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SUNLIT SAIL USNS *Wally Schirra* and USS *Theodore Roosevelt* participate in a replenishment in the South China Sea, May 14, 2024. U.S. Navy photo

NAVY ANNOUNCES COMMISSIONING DATE FOR FUTURE USS RICHARD M. MCCOOL, JR.

by Karli Yeager

Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet

The Navy has approved the commissioning date for future amphibious transport dock ship USS Richard M. McCool, Jr.

The Navy will commission Richard M. McCool, Jr., Sept. 7, 2024, at Naval Air Station Pensacola in Pensacola, Fla.

The naming of LPD 29 honors Navy Capt. Richard M.

McCool Jr., who was awarded the Medal of Honor in 1945 for the heroism he displayed after his ship was attacked by kamikaze aircraft in the Battle of Okinawa. Despite suffering from shrapnel wounds and painful burns, he led efforts to battle a blazing fire on his ship and rescue injured sailors. LPD 29 will be the first of its name.

Richard M. McCool Jr. is co-sponsored by Shana McCool and Kate Oja, granddaughters of the ship's namesake. As the co-sponsors, McCool and Oja lead the time-honored Navy tradition of giving the order during the ceremony to "man our ship and bring her to life!" At the moment, the commissioning pennant is hoisted and Rich-

ard M. McCool Jr. becomes a proud ship of the fleet.

Richard M. McCool Jr. will be the Navy's 13th San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship.

Amphibious transport docks are used to transport and land Marines, their equipment, and supplies by embarked Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC) or conventional landing craft and amphibious assault vehicles (AAV) augmented by helicopters or vertical take-off and landing aircraft (MV 22). These ships support amphibious assault, special operations, or expeditionary warfare missions and serve as secondary aviation platforms for amphibious operations.



Shown here is the builder's trials for future San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock Richard M. McCool Jr. (LPD 29). Courtesy photo

It's a first: 'Operation Flags for Vets' May 25 at Miramar National Cemetery

SAN DIEGO - In honor of Memorial Day and military men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, Rotary District 5340 will place 17,000 American flags at Miramar National Cemetery on May 25.

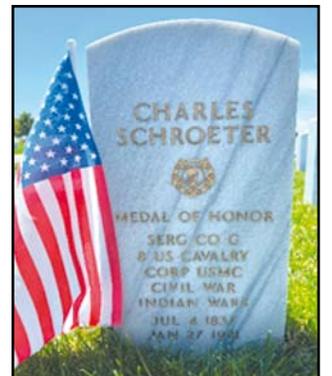
This will be the first time since the cemetery opened in 2010 that flags will be placed on every veteran's gravesite. "Operation Flags for Vets" will take place this Saturday at 2:30 p.m. at Miramar National Cemetery.

Operation Flags for Vets is in coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs and hosted by Rotary District 5340. The project was started by Rick Clark, a Navy Vietnam veteran and past president of the La Jolla Golden Triangle Rotary Club.

"On Memorial weekend each year, I have always been moved by the inspirational vision of the thousands of flags on the graves of our fallen heroes at Ft. Rosecrans National Cemetery," said Clark. "I couldn't be prouder of our first-ever 'Operation Flags for Vets' program at Miramar National Cemetery and by the Rotary District 5340 volunteers who are making it happen."

More than 300 volunteers have signed up to place the flags on Saturday. Rotary District 5340 is seeking volunteers on Tuesday, May 28 at 3 p.m., to help pull the flags and make them ready for Memorial Day 2025. To volunteer for the Tuesday event, go to www.rotarydistrict5340dmcc.com and click on upcoming events.

Miramar National Cemetery is one of two San Diego County national cemeteries.



Headstone of Army WWI Medal of Honor Recipient Charles Schroeter. Photo by Holly Shaffner

Memorial Day San Diego

Miramar National Cemetery Veterans Memorial Service

Free • May 26, 2024 • 1-2 p.m.

****Special program honors the 80th anniversary of D-Day**

5795 Nobel Dr., San Diego

Fort Rosecrans Memorial Day Ceremony

Free • May 27, 2024 • 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

1800 Cabrillo Memorial Dr., Point Loma

Mt. Soledad's Memorial Day Ceremony

Free • May 27, 2024 • 11 a.m.-12 p.m.

****Special tribute to 25 Marines of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment (call sign, 'Darkhorse') for their actions during the war in Afghanistan.**

Coronado Summer Concert Series

A series of 16 free concerts kicks off Memorial Day weekend at Spreckels Park as part of an annual summer series organized by Coronado Promenade Concerts.

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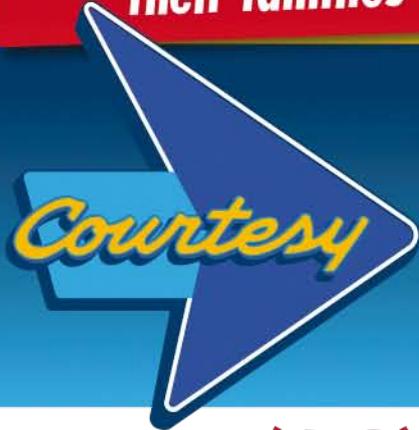
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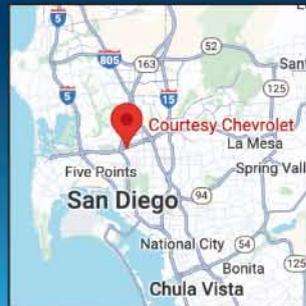
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Admiral: Success of Red Sea operations are a tribute to Sailors, systems

by David Vergun
DOD News

Navy vessels have been plying the Red Sea since December as part of Operation Prosperity Guardian, a U.S.-led, multinational coalition established to counter attacks by Houthi terrorists on merchant and naval vessels.

