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## THE MARINE CORPS OWNS PART OF ROUTE 66 SO IT MADE A SPECIAL EAGLE, GLOBE AND ANCHOR FOR IT

by Chad Garland,  
Stars and Stripes

There's a Marine Corps logistics base in California's high desert outside Barstow where the service's Eagle, Globe and Anchor looks unlike those in any other clime or place.

The symbol, made up of a highway shield superimposed over the service's emblem, is found on signs lining the shoulder of Joseph L. Boll Avenue, an original part of U.S. Highway 66 at Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow.

The modified emblem recognizes the road's ties to the logistics hub, which "has the privilege of being the only military base that has Route 66 running straight through it," said Jason Thompson, the installation's environmental director, who oversees its historical preservation program, in an email this week.

The road section has been off-limits to the public since 1964, after Interstate 40 was built. But officials who get their kicks from preserving history came up with the emblem redesign in 2019 to bring more attention to it as a cultural resource.

It's also painted in large stencils



**Maj. Gen. Joseph Shrader, the commanding general of Marine Corps Logistics Command Barstow, and David Clifton, the command's executive deputy, stand at the Route 66 pavement marking on Oct. 22. Officials dedicated a new monument near the marker Nov. 9. Official Marine Corps photo**

on the pavement of that 1.7-mile stretch of road, which passes the commissary and Leatherneck Lanes bowling alley.

It was used to decorate the base's Marine Corps birthday cake, and it was memorialized in a towering sculpture of gleaming brass and steel.

The symbol was "approved enthusiastically" and trademarked by Headquarters Marine Corps

after first being unanimously approved by the California Historic Route 66 Association, Thompson said. Base documents say the logo can only be used there.

The Route 66 segment is eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places and is just one of the base's 227 archaeological resources, official documents say.

"If there's one thing Marines

prize, it's our history," Col. Craig C. Clemans, the post's previous commanding officer, said in an April statement recognizing Thompson and others for their management of cultural resources, including the historic roadway and several Native American rock carvings.

Also called the "Mother Road," Route 66 was the first all-weather highway from Chicago to Los Angeles, wending its way for

some 2,400 miles.

While it may evoke thoughts of scenic road trips and kitschy roadside attractions from America's postwar economic boom, it also played a major part in U.S. efforts during World War II.

During the unprecedented U.S. mobilization for the war, it served as an artery for the movement of troops, gear and supplies between bases. It also carried job-seekers west for work in defense plants, the National Park Service has said.

To put its supply depot for the Pacific theater out of range of Japanese naval gunfire, the Marines moved it from San Francisco to a spot the Navy gave it along the desert highway north-east of LA in December 1942.

Bursting at the seams after the war, the base was expanded with the purchase of 2,000 acres from the Army in 1946. The 5,500-acre installation is now home to the military's largest rail facility, supporting troop rotations at the nearby National Training Center at Fort Irwin and other West Coast bases.

The strip of asphalt there isn't the only thing connecting the Corps and the historic highway, though. Both are also linked through the popular song "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66," which musician Bobby Troup wrote shortly after he left the Marines as a captain in 1946 while moving his family to Hollywood.

These days, drivers heading west need permission to pass through the base's front or back gates on the "highway that is the best."

But Thompson said new kiosks at special marquees outside both entrances provide historical information to any visitor who wants to stop.

And just before Veterans Day last month, officials held a ceremony to dedicate the shimmering 6-foot-tall metal sculpture of the modified Eagle, Globe and Anchor on a pedestal in the middle of the base.

"The biggest drawback is that the only way you can see the statue is if you have permission to access the base," Thompson said. "You won't see it anywhere else."

### Winston Churchill executive officer fired after refusing to get COVID vaccine

According to Navy officials in a Dec. 10 news report, a Navy commander was fired as executive officer of a warship because he refused to get a COVID-19 vaccine as required and refused to be tested for the virus.

Cmdr. Lucian Kins was relieved of his duties Friday as second in command of destroyer USS *Winston Churchill*, by Capt. Ken Anderson, commander of Naval Surface Squadron 14. Officials said Kins was the first naval officer to be fired as a result of a vaccine refusal.

Navy spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Jason Fischer declined to give the precise reason why Kins was relieved of command, citing privacy concerns. Fischer, who is spokesman for the Naval Surface Force Atlantic, said Kins has been reassigned to the staff of Naval Surface Squadron 14. Lt. Cmdr. Han Yi, the ship's plans and tactics officer, is temporarily serving as *Churchill's* executive officer until a permanent replacement is identified.



### Air Force discharges 27 for refusal to get COVID vaccine

WASHINGTON - In a report Dec. 13 in the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper, the Air Force has discharged 27 people for refusing to get the COVID-19 vaccine, making them what officials believe are the first service members to be removed for disobeying the mandate to get the shots.

The Air Force gave its forces until Nov. 2 to get the vaccine, and thousands have either refused or sought an exemption. Air Force spokeswoman Ann Stefanek said Monday that these are the first airmen to be administratively discharged for reasons involving the vaccine.

She said all of them were in their first term of enlistment, so they were younger, lower-ranking personnel. And while the Air Force doesn't disclose what type of discharge a service member gets, legislation working its way through Congress limits the military to giving troops in vaccine refusal cases an honorable discharge or general discharge under honorable conditions.

### Local post offices extend hours Dec. 18 for 'Santa-day'

SAN DIEGO - Business hours will be extended this Saturday for "Santa-days" at five San Diego-area post offices.

The five offices that will be extending their hours of operation on Saturday, Dec. 18 are: **Chula Vista, La Costa, Midway, Moreno Valley, and Murrieta.**

"We're beginning to see a surge in customers shipping their Christmas packages," said USPS Holiday Spokesperson Tonya Billingslea. "We hope these extended hours will make it easier for our customers to ship out those packages to their friends and family across the nation."

"These extended hours, along with the hiring of 40,000 seasonal employees nationwide, the installation of new equipment at select locations and the redesign of our transportation network, are special measures that we've taken in order to ensure that we are providing peak customer service during our busiest time of the year."

USPS expects to deliver more than 12 billion pieces of mail and about 950 million packages nationwide between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day.

The Postal Service generally receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

### Base Movie Schedule



Clifford the Big Red Dog, King Richard, Encanto, Eternals. **See page 9**

### AutoMatters & More

Review of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' & thrilling conclusion to 2021 Formula One World Championship. **See page 11**

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## MARINE CORPS HERITAGE FOUNDATION

### Nominations for prestigious Marine Corps Heritage Foundation award program now open

**Marines and civilians eligible for categories including journalism, photography and writing**

TRIANGLE, Va. - The Marine Corps Heritage Foundation has announced the return of their annual award program, after a one-year hiatus, with nominations now open.

Each year the Foundation presents a series of awards for creative works preserving or advancing Marine Corps history, traditions, culture or service. Marines and civilians are eligible to submit their own artistic entries or the distinguished work of others. Awards are scheduled to be presented during the Foundation's in person annual awards ceremony on April 30, 2022, at the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The deadline for submissions is January 15, 2022.

The annual awards are presented in 17 categories including journalism, documentary, lit-

erature, screenplay, photography and poetry. A panel of experts from major regional and national media outlets, authors, noted photographers and Marines will judge the submissions. Entry is free. Winners will receive a gold medallion award, commemorative brick in Semper Fidelis Memorial Park, and a \$2,000 cash prize if applicable.

"The annual awards program provides the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation the invaluable opportunity to celebrate and recognize those who educate our nation on the service and sacrifice of all Marines," said Maj. Gen. (Ret.) James Lukema, president and CEO of the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation. "We are pleased to invite writers, photographers, artists and others whose work focuses on the Marine Corps to submit their work."

For a detailed list of the awards as well as submission requirements, visit <https://www.marine-heritage.org/awards.html>.

Dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of Marine Corps history, the Marine Corps Heritage Foundation was established in 1979, supporting the historical programs of the Marine Corps in ways not possible through government funds.

The Foundation provides grants and scholarships for research and the renovation, restoration and commissioning of historical Marine Corps artifacts and landmarks. Having secured the necessary funding for the complete construction of the National Museum of the Marine Corps and Heritage Center, located here, the Foundation's current primary mission is to vigorously seek financial support to provide continued leadership, strategic direction and financial oversight in supporting and expanding programs at the National Museum of the Marine Corps and beyond its walls.

For more information, visit [MarineHeritage.org](http://MarineHeritage.org).

