

USS *Mustin* homeport change
SAN DIEGO: USS *Mustin* homeport swap
with USS *Ralph Johnson*.

See page 6

The Meat & Potatoes of Life
The secret behind "The Meat & Potatoes
of Life": It's okay to laugh.

See page 10

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SIXTY-FIRST YEAR NO. 10
THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

MARINES NO LONGER HAVE TO SEND 360-DEGREE TATTOO PHOTOS TO THE CORPS

by Chad Garland,
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps has done away with a tattoo policy rule requiring its members to submit 360-degree photos of themselves when seeking enlisted retention, or special assignments like embassy guard or drill instructor.

In an administrative memo last week, the service ended the nearly 7-year-old requirement for the photos, which were used to validate compliance with the service's tattoo regulations, the strictest in the Defense Department.

Marines have complained for years that the tattoo policy hurts careers and retention and may prevent otherwise qualified recruits from joining the service. Other Marines have lamented all the body art they won't get - such as "sleeves" - so long as the rules remain in effect.

As the Corps drew down from 202,000 to 182,000 active-duty personnel and reduced its involvement in Afghanistan, officials in 2014 began to focus more on issues of appearance and grooming



Tattoos on a Marine in 2008. While sleeve tattoos remain prohibited under current regulations, the Corps has ended a rule requiring its members to submit 360-degree photos of themselves when seeking enlisted retention, or special assignments such as embassy guard or drill instructor duty. Photo by Jimmy Serena Jr.

standards.

The service's tattoo rules were relaxed somewhat in 2016 to "balance the personal desires of Marines with high standards of professional military appearance and heritage," the Corps said at the time.

But after years at war, the still-rigid tattoo order was still seen as a "career killer" for some combat veterans who

said they weren't allowed to reenlist, Marine Corps Times reported in 2017.

Marines can have "an unlimited number of tattoos" that can't be seen when they're wearing a physical training uniform. But they are prohibited from designs on the head, neck, mouth, wrist, knee, elbow or hand, and there are limits on the size and number of tattoos visible when in PT gear.

The new photo policy does not change those standards. And it requires Marines with visible tattoos to provide a close-up photo of each, aligned with a measuring device to show that each one isn't too close to a knee or elbow, as required by the tattoo regulation.

But Marines whose tattoos aren't visible in the T-shirt and shorts of the PT uniform no

longer have to submit photos or sketches of their hidden tattoos.

Still, many Marines have bridled at the restrictions.

Marine officials over the years have justified the service's stringent body art rules as just one of many ways the Corps sets itself apart.

Last year, an infantry corporal started a Change.org petition seeking a modification to allow sleeve tattoos. It received over 76,000 signatures.

Fourth of July fireworks shows and celebrations

Camp Pendleton Fireworks at 9 p.m. at Del Mar Beach. Military ID required. mccscp.com

Carlsbad Fireworks Red, White & Boom at Legoland Fireworks at 8:30 p.m. legoland.com/california

Carlsbad at Park Hyatt Aviara, 9 p.m. See from surrounding area. parkhyattaviara.com

Coronado Fireworks at 9 p.m. over Coronado Bay and Art-in the Park 9-4, Navy Leap Frogs demo 2-3 p.m., on July 4. Independence Day parade 10 a.m. on July 3 down Orange Ave. coronadofourthofjuly.com

Del Mar Fairgrounds Fireworks at 9 p.m., which can be viewed throughout the fairgrounds. Parking \$12; admission \$10 ages 6+. Must purchase tickets/parking online in advance. sdfair.com

El Cajon Fireworks at 9 p.m. at Kennedy Park. ci.el-cajon.ca.us

Escondido Fireworks at Grape Day Park. visitescondido.com

La Jolla Fireworks at 9 p.m.

Mira Mesa Fireworks Show at 9 p.m. at Mira Mesa High School. miramesafireworks.org

Oceanside July 3 fireworks at 9 p.m. at El Corazon, celebration of Oceanside's 133rd anniversary of the City's incorporation. Recommended viewing area is on Rancho Del Oro Dr., which will be closed at 5 p.m. from O'side Blvd north to Mesa Dr. <https://visitoceanside.org/events/fireworks-show/>

See FIREWORKS page 9

NEW PILOT PROGRAM EXPLORES HELPING MILITARY PARENTS WITH FEE ASSISTANCE FOR IN-HOME CHILD CARE

Furthering its commitment to provide additional child care options to meet the needs of service members and military families, the Department of Defense will initiate a new pilot program to grant fee assistance to military families for full-time, in-home child care providers.

The department recognizes that child care is a critical support for military families with children.

"Our military parents can't be focused and available for their mission without safe and reliable care for their children,"

said Stacey Young, director of the office of military family readiness policy in the office of the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy.

DOD currently provides support to families through a range of child care solutions. On-installation care is available at child development centers, certified family child care homes, and before- and after-school care programs. Other options include fee assistance for community-based child care and free access to a subscription service that

connects families with flexible, hourly care.