“Our forces are engaged in the Red Sea right now [in a way] we’ve not seen since probably World War II. I mean, those ships are operating inside weapon engagement zones. They have to be prepared on a moment’s notice to conduct engagements, and they have to get it right every single time,” said Navy Rear Adm. Fred Pyle, director of the Surface Warfare Division, at a Center for Strategic and International Studies event May 14.

“I could not be more proud of how those sailors are performing over the last six months and also how the systems are performing, given what they’re operating in,” he said.

They’re engaging enemy antiship cruise and ballistic

missiles, as well as unmanned systems, Pyle said, while also navigating through waters at night where merchant vessels are steaming.

The integrated air- and missile-defense on these ships provides a layered defense distant, close in, and in between, he said, adding that aircraft from USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* aircraft carrier are also playing a vital role in the mission.

Expensive missiles are being shot at much cheaper drones, the admiral acknowledged.

“Should we find a more cost-effective way of downing say, an inexpensive drone? Absolutely. And we’re working towards that,” he said, adding that there are solutions being considered, but he couldn’t get into more detail because

of the classified nature of that effort.

Allies and partners are a vital part of the effort. More than 24 nations are supporting Operation Prosperity Guardian, he noted.

“It’s always good to have an international face on an effort where you’re trying to maintain the flow of global commerce,” he said.

Many months of training have paid off for this mission, particularly in utilizing virtual, live and constructive simulations, Pyle said.

The admiral said that two key lessons learned from the conflicts in the Red Sea and Ukraine are that the services need to increase their munitions stocks and increase the



A Sailor participates in flight operations aboard USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* in the Red Sea, April 18, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by C3 Samantha Alaman

means to resupply anywhere in the world.

“We’re very focused on getting our munitions inventories increased,” he said. “We’re in a sustainable position right now, given what we’re seeing in the Red Sea.”



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Top 5

- Military's novel floating pier arrives in Gaza amid security concerns
- USS *Ronald Reagan* leaves its Japan homeport after nearly 9 years
- Soldier says he lost a leadership position due to his beard
- Marine corporal earns prestigious medal for saving military \$140M
- Former Army sergeant convicted of killing BLM protester pardoned

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- Family: Army frustrated efforts to get reservist help before shooting
- Army's future artillery may include wheeled howitzers, automated cannons and long-range mortars
- Staff Sgt. Gordon Black reportedly pleads guilty to theft while being held by Russia

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- Approximately 30 percent of Sailors remain in same area following new billet assignment, CNP says
- Navy pushes for more access to high schools amid recruiting struggle
- Navy gearing up to test secretive Project Overmatch capabilities at RIMPAC
- Higher stakes: USS *Truman* prepares for Red Sea mission to counter daily barrage of Houthi missiles and drones (see story, this page)
- Navy secretary vows more money for anti-drone lasers

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- How Marines took an airfield in the Philippines in a show against China
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'HIGHER STAKES': USS *TRUMAN* PREPARES FOR RED SEA MISSION TO COUNTER DAILY BARRAGE OF HOUTHI MISSILES AND DRONES

by **Corey Dickstein**
Stars and Stripes

MIAMI - USS Harry S. Truman will soon lead a Navy strike group into the volatile Red Sea, where U.S. Sailors have fought almost daily for months to down drones and missiles launched by Houthi rebels from Yemen.

The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier and its 6,000-some Sailors have spent recent months training in the western Atlantic Ocean for that mission - a rare, pre-planned deployment expected to take the ship into a hostile environment. In recent weeks, its Sailors have been undergoing flight deck testing, its pilots knowing that later this year they will be tasked with shooting down drones and munitions launched by the Iran-backed Houthis.

"They know that they're most likely going to be entering a weapon engagement zone," said Adm. Daryl Caudle, the leader of Navy Fleet Forces Command. "I believe, personally, that puts higher stakes on why what we do [in training] is so important. ... For this group, this [deployment] is not with the mindset that they're just going to go drill holes in the water somewhere — this is, 'We're going to be employed for combat.'"

But with combat on the minds of *Truman's* sailors and preparations being made to deploy to the

hostile waters of the Red Sea, the 1,000-foot-long, 104,000-ton aircraft carrier made a rare appearance in Miami to have the ship's sailors participate recently in the city's first Fleet Week.

There was some "push-back" from Navy planners, Caudle admitted. An aircraft carrier had never participated in a U.S. Fleet Week anywhere. But when Fleet Week kicked off May 5, Truman sat stoic, anchored just a few miles off the coast of Miami Beach - its Sailors gathered on the flight deck to wave emphatically at their counterparts aboard USS *Bataan*, as the amphibious assault ship entered Miami's port.

"I will admit that bringing a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to a Fleet Week is unique," said Caudle, who is charged with providing trained and ready naval forces to combatant commanders around the world. "And of course ... they're [in the middle of] doing the training ... they need to do to ensure that they're certified and qualified and proficient and ready to go fight. Fleet Week is not built into that."

The crew used the voyage from its home base in Norfolk, Va., to Miami and back - *Truman* recently returned to Norfolk - to conduct extra tactical training at sea, Caudle said. The carrier's time in Miami was largely meant

to give Sailors a fun port call and to interact with the local community, a sort-of recruiting effort that top Navy officials, including Caudle, said they hoped would spark interest in the sea service among more young Miamians.

The admiral said he hoped the Fleet Week stop, wedged into a critical train-up for what would likely be the most dangerous deployment most of the sailors have ever served, would spark memories of their service and bolster their quality of life in the Navy.

