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## Navy ships shoot down 'complex' barrage of Houthi missiles and drones in Red Sea, Pentagon says

by Caitlyn Burchett, Stars and Stripes

Navy ships intercepted a Houthi barrage of missiles and drones launched from Yemen at the shipping lanes of the Red Sea, the Pentagon confirmed Sept. 27, while also denying reports that any ships were hit in the attack.

<sup>22</sup>We did see a complex attack launched from the Houthis that ranged from cruise missiles and [unmanned aerial vehicles]," said Sabrina Singh, deputy press secretary for the Defense Department.

The Iran-backed Houthi claimed Sept. 27 to have damaged three U.S. Navy warships in a bombardment of 23 missiles and bomber drones. The Navy destroyers, the Houthis' military spokesperson said in a televised speech, were targeted as they transited the Bab al-Mandeb Strait in the Red Sea. The Bab al-Mandeb Strait connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, between Yemen.

"My understanding is that those were either engaged and shot down or failed," Singh said, referring to the Houthi missiles and drones. No U.S. military ships were struck, and there were no injuries to U.S. service members, she also said.

USS *Abraham Lincoln* and its carrier strike group are in the region. The strike group includes three destroyers: USS *Spruance*, USS *Stockdale*, and USS *O'Kane*. Singh on Sept. 27 declined to say whether the destroyers were the intended targets of the Houthi missiles.

"We did what we had to do to protect our forces, and at the end of the day, no ship was hit -- no damage and no injuries to our personnel," she said.

https://www.stripes.com/theaters/middle\_east/2024-09-27/navy-houthis-red-sea-missiles-drones-15325212.html



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# SIOP microgrid study by NAVFAC EXWC to enhance energy resilience, mission assurance at naval shipyards

by William Couch

WASHINGTON -- Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center (NAV-FAC EXWC) awarded Jacobs Engineering CH2M Hill/Clark Nexsen Energy Partners Joint Venture a \$3.7 million contract for an electrical microgrid study as part of the Navy's Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP) last month.

The study, expected to be completed in October 2025, will assess all four public shipyards and develop proposed courses of action for ensuring up to 14 days of electrical power in the event of a power grid or utility outage. It will include assessing the technical, economic, and environmental feasibility of implementing a microgrid system to enhance energy efficiency, reliability, and resilience within shipvard facilities.

"This study is foundational to

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providing energy resilience at our naval shipyards," said Capt. Luke Greene, SIOP program manager. "Off-grid survivability is critical to maintain the shipvards' operations under adverse conditions and deliver ships and submarines back to the fleet on

The study is part of SIOP's holistic recapitalization effort that integrates all infrastructure and industrial plant equipment investments at the Navy's four public shipyards to meet nuclear fleet maintenance requirements, as well as improve Navy maintenance capabilities by expanding shipyard capacity and optimizing shipyard configuration.

Leveraging the structure and rigor of the Department of Defense's Major Defense Acquisition Program process -- a first for an infrastructure program -- SIOP established infrastructure performance criteria to evaluate potential solutions to facilities challenges at the shipyards. These criteria include the ability to operate independently of the electrical grid for up to

To date, SIOP has completed 30 facilities projects totaling \$867 million, with an additional 40 projects worth a total of \$6 billion under contract. This includes four dry docks under construction. SIOP work continues to strengthen the naval shipyards' resiliency in the face of sea level rise and other adverse conditions

NAVFAC EXWC, the specialized engineering support and contracting activity for the study, provides research, development, testing and evaluation; in-service engineering; and life-cycle management for shore, oceans, and expeditionary domains to accelerate innovation enabling fleet lethality both at sea and ashore.

In this Navy file photo, steel pieces, ship parts and other material are laid out around Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility's Dry Dock 3 as part of the shipyard's recycling program. This program is lead by Code 350, Inactive Fleet, Recycle and Reactor Compartment Disposal. U.S. Navy photo by Wendy Hallmark

'This microgrid study will support infrastructure modernization of our naval shipyards by providing a course of action to increase resilience and provide uninterrupted critical power,'

said Andy Vasquez, NAVFAC EXWC program manager. "NAVFAC EXWC is proud to provide the required specialized engineering services to support SIOP."

For more information about the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program, visit https:// www.navfac.navv.mil/PEO-Industrial-Infrastructure/PMO-555-SIOP/.



NORFOLK, Va. - The crew of Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Leyte Gulf (CG 55) held a decommissioning

Over 500 attendees including plankowners and former crew

"What a great opportunity to celebrate the Sailors who brought this ship to life, kept her operating at the highest level and ready for a fight throughout her long and illustrious career of service to our nation," he said.