The new pilot program will explore fee assistance for military families who have determined that full-time, in-home child care, such as nannies, is the best solution to fit their needs. The program will cover full-time care for a minimum of 30 hours to a maximum of 60 hours of child care weekly. Care is not limited to Monday through Friday or time of day. This allows in-home providers to be used for rotating shifts and weekend care to meet the nontraditional sched-

ules of military families.

"The Department of Defense is taking another important step to support families with child care solutions by piloting a program that explores the viability of providing fee assistance for full-time, in-home child care services," said Patricia "Patty" Montes Barron, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military community and family policy. "This is just one of many initiatives to increase access to affordable child care, including support provided for community-based fee assistance

and hourly care. We understand the need is great, and the time is now."

This pilot will be operated similarly to the child care fee assistance program currently in place for service members using community-based care facilities. A third party administrator will be selected to oversee the program, verify service member and provider eligibility, and distribute fee assistance payments to approved providers of in-home care. The amount of fee assistance provided is determined based on the service

member's total family income. The administrator will also ensure providers successfully complete and maintain current background check requirements, as well as provide information on tax requirements to the parent who will be the employer of the in-home care provider or employee. Military parents who employ care providers in their home can reach out to Military OneSource tax consultants any time they have questions about these tax implications.

In its first year, the pilot will see **Child care, page 4**

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Nuclear posture review, National Defense Strategy will be thoroughly integrated

by C. Todd Lopez,
DOD News

A new National Defense Strategy is in the works and is expected to be completed early next year. When delivered, it will provide a new set of goals and priorities for America's defense.

The Nuclear Posture Review, or NPR, will come on the coattails of the NDS and will be fully nested within it, said Colin H. Kahl, the undersecretary of defense for policy, June 24 during a virtual discussion at the 2021 Carnegie International Nuclear Policy Conference.

"We want to make sure that the nuclear posture review does not stand on its own in its own silo, no pun intended, but is rather integrated into the analysis of the NDS."

The NPR will spell out, among other things, priorities for modernizing the U.S. nuclear triad and ensure that the United States has the right capabilities matched with the national nuclear strategy. The review will also examine how the United States can take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy while

ensuring the strategic deterrent remains safe, secure and effective and that the extended deterrence commitments to its allies remain strong and credible.

It will be informed by the current and projected global security environment; threats posed by potential adversaries, and the capabilities of the United States and its allies and partners to address those threats; and the impacts of policy, posture and capabilities on strategic stability and the risks of miscalculation. Both documents will figure into the fiscal year 2023 budget deliberations, Kahl said. Especially important to the FY 2023 budget will be decisions the department makes about modernizing and replacing the aging systems of the nuclear triad, which includes ground-launched, submarine-launched and air-launched nuclear weapons. Modernization also involves new submarines, such as the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines; new intercontinental ballistic missiles as part of the Ground-Based Strategic Deterrent program; and new bomber aircraft, such as the B-21 Raider.

"I do think we need to have a modernized triad as a hedge

against an uncertain technological future, but one where we expect our adversaries to be quite competitive and building up their own capabilities," Kahl said, adding that, in addition to triad modernization,



A B-52H Stratofortress, a nuclear-capable bomber, flies through the air. Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Luke Hill

related nuclear command and control systems must also be upgraded.

While Kahl said he can't predict exactly how the NPR will look when it's complete, he did say the U.S. remains committed to its nuclear deterrent and its extended deterrence commitments.

"I don't know exactly where we're going to land on numbers on all of this, but what I can guarantee you is that we are committed to having a safe, secure and reliable deterrent, and one that is credible — not just to

our adversaries, but to our allies, over which we have extended our deterrence commitments," he said.

The U.S. nuclear deterrent is expected to protect the U.S. and its allies in a rapidly-changing nuclear environment, Kahl said.

"As we look at the strategic environment ... I think we see a couple of things," Kahl said. "First, obviously, I think it's widely recognized that we're in a period of accelerating great power competition. But it's more than that. We're also increasingly in a multipolar nuclear world."

Russia, he said, continues to develop new kinds of nuclear weapons and also continues to expand its arsenal of non-strategic nuclear weapons — typically smaller, lower-yield "tactical"-style nuclear weapons designed to attack troops or facilities, rather than entire nations.

"We also see that ... the role that nuclear weapons play in Russia's doctrine is quite elevated in the sense that, I think, Russia sees much higher utility for nuclear weapons than any other state," he said.

Nearby, China wants to grow

its own nuclear arsenal both in numbers and technological capacity, he said.

"I think within the next decade we might see the number of nuclear weapons in China double," he said. "But they're also developing new kinds of nuclear weapons ... I think that what that suggests is that they may be moving beyond, kind of, their traditional view of a kind of minimal deterrent towards seeing nuclear weapons as something that they might require in a regional conflict."

The U.S. has long-standing security commitments around the world to a number of treaty allies. Those allies know the U.S. nuclear deterrence capability underwrites the U.S. security commitment to them. What comes out in the NPR will be just one of the signs that the U.S. continues to be committed to ensuring its extended nuclear deterrence commitments remain strong and credible.

