

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985
 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

June is Men's Health Month. Men are less likely than women to seek medical care and are more likely to choose unhealthy behavior. Take charge of your health. Schedule your preventive care screenings ASAP. www.Health.mil/menshealth #MensHealthMonth



SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR NO. 1
 JUNE 16-30, 2024



D-DAY JUMP U.S. Air Force special tactics Airmen assigned to the 57th Rescue Squadron jump out of a MC-130J Commando II over Normandy, France, June 2, 2024. Eighty years later, D-Day remains an enduring historic reminder of how the strength of alliance and dedicated resolve to shared ideals proved to be the turning point in the brutal fight against tyranny that spanned three continents and raged on for more than five years. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Jessica Sanchez-Chen

Wade takes the helm at 3rd Fleet

by MC2 Maria Llanos, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet

Vice Adm. John Wade assumed command of U.S. 3rd Fleet (C3F) during a change of command ceremony on Naval Base Point Loma, June 7. He relieved Vice Adm. Michael "Fonz" Boyle, who took command of C3F in June 2022.

Adm. Stephen Koehler, commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and presiding officer of the change of command, opened the ceremony by welcoming Wade and praising Boyle for his leadership during his time as the C3F commander.

"Fonz has embodied professionalism at 3rd Fleet and achieved success across every mission set he encountered," said Koehler. "Most important has been his relentless drive for rehearsal. Deeper than ideas and concepts, he has pushed and driven the actual processes and orders that are required to make things come alive. It is so vital to get to the actual mechanics to win and that's exactly what Fonz has done."

Koehler welcomed Wade saying, "John is handpicked to come here, he's the exact leader that we need to continue to move the ball down the field. I'm confident with John in command that when called upon, 3rd Fleet will continue to have the fighting force to overmatch and beat any adversary."

While in command of the Navy's largest numbered fleet, Boyle employed more than 100 ships and submarines, nearly 400 aircraft and more than 68,000 personnel, and ensured maritime tasking success across exercises and real-world events, by providing and employing combat ready forces in support of national objectives. He trained, certified, and deployed five carrier strike groups, two amphibious ready groups, 14 submarines, and eight independent deploying ships.



Vice Adm. John Wade, right, assumes command of Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet from Vice Adm. Michael Boyle during a ceremony held at the C3F headquarters, June 7, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Maria G. Llanos

DOD WILL OFFER REIMBURSEMENTS FOR BREAST MILK SHIPPING EXPENSES UNDER NEW POLICY

by Joseph Clark, DOD News
 The Defense Department issued a new policy this month to cover costs associated with the shipment of breast milk during permanent change of station moves. Under the new policy, which was published in the Joint Travel Regulations, the department

will reimburse up to \$1,000 of expenses for service members who are breastfeeding children up to 12 months old.

Christopher Woods, the policy branch chief for the Defense Travel Management Office, said the new allowance is aimed at covering common costs that military families with young children previously paid out of pocket.

Oftentimes, service members and their families travel separately during station-to-station moves to set up households or meet mission requirements, such as training, while en route to their duty stations, Woods said.

During those periods, breastfeeding parents may be separated from their children.

"This allowance allows the breastfeeding service member to ship that milk back to the previous, permanent duty station where the dependents still are," Woods said.

Even when not separated during moves, military families often pay a hefty price to appropriately pack and store breast milk for long car rides or international flights.

"The fact is that this milk must be stored in a cold environment, and service members are having to purchase things like ice and dry ice in order to keep the milk frozen or cool," Woods said, adding that those costs can quickly add up.

The allowance covers a range see **Policy, page 2**



A mother and her newborn daughter snuggle following an evaluation of the infant, July 18, 2023, at Naval Hospital Okinawa, Japan. U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Master Sgt. Beth Holliker

Atlas V Starliner launches astronauts for the first time from Space Force installation

By Airman 1st Class Collin Wesson, Space Launch Delta 45

CAPE CANAVERAL SPACE FORCE STATION, Fla. - For the first time since 1968, astronauts were launched from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, the first time ever from a Space Force installation, June 5. The Atlas V Starliner Crew Flight Test mission launched astronauts Barry Wilmore and Sunita Williams from Space Launch Complex - 41 at CCSFS. "The unwavering support from members of Space Launch Delta 45 was instrumental in the success of the CFT launch," said Brig. Gen. Kristen Panzenhagen, SLD 45 commander and Assured Access to Space program executive officer. "Their dedication and expertise ensured a flawless execution, setting the stage for future triumphs." SLD 45 is projected to launch approximately 107 times this year.

General officer announcement: Watson

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced June 6 that Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Benjamin T. Watson for appointment to the grade of lieutenant general, with assignment as commanding general, Training and Education Command, Quantico, Virginia. Watson is currently serving as the commanding general, 1st Marine Division, San Diego.

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2 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers on the move, at sea

USS *Mason* enters Mediterranean Sea after 7 months in the Red Sea

MEDITERRANEAN SEA - Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Mason* (DDG 87) transited the Suez Canal and entered the Mediterranean Sea, June 7.

Mason entered the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations on Nov. 4, 2023, for a routine deployment as part of the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* Carrier Strike Group. While operating in the Red Sea, *Mason* supported maritime security and stability in the Middle East, providing assurance to maritime traffic by deterring threats to the international rules based order and freedom of navigation.



USS *Mason*. File photo

"*Mason* and the crew demonstrated a remarkable level of operational support in the Red Sea over the past 7 months and I am extremely proud of all their accomplishments," said Cmdr. Justin B. Smith, commanding officer of *Mason*. "I am eager for the next chapter of 6th Fleet operations as we continue to demonstrate our proficiency and mission support."

Mason is deployed as a part of the *Eisenhower* strike group. IKECSG is operating in the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operations to deepen strategic relationships with allies and partners, and to support maritime security and stability.

The strike group is commanded by CSG-2 and comprised of flagship *Dwight D. Eisenhower*, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 3 with its nine squadrons, USS *Philippine Sea* (CG 58), and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 22 with its guided missile destroyers.

For more than 80 years, U.S. Naval Forces Europe-U.S. Naval Forces Africa has forged strategic relationships with our Allies and partners, leveraging a foundation of shared values to preserve security and stability.

Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command and U.S. Africa Command areas of responsibility. U.S. 6th Fleet is permanently assigned to NAVEUR-NAVAF, and employs maritime forces through the full spectrum of joint and naval operations.