Cmdr. Brian M. Harrington, who served as the 23rd and final commanding officer of Leyte Gulf, led the ship's final crew through the decommissioning process, assuming command following Leyte Gulf's deployment to the Caribbean Sea and South Atlantic earlier

crew through the final chapter in her storied career. This crew accomplished the final mission with professionalism and dedication

brance as Black and Harrington shared a few memories created over Leyte Gulf's 37 years of service, inviting shared laughter

Leyte Gulf was built at Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and commissioned in Port Everglades, Florida, on September 26, 1987. Leyte Gulf's namesake commemorates the largest naval battle in history, fought from October 23-26, 1944 during World War II.

ceremony on board Naval Station Norfolk on Sept. 20.

members joined together to celebrate the ship's distinguished 37 years of naval service. Vice Adm. Eugene Black III, Leyte Gulf's 14th commanding officer, served as the ceremony's keynote speaker, wishing the current crew fair winds and following seas as they bade their ship farewell.

"It's been an honor to lead America's Battle Cruiser and her that honors all Leyte Gulf Sailors past and present.

The ceremony atmosphere was one of fond but somber rememfrom crewmembers past and present.

#### Senate confirms more than 6,000 military leaders for promotions, new positions

The Senate has confirmed, via voice vote, the promotions of some 6,030 military officers across the Department of Defense to both new ranks and in some cases to new jobs.
"Last night, the Senate confirmed more than 6,000 of our

highly qualified military nominees in the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, Navy and Space Force," said Deputy Pentagon Press Secretary Sabrina Singh during a recent briefing.

Less than a year ago, hundreds of similar nominations were held up in the Senate due to a blanket hold on confirmations implemented in February 2023.

We're very glad that the Senate has confirmed these officers for critical positions during this time and for our national security," she said.

Among those names submitted to and confirmed by the Senate were Air Force Lt. Gen. Steven S. Nordhaus, who was promoted to general and who will serve as chief of the National Guard Bureau; Navy Vice Adm. Alvin Holsey, promoted to admiral, who serve as commander of U.S. Southern Command; Air Force Lt. Gen. Randall Reed, to general, to serve as commander of U.S. Transportation Command; and Air Force Lt. Gen. Xavier T. Brunson, to general, to serve as commander of U.S. Forces Korea

Singh also said the department is monitoring the path of Hurricane Helene for what kind of impact it may have and what type of assistance will be needed.

'Florida and Georgia have both declared states of emergency, and the governor of Florida has activated more than 3,300 National Guardsmen and 12 rotary wing aviation assets in state active duty status," Singh said. "These guardsmen are pre-positioned around the state to provide responsive state support, including high-wheeled vehicle rescues, aerial support, route clearance and commodities distribution."







# Special operations forces face hurdles to DOD program for civilian transition, report says

by Alison Bath
Stars and Strines

The Pentagon is failing special operations forces personnel by not tracking problems they encounter accessing and completing a program for service members transitioning to civilian life, according to a watchdog agency's report. As a result of that monitoring failure, U.S. Special Operations Command and the Defense Department services may be unaware of Transition Assistance Program shortcomings for special operations forces the Government Accountability Office report issued Sept. 25 said.

Transitioning to civilian life can be even more difficult for SOF service members because of the physical and mental strain of rigorous training, multiple combat deployments and other factors, according to the report.

Over the past 20 years, special operations staffing levels across the services rose to about 74,000 personnel in 2022, as the U.S. worked to counter terrorism. But the Pentagon now is refocusing to address threats from peer adversaries, such as China and

Russia, the report stated.

As a result, many special operations forces service members remain on active duty or separate from the military. From 2021 to 2023, the time period analyzed by the GAO, some 7,000 of them returned to civilian life, the GAO said.

The program, known as TAP, is required for all service members leaving the military. The Defense Department estimates that more than 500,000 members will participate in the program over the next few years, according to the GAO.

The study evaluated data related to special operations forces' participation in TAP, which includes information and training designed to guide departing service members toward employment, higher education and other opportunities.

While SOF personnel generally completed the mandated training at a higher rate than other service members leaving the military, just 39% began the program a year or more before their separation date as required, the report said.



Green Berets from 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) join Serbian counterparts in a jump over Pranjani, Serbia last month. The Defense Department is not doing enough to ease special operations forces service members' transition to civilian life, according to a Government Accountability Office report. U.S. Army photo by Kyle Odum

"It is imperative that service members planning to leave military service start accessing transition programs on time to fully leverage existing resources and transition activities," the report authors wrote.

And without a thorough Pentagon analysis of TAP, service members transitioning out of special operations could be prevented from fully realizing

the program's benefits, according to the report.

In its review, the agency found that a high operational tempo, delays in medical assessments and other problems kept special operations personnel from starting TAP on time and participating in related activities.

That hold-up was more acute for lower-ranked enlisted special operations forces personnel when compared with those of higher enlisted ranks or officers, who may have more control over their schedules, the report found.

Active-duty SOF service members and veterans told the agency that "there also is tension within a command that is trying to balance operational and mission needs with the ability to support transition program requirements."

The GAO recommended that U.S. Special Operations Command and the services analyze TAP participation and other data annually and develop plans to address problems if needed. The Pentagon concurred with the recommendations.



