National Museum of Health and Medicine, in Silver Spring, Maryland. “After battles, surgeons from opposing sides sometimes cooperated to care for the wounded left behind.”

“It starts as a problem the Army didn’t know how to solve,” said Macfarlane. “Through the Mexican-American War/Mexican-American War, there was no organized way to get a wounded soldier off the field.”

The Civil War brought new challenges of evacuation: larger armies, deadlier weapons, and heavier casualties overwhelmed surgeons after “early-war chaos” left wounded soldiers on battlefields for days, said Macfarlane.

“The casualties just suddenly shot up” during the Civil War, said Hawk. “The old system left wounded troops waiting too long.”

Building on Army Brig. Gen. Charles Tripler’s designs of an ambulance wagon, Army Maj. Jonathan Letterman, medical director of the Army of the Potomac, developed a more complete, organized ambulance corps system with dedicated wagons and stretcher-bearers.

Macfarlane said the new system marked a turning point. “For the

first time, evacuation was a deliberate military process rather than an emergency improvisation.”

The Civil War also used hospital trains and ships to move patients over long distances — bypassing rough terrain and roads which often risked further damage to wounds and broken bones, said Hawk.

World War I saw the adoption of motor ambulances, larger hospitals, and more organized medical logistics, according to an article published in the Military Review, the Professional Journal of the U.S. Army.

World War II expanded air evacuation, with fixed-wing aircraft transporting patients to hospitals across oceans and combat theaters. During the war, Army Maj. Gen. David Grant, the grandfather of aeromedical evacuation, turned air evacuation from concept to reality. He advocated for an aeromedical evacuation system with flight nursing and aviation medicine.

Then came what Macfarlane calls one “of the single most transformative platforms of evacuation” — the helicopter. Bypassing roads entirely, evacuation times went from hours or days to minutes. Army Lt. Carter Harman performed the first combat helicopter rescue while extracting a downed pilot and three wounded British soldiers from behind Japanese lines in 1944 near the end of WWII.

Helicopters were game-changing because they “marked the first time an aircraft could reach the wounded where they actually fell, not just at the nearest airfield,” said Macfarlane. They could lift troops from difficult terrain and transport them to a field medical unit in minutes, without the need for an airstrip.

Along with nearby mobile medical units, helicopters were used during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, performing lifesaving operations not possible in prior conflicts.

During the Vietnam War, helicopter evacuations from a conflict zone

earned the call sign “dustoffdustoff” because pickups in dry fields blew dust, dirt, and debris around the troops waiting below.

The UH-1 Huey became the symbol of medevac, and crews earned acclaim for their heroic actions in rescuing and saving the lives of thousands of injured service members. Army Maj. Charles Kelly, commander of the 57th Medical Detachment 57th Medical Detachment in Vietnam, famously answered, “When I have your wounded,” when warned away from a dangerous landing zone.

In the 2000s during conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, blast wounds from roadside bombs were more

common and severe than in past conflicts, and warfighters worked in smaller units to avoid detection and to limit casualties, Hawk noted. Trained medics were embedded with units, providing immediate care within seconds, and “today’s medevac helicopters are essentially flying intensive care units,” Macfarlane added.

Medevac more than equipment: It’s about the people

Medevac history often centers on aircraft, but “people built the mission,” stressed Macfarlane, who himself served as a “guardian angel” on medevacs, the armed escorts flying alongside unarmed medevac aircraft. “It isn’t just a story about machines; it’s a story about the people those



Medevac keeps the fight alive. A battle casualty of the 1st battalion, 4th Marines, is brought to a helicopter for evacuation during the Vietnam War. Medevac capabilities have evolved from using a wagon or cart to technologically advanced mobile treatment units that get the warfighter treated and transported to safety quickly.

machines exist to reach.” Names like Tripler and Letterman may get a lot of attention, but countless others continually evolved the medevac system, and medical techniques that gave the injured warfighter a better chance of survival on the battlefield, including:

• Army Maj. Gen. Spurgeon Neel shaped modern aeromedical evacuation by connecting medevac with trauma care, logistics, and command structure, with the establishment of the U.S. Army Aeromedical Research Laboratory.