Kahl said anxiety among America's traditional allies has been high. But recent efforts by the president, the secretary of defense and the State Department have gone far to reassure those allies of America's continued

commitment to partnership and mutual security.

"You saw a lot of great statements coming out of the G7 and NATO and U.S.-E.U. meetings this past week to include issues like China, where the countries have not always been closely aligned," Kahl said. "But I think ... we all have to admit there's real anxiety among our allies. So, I think whatever we do on the nuclear piece has to take into consideration this ... emerging multipolar nuclear world where, really for the first time, we're going to face two peer competitors in the nuclear space, plus ... the North Koreans and Irans of the world."

The NPR will spell out, among other things, priorities for modernizing the U.S. nuclear triad and ensure that the United States has the right capabilities matched with the national nuclear strategy. The review will also examine how the United States can take steps to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in its national security strategy while ensuring the strategic deterrent remains safe, secure and effective and that the extended deterrence commitments to its allies remain strong and credible.

see **Strategy, page 4**

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Child care
continued from page 1

be offered in the five regions with the highest demand and longest waitlists for DoD-facilitated child care for our military families. These locations are the National Capital Region; Hawaii; San Diego; Norfolk, Va.; and San Antonio, Texas.

Single or dual active duty and Guard or reserve service members on active duty, with a full-time working spouse or

spouse enrolled full-time in a postsecondary institution currently on the MilitaryChildCare.com waitlist in one of the five regions are eligible to participate. If families are not yet on the waitlist but need child care, they can create an account at MilitaryChildCare.com and submit their request for in-home care.

Families will be responsible for finding their own in-home care providers. They may use the expanded child care service

available at no cost through Military OneSource to search for local providers. Providers must be U.S. citizens and:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Hold a high school diploma or equivalent
- Read, speak, and write English

Providers must successfully complete requirements for background checks and complete 32 hours of training, covering topics, including CPR and first aid, child abuse prevention, safe sleep, and care for children with special needs, if applicable. Learn more about in-home child care fee assistance.

This pilot is in response to requirements of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 21, Section 589, "Pilot Program to Provide Fee Assistance (In-Home Providers)." Lessons learned from the initial year of the pilot will be used to explore options for future expansion.

Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for establishing and overseeing quality-of-life policies and programs that help our service members, their families and survivors be well and mission-ready. Military OneSource is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of the 5.2 million service members and immediate family members of the military community.

Strategy
continued from page 3

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Total Navy Battle Force: 296
Ships underway
 Deployed ships underway: 61
 Non-deployed ships underway: 38
Total ships underway: 99
Ships deployed by fleet
 Fleet Forces: 0 3rd Fleet: 2
 4th Fleet: 2 5th Fleet: 25
 6th Fleet: 17 7th Fleet: 53
Total: 99



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LOCAL HOMEPORTING: USS *Mustin* to be replaced by USS *Ralph Johnson*

by Alex Wilson,
Stars and Stripes
YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE,
Japan - USS *Mustin* is sailing
back to the United States after
an eventful 15 years of Western
Pacific service that included

multiple disaster-relief missions
and frequent freedom-of-naviga-
tion operations in the South and
East China seas.

The guided-missile destroyer,
which departed its former home-

port of Yokosuka last week, is
bound for San Diego, where it's
slated to join 3rd Fleet follow-
ing a maintenance and moder-
nization period early next
year, according to Cmdr. Nicole
Schwegman, a Pacific Fleet
spokeswoman. The work, which
will begin early next year, is
expected to take two years to
complete.

Schwegman said in an e-mail
June 25 that the work will begin
early next year and take two
years to complete. However,
she was unable to comment on
the nature of the repairs and up-
grades the ship will receive.

"Planned maintenance avail-
abilities like these are critical to
ensuring ships are maintained
and equipped to perform combat
ready tasking when called upon
and achieve their expected ser-
vice life," she said in an e-mail
Friday.

Mustin will be replaced in
Yokosuka by USS *Ralph John-
son*, 7th Fleet spokesman Lt.
Mark Langford said in an e-mail
Tuesday. The destroyer, com-
missioned in 2018, returned to
Naval Station Everett, Wash.,
in January following its maiden
deployment to the 5th Fleet and
7th Fleet operations areas.



USS *Mustin* guided-missile destroyer steams away from Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, June 22. Navy photo by Arthur Rosen

It's unclear when *Ralph John-
son* will arrive in Japan. The
Navy typically doesn't announce
ship movements in advance for
security reasons.

In July, it sailed within 12
nautical miles of the Spratly
Islands in the South China Sea.
Beijing has reclaimed land and
built military infrastructure in
the Spratlys since 2014, accord-

ing to the Center for Strategic
and International Studies Asia
Maritime Transparency Initia-
tive.

Mustin, which arrived in Ja-
pan in July 2006, has conducted
three of its own freedom-of-
navigation operations in the
South China Sea. The most re-
cent happened near the Paracels
on Aug. 27.