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USS *Paul Ignatius* arrives in Limassol, Cyprus

by Lt.j.-g. Carolyn Batista, USS *Paul Ignatius* PAO

USS *Paul Ignatius* (DDG 117) guided-missile destroyer arrived in Limassol, Cyprus on June 9 for a scheduled port visit. As part of its forward-deployed presence in the region, *Paul Ignatius* has been operating in the Mediterranean for several months, conducting various exercises and training operations with other naval vessels.

The crew of *Paul Ignatius* is thrilled to be in Cyprus and is looking forward to exploring the beautiful city and island. "We're all excited to be here in Limasso," said Ensign Alfred Lin, a Sailor aboard the ship. "We've heard great things about the city and are looking forward to trying some of the local cuisine and enjoying the various activities available."

Commanding Officer Cmdr. Corry Lougee expressed his excitement about the port visit. "We're thrilled to be in Limassol and the crew is looking forward to exploring the city," he said. "We've planned a range of activities, including visits to local landmarks, cultural events, and recreational activities. Our sailors are excited to experience the rich history and culture of Cyprus and we're confident that they will have a great time"

During its port visit, the crew of *Paul Ignatius* will have the opportunity to take part in various cultural and recreational activities, including visiting local landmarks such as the Limassol Castle, the Folklore Museum, and the Archeological Museum.

They will also have the chance to enjoy water sports and activities at the beach, and take part in cultural events and festivals that showcase the rich history and heritage of Cyprus.

The ship's arrival in Limassol marks the first time that *Paul Ignatius* has visited the port city. The port visit is expected to last several days, during which time the crew will have the opportunity to relax and enjoy each other's company.

USS *Paul Ignatius*, named in honor of Paul Ignatius, a distinguished public servant and World War II Navy veteran who served as the 59th Secretary of the Navy, is equipped with advanced technology and weaponry, enabling it to execute a wide array of missions, including anti-air, anti-submarine, and anti-surface warfare operations.

U.S. Navy in Italy apologizes for snafu that barred Chinese nationals from school sports event

STARS AND STRIPES - NAPLES, Italy - A U.S. Navy base in Italy is considering easing access to a recreational park after an approved visit by a local international school was abruptly canceled when students with Chinese citizenship were barred from entry.

Naval Support Activity Naples officials are discussing whether some rules related to the accessing of base facilities, such as operational or residential sites, should uniformly apply to its 93-acre recreation and lodging park, which also hosts community events, said Lt. Cody Milam, a spokesman for NSA Naples.

Those talks include evaluating whether requirements, such as heightened scrutiny of Desig-

nated Third Country Nationals, or DTCN, could be eased at Adm. Robert B. Carney Park "to facilitate more engagements with our local community," said Milam, who added that the safety and security of everyone using the park would remain the top priority.

Carney Park is situated in the crater of an extinct volcano in the town of Pozzuoli, about 14 miles from NSA Naples' administrative site near the Naples International Airport.

The base's response comes after the Chinese students were denied access May 23 as part of a group of 600 children, teachers and parents visiting from the International School of Naples for Sports Day.

Policy

continued from page 1

of expenses associated with transporting breast milk, such as dry ice, commercial shipping and excess baggage fees. Federal law prohibits reimbursement for packaging and container expenses.

Service members seeking reimbursement must obtain authorization included on their PCS orders prior to any expenses being incurred.

The expenses must be claimed on the PCS voucher once the move is complete. All receipts associated with the claimed expenses, regardless of amount, must be submitted along with the claim.

Woods said the policy change aligns with a recent change in federal law, which requires employers to create accommodations for breastfeeding parents.

The policy also reflects Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's priority of strengthening support for DOD personnel and family members under his "Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families" campaign.

Those efforts include key initiatives to improve the lives of service members and their families through access to quality and affordable child care and easing the burdens of relocation for military families, among other things.

"We've made taking care of people one of our major initiatives," Woods said. "This policy change supports two objectives under 'Taking Care of Our Service Members and Families' — making moves easier and supporting families."

He said once the issue of shipping breast milk was raised

by the services, the travel policy office quickly coordinated with stakeholders across DOD to craft a solution.

Woods said. "And we're proud to do this to support families and service members that are undertaking challenging moves."

Recurring moves are a unique part of military life. According to Military OneSource, more than 400,000 service members change duty stations each year.

Woods said the department is constantly looking at ways to improve the experiences of service members and their families through key changes to policy governing PCS moves.

Last year, for example, the department approved a new policy to cover travel expenses associated with transporting pets during PCS moves, such as pet shipping or quarantine fees.

As of January, service members moving within the continental U.S. can be reimbursed up to \$550 for a household pet and up to \$2,000 for moves to or from duty stations outside of the continental U.S.

"The department's travel policy, the Joint Travel Regulations, is always evolving," Woods said. "We're adapting to challenges and different circumstances in order to better support our workforce."

He added that any change that can improve the lives of service members while meeting federal guidelines can be considered.

"We're putting everything on the table," Woods said. "We're looking to make positive changes in all of these areas that benefit our service members."

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Marine Corps command on Okinawa responds to Pride post critics on Facebook

by Jonathan Snyder
Stars and Stripes

Marine Corps Installations Pacific has pushed back at critics of its recent social media post recognizing Pride Month with the headline, "Pride In All Who Serve."

"This #PrideMonth, we recognized the LGBTQ+ #Marines that raised their right hand and earned the title 'Marine,'" the Okinawa-based command wrote June 6 on its official Facebook page. "The business of fighting and winning battles requires diverse and inclusive teams, and the #USMC takes #pride in building strength through #diversity."

The command has oversight and control of Marine bases across the Indo-Pacific.

The post endorsing Pride Month didn't go over well in some of the 63 comments and 108 emojis attached to it as of Friday afternoon in Japan.

"The USMC does not take pride in a sexual agenda that continues to be shoved down our throats," Eduardo Flores wrote June 7. "Servicemembers do not wish to continue being associated with a sexual movement that has nothing

to do with the military and what we do."

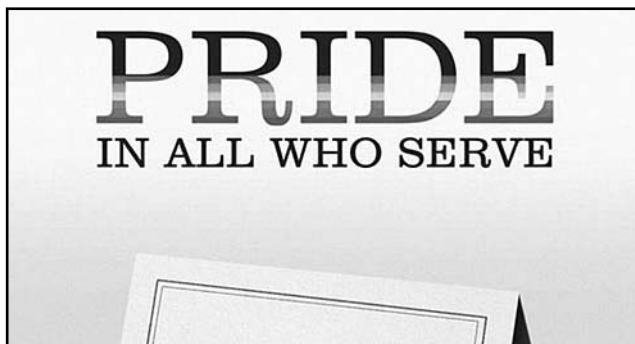
The command posted a response to Flores starting with, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," before citing the Corps' regulation addressing policies and procedures regarding sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying and other activities.

