

# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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SIXTY-FIRST YEAR NO. 42  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2022

## DESTROYER O'KANE RETURNS HOME COMPLETES EIGHT MONTH INDEPENDENT DEPLOYMENT

SAN DIEGO - Destroyer USS *O'Kane* (DDG 77) returned home to Naval Base San Diego, completing an eight-month independent deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation Feb. 6.

*O'Kane* deployed in June 2021 in support of national tasking, serving as the ballistic missile defense (BMD) commander for Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1 while operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet and the primary BMD asset while in the U.S. 5th Fleet.

"The Sailors aboard USS *O'Kane* lead the way in demonstrating resiliency and dedication to support the mission and each other," said Cmdr. Michelle R. Fontenot, the ship's commanding officer. "As an independent deployer serving in both the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleets, *O'Kane* met each mission with success."

While operating in U.S. 5th Fleet, *O'Kane* escorted multiple high-value units through 30 strait transits, including the Strait of Hormuz, Bab el-Mandeb and the Suez Canal. *O'Kane* participated in several high-end exercises such as Maritime Security Operations in support of the International Maritime Security Coalition (IMSC), collaborating with seven partner nations for security and the free flow of commerce. *O'Kane* also



**Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Alain Icasiano, assigned to USS *O'Kane*, embraces his family after returning to homeport at Naval Base San Diego. Navy photo by MC3 Stevin C. Atkins**

participated in Indigo Defender, a bilateral maritime exercise between Royal Saudi Naval Forces and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

In addition, *O'Kane* conducted maritime interdiction operations; board, search, and seizure operations; and operated alongside international navies, including the Egyptian Naval Force, Royal Saudi navy,

and the Indian navy. As the on-scene commander, *O'Kane* was charged with the planning and executing of escorting two mine countermeasures ships through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, marking the first time in seven years a mine countermeasures ship operating from Bahrain transited to the Red Sea and back.

Following Israel's transition from the U.S. European Com-

mand theater to U.S. Central Command area of responsibility in September, *O'Kane* Sailors were able to enjoy a visit to Haifa, further strengthening the U.S. partnership with Israel. *O'Kane's* crew also hosted several distinguished visitors throughout deployment, to include Vice Adm. Brad Coopet, commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime

Forces; as well as United Kingdom Royal Navy Commodore Gordon Ruddock and Commodore Don Mackinnon who both commanded IMSC while the ship operated in the U.S. 5th Fleet region.

*O'Kane* served as a key facilitator in a highly successful seizure of illicit cargo from a stateless fishing vessel during a flag verification boarding in accordance with customary international law in the North Arabian Sea, Dec. 20. *O'Kane* worked alongside coastal patrol ships USS *Tempest*, USS

*Typhoon*, and the Coast Guard Advanced Interdiction Team to seize 1,400 AK-47s and 226,000 rounds of ammunition.

Upon completion of the missions in 5th Fleet, *O'Kane* entered 7th Fleet and took part in expeditionary strike force operations with amphibious assault ship *Essex* and aircraft carrier *Carl Vinson*. The U.S. force of more than nine ships conducted underway replenishments, including vertical and connected replenishments. *O'Kane* executed anti-subma-

see **O'Kane**, page 7

## Navy identifies SEAL trainee who died after 'Hell Week'

STARS AND STRIPES - A Navy SEAL candidate who died just hours after completing the grueling Hell Week test was identified Sunday as a 24-year-old Sailor who joined the military last year.

Seaman Kyle Mullen died at a San Diego area hospital on Friday after he and another SEAL trainee reported experiencing symptoms of an unknown illness, the Navy said.

The other Sailor, whose name has not been released, was hospitalized in stable condition, the *San Diego Union-Tribune* reported Sunday.

The cause of death is unknown and under investigation. Both men fell ill just hours after they successfully completed the test that ends the first phase of assessment and selection for the elite Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL (BUD/S) class.

The Navy said neither one had experienced an accident or unusual incident during the five-and-a-half-day Hell Week.

Rear Adm. H.W. Howard III, the commander of Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado offered his sympathies to Mullen's family in a statement. "We're extending every form of support we can to the Mullen family and Kyle's BUD/S classmates," Howard said.

## 2 MARINE CORPS OFFICERS COMMISSIONED ABOARD MIDWAY MUSEUM

by Cpl. Emely Gonzalez  
12th Marine Corps District

Two confident young men stood tall as they were called to the stage on the flight deck of USS Midway to be commissioned as Marine Corps officers.

Although 2nd Lt. Steven Lofy and 2nd Lt. Trevor Salom are new to the Marine Corps, they are no strangers to the military as they are both the newest additions to their families' legacies of service. This ceremony held a deeper meaning for these two

families because Lofy's father and Salom's grandfather served as Sailors on that very ship many years ago. Full of pride, Lofy and Salom held their heads high as they were commissioned.

Becoming a Marine Corps officer was not a recent decision for Lofy. It was his drive for as long as he could remember. He grew up in a military family, making him familiar with the lifestyle. His mother's grandfather served in the Navy, her father served in the Army, and his father served in the Navy.

Although he didn't know what branch he wanted to join at first, with his lineage, Lofy knew from an early age that he wanted to join the military and decided to join the Marine Corps.

"I chose the Marine Corps because I wanted more of a challenge," Lofy said.

Lofy plans to become an aviator like his father. He feels fulfilled with his decision to join and believes he found his home in the Marine Corps. He will continue his career following in similar footsteps as his father.



Lofy's father, Lt. Cmdr. (Ret.) Michael Lofy, first served on Midway in 1988 and retired there years later. After commissioning his son on the same flight deck, Lofy hopes to see his son have a long, successful career and retire the same way.

"Where I ended my career is where my son started his, this made an absolute full circle," Lofy said.

Salom also had great military influences in his life. Salom went from jokingly saluting his grandfather as a child, to having his grandfather salute him as a Marine officer.

"Having my grandfather to be my first salute was my only option," Salom said. "He's been an important part of my life."

Salom's grandfather, Chief Petty Officer (Ret.) Romeo

Salom, served on Midway from 1961-1965. Salom is proud of his grandson and hopes to see his career flourish. Being able to salute each other was a powerful moment for both of them.

"I once had the opportunity to become commissioned but couldn't continue," Romeo said. "I'm glad my grandson could fulfill that dream."

The commissioning ceremony was special for Lofy and Salom because they're continuing their families' legacies as the next generation of military service.

### Career and Education

U.S. Naval Community College selects Alexandria College for nuclear engineering program.

**See page 5**

### AutoMatters & More



Gutsy Busch Light CLASH at the Coliseum.

**See page 9**

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Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division get off a C-17 Globemaster aircraft at Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport, Poland, on Feb. 6 to join the efforts in support of the European Deterrence Initiative. This move was two days after the Pentagon announced the United States would send 1,700 extra troops to Poland and approximately 1,000 more to Romania in order to reinforce NATO's eastern flank amid the standoff with Russia over Ukraine. Photo by Ángel Martínez-Navedo/Army National Guard

# Several hundred U.S. troops arrive in Europe as Russia expands its forces along Ukrainian border

by Caitlin Doornbos  
Stars and Stripes  
WASHINGTON - Several hundred U.S. troops from Fort Bragg, N.C., have arrived in Poland and Germany amid rising tensions in Europe over Russian armed forces massing at the Ukraine border, chief Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said Feb. 7.

The Pentagon announced last week that it would send roughly 1,700 troops with the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg to Poland and an additional 300 from other units of the 18th Airborne Corps from Fort Bragg to Germany to form a joint task force headquarters there.

A “couple hundred” troops from

the 82nd Airborne have landed in Poland since Sunday, with the rest to follow “over the coming days,” Kirby told reporters at the Pentagon.

“The headquarters element [in Germany] for the 18th Airborne Corps is pretty much all in place,” he said.

U.S. officials also said last week that they would move about 1,000 troops already stationed in Germany to Romania. Kirby on Monday said those troops had already arrived.

The roughly 3,000 U.S. forces deploying did not include the approximately 8,500 troops that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin

placed on high alert Jan. 24 to be ready to deploy within five days if called upon. Most of those troops would be sent to join the NATO Response Force, which includes 40,000 troops from multiple nations, should it be activated, Kirby has said.

The moves come as more than 100,000 Russian troops continue amassing along Ukraine’s northern border with Belarus and eastern border with Russia. The buildup began in December, but Kirby on Monday said they continued to increase “just over the past two days.”

European Commission Vice President Josep Borrell estimated Russian forces along the Ukraine

border could be closer to 140,000. He offered that estimation Monday during a news conference with Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

Kirby said the Pentagon is also concerned about the kinds of military equipment and forces that Russia is moving closer to Ukraine, such as tracked vehicles, artillery and long-range weapons, air and missile defense, and special operations forces.