The destroyer has also been
active in the Taiwan Strait,
sailing three times through the
politically sensitive waters that
separate the island from the
Chinese mainland. Its most
recent passage there happened
on Dec. 19.

Another highlight of *Mustin's*
time with 7th Fleet was provid-
ing aid to the Philippines after
2013's Typhoon Haiyan.



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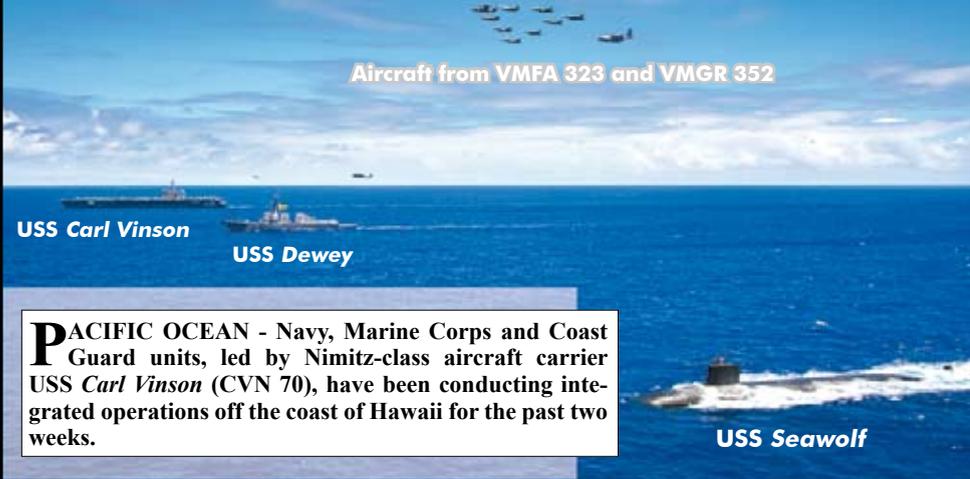
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PACIFIC OCEAN - Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard units, led by Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70), have been conducting integrated operations off the coast of Hawaii for the past two weeks.

Units assigned to Carrier Strike Group 1, as well as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 323, Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352, to name a few, participated in the joint endeavor in support of the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy.

“Our integrated Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard team is the world’s finest maritime force,” said Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, the commander of 3rd Fleet. “Synchronizing our capabilities through combined operations sharpens our edge and reinforces our commitment to a stable and secure global maritime environment.”

In addition to tri-service training, the strike group also completed carrier qualifications with embarked squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 2 and testing of ship’s self-defense systems.

“Forward presence matters.

AT SEA: Anchorage’s change of leadership

Capt. Peter J. Riebe assumed duties as commanding officer of amphibious transport dock USS Anchorage (LPD 23) from Capt. Stephen J. Iltis during a small change of command while underway in the Pacific Ocean May 14.

The ceremony consisted of a small gathering of the crew on the ship’s flight deck.

“It has been an honor to serve as your commanding officer,” said Iltis. “We had to overcome many obstacles, but I could not be more proud of this crew’s resiliency and tenacity in accom-

plishing the mission in the midst of a worldwide pandemic.”

Riebe assumed command and in his first addressed the crew as CO, said, “I’ve heard a lot of great things about Anchorage and her crew. As the world starts to open up and we become more operational, I’m looking forward to what we will accomplish together.”

Riebe previously served as the executive officer aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

- THE PLAYERS**
- USS Seawolf submarine
 - Midgett & Oliver Berry Coast Guard cutters
 - USS O’Kane destroyer
 - USS Howard destroyer
 - USS Chafee destroyer
 - USS Kidd destroyer
 - USS Dewey destroyer
 - USS Wayne E. Meyer destroyer
 - USS Michael Murphy destroyer
 - Strike Fighter Squadrons 2, 113, 147, and 192
 - Electronic Attack Squadron 136
 - Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron 113
 - Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 4
 - Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 78

how we will respond tomorrow, we ensure we are capable of honoring the U.S.’s security commitments to allies, partners and friends.”

Serving under tactical control of Destroyer Squadron 1, seven guided-missile destroyers as well as the two Coast Guard cutters executed combat systems training scenarios, damage

control and general quarters drills and additional live-fire exercises.

“High-level training of joint forces ensures the U.S. military remains the preeminent military power in the region,” said Capt. Jay Clark, the commodore of Destroyer Squadron 1. “These operations are vital to our readiness and are part of our routine presence throughout the western Pacific.”

As an integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific in addition to providing realistic and relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy’s timeless roles of sea control and power projection. U.S. 3rd Fleet works in close coordination with other numbered Fleets to provide commanders with capable, ready forces to deploy forward and win in day-to-day competition, in crisis, and in conflict.

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Permission To Come Aboard

Exhibition: July 3 - September 18, 2021

The History of Navy Ship Design with veteran curator Joe Frangiosa, Jr. featuring sailor-built models and collectibles



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WELCOME TO YOUR NEW HOMEPORT



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (June 26, 2021)

Littoral combat ship USS Mobile (LCS 26) arrives at its homeport Naval Base San Diego for the first time. The Navy commissioned Mobile May 22.