"All Marines and Sailors will treat one another with dignity, care, and concern," the command wrote, quoting from the regulation.

It then cited the regulation on prohibited discrimination: "Any conduct whereby a Service member knowingly, recklessly, or intentionally and with a nexus to military service discriminates, including disparate treatment, of an individual or group on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), gender identity, or sexual orientation that is not otherwise authorized by law or regulation and detracts from military readiness."

Minutes later, the command wrote and pinned another comment that further addressed the criticism.

"We understand that this is an issue that many people feel



Marine Corps Installations Pacific has pushed back at critics of a recent social media post recognizing Pride Month. Courtesy of U.S. Marine Corps

strongly about, and we appreciate you sharing your perspective. However, supporting Pride aligns with the Marine Corps' values of honor, courage, and commitment," the command wrote. "It takes courage to stand up for what is right and to support all members of the military community."

Flores didn't immediately respond June 7 to a Facebook message seeking comment. His post drew a series of other responses, including one from Heather Raquel, who wrote: "(S)peak for yourself. Being supportive of all of the Marines to my left and right IS important.... So please don't attempt to speak for us all."

Another commenter said Flores is free to speak his opinion — a point agreed upon by a command spokeswoman.

"Marine Corps Installations Pacific acknowledges and supports everyone's right to freedom of speech," 2nd Lt. Kelsey Enlow told Stars and Stripes by email Friday. "MCIPAC finds strength in diversity and inclusivity."

Other commenters took a neutral or positive view of Pride Month.

"I'm living for these comments," Haili Shimko wrote. "Happy pride to all my brothers and sisters in arms!"



FINAL PATROL U.S. Marines with 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division and service members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines conduct the final exercise for Archipelagic Coastal Defense Continuum in Barira, Philippines, May 28, 2024. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Shaina Jupiter



TORCH & Armed with oxyacetylene torches and a CLAW claw excavator June 5, 2024, at Sparrows Point, Md., Unified Command salvage workers carve up a section of steel truss removed from the Fort McHenry Federal Channel near Francis Scott Key Bridge



Army

- Soldier injured in Gaza pier mission transported to Army hospital
- Rangers led the way in the D-Day landings 80 years ago
- Report recommends NATO relocations, reactivation of U.S. 7th Army in Germany
- How the 16th Infantry Regiment's heroism helped bring victory on D-Day

Navy

- Navy focuses on rapidly changing battle technology, Franchetti says in Bahrain
- Navy officer sentenced in sexual coercion of a minor case
- Allman takes reins as first Navy SEAL commandant at Naval Academy
- Good lord, the head of U.S. 2nd Fleet is a PT stud

Marine Corps

- Marine Corps command on Okinawa responds to Pride post critics on Facebook
- New Marine Corps Information Command fleshing out command and control relationships

Air Force

- High levels of PFAS reported at reservoir near Air Force base in Japan
- U.S. Air Force says it's on verge of rapid electronic warfare updates
- Okinawa mayor recognizes U.S. Airman who saved severely injured motorcyclist's life
- 6 months after fatal V-22 crash, an Air Force Osprey squadron in Japan prepares to fly again

Space Force

- Space Force telescope proposal on Hawaii volcano meets Maui opposition
- Lawmakers chip away at controversial plan to transfer Air National Guard units to Space Force

Coast Guard

- Japan, U.S., South Korean coast guards hold 1st joint drill off Japan's coast as China concerns rise

National Guard

- 'We failed': How an F-16 flight on 9/11 shaped National Guard's No. 2

Pay & Benefits

- What troops need to know about home and renters insurance in 2024
- Va. House speaker reconvening lawmakers on military tuition program

Your Military

- Battling bureaucracy after burn pits: Why are civilian contractors left behind?
- Outgoing Joint Region Marianas commander to lead new Guam-based task force
- First test of space-based hypersonic tracking sensors 'within a week,' MDA director says
- Bravo Fire burns in Coconino County on Camp Navajo, a military training site

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UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

Welcome to San Diego
Thursday, June 20, 9-11 a.m.

This course is designed to inform service members and families about the wide range of resources and activities available in metro San Diego. It is especially useful for individuals who consider themselves "new" to the area or want a "refresh" regarding what San Diego has to offer.

Location: Naval Base San Diego FFSC, Bldg. 259, 3005 Corbina Alley, San Diego, CA 92136, (619) 556-7404

Resume Writing
Tuesday, June 25 | 9-11 a.m.

Resume writing offers a broad overview of the purpose and value in resumes and cover letters. Schedule a 1:1 for additional support or development for your resume and cover letter. Individual consultations available. Location: FFSC Village at Serra Mesa Branch, 3141 Afton Road, San Diego, CA 92123, (858) 505-1369

Saving & Investing 101
Tuesday, June 25, 9-10 a.m.

Develop knowledge and skills that will enable you to achieve your financial goals through saving and investing. You will learn the characteristics of the different saving and investment vehicles - such as Retirement Accounts, Money Market Accounts and Stocks. Location: Naval Base Coronado FFSC, Bldg. 318, 318 Saufley Road, San Diego, CA 92135, (619) 545-6071

Navy Spouse 101
Tuesday, June 25, 10 am - 12 p.m.

Learn the basics of Navy life and how to thrive as a military spouse. Location: FFSC Gateway Village Branch, 3207 Rosecrans Place, San Diego, CA 92110, (619) 222-5548

Family Readiness Group Advanced Training
Tuesday, June 25, 9-11 a.m.

Explore the topics discussed in FRG Basic in more depth, hear from guest speakers, learn about additional community resources and network with your fellow FRG's. Location: Naval Base San Diego FFSC, Bldg. 263, 3005 Corbina Alley, San Diego, CA 92136, (619) 556-7404

Command Sponsor Training
Tuesday, June 25, 9-10:30 a.m.

This class is designed to help you be an effective Command Sponsor. We will review the roles and responsibilities of the Sponsor and discuss each stage of the program. We will also provide you with resources and area-specific information to assist you with your incoming personnel. Location: Naval Base San Diego FFSC, Bldg. 263, San Diego, CA 92136, (619) 556-7404

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NAVAL BASE VENTURA COUNTY SAILOR FIRST TO EARN NAVY SECURITY FORCE SPECIALIST INSIGNIA

by Lt.j.g. Drew Verbis
Naval Base Ventura County

PORT HEUNEME – Master-at-Arms 1st Class Blas Diaz, from Hialeah, Fla, assigned to Naval Base Ventura County, force protection team, is the command's first enlisted Sailor to earn the Navy Security Force (NSF) Senior Specialist insignia recently.