“What’s important is not just the numbers, it’s the capabilities and what we see is that [Russian President Vladimir Putin] is really putting in place robust ... combined arms capabilities in Belarus and along that border with Ukraine, [and] in Russia,” he said. “I mean, he has a full suite available to him, and it continues to grow every day.”

Kirby also said Russia has moved capabilities to sustain troops in the field for an extended deployment that also raise concerns that Putin could be planning to invade Ukraine as Russian forces did in 2014, which resulted in the annexation of Crimea.

“Even as he has added combat capability, he has also added logistics and sustainment capability — in other words, the ability to keep them in the field for longer and longer periods of time,” he said. “So, it’s a whole panoply of things that we’re looking at and watching.”



<b>Total Navy Battle Force: 296</b>
<b>Ships underway</b>
Deployed ships underway: 65
Non-deployed ships underway: 15
Total ships underway: 80
<b>Ships deployed by Fleet</b>
Fleet Forces, 1: 3rd Fleet, 5
4th Fleet, 2: 5th Fleet, 12
6th Fleet, 26: 7th Fleet, 71
Total 117

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Central Command releases report on August Abbey Gate attack

by Jim Garamone  
DoD News

The attack on Abbey Gate that killed American service members and around 170 Afghan civilians during the non-combatant evacuation of Kabul on Aug. 26, was not a complex attack, Marine Corps Gen. Frank McKenzie, the commander of U.S. Central Command, said.

McKenzie and a team of U.S. Central Command leaders presented the results of an investigation into the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's Khorasan attack on Hamid Karzai International Airport as U.S. service members worked to evacuate American citizens and Afghans at particular risk from a Taliban-controlled government in Afghanistan.

A total of 11 Marines, a Soldier and a Sailor were killed in

the ISIS-K attack with a total of 45 wounded.

Contrary to first reports, it was not a complex attack. "The investigation found that a single explosive device killed at least 170 Afghan civilians and 13 U.S. service members by explosively directing ball bearings through a packed crowd into our men and women at Abbey Gate," McKenzie said. "The investigation found no definitive proof that anyone was ever hit

or killed by gunfire either U.S. or Afghan. This conclusion was based upon the careful consideration of sworn testimony



The Navy Ceremonial Guard transports the casket of Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Maxton W. Soviak, who was killed in the Aug. 26 attack at the Abbey Gate of Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul, Afghanistan. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Maddelin Hamm

of more than 100 witnesses, and especially those witnesses and Observation Towers - both American and British - who were in locations unaffected by the blast, and that had commanding views of the scene before, during and after the explosive attack."

This is counter to what leaders believed on the day of the attack. "At the time, the best information we had, indicated that it was a complex attack by both

a suicide bomber and ISIS-K gunmen," the general said. "We now know that the explosively fired ball bearings cause wounds that look like gunshots, and when combined with a small number of warning shots, that lead many to assume that a complex attack had occurred. The fact that this investigation has contradicted our first impression demonstrates to me that the team went into this investigation with an open mind in search of the truth."

The investigators found that military leadership on the ground was appropriately engaged in force protection measures throughout the operation of Abbey Gate. They also found that the medical services that were available and ready, "saved every life they possibly could through heroic efforts," McKenzie said.

The investigators came from all services and were led by Army Lt. Gen. Ron Clark, the commander of 3rd Army and Army Forces Central Command. Their task was large, and they examined tactical-level actions at Abbey Gate including gate operations, force protection, force posture, leadership, unit readiness and any relevant actions before, during and after the attack.

News from the services

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NATIONAL GUARD

•Airmen Have a 'BLAST' in Greenland

AIR FORCE

•Leader Highlights Army-Air Force Integration

NAVY

•USS Michael Murphy Returns to Home Port

MARINE CORPS

•'Keen Edge' Sharpens U.S.-Japan Coordination

ARMY

•Command Leads Effort to Make Footwear More Inclusive

NATIONAL GUARD

•'Winter Strike' Provides Cold Weather Training

AIR FORCE

•Aviano Airman Heads to Beijing Winter Olympics

MARINE CORPS

•Marines Battle Unknown in Jungle Warfare Course

NAVY

•U.S., French Navy Chiefs Discuss Partnership

ARMY

•Separation Process Begins for Unvaccinated Soldiers

NATIONAL GUARD

•Alaska Guard Rescues Two Hikers

AIR FORCE

•Squadron Tests New Vehicle Drop

MARINE CORPS

•Marines investigate reservist for alleged link to white supremacist group

NAVY

•Little Creek Navy Seabee unit leaders relieved of duties over loss of confidence

COVER CAPTION

ABOARD MIDWAY MUSEUM - 2nd Lt. Stephen T. Lofy and 2nd Lt. Trevor Salom are pinned by their parents Jan. 29 A commissioning ceremony is the culminating event for an officer's career, signifying the transformation from candidate to officer. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Emely Gonzalez



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## Official says DOD s seeking pathways to better integrate women into workforce

by David Vergun

DoD News

The “Women, Peace and Security Framework and Implementation Plan” was published by the Defense Department in June 2020. That plan was the result of the “Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017,” Public Law 115-68, which was signed into law on Oct. 6, 2017.

The three objectives of DOD’s plan are:

- That the department exemplifies a diverse organization that allows for women’s meaningful participation across the development, management and employment of the joint force.

- That women in partner nations meaningfully participate and serve at all ranks and in all occupations in the defense and security sectors.

the implementation plan during a panel discussion about national defense and gender issues at Georgetown University.

Integrating women, peace and security ideals into plans, strategy and policy is important, as is helping allies and partners understand the value of inclusivity and diversity, Phu said.

Phu noted that her office didn’t promulgate this implementation plan, but that everyone in the department has a responsibility to think about these issues and look for opportunities to better integrate women into the workforce.

the progress is a lot slower than others, but I do see progress overall,” she said.

She said supervisors - including males and females



**Petty Officer 3rd Class Katelyn Ramirez ensures an arresting wire is online aboard carrier *Abraham Lincoln* in the South China Sea Jan. 26. Photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael Singley**

- should look to find the best talent available and they need to embrace diversity, including age, experience, race and gender as absolutely key to developing the workforce we need to face the challenges of tomorrow.

Carla Koppell, a distinguished fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security and the senior advisor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at Georgetown University, was also on the panel. She helped create the first U.S. national action plan on women, peace and security, which preceded the “Women, Peace and Security Act of 2017.”

“My hope is that as we move forward in the 2020s and beyond, we see comprehensive application and implementation of the act through the Department of Defense and through other organs of U.S. foreign policy,” she said.



- That partner nations’ defense and security sectors ensure women and girls are safe and secure and that their human rights are protected, especially during conflict and crisis.

Elizabeth Phu, principal director of cyber policy in the office of the secretary of defense, spoke Jan. 27 about

Part of the answer, she said, is figuring out how to more effectively recruit, select and retain women - both on the civilian and the military sides of DOD.

“When you ignore any segment of the population, you run the risk of not grabbing the best talent available for critical missions. And so, in some sectors,

## Military personnel chiefs discuss people issues before HASC panel

by Terri Moon Cronk

DoD News

The U.S. military’s No. 1 priority remains its people: service members, civilians, families and veterans, the five services’ personnel chiefs told a House Armed Services Committee military personnel panel Feb. 8.

Appearing before the subcommittee were Lt. Gen. Gary M. Brito, Army deputy chief of staff; Vice Adm. John B. Nowell Jr., chief of Naval personnel; Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, Air Force deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services; Lt. Gen. David A. Ottignon, Marine Corps deputy commandant for manpower and reserve affairs; and Patricia Mulcahy, Space Force deputy chief of space operations for personnel.

“All of our Army’s personnel, programs and initiatives are focused on taking care of people with dignity and respect, and building a culture of trust and cohesion,” Brito began. “We continue to ... acquire, develop, employ and retain the very best talent, uniformed and civilian alike. One of the critical enablers from the Army People Strategy is our Army’s 21st-century talent-management system, which we are continuing to build and refine today.”

Bruto said personnel readiness is critical to Army readiness. “New technology, programs, policy, innovation and management models are transforming the Army’s personnel systems and will provide our soldiers more opportunities to excel and improve our ability to compete for and retain talent,” he added.

The general said the integrated personnel and pay system in the Army is the No. 1 human resource modernization effort for the total Army. The Army’s new web-based HR system, which when fully deployed, will develop or deliver a single comprehensive data-rich HR and talent management system to the Total Force.

“We recognize talent management is more than just acquiring, developing and distribution,” Brito said. “We fully recognize a connection to our Army families. The Army will keep a keen eye on the impacts of moves, quality of life efforts, employment opportunities and more as the Army maintains his combat readiness.”

The Navy continues to modernize talent management programs, training systems and recruiting platforms. It is also transforming internal business processes to improve service delivery to its

sailors, increase agility, accelerate responsiveness and reduce cost,” Nowell told the panel.