"Once they actually come over to the city, and immerse themselves into this incredible town, and get to experience the food, and the people, and the nightlife and all that, that is what builds the memories, and [that is] why people stay in the Navy," Caudle said. "I'm going to be honest; this is what I remember from my almost 40-year career are the places I've pulled into. The operations tend to be a bit of a blur, but you really remember the port calls."

With Fleet Week over, the bulk of *Truman's* preparations begin.

Navy officials declined to say precisely when *Truman* will embark on its cross-Atlantic voyage toward the Red Sea to replace USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, which deployed from Norfolk in October. Caudle said

the deployment was still "several months out." *Eisenhower* briefly left the Red Sea last month for the Mediterranean Sea, but it has recently returned to the Red Sea, according to the Navy.

The Navy canceled a planned visit to *Truman* for news reporters during the Miami Fleet Week, and the ship's top leaders were not made available for interviews.

Caudle said he was confident in the ship's ongoing preparations. The Navy was already incorporating "lessons learned" in *Truman* crew's training from *Eisenhower* strike group's fighting with the Houthis.

While the admiral declined to provide specifics about most of those new lessons, he said they are informing the scenarios that *Truman* has faced in its training. As the carrier completes its pre-deployment training, the ship will deal with similar issues that *Eisenhower* and its escort ships have faced in the Red Sea, said Caudle. Those include lessons on some strategies such as where a strike group's ships should be in relation to one another, how its radar systems should be tuned and the decision-making processes on which weapon should be employed against which incoming munition and when.

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Military recruits would not be tested for marijuana under House draft bill

by Svetlana Shkolnikova
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - New recruits and incoming officers into the military would not have to undergo mandatory cannabis testing under the House's version of an annual must-pass defense policy bill.

The draft of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act bars the services from requiring an individual to submit to marijuana testing as a condition of enlisting or commissioning.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., attempted to add the provision as an amendment to last year's authorization bill, which sets priorities for the Pentagon, but was unsuccessful. Its inclusion this year was "a collaborative effort," he said May 17.

Supporters of the measure believe it will help the military attract recruits at a time when few young people want to or are eligible to serve.

"I do not believe that prior use of cannabis should exclude Americans from enlisting in the armed forces," Gaetz said last year. "We should embrace



An Oklahoma Army National Guard Soldier pulls illegally grown marijuana plants out of their pots in Kay County, Okla., in September 2022. Oklahoma National Guard photo by Haden Tolbert

them for stepping up to serve our country."

The military has long maintained a zero-tolerance, marijuana-use policy but has revisited and loosened its rules in recent years as more states legalized the drug.

The Air Force and Space Force began a pilot program in 2022 that allows some recruits who test positive for THC — the main psychoactive component in marijuana — to retake the test after 90 days.

The Army, Navy and Marine Corps also give applicants second chances to take a cannabis test and the Navy announced in February that it will no longer send home recruits who test positive for marijuana upon their arrival at boot camp.

A 2021 Rand Corp. study of the Army's marijuana waiver policies showed recruits who received waivers for testing positive for cannabis or admitting to past drug use "perform no worse" than other Soldiers.

"That should be welcome news in recruiting offices nationwide. More than half of all new recruits come from states where marijuana is now legal, at least for medicinal use," an essay accompanying the study said.

Recreational marijuana is now legal in 24 states — almost half the country — while medical marijuana use is legalized in another 14 states, according to the Pew Research Center.

The use and possession of marijuana remains illegal under federal law but President Joe Biden's administration moved Thursday to downgrade marijuana from the most dangerous and restrictive category of drugs.

"Far too many lives have been

upended because of a failed approach to marijuana, and I'm committed to righting those wrongs," Biden said.

The House Armed Services

Committee is expected to meet next week to discuss the defense authorization legislation. The Senate Armed Services Committee has not yet released its version of the bill.



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SURFOR establishes Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron (USVRON) Three

by Karli Yeager

Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet
SAN DIEGO - Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP) established Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron (USVRON) Three at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado during a ceremony, May 17.

USVRON Three will oversee a fleet of small, unmanned surface vessels (USV) known as Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Craft (GARC).

During the ceremony, Capt. Derek Rader assumed command of the newly established USVRON Three.

“Our Sailors are the essential key for integration of unmanned surface vessels in the Navy and joint construct,” said Rader. “This will be accomplished through experimentation with the fleet testing and doctrine drafted by operators you see today, who embody and execute the warfighting that we need to achieve to enable the full potential of unmanned systems.”



Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet Vice Adm. Brendan McLane, is rung in upon his arrival to the establishment ceremony for Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron 3 on Naval Amphibious Base Coronado May 17. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Claire M. DuBois

USVs, including the GARCs, will provide additional warfighting capability and capacity to augment the Navy's traditional combatant force, providing commanders with a greater range of

capabilities and employment options to increase the Fleet's tactical and strategic advantages. The goal for USVs is to provide the fleet with operations in conjunction with carrier strike

groups, surface action groups, or even independently.

Manufactured by the Maritime Applied Physics Corporation, GARCs are 16-foot USVs

that enable research, testing, and operations that will allow integration throughout the surface, expeditionary, and joint maritime forces.

see **USVRON**, page 7

Military Sealift Command takes delivery of newest Fleet Replenishment Oiler USNS Earl Warren

Military Sealift Command recently took delivery of its newest fleet replenishment oiler, USNS Earl Warren (T-AO 207), from General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego. The ship honors Earl Warren, an American attorney, politician, and jurist who served as the 14th Chief Justice of the United States from 1953 to 1969. He also served as Governor of California from 1943 to 1953, and is the last chief justice to have served in an elected office before nomination to the Supreme Court. Warren is considered to be one of the most influential Supreme Court justices and political leaders in the history of the United States.