"I'm honored to be the first at NBVC, but that is not what's important," said Diaz. "My goal is to grow the program and get everyone in my community qualified. Hopefully I can influence, motivate, or inspire my peers or junior Sailors to be the next one."

The NSF insignia program officially began in April 2022 with the release of NAVADMIN 094/22. The program allows active duty and reserve Sailors in the Navy Security Force community to earn a qualification that indicates their mastery of security force knowledge. In addition to the Senior Specialist insignia earned by Diaz, Sailors in the Navy Security Force

community can also earn the Specialist, Master Specialist, and Officer insignia depending on their pay grade.

"U.S. Fleet Forces Command authorized this qualification and insignia to provide advanced knowledge in the Master-at-Arms rating," said Senior Chief Master-at-Arms Jessica Gallegos, leading chief petty officer, NBVC. "The program is in its infancy and will continue to add critical professional development while evolving to meet challenges of the mission requirements."

Master-at-Arms have limited opportunities to gain warfare devices and this breast insignia gives MAs an opportunity to gain advanced knowledge in their rating and in 10 different mission areas. The program is composed of four different levels designated by rank and knowledge. NSF Specialist for E4 and below, senior specialists for E5 and E6 and master specialist for Chief Petty Officers and above as well as NSF-O for Officers.

Army expands military spouse licensing, fellowship programs

WASHINGTON - The Army recently expanded the reimbursement policy and fellowship program for military spouses to promote career continuity, financial stability, professional fulfillment, talent retention and support overall military readiness.

The Army enhanced the reimbursement program for business costs and relicensing fees due to relocation for spouses and increased awareness of its paid fellowship program for the Army spouses.

"The Army is doing everything possible to remove barriers impeding employment for military families," said Steve Yearwood, program analyst with the Army's Directorate of Prevention, Resilience and Readiness. "By providing opportunities for career development, portable career pathways through licensure recognition among states and increased awareness of programs supporting military families, these initiatives can improve unemployment rates among military spouses and their overall economic stability and well-being."

The new directive permits reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for business-related expenses, in addition to the already authorized \$1,000 for relicensing fees resulting from a relocation.

https://www.army.mil/article/277104/army_expands_military_spouse_licensing_fellowship_programs



Master-at-Arms 1st Class Blas Diaz is Naval Base Ventura County's first enlisted Sailor to earn the Navy Security Force (NSF) Senior Specialist insignia. U.S. Navy photo by Master-at-Arms 1st Class Jon Cason

"The hardest part of getting the qualification was studying the broad range of topics," said Diaz. "From nuclear weapon security to police harbor patrol, there are so many different aspects of the MA rate to learn."

Gallegos said Diaz had to meet extensive requirements defined in the NSF Qualification Program, to include management of personnel, programs, equipment, and more.

"We're proud of Diaz," said Gallegos. "He completed pay-

grade-specific prerequisites, passed a written test, and finally, a challenging oral review board."

Upon completion of the program, Sailors receive a letter of designation and an insignia pin to be worn on their uniform, visually representing the Sailor's level of professional expertise.

"I advise my peers to dedicate time to study," said Diaz. "The qualification is not meant to be easy; it's meant to make you uncomfortable, to challenge your professional knowledge."

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Local Military

I MEF summer campaign ramps up Pacific presence

I MEF courtesy sory

CAMP PENDLETON – As the summer approaches, I Marine Expeditionary Force executed a series of exercises throughout Southeast Asia that bolster I MEF's capabilities and affirm the Marine Corps' dedication to the Indo-Pacific.

The exercises provided invaluable opportunities for the force to engage with counterparts from allied and partner nations to enhance interoperability and ensure seamless cooperation in future contingencies.

From engineering projects and medical outreach in remote communities, to high-intensity maritime warfare simulations and amphibious assaults, the varied nature of these exercises highlighted the versatility and adaptability of the world's largest expeditionary force.

The campaign kicked off with Exercise Balikatan in the Philippines in April to May, where more than 2,500 I MEF Marines trained shoulder-to-shoulder with members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the joint force. From field training exercises to humanitarian assistance, Exercise Balikatan increased proficiency in maritime security and combined arms operations and solidified an enduring friendship between two nations.

The completion of Exercise Balikatan marked the com-



U.S. Marine Corps amphibious combat vehicles attached to 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct open water transit at during the recent Exercise Balikatan 24 in Naval Detachment Oyster Bay, Palawan, Philippines. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Peyton Kahle

mencement of Archipelagic Coastal Defense Continuum where the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. Marine Corps conducted bilateral training and subject matter exchanges from May 12 to June 7 throughout Northern Luzon, Palawan and Mindanao to support the modernization efforts of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Following ACDC, I MEF will continue to hold the line, strategically deploying Marines from the Philippines to Palau and Guam to the Hawaiian Islands in support of exercises Valiant Shield, Marine Aviation Support Activity, Rim of the Pacific and Task Force Koa Moana.

Through these summer exercises, I MEF aims to strengthen existing alliances and build new partnerships through coopera-

tion and mutual understanding to ensure a collective approach to regional security challenges in a complex and dynamic environment. The exercises will highlight I MEF's agility and aim to foster unity with allies, thereby elevating warfighting readiness, deterrence, reassurance and the future of I MEF's posture in the Indo-Pacific.

I MEF's forward presence is a testament to its regional partnerships and pivotal role in advancing the Marine Corps' strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific. By demonstrating a commitment to peace, stability and prosperity in the region, I MEF not only enhances its operational readiness but also contributes to a broader effort to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific, where power is respected and disputes are resolved peacefully.



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CAPTAIN OF NAVY AMPHIBIOUS TRANSPORT DOCK SHIP RELIEVED OF COMMAND

by Gary Warner
Stars and Stripes

Navy Capt. Michel Brandt has been relieved of command of USS *Somerset*, an amphibious transport dock ship, the service announced June 7.

Brandt was fired "due to a lack of confidence in her ability to lead the crew" by Rear Adm. Christopher Stone, commander of the Expeditionary Strike Group 7, according to the Navy statement. She was relieved June 6.

A "lack of confidence" is often cited by the military when removing a commander. Brandt has commanded the ship since July 2023, according to the Navy.

Capt. Tate Robinson was assigned to temporarily replace Brandt as commanding officer of *Somerset* until a permanent commander is selected for the ship. Robinson is currently commodore of Amphibious Squadron 5 at Naval Base San Diego, the Navy said.