### HOLIDAY FAMILY PARTY AT THE NAVAL HOSPITAL



**SAN DIEGO (Dec. 11, 2021) - (top photo) Associates and children in the Drug Education for Youth (DEFY) Program pose for a photo in the hospital's courtyard. The holiday party has been an annual tradition on board NMRTC San Diego.**



**(middle photo) A Sailor dressed as Santa Claus meets guests in the courtyard.**

**(bottom photo) Guests play a game at the holiday holiday**

Navy photos by MC3 Mariterese Merriquer

**NMRTC San Diego's mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMRTC San Diego employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere.**



## Admiral describes DOD's response to global threats, challenges

by David Vergun, DoD News

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in consideration of his nomination to become vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Christopher Grady emphasized the challenges facing the United States and its allies.

Grady said that competition in today's extraordinarily complex and dynamic environment means that the United States and its allies face mounting challenges to the international rules-based order and national security in every domain, from the seabed

to space to cyberspace, to the air and land domains.

Strategic competition, he said, does not just involve conventional or nuclear threats, but also attacks below the threshold of armed conflict that have changed the character of that competition.

"And so now more than ever, global integration is essential. And integrated deterrence in those multi-domains, leveraging all elements of national power across the whole of government and with our allies and partners is absolutely critical," he said.

Grady noted four strengths of the Defense Department, which give it a competitive advantage:

1. America's unrivaled industrial base, resulting from an innovative and open society;
2. Many allies and partners with whom all are stronger together;
3. Service members who are always resolute, lethal and ready at a moment's notice;
4. Families who support the force.

"I firmly believe that family readiness directly contributes to operational readiness. I've always said a stronger family means a stronger fleet and after 37 years of service, I can

confidently say that it is because of our families and their service and their sacrifice that we continue to be the most powerful military the world has ever known," he said.

The admiral answered questions that focused on several different topics, one of which was about the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, which is chaired by the vice chairman which reviews and validates all warfighting capabilities needed to win on the battlefield.



**Machinists Mate 3rd Class Joel Rumsey explains torpedo operations to Adm. Christopher Grady aboard fast-attack submarine North Dakota. Photo by MCI Steven Hoskins**

The JROC is one of the most important organizations in the Pentagon, he said.

Decisions that are made at the JROC are threat- and risk-based, informed by disciplined and analytical data, he said, noting that he will continue that rigorous process if confirmed.

The admiral told lawmakers that the department must be postured to address challenges from China and Russia, particularly with their growing nuclear arsenals and modernization efforts. "We need to have that responsive, flexible and survivable [nuclear] triad if we're going to meet the challenges to nuclear peer competitors," he said.

## Navy and Hawaii Dept. of Health to conduct additional sampling near Navy's Aiea-Halawa Well

from Commander, Navy Region Hawaii Public Affairs

The Navy and Hawaii Department of Health are doing additional water sampling after a sample taken Dec. 5 from an off-service section of the Navy's water distribution near Navy's Aiea-Halawa Well showed elevated results for Total Petroleum Hydrocarbon (TPH).

This sample didn't come directly from the Navy's Aiea-Halawa Well and the Navy doesn't believe it indicates contamination of the Navy's Aiea-Halawa Well. The Halawa well hasn't been used since Dec. 3, and a sample from that day, before the well was off service, indicated that the water was safe.

The Navy received preliminary verbal results of an elevated sample on the Halawa portion of the distribution system on Dec. 8, and immediately notified the Hawaii Department of Health, with follow-on discussions with several stakeholders, including Department of Land and Natural Resources, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Board of Water Supply. After reviewing the detailed results from the independent laboratory conducting the testing, the Navy determined that the sample was't from the Halawa well but from an off-service section of the water distribution system. This was subsequently reported to the Department of Health.

The Navy continues a rigorous sampling program of the drinking water distribution system. To date, the Navy has collected over 100 samples throughout the distribution system. Samples continue to be shipped off-island to certified laboratories for analysis. To date, the Navy has received results from 84 samples, and none of the results from the on-service water distribution system have indicated the presence of petroleum products at or near EPA or Hawaii Department of Health limits.

Navy remains dedicated to ensuring all residents have safe drinking water and is working closely with Hawaii Department of Health and other stakeholders.

**Total Navy Battle Force: 295 Ships underway**  
 Deployed ships underway: 51  
 Non-deployed ships underway: 20  
 Total ships underway: 71



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# DOD assists in tornado recovery, cleanup

by David Vergun, DoD News

The Kentucky National Guard has called up more than 300 personnel to duty - including 81 in law enforcement roles, 80 in recovery support and 44 in debris clearance, Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby said at a press briefing Dec. 13.

Scores of people were killed and many more were injured or unaccounted for after tornadoes tore through western Kentucky and adjacent areas of the Midwest and Southeast on Friday and Saturday.

Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responding to Federal Emergency Management Agency mission assignments, Kirby said.

Under the regional activation mission assignment, the Corps is deploying in support of debris removal, supporting critical public facilities, infrastructure assessment, he said.

Under the temporary power mission assignment, the Corps' 249th Engineer Battalion is mobilizing a temporary power planning and response team and bringing in additional experts to assist with generator staging, assessments and installation, he said.

Also, the Defense Department is making Fort Campbell, Kentucky, available as an incident support base, he said.

## NAVCENT launches Saildrone in Gulf of Aqaba for Exercise Digital Horizon

GULF OF AQABA - U.S. Naval Forces Central Command began operationally testing a new unmanned surface vessel in the Gulf of Aqaba, Dec. 12, as part of an initiative to integrate new unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into U.S. 5th Fleet operations.

NAVCENT commenced ex-

ercise Digital Horizon while launching a Saildrone Explorer USV into the water for the first time from the Royal Jordanian naval base in Aqaba, Jordan. Last month, U.S. and Jordanian naval leaders announced the base would become a joint hub for Saildrone operations in the Red Sea.

“Our thoughts and prayers, deepest condolences go to all those who were affected by those devastating tornadoes and who will have to deal with rebuilding, and, clearly, the department stands behind

“These are exciting times for Task Force 59 as we team with the Royal Jordanian Navy to establish our hub for Red Sea operations in Aqaba and deploy some of our new maritime robotics,” said Capt. Michael Brasseur, commander of NAVCENT’s new task force for unmanned systems and artificial intelligence.

The Saildrone Explorer is a 23-foot-long, 16-foot-tall USV reliant on wind power for pro-

the interagency effort to do whatever we can do to support them,” he said.

Kirby said Dec. 13 was the Guard’s 385th birthday and that they have had a full plate of activities over the past year or so - from responding to natural disasters and deploying to areas in harm’s way to helping vaccinate Americans and assisting Customs and Border Protection at the Southwest border.

pulsion. The vessel houses a package of sensors powered through solar energy for building a shared picture of the surrounding seas.

“Our Saildrones leverage machine learning and artificial intelligence to enhance maritime domain awareness, extending the digital horizon with a sustainable, zero-carbon solution,” said Brasseur.

After establishing Task Force 59 in September, NAVCENT is in the early stages of integrating unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into the U.S. 5th Fleet operational environment. In October, the task force integrated and evaluated new MANTAS T-12 USVs alongside crewed ships in the Arabian Gulf during exercise New Horizon.

### From the Services ...

#### Army

- Army officials: Service needs a “true data fabric”
- Ideas from troops for cooling body armor, vehicle safety system and building layout software take top honors in Army innovation contest

- Former Fort Hood Soldier sentenced to 40 years in prison for strangling woman to death

#### Navy

- USS *Winston Churchill* XO ousted
- Fuel detected near another Hawaiian water well; U.S. senator call for EPA’s involvement
- Navy blames Hawaii water contamination on jet fuel spill

#### Marine Corps

- Phoenix Marines team up with Habitat for Humanity to build homes ahead of the holidays

#### Air Force

- Air Force would keep B-1 bombers until B-21s arrive, under NDAA
- Airman dies at RAF Lakenheath in England
- Civilian police officer at Joint Base Charleston threatened “mass shooting or act of terrorism”: records
- Grand jury unseals federal indictment claiming unemployment fraud by Edwards AFB military police officer

#### Space Force

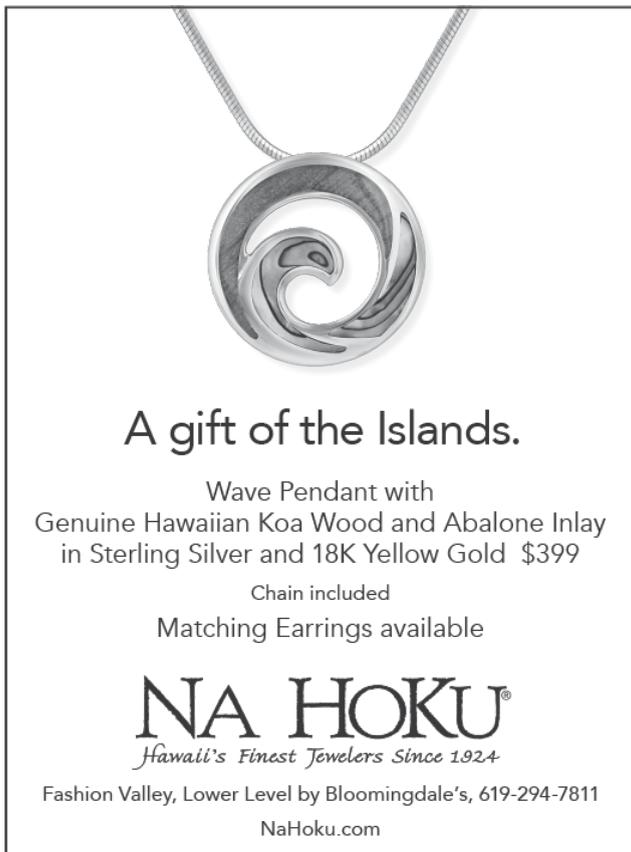
- Space Command’s goal of uniting all U.S. military space functions
- Russia showed it can attack. Is U.S. Space Force ready to defend?

