

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

www.armedforcesdispatch.com

619.280.2985

SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR NO. 44

Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

MARCH 1-15, 2025



See homecoming story, page 6

FAMILY REUNION A Navy family reunites after Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Stockdale (DDG 106) pulled into homeport at Naval Base San Diego, Feb. 21, after being deployed with 3rd, 5th, and 7th fleets. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Kristine Joy Nool

DOD prepares invitation to bring back troops separated for refusing COVID vaccine

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Over the course of 500 days, beginning in 2021, nearly 8,000 active duty and reserve service members were involuntarily separated from service for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Many others left voluntarily to avoid the vaccine mandate.

Now, the Defense Department plans to invite those service members back into uniform at the same rank they held when they separated.

President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order on Jan. 27, 2025, regarding reinstating service members discharged under the department's COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

As part of the executive order, active duty and reserve service members who were discharged solely for refusing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine may request reinstatement to their former rank.

The Defense Department rescinded the mandate to take the COVID-19 vaccine on Jan. 10, 2023.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth recently directed the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness to provide guidance to the military departments on how to proceed.

"This guidance will provide procedures to rapidly reinstate individuals who were involuntarily discharged or voluntarily left to avoid vaccination," Hegseth wrote.

That guidance, now in the hands of the military departments, details the efforts the service branches must take.

A large part of that effort involves records reviews: identifying service members who were involuntarily separated or voluntarily separated to avoid vaccination and then communicating with those service members to let them know they are invited back into service.

Service members involuntarily discharged, solely for their refusal to take the vaccine, will be contacted directly by their respective services, according to the guidance.

"The secretaries of the military departments will invite these service members to seek reinstatement by applying to have their records corrected to reflect continued service such that back pay, benefits, bonus payments, or other compensation, subject to required offsets, will be available," the guidance reads.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4067895/>

Defense secretary welcomes Saudi defense minister, underscores partnership

by Matthew Olay, DOD News

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth highlighted the importance of the partnership between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia while hosting that country's defense minister during a bilateral engagement at the Pentagon earlier this week. After formally welcoming Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud and his delegation, both men delivered prepared remarks in the secretary's office. "As you know, [President Donald J. Trump has] made clear in his administration [that] we're going to pursue peace through strength and put America first," Hegseth said. "But that does not mean ignoring partnerships; and, in fact, it requires greater attention to the ones that matter most," he said, adding that the U.S. partnership with Saudi Arabia "matters a great deal." Referencing the cooperation that took place between the countries during Trump's first administration, Hegseth pointed out that both nations worked together to pursue security and stability in the Middle East, as well as to combat terrorism in the region and increase mutual prosperity.

MILITARY SPOUSES EXEMPTED FROM RETURN-TO-WORK MANDATE

by C. Todd Lopez

DOD News

While the president has ordered federal employees who have been working remotely and teleworking back to their offices, an exception is now in place for those federal employees who are spouses of military service members.

agement released a memorandum titled "Guidance on Exempting Military Spouses and Foreign Service Spouses from Agency Return to Office Plans" on Feb. 12. The memo explains how federal civilian employees who are also military spouses are exempt from the return-to-work mandate.

that their return-to-office plans categorically exempt all military spouses authorized to engage in remote work," the memorandum explains. "This includes both military spouses appointed under the Military Spouse Employment Act authorities and those appointed under other hiring authorities."

spouses are permitted to continue with any applicable remote work arrangements," the memo says.

Across the active-duty military, more than 48 percent of service members are married. Their spouses face challenges finding employment because the military lifestyle includes frequent moves, making it difficult to commit to a single employer or develop a career. That inability to find meaningful work makes life even more difficult for families who may depend on having a dual-income household.

According to DOD's "2023 Demographics Profile of the Military Community," approximately 64 percent of military spouses want to be employed. Of the spouses who want to be employed, about 79 percent have found work, while about 21 percent are unable to find work. The new policy memo from OPM will help keep many military spouses employed and serve as a critical recruitment and retention tool.

The memo also said agencies may continue hiring military spouses in remote work positions.

According to the memorandum, the policy covers spouses of members of the armed forces on active duty, spouses of service members who retired with 100 percent disability, and spouses of service members who died while on active duty. Spouses of National Guard members on full-time guard duty are also included. The memo also covers spouses of U.S. foreign service members.