Carrier Strike Group 3 changes command

SAN DIEGO - Rear Adm. Kevin Lenox was relieved by Rear Adm. Adan Cruz as commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 3, during a change of command ceremony held on board Naval Air Station North Island, May 8. Lenox served as commander of CSG-3 from September 2022 to May 2024. “It’s been the privilege of a lifetime to command this strike group,” said Lenox. “It has been truly inspiring to watch these young Sailors come out of the maintenance phase and integrate all of our new warfighting capabilities into their training.” Prior to taking command of CSG-3, Cruz served as the deputy director, Politico-Military Affairs (Middle East/Africa) J-5 for the Joint Staff.

NAVFAC Southwest begins construction on Child Development Center in Point Loma

SAN DIEGO - Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest joined members from Naval Base Point Loma, Navy Region Southwest, and contracted partners from RA Burch to mark the start of construction for a Child Development Center for Naval Base Point Loma with a ground breaking ceremony May 10 in San Diego. “It’s truly a pleasure to be here with everyone to share our pride in military families and our unwavering support and commitment to the needs of our military children,” said Naval Base Point Loma Commanding Officer Capt. Jeff Yackerren. The planned 35,987 square foot Child Development Center project is a large classification design and construction project.

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Greetings from pierside as submarine *Greenville* arrives at its new homeport at Naval Base Point Loma. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Tierra N. Brown

USS *Greenville* arrives at new homeport at Naval Base Point Loma

by MC1 Tierra Brown
 NAVALBASE POINT LOMA – Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS *Greenville* (SSN 772) and its crew of approximately 155 Sailors arrived at its new homeport here May 20.

Greenville is conducting a homeport shift to San Diego following the completion of a 30 month engineered overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Prior to begin-

ning its EOH, *Greenville* was homeported at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

Submarine EOHs are comprehensive maintenance periods, ranging from 24 to 36 months in duration, and are normally conducted near the mid-point of a submarine's service life. The EOH period encompasses necessary repairs, maintenance, equipment modernization and upgrades, and system alterations.

"It's a wonderful feeling to be here in San Diego," said Cmdr. Chad Tella, *Greenville's* commanding officer. "This crew has worked incredibly hard over the course of the last 30 months while *Greenville* was in the shipyard. Over the past month of operations, the crew has demonstrated their professionalism and resilience in safely bringing *Greenville* to our new home. I could not be more proud of each and every crewmember, and I am happy to join the warfighters of Submarine Squadron 11."

Greenville will be joining four Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarines already assigned to Submarine Squadron 11. More than half of the Navy's submarine force is based in the Indo-Pacific region due to the area's strategic importance.

NEWS IN PHOTOS



SECURE THE VESSEL Sailors heave mooring line aboard destroyer USS *William P. Lawrence* (DDG 110) while getting underway from Juneau, Alaska May 9. *William P. Lawrence* is underway conducting routine operations in the 3rd Fleet area of responsibility. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lordin Kelly



C3F FUN Vice Adm. Michael Boyle, commander, 3rd Fleet, participates in a cornhole tournament during a command picnic held at Naval Base Point Loma, May 17, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 John B. Hetherington

USVRON

continued from page 6

Commander, Naval Surface Forces U.S. Pacific Fleet Vice Adm. Brendan McLane delivered the keynote speech at the ceremony.

"With challenging obstacles to overcome, we have put the right team in place at USVRON Three, and I believe we have done just that," McLane said. "The Navy is placing unmanned systems in the hands of 400 of our most talented warfighters to help integrate, scale, experiment, and employ these systems."

USVRON Three will also incorporate the newest rating, the robotics warfare (RW) specialist into their teams. The rating was announced in February by the Chief of Naval Opera-

tions. They will enable Robotic Autonomous System operations and maintenance at the tactical edge and be the subject matter experts for computer vision, mission autonomy, navigation autonomy, data systems, artificial intelligence, and machine learning on the RAS platforms.

USVRON Three will report to Surface Development Group (SURFDEVGRU) One, under the direction of Commodore Shea Thompson.

"There are currently no boundaries, and we have an incredible opportunity to determine what right looks like within our sphere of influence," said Thompson. "And the SURFDEVGRU One and USVRON Three teams are manned by like-minded surface warriors who are making considerable strides in validating small

USV capability while laying out a clear path to achieving full operational capability by a timeframe that matters."

The mission of USVRON Three is to deliver the most formidable, unmanned platforms in the maritime domain. The squadron will be a cornerstone in building the foundational knowledge required to operate and maintain USV and will spearhead the development of TTPs for USV operations and sustainment. USVRON 3's motto is "Victory Through Ferocity."

SURFDEVGRU 1 is responsible for the maintenance, training, and manning oversight for unmanned surface vessels, Zumwalt-class guided missile destroyers, and future USS *Lynndon B. Johnson* (DDG 1002).

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Try, try again, and then try some more

I arrived at the base marina ten minutes late, setting my nerves on edge before crew practice had even started. Little did I know, the smidge of apprehension I felt would amplify into confidence-obliterating anxiety that would render me virtually useless before the day was done.

It was the first practice for the crew of Alliance, a 40-foot J122 offshore racing sailboat co-skipped by two military-connected sailing friends, Mary and Eric. I'd met Mary through the base's Navy Yacht Club, and she'd invited me to be "delivery crew" last year.