#### **Army**

\*Baumholder U.S. Army base breaks ground on annexes as latest in \$500 million building program

\*Transforming in contact: U.S. general highlights how Army's training in Europe has adapted

#### Navy

\*Navy decommissions cruiser Leyte Gulf after nearly 40 years of service

\*Navy Sailor convicted of beach attack gets suspended sentence from Japanese court

\*DoJ notified of suspected faulty welds on subs, aircraft carriers at Newport News Shipbuilding

#### **Marine Corps**

\*Marine squadron's first F-35 opens path to reactivation at new home base in North Carolina

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\*U.S. military mum on liberty changes as Okinawa city protests alleged sexual assault

#### **Air Force**

\*Air Force faces hits to readiness, new programs under continuing resolution

\*New Air Force PT uniforms delayed, again, until November

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\*Command chief fired at Keesler Air Force Base after investigation 'warranted removal'

\*Multiple bases hunker down, evacuate aircraft for Hurricane Helene

#### **Coast Guard**

\*Coast Guard marine inspector's testimony: Titan's owner railed against regulation, but complied



**GOLDEN FALL Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Osorio of the** Army Parachute Team takes Josh Moraan on a tandem skydive at the Airshow London on Sept. 14, 2024. Morgan is the mayor of London, Ontario U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jason Bauder



FINAL FLIGHT Air Force Lt. Col. Mark Robinson's children marshal their father into the spot after his final flight at Rickenbacker Air National Guard Base, Ohio, Sept. 19, 2024. Robinson retires after serving 21 years and flying more than 3,500 hours. U.S. Force photo by Ralph Branson



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# Pilot program to cover certain child care costs after PCS moves

by C. Todd Lopez DOD News

The Department of Defense kicks off a three-year pilot program meant to reimburse service members up to \$1,500 for travelrelated expenses incurred for a temporary child care provider following a permanent change of station move.

When an active duty service member makes a permanent change of station move to a new duty location and finds that child care at the local child development center won't be available within 30 days of their report date, they can hire their own provider, typically a relative or family friend, and then later file for reimbursement of transportation-related expenses.

The process begins with a ser-

vice member visiting the military child care website to apply for child care at their new duty location, said Chris Woods, chief of the policy branch within the Defense Travel Management Office.

"If the scheduling shows that care could not be provided within 30 days of the member's report date, then the member would become eligible to bring a child care provider to their permanent duty station to look after the child while the member reports to work and their spouse begins to do all those things like unpacking or finding their next job," Woods said.

The military child care website is the DOD's official tool to sign up for child care. When the program begins in October, the website will provide instructions to affected service members and generate the necessary forms that allow service members to obtain the needed child care.

"What would happen at that point is the member takes that documentation that they have from MilitaryChildCare.com... and they begin to coordinate with their local travel office to treat that child care provider much like they would treat a dependent to begin to make the commercial travel reservations," he said.

Reimbursement is limited to commercial transportation expenses, including flights, rail tickets, transportation to or from an airport and an en route and departure rental car. Reimbursement for privately owned vehicle mileage is not authorized, while reimbursement for fuel used in a privately owned vehicle is.

For a permanent change of station move between locations within the continental United States, reimbursement is limited to \$500. For a move to or from a duty station outside the continental United States, the reimbursement is limited to \$1,500.

Typically, a child care provider in these situations would be a relative or family friend, Woods said. But it could also be an au pair, for instance. But Woods also said that reimbursement is for transportation only — both at the start of the period needed for child care and at the end, to send the child care provider home. There is no reimbursement to pay a child care provider a salary or to provide for room and board.

As part of the program, only one child care provider is authorized per military family, and only one service member in a military-to-military couple can request reimbursement.

The pilot program, which lasts three years and runs Oct. 1, 2024, through Sept. 30, 2027, comes after direction by Congress in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, Woods said.

While the program is active, said Heidi E. Welch, the associate director for child and youth programs operations, it's expected to relieve a burden on military families.

"Coming from the child care perspective, this is going to help families, so they have less strain," Welch said. "PCSing is a challenge and it's very difficult. I think this is going to relieve some of the strain and burden that families have as they're making those PCS transitions.

https://www.defense.gov/ News/News-Stories/Article/Ar $ticle/3920672/pilot ext{-}program$ to-cover-certain-child-carecosts-after-permanent-change-

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# Gareer & Education

# **USAF Warrant Officer Training School opens doors at Maxwell AFB**

by Lt. Col. William Russell Air University Public Affairs

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. (AFNS) - Nine months after the Air Force announced the decision to reintegrate warrant officers into the force, the Warrant Officer Training School officially opened its doors with a ribbon cutting ceremony Sept. 25 here.

WOTS will welcome the Air Force's first cohort of 30 warrant officer candidates to its facility. The inaugural class of WOTS is scheduled to begin Oct. 8.

"When the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff directed us to bring back warrant officers two-hundred and twenty-six plus days ago ... It was going to be here at Air University [Maxwell AFB]," said Lt. Gen. Andrea D. Tullos, commander and president of Air University.