"Agencies should ensure that all such military and foreign service

The Office of Personnel Man-

"Agencies should ... ensure



Military families are getting help from DoD to connect spouses with prospective employers. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Alex Fairchild

PRSR STD
ECRWSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Local Postal Customer

Read the Dispatch online weekly
New issues posted weekly online in a downloadable pdf format at www.afdispatch.com.

Your FREE weekly paper
Take one!

Department tells Gold Star Families: We'll find loved ones, bring them home

by C. Todd Lopez
DOD News

On Feb. 22 in Sacramento, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency held the largest-ever family member update in its history.

More than 500 Gold Star families attended to learn how the agency is proceeding in efforts to repatriate the remains of service members who never returned home from the Vietnam War, the Korean War or World War II.

Around the nation, the DPAA holds several family updates each year so the families of service members who went missing in action can meet with officials one-on-one to discuss the details of their cases. Since 1995, DPAA has conducted these family updates, reaching more than 31,000 family members through face-to-face meetings.

Nearly 82,000 service members still remain unaccounted for from conflicts dating back to World War II. According to

DPAA, 71,981 service members are missing from World War II, 7,444 are missing from the Korean War, 1,573 are missing from the Vietnam War, and 126 are missing from the Cold War.

Finding those service members and bringing them home is the sacred duty of the DPAA, said Fern Sumpter Winbush, the principal deputy director of DPAA.

"Not only is this mission a sacred obligation, but it's a moral imperative," she told families. "The agency exists because there are unaccounted for ... there are men and women who gave their ultimate all. We serve the families because you are the ones that are still here. You are relying on us because we're the only ones that are doing this mission. We'll continue to put [the] mission first. We're not going to accept defeat. We'll never quit, and we're never going to leave a comrade behind."

Winbush told family members that the DPAA mission would take recovery operations to 33 territories and countries this year. The ability to do that requires building relationships with nations around the world to earn the trust needed to gain access. It's something she said the agency will continue to work on. Right now, she said, there are 10 ongoing missions in Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines.

Winbush also stressed to families in attendance the importance of getting family member DNA on file.

"We can't make an identification unless we have something to compare it to," she said. "For many of the unaccounted-for, we don't have the proper family reference samples on file. This is one way we work to collect them."

Also, she noted the number of young people attending the family member update and stressed how important it is that families



Air Force Tech. Sgt. Maurice Tooles, left, and Senior Airman Zamiyah Warner, both assigned to Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations, prepare an American flag at Dover Air Force Base, Del., March 30, 2022. Airmen assigned to the team work to make sure each flag draped over a casket of a fallen service member is immaculate. U.S. Air Force photo by Jason Minto

keep other family members aware that a family member who served overseas never returned home and that the DPAA is still looking for them.

"We need third, fourth, and even fifth-generation families to stay on top of their loved one's loss," Winbush said. "We don't forget ... we have all of the records. But it's critically important that you stay on top of it so that the story can continue to be told."

She said it's common for DPAA to call families with a notification that a loved one has been found, only to find that some families were unaware or don't believe what they are being told.

"They don't know this mission exists," she said. "They don't believe that we're still searching for their great, great uncle [or] father ... from World War II," she said. "We've got to keep all of the families involved."

As part of the family member update, the DPAA also unveiled its annual poster, which will be used later this year to commemorate National POW/MIA Recognition Day, Sept. 19, 2025.

This year's poster was created by artist Jeannie Huffman, the daughter of Navy Cmdr. Edward James Jacobs Jr., a Vietnam War pilot who never came home. He went missing Aug. 25, 1967, while piloting an RA-3B Skywarrior aircraft over the Gulf of Tonkin in North Vietnam.

When her father left for Vietnam, Huffman was only two weeks old. She was just five months old when her mother learned her father went missing. She said her father had been able to hold her as an infant before he deployed for the war, but there's no record of that for her to look at today.

"One thing that kind of bothers me ... I have no photos of that," she said. "I wish I had a picture of him and me, and I don't."

Back in 2018, Huffman attended her first DPAA family member update in Greensboro, North Carolina. There was not a lot of information then about recovery efforts for her father, and this was because her father had been put into a non-recoverable status.