#### Special Operations Forces

- Fallen SEAL Team 8 Commander honored during Army Navy game

#### National Guard

- National Guard helping virus-sapped states, hospitals
- Oklahoma National Guard leader warns unvaccinated members
- Deployed Guardsman’s stories for kids become children’s book




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	<p><b>L</b>iving Water Lutheran Church Meeting at Green Flash Brewery Gathering Room 6550 Mira Mesa Blvd. (Entrance Directly in back - off Sequence Dr.) Worship 8:45am (858)792-7691 LivingWaterSD7@gmail.com Pastor: Rev. Steven Duescher</p>	<p><b>S</b>t. Luke’s Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: <a href="http://www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org">www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org</a> Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. <i>We thank you for your service!</i></p>

## Seizing the next cycle: Advancement readiness equals mission readiness

by **Cmdr. J. D. Wainwright**,  
Reserve Enlisted Community Manager

Advancement Season is upon us. It's one of the most sacred times in a Sailor's career. And if I'm being honest, it's the highlight of a tour for a commanding officer, executive officer, or command senior enlisted leader. A mark of true accomplishment, where Sailors are rewarded for years of hard work in a symbolic act of tacking the crow.

I remember past cycles where I would close my door after viewing the TRIAD results on BUPERS Online. Sometimes because my Sailors set a new personal record at the command on our advancements. And other times, because our results were admittedly lacking. Why aren't our Sailors studying? This is a leadership issue. I need to speak with the wardroom and the chiefs' mess on drill weekend.

More recently, I struggled with the notion that Sailors weren't completing PMK-EE, or were missing a periodic evaluation to complete their advancement worksheet. They were losing the opportunity to test before the exam even kicked off.

A couple of cycles into my command tour, my senior enlisted leader, ITC Rudy Gonzalez Jr.,

gave me three stacks of paper: the profile sheets of our Sailors - those who failed, those who passed but did not advance, and those who advanced. He gave me a thorough overview of where his concerns were, and where mine should be.

First, ITC went over the failures. I found the review to be fairly cut and dry. Our Sailors who failed were not prepared for the exam (or were not proficient test-takers). Many were quality Sailors - good people who seemed to have it together on nearly every front. The leadership messaging was clear - study harder and good things will follow. In the enlisted community management shop, failures drive what we call - eligible-limited advancements. This means we have more quotas than we have test-passers. Essentially, we leave opportunities on the table, and quotas are reduced down to match the number of test passers.

The second stack was a little more complicated. These Sailors had passed, but quotas were limited to some degree. The Sailors had respectable evaluations, decent exam scores (some stellar),

maybe even an award or two that helped boost their final multiple score. Unfortunately, the Navy Reserve only had room for a limited number of Sailors within that rate and paygrade.

There are two points of emphasis to share with this second group of Sailors. First, it's not necessarily the Sailors' fault that the needs of the Navy limited advancement,

particularly in those rates that see zero quotas in an exam cycle. The messaging remains steady: that they should study hard and always remain prepared to prove their in-rate knowledge; that they are trained for their billet and prepared to mobilize. It is also important to note that as we design the Reserve Force for future warfighting requirements, we may see shifts in vacancy across communities to better align with mission objectives. Vacancy drives advancement, but vacancy can certainly shift over time as we grow and evolve.

Warfighting readiness starts

with in-rate knowledge. Passing without advancing is not a call to relax our level of effort. In fact, I would implore Sailors to control the two main factors that they can control - sustained, superior performance and sustained, superior in-rate knowledge.

The third stack was one that I perceived to be a group of Sailors who had done their part and their hard work aligned well with the needs of the Navy. These were wins in my mind. And as Chief Gonzalez pointed out, many were wins. But some Sailors were beneficiaries to growth of their communities. The Sailors did their part, but the timing was also fantastic. Some Sailors could have very well ended up in the second stack if not for the needs of the Navy.

of world-class petty officers; we are building future chief petty officers. Leaders owe it to our enlisted Force to help them understand when they have hit a home run and when they have struck out; and to understand when the needs of the Navy have prevailed, and when the needs of the Navy have aligned.

If you advanced this cycle, congratulations on a job well done. Take the time to review your profile sheet and understand what your next steps are for your next advancement exam, or for our new E-6s, your first promotion board. The process of reviewing your profile sheet is invaluable, and is an art behind the science of becoming a member of our chiefs' mess or wardroom.

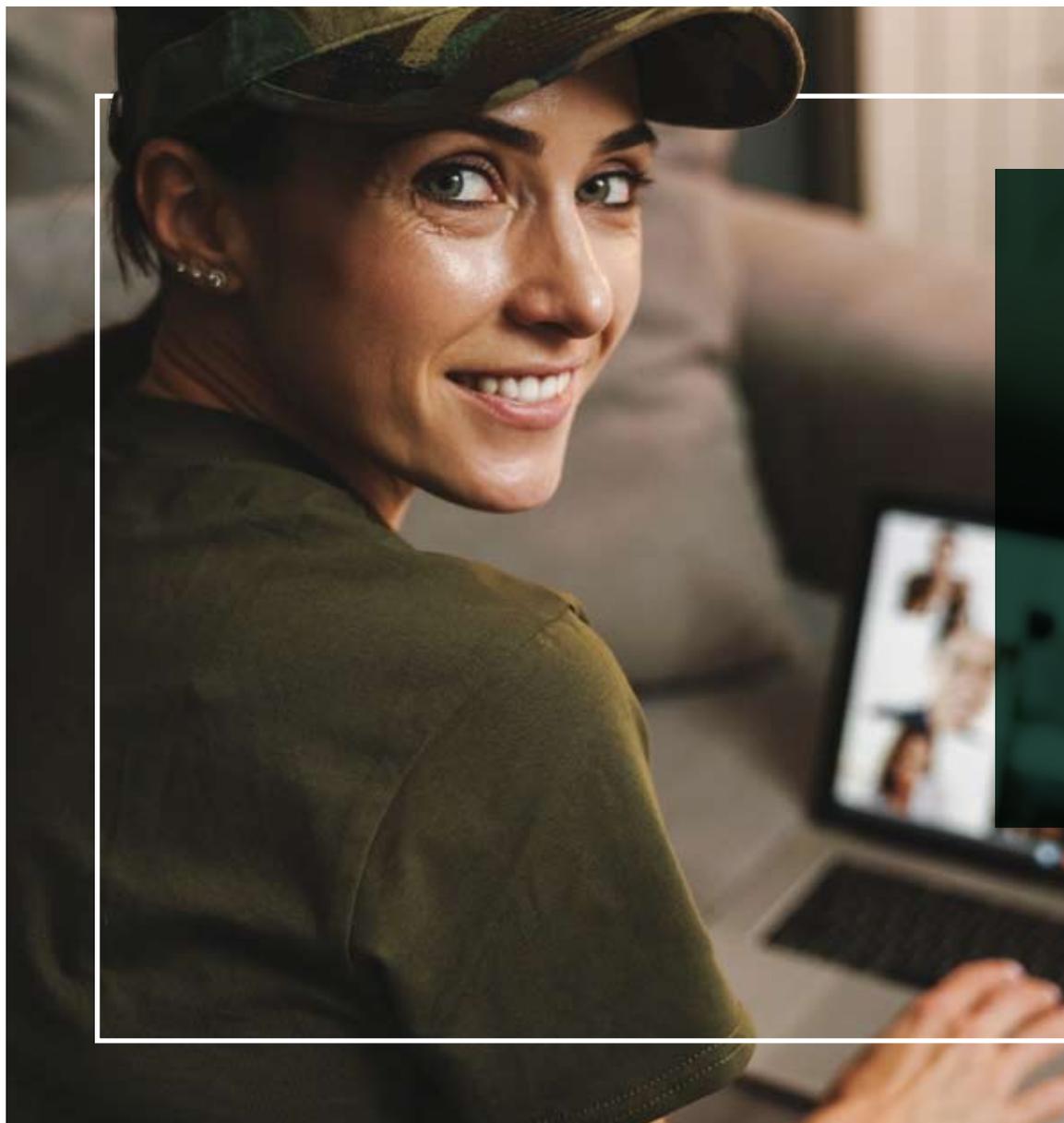
there's always next cycle. Looking ahead to the spring Navy-wide Advancement Cycle, stay focused on your pre-requisites to sit the exam. Study hard. Knock out your PMK-EE (due Dec. 31, 2021). And keep the press on your performance. Good things are sure to follow.