“We realize PCS moves and job changes continue to factor significantly in sailor and family retention decisions. In response over the past five years, the Navy has focused on improving geographic stability, and currently, more than 75,000 sailors have been at the same duty location for at least three years, with over 42,000 of those sailors in their family stable for four or more years,” the admiral said. The Navy also announced recently its new detailing marketplace assignment policy, which gives additional opportunities for improving geographic stability for sailors electing to stay at sea beginning next month, he added.

“It’s essential we accelerate the establishment of the environment, developmental paths and the talent-management systems needed to unlock our airmen’s ability to reach their full potential,” Kelly said.

“We know success squarely depends on our airmen on them having the ability to operate in a safe and inclusive environment where they can be the best airmen they can possibly be. ... It is important that current and prospective members see the Air Force as an agile employer flexible meeting the personal needs of its members and families,” he noted.

“We have decisively stepped down on talent management, designing modernization efforts to increase the readiness and the lethality of your Marine Corps to fight and win if called upon by our nation,” Ottignon said.

“The commandant published Force Design 2030 and it’s all about the lethality and warfighting capabilities. Talent Management 2030 supports these efforts. Accomplishing these objectives of Force Design will not be possible without highly skilled, mature and mentally tough Marines to execute it,” he added.

“ We purposefully build a capable of securing the space domain, we developed and released our new human capital vision, The Guardian Ideal, in September of last year,” Mulcahy said. “That approach is grounded in our values of connection, commitment, competency and courage, and combines the more traditional recruit-and-retain objectives with an eye toward connecting with our guardians and their families, enabling a digital force while integrating wellness and resilience,” she added.

## Places of Worship

### Bethany Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod  
2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd, Ocean Beach 92107  
(Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building)  
Worship 10:30am Sundays  
Bible Class, Wednesdays 10am  
(619)222-7291 LivingWaterSD7@gmail.com

### Bayview Church

Attract... Assimilate... Activate  
6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 (619) 262-8384  
Sunday 6:45am, 8:30am, 11am Worship Service  
Studies in Christian Living (formerly known as Sunday School) Tuesday & Thursday 6pm, Wednesday 5:30pm & Saturday 9am  
www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org

### Canyon View Church of Christ

"Love God, Love People, Serve the World"  
Sunday Bible Classes for all ages 9am  
Sunday Worship 10am  
4292 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 Email:cvoffice@canyonview.org  
(Near corner of Balboa Ave & Clairemont Dr)  
www.canyonview.org (858) 273-5140

### Christ Community Church

Helping people love God and each other!  
Services Onsite or Online Sundays 8:45 & 10:30am  
Children's Ministries for All Kids!  
Small Groups for Teens & Adults of All Ages!  
9535 Kearny Villa Rd., Mira Mesa 92126; Located just off Miramar Rd. & I-15  
www.gotoChrist.com or (858) 549-2479

### First Baptist Church of Coronado

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

### La Jolla Lutheran Church

"We Follow Jesus"  
Sunday 9:30am Worship and Sunday School  
Wednesday 6:30pm Bible Study  
7111 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037  
(858) 454-6459  
LaJollaLutheranChurch.com

### Living 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

### Mesa View Baptist Church

Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CWO3, USMC (Ret.)  
Seeking Sinners; Saving Souls, Strengthening Saints  
Sunday School at 8:45am • Morning Worship at 10am  
Wednesday Night Bible Study 7pm  
13230 Pomerado Rd, Poway • 858-485-6110 • www.mesaview.org

### Military Outreach Ministries Int'l Church

"Transforming the World, One Person at a Time"  
Dr. Dennis Eley, Jr, Th.D., MBA dennis@militaryoutreachministries.org  
7997 Paradise Valley Rd, San Diego, CA 92139  
Sunday Service In Person 12:30-2pm • Children's Church 1pm  
Live Stream: 1pm on "Moministries" free church app  
Or www.militaryoutreachministries.org click on 'live stream' blue button

### Resurrection Lutheran Church

A Small Place with a Big Heart!  
Worship Service Sunday at 10:15 am. (please see website for details)  
1111 Fifth Street – Coronado, CA 92118 – 619.435.1000  
secretary@resurrectioncoronado.com – www.rlchurch  
https://www.facebook.com/resurrectioncoronado/  
The Rev. Dr. Brian Oltman, Pastor

### St. Luke's Lutheran Church

5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942  
Phone: (619) 463-6633  
website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org  
Worship: 9am  
Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD.  
We thank you for your service!



## Interpersonal Edge: Chasing happiness?

by Dr. Daneen Skube,  
Tribune Content Agency

*Q: Now that 2022 is here I'm thinking more about how to be happy. The last two years have been rough! I'm seeking out entertaining and distracting activities but they only make me happy while I'm doing them. Are there any habits you teach clients to be happy?*

A: Yes I teach clients that if we chase happiness, especially only activities that entertain us, happiness eludes us. Happiness is one of four emotional states that include: fear, sadness and anger. Happiness is a fleeting emotional weather pattern. What we can cultivate that is more pervasive is peace.

Think of each emotion (happy, sad, scared and mad) as emotional weather. We can no more sustain one weather pattern than force constant sun. Indeed if we had constant sun we would have drought and damage.

Each emotion has its purpose to balance our inner weather. Fear warns and prepares us for danger. Grief helps us resolve our past. Rage moves us into action. Happiness lets us feel the reward of being alive.

Our Western culture encourages us to "chase" happiness. Marketing tries to convince us that the right products or activities buy happiness. The joke about how people who think money can't buy happiness don't know where to shop is relevant here.

The truth is any happiness we chase or buy is temporary. Instead of running after a fleeting emotion I recommend clients work to make decisions that create peace.

Peace is not just something we cultivate by meditation. Although I think meditation is wonderful due to my experience of 50 years practicing Transcendental Meditation. Peace in the outer world does not occur through attitude but by interpersonal skills and self-knowledge.

Many new clients don't under-

stand how much life satisfaction and peace are simply a result of decades of hard work on a technology that emphasizes effectiveness over being right.

The Buddhist philosophy recommends reducing ego. I think of this as reducing our need to be right. When we're suffering if we can take responsibility for our contribution to our problems we learn from our misery. Our ability to learn concrete tools

### Interpersonal Edge



by  
Dr.  
Daneen  
Skube

makes us happier in the moment but also, importantly, peaceful in the long run.

Peace also means we accept emotional weather patterns. We cannot be happy when we're sad, scared or angry but we can be at peace with these emotions.

Peace and satisfaction allow us to act skillfully when we feel crappy. These interpersonal tools are truly the secret to a more permanent state of well-being. Each time we act badly when we feel badly we'll end up feeling even worse.

Think about when someone

yells at you and you yell right back. Sure you may feel righteous for a few minutes. Then you'll notice your heart rate, blood pressure, and body are in a fight or flight state and you don't feel well.

Instead when someone yells at you, you can choose to remain well despite the other person acting badly. You can walk away, paraphrase, or use one of many other clever tools. The advice I give clients is to love themselves more than they hate others.

Chasing happiness can become a desperate attempt to remain comfortably distracted or numb. Numbness never gives us the consciousness we need to create optimal careers or lives.

If your goal for 2022 is long-term well-being begin tomorrow to cultivate peace. Invest in your future by learning the interpersonal and self-knowledge tools available. Read books, find a counselor that educates, and make peace not fleeting happiness your new North Star.

The last word(s)  
Q: Our team is having a lot of conflict regarding goals for 2022. Is there a way to reduce conflict at work?

A: No. Conflict is necessary to up level our creativity and problem solving. Our goal should be choosing collaboration over combat during conflict.

## U.S. Naval Community College selects Alexandria College for nuclear engineering program

by MCC Xander Gamble  
QUANTICO, Va. - The U.S. Naval Community College selected Alexandria Technical & Community College for its Pilot II Nuclear Engineering Technology associate degree program.

This agreement provides active duty enlisted Sailors an opportunity to earn a naval-relevant and nuclear engineering-focused associate degree which directly contributes to the readiness of the naval services and set them on a path of life-long learning.

The USNCC worked with Alexandria College during the Pilot I phase of the USNCC's development and was selected to continue to be a part of the USNCC consortium for the continued growth of the newly established institution.

"We are excited to continue our relationship with Alexandria College," said Randi Cosentino, Ed.D., president of the USNCC. The education and support the Alexandria College team provided our Sailors during Pilot I were exactly what we were looking for from an institution in our consortium, and we hope to continue to work together to further develop our warfighters'

critical thinking and leadership skills."

"We are very honored to have been selected to be a partner with the USNCC Pilot II Nuclear Engineering Technology program," said Michael Seymour, president of Alexandria College. "We are committed to serving the military community in new and effective ways. Our caring staff and faculty stand ready to ensure military members have a great experience here at Alexandria College."