"The warrant officers we develop here will step right in and join their joint partners on combatant commander's teams and give us the tactical, operational and strategic advantages that our force needs, anytime and anywhere," she said

WOTS is a 40-day train-

ing program, in-residence accessions program designed to educate and train candidates with specialized knowledge and technical skills on how to serve as technical advisors to command leadership in their future roles as warrant officers.

"The Warrant Officer Training School is a training program designed to develop professional warrant officers who can advise and integrate at various organizational levels," said Maj. Nathaniel Roesler, WOTS com-

"The program is a challenging, fast-paced, and highly structured educational program that integrates classroom lecture, guided discussion and experiential learning opportunities to reinforce educational understanding."

The Air Force dissolved its Warrant Officer Corps in 1958 following the creation of the Senior Master Sgt. and Chief Master Sgt. ranks, who took on warrant officer responsibilities. These senior non-commissioned officers took on specific technical duties but were never relieved of their institutional requirements as part of the enlisted structure.

The reintroduction of the Warrant Officer Corps career path in the Air Force aims to

address critical operational needs, while maintaining highly perishable skills, and simulta-

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neously leveraging the unique expertise and capabilities of warrant officers.

"It took a shared vison and effort from Headquarters Air Force down through AETC, AU, the Holm Center and the 42nd Air Base Wing to bring this concept to fruition," Roesler said. "We had a long way to go and a short time to get there, but with the efforts of many of you sitting here and others within your organization we're ready to produce warrant officers for the Air Force ... and this building is the physical evidence that this was not a paper drill."

Upon graduation from WOTS, the newly minted warrant officers will be assigned to a range of Air Force units as technical experts in cyber and information technology supporting both Air Force and joint force operational requirements.

The second WOTS class, also comprised of approximately 30 candidates, is scheduled to start January 2025.

https://www.af.mil/News/



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# **Local Military**

#### Marine at Camp Pendleton who sold 'ghost guns' sentenced to 3 years in prison

by Caitlyn Burchett, Stars and Stripes

A Camp Pendleton Marine who illegally sold 22 homemade firearms to undercover agents was sentenced to 37 months in prison, federal officials said.

A federal judge handed down the more than three-year sentence recently to Christian Ferrari, 23, for selling the nearly two-dozen weapons known as ghost guns across four separate transactions for \$23,000. Ghost guns are firearms made by individuals who buy parts and use specialized tools to assemble them into a functional weapon.

Unlike firearms made by licensed manufacturers, ghost guns do not have a serial number, making them virtually untraceable. Ferrari was accused of selling the guns to undercover Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents between March 13 and May 9, 2023, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California. At the time, Ferrari was a lance corporal stationed at Camp Pendleton.

#### **Modified Japanese helicopter carrier** scheduled for F-35B tests near San Diego

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan - One of Japan's largest warships, modified to carry fifth-generation fighters, is expected in California later this year for a test run.

Helicopter destroyer JS Kaga, which resembles a small carrier, is scheduled Oct. 5 to Nov. 18 for flight tests with F-35B Lightning II multirole jets off San Diego, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force announced Sept. 10.

The stateside testing will employ F-35Bs from Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23, Naval Air Systems Command's largest flight-test squadron, according to a Maritime Self-Defense Force spokesman.

Testing will include short-range take-off and landing and vertical landing, he told Stars and Stripes by phone recently. Multiple tests are planned throughout the 45-day trial.

# USNS Lucy Stone christened as MSC's newest fleet replenishment oiler

by Sarah Cannon Military Sealift Command Pacific

Fleet replenishment oiler USNS Lucy Stone (T-AO 209), the Military Sealift Command's newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego recently.

The event was attended by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro; Meredith Berger, assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment; Vice Adm. John F. G. Wade, commander, U.S. Third Fleet; Vice Adm. Jeffrey Jablon, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Installations and Logistics; to name a few

The ship honors American suffragist Lucy Stone, who joined other notable advocates such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Susan B. Anthony, Ernestine Rose, and Antoinette Brown Blackwell to petition for suffrage and abolition in the 19th century. Her efforts as a founder of the Women's National Loyal League were essential to the passage of the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.

"In choosing to name this ship after Lucy Stone, Secretary Mabus and Secretary Berger knew the legacy of this remarkable woman, who dedicated her life to freedom and to equality for all, "said Deborah Donnley Simmons, Stone co-sponsor. "Her legacy will continue to be told, as this ship sails throughout the world."

The official christening moment happened when the ship's co-sponsors, Alicia Aadnesen Deborah Donley Simmons broke a bottle of champagne over the ship's bow with the words,

"For the United States of America, I christen you the USNS Lucy Stone. May God

**Military** Sealift Command's newest fleet replenishment oiler, USNS Lucy Stone, slides down the rails and into the San Diego Bay following its christening at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego. Courtesy photo

bless this ship and all who sail on her." Following the christening moment, the ship blew her horns and slid down the rails, amid a fanfare of music from the Navy Band Southwest and red, white and blue streamers.