For our reserve unit leadership, take advantage of talent management tools at your disposal, e.g. meritorious advancement program and evaluations. Let your Sailors know what it means when they fall into one of the three stacks. Review profile sheets, and let them know with specificity where they stand. If they struck out, find out why. Find out their study habits. Find out their proficiencies. Find an in-rate opportunity for orders or drilling with their gaining Command. Make sure they're ready for next cycle.



We are not just building a Navy

For those that did not advance,



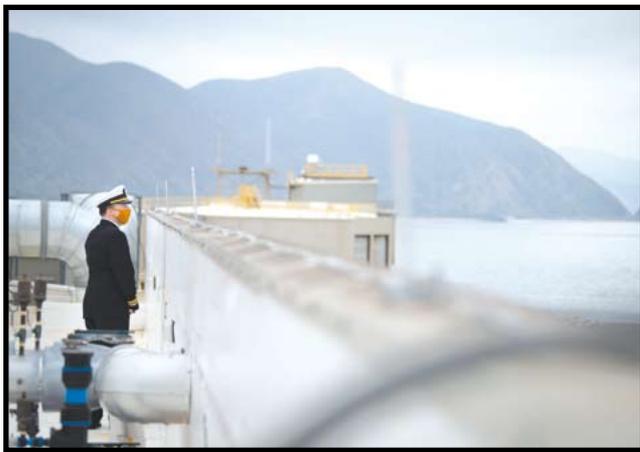
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**Ship Defense & Expeditionary Warfare Department Officer Lt. Cmdr. Levi Jones peers over the roof of the Directed Energy Systems Integration Laboratory (DESIL) toward the Pacific Ocean as he toured DESIL with other invited guests following its grand opening ceremony on Dec. 3 at Point Mugu. Navy Photo by Eric Parsons**

## Navy, local dignitaries welcome first and only directed energy lab to Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu

by Latasha Ball

The Navy's exclusive Directed Energy Systems Integration Laboratory (DESIL) is officially open for business at Naval Base Ventura County, Point Mugu.

Navy senior leaders, and local officials, including Camarillo Mayor Charlotte Craven, and representatives from Harper Construction Co., Inc., attended a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new facility on Dec. 3.

DESIL is an 18,500-square-foot, three-story facility that will allow the Navy to test and evaluate laser weapons systems in a maritime environment while taking advantage of the Point Mugu Sea Range, including 36,000 miles of controlled air and sea space that can stretch to more than 220,000 miles.

The laboratory also allows for installation of directed energy systems on its roof and inside the building for test and evaluation.

Capt. Robert Kinnach, III, commanding officer of Naval Base Ventura County, expressed his excitement for the facility during the event, including the commands and tenants that worked hard to bring this project to fruition.

"There's a lot of work that went into it (DESIL) from start to finish," Kinnach said. "We have an amazing relationship with Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA), our tenants and Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) and that relationship that we have with the other commands and tenants is really what makes this happen and I'm excited to see it go into the future."

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest Commanding Officer Capt. Mike Oestereicher spoke about

about here is lasers and that sense of wonderment that I have, [being] born into a world where lasers were purely science fic-

Point Mugu, the environment will expand testing capabilities and allow for realistic challenges, said Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division Commanding Officer Capt. Andrew Hoffman.

**"...we're talking about integrating laser systems as a deployed fleet capability, ensuring we have a decisive edge to execute the mission."**

**- Thomas Dowd**

the dedication behind the team during construction of DESIL when facing obstacles and successfully overcoming them to meet mission requirements. One of those obstacles included the discovery of a 2,000-plus cubic yard concrete slab used as a gun mount that was buried beneath the surface.

"We rallied and overcame those (challenges) and essentially very little, if any actual construction schedule increased because of those very complex, unexpected items that we found during the construction," Oestereicher said. "That was because everyone swarmed the problem, worked together, didn't point fingers at each other, and overcame those, as most of you know, about 18 months worth of construction."

During his speech, Thomas Dowd, director, Ranges/Targets Operations, Instrumentation and Labs for Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, reflected fondly about the satisfaction of seeing DESIL completed and the capabilities and future projects it will bring to the warfighter and the fleet.

"It conveys a sense of complexity, a kind of enticing vagueness and what we're talking

tion," Dowd said. "Now we're talking about integrating laser systems as a deployed fleet capability, ensuring we have a decisive edge to execute the mission."

With the facility located at

## USS Connecticut pulls into San Diego after surface transit From Guam

As reported by *U.S. Naval Institute* Dec. 12, USS Connecticut (SSN-22) pulled into San Diego Sunday morning after transiting the Pacific Ocean on the surface due to damage from a collision in the South China Sea.

The submarine transited the Pacific Ocean entirely on the surface due to damage sustained in an October collision, several Navy officials confirmed to *USNI News*. The boat's sonar dome became inoperable as a result of the collision, making it unsafe to travel underwater.

*Connecticut* struck an unmapped seamount in early October in the South China Sea, a collision that damaged the ballast tanks and the forward section of the boat, *USNI News* previously reported.

After hitting the seamount,

the boat sailed on the surface to Guam, arriving on Oct. 8 for initial repairs and a damage assessment. The submarine left Guam at some point last month.

The Bremerton, Wash.,-based boat is slated to undergo additional repairs at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard and Intermediate Maintenance Facility, which already has a backlog of maintenance. It's unclear why the boat pulled into San Diego on Sunday morning.

After an investigation into the collision, U.S. 7th Fleet commander Vice Adm. Karl Thomas relieved the boat's commanding officer, executive officer and chief of the boat "due to loss of confidence."

The collision also led the Navy's submarine forces to call for a "navigational stand down" last month.

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## THIS WEEK'S GALLERY



MCRD, SAN DIEGO  
Dec. 10, 2021

(left) A new Marine of India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, is welcomed by loved ones following graduation. Once India Company was dismissed, families and friends met their new Marines on the parade deck.

Marine Corps photo  
by Lance Cpl.  
Cristian G. Torres

(right) Capt. Kim Davis, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command San Diego's commanding officer, awards Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Randel St. Hill with a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. St. Hill received the award for outstanding performance in his duties. NMRTC prepares service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services. Navy photo by MC3 Luke Cunningham



NMRTC San Diego  
Dec. 10, 2021



PHILIPPINE SEA  
Nov. 29, 2021

An Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to the "Blue Hawks" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 78, deploys flares as it performs an aerial change of command alongside Carl Vinson aircraft carrier. The carrier strike group is on deployment in the 7th Fleet.

Navy photo by  
MC2 Russell Lindsey

## Marines with engineer support battalion complete interoperability exercise

by 1st Lt. Jonathan Coronel

3rd Marine Logistics Group

CAMP PENDLETON - Marines from both I and III Marine Expeditionary Force recently conducted a littoral mobility exercise to test new technology and tactics with a focus on mine countermeasure and engineer reconnaissance from shallow water to the objective.

Unique elements from both 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3d Marine Logistics Group, and 7th ESB, 1st MLG, refined their tactics to support naval persistence from very shallow water to the objective ashore.

9th ESB's Littoral Engineer Reconnaissance Team, recently formed in August 2021, is trained to employ personnel and unmanned systems to identify, update, and confirm or deny suitable beach landing sites for follow-on forces ashore. However, once man-made or natural obstacles are identified, the LERT turns the fight over to the Littoral Explosive Ordnance Neutralization platoon or Naval Mine Countermeasures Company to render that threat safe, according to the LERT officer in charge, 1st Lt. Brandon Cavit.