Naval professionals who pursue the associate degree in Nuclear Engineering Technology through the USNCC will have an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of engineering principles and ethics, quality assurance, radiological and chemistry controls, and more. The degree will also have an established transfer path to four-year degree programs in nuclear engineering.

"For the past year, I have had the opportunity to teach calculus to Sailors as part of the Pilot I project. I have enjoyed getting to know these students, and I am impressed by their ability to study and achieve excellent re-

sults in class while still performing their active-duty jobs," said Justin Eberhardt, mathematics instructor at Alexandria College. "I look forward to the next phase of this project, which will increase the enrollment of the USNCC to further enhance the warfighting advantage across forces."

While talking about Alexandria College's selection for this continued relationship with the USNCC, Tamara Arnott, Dean of Educational Services, said Alexandria College offers "the strength of its online programs, excellent student outcomes, a student-first mentality and unwavering commitment to student access and success.

"As a member of the Minnesota State system, we provide an extraordinary education to all students who select Alexandria College." Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are regionally accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Active duty enlisted Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen can fill out an application on the USNCC website, [www.usncc.edu](http://www.usncc.edu). The first courses will start in the fall of 2022.

San Diego State is happy to offer a special discounted ticket promotion for our local military for this Saturday's Aztec Men's Basketball game vs. Air Force!

### SDSU Basketball Military Appreciation Day



Saturday, Feb. 12

Aztec Men's Basketball vs. Air Force

5 p.m. at Viejas Arena



Active and veteran military can purchase discounted tickets for \$10 each at [www.GoAztecs.com/Military](http://www.GoAztecs.com/Military), while supplies last. Military in attendance will also receive a free pair of USA flag/SDSU sunglasses, which can be picked up at the Marketing table outside Door 1 before the game

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## Navy commissions littoral combat ship USS Savannah



Sailors assigned to USS Savannah littoral combat ship run aboard to man the ship as part of its commissioning ceremony. Savannah is the Navy's 14th Independence-variant littoral combat ship. Navy photo by MC2 James S. Hong

BRUNSWICK, Ga. - The Navy commissioned its newest Independence-variant Littoral Combat Ship, USS Savannah (LCS 28), Feb. 5 here.

"It's fitting that it would find its home in Savannah, a city whose agility has allowed her to be a defining force in the entire scope of American history," said principal speaker U.S. Representative Earl L. Carter, Georgia's First District.

Diane Davison Isakson is the ship's sponsor and wife of the late Johnny Isakson, former senator from Georgia. Their daughter, Julie Isakson Mitchell, served as the Matron of Honor. Meredith Berger, performing the duties of the Navy's under secretary, recognized Mrs. Isakson.

"It is said that the character and spirit of the ship's sponsor serves to enrich, guide, and protect the ship and her crew," said Berger. "You come from a family steeped in service. You've got Navy in your blood."

Guest speakers for the event also included Mayor of Savannah Cosby Johnson, Mayor of Brunswick Van Johnson, and Commander, Naval Air Systems Command Vice Adm. Carl Chebi.

"USS Savannah is poised to represent its motto across the globe, not for self but for others," said Chebi. "Today as we commission her as an operating force of the U.S. Navy. The ship and her crew will carry on the legacy of the five other ships that had the honor to bear the name Savannah since 1798. They participated in the Mexican War, the Civil War, World War I, World War II, and the Vietnam War. The 6th USS Savannah's history has yet to be written but will be enriched in stories of honor, courage, and commitment."

Mayor Van Johnson highlighted the value Savannah brings to the Navy.

"It can't be understated, the importance of the day, the significance of this vessel, the importance of the company

that built it, the strategic and operational necessity that our Navy remains the premier maritime force in the world," said Johnson. "Therefore, in addition to having the finest men and women to serve, they deserve a premier vessel to serve upon."

Savannah's commanding officer, Cmdr. Kevin M. Ray, reported the ship ready, and Diane Isakson gave the traditional order to "Man our ship and bring her to life!"

"To the city of Savannah, I assure you, the fine men and women of our crew, who I am humbled to lead, represent everything that is great about your city. Pride, patriotism, resiliency, diversity, and hospitality," said Ray. "We will carry your name forward, wherever our Nation asks us to go, and we will represent you well."

LCS 28 is the 28th ship in its class. It's the sixth ship named in honor of the city of Savannah. The first was a coastal galley that provided harbor defense for the port

of Savannah, 1799-1802. The second USS Savannah, a frigate, served as the flagship of the Pacific Squadron and then served in the Brazil Squadrons and Home Squadrons, 1844-1862. The third USS Savannah (AS 8) was launched in 1899 as the German commercial freighter, Saxonia. Seized in Seattle, Washington, upon the outbreak of World War I, the freighter was converted to a submarine tender and supported submarine squadrons in both the Atlantic and Pacific, 1917-1926.

The fifth USS Savannah (AOR 4) was a Wichita-class replenishment oiler commissioned in 1970. AOR 4 earned one battle star and a Meritorious Unit Commendation for service in the Vietnam War. The oiler provided underway replenishment services in the Atlantic and Indian oceans until decommissioning in 1995.

Savannah will now sail to San Diego to join sister ships.

## photo gallery



LOS ANGELES  
Feb. 4, 2022

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officer David Tapia discusses seized counterfeit NFL merchandise during a media event. CBP photo by Arthur Rangsitpol



USS CARL VINSON, at sea  
Jan. 24, 2022

Sailors load ordnance on the flight deck of Carl Vinson aircraft carrier. Dual carrier operations with strike groups from Carl Vinson and Abraham Lincoln demonstrates the U.S. Navy's capability to rapidly aggregate to deliver overwhelming maritime force and increase collective war-fighting readiness in support of a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Navy photo by MCSN Leon Vonguyen



USS TRIPOLI, at sea  
Feb. 8, 2022

Airman Marek Swan, from Ballarat, Australia, waits in line for a chemical, biological, radiological individual protective equipment fitting test. Tripoli is an America-class amphibious assault ship homeported in San Diego. Navy photo by MC2 Malcolm Kelley

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# COMSUBPAC names Battle 'E' winners

by MC1 Michael B. Zingaro

PEARL HARBOR - Rear Adm. Jeff Jablon, commander, Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, announced the COMSUBPAC winners of the 2021 Battle Efficiency (Battle "E") competition Awards, Jan. 1.

COMSUBPAC Battle "E" winners are the following (San Diego-based submarines are in bold type):

## At Sea Category:

USS Missouri (SSN 780), Commander, Submarine Squadron (CSS) 1

USS Seawolf (SSN 21), Submarine Development Group 5

USS Jefferson City (SSN 759), CSS-7

USS Hampton (SSN 767), CSS-11

USS Key West (SSN 722), CSS-15

USS Maine (SSBN 741), Blue and Gold Crews, CSS-17

USS Ohio (SSGN 726), Blue and Gold Crews, CSS-19

## Sub Tender Category:

USS Frank Cable (AS 40)

## Shipyard Category:

USS Topeka (SSN 754)

## Special Category:

Arco (ARDM 5)

Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron 1

Naval Ocean Processing Facility Dam Neck

"Battle 'E' award winners have proven their ability to exceed expectations under complex circumstances in one of the most challenging and dynamic environments on earth," said COMSUBPAC Force Master Chief Jason Avin. "They have pushed themselves to improve every day by honestly assessing their strengths and weaknesses, and by holding each Sailor at their commands accountable to helping find solutions to problems. Bravo Zulu to every member of these elite teams for a job well done."

These ships were considered the most ready for combat throughout the year and were

judged based on their warfighting readiness; mission accomplishments; self-assessments and ability to improve; ability to innovate; and resiliency in executing the ship's schedule.

"Each crew member can be justifiably proud of their contribution to improve Pacific Submarine Force combat readiness," said Jablon. "I'm extremely proud of your outstanding performance. Well done and congratulations."

The Pacific Submarine Force provides strategic deterrence; anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface warfare; precision land strike; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and early warning; and special warfare capabilities around the globe.

## O'Kane

continued from page 1

rine warfare operations while escorting high-value assets through the South China Sea. *O'Kane* also hosted Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 1, during a transit through the U.S. 7th Fleet.

"O'Kane's tireless commitment and unparalleled performance are above reproach; I am very proud of every *O'Kane* Sailor and what we have accomplished as a team," said Fontenot. "*O'Kane* Sailors represent the Navy's fighting spirit and it is an honor to serve them as their commanding officer."