As delivery crew, I wouldn't race with Alliance, but I'd help sail the boat to and from race locations. As a sailing novice with lots to learn, this lesser status was fine by me. In fact, I was grateful to be exposed to this respectable group of lifelong sailors at all.

At 57-years-of-age, my goal wasn't to become an expert offshore racer. Realistically, I'd never fully grasp the complexities of navigation, weather, and tactics. My modest aim was to simply be a useful member of the overall crew.

"Hi, I'm Lisa," I said cheerfully to the crew members who were busy doing various tasks on the docked boat. When they looked in my direction, I sensed mild confusion.

"What's that frumpy, middle-aged woman doing on the boat?" their faces seemed to say.

"Delivery crew," I explained with a nervous chuckle, pointing to myself.

The race crew wore scuffed

boots and sailing gear, showing wear and tear from years of races. By contrast, I was decked out in glaringly spotless boots and crispy-new foul weather gear without so much as a smudge, wrinkle or stray thread.

Once aboard, I looked for ways to help, but it quickly became apparent that I couldn't really help without asking for help myself, which kind of defeated

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

the purpose of helping at all. When I did take a stab at tasks, I often made stupid mistakes, further rattling my nerves.

"You're making this more difficult," Bill, a race crew member, blurted when I attempted to help him pack a spinnaker sail into its designated bag.

My blunders continued that blustery afternoon during practice maneuvers on the Narragansett Bay. I grabbed the wrong line, attached the wrong shackle, tied the wrong knot, forgot where the fairlead was, sheeted in when I should've eased out.

Each time I goofed or got in someone's way, I pivoted and carried on. However, one by one, tiny invisible chinks formed in my self-confidence.

At 6:30 pm, Alliance sailed out of the bay on port tack, fol-

lowing a rhumb line to a point just south of Block Island. The ocean was quite rough, and I was glad that I'd hidden a seasickness patch behind my left ear. I volunteered to wash the dinner dishes, one task I thought I couldn't screw up, but as I worked at the galley sink, the Shepherd's Pie I'd eaten nearly came back up.

I was assigned to first watch, 8:00 pm to midnight, along with Conor and Julija. When I took the helm, Conor pointed out a lighted beacon up ahead "just of the starboard bow." I searched in vane for the light. "The OTHER starboard bow," Conor said flatly.

In the windblown cockpit, my battered self-confidence finally gave way. For the rest of the watch, I clammed up, unable to do or say anything. I'd hit a mental wall. In all my unsuccessful attempts to be useful, I'd rendered myself useLESS.

Chilled to the bone, I huddled in my designated berth after midnight and my paralyzed brain forgot to set an alarm for the 4:00 am watch. My final rookie mistake was waking up an hour late. The entire crew was topside when I appeared in the companionway, as Alliance re-entered the Narragansett Bay.

At home, I convinced myself that I was the laughing stock of the Alliance crew, and that they'd never invite me back. But I received an email from the skippers assigning me to delivery crew after a race the very next weekend. In mustering the courage to try again, I stumbled upon a quote by Henry Ford: "Failure is only the opportunity to begin more intelligently again."

Star Wars: Season of the Force 2024 at the Disneyland Resort



by Jan Wagner

In the years following the 1977 release of Star Wars: Episode IV — A New Hope, Star Wars has become a global sensation, and in 2012 it became part of Disney, when Disney acquired Lucasfilm. That acquisition opened the door to a massive expansion of the Star Wars entertainment universe.

Plans were made, construction commenced and, in 2019, Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge opened at the Disneyland Resort in California and at Walt Disney World in Florida. Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is a land representing the planet of Batuu, with immersive Star Wars theming, buildings, props, characters, rides, entertainment, food & beverages, memorabilia and two fantastic, extensively themed rides: Millennium Falcon: Smugglers Run and the absolutely mind-blowing Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance.

This year, Star Wars: Season of the Force celebrations run from April 5 to June 2, with "specially themed food, beverages, merchandise and more for a limited time." Expanding upon the Star Wars theme are Star Tours in Tomorrowland with new adventures, and the Star Wars-themed Hyperspace Mountain high-speed roller-coaster.

On selected dates special after-hours, extra-cost, ticketed Star Wars Nites are also offered with additional special entertainment and more.

However, one day of the year in particular is more special than all of the rest, and it is a day that all park guests may enjoy. It is May fourth, the unofficial Star Wars Day, channeling that iconic line from the Star War movies with a play on words: "Let the

Force be with You!" I made the necessary reservation well in advance and then celebrated Star Wars Day at the Disneyland Resort.

As I often do, I rode several of the Star Wars-themed rides, but what I hoped would be the highlight of this special day would be viewing Disneyland's evening fireworks show from a vantage point within Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, instead of from a vantage point that had a view of Sleeping Beauty's Castle and the projections on the storefronts of Main Street USA.

Thankfully, in official recognition that Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge is another great place to

Hoping for the best, and aware that the weather forecast was favorable, I joined hundreds of my fellow Star Wars fans around the Millennium Falcon in Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge. Many of those present proudly wielded colorful lightsabers, lighting up the night sky. Even more of us celebrated this special day with themed Star Wars clothing and paraphernalia. There was an intense, palpable feeling of excitement as the time for the start of the fireworks grew closer. Finally, the lights dimmed and the spectacular show began.

With the Millennium Falcon in the foreground, at the foot of the twin peaks of Batuu, the large crowd of fans — many



enjoy the evening fireworks show, the special Fire of the Rising Moons version of the fireworks show was created, complete with synchronized, Star Wars-themed music by John Williams; narration and dramatic lighting of the twin mountain peaks of Planet Batuu.