"This exercise was all about honing the Marine Corps' interoperability with the Navy, specifically addressing where we can provide redundant and complementary capabilities. When we look at the emerging capability and relationship between the LERT and LEON, this interoperability field exercise provided the ground work for what we can provide the Navy in terms of littoral mobility," said Cavit.

The three week exercise featured experimentation on new technologies such as the Vapor 55 unmanned aerial system, the Fusion Strategic Robotics System, and the REMUS unmanned underwater vehicle, as well as cross-training with Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 1, underscoring the importance of integrating new capabilities in support of naval maneuver, a key tenet of the 38th Commandant of

the Marine Corps' 2019 Planning Guidance.

"This exercise has put our unit at the forefront of force design and helped us understand our role as a stand-in force by giving us the opportunity to develop tactics, techniques and procedures that help us work more seamlessly with our Navy counterparts. These new capabilities enhance commanders' real-time situational awareness in an amphibious environment, which changes the game when it comes to shortening the decision-making process," said Master Sgt. Matthew T. Jackson, with 1st Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company

The exercise culminated with a full mission profile utilizing LEON and LERT to set conditions for surface connectors heading ashore. LERT Marines used civilian vehicles to gain access to a semi-permissive beach and reconnoitered multiple objectives with the Vapor-55 UAS and small reconnaissance elements to locate, identify, and observe potential landing zones. Simultaneously, the LEON team inserted Marines and UUVs via combat rubber raid craft to identify underwater mines and explosive hazards.

During this culminating evolution and throughout the training, the Marines from I and III MEF demonstrated their ability to seamlessly integrate in order to detect and neutralize threats in shallow water, supporting Navy maneuver, according to Lt. Col. Marcus Gillett, commanding officer of 9th ESB.

"This operation validated assumptions and concepts regarding the employment of multiple capabilities like the Vapor-55, LEON, and other reconnaissance technology in the tactical collection of geospatial intelligence, enhancing the supported units' mobility through standoff detection of natural and manmade obstacles, and the ability to integrate the information into the command and control network in a way that is actionable at multiple levels of the chain of command," said Gillett.

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## Sailor wishes his family in Houston a happy holiday

by Stephanie Fox,  
Office of Community Outreach  
Sailors help maintain America's advantage at sea. This means they do not always get to celebrate holidays with their loved ones. A Houston, Texas, native serving in the Navy will celebrate the holidays aboard USS *Essex*.

"Holidays are a special time for me," said Lt. Cmdr. Landerrick Bolding. "As a service member stationed away from my hometown, the holidays are a time of reflection of some of my fondest memories. Christmas 2013 was the day I proposed to my wife of seven years, at the home of my grandmother who passed away earlier this year. New Year's Eve of 2015 was spent with my parents and two younger siblings. Now my brother is deceased and these memories are all I have left of him."

Bolding hopes others take this as a reminder to appreciate the ones they love.

"Use these special times to let people know how important their presence is in your life and how much you appreciate them," said Bolding.

As a member of the Navy, Bolding, as well as other Sailors, know they are a part of a tradition providing unforgettable experiences through leadership development, world affairs and humanitarian assistance.

"As a proud service member, I'm honored to be associated with a long list of brave men and women whose very presence represent the fighting spirit of our great country and the defense of freedom and democracy around the world," added Bolding. "Although great, this occupation and lifestyle has



Lt. Cmdr. Landerrick Bolding

not been without challenges and sacrifices. With that in mind, I ask that you do something special for a military member or military family you may know. While most of you will celebrate this holiday season with family and friends, others will likely have to get through the holidays without their husband, wife, mother or father."

## San Diego native becomes member of elite Navy Honor Guard

by Rick Burke,  
Navy Office of Community Outreach  
MILLINGTON, Tenn. - A native of San Diego recently completed an intensive 10-week training program to become a member of the elite Navy Honor Guard.

Seaman Daviontee Robinson is a 2012 Mount Miguel High School and 2015 West Hills Community College-Coalinga graduate with a degree in liberal arts behavioral and social science. Today, Robinson serves as an Navy Ceremonial Guardsman.

"I joined the Navy four months ago to provide a better life for myself and my family," said Robinson. "I also wanted to build, serve and grow relationships with people all across the world. I learned motivation, determination and attention to detail are essential qualities not only in the Navy, but life in itself."

Established in 1931, the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard is the official honor guard of the Navy and is based at Naval District Washington Anacostia Annex in Washington, D.C.

According to Navy officials, the Navy Ceremonial Guard's primary mission is to represent the service in Presidential, Joint Armed Forces, Navy, and public ceremonies in and around the nation's capital. Members of the Navy Ceremonial Guard participate in some of our nation's most prestigious ceremonies, including Presidential inaugurations and arrival ceremonies for foreign officials.

"I enjoy the fact that it is a close-knit command, and very few get the opportunity to bury our fallen Sailors," said Robinson.

Sailors of the Ceremonial Guard are hand selected while

**The staff at the Navy Office of Community Outreach travels the globe to collect Sailors' stories and distribute them to their hometown media. These articles increase engagement with your communities.**

they are attending boot camp at Recruit Training Command in Great Lakes, Ill. Strict military order and discipline, combined with teamwork, allow the Ceremonial Guard to fulfill their responsibilities with pride and determination. They are experts



Seaman Daviontee Robinson

in the art of close order drill, coordination and timing.

The Ceremonial Guard is comprised of the drill team, color guard, casket bearers and firing party.

Casket bearers carry the Navy's past service members to their resting ground. Whether it is in Arlington National Cemetery, or another veteran's cemetery. The firing party renders the 21 Gun Salute, the signature honor of military funerals, during every Navy Funeral at Arlington National Cemetery.

Though there are many opportunities for sailors to earn recognition in their command, community and careers, Robinson is most proud of being a

husband, father and building generational wealth that wasn't obtained before.

"I'm the first person in my family to accomplish anything positive in life," said Robinson.

As a member of the U.S. Navy, Robinson, as well as other sailors, know they are a part of a service tradition providing unforgettable experiences through leadership development, world affairs and humanitarian assistance. Their efforts will have a lasting effect around the globe and for generations of sailors who will follow.

"It's a great deal of pride for myself," said Robinson. "I'm leaving a legacy for my family, as well as serving amongst those that love their country."

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6pm Clifford Big Red Dog (PG)

**Friday, Dec 17**  
6pm Ghostbusters:Afterlife (PG-13)

**Saturday, Dec 18**  
2:40pm Ghostbusters:Afterlife (PG-13)

6pm King Richard (PG-13)

**Sunday, Dec 19**  
1pm Clifford Big Red Dog (PG)

3:30pm King Richard (PG-13)

**Pendleton Theater and Training Center**  
Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across from Mainside Center)

**Saturday, Dec 18**  
1:30pm Eternals (PG-13)

**Bob Hope Theater** 577-4143  
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**Friday, Dec 17**  
6pm Ghostbusters:Afterlife (PG-13)

9pm King Richard (PG-13)

**Saturday, Dec 18**  
3pm Clifford Big Red Dog (PG)

6pm Ghostbusters:Afterlife (PG-13)

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**Friday, Dec 17**  
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**Saturday, Dec 18**  
3pm Eternals (PG-13)

6pm Ghostbusters:Afterlife (PG-13)

**Sunday, Dec 19**  
1pm Clifford Big Red Dog (PG)

4pm King Richard (PG-13)

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- Settlement for prisoners
- Iberian river
- Countless years
- One with cinco dedos
- Place to display tchotchkes
- Die down, as a storm
- Type
- "What was \_\_\_ think?"
- High-level H.S. classes
- Prefix with cycle
- Linseed oil source
- She voices Elsa in "Frozen" films
- PC connections
- Little rascal
- "MASH" milieu: Abbr.
- Slippery swimmer
- Pre-1868 Tokyo
- Like Stout's Nero Wolfe
- Approximately 247 acres
- Govt. agency with an Informed Delivery service
- Cry from a crib
- Distant relative of the emu
- Pocket money ... and what's in the puzzle's circles?
- Supergirl's symbol
- Wheel cover
- "That's unnecessary"
- GPS indication
- Soap since 1965, familiarly
- Like plans yet to be finalized
- Grass in a roll

Down

- Capital east of Denver
- Site with many home pages?
- Name spelled out in a Van Morrison song
- "The Racer's Edge"
- Golf course hazard
- Used as fuel
- Donald Jr.'s mom
- Many-voiced Blanc
- Capital WNW of Denver
- Psalm instruction
- Three-time "Modern Family" Emmy nominee
- Company that merged with Konica
- Oinker's digs
- Siberian city
- Eightsomes
- French military cap
- French film
- "Hogan's Heroes" colonel
- Sly critter
- Derogatory
- Decision maker at home
- "Show Boat" author
- Apparent
- Wild way to run
- New way for many to meet
- Moines
- Giant redwood
- Scots Gaelic
- Old anesthetics
- Makes sure of
- Took off the board
- Altar areas
- Start of a demand
- Bowling sites
- "Well, shucks!"
- Bygone Ford
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## EVENTS AROUND TOWN

Dec 16: **LA Chargers vs. Kansas City Chiefs** at SoFi Stadium, 5:20pm. [www.chargers.com](http://www.chargers.com)

Dec 16-23: Golden State Ballet Presents: **The Nutcracker** at San Diego Civic Theatre. [sandiegotheatres.org](http://sandiegotheatres.org)

Dec 17: noon-6pm, **Gem Faire**, \$7. Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South, Mission Valley.