Navy photo by MC2 Vance Hand

USS MOBILE

Theodore Roosevelt to change homeport for planned maintenance, upgrades

SAN DIEGO - Aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* will depart San Diego July 16 in order to change its homeport to Bremerton, Wash., and conduct a docking planned incremental availability at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

The DPIA is scheduled to commence this September and will include a system retrofit to accommodate the F-35C Lightning II mission capabilities, as well as upgrades to the ship self-defense system, the Consolidated Afloat Networks and Enterprise Services network, and the Mk 38 25mm machine gun, as well as refurbishment and pres-

ervation of the ship's hull, rudder, propulsion shaft, anchor, and 25 berthing spaces.

Approximately 3,000 Sailors and their families will relocate from San Diego to Bremerton as part of the homeport shift. *Theodore Roosevelt* is scheduled to arrive in Bremerton July 20.

Theodore Roosevelt returned to San Diego May 25, following a six-month deployment.

Last September, *Carl Vinson* aircraft carrier shifted its homeport back to San Diego, after spending a year and a half undergoing maintenance in Washington.

Contract awarded for construction, repair of NAWs China Lake's Michelson Laboratory

by Mario Icaro

SAN DIEGO - Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southwest awarded RQ Construction LLC of Carlsbad a \$217.6 million firm-fixed-price task order June 24 under a multiple award construction contract for the design and construction of the Michelson Laboratory Complex and repair of wings Six and Seven at the Michelson Laboratory building at Naval Air Weapons Station, China Lake.

"We are pleased to be part of this project that will construct new and repair damaged laboratory facilities critical to the research, development, testing, and evaluation of cutting-edge weapons systems that support the fleet and our national defense strategy," said Cmdr. Dan Stokes, NAVFACSW assistant operations officer. "The continued effort to recover from the July 2019 earthquakes has been sizeable, and each contract award draws us nearer to our objective of restoring full mission capability to NAWs China Lake."

RQ Construction is scheduled to complete the design and construction of an industrial shop, environmental laboratory and a chemistry laboratory for advanced materials research and development by the summer of 2025.

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Humor in Uniform from Reader's Digest

I was stationed on a Navy ship in the Mediterranean, and the 18-20 hour workdays passed very slowly. My wife, a psychologist, decided to send me a relaxation tape to ease the stress of sea duty. Its title: *Sounds of the Ocean.* Frank Baker

The new ensign was trying to impress everybody with what he'd learned in Submarine School when the master chief cut him off. "Listen, sir, it's simple," he said. "Add the number of times we dive to the number of times we surface. Divide by two. If it

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Fourth of July fireworks/celebrations

Continued from page 1

Old Poway Park annual "Old Fashioned Fourth of July Celebration" is 10am to 4pm at Old Poway Park, 14134 Midland Road, with patriotic entertainment, western reenactors, free children's crafts, train displays, and old-fashioned games.

Poway Fireworks, 9pm at Poway High school. \$5pp at gate. Gates open 6pm and another display at Sportsplex in Poway Business park.

Ramona Family Picnic and Fireworks at 9pm. Olive Peirce Middle School. Events stars at 4pm.

Rancho Bernardo Community Park: Pre-Fourth of July Parade and Carnival games starting 10am July 3 at Rancho Bernardo Community Park, 18448 W Bernardo Dr. The parade is from 10-11am, followed by food trucks and carnival booths until 2pm.

Rancho Bernardo Fireworks at 9pm. Gates open 6pm. \$20 per family. spiritothefourth.org

San Diego Big Bay Boom. Fireworks at 9pm. Downtown along waterfront, Shelter Island, Harbor Island, Marina District, Coronado Ferry Landing. bigbayboom.com

Scripps Ranch 4th of July Parade begins 10am July 4 at Red Cedar Dr and Ironwood Rd, ends at Scripps Ranch Blvd and Aviary Dr by Hoyt Park. After parade festivities 11am Hoyt Park.

SeaWorld Fireworks 10 minutes before closing each night through Sept. 6. View from Fiesta Island and around the area. seaworld.com/san-diego/events/firework-shows/

San Marcos Fireworks at 9pm. Bradley Park.

Santee Fireworks at 9pm. Town Center Community Park East. Park closed to public. \$10 advance parking required. santeesalutes.com

Vista Fireworks 9pm. Brengle Terrace park. \$15/vehicle. Entry to Amphitheater \$5pp. Park opens 5pm, bbq 6:30-7:30. cityofvista.com



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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

During challenging times, people say, "It's okay to cry." Society universally accepts that, in order to overcome sadness, frustration, and even anger, one mustn't bottle up these uncomfortable emotions. One must be granted permission to cry, without fear of judgement or reproach.

But what about laughter?