The only caveat is that the evening fireworks show will only be held if the weather permits. The fireworks will not be launched if the wind is too great at high altitudes (even if there is no wind at ground level, which happens).

The decision to cancel the fireworks is often made as late as just before the scheduled start time — just in case the weather improves, making the cancellation especially disappointing for guests who had occupied their great viewing spots very early and had been waiting in anticipation for a long time, instead of going on more rides.

waving lightsabers — cheered and roared their approval as round after round of fireworks burst overhead. John Williams' Star Wars-themed music — amplified by the surrounding structures — filled the air. One could literally feel the music and the explosions of the fireworks. The combined visual and aural experience was absolutely breathtaking.

I shot video of the fireworks show and will add a link to it on the AutoMatters.net website, when that video has been edited and is posted on the AutoMatters & More YouTube Channel.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse. Copyright © 2024 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #839r1

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<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>
<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

Lowry Theater - NASNI, ★
 619-545-8479 Bldg. 650

Thursday - May 23
 6pm Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare r
 3:30 PM Monkey Man r

Friday - May 24
 6:00 PM The Garfield Movie pg
Saturday - May 25
 1:00 PM The Garfield Movie pg

3:10pm Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare r
 6:00 PM Challengers r

Sunday - May 26
 1:00 PM The Garfield Movie pg
 3:10 PM Challengers r

Thursday - May 30
 6:00 PM The Garfield Movie pg

Naval Base Theater - NBSD, ★
 619-556-5568, Bldg. 71
 3465 Senn Rd.

Thursday - May 23
 6pm Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare r

Friday - May 24
 6:00 PM Challengers r

Saturday - May 25
 3:30 PM The Garfield Movie pg
 6:00 PM Challengers r

Sunday - May 26
 1:00 PM The Garfield Movie pg
 3:20 PM Challengers r

Thursday - May 30
 6pm Young Woman and the Sea (AD-
 VANCE SCREENING) pg

For updates check <https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/movies/>

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

Saturday, May 25
 1:30pm The Garfield Movie (PG)
 4:00pm The First Omen (R)

Saturday, June 1 ?
Saturday, June 8
 *SENSORY FRIENDLY

1:30pm *The Garfield Movie (PG)

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143 ★
 MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

Friday, May 24
 6:00 PM - Challengers (R)

Saturday, May 25
 3:00 PM - The Garfield Movie PG

6:30pm Ministry Ungentlemanly Warfare R

Sunday, May 26
 12:00 PM - The Garfield Movie (PG)
 3:00 PM - Challengers (R)

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Older husband and working wife seek guidance

Dear Rusty: I am 74 years old, retired and receiving Social Security. My wife will be 65 in January of 2025. Our hope was to start paying off some credit card expense by her receiving SS when she turns 65, however it appears there would be a substantial reduction to her benefits. Her work income is \$37,500 a year, and she wasn't planning on retiring from work at age 65. Because I am 11 years older, we felt it makes sense to use her Social Security as a means to lower our debt. We have \$27,000 in credit card debt, and I don't really want to use my 401(k) funds due to taxes. We pretty much live on my Social Security and pension. Signed: Seeking Suggestions

Dear Seeking: Your wife's full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is age 67. Because she will not yet have reached her FRA in January 2025 (when she is 65), if she claims SS to start at that time, not only will her monthly amount be reduced, but she will be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test. The earnings test sets a limit for how much can be earned by beneficiaries who claim SS before FRA.

The earnings limit for 2024 is \$22,320. The limit for next year is not yet published (it's based on changes to the national wage index) but will be a bit higher - likely about \$23,500. Thus, I can't provide the exact impact, but if your wife's 2025 earnings exceed next year's limit, Social Security will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit (half of the amount over the limit). So, if your wife earns \$37,500 per year, that will likely be about \$14,000 over the limit and Social Security will take back half of that (\$7,000). They "take back" by withholding future benefits, or you can repay them in a lump sum. So, you will have a choice - repay Social Security from your other assets, or they will withhold your wife's SS benefits for the number of months needed to offset her penalty for exceeding the earnings limit. The number of months they will withhold depends on how much is owed and what your wife's monthly SS benefit is. For example, if your wife's age-65 SS benefit is about average (\$1,900) and her penalty for exceeding the limit is \$7,000, Social Security would withhold your wife's benefit for 4 months to recover the penalty, but she would receive her full benefit for the remaining 8 months of the year.

Unless your wife tells them in advance that she will exceed the limit, Social Security will find out the following year (after you file your income taxes). But, in any case, your wife cannot avoid the annual earnings test for working before reaching her full retirement age. The earnings test goes away when your wife reaches her FRA of 67. Until that time, if she continues working she will have a choice to have her benefits withheld for a portion of the year, or simply repay Social Security in a lump sum (in which case her benefits would continue uninterrupted).

FYI, there is a silver lining in this, because if your wife has benefits withheld because she exceeds the earnings limit before her FRA, after she reaches her full retirement age Social Security will give her time credit for the months when benefits were withheld, which will result in her monthly Social Security payment amount increasing somewhat at her full retirement age. Thus, over time, your wife may recover the benefits which were withheld for exceeding the annual earnings limit. But to get 100% of the benefit she's earned from a lifetime of working, and be exempt from Social Security's earnings limit, she would need to wait until she reaches her FRA to claim.