Dec 17: 5-7pm, **Stars at Mission Trails**: West Sycamore, Free. SD Astronomy Assn has telescopes to view night sky. Parking lot at the far east end of Stonebridge Parkway. <https://mtrp.org/>

Dec 17-18: **Holiday Lights** at Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum. [www.agsm.com](http://www.agsm.com)

Dec 17-18: 5 & 7pm. **North Pole Limited train ride** to visit Santa. [www.psm.org](http://www.psm.org)

Dec 18: 8-9:30am, Free. **Guided Bird Walk: Lake Murray** North, Lake Murray Community Park, 7001 Murray Park Dr, San Diego, 92119.

Dec 18: 8-10am, free. **Guided Nature walk from Peñasquitos** Creek Crossing Trailhead, Peñasquitos Creek Park, 11939 Camino Del Sur, San Diego, 92129.

Dec 18: **Christmas City USA**, 6-9pm, Legacy International Center, Free. Enjoy music, food, vendors, and festive décor. 875 Hotel Circle South, San Diego. <https://legacysandiego.com/>

Dec 18: **Bad Santa Pub Crawl** at Taste and Thirst, 6pm-12:30am. [www.eventbrite.com/e/bad-santa-pub-crawl-tickets-188706204337](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/bad-santa-pub-crawl-tickets-188706204337)

Thru Dec 24: **The Holiday Market**, 4-10pm, \$10-\$14, Petco Park

Dec 18: **SD Gulls vs. San Jose Barracuda** at Pechang Arena San Diego, 7pm. [sandiegogulls.com](http://sandiegogulls.com)

Dec 18: **Winter Wonderland**, 3pm. Free\*. Play in the snow, holiday crafts, tunnels of lights! California Center for the Arts, Escondido. <https://artcenter.org/event/winter-wonderland/>

Dec 18-23: **Wild Holidays** at San Diego Zoo Safari Park, 4-8pm. [www.sdzsaferipark.org/wildholidays](http://www.sdzsaferipark.org/wildholidays)

Dec 19: **San Diego Holiday half marathon**, 5am-noon. Rancho Peñasquitos to Torrey Pines. Register

Dec 19: **An Irish Christmas** at Balboa Theatre [visitsdbalboa.org](http://visitsdbalboa.org)

Dec 19: **Gaslamp Pet Parade**, 1pm. Gaslamp quarter. [www.gaslamp.org/events/](http://www.gaslamp.org/events/)

Dec 19: **LA Rams vs. Seattle Seahawks** at SoFi Stadium, 1:25pm. [www.therams.com](http://www.therams.com)

Dec 19: **50th Annual San Diego Bay Parade of Lights** 5-7pm. Holiday boat parade that will dazzle and entertain Bayfront crowds. [www.sdparadeoflights.org](http://www.sdparadeoflights.org)

Dec 20-22: **Men At Work** at Belly Up, 8pm. [www.bellyup.com](http://www.bellyup.com)

Dec 21: **Winter Solstice**  
Dec 22: **Men's Basketball**: SDSU vs. UC San Diego at Viejas Arena. [www.goaztecs.com](http://www.goaztecs.com)

Thru Dec 23: **Miracle on 34th Street** at Avo Playhouse in Vista [www.moonlightstage.com](http://www.moonlightstage.com)

Thru Dec 23: **Photos with Santa**, Seaport Village. [seaportvillage.com](http://seaportvillage.com)

Dec 22-23: City Ballet of San Diego presents **The Nutcracker** at California Center for the Arts Escondido. [www.artcenter.org](http://www.artcenter.org)

Dec 23: **LA Lakers vs. San Antonio Spurs** at Staples Center, 7:30pm. [www.nba.com/lakers](http://www.nba.com/lakers)

Dec 24: **Christmas Eve**  
Dec 25: **Christmas Day**  
Dec 26: **Mystery Science Theater 3000** Live at Balboa Theatre, 7pm. [www.sandiegotheatres.org](http://www.sandiegotheatres.org)

Dec 26-Jan 1: **Kwanzaa**  
Thru Dec 31: **Dr. Seuss's How the Grinch Stole Christmas** at The Old Globe. [www.theoldglobe.org](http://www.theoldglobe.org)

Thru Dec 31: **Seas 'n' Greetings at Birch Aquarium**  
Thru Jan 2: **Snow N Glow Holiday Festival**. Select nights at Del Mar Fairgrounds. [snownglow.com](http://snownglow.com)

Thru Jan 2: **Skating by the Sea** at Hotel Del Coronado. [www.hoteldel.com/activities/skating](http://www.hoteldel.com/activities/skating)

Thru Jan 2: **Jungle Bells** at San Diego Zoo, 9am-8pm. No celebration on 12/24, as the park closes at 5pm. [www.sandiegozoo.org/junglebells](http://www.sandiegozoo.org/junglebells)

Thru Jan 5: **Christmas Celebration at SeaWorld** San Diego.  
Thru Jan 5: **Christmas Celebration at SeaWorld** San Diego.

## MWR EVENTS

### Ebenezer Scrooge's Big San Diego Christmas Show

Sunday, Dec, 19, 7pm, \$49 per person (ages 4+)  
Meeting location: The Old Globe Theatre 1363 Old Globe Way. Back by popular demand, the iconic Christmases Past, Present, and Future—with a comedic local twist—all set in "wintery" San Diego. Register today! <https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/SanDiego/Ebenezer>

**Christmas Movie Marathon!** Fri, Dec 24, 10am-4pm  
\*\*For Active Duty Only - Single Sailors E1-E6. (NBPL, Harbor Drive) Liberty Program at Marina, Bldg. 606. Info: 619-524-5628

**Christmas DINNER and Activities.** Sat, Dec 25, 4-5pm  
\*\*For Active Duty Only - Single Sailors E1-E6. (NBPL, Subbase) Liberty Program At Com-Rec, Bldg. 546. Info: 619-553-9138

## ROY'S SUDOKU

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2021 [www.armedforcesdispatch.com](http://www.armedforcesdispatch.com) 9



## Medal of Honor Spotlight: Marine Corps Maj. Henry Elrod

by Katie Lange

Pearl Harbor wasn't the only U.S. military base attacked by the Japanese on Dec. 7, 1941. U.S. service members on tiny Wake Island, a strategic base

about 2,300 miles further west from Oahu, also defended themselves from enemy invaders. Marine Corps Maj. Henry T. Elrod fought valiantly there in the skies and on land for more than two

weeks. While he didn't survive the battle, his bravery earned him the Medal of Honor.

Elrod was born Sept. 27, 1905, in Rebecca, Ga., to parents Robert and Margaret. The family moved to Thomasville, Ga., in 1911, where Elrod grew up with his younger sister, Kate.

According to the *Thomasville Times Enterprise*, Elrod played football and baseball for Thomasville High School before attending the University of Georgia, where he played football for one year. He then transferred to Yale before joining the Marine Corps in 1927. Elrod received his commission as an officer four years later.

In May 1933, Elrod married Elizabeth Jackson. She was the niece of Rear Adm. R.H. Jackson and went on to become a captain within the Marine Corps' Women's Reserve.

By February 1935, Elrod had earned his wings as an aviator. He served at Quantico, Virginia, before being transferred to San Diego in 1938. In January 1941, he was sent to Hawaii to be the executive officer of Marine Fighting Squadron 211.

On Dec. 4, 1941, Elrod and 11 other pilots in his squadron flew F4F-3 Wildcats to Wake Island. Three days later — technically Dec. 8, 1941, because Wake is on the other side of the International Date Line — the Japanese

left to fend off a massive number of enemy forces.

Over the span of several days, Marine Corps Capt. Elrod used one of those aircraft to keep several Japanese planes from landing on the island. He also single-handedly shot down two enemy fighters in a flight of 22. After that, he bombed and strafed the Japanese destroyer ship *Kisaragi* so many times that it sank. That feat made Elrod the first U.S. pilot to sink a warship from a fighter plane.