People also say, "laughter is the best medicine" yet at the same time, we are expected to act "appropriately" in the face of suffering and hardship. Apparently, there is a fine line. I hate fine lines because I tend to cross them. If we make the wrong joke at the wrong time, we are relegated to being ... DUN DUN DUN ... inappropriate.

When my husband deployed for a year in 2008, I had an all-out, snotty blubberfest on a weekly basis to "cleanse" my stress. However, I learned that crying wasn't an effective long term strategy. By the seventh month of the deployment, I was drowning in endless minutia. My head swam with rational and irrational fears. Are the neighbors mad that the kids left scooters in the cul de sac? Did I pay the water bill? Are my teeth turning yellow? Am I an awful parent for serving macaroni and cheese three nights a week? Does my bunco group talk about me behind my back? Am I using the right sugar substitute? If I hate Skyping, does it make me a bad wife?

The secret behind "The Meat & Potatoes of Life": It's okay to laugh

My weekly waterworks sessions weren't enough to get me through the deployment — I needed a lifeline to lead me out of the chaos and back to solid ground. For me, that was laughter.

At my children's swimming lessons, I organized my scattered thoughts on a yellow legal pad. By the time they learned the crawl stroke, I had written four humorous essays about parenting, marriage and military life. Writing about my reality helped me sort my thoughts into what was truly important, and what wasn't worth worrying about. Through this process, I found that crying about hardships in my life wasn't nearly as therapeutic as laughing at the ridiculous minutia in between.

Socrates once said, "The comic and the tragic lie inseparably close, like light and shadow." Writing and telling funny stories is my way of achieving my own sense of "mindfulness" during times of insecurity, hardship, and even tragedy. Our whole family uses humor for fun and as a coping mechanism to approach delicate topics, get through awkward situations, deal with stress, and put others at ease. So rather than tell others, "it's okay to cry," I encourage them to see the humor in car pools, chicken nuggets, juice boxes, minivans, and so-called Supermoms. There is so much to smile about — you just have to know how to see it.

"You tell the best stories!" I've been told. But my life is not extraordinary. There's nothing significant that sets my family apart from other military

families. I've never been nominated for Military Spouse of the Year. I'm not academically gifted. I haven't done anything to merit accolades of praise, swarms of sympathy, or chants of disapproval. I haven't reached Nirvana ... yet.

For the 28 years my husband was active duty, I was a garden-variety stay-at-home mom and Navy wife with three kids, a dog, and a good meatloaf recipe. If I had any unique quality, it was simply my ability to see fodder for funny stories in everyday life.

I honed my knack for storytelling while writing on that yellow legal pad back in 2008, as a way to cope with deployment stress. Two years later, I published my first humor essay in the Washington Post and created this column, "The Meat and Potatoes of Life."

The secret I don't tell anyone is that it was by pure accident that my home-grown therapy became my career. Writing was something I did to cope, but through the process, I became a columnist and an author.

That's cool, because I'm all about bonus prizes.

As life continues to challenge us all, I'll continue to tell the funny stories that helped keep me afloat during stressful times. Sure, crying is good, but I've learned that sometimes it's better to live, love, and by all means, laugh.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Last week's column covered the amazing 1957-59 Ford Fairlane 500 Skyliner retractable top convertible, as seen at Fabulous Fords Forever. This week covers the rest of that show!

Fabulous Fords Forever wasn't held in 2020, due to COVID, but it returned as great as ever in 2021 to a new venue: Irwindale Speedway, in Southern Calif. Presented by the Ford Car Club Council and its 39 member clubs, with support from the Ford Motor Co., this marked this iconic show's 35th year.

There was huge interest in attending this car show, as was evidenced by the hours-long wait necessary to slowly inch ahead in traffic for blocks towards the Irwindale Speedway entry gate. Fortunately, the show cars arrived much earlier, coming from as far away as Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas and Washington.

1,000 Ford, Mercury and Lincoln cars and trucks, spread out among 52 of the possible 57 classes, were registered for display, ranging from vintage Model A Fords to the latest new Ford - the 2022 Maverick truck, making its California debut. This truck marked a revival of the Ford Maverick name from the 1970s sporty car.

Since I can't possibly show all

Fabulous Fords Forever 2021

of them to you in photos, this list of participating member clubs will give you an idea of the breadth of vehicles represented at this huge annual car show. This list might remind you, like it did me, of models that you'd forgotten about: 53-56 Pickups International, 57 Fords International, All Mustang and Ford Car Club, Beach Cities Mustang Club, Boss 302 Registry, Classic-Stangs, Cobra Owners Club of Orange County, Early Birds of Southern Cal, Early Bronco Registry, Early Ford V8 Club, Econolines West, Edsel Owners Club, Fabulous 50s, Int'l Mercury Owners Ass'n, Legend Lime Registry, Lincoln and Continental Owners Club, Lincoln Zephyr Owners Club, Mustang Club of San Diego, Mustang Owners Club of Calif., OC Panteras, Orange County Model A Ford Club, Pinto Car Club of America, Redliners Mustang Car Club, Saleen Owners & Enthusiasts Club, Saddleback Mustang Ass'n, Shelby American Automobile Club - L.A. Region, So Cal Cougar Club, So Cal European Fords, So Cal Falcon Club, So Cal Galaxies, So Cal Probe Owners, So Cal Panther Cruzers, So Cal Retractable, Southlanders Edsel Owners Club, South Bay Mustang Owners, Street Stanz Mustang Club, SVO Owners Ass'n, Thunderbirds of Southern Cal and Total Performance Car Club.