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

3rd Fleet provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy's role across the full spectrum of military opera-



**Many Sailors assigned to USS O'Kane (DDG 77) welcomed out-of-town families and guests after the ship arrived in San Diego last week. Here, a father greets his daughter on the pier after returning from deployment. O'Kane, a part of the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, spent eight months away from home on an independent deployment in support of national tasking and to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. Navy photo by MC1 Kelby Sanders.**

tions--from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

U.S. 3rd Fleet works together

with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

## NAVWAR Outreach Team wins STEM Advocate of the Quarter award

by Elisha Gamboa

The Naval Information Warfare Systems Command, (NAVWAR) Enterprise Virtual Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Outreach Team has been selected to receive the Department of Defense STEM Advocate of the Quarter award for their innovative outreach efforts and continued leadership amid the COVID-19 pandemic, positively impacting thousands of students and educators nationwide.

The team, including Yolanda Tanner (Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific), Kelly Thompson (NIWC Atlantic) and Tonya Hamann (NIWC Atlantic), is being recognized for their exemplary support to the DoD's mission to inspire young Americans in STEM through their determined advocacy for education and community outreach programs connected to modernization and technology priorities.

"This team's enthusiasm and dedication to STEM outreach, keeping today's youth engaged despite current challenges, goes far beyond their normal day-to-day duties," said NAVWAR Executive Director John Pope. "We are beyond proud of the incredible impact their work has had on local and national communities, inspiring the next generation of STEM professionals in support of NAVWAR, the Navy and the Nation."

Together the team demonstrated dedication to mentoring, encouraging and informing students about STEM education and workforce opportunities despite challenges due to the pandemic. Pivoting to a virtual environment, they facilitated a total of 118 outreach events, enabling more than 40,000 K-12 students to engage in STEM programming efforts across the country.

This included developing For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) robotics programming in support of local, regional and state competitions while guiding more than 130 workforce-mentored teams. The team also connected with upwards of 500 college students from public and private research institutions, historically black colleges and universities, and Hispanic and other minority serving institutes across the country to aid in the facilitation of STEM retention, efficacy and identity.

"This award is a testament to the creativity, adaptability and resiliency of our STEM outreach program directors, leads, team members and volunteers across the NAVWAR Enterprise," said Tanner. "This prestigious award is significant as it represents the excellence and evolution of our STEM programming and its' ability to pivot and reimagine STEM programming at local, regional and national levels in a fluid COVID environment."

Moving forward the team will continue to focus on student populations underrepresented in STEM careers, with future goals including the development of STEM virtual and face-to-face hybrid models aimed at reducing barriers to STEM entry and making broader impacts with students across the nation.

The team will have an opportunity to present their work at an upcoming DoD Innovators Spotlight Series virtual webinar. This open-to-the-public webinar will provide a web-based platform for attendees to meet recognized awardees while learning about their work and best practices.

## White Labs San Diego Expansion: New pizza kitchen and fermented food menu

SAN DIEGO - Global liquid yeast and fermentation company, White Labs has added a kitchen to it's San Diego location.

White Labs Brewing Co. started in 2012 to showcase the influence yeast and fermentation have on beer. Now visitors will have the opportunity to pair their beers with new fermented foods in the White Labs Brewing Co. San Diego Kitchen & Tap.

"This was the natural progression for us", stated Chris White, founder and CEO of White Labs. "When we opened our Asheville

location in 2017 we knew the next step would be to take that concept and bring it back to San Diego. We are so excited to be able to offer our customers similar experiences at both locations."

The menu will feature the same specialty pizza made with White Labs brewers yeast 72-hour slow-risen dough that the company offers at its Asheville Kitchen & Tap along with a local cheese board, sliders with in-house fermented pickles and carnitas street tacos. The full menu is available on the White

Labs Brewing Co. website.

Erik Fowler, Head of Education and Craft Hospitality adds, "Our mission is to bring accessibility and understanding to the impact of yeast and fermentation on many of our favorite food and beverages. Since 2012, White Labs Brewing Co. has been able to showcase the influence and importance of yeast in crafting high quality beers.

Through San Diego Kitchen & Tap we aim to open the door to food and beer lovers by continuing to build a community of

fermentation enthusiasts."

White Labs Brewing Co. San Diego Kitchen & Tap will host its grand opening weekend Feb. 11-13 and will feature three new release beers: Specialty Brewers Cask, Latte Frankenstout and Hibiscus Hansen Hefeweizen. Hours are Sunday, 12-5 p.m.; Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 2-8 p.m.; Friday, 12-9 p.m. and Saturday, 12-8 p.m.

Public tours of the White Labs yeast facility are offered on Friday and Saturday at 1 and 3 p.m. with no reservation required.



Welcome to Camp Pendleton Provost Marshal's Office

# Marine staff sergeant: After the accident

by Capt. David Mancilla and Pfc. Broc Story

As the light of a new day slowly began to creep over the hills of Temecula, Staff Sgt. Johnathan Jones, an administration specialist working aboard Camp Pendleton, jolted out of bed half awake; his alarm ringing mercilessly in the background. With little regard to his surroundings, Jones frantically scurried and stumbled across his small Southern California suburban home. Going through a morning routine in five minutes to what usually takes 35, Jones refused to be late to work, again.

After blindly tossing his belongings into his pickup truck, he turned the ignition and painted two perfectly black tire marks on his driveway. His exhaust roared with reckless abandon as the defending sound shook the quaint little neighborhood; heralding the soundtrack of a mad-man behind the wheel.

Threading in and out of traffic and chasing every yellow traffic light like a feral cat chasing a mouse, Jones slammed his gas pedal at every opportunity with no regard to those around him. When Jones approached Camp Pendleton's Fallbrook gate entrance, he slowed down just enough to appear normal, struggling to hide his anxiety from the sentry. After passing through the

gate, and giving himself enough distance to be out of eyeshot, Jones slammed on the gas once more and zoomed down the long stretch of road. Eventually coming to T-intersection, Jones made a last-minute right turn paying little attention to the group of Marines running their PFT, until it was too late.

With red and blue lights flashing all around, and paramedics carefully loading the remnants of what used to be Marines into the back of their ambulances, the world spun for Jones as he sat in the back of a police cruiser. His vision narrowed more and more as the minutes ticked by, watching the horror and twisted expressions of the group of survivors huddled on the side of the road comforting each other. What started as a routine workday aboard Camp Pendleton, ended in tragedy. Life would never be the same for those involved.

According to the Department of Transportation, nearly 39,000 people died last year as a result of a motor vehicle crash in the United States alone. Sadly, scenarios like the one above are all too real and common across our nation, and more disturbingly, across our military installations. Excessive speeding and reckless driving are leading contributors to many of these collisions,

many of which are preventable. Unfortunately, Camp Pendleton is not immune to these tragedies, needlessly losing Marines every year to this behavior. There is good news, however, as it is well within the power of all those who commute on and off base to curb these unfortunate accidents.

In efforts to reduce the number of vehicle-related incidents on base, as well as promote safe driving behaviors, Camp Pendleton has stepped forward and taken action, updating its policies and increasing the consequences for those caught speeding on base. Operation Slow Down is a continuing effort to reduce speeding and reckless driving by increasing enforcement of speeding policies, as well as updating and enhancing a variety of traffic control measures and technologies.

"Operation Slow Down is an ongoing campaign in an effort to alter unsafe driving behaviors across Camp Pendleton, resulting in safer roadways for all base residents and visitors," said Marine Brig. Gen. Jason G. Woodworth, the commanding general for MCI-West, MCB Camp Pendleton. "Deadly driving accidents caused by speeding are devastating to the families of victims as well as the unit, making it crucial that Camp Pend-

leton Marines, Sailors, and all motorists drive safely and adhere to the posted speed limits."

Since Operation Slow Down's inception in November 2021, on base speeding policies have increased penalties for violators of Camp Pendleton's posted speed limits. Speeding more than five miles over results in higher points than previously, while 16-20 mph over the posted speed limit is a three-month suspension of on-base driving privileges. Speeding 21-30 mph over the posted speed limit is a six-month suspension. Going 31 mph or more over the posted speed limit, as well as street racing or DUI, is a 12-month suspension.

"In addition to stricter enforcement of base speeding regulations we are expecting more command involvement to ensure their Marines are driving safely, and not risking losing their on-base driving privileges; we are also buying more radar guns to help law enforcement officers increase enforcement," said Woodworth.

Increased penalties for those caught speeding in construction, school, or housing areas, have also taken effect, with three-month suspensions for 5-10 mph over the posted speed limit and six-month suspensions beginning at 11 mph over.