Eventually, Elrod's plane suffered enough damage that it was no longer able to fly, and the remaining Wildcats were no longer airborne, either. In a last-ditch effort to save the island, Elrod helped organize the remaining troops on the ground — many of whom were civilians — into beach defense units to repel waves of Japanese troops trying to come ashore. Several times during that night, Elrod provided cover fire for unarmed ammunition carriers who were resupplying a gun emplacement.

Shortly before dawn on Dec. 23, a Japanese sailor who had hidden himself among the casualties on the beach shot Elrod as he was providing cover fire. He died instantly.

Wake fell to the enemy later that day. The Japanese didn't surrender the island back to U.S. troops until the end of the war.

Despite the massive American losses recorded at Wake, Elrod's determination in the air and as a leader on the ground was integral to the fight. On Nov. 8, 1946, Marine Corps Gen. A.A. Vandegrift presented the Medal of Honor to Elrod's widow during a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Elrod was initially buried on Wake, but he was reinterred at Arlington National Cemetery in 1947. Elrod's heroics haven't been forgotten in the Marine Corps. In 1985, a guided missile frigate was commissioned and named USS Elrod in his honor. A street is also named for him at Quantico.

*This article is part of a weekly series called "Medal of Honor Monday," highlighting one of the many MOH recipients who have earned the U.S. military's highest medal for valor.*

### Veterans

- Buddy Check' gatherings aimed at helping veterans
- Writer profiles every USS Arizona casualty at Pearl Harbor
- Retired Army colonel circulated proposal to challenge the 2020 election
- A Marine veteran was denied his disability benefits for 40 years. He sued the VA and won
- Downed war pilot from Montana memorialized in French film
- After 19-month search, Italian researcher may have located lost plane of missing WWII airman



**In this file photo from March 22, 1988, family and friends greet crew members of frigate USS Elrod upon its return from a six-month deployment in the Persian Gulf. Navy photo**

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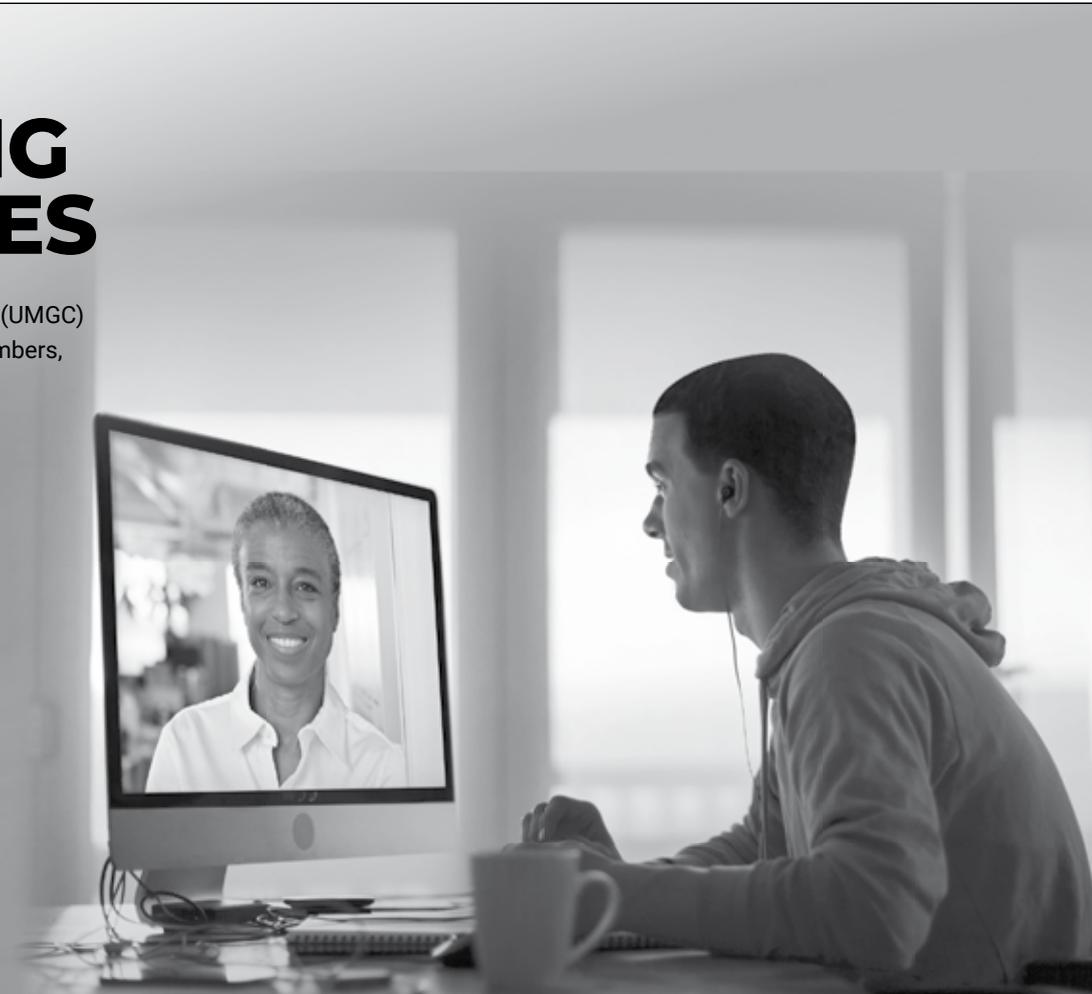
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## Why less sunlight in the wintertime can put you at risk of depression

During winter months at Fort Wainwright in Alaska, the sun comes up around 10 a.m. and sets a little bit before 3 p.m. Along with the frigid weather, the extended darkness creates an increased risk of depression and other mental health problems.

That's why at installations like Fort Wainwright, military officials are acutely aware of the risks of Seasonal Affective Disorder, also known as SAD, which is the medical term for a seasonally triggered change in behavior that can affect anyone but especially at higher latitudes where the days are shortest.

**SAD can be hard to recognize because its onset is as slow as the changing seasons.**

"One of the most challenging things about identifying Seasonal Affective Disorder is that the onset can be very subtle," said Army Capt. Julie Dederer, a psychologist at Bassett Army Community Hospital at Fort Wainwright near Fairbanks, Alaska, said.

"This can cause delays in patients identifying that something is wrong, and in accurately identifying it for treatment once the patient does seek treatment for it."

The problem becomes most

acute around this time of year, near the winter solstice, or the northern hemisphere's shortest day of the year, which usually falls on Dec. 21.

**Anyone can be affected each year regardless of latitude.**

"SAD can occur regardless of geographic location, especially if people have a history of mental health issues or depression," said U.S. Public Health Service Officer Lt. Hana Kim, the assistant department head of the outpatient behavioral health department at the Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command in Jacksonville, Florida.

There is a relatively high rate of reoccurrence "in that individuals who experience an episode of SAD are significantly more likely to experience another episode the next year," Dederer said. The good news is that this "provides an opportunity for preventive measures."

At Fort Wainwright, soldiers can borrow light boxes, which provide broad-spectrum light that mimics daylight. Light boxes are best used in the morning, Kim said.

"For mild to moderate SAD, light box therapy is the first line of therapy," she said. For more severe

cases, antidepressant medications such as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, known as SSRIs, might be prescribed.

**Lifestyle Changes Can Help**

A good deal of treatment for SAD involves behavioral and lifestyle changes.

There are other contributing factors to SAD and its severity, which can include reduced physical activity, poor diet, social isolation, and spending less time on enjoyable activities, Dederer said. To address some of these issues, she recommends:

- Low-fat diets
- Reduced carbohydrates
- Reduced refined sugars

Dederer also suggested lifestyle changes, including:

- Finding new hobbies to stay active in the winter
- Making deliberate efforts to go outside during the daytime
- Opening blinds to increase sun exposure
- Socializing more with family and friends

Additionally, she suggested getting your vitamin D levels checked during the winter. Low vitamin D is a possible medical factor with SAD, although there is no conclusive scientific evidence to support that. Fort

Wainwright provides free vitamin D supplements on-post.

Kim emphasized as important "good sleep hygiene – going to bed at the same time every night, no naps, and no caffeine in the afternoon."

Additionally, she suggested adopting a "generally healthy lifestyle and exercising, which releases good endorphins in the brain and can help counteract any weight gain caused by overeating, and limiting excess alcohol."

**SAD Education**

At Wainwright, the potential for SAD is addressed immediately upon a service member's arrival, regardless of the time of year.