"The enduring legacy of Lucy Stone as a trailblazer in the women's rights movement re-

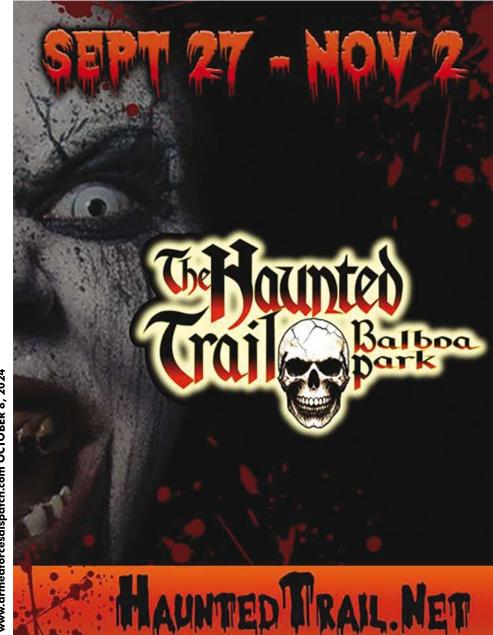
inspiration today," said Del Torro. "How extraordinary that all of these years later, today, our United States Navy is headed-up by the Chief of Naval Operations, a female by the name of Adm. Lisa Franchetti. It would not have been possible if it had not been for the efforts of Lucy Stone.

The 746-foot Stone is the fifth ship in the new John Lewisclass previously known as the TAO(X). This class of oilers has the ability to carry 162,000 barrels of diesel ship fuel, aviation fuel and dry stores cargo. The upgraded oiler is built with double hulls to protect against oil spills and strengthened cargo and ballast tanks and will be equipped with a basic self-defense capability. The Lewis-class of oilers will replace the current Kaiser Class fleet replenishment oilers as they age out of the MSC fleet. The ship will be manned by a crew of about 100 civilian Merchant Mariners, sailing under the operational control of MSC.

https://www.cpf.navy.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/3916102/usns-lucv-stonechristened-as-mscs-newestfleet-replenishment-oiler/

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(USS 237, USNS 60)	(USS 76 USNS 30)	(53 Deployed, 18 Local)			







## USS *Essex* galley reopens after 758 days

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard Anglin

USS Essex (LHD 2)

Sailors assigned to amphibious assault ship Essex reopened the galley after it was completely renovated with new ovens, steamers and deep sinks during docking selected restricted availability (DSRA) in preparation to provide the best culinary services available to Essex crew in San

Essex closed the galley when the ship entered DSRA. However, when they initially shut the galley down, the ship still held over one hundred pallets worth of food that the ship could no longer use.

The culinary team called a few of the ships across the water front, and were able to salvage the surplus food by providing it to USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72), successfully preparing the galley to be efficiently closed.

The galley being closed did not slow down the *Essex* Culinary Specialist team. The team created a partnership with a five-star hotel local to San Diego, Hotel Del Coronado, rotating three team members every 30 days to learn how to prepare meals in the high tempo environment of the civilian sector, and bring those skills back to the crew.

They also sent Sailors to compete in 13 different culinary

competitions including the Sea vs Shore Galleys Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Cake Competition, which they won. Two Essex Sailors were selected to be the first Navy Sailors to represent the Navy in the Army Culinary Arts Team (USACAT) which competed in the Culinary Olympics in Stuttgart, Germany, where they won bronze.

They were also able to win a silver at nationals during the 2024 American Culinary Federation (ACF) student chef of the year competition. Across all 13 culinary competitions, the Essex Culinary Specialist team has brought home a total of 32 medals.

"The Sailors are really performing really well when it comes to getting the job that we need to get done," said Culinary Specialist 1st Class Maria Martin. 'We have a lot of people that have been here for deployment and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), and they're some real heavy hitters when it comes to leading the new Sailors."

Spare Sailors from the Culinary Team were sent to assist in helping 16 different commands to complete multiple different inspections, and go out to sea on deployments and underways.

"The Culinary Specialist team also gave over 1,200 hours to volunteer work at 64 different four-star flag events," said Chief

Warrant Officer 3 Jeremy Domagalski, Essex food service officer, including the Battle of Midway, and local community events supporting the fleet reserve."

The Culinary Specialists are made responsible for 326 spaces, including 128 staterooms and 12 storerooms which they needed to refurbish with paint, a polyurethane resin coating (PRC), fixing lights, doors, hinges, lockers, missing handles and repairing the showers.

The team managed a 10-million-dollar budget in habitability contracts to completely rehabilitate all of their spaces and equipment to be fully prepared to open their galley. Surpassing the progress of the rest of the ship, they had to delay the reopening to wait for the rest of the ship to catch up and create conditions suitable to open the galley.

"My goal is to be the best ship in the United States Navy," said Domagalski, "which is why I am so blessed to have such an amazing team. They poured everything they had into making this happen."

After 758 days, refurbishing the ship, competing in competitions, training with other commands and civilians, the Culinary Specialists were able to reopen all three of their galleys with full capacity to serve 1100 Sailors and Marines.