Brandt has been assigned to administrative duties with the Pacific fleet's Naval Surface Force commander. USS *Somerset*'s homeport is listed as Naval Base San Diego. *Somerset*

has been operating in the Indo-Pacific region and took part in the Balikatan exercises in the Philippines in May, according to Lt. Grace Kording, public affairs officer with the Naval Surface Force at Naval Base San Diego.

The Navy offered no additional details about firing Brandt.

"Navy commanding offi-

cers are held to high standards of personal and professional conduct," the Navy said in its statement. "They are expected to uphold the highest standards of responsibility, reliability and leadership, and the Navy holds them accountable when they fall short of those standards."

Brandt is a native of Oak Grove, Ky., according to her

Navy profile. She graduated from Vanderbilt University in 1998 and was commissioned through the Navy ROTC program.

Among her assignments, Brandt has served on littoral combat ships USS *Freedom* and USS *Fort Worth* and as reactor officer aboard aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*.

NBVC welcomes Brown as its new commanding officer

SIMI VALLEY, Calif. – Capt. Daniel W. Brown relieved Capt. Robert "Barr" Kimmach III as the commanding officer of Naval Base Ventura County during a change of command ceremony held at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library here June 7.

"Changes of command are bittersweet," said the presiding officer, Rear Adm. Brad Rosen, Commander, Navy Region Southwest. "On one hand they recognize a job well done and offer a farewell to a valued leader and friend. On the other hand, it's a time to look forward to new ideas and direction under the guidance of a new commanding officer."

Strategically located along the California coastline approximately 55 miles north of Los Angeles, NBVC enhances the nation's combat readiness, supporting DoD's National Defense Strategy through military installation management that cares for our people (service members and families), trains warfighters, and deploys warfighters.

"NBVC is a major shore facility and until you sit in the commanding officer's seat - it's almost impossible to describe the hundreds of diverse challenges, issues, and accomplishments that Barr has managed during his tour," said Rosen.

Kimmach served as commanding officer from July 2021 to June 2024. Brown takes command of NBVC following an assignment as an assistant chief of staff at U.S. 3rd Fleet. "For those who know me, I'm a man of few words, so rest assured, we'll all be eating cake in a few minutes," Brown said candidly.



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CAMP PENDLETON (June 10, 2024) Marine Corps Lt. Col. Daniel J. Burton, right, the incoming commanding officer of Security and Emergency Services Battalion, receives the colors from Col. Jonathan H. Vaughn, the outgoing commanding officer of SES Bn., during the SES Bn. change of command. SES Bn. aims to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to, and support recovery from the effects of all hazards aboard MCB Camp Pendleton and surrounding communities to ensure a secure training environment for the fleet marine force and their families. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Mhecaela J. Watts



ASTORIA, Ore. (June 4, 2024) Independence-variant littoral combat ships USS *Montgomery* (LCS 8), front, and USS *Augusta* (LCS 34) are in port here during Portland Rose Festival Fleet Week. Fleet Week provides the public an opportunity to tour a U.S. Navy ship and gain a better understanding of how sea services support national defense and freedom of the seas. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Michael Virtue

NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER SAN DIEGO (June 6, 2024) NMCS team members participated in a routine patient decontamination exercise June 6. Decontamination refers to the processes used to remove contaminants such as micro-organisms or hazardous materials in case of a chemical, biological, or radiological event. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Celia Martin



City, corps celebrates San Clemente beach expansion

by Areca Wilson

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District
SAN CLEMENTE – The City of San Clemente hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reopening of part of its expanded beach May 31 in San Clemente.

The event occurred following the completion of Phase One of the San Clemente Beach Nourishment project, which aims to reduce coastal storm damage along the city's shoreline.



Celebration of Phase One of the San Clemente Beach Nourishment project. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo by Areca T. Wilson

“As a lifelong southern Californian, I know that beaches are the foundation of the community,” said U.S. Representative Mike Levin, representing California’s 49th Congressional District. “They are critical for recreation, tourism (and) infrastructure in our local economy . . . but over the years, our beaches have lost massive amount of sand due to the loss of natural sources, climate change, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and severe weather events.”

The project includes the construction of a 50-foot-wide beach fill along a 3,412-foot-long stretch of shoreline, using 251,000 cubic yards of compatible sediment. Over 50 years of federal participation, re-nourishment will occur every six years, on average, for eight additional nourishments.

“I want to begin by recognizing the great team of professionals from the Los Angeles District, Manson Construction, San Clemente and our federal and state partners – all of them are critical for getting us to where we are today. We could not have made it here without everyone in each of these individual teams rowing together in unison,” said Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Los Angeles District. “It’s been a tough road, and through perseverance, some long days and late nights, and, most importantly, incredibly solid teamwork across the board, we were able to deliver sand to this beautiful beach ahead of Memorial Day, and, most importantly, reduce storm-damage risk for the City of San Clemente.”

The opening of the newly expanded beach portion was not only celebrated by government leaders, it was a welcomed improvement for the community, according to one beachgoer, Christine Howard, who expressed her appreciation for the upgrade.

Howard said she comes to the beach often to meditate, walk the beach trail and enjoy some quiet time.

“I think it’s really important for everything they said and more,” she said. “I realize that it affects not just the local economy; it makes an impact on future erosion and the ecosystem, too, so I wholeheartedly support it. I’m grateful to be in San Clemente, and I just so love how everyone worked together. I was really impressed how it was local all the way to federal and how they made it happen.”

Carrier Strike Group 1 holds change of command

SAN DIEGO – Rear Adm. Michael Wosje relieved Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello as Commander, Carrier Strike Group 1 (CSG-1), during a change of command ceremony aboard Naval Air Station North Island, June 6.

Sardiello is a 1990 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and holds post-graduate degrees in Computer Science and National Security and Strategic Studies. He is a Navy Test Pilot School graduate of Class 115 and a 2021 MIT Seminar XXI Fellow.

Landing on aircraft carriers for the past 29 years, his operational assignments include flying in the S-3B Viking as a junior officer embarked aboard USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68) and department head on USS *Constellation* (CV 64). Transitioning to the P-3C Orion, he served as the 73rd commanding officer of Patrol Squadron Four Six (VP 46), the “Grey Knights”. He completed Forward Deployed Naval Force tours homeported in Japan and Italy, as executive officer aboard USS *George Washington* (CVN 73), commanding officer of USS *Mount Whitney* (LCC 20) respectively. He then served as the 15th commanding officer of USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71).