"This is entirely preventable and within our power to choose whether a fellow Marine goes



**CAMP PENDLETON**  
**Feb. 2, 2021**

**Lance Cpl. Caleb Isaac, a helicopter airframe mechanic, replaces a door hinge on a UH-1Y Venom. MAG-39 provides utility helicopter support, close-in fire support, fire support coordination, aerial reconnaissance, observation and forward air control in aerial and ground escort operations during ship-to-shore movement and subsequent operations ashore. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Austin Fraley**

**1st Lt. Mary Berney, a native of Las Vegas, graduates from law school at Florida International University College of Law, Miami, May 2019. Berney currently serves as a Marine Judge Advocate on the trial counsel at Camp Pendleton. Courtesy photo**



home tonight," said Col. John Black, the commanding officer of Security and Emergency Services Battalion, Camp Pendleton, when asked what he would say to every driver on base. "Please obey the speed limits and drive

safely; we don't want to see you, your loved ones, or anyone else aboard base killed or seriously injured. When that happens, you harm yourself, your family, your unit, and the Marine Corps' operational readiness."

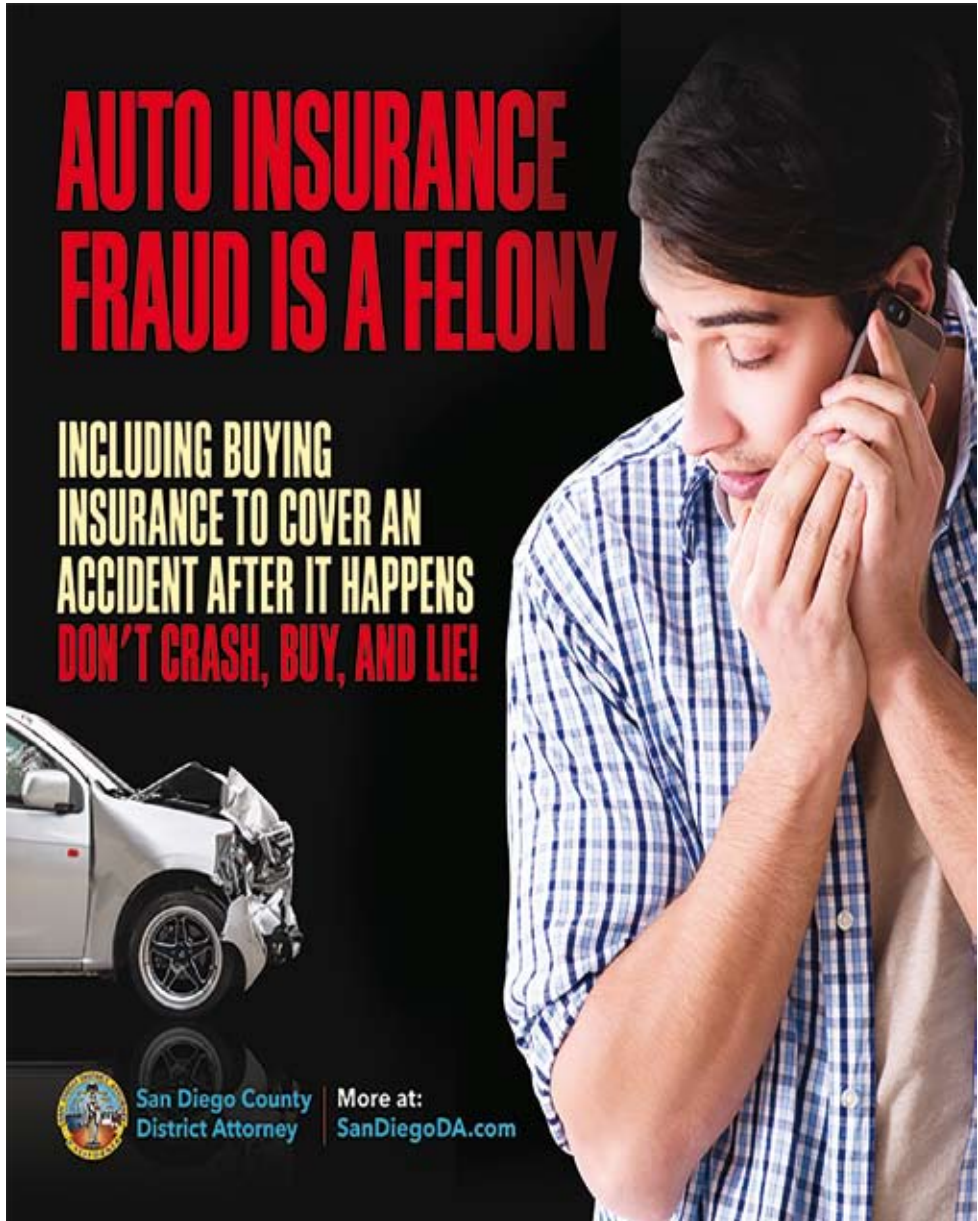
Camp Pendleton encourages all Marines, Sailors, and various motorists to do their part and drive safely aboard the installation. Taking the appropriate safety measures while behind the wheel is the responsibility of all drivers, with small changes to driving habits resulting in an increase of overall safety for those who live and work on base.


Driving at the appropriate speed limits may seem like a nuisance at times, but it could just be the deciding factor between life and death for your loved ones or the loved ones of another.

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## VA funding available to create technology helping eligible service members, vets adapt their homes

The Department of VA has Specially Adapted Housing Assistive Technology grants available for fiscal year 2022 to develop new technologies that enhance the ability of seriously disabled service members and veterans to live more independently.

VA encourages researchers, organizations and individual technology developers to apply for SAHAT grant funding via [Grants.gov](https://www.va.gov/grants) by March. 11, to develop specially adapted housing assistive technologies that will improve the livability of veterans' adapted residences.

VA issues the Notice of Funding Opportunity in the Federal Register to foster competition among technology developers, funding innovation that will best serve the needs of certain seriously disabled service members and vets.

Since 2016, when VA awarded its first SAHAT grant, VA has awarded 22 grants. To date, these grants have resulted in the introduction of new products to the accessibility industry used to improve the lives of veterans, including:

- AI-powered mobile scanner

and reader enabling blind and visually impaired users to read text independently.

- Smart guidance: a customized disability-adapted bathroom module designed to bring users closer to independent living by providing a safer bathroom environment and permitting home care.

- Robotic overbed table for beds, recliners and wheelchairs allowing users to independently deploy, position and store mobile devices using accessible switches or a remote from a bed or chair.

ogy will ultimately help make homes more livable for seriously disabled service members and veterans,” said Principal Deputy Under Secretary for Benefits Mike Frueh. “In addition to the SAHAT program, VA also administers Specially Adapted Housing grants to eligible service members and Veterans with certain serious service-connected disabilities to purchase or adapt a home that suits their individual needs.”

To learn more about SAHAT, visit <https://www.benefits.va.gov/homeloans/sahat.asp> and Notice of Funding Opportunity.

## FRA NewsByte: Vets with COVID at an all-time high

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION - In recent weeks, COVID-19 cases among the veteran population have reached an all-time high.

As of Jan. 19, the VA recorded 55,202 veterans with active COVID-19 infections - 3,175 of whom are hospitalized at a VA facility. Reports also show that nearly 13,000 VA health care employees were unable to report to work due to infection, which is more than double the amount at last winter's peak.

Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Chairman Jon Tester (Mont.), Ranking Member Jerry Moran (Kan.), Senators Sherrod Brown (Ohio) and Richard

Blumenthal (Conn.) are leading a bipartisan push to provide veterans nationwide access to no-cost, at-home COVID-19 test kits from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

These legislators have dis-



patched a letter to VA Secretary Denis McDonough, which states: “[We] must ensure veterans are not left behind in this effort to expand testing access...[they] deserve to have every available tool to protect themselves and their families from COVID-19, and at-home tests are one useful approach for limiting the spread within communities and VA facilities.”

Currently, the VA is not providing or mailing out at-home coronavirus test kits to veterans due to the increasing demand, but VA medical facilities can offer free in-person tests in many circumstances. However, this may limit access for veterans living in rural or remote areas, veterans with transportation or childcare needs, or veterans with mobility limitations. Also, under Section 6006(b) of Public Law 116-127, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (Families First), the VA is required to cover FDA-authorized COVID-19 testing with no cost sharing for veterans for the duration of the public health emergency.

In addition, Congress has

appropriated billions of dollars in COVID-19 funding to support veterans and the VA's operations throughout the pandemic.

The VA received \$60 million from Families First, nearly \$20 billion from the CARES Act (P.L.116-136) and more than \$17 billion from the American Rescue Plan Act (P.L.117-2). The VA has only obligated \$458 million of the nearly \$14.5 billion appropriated for VA medical care in the ARP as of Jan. 18, 2022.

The VA should be able to fulfill its statutory obligation to provide veterans with free at-home COVID-19 testing with this level of resources.

## The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

As Valentine's Day approaches, I tend to panic. Rather than my heart filling with the wonderment of love, I'm struck with sudden dread. “Oh crap, it's almost Valentine's Day! We haven't made dinner reservations! I need a card for Francis! I've gotta buy a gift!” I rush around in my salt-crusted car, hastily spending money and mustering contrived affection to fulfill modern societal expectations for this yearly celebration of love, often finding myself too tired to enjoy romance anyway.