SULU SEA (Sept. 21, **2024)** Master Chief Master-at-Arms Guadalupe Gonzalez motivates Sailors selected for chief petty officer on the flight deck aboard Theodore Roosevelt. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Richard Tinker





USS BOXER (Sept. 26, 2024) Cpl. Jaden Ibarra and Staff Sgt. Richard Ashby, both low-altitude air defense gunners with 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, move to a firing point with a Stinger . Trainer Launch Simulator aboard amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) in the East China Sea. U.S. Marine Corps Photo

#### VIDEO: Russian military aircraft unsafe and unprofessional conduct

Courtesy video, North American Aerospace Defense Command

On Sept. 23, a U.S. Air Force F-16 operating under the direction of North American Aerospace Defense Command was conducting a routine intercept of a Russian Tu-95 aircraft in the Alaskan Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) when a Russian Su-35 aircraft conducted an unsafe maneuver directed at the F-16. Gen. Gregory Guillot, Commander, NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, spoke on the event, stating: "On Monday (Sept. 23), NORAD aircraft flew a safe and disciplined intercept of Russian military aircraft in the Alaskan ADIZ. The conduct of one Russian Su-35 was unsafe, unprofessional, and endangered all – not what you'd see in a professional air force.

View the video at https://www.dvidshub.net/video/938444/russian-military-aircraft-unsafe-and-unprofessional-conduct-alaska-adiz.





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Chief Intelligence Specialist Sarah McMahan from Pittsburgh, Penn., assigned to Tactical Training Group Pacific, is pinned to the chief petty officer during a ceremony held at Commander, 3rd Fleet headquarters on Naval Base Point Loma Sept. 27, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sarah G. Eaton



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by Jan Wagner

One of the most popular annual car shows in San Diego County each year is the Wavecrest Woodie Meet, billed by the San Diego Woodies car club (sponsor and host of the event) on the event's Facebook page as "the longest-running gathering of wooden automobiles in the world." Held on the third weekend of September each year, it is a nostalgic celebration of cars from a long-gone era, whose bodies were made of real wood

Woodie wagons were especially popular for carrying surfboards to the beach in Southern California, so it is appropriate that the car show portion of this event takes place overlooking the Pacific Ocean and Moonlight Beach in Encinitas, California, This car show is free for the public, and no advance registration or fee is required.

The organizers planned several days of fun and activities, which made this event especially attractive not only to locals, but to out-of-towners as well. This year's four-day event drew entries from as far away as Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

This, the 45th Annual Wavecrest Woodie Meet, began on Thursday evening, Sept. 19 with a late afternoon and early evening Classic Car Show, in downtown Encinitas on the famous Highway 101. Then, on Friday, there was a "Meet & Greet," with appetizers and drinks, poolside at the event

## AutoMatters™&More Wavecrest Woodies show cars from as far away as Calgary

Saturday was the day of the event's signature Wavecrest Woodies car show, located close to the beach within the Moonlight Beach parking lot (at 4th and C Street). Several of the show cars were displayed on a cul-de-sac and the bottom of a hill overlooking the Pacific Ocean. The view was spectacu-

The weather for the car show was SoCal beautiful and the event attracted a couple hundred woodies. Between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:00 pm, visitors were free to roam around, take pictures, speak with the cars' owners and get a real taste of classic Southern California car culture. Woodies slowly cruised in and out of the parking lot, and along the nearby Encinitas streets. A DJ played music, woodie memorabilia and car parts were for sale, and a surf board was raffled off. Since I drove there in my Miata (and I've never surfed!), I did not buy a raffle ticket for the surf

Towards the end of the car show, as I was walking around and taking pictures, I heard the event's announcer introducing the winner of their "LONG DISTANCE DRIVEN" award and I particularly noted that this winner drove his woodie all the way from Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Calgary is my hometown, so of course I headed straight over there, where I asked Neil Roach and his daughter about their 1951 Ford Meteor and the 1,600-mile road trip. By the way, for those of you who may notice, that grill is indeed from a '49 Meteor. Neil bought

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hotel (The Encinitas Hotel & his '51 in 2005, and it needed a lot of work. He changed out the engine and the rest of the drivetrain for a much more modern one from a Lincoln Continental, completing the work about four years ago.

> They also won the HARD LUCK AWARD, because on their way to Wavecrest the in-tank fuel pump failed. That left the car stranded on the road twice — once near Las Vegas and once outside of Barstow. Fortunately they found a great mobile mechanic in Barstow, who fixed it in an O'Reilly Auto Parts parking lot.

> According to their website (http://www.sandiegowoodies. com), San Diego Woodies is a chapter of the National Woodie Club. It was created in 2001 "to foster camaraderie among woodie enthusiasts from near and far and to provide a forum through which owners and fans of woodies may share their common infatuation for these great treasures of automobile history." The club schedules and participates in many other carrelated events and activities in the greater San Diego area, aside from Wavecrest — including cruises and Woodie meets.

> The event ended on Sunday morning with the 25-mile Woodies Cruise along historic Pacific Coast Highway, from Encinitas City Hall to Oceanside.