Wainwright has an outreach component, where behavioral health staff brief every soldier within their first week on base. They discuss challenges in Alaska's climate and environment, signs of SAD and resources for addressing the condition.

"The hope is that the brief gives soldiers the information to encourage them to be proactive in identifying and preventing SAD symptoms," Dederer said.

If SAD symptoms are identified in a soldier, the behavioral staff at



**U.S. Airmen carry their deployment gear as they arrive at the Joint Mobility Complex for exercise Polar Force at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, Nov. 2021. Polar Force is a two-week exercise designed to test JBER's mission readiness while strengthening and developing the skills.**

Bassett "assess the extent to which symptoms might be seasonally driven" and recommend a treatment plan, she added.

**SAD and Social Isolation**

"Beware of the challenges in comparing your own needs to those of the people around you," Dederer said.

"In winter, many people socialize less, which means they interact with their friends less often," she said.

For instance, "They may believe they are the only one struggling with the 'winter blues' and are reluctant to seek help due to stigma. Or they think everyone is experiencing the same thing and there is no reason or benefit to seeking help. Both comparisons can be harmful in preventing someone from seeking help to address their symptoms," Dederer cautioned.

"The upside is that these interventions are easy to do on your own and accessible to pretty much anyone," Dederer said.

"The downside however is that the nature of SAD is cyclical—those with SAD have lower energy because of the reduced sunlight exposure, so they spend less time doing activities such as exercising and socializing with friends, and the withdrawal from these activities increases feelings of fatigue and depression, making it harder to put the lifestyle changes in place."

"The most important thing is to not take it lightly," Kim said. "Don't chalk it up to winter blues, especially if you feel this way for more than two weeks." Since SAD is a subtype of depression, it can lead to more severe depression and suicidal ideation.

"There are good treatment options for SAD, so reach out."

### The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

At ten in the morning, our kitchen was still dark. The sun wouldn't wind its way around to this side of the house until mid-afternoon. Built in the 1800s when a servant was relegated to cook unseen and unheard, our kitchen was neither bright nor cheerful at this time of day. But it was where the coffee was located.

I sat at our island, sipping my second cup, trying to get my act together. There was a mountain of laundry to do, Christmas gifts to order, pork to defrost, tumbleweeds of dog hair to sweep up, and computer work waiting in my cramped, chilly home office. I needed motivation, energy, positivity. But all I felt was a vague sense of apathy, boredom and guilt.

I wondered why, I often found myself stagnating in this dreary mindset. The pandemic had done a doozy on my daily routine. Before "stay at home" became a virtue, I got up and out of the house most days, doing computer work at coffee shops, going to the base gym, meeting military spouse friends. I'd come home from my outings, feeling like our house was a cozy refuge to enjoy.

But now, after two years of staying home, our house felt like a trap. I was the servant, imprisoned in the dark kitchen, with nothing to look forward to but a day of drudgery. I

## Finding meaning in the space between

shook my head, trying to reorder my irrational thoughts.

The logical side of me knew that we had a wonderful life. I was proud of my husband's 28 years of service in the Navy. After retirement, we'd found a historic house in a charming New England village, close enough to the Navy base that we could hear the national anthem most mornings. We were building a nice group of local friends. My husband and I had good jobs, both of us working remotely. Our three children, in their twenties and doing well, live near enough to bop in to entertain us often.

While the chores waited, I wracked my brain to understand why I regularly descended into melancholy, when life was so obviously good. I suspected that the problem was my warped way of thinking. To me, I was either succeeding or failing, winning or losing, starving or feasting, full or empty, all or nothing.

When our family had hard times — deployments, health issues, dis-appointments, stress — I rose to the occasion, proud of my ability to hit serious challenges head on. When we experienced good times — births, milestones, graduations, promotions, travel, holidays — I embraced those moments with a happy heart.

Perhaps, I struggled with the periods in between extremes. The days when time stretches out before me, with nothing particularly exciting or challenging on the horizon.

When I go through the motions, thinking all I have to show for myself is an empty dishwasher and a lousy pork roast. My mind plays tricks, telling me I'm wasting my life.

I looked down at my half empty cup of lukewarm coffee and realized, I needed to change my attitude. I noticed our yellow lab dozing on his dog bed beside the refrigerator. "Time to wag the dog," I thought.

I clicked the button on our kitchen radio, humming along with Bing Crosby's "Marshmallow World" while I flicked on lights to brighten our kitchen. After stuffing wet laundry into the dryer and sweeping up dog hair, I cranked the portable radiator in my chilly home office and lit a scented candle to make it cozy for my afternoon computer work. I smiled at my luck at finding a jar of applesauce to go with the defrosting pork for dinner.

The microwave emitted its melody, indicating that my lukewarm coffee was piping hot again. While waiting for it to cool, I marked items off my to do list, recognizing that each seemingly mundane daily task is equivalent to laying a brick on the path of life's journey. Every matched pair of socks, vacuumed rug, day of work, errand run, litter box scooped, and sidewalk shoveled is progress. Each day we move forward, step by step.

I sipped, with newfound awareness. My cup was not only half full, it actually runneth over.

### AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

**Review of "Spider-Man: No Way Home"**

Message to script writers: unless it is one part of a serial, a movie should stand on its own merits with a complete, compelling, fully-developed story that quickly and masterfully engages the audience, dramatically builds through twists and turns to a climax, and ideally ends with a conclusion that the audience did not see coming. That can't be said for "Spider-Man: No Way Home." The pace of the film alternated between mind-numbingly slow, and frenetic, as an abundance of special effects were utilized to spectacularly illustrate the conflict between the forces of good and evil.

The main characters included the webslinger, Doctor Strange and several powerful villains.

In fairness to the writers, I will say that several members of the audience at my screening obviously did enjoy this movie, cheering at certain points as things that they recognized were suddenly revealed. However, that necessitated prior knowledge that I, for one, did not have, despite having followed the exploits of Spider-Man on large and small screens, and in comic books, for decades. Unless you have a wealth of prior knowledge about Spider-Man, you might not get it either.

To see an official trailer for

### Review of 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' & thrilling conclusion to '21 Formula One World Championship

"Spider-Man: No Way Home," visit [HYPERLINK, https://www.sonymovies.com/movies/spider-mannowayhome](https://www.sonymovies.com/movies/spider-mannowayhome), or <https://www.sonymovies.com/movies/spider-mannowayhome>.

**Thrilling conclusion to 2021 Formula One World Championship**

This past weekend, fans of professional auto racing worldwide witnessed a stunning last lap finish to what was one of the most exciting and, ultimately, controversial Formula One World Championships ever.

Almost unbelievably, after a full season of racing, Max Verstappen (Red Bull) and Sir Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) went into last weekend's final round of the Formula One World Championship in Abu Dhabi exactly even, right down to a half point. Whoever scored the most points in the race would win the Championship.

Controversy began on the first lap, as polesitter Verstappen's slow start on soft tires gave Hamilton the lead. Maxed quickly charged back to try to elbow his way into the lead, forcing Hamilton off the track, but Lewis' off-track excursion was a shortcut. He had the lead and the stewards let him keep it.

As the race developed it was clear that Lewis had the faster car. Max tried but could not keep up. However, after giving up his lead to make a pit stop for fresh tires, Hamilton was held up by Sergio Perez — Max's teammate — erasing most of Hamilton's sizable lead over Max. Soon though, since Perez was on older tires, Lewis passed him and began to pull away from Max again.

It looked like Hamilton was on his way to a convincing race win

and, with it, his record eighth Formula One World Championship. As Christian Horner (Red Bull Team Principal) said when asked by a Sky TV interviewer, his driver Max would need a miracle to win the race and the Championship.

That needed miracle unfolded just a few laps from the end of the race, when Nicholas Latifi (Williams) had an accident which necessitated the deployment of a safety car, so that the track could be cleared and restored to racing condition.

In one last, desperate move, Max pitted for a set of fresh, soft compound tires. If Mercedes had responded by calling Lewis in to change his tires too, and if the race had ended under the safety car, Max would have won — so Lewis stayed out on his worn, hard tires.

Then, about to head into the final lap in what will surely go down in the history books as one of the most controversial calls by a Race Director (Michael Masi) ever — who wanted to give fans around the world a racing finish — several backmarkers were ordered to pass the pace car so that the race could be restarted with Max directly behind Hamilton.

Lewis, on his old, hard tires, was a sitting duck. In a thrilling manner, through several closely contested turns, Max passed him and crossed the finish line first, to win the race and the Championship.

To see the most photos and the latest text, and to explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, visit [AutoMatters.net](http://AutoMatters.net). On the Home Page, search by title or topic, or click on the blue 'years' boxes.

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