By far the most represented Ford model was the Mustang, with 641 registered. Additionally, there were 68 F-Series trucks (including 19 Lightning/Raptor models), 28 Broncos, 23 Thunderbirds, 17 Pintos (and Mercury Bobcats) and 16 Falcons. Rounding out the list of registrants were 22 Lincolns and 17 exotics.

Featured at this year's show was a special exhibit of cars from the "Ford v Ferrari" movie, the "Strip Star" from customizer Gene Winfield and

an original Ford GT Mk IV- chassis number J-9.

In addition to the featured vehicles and registrants, there were sponsor displays that added more vehicles, as well as parts, accessories and more. Sponsor displays included Anderson Composites, California Casuals, Cal Pony Cars, Car Guy Clothing, Classic Industries, Detail Garage, Galpin Auto Sports, JBA, Katzkin Leather, Magnaflo, Original Venice Crew, Rally Innovations, Saleen, Stang Stuff, SW Lights and Vortech. Of course, Ford had a large exhibit.

There were also plenty of food vendors. I can personally confirm that the Irwindale track concession trailer staff served up delicious cheeseburgers. Man, was I hungry by the end of the day. There was a drifting exhibition, but I missed that because I arrived late (due to the heavy traffic).

Special awards included the Johnna Pepper Trophy for the "Best Car," named for the show's founder and former Ford Executive, the late Johnna Pepper; the Bill Stroppe Trophy for the "Best Truck," named for off-road racing legend Bill Stroppe; and the George Watts Trophy for the "Best Thunderbird," named for the late former Ford Car Club Council chairman, George Watts.

This was the Fabulous Fords Forever show's first year at Irwindale Speedway. It was certainly a sufficiently large paved venue, but I missed the show being at Knotts Berry Farm, as in years past. There was even more to see and do there, and the venue seemed to handle the large influx of traffic better.

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Medal of Honor Spotlight: Army Specialist 5th Class Edgar McWethy Jr.

by Katie Lange, DOD News

Medics have one of the toughest jobs in the military - saving wounded comrades despite the danger they may face on the battlefield. Army Spc. 5th Class Edgar McWethy, Jr. understood that commitment; he gave his own life while trying to save several of his fellow platoon members in Vietnam. For his sacrifice, he earned the Medal of Honor.

McWethy was born Nov. 22, 1944, in Leadville, Colo., to Edgar and Martha. Growing up, he was active in the Boy Scouts and enjoyed being a member of the Baptist church.

McWethy was 19 and working at the Leadville post office when he was drafted into the Army in 1964. He received training as a medical specialist and was attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division. His unit was sent to Vietnam on Sept. 21, 1966.

Spotlight: Commemorating the Vietnam War

On June 21, 1967, McWethy and his platoon were in Binh Dinh Province when they rushed to the site of a downed helicopter. As soon as they set up

a defensive perimeter around the aircraft, enemy forces surrounded them on three sides and opened fire.

The platoon leader and radio operator were hit almost immediately, so McWethy rushed through the fire-swept area to help. There was nothing he could do to save the radio operator, but the aid he gave the platoon leader helped that man retain command during a critical moment.

After hearing another call for help, McWethy got up again and ran through the exposed area. He was wounded in the head and knocked down, but he got up and kept going, only to be hit again in the leg. In pain, he continued pushing forward until he reached more injured comrades.

When McWethy finished treating those men, he noticed a fallen soldier in an open area being raked with enemy fire. McWethy quickly moved toward that man and was injured a third time. He was weak and in extreme pain by the time he made it to the fallen soldier's side, but he attempted to do his job anyway. McWethy was trying to resuscitate the soldier when he was struck by a fourth bullet and died.



Soldiers carry a wounded comrade through a swampy area in Vietnam in 1969. Army photo

McWethy's desire to do his job in the face of danger inspired the other men in his platoon. They were able to successfully defend their position and force the enemy back.

For his courage, the 21-year-old earned the Medal of Honor. President Richard M. Nixon presented the medal to McWethy's family at the White House on Oct. 16, 1969.

During the same ceremony, Nixon also awarded the Medal of Honor to Army Spc. 4th Class Carmel Harvey Jr., who was in

McWethy's platoon and died in the same firefight. It's rare for two people in the same platoon to earn the nation's highest honor for valor during the same engagement.

McWethy is buried in Pence Cemetery in Baxter Springs, Colo., where his parents had relocated.

His spirit lives on in the military medical community. Two buildings at Joint Base San Antonio are named for McWethy, as is a medical clinic at Fort Jackson, S.C.