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County's Free Summer Movies in the Park season starts Friday at Waterfront Park

by Shauni Lyles, County of San Diego

The County of San Diego's free "2024 Summer Movies in the Park" season starts at 6 p.m., Friday, May 24 with an event and sunset showing of the Oscar-winning blockbuster "Barbie" at the Waterfront Park downtown. To celebrate the opening, there will be a variety of features and free fun for kids and families, including music, games, bounce houses, themed crafts, and other free activities. Although the movie starts at dusk, about 15 minutes past sunset, a host of free activities are expected to begin at 6 p.m. Make sure to bring a chair and blankets to cozy up for a night under the stars.

This year's schedule includes more than 100 movies at dozens of parks across the County. If you're a fan of modern-day classics there will be a variety of showings that may spark your interest, including "Wonka," "The Goonies," "The Sandlot," "ET the Extra-Terrestrial" and the 1954 version of "Rear Window." If cartoon heroes and villains are what you prefer, you won't want to miss "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem," "Monsters Inc.," "Kung Fu Panda 4," or "The Little Mermaid." And for those mystery with a sprinkle-of-horror fans there will be showings of "Hocus Pocus," "Ghostbusters: Afterlife," and "Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island."

The line-up has something for everyone to enjoy. View the full list of movies (<https://www.sdparks.org/content/sdparks/en/participate/summer-movies-in-the-park.html>) and plan to attend movies near you as the Department of Parks and Recreation celebrates 17 years of taking back parks, after dark, through safe and fun nighttime activities. Movies, dates and locations are subject to change, go to Summer Movies in the Park. For infor about all County parks & events, go to sdparks.org.



Thanks for reading The Dispatch!

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80°	99°	114°
85°	104°	119°

Enjoy the outdoors and support local farmers at one of the county's farmer's markets

At daily San Diego farmers markets in neighborhoods throughout the county, you can sample fresh-from-the-farm produce from regional farmers and tasty treats from local artisans.

For more information about farmers markets around San Diego County, visit the San Diego County Farm Bureau website at <http://www.sdfarmbureau.org/farmers-market/>. Days and times are subject to change. Please email us any corrections: editor@navydispatch.com Subject: Farmers Market Correx

Coronado

Coronado Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 2:30pm-6pm
Coronado Ferry Landing, 1201 First St at B Ave, Coronado, CA 92118

Downtown /

Gaslamp Quarter

City Heights Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 9am-1pm
On Wightman St from Fairmount Ave to 43rd St, San Diego, CA 92105

Gaslamp Artisan Market

Saturday & Sunday: 11am-4pm
Fifth Ave from Island Ave to J St. and Island Ave from Fourth Ave to Fifth Ave, San Diego, CA 92101

Little Italy Mercato Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 8am-2pm
501 W Date St from Kettner Blvd

to Front St, San Diego, CA 92101

Tuna Harbor Dockside Market

Saturday: 8am-1pm
598 Harbor Ln - Fish Harbor Pier (near Tuna Harbor), San Diego, CA 92101

Hillcrest / Uptown

Hillcrest Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: 9am-2pm
3960 Normal St from Lincoln Ave to University Ave, San Diego, CA 92103

North Park Thursday Certified Farmers Market

Thursday: 3pm-7:30pm
2900 North Park Way from 30th St to Granada Ave, San Diego, CA 92104

La Jolla

La Jolla Open Aire Market

Sunday: 9am-1pm
7300 Block of Girard Ave at Genter St, La Jolla, CA 92037

Mission Bay and

Beaches

Ocean Beach Certified Farmers Market

Wednesday: 4pm-8pm
4900 Newport Ave from Cable St to Bacon St, San Diego, CA 92107

Pacific Beach Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 8am-12pm
4150 Mission Blvd from Reed St to Pacific Beach Blvd, PB, CA 92109

Pacific Beach Tuesday Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 2pm-7pm
4500 Bayard St. from Garnet Ave to Hornblend St

San Diego, CA 92109

Mission Valley and Old Town

Kearny Mesa Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 10:30am-2:30pm
Service Road from Lightwave Ave to Spectrum Center Blvd, San Diego, CA 92123

South Bay

Chula Vista - Otay Ranch Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 4pm-8pm
2015 Birch Rd. and Eastlake Blvd. Chula Vista, CA 91915

Imperial Beach Certified Farmers Market

Friday: 2pm-7pm (April - Sept.)
Friday: 2pm-6pm (Oct - March)
Imperial Beach Pier Plaza, 10 Evergreen Ave, Imperial Beach, CA 91932

South Bay Certified Farmers Market

Wednesday: 3-7pm
4475 Bonita Rd. Bonita, CA 91902

East County

Borrego Springs Certified Farmers Market

Friday: 7am-Noon (October - April, closed May - September)
Christmas Circle, 700 Palm Canyon Dr and Borrego Springs Rd Borrego Springs, CA 92004

La Mesa Village Certified Farmers Market

Friday: 3pm-7pm
La Mesa Blvd from Palm Ave and

Allison Ave, La Mesa, CA 91942

Santee Certified Farmers Market

Wednesday: 3pm-7pm (March - October)

Wednesday: 2:30pm-6:30pm (November - February)
9600 Carlton Hills Blvd and Mast Blvd, Santee, CA 92071

Santa Ysabel Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: Noon-4pm
21887 Washington St at Hwy 78 and Hwy 79. Santa Ysabel, CA 92070

North Coastal

Carlsbad State Street Certified Farmers Market

Wednesday: 3pm-7pm (March-Oct)
Wednesday: 3pm-6pm (Nov-Feb)
2900 State St from Carlsbad Village Dr to Grand Ave, Carlsbad, CA 92008

Del Mar Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: Noon-4pm
Civic Center, 1050 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, CA 92014

Leucadia Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: 10am-2pm
Paul Ecke Elementary, 185 Union St, Encinitas, CA 92024