He logged over 2,800 flight hours and over 500 carrier arrested landings. His combat highlights include scoring the first, and only strike, by an S-3B Viking with an air to ground missile on March 26, 2003. Sardiello assumed command of CSG-1 in May 2023.

“The Carrier Strike Group is an essential element of our nation’s credible combat capability to guarantee peace around the world and our American way of life. Just two years ago marked 100 years of the U.S. Aircraft Carrier,” said Sardiello. “Our young men and women who serve in CSG-1 and the Navy leave me awestruck because of their unmatched professionalism and dedication to service.”

During his tenure, Sardiello led CSG-1, which encompasses 7,500 Sailors across nine afloat units and aviation squadrons. Throughout this tour, including deployment to the U.S. Seventh Fleet in support of maintaining security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region, CSG-1 completed multiple integrated exercises with the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) and Republic of Korea Navy along with conducting overseas port visits with partner and allied nations in the region. Sardiello ensured the strike group’s ability to protect a free and open Indo-Pacific through continued presence and high-end training during multiple exercises and operations.

“It is without a doubt that commanding Carrier Strike Group 1 is one of my most rewarding tours while serving over three decades in the United States Navy,” said Sardiello.

During the ceremony, Wosje emphasized his enthusiasm in taking command of CSG-1. “My family and I are delighted to join the Carrier Strike Group 1 team and look forward to all we will accomplish together,” said Wosje. “It is an honor and a privilege to serve with you.”

A career Naval Aviator, Wosje has 29 years of aviation experience. His operational assignments include the Blue Diamonds of Strike Fighter Squadron 146 where he completed two deployments aboard USS *Nimitz* and USS *John C. Stennis* in support of Operation Southern Watch; the Stingers of VFA-113 aboard USS *Ronald Reagan*; command of the Valions of VFA-15 aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, to name a few.

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

This week, I turned 58 on a non-descript Tuesday during a busy work week while the rest of my family was away. Just me and the dog, planning a night on the couch, eating leftover salad and watching reality TV.

But I didn't mind. On the contrary, I quite enjoyed myself.

Of course, my husband Francis called to deliver his annual joke: "Honey, you might be fifty-eight, but you're built like you're fifty-seven." I got a chuckle out of his clumsy humor like I always do.

I wasn't always so nonchalant about my birthdays. In fact, ten years ago, on my 48th birthday, I had a midlife crisis.

That morning, while making breakfast in our base house at Naval Station Newport, I had my very first hot flash. The uncanny coincidence of the occurrence made it seem psychosomatic. However, I couldn't deny the unsettling reality of the sweat mustache that had formed while I was eating scrambled eggs. I tried to pass the event off as a fluke, but while going about my day, I started thinking, "You know, I'm getting kind of old. Really old."

I'd always been content with the progression of my life as a Navy

Life, hot flashing before my eyes

wife and mother of three; generally gratified to have found a calling to serve my military family, rather than pursuing my legal career.

But suddenly, life passed before my eyes as if death were imminent. I thought about my education and quickly decided I'd wasted it. I thought about my early work experiences as a young attorney before Navy life, and I summarily concluded my brain had atrophied to the size of a tangerine. I thought about my homemaking skills, swiftly determining I was a mediocre cook and reluctant cleaner at best.

After decades of gleaning my own identity from the contentment of my family members, it was suddenly all about me.

There was something about this particular birthday that had me wallowing in panicked self-loathing. Perhaps it was the hair that seemed to be clinging damply to the back of my perspiring neck. Or maybe it was the lack of bladder control. Did I detect a throbbing bunion? Was I sprouting age spots?

As the day progressed, I relentlessly berated, harangued, nit-picked, criticized, and condemned myself until I could feel my spider veins bulge.

"Why do I snap at the kids so much? Why can't I seem to cook a decent meal without turning meat into shoe leather? Why do I watch so much TV at night? Why couldn't I ever get rid of this paunch? Why didn't I moisturize when I was younger? Why do I always forget to bring my coupons to the commis-

sary? Why? Why? Why?!"

By the time Francis came home from work, I was slumped in a kitchen chair, staring into a cup of coffee gone cold.

I'd hit rock bottom. "Happy birthday, Honey!" he offered with a grin. I looked up weakly, and said, "I think I'm having some kind of mid-life crisis ... can you listen to me for a sec?" For the next twenty minutes, Francis sat calmly in his cammies at our kitchen table, permitting me to tell him all about the hot flash and the resulting epiphany revealing the harsh truth: I'd never really amounted to much and it was too late to do anything about it.

At the risk of sounding sexist, I find that men have a unique ability to simplify complex emotional situations that women tend to over-complicate. Or maybe they just don't get it. Either way, it can be helpful.

Francis waited until the end of my rant, then simply got up and poured us each a glass of wine. I wondered whether he'd heard anything I'd just said. Then, holding his glass up to toast mine, he delivered the birthday joke that would not only snap me out of my self-centered spiral, it would also become his annual tradition: "Honey, you might've turned forty-eight today, but you're built like you're forty-seven!"

I couldn't help but laugh, and in that instant, my hot flash turned into a flash flood of gratitude for our military life, the simplicity of love, and the boundless support of my family.

Sneak peek at the 2024 San Diego County Fair

AutoMatters™ & More
by Jan Wagner



Excitement is in the air as we close in on the June 12th opening day of the 2024 San Diego County Fair.

The Fair is the largest annual event in the county, with an attendance of nearly one million. Its origin dates all the way back to 1880, when "a group of San Diegans organized an agricultural fair to bring county farmers together to share ideas, see who had the best citrus fruit, who baked the best pie, and who had the fastest horse." These days it is still an agricultural fair, but so much more.

The theme of this year's Fair is LET'S GO RETRO — a blast from the past celebrating the fashion, music, pop culture, styles and fun of the '50s, '60s, '70s (with a John Travolta, Saturday Night Fever vibe), '80s and '90s.

Recently, the press was invited to the Del Mar Fairgrounds to experience a preview taste (quite literally!) of what will be at the San Diego County Fair. There were Fair food and beverages, performances by entertainers, previews of multicultural festivals, farm animals, exhibits and displays, and more.

Be sure to bring your appetite (and best put your diet on hold) because, once again, this year's Fair

food will be too delicious to resist. Chicken Charlie will tempt you (as he did us!) with such yummy treats as a hot dog on a stick that is wrapped in funnel cake, drenched in maple syrup and sprinkled with powdered sugar. That is as sweet as it sounds, and just as messy! Or, for something a little less sugar-coated, check out offerings at the Farmer in the Dell Coastal Farm Kitchen + Bar. Believe it or not, until this day I had never eaten SPAM! Not any more, thanks to the SPAM STAND — and I liked it.