> To learn about the National Woodie Club, visit https://woodies.clubexpress.com.

> 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 'vears' boxes and browse.

> Copyright © 2024 by Jan Wagner - AutoMatters & More

# Taken for a ride

This week, a large box containing a desk chair arrived on our porch. Once the chair was removed, I hesitated a moment before stomping the humongous thing flat for recycling.

"Should I keep this big box for something?" I wondered.

A joystick in my brain moved, dropping an open claw down onto a pile of old memories, retrieving one after several failed attempts.

It was fall in the 1970's, and my brother, Tray, scored two large truck inner tubes. Back then, any kid who found shopping carts, large boxes, or truck inner tubes was king for the

After lunch, Tray and his middle school friend, Tracy, disappeared to hatch a plan for the tubes while I trotted up the hill to play in the neighbor's playhouse.

Our hill had woods at the top and a road at the bottom. Starting from the tree line, the hill sloped steadily downward, flattening out at the neighbor's property, then dropping steeply toward a barrier of blue spruces behind the house on the road.

I was lost in pretend play, when suddenly, there was a knock on the playhouse door.

"Hey, Lisa! C'meer! Wanna do something fun with me and Tracy?!"

My brother and his friends wanted nothing to do with little sisters like me, but I was gullible, so I threw the baby doll I was nurturing into the spiderwebbed corner and ran out the door. "Whaddya wanna do?!" I yelled excitedly.

Tracy and Tray lead me to the inner tubes which were lashed side by side with twine."Lisa, if you climb inside the tubes, my brother said, "we'll roll you

## The Meat & Potatoes



down the hill and it'll be really

I couldn't hear the alarm bells going off. All I knew is that my big brother finally wanted to play with me.

I climbed into the center hole, gripping the metal valves like handles just as they instructed. With my chin on my chest and my legs criss-crossed, I fit snuggly into the tiny space. Assuring me that the ride would be better than the Scrambler at the County Fair, they shoved me off down the hill.

During the first few rotations. I squealed with excitement. But then, I reached the sharp drop off after the neighbors' property, and the tubes spun wildly with sudden acceleration.

Undulations in the grass sent the tubes airborne, causing them to elongate into ovals on impact. My teeth clacked. My initial squeals of delight turned into breathy screams of terror, and then into the silence of survival

From my cramped vantage point, I saw flashes of blue sky, the approaching spruces, and Tray and Tracy screaming down the hill after me.

To save myself from certain disaster, I let a foot pop out and catch the grass. My wheel of ter-

ror flipped like a quarter in a coin toss, then teetered to a stop just before the spruces. The entire universe spun around me.

Soon, Tracy's silhouette appeared against the blue sky above me. "Lisa! Lisa! Are you OK?!" Tracy panted, and a drop of spit began to ooze from his gaping mouth. Just before the elongated globule could detach itself, he slurped and swallowed

I survived that harebrained scheme, but would go on to experience many others, involving locked closets, tying our dog to a sled, umbrella "parachutes," sliding down bannisters, and climbing trees.

When I had my own children, I thought our advanced society with its modern safety regulations, vast parenting resources, and improved threat awareness would surely save our children from the dangerously idiotic behaviors I engaged in so long

As I flattened the big box on my porch, the claw grasped another memory.

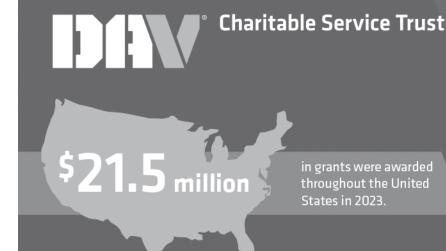
It was Fall 2009, and we lived at the bottom of Vermont Strasse on Patch Barracks in Germany. I was taking trash to the dumpsters, when I saw them: Our two daughters, in an abandoned commissary shopping cart, careening down the hill toward me.

I didn't yell, intervene, or call an ambulance. I simply said a little prayer that no one breaks an arm or chips a tooth, I accepted the natural order of things, and I realized that some things would never change.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com



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#### MCRD SAN DIEGO





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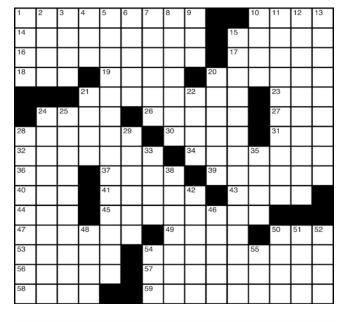
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- 39 Tswana for "flv"
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# Health & Fitness

# Tired, achy eyes? Finding relief for eye discomfort

Are your eyes tired, dry, or achy? Many factors can contribute to these types of symptoms. But a big culprit can be intense use of your eyes. Spending too much time looking at screens and held devices, like smartphones, can strain your eyes. So can normal aging. What can you do to find relief?

One major cause of eye discomfort is not blinking enough. "When we focus on tasks like reading or computer work, our blink rate just plummets," says Dr. Chantal Cousineau-Krieger, an NIH ophthalmologist.