Oceanside Certified Farmers Market

Thursday: 9am-1pm
Pier View Way and Coast Hwy 101, Oceanside, CA 92054

Rancho Santa Fe Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: 9:30am-2pm
Del Rayo Village Center. 16079 San Dieguito Rd, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92091

Solana Beach Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: Noon-4pm
444 South Cedros Ave, Solana Beach, CA 92075

North Inland

Escondido Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 2:30-7pm (Oct- May)
Tuesday: 2:30-7pm (June-Sept)
200 East Grand Ave from N Juniper St and S Kalmia St, Escondido, CA 92025

Fallbrook Main Avenue Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 9:30am-2pm
100 S Main Ave from Hawthorne and Fig, Fallbrook, CA 92028

Mira Mesa Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 3pm-7pm (February - October) Opens 2nd Tues in Feb.
Tuesday: 3pm-6pm (Nov-Dec, closed in January)
Mira Mesa High School, 10510

Reagan Rd. San Diego, CA 92126

North San Diego (Sikes Adobe) Certified Farmers Market

Sunday: 10:30am-3:30pm
Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead, 12655 Sunset Dr, Escondido, CA 92025

Poway Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 8am-1pm
14134 Midland Rd at Temple St Poway, CA 92064

Rancho Bernardo Certified Farmers Market & Specialties

Friday: 9am-1pm
Bernardo Winery, 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte, San Diego, CA 92128

San Marcos Certified Farmers Market

Tuesday: 3pm-7pm
250 North City Dr. (between Campus Dr. and Redel Rd.), San Marcos, CA 92078

Vista Certified Farmers Market

Saturday: 8am-Noon
County Courthouse, 355 South Melrose Dr (south of Hacienda), Vista, CA 92081



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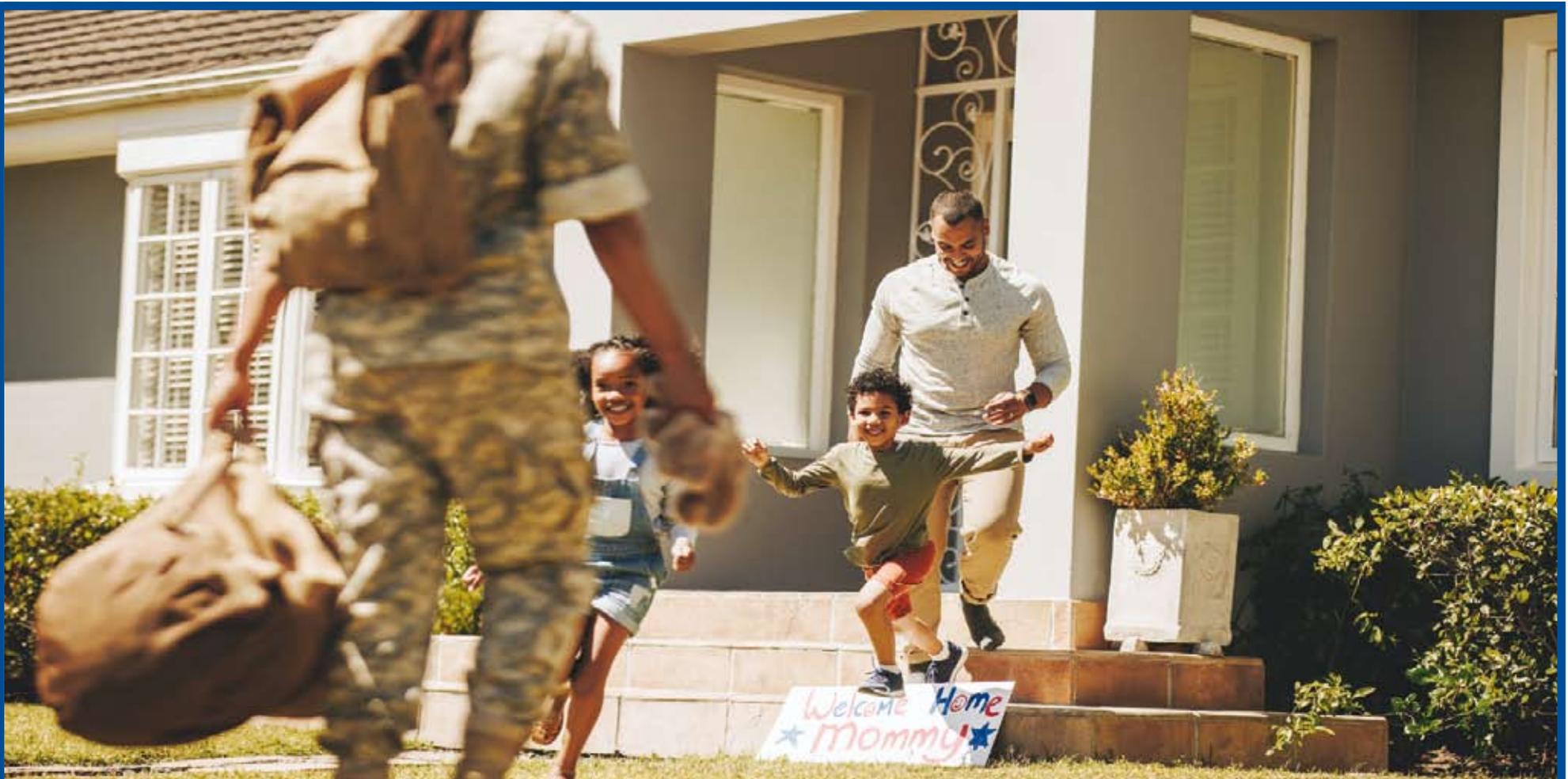
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