Try the Mexican Street Corn Pizza at Pizza and Subs, and for dessert Mom's Bakeshop has delicious cookies. Referring back to my John Travolta reference and the '70's, you'll see numerous disco balls hanging at the Rooftop Speakeasy (ages 21 and over). If you really cannot decide what you want to eat, head on over to the Albertson's/Vons/Pavilions grocery store.

Be on the lookout and have your camera ready to capture the walking Slinky. Speaking of photography, check out the wide range of over 40 photography events and workshops at: <https://www.sdfair.com/events/2024/photography-exhibit>

To those of you who entered an original photo in the international juried Exhibition of Photography competition (there was even a class for cell phone photos), good luck! We'll be able to learn the results of the judging soon.

Scheduled events throughout the Fair include: Maritime Model Ship Building, the Great American Petting Farm, Dig for Treasure, Wood Carving and Violin Making demonstrations, Corn Shucking, Wine

Tasting, Nerveless Nocks thrill show, Motu Nehenehe Polynesian Dancers, to name a few.

Also, Fourth of July Fireworks Spectacular, Gems & Minerals Docent Tour, That '70s Bird Show, A Hundred Drums, The Farm, Native American Pow Wow, Plant a Pumpkin Seed, Paul Ecke Jr. Garden Show. For a comprehensive list of the scheduled events, visit: <https://www.sdfair.com/events>.

As always, there will be exhilarating rides and carnival games in the Fun Zone and the Kids' Zone.

Enjoy live music entertainment on several stages throughout the Fair; ticketed performances in the Toyota Summer Concert Series on the Grandstand Stage — featuring top artists, including Smokey Robinson, Ludacris and many more; and Saturdays at the Sound — featuring a different theatrical, glow-in-the-dark musical experience every Saturday night: <https://www.sdfair.com/p/what-to-do/saturdays-at-the-sound>.

The 20-day Fair season will run June 12 through July 7, with closures on Mondays and Tuesdays, at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. See special offers and purchase your tickets for admission, parking, rides, games and concerts in advance at: <https://www.sdfair.com/p/tickets>. For more information, visit <https://www.sdfair.com>.

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Veterans News

VA nurses protest in DC over chronic job vacancies at hospitals and clinics

by Linda F. Hersey
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Shouting "VA cuts have got to go," dozens of nurses marched outside the Department of Veterans Affairs headquarters June 6 to protest chronic job shortages at veterans hospitals and clinics across the United States.

Citing 66,000 job vacancies nationwide at VA health care facilities - including 13,000 for registered nurses - the VA nurses rallied for two hours at the agency's central offices in Washington. The nurses claim the VA is intentionally not filling positions to keep costs down.

The protesters, who arrived aboard a private bus, wore red T-shirts and said they represented VA facilities from across the U.S., including California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois and New York.

"We do not have enough nurses to do the job, and the VA is not hiring," said Tom Bewick, an intensive care unit nurse at the Albany Stratton VA Medical Center in New York.

Bewick, who has worked for the VA for 20 years, was one of the organizers of the June 6

rally. A former Army nurse from 2004-2010, Bewick said he spent a year on active duty at Fort Sill, Okla., and then served as a reservist in New York. He and other union leaders at the rally claimed the VA is keeping jobs open but will not acknowledge that there is a hiring freeze.

"There is no nationwide hiring freeze on VA nurses," Terrence Hayes, the VA press secretary, said June 6. "Over the past three years, VA has aggressively hired nurses nationwide - increasing our nursing workforce by 14,000 nurses to a total of 122,000 nurses, the largest nursing workforce in the country and in the history of VA."

Hayes also said the turnover of VA nurses is 3.4 percent, which outperforms the private sector. The American Hospital Association and the American Association of Colleges of Nursing has reported a nationwide shortage of nurses.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects more than 275,000 additional nurses will be needed in the workforce through 2030, as many nurses near retirement age and thousands of others left the workforce during the coronavirus pandemic.



Veterans Affairs nurses from across the country rallied at the Department of Veterans Affairs Washington, D.C., headquarters building June 6 to protest the planned reduction of 10,000 employees from the Veterans Health Administration. Courtesy photo by Patricia Kime/Military.com

In Albany, Bewick said the VA medical center recently posted two jobs to fill vacancies for night-shift nurses that were later taken down without explanation. He said the openings resulted in nurses rotating out of other units to meet the immediate need, which is not in the best interest of patients.

The rally in Washington was organized by the National Nurses Organizing Committee of National Nurses United, a national labor union with 225,000 members. Union members said they

want to raise awareness about critical shortages of health care workers across the VA health system because it is putting patient safety at risk.

The nurse's union pointed to a 2023 inspector general's report that found 92 percent of VA hospitals and clinics were experiencing severe nursing shortages. Members also said they wanted to raise concerns about VA funding going to private health care of veterans since passage of the 2018 MIS-SION Act.

The law enables veterans to obtain non-VA care in their communities when the service is unavailable in a timely manner at a VA hospital or clinic.

Monica Coleman, a nurse from the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in Chicago, said she is noticing an uptick in referrals for veterans to get their health care from the private sector. Coleman works in an office at the health care center that manages referrals to community care providers. She said the referrals most often are due to staffing shortages at VA hospitals and clinics.

"Hospitals are chronically understaffed, while billions of dollars from the VA are going to the private sector," Coleman said. "The VA needs to reinvest in itself, including hiring in critical areas."

Jordan Le Blanc, a nurse in the intensive care unit at Rocky Mountain Regional VA Medical Center in Aurora, Colo., also was among the protesters. She said a shortage of critical care nurses at her hospital means one nurse is assigned to three patients in the intensive care unit with the help of an assistant, when the standard is to have one or two patients. Le Blanc said the VA

determined in December that an additional 57 nurses were needed at the hospital where she works to meet staffing requirements.

"The staffing crisis has forced us to cut the number of ICU beds from 18 to 12, which means the veterans are diverted to other hospitals," she said.

A shortage of nurses at the VA New York Harbor Health Care in New York City resulted recently in two nurses caring for 15 patients on a medical-surgical unit, the union said.

In Tampa, Fla., ICU nurse Justin Wooden said the nursing shortage at James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital has led administrators to pull nurses out of the intensive care unit to work in other areas of the hospital as need arises.

"Too often nurses are being asked to work in units where they lack the specialized knowledge, experience and skills to provide optimal care to that specialized patient population," Wooden said.