Huffman's husband, Dave,

explained what had happened.

"In 1993, when previous iterations of what's now the DPAA [were] charged with the mission, there was an order that came out to try to touch as many sites as possible," he said. "They got in a boat and went out to the grid coordinates of the last known location of the airplane and said there's no visible wreckage."

That finding resulted in Jacobs and the crewmen he was with being deemed unrecoverable — which stood until January 2024. However, the two did their own research and were later able to convince DPAA to begin anew in an effort to find Jeannie Huffman's father.

"We had a meeting with the DPAA in Washington, D.C., and we presented our research and investigation to them in November of 2023, and they revisited his case, and now his case and the two crewmen that were with him have all been changed from non-recoverable to active pursuit," Dave Huffman said.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4074620/period-uniforms-and-gear>

TOGETHER, WE CAN FACE THE FIGHT AGAINST VETERAN SUICIDE

FACE THE FIGHT

WEFACETHEFIGHT.ORG
#FACETHEFIGHT

2 www.armedforcesdispatch.com MARCH 1-15, 2025

MAIN AUTO REPAIR
"ALL WORK GUARANTEED"

FREE ESTIMATES - Serving Military for Over 23 years

BRAKE SERVICE SPECIAL from \$140 Per Axle, Parts & Labor included. Most Cars Standard Brake Packages Don't Wait Until You Have a Problem!	A/C Service \$95	Body Work and Paint	CLUTCH \$319 Most Cars. Parts & Labor included. Includes: Pressure plate and disc. Adjustment. New throw out bearing. Pilot bearing. Inspect flywheel
TIMING BELT SPECIAL from \$199 Most Cars. Parts & Labor included	CV JOINT AXLE from \$220 Most Cars. Parts & Labor included	FUEL INJECTION SERVICE from \$89 Most Cars. Parts & Labor included	

3714 Main Street, San Diego • 619-238-4385

SoCalTruck.com
ACCESSORIES & EQUIPMENT
10460 Mission Gorge Rd.
Santee, CA 92071
619-749-0742
Work Smarter, Play Harder!

- Truck Bed Covers • Camper Shells
- Side Steps • Truck Racks
- Tool Boxes • Fuel Tanks
- Carpet Kits • Tow Hitches

MILITARY DISCOUNT
Get \$25 off \$300 or more with this ad

BULLET LINER
Spray on Bedliners

Drones and AI take center stage in Navy-led Middle East exercise

by Shannon Renfroe
Stars and Stripes

MANAMA, Bahrain - A recent U.S.-led maritime exercise in the Middle East shifted its focus to building artificial intelligence and drone capabilities as the Navy and its partners work to address increasingly sophisticated threats in the region.

The emphasis represents a change at this year's International Maritime Exercise, which normally focuses on mines and explosive ordnance disposal, among other training.

It also comes as the Navy and other nations in the region prioritize adaptation to technology used by Iran and its proxies in Lebanon, Yemen and other countries, service officials say.

For example, Iran-backed Houthi militants in Yemen have launched swarm drone attacks against ships in the Red Sea in the past year.

The U.S. and its partner navies in the region also are defending against cyberattacks on their systems, Vice Adm. George Wikoff, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. 5th Fleet, said Feb. 20.

"Cyberattacks are a great example of where AI can make a real impact," Wikoff said, adding that it has "great promise" as a cyber protection tool.

AI also is becoming a bigger factor in stopping adversaries, Wikoff said.

Information picked up by Navy sensors in the sea regarding such activity as drug or

Wikoff made the comments as the 12-day IMX25 ended Feb. 20. The exercise also included noncombatant evacuation, search and seizure, vessel defense, search and rescue, and mass casualty response, the Navy said.

It was linked to Cutlass Express, an exercise in eastern and southern Africa led by U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa.

"AI also is becoming a bigger factor in stopping adversaries."
- Vice Adm. George Wikoff

weapons smuggling can be evaluated more efficiently using AI, which allows a better understanding of what is happening in regional waterways, he said.

"Our ability to get through that data and find what's really important is always a challenge, and AI is helping accelerate that," Wikoff said.

He noted that Task Force 59, a Bahrain-based unit focused on testing and deploying drones and using AI, has played an important role in leading Navy security efforts at sea.