U.S. commemorates those who served in Korean War

by David Vergun, DOD News

The Korean War's roots can be traced back to 1945 following the post-World War II surrender of Japan, which had occupied Korea since 1910.

After the Soviet Union declared war on Japan in August of 1945, Soviet forces invaded northern Korea, as well as other areas in Northeast Asia under Japanese control. After invading Korea, the Soviets established a major foothold in northern Korea, north of the 38th parallel - which roughly divided the Korean peninsula in half - while the United States had a strong presence in southern Korea.

In 1948, Korea officially split into what is now South Korea, or the Republic of Korea, and North Korea, or the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when North Korean troops, aided by military support from China and

the Soviet Union, invaded South Korea with the aim of consolidating the two Koreas into one, controlled by the communist north.

Although the Soviet Union and the U.S. had been allies during World War II, after the war, relations between the two nations deteriorated, ushering in what became known as the Cold War.

North Korea's invasion of South Korea was viewed unfavorably by many non-communist nations, including the U.S.

The result was that for the first time in history, the United Nations Security Council authorized the formation of a U.N. Command and dispatched troops to help repel the invaders.

The U.S. provided about 90 percent of the troops, but it is noteworthy that 21 other nations also participated.

Check out the entire story at <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Features/Story/Article/2664200/us-commemorates-those-who-served-in-korean-war-which-began-71-years-ago/source/GovDelivery/>.

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Purchase or lease any new (previously untitled) Subaru and receive a complimentary factory schedule maintenance plan for 2 years or 24,000 miles (whichever comes first). See Subaru Added Security Maintenance Plan for intervals, coverages & limitations. Customer must take delivery before 12-31-2021 and reside within the promotional area. All participating dealers only. See dealer for program details and eligibility.

2021 SUBARU FORESTER Premium Option Pkg 15

\$347 Mo. + Tax
LEASE



MSRP \$31,328. Security deposit \$0. Due at signing \$1999. Lease for 36 Months, Residual \$20,363.20. Cap cost \$29,926.45. 10,000 miles per year. Tier 1 Credit Needed to Qualify. 1 at this price #519439.

MILITARY ONLY SERVICE SPECIALS!! 4-WHEEL ALIGNMENT

\$89⁹⁵ + tax

- Precision computerized wheel alignment
- Adjust caster, camber & toe
- Inspect suspension for wear
- Center steering wheel • Inspect tires

Must present coupon. Cannot be combined with any other offer or discount and cannot be applied toward previous purchases. Offer expires 7/31/21.

OIL CHANGE & TIRE ROTATION + MULTI-POINT INSPECTION

\$99⁹⁵ + tax

- Install Genuine Subaru oil filter
- Replace engine oil (up to 5 qts conventional oil)
- Top off under the hood fluids
- FREE Check & set tire pressure to vehicle specifications
- FREE Multipoint inspection
- FREE Car Wash
- FREE Battery Test

Synthetic, V6 & V8 additional. Subarus only. Cannot be combined with any other offer or discount and cannot be applied toward previous purchases. Please present coupon at time of write up. Offer expires 7/31/21.

900 Arnele Ave., El Cajon • 619-440-0404
www.SubaruOfElCajon.com

All advertised prices exclude government fees and taxes, any finance charges, any dealer document processing charge, any electronic filing charge, and any emission testing charge. Offer expires 7/31/21.

SOUTH COUNTY

B U I C K | G M C



GMC
WE ARE PROFESSIONAL GRADE

2021 Buick Encore GX

\$227 PER MO. + TAX
LEASE



Satin Steel Metallic. \$1995 Drive off. 36 months @ \$227 mo. + tax. 10,000 miles per year. This includes \$2000 Conquest Rebate (Must have a non GM Lease). Stk #3210033, Vin #MB051383.

2020 Buick Encore GX ONLY

\$22,800

Plus tax & fees.



Burnished Bronze Metallic. MSRP \$28,300, Discount \$ 2,000, Customer Cash \$3,500. Buick & GMC Conquest Rebate (Must have a non GM Lease). Stk #320298, Vin #LB112588.

2021 GMC TERRAIN SLE Elevation Package

\$223 PER MO. + TAX
LEASE



\$1995 Drive off. 36 months @ \$223 mo. + tax. 10,000 miles per year. Rebate of \$1350. Plus this includes \$1500 Conquest Rebate (Must have a non GM Lease). Stk #3210113, Vin #ML332250.

2021 GMC ACADIA SLE Elevation Package

\$285 PER MO. + TAX
LEASE



\$1995 Drive off. 36 months @ \$285 mo. + tax. 10,000 miles per year. Rebate of \$3000. Plus this includes \$1000 Conquest Rebate (Must have a non GM Lease). Stk #3210128, Vin #MZ147605.

2202 National City Blvd.
619-375-0409

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All advertised prices exclude government fees and taxes, any finance charges, any dealer document processing charge, any electronic filing charge, and any emission testing charge. Offer expires 7/31/21.