Not blinking enough can cause your eyes to become dry and uncomfortable. Certain people are more prone to eye dryness, too. This includes those over age 50, women, and people who wear contact lenses. Certain medications, like antihistamines, and health conditions can also add to eye dryness.

Avoiding other factors that increase eye dryness may help your eyes feel better, too. Air blowing directly in your face



from a fan or from air vents in the car can contribute to eye dryness, says Cousineau-Krieger. So can smoke or windy conditions.

Normal aging can also lead to eye strain. With age, we start to lose our ability to focus on close objects. This is called presbyopia. Our eyes need to work harder to focus.

"When we look at something up close, we flex the muscle inside of our eye," Cousineau-Krieger explains. "And just like any other muscle, if you hold the contraction for a long time, the muscle can become fatigued. Eventually, in your 40s, you end up not being able to see things up close as well. It's a natural part of aging that goes along with gray hairs and wrinkles. And then we typically need reading glasses to be able to see things up close."

But eye strain doesn't only happen to adults. Children can also develop symptoms from intensely using their eyes. They may not tell you that their eyes hurt. Instead, they may start blinking forcefully or rubbing their eyes.

Spending too much time on screens is also now believed to be contributing to children developing nearsightedness. Studies have shown growing rates of nearsightedness in children over the past few decades.

To relieve eye discomfort, you can try some simple steps. Experts recommend the 20-20-20 rule. Take eye breaks every 20 minutes and look far in the distance, about 20 feet away, for about 20 seconds.

"Experts are recommending that children spend time out-doors playing to help them focus on things further at a distance," says Cousineau-Krieger. "Hopefully, this will also help decrease the amount of nearsightedness. The amount of nearsightedness is going up around the world."

Taking screen breaks and focusing on more distant objects can be helpful for everyone's eye health. See the Wise Choices box for more eye health tips. If simple lifestyle changes don't bring you relief from eye discomfort, it may be time to see a doctor for an eye exam.

# **Protect your eye health**

- Rest your eyes. Take a break from tasks that require focusing on nearby objects every 20 minutes, and look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Limit screen time and take breaks often. Encourage kids to spend more time outdoors and focus on things in the distance.
- Keep your eyes moist. Use eye drops called artificial tears when your eyes feel dry.
- Prevent the air in your home from getting too dry. Use a humidifier. Limit air conditioning.
- Wear sunglasses when outside. Choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Keep your eyeglasses and/or contacts prescription current.

  Learn how to properly care for your contacts.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Drink plenty of water, eat healthy, and get enough physical activity. Healthy habits can lower your risk for diseases and conditions that lead to eye
- or vision problems.
   Quit smoking and keep your home smoke-free. Get free help at smokefree.gov, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or by texting QUIT to 47848.



# Don't give in to gum disease

Periodontal, or gum, disease is an infection of the tissues that hold your teeth in place. It usually arises because of poor brushing and flossing habits. This can lead to a sticky film of bacteria called plaque, which builds up and hardens on teeth. The hard buildup, called tartar, can only be removed by a dentist or dental hygienist.

If not treated, gum disease can spread to the bones around the gums. It can make chewing painful. Eventually, it can lead to loose or lost teeth.

People with gum disease often have swollen, red, or bleeding gums. Other symptoms include persistent bad breath or sensitive teeth. People who smoke are especially at risk for gum disease. Other factors that raise your risk include hormone changes in girls and women, certain genes, and health conditions like diabetes and AIDS and their medications.

Treatment options range from non-surgical to surgical interventions. It's important to keep brushing and flossing every day. Changing unhealthy habits and quitting smoking can be part of a treatment plan. Some patients may be referred to a specialist called a periodontist. These are doctors who can provide advanced treatment for gum disease.

To keep your teeth and gums healthy, use fluoride toothpaste and brush your teeth twice a day. Floss regularly or use another dentist-recommended device to clean between teeth. Be sure to visit your dentist regularly.

# Microbes in your mouth

Do you know what's in your mouth? It's home to about 700 species of microbes. These include germs like bacteria, fungus, and more.

"Everybody has these microbes in their mouth," says Dr. Robert Palmer, an NIH expert on oral microbes.

Some microbes are helpful. Others can cause problems like tooth decay and gum disease. Troubles begin when microbes form a sticky, colorless film called plaque on your teeth.

Brushing and flossing help to keep your mouth clean. But after you brush and floss, germs grow again and more plaque forms. That's why you need to clean your mouth regularly.

Different microbes grow in different places. Some stick to your teeth. Others prefer your tongue. Some lurk in the tiny pockets between tooth and gum.



# \*USO\*

#### Your Local USO Wants You!

Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a Sailor or Marine with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" ships and 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/

- On the right side see "Interested in volunteering?"
- Click red "Register Here" button
- Navigate to your area
- Finally, select the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

Positions may be available around San Diego county at:

Neil Ash Airport Center Camp Pendleton USO Center San Diego MEPS Center Special Events





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