Together, there were about 30 countries and 5,000 personnel participating in the exercises, the Navy said.

The maritime portions took place in the Persian Gulf, Arabian Sea, Gulf of Oman, Red Sea and northern Indian Ocean.

"If you look around the room today, you'll see naval personnel from every continent on the Earth with the exception of Antarctica," Wikoff said during the exercise's closing ceremony.

This year's IMX took place during a period of relative calm

in the region. That is chiefly due to the Houthi militants' stoppage of their attacks on ships in the Red Sea because of a ceasefire reached between Israel and Hamas in Gaza last month.

Even so, there were about 50

percent fewer participants in the exercise than in previous years, Navy officials noted. In 2022, about 60 nations participated, they said.

Wikoff attributed the drop to the fact that navies are stretched by multiple global obligations,

adding that participant numbers aren't the sole factor determining success.

"It's about the quality of the training and (whether) those that participate ... get what they want out of it," Wikoff said.

Japan Self-Defense Forces and U.S. participate in fleet synthetic training 'Resilient Shield'

by Lt. Cmdr. Seth Koenig

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Japan Self-Defense Forces and U.S. forces launched Fleet Synthetic Training - Joint (FST-J) 25-71 (Resilient Shield), here, and other command centers throughout the region, Feb. 24-27.

Resilient Shield provides computer-generated training to commands ashore and ships at sea. This training provides the opportunity for ships, Patriot batteries, and command centers to integrate and hone warfighting skills collectively in a tactically demanding environment. The annual exercise focuses on testing and refining U.S.-Japan forces' ballistic missile defense (BMD) tactics, techniques and procedures, pre-planned responses, and warfighting concepts.

"With this year's Resilient Shield 25, our joint and combined U.S.-Japan team continues to advance our collective ballistic missile defense," said Vice Adm. Fred Kacher, commander, U.S. 7th Fleet.

"This exercise presents our teams with dynamic, realistic BMD scenarios meant to sharpen our reflexes and harden our defenses as we provide an all-domain missile defense capability to the Indo-Pacific theater."

<https://www.cpf.navy.mil/Newsroom/News/Article/4075471/>

Armed Forces Dispatch
published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
619-280-2985 • E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com
Editor.....Scott Sutherland

The Dispatch is published online weekly on Thursdays, and in print on the 1st & 16th of each month by Western States Weeklies, Inc., as a commercial, free-enterprise newspaper. The editorial objective of the Dispatch is to promote support for a strong military presence. Contents of the Armed Forces Dispatch are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or U.S. Marine Corps. The opinions and views of writers whose materials appear herein are those of the writers and not the publishers. Appearance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or any other DOD component, this newspaper, or Western States Weeklies, Inc. Subscription cost is \$75/year.



**GAIN
INDUSTRY
EXPERTISE**

**FAST-TRACK
YOUR CYBER
CAREER**

SUCCEED AGAIN

Secure your future with an accredited online cybersecurity degree or certificate. Gain the knowledge and practical skills you need to become an ethical hacker through immersive learning and AI-enhanced experiences while learning from industry experts.

- Earn up to 90 credits for prior learning, industry certifications, military experience & training toward a bachelor's or transfer up to 12 credits toward a master's
- Programs in cybersecurity technology, cybersecurity management & policy, cyber operations, cyberaccounting & more
- Reduced tuition rate for eligible active-duty servicemembers, spouses & dependent children
- No-cost digital resources in place of textbooks for most courses



UMGC has been designated as a CAE-CD by the NSA and as a CDFAE by DACCA.