Oh, the irony.

It wasn't always this way. As a child, Valentine's Day represented a whole week of excitement. First, Mom took me to the store to buy Ziggy Valentines for my classmates at East Pike Elementary School. At home while munching conversation hearts, I'd select my favorite magenta crayon and sign each one “Lisa S.” before scotch-taping it to a heart-shaped lollipop. At school, we spent the day exchanging Valentines and treats, cutting hearts out of red and pink construction paper, and pasting them against lacy doilies for our moms and dads.

Having no concept of romance, I happily expressed my universal love of friends, teachers, and parents with the same affection I felt for my pets, my Barbie Doll, and chocolate chip mint ice cream. To

## Love? It's complicated

me, love was whatever brought me joy. And Valentine's Day was simply a day to celebrate that wonderful feeling without complications or contradictions.

However, the unavoidable responsibilities and routines of adulthood tend to expose the ironies of love. Like, I may love my husband, but I may be in no mood for romance, especially on a busy Monday night when my kid has a science project due, my favorite show is on, and I just sprouted a cold sore. Valentine's Day is a celebration of love, but we mustn't deny reality. Why not acknowledge and appreciate love's contradictions and complications?

For example, I love friendships that involve no judgement, where my friend and I are free to confess our deepest insecurities, most embarrassing habits, and worst flaws without fear of criticism. Instead, offering unconditional acceptance, admiration and support.

Ironically, I also love when my BFF and I dish the dirt. In the safe and comfortable atmosphere of our supportive relationship, we engage in lively gossip about other people — movie stars, workmates, old boyfriends, public figures — judging their behavior, clothing, parenting, hairstyles, nail polish color and criminal records as if we are perfect human beings.

I love our flubbery, adorable, thick-headed, yellow English Labrador Retriever named Moby. I love that he follows me around our house, plopping down on his kitchen dog bed, or sneaking up onto our couch and beds for naps. I love that, despite his stocky girth, he curls himself up

to sleep, collecting all four paws near his nose.

Ironically, I also love a clean house, free of stiff yellow dog hairs that permeate every nook and cranny of our house, that weave themselves into our sweaters, that blow like tumbleweeds across our floors, that become airborne before sprinkling down onto furniture, fixtures and food.

I love our three children, each with their own distinct personalities. I love that they share my sense of humor and appreciation for clowning around. I have loved watching them grow into interesting young adults, and writing about them in my columns.

I also love the irony that they have no interest in my writing, and probably won't read my columns until after I've died and they find my book while cleaning out our house for an estate sale.

I love my husband, Francis, a sweet guy with great comedic timing, a strong work ethic, and an unbreakable sense of loyalty. I love that he spent 28 years serving his country in the navy, and now works hard in his civilian job to support our family. I love that under his hairy Italian-Irish exterior is a sensitive softie without typical manly ways.

Ironically, I also love when spiders are smooshed, dead mice are removed, batteries are jump-started, and toilet flappers are replaced by someone other than me, which mostly never happens.

How do I love thee? It's complicated. It's contradictory. It's ironic. It's beautiful. Let me count the ways.

## Gutsy 'Busch Light CLASH at the Coliseum' revs up a large new audience for NASCAR

You really have to hand it to NASCAR for trying something so radically different for its first race of the 2022 Cup season, in an effort to reverse the trend of declining audiences in recent years.



The annual CLASH exhibition race is NASCAR's first race of the Cup season, welcoming back fans after the winter to meet the new year's drivers, see their colorful new sponsor graphics and, this year, to get their first racing look at NASCAR's radically new Next Gen (Gen-7) racecars. In past years this race has been held at the Daytona International Speedway, shortly before the season opening Daytona 500, but this year — for the very first time — it would leave Daytona and be held clear across the county at Los Angeles' Exposition Park, inside the LA Memorial Coliseum.

At only a quarter-mile in length, this track was much shorter than even the shortest tracks that the NASCAR Cup Series races on. Would the Coliseum track be too short to provide the drivers enough room to race each other? Would this 'event' become an ill-conceived, unsuccessful crash-fest? Would the freshly laid asphalt track come up under the weight of these heavy cars as they race lap after lap? Even my pace laps riding in the Toyota Camry pace car generated significant g-force. No one knew what would happen.

It is speculated that the cost to build, and then immediately remove, this quarter-mile, asphalt race track inside the LA Memorial Coliseum (above the grass of its football field, which will have to be replaced, and its irrigation system) was over \$1,000,000. The track met NASCAR safety standards, complete with SAFER Barriers, plus strong, tall safety fencing (borrowed from the Acura Grand Prix of Long Beach, before it is needed for that popular street racing event in April).

The inside of the LA Coliseum is so much smaller than any other racetrack that NASCAR competes on, that the track designers had no choice but to locate the garage area and the haulers several blocks away. The competitors had

to drive their racecars through fenced-off parking lots to get to the Coliseum, and enter through its famous tunnel.

While no one knew for certain if this radical experiment would actually work, the drivers were enthusiastic and expressed their support for racing in the magnificent, historic, LA Memorial Coliseum — site of two Olympics (the first was in 1932) and soon to be three.

Dale Earnhardt Jr. suited up and borrowed Alex Bowman's Ally Chevrolet on Friday night, to record footage for a Super Bowl pre-game TV commercial — and in the process was one of four drivers who took the first laps around the brand-new racetrack in the Next Gen racecar.

Will this become a lost speedway? With Dale's “Lost Speedways” TV show in mind, on Saturday I asked him if he would be collecting a sample of this track when they tear it up after the race. I don't think that's going to happen.

On Saturday afternoon there was a two-hour practice, followed by single-car qualifying under the Coliseum's bright lights — to determine the fields and lineups for Sunday's first four heat races.

On Sunday the drivers could not afford to hold anything back, or risk not making the field, since there were more cars (36) than spots in the starting grid (23) for the 150-lap feature.

The format for this CLASH was more like that for a traditional local short track race. The day began with four qualifying, nine-car heat races, followed by two last-chance qualifiers that would set the field for the 150-lap CLASH. Despite the very short track, there was still plenty of passing, with cars racing up to three-wide at times, and then some! The new composite bodies were tested, as there was plenty of ‘bumping & banging’ going on — especially in the second last-chance qualifier, with its seven cautions and the elimination of Kurt Busch and Alex Bowman, due to damage to their cars. The new composite bodies likely kept tire failures to a minimum, whereas in the past damaged metal bodies tended to cut tires down.

Thanks to this year's new, larger wheels, there are also larger brakes, which seemed to work really well, given the number of cars that locked them up going into the tight turns. Pit stops this

year (beginning with the Daytona 500) will probably be quicker, now that NASCAR has changed from five conventional lug nuts to one large, central locking nut per wheel.

To sweeten the deal for those who attended in-person, NASCAR added a pre-race concert with rapper and NASCAR race team co-owner Pit Bull (and dancers!), on-stage in the peristyle; and at a break mid-way through the feature race, LA's popular rapper Ice Cube entertained during a half-time concert.

The 150-lap “Busch Light CLASH at the Coliseum” went by quickly, given the very short laps. Laps that were driven under “caution” were not counted.

The race did not have the wild, last laps shootout that many had expected. Joey Logano, with his wife due to have a baby the next day, would not be beaten, leading pole-sitter and racing laps leader Kyle Busch across the Start/Finish line by a comfortable margin.

Was this project an insane thing to do, as some speculated? No, it was actually brilliant, and hugely successful. According to a FOX Sports PR tweet on Feb. 8th, citing Neilson Media Research, the inaugural Busch Light CLASH at the Coliseum delivered 4,283,000 viewers — way up by 168% over last year's 1,598,000 viewers. This was the “most viewers for the event since 2016.” The tweet went on to say that Los Angeles had its best non-Daytona 500 Cup Series rating (2.7) in nearly six years.

Seventy percent of the fans in attendance had never been to a NASCAR race before. This is definitive proof that NASCAR's read of the potential LA-centered audience was right on the mark.

Sure enough — shortly after 6 p.m. on Sunday, as I sat in the empty grandstands eating my chicken parmigiana and vegetables dinner (thank you NASCAR!) — workers had already begun to tear the track apart.

To see the most photos and the latest text, and to explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, visit AutoMatters & More at AutoMatters.net. On the Home Page, search by title or topic, or click on the blue ‘years’ boxes.

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--Dalai Lama

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**SDSU Basketball  
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**Saturday, February 12**

**Aztec Men's Basketball**

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SDSU sunglasses, which can be  
picked up at the Marketing table  
outside Door 1 before the game.

## ROY'S SUDOKU

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## MOVIES AT THE BASES

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concessions will be available.