• Navy Capt. Frank Butler was a founder of Tactical Combat Casualty Care.

• Army Chief Warrant Officer Michael Novosel flew more than 2,500 medevac missions in Vietnam and recovered thousands of wounded.

• Navy Capt. Frank Butler was a founder of Tactical Combat Casualty Care.

• Army Chief Warrant Officer Michael Novosel flew more than 2,500 medevac missions in Vietnam and recovered thousands of wounded.

Innovations improving the rescue

With each new lifesaving medevac innovation and tool, Macfarlane said, “evacuation became treatment, not just transportation.”

The development of numerous techniques, systems, and equipment across conflicts has made medevac safer, faster, and more effective,



Medical evacuation from the battlefield evolved from wagons to mobile intensive care units to efficiently evacuate injured service members — getting service members treatment sooner, saving lives, and getting the warfighter back into the fight.

with innovations including:

• Ambulance systems, like the Rosecrans Ambulance, the Forage Wagon, and Tompkin’s Wheeled Stretcher.

• Hoist evacuation allowed crews to retrieve wounded troops when terrain or enemy fire made landing impossible.

• Medical records, Hawk noted, “evolved from basic tally and tags to information that can move with the patient from the medic to the aircraft to the hospital,” making each transition smoother for the patient and healthcare worker.

• Miniaturized medical equipment, such as ruggedized ventilators, monitors, and infusion pumps, enables air crews to deliver hospital-level care.

• Blood products, like whole blood and plasma, and pharmaceuticals at the point of injury have raised survival rates for wounded soldiers.

• Hospital ships used since the Civil War began as modified river steamers and oceangoing steam vessels. Ships like USS Red Rover, USS Relief, USS Repose, and USNS Comfort enable the U.S. military to provide immediate hospital care close to the front lines.

Medevac for the future fight

Senior leaders across the Military Health System often warn that the next war may make prolonged field care a necessity.

Future battlefields will include

enemy drones, long-range weapons, air defenses, and cyberattacks threatening aircraft, roads, and communications, Hawk said, making medical logistics and timely evacuation difficult.

The future of medevac may look “less like one helicopter racing to one landing zone and more like a network of medics, aircraft, autonomous systems, data links, and forward surgical teams,” Macfarlane noted.

Regardless of the conflict or environment, “if you go down,” Macfarlane said, “the system is built to come get you. The unchanging core in every mission is there is going to be a soldier on the ground who believes the system is coming for them, and a crew who has decided they will go ... the technology is what makes it possible. The decision is what makes it real.”

Mission readiness depends on evolving medevac systems not only to get the warfighter back into the fight, but also to honor the military ethos, “leave no man behind,” said Hawk.

“We make a promise to the soldier, the sailor, the airman, or the guardian,” Hawk continued, “if we’re going to put you in harm’s way ... we will do our best to get you out. We will take care of you.”



Wounded men from the USS Nevada are transferred to an amphibious craft for further transfer to a Navy hospital ship. Medevac capabilities have evolved from using a wagon or cart to technologically advanced mobile treatment units that get the warfighter treated and transported to safety quickly.

Fair winds & following seas



After a combined 67 years of honorable U.S. Navy service, Capt. Elizabeth Adriano and Capt. Mike Adriano retire, leaving behind a legacy of leadership, dedication, and unwavering commitment to the warfighter.

Their journey spans more than three decades, multiple continents, and a shared commitment to Navy Medicine. While raising three children, Capt. Elizabeth Adriano served as an obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN), and Capt. Mike Adriano served as a flight surgeon, both advancing military medicine and supporting the health, readiness, and resilience of America’s Sailors, Marines, and their families.

This tribute celebrates their extraordinary careers, their enduring partnership, and the lasting impact they have made across the fleet and at Naval Medical Center San Diego.

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