Health & Fitness



On June 4, 2024, NMRTC Camp Pendleton and EMF 150 Alpha held a combined frocking ceremony where those recently selected to the rank of 1st Class Petty Officer and 2nd Class Petty Officer were "pinned" with their new rank by CAPT Jenny Burkett, NMRTC Commander, and CAPT Liz Smith, EMF 150 Alpha Commanding Officer, respectively. Congratulations to all our new Petty Officers!!



On the afternoon of Thursday, June 6, several members of the command at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton took the opportunity to participate in the Captain's Cup competition. Directorates were grouped together to provide depth and equal sizing for the teams. A great time was had by all, but someone had to be the winner ... and that was the team comprised of staff from DCSS, DRM & DHB. Thank you to everyone who participated and congratulations to the winners!!

Navy observes June as Deployment Readiness and Resiliency Month

Deployment Readiness

Deployment Readiness includes services provided in the areas of deployment support, ombudsmen coordination, relocation assistance and life skills education. Deployment Readiness has always been and remains the area of highest priority for Navy family support.

Deployment support focuses on:

- practical preparation
- emotional aspects of separation
- supporting children during deployment
- maintaining communication and closeness during deployment and homecoming
- successful reintegration of the Sailor into the family and community

Efforts to better reach remotely located families have included use of information technology to provide virtual family discussion groups and workshops, publication of a monthly electronic newsletter and of Family, Sailor and Command IA Handbooks.

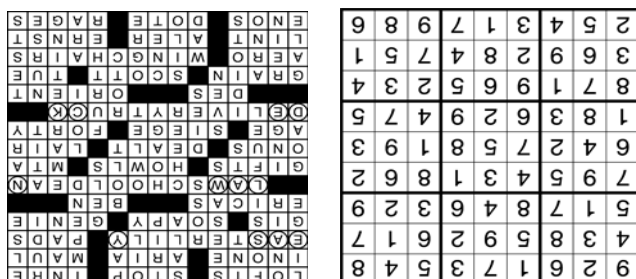
Command Ombudsmen are trained volunteers who serve as a vital two-way communication

link between command leadership and family members. Ombudsmen provide personalized support and guidance to families in adapting to the challenges of a mobile military lifestyle and extended operations necessary to meet the Navy's maritime strategy.

There are currently over 2,200 registered Navy Family Ombudsmen. Fleet and Family Support Centers provide training, consultation, coordination and support to Ombudsmen.

Navy Fleet and Family Support Centers also support the development and sustainment of Family Readiness Groups (FRGs).

These groups enhance preparedness by providing an informal and less structured opportunity for family members to meet on a regular basis for camaraderie, companionship and support. They plan family activities during deployments, mentor new family members and assist families in times of crisis.



NMCSO celebrates Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander Heritage Month (AANHPIHM)! NMRTCSanDiego's diversity team members put together a special celebration May 23 to celebrate. Team members were invited to come out, grab a lei, listen to music, and enjoy some delicious food! Some of the food options included a roasted pig, lumpia, rice and sauces. Thank you, Diversity Team, for hosting this event!



Capt. James Mucciarone, Force Medical Officer of Naval Special Warfare Command, and Cmdr. James Chung, Senior Medical Officer, awarded #NMRTCSanDiego resident physicians for their outstanding work during their time at NSW as instructors for Tactical Combat Casualty Care and Prolonged Casualty Care. #BZ to the following team members: Capt. Jonathan Auten - Flag Letter of Appreciation; Cmdr. Ryan Snow - Flag Letter of Appreciation; Lt. Cmdr. Alexandre Nguyen - Flag Letter of Appreciation (not pictured); Lt. Cmdr. Wooten - Flag Letter of Appreciation (not pictured); Lt. Jocelyn Young - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal; Lt. Sammuel Billingslea - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal; Lt. Erin Snyder - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal #MilitaryMedicine #DHA

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Become a USO Volunteer

Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a soldier with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" troops from deployment, volunteers are vital to the success of the USO's mission. While the duties of a volunteer may vary, the goal is always the same – to improve the quality of life of service members, boost their morale, and serve as the link between service members and the American people.

Ready to apply to be a USO San Diego volunteer?

Visit <https://volunteers.uso.org/>

Once you navigate to the web page, scroll down to and look at the right side of the page to find information about volunteering.

Camp Pendleton USO Programs Include:

USO Transitions: <https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-pathfinder-transition-program>

Want to be better prepared for future success before transitioning from the military? Are you a military spouse looking for new opportunities? The USO Pathfinder® Transition Program extends the USO experience to active duty, Reserve, National Guard and military spouses by offering professional development services throughout the duration of military service as well as in preparation for life post-military.

MilSpouse Connect: Monthly events bringing military spouses together to connect and thrive.

Craft & Coffee: USO Camp Pendleton provides creative outlets for adults and children to create fun, whimsical or serious works of art through a variety of mediums. Signs up happen online and are usually advertised through the USO Camp Pendleton Facebook page.

Command Support: USO is here to support! We often help support command events across Camp Pendleton such as Family days and Morale Days. Commands can request support in a number of different ways, from outdoor games, a kids craft, or even our mobile photo booth. We also can help provide small refreshments. To request support, please email our Center Operations and Programs Manager, Crystal Gates at cgates@uso.org. All requests must be submitted within 30 days and although we try our best, not all requests can be granted.

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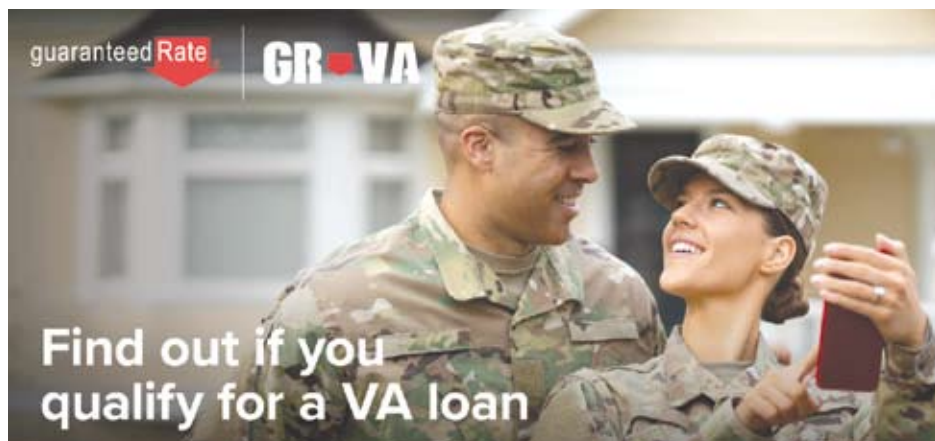
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