**Thursday, Feb 10**

5:50pm The 355 pg13

**Friday, Feb 11**

5:30pm Scream (2022) r

**Saturday, Feb 12**

12:50pm The 355 pg13

3:50pm Scream (2022) r

**Sunday, Feb 13**

1:30pm Sing 2 pg

4:20pm The 355 pg13

**Thursday, February 17**

5:50pm Scream (2022) r

**Pendleton Theater  
and Training Center**

Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across  
from Mainside Center)

**Saturday, Feb 19**

The King's Man (R)

**Saturday, Feb 26**

The 355 (PG13)

**Saturday, March 5**

1:30pm Scream (R) ★

**Bob Hope Theater** 577-4143  
MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242 ★

**Friday, Feb 11**

6pm The 355 ( PG-13 )

**Saturday, Feb 12**

3pm Sing 2 ( PG )

6pm Scream (2022) ( R )

**Friday, Feb 18**

6pm Scream (2022) ( R )

**Saturday, Feb 19**

3pm Uncharted ( PG-13 )

6:30pm The King's Man ( R )

**Sunday, Feb 20**

3pm Uncharted ( PG-13 )

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**Friday, Feb 11**

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**Saturday, Feb 12**

3pm The King's Man r

6pm The 355 pg13

**Sunday, Feb 13**

1pm Sing 2 pg

4pm Scream (2022) r

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- Not imagined
- On
- Arthur of tennis
- Country quarters
- Be behind
- Skier's need, maybe
- Arose to catch the proverbial worm
- President's Day event
- Ivy League student
- Dynamic prefix
- Sushi bar brews
- Ristorante favorite
- "Holy smokes!"
- Award won twice by Adele and Kelly Clarkson
- Monks' wear
- Total drubbing
- Flatow of "Science Friday"
- Opposite of home
- Dozen dozen
- Craftsy etailer
- Tiny, for short
- "Not long"
- Guilty and not guilty
- Philanthropist who was a Time Person of  
the Year co-honoree in 2005
- Spectrum maker
- Comment after a missed shot
- Characteristic
- Shred
- Tint
- "I didn't mean to do that"
- Relatively unknown quality items ... and  
what can be found in 16-, 26- and 42-Across
- Unmitigated joy
- Seller, usually
- Its symbol is Fe
- Some cameras, for short
- Amorously pursues
- Fiddling emperor

Down

- Orion's left foot, some say
- Gay
- Naysayers
- Pelican State sch.
- Biblical mount
- Tropical root vegetable
- Squeaky-wheel need
- Tissue layer
- Attack
- Hazard in many old Westerns
- Opening
- Lambs' moms
- New drivers, typically
- Novel units
- Whack at a mosquito
- With skill
- Family outing destinations
- Numbered piece
- Outlet insert
- Celestial bear
- First Black MLB team captain, 1964
- Not nervous
- Something Mommy needs to kiss?
- Computer screen background
- Odin and Thor
- Wander
- "Need anything \_\_\_?"
- Sulky state
- Pie nut
- Flowery van Gogh work
- Battery terminals
- Solution strength measure
- "Over \_\_\_"
- Something from a mill?
- Type of survey question
- Duds
- Dinner table staple
- License plate fig.
- "\_\_\_ come?"
- Iconic WWII island, briefly
- Winning game cry

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## Armed Forces Dispatch (619) 280-2985

Published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.  
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Publisher.....Sarah Hagerty

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## Celebrate American Heart Month: Join the #OurHearts movement

February is American Heart Month!

Did you know that people who have close relationships at home, work, or in their community tend to be healthier and live longer? One reason, according to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), is that we're more successful at meeting our health goals when we work on them with others. NHLBI launched the #OurHearts movement to inspire us to protect and strengthen our hearts with the support of others.

Here are some facts, how-to tips, and resources to inspire you to join with others, even if you can't be physically together, to improve your heart health.

Heart disease is a leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. Most middle-aged and young adults have one or more risk factors for heart disease, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or being a smoker or overweight. Having multiple risk factors increases your risk for heart disease.

### Why Connecting is Good for Your Heart

Feeling connected with others and having positive, close relationships benefit our overall health, including our blood pressure and weight. Having people in our lives who motivate and care for us helps, as do feelings of closeness and companionship.

Follow these heart-healthy lifestyle tips to protect your heart. It will be easier and more successful if you work on them with others, including by texting or phone calls

**GET OUTSIDE THIS WEEKEND Need compost/mulch?** Free Product Giveaway Saturday, Sat, Feb 12, 7-1:30. San Pasqual Valley Soils, 16111 Old Milky Way, Escondido, 92027. Load up whatever amount you need for your own benefit. Free if self-loaded, or loaded for a nominal fee. **Guided Nature Walk**, Sat, Feb 12, 8:30-10am. Free. Guided walk starts from Kumeyaay Lake Campground Entry Station, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Diego, CA 92119. mtrp.org **SD Cactus & Succulent Soci-**

### #OurHearts

eat healthier together

Get heart healthy for life by following the Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan. It requires no special foods, provides daily and weekly nutritional goals, and can help lower high blood pressure.

Support your loved ones in their effort to stick to DASH by doing the following together:

- Pick out recipes to try.
- Make a grocery list.
- Cook heart-healthy versions of family favorites.
- Enjoy the meals you've prepared.

[nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/DASH)

if needed.

- Be more physically active.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a nutritious diet.
- Quit smoking.
- Reduce stress.
- Get 7-8 hours of quality sleep.
- Track your heart health stats.

You don't have to make big changes all at once. Small steps will get you where you want to go.

### Move more

- Invite family, friends, colleagues, or members of your community to join you in your efforts to be more physically active:
- Ask a colleague to walk "with you" on a regular basis, put the date on both your calendars, and text or call to make sure you both get out for a walk.
- Get a friend or family member to sign up for the same online ex-

ercise class, such as a dance class. Make it a regular date!

- Grab your kids, put on music, and do jumping jacks, skip rope, or dance in your living room or yard.

How much is enough? Aim for at least 2½ hours of physical activity each week—that's just 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week. In addition, do muscle strengthening exercises 2 days a week. Can't carve out a lot of time in your day? Don't chuck your goal, chunk it! Try 10 or 15 minutes a few times a day. NHLBI's Move More fact sheet has ideas to get and keep you moving.

### Aim for a healthy weight

Find someone in your friend group, at work, or in your family who also wants to reach or maintain a healthy weight. (If

you're overweight, even a small weight loss of 5–10 percent helps your health.) Check in with them regularly to stay motivated. Agree to do healthy activities, like walking or cooking a healthy meal, at the same time, even if you can't be together. Share low-calorie, low-sodium recipes. Check out NHLBI's Aim for a Healthy Weight web page.

### Eat heart-healthy

We tend to eat like our friends and family, so ask others close to you to join in your effort to eat healthier. Together, try NHLBI's free Dietary Approaches to Stop

Hypertension (DASH) eating plan. Research shows that, compared to a typical American diet, it lowers high blood pressure and improves cholesterol levels. Find delicious recipes at NHLBI's Heart-Healthy Eating web page.

### Quit smoking

To help you quit, ask others for support or join an online support group. Research shows that people are much more likely to quit if their spouse, friend, or sibling does. Social support online can help you quit. All states have quit lines with trained counselors—call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). You'll find many free resources to help you quit, such as apps, a motivational text service, and a chat line at BeTobaccoFree.hhs.gov and Smokefree.gov.

If you need extra motivation to quit, consider those around you: Breathing other people's smoke, called secondhand smoke, is dangerous. Many adult nonsmokers die of stroke, heart disease, and lung cancer caused by secondhand smoke.

### Manage stress

Reducing stress helps your heart health. Set goals with a friend or family member to do a relaxing activity every day, like walking, yoga, or meditation, or participate in an online stress-management program together. Physical activity

also helps reduce stress. Talk to a qualified mental health provider or someone else you trust.

### Improve sleep

Sleeping 7–8 hours a night helps to improve heart health. De-stressing will help you sleep, as does getting a 30-minute daily dose of sunlight. Take a walk instead of a late afternoon nap! Family members and friends: remind each other to turn off the screen and stick to a regular bedtime. Instead of looking at your phone or the TV before bed, relax by listening to music, reading, or taking a bath.

### Track Your Heart Health Stats, Together

Keeping a log of your blood pressure, weight goals, physical activity, and if you have diabetes, your blood sugars, will help you stay on a heart-healthy track. Ask your friends or family to join you in the effort. Check out NHLBI's Healthy Blood Pressure for Healthy Hearts: Tracking Your Numbers worksheet.

Visit #OurHearts for inspiration on what others around the country are doing together for their heart health. Then join the #OurHearts movement and let NHLBI know what you're doing to have a healthy heart. Tag #OurHearts to share how you and your family and friends are being heart healthy.

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**\$17,577**

BELOW MARKET PRICE!



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Stk #P304879

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