CLASSES START MARCH 12.
UMGC.EDU | 619-550-1537



**UNIVERSITY
OF MARYLAND
GLOBAL CAMPUS**
AT YOUR SERVICE SINCE 1947



Army
*M10 Booker undergoing cold weather trials in Alaska

Navy
*Report to Congress on Columbia-class submarine program
*Virginia subs, some surface ships safe in new Pentagon FY 2026 budget review
*USS *Thomas Hudner* deploying to Fourth Fleet
*Navy captains imprisoned in 'Fat Leonard' scandal seek details of government misconduct

Marine Corps
*Marine Corps shrinks its Osprey fleet on Okinawa under Force Design plan

Air Force
*NGAD engines pass key design reviews, prototype work underway
*Pratt gets \$1.5B to sustain F-22 engine—and is working on upgrades
*New hypersonic strike-recon aircraft effort eyeing prototype development by 2030
*Advanced fighter engines pass design review. Now comes fabrication stage.
*Malmstrom Airmen participate in unarmed Minuteman III ICBM launch at California Base
*Veteran, employee at Robins Air Force Base sues after service dog request was denied

Your Military
*South Korea, US conduct exercise with B-1B bomber, fighter jets
*Wave of dorm improvements reaches 1,500 airmen at fighter base in South Korea

Veterans
*Remains of dozens of WWII, Vietnam War troops brought to Hawaii for forensic identification
*New Concerned Veterans for America director to lead group's effort to expand priorities

Education & Transition
*Parents at Army base in Stuttgart say students grappling with new school rules

Military Culture & History
*Ronald Reagan narrated a short film in 1945 about the Tuskegee Airmen

Cyber, Space & Unmanned
*Space Development Agency to re-bid contentious prototype contract

Defense Industry
*L3Harris breaks ground on solid rocket motor production expansion
*GE, Pratt clear key design milestone, begin building next-gen engine prototypes
*SOCOM looking to acquire new drone-launched glide bombs

MISSION AND PURPOSE ON FULL DISPLAY AS TRUMAN RETURNS TO SEA

from USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) Public Affairs
MEDITERRANEAN SEA - Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) is underway conducting routine flight operations in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations, Feb. 24, after departing Souda Bay, Greece, on Feb. 23, following completion of an emergent repair availability (ERAV).

"Our ship remains operationally ready to complete deployment with mission and purpose on full display by the entire crew," said Capt. Chris Hill, commander of *Truman*. "We are out here launching and recovering aircraft, ready to 'Give 'em Hell' with combat credible power."

The Navy's ability to rapidly repair its warships anywhere in the world is a testament to our lethality and the warfighting advantage of relationships with Allies and partners.

Led by Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center (FDRMC), *Truman* completed the five-day ERAV at Naval Support Activity (NSA) Souda Bay, Greece. In an all-hands effort, Sailors worked with FDRMC personnel, Norfolk Naval Ship-

yard, and local industry partner Theodoropoulos Group to assess damage, develop a repair plan, and restore weathertight integrity to the ship following the collision on Feb. 12.

"FDRMC is focused on keeping our forward-deployed naval forces mission-ready across 5th and 6th Fleets, maintaining critical combat readiness for the ships and their Sailors," said Capt. Mollie Bily, FDRMC commanding officer. "The rapid repair effort on *Truman* was a testament to our expeditionary maintenance expertise and the exceptional collaboration with our Norfolk Naval Shipyard teammates and industry partners."

Since deploying, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 1 has flown over 5,500 sorties, including two self-defense strikes into Houthi-



FUNERAL HONORS Sailors conduct military funeral honors with funeral escort for Seaman 1st Class Aaron L. McMurtrey in Section 69 of Arlington National Cemetery, Va., Feb. 13, 2025. McMurtrey was assigned to USS *California* on Dec. 7, 1941, when the battleship sustained multiple torpedo and bomb hits during the attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The attack on the ship resulted in the deaths of 103 crew members, including McMurtrey, who was officially accounted for in 2024 after his remains were identified. U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser

controlled Yemen territory and a large force strike against ISIS-Somalia targets in Northeast Somalia in coordination with U.S. Africa Command. The *Truman* Carrier Strike Group continues to provide maritime security and regional stability in support of its component commanders.

The carrier strike group in-

cludes flagship *Truman*; CVW 1; staffs from CSG-8, CVW-1; and Destroyer Squadron 28; Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64); and three Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers, USS *Stout* (DDG 55), USS *The Sullivans* (DDG 68), and USS *Jason Dunham* (DDG 109).

March monthly holidays and observances

Action & Skill Toys Month
Adopt A Rescued Guinea Pig
Alport Syndrome Awareness
American Red Cross Month
Asset Management
Awareness Month
Brain Injury Awareness
Child Life Month
Clap 4 Health Month
Colic Awareness Month
Colorectal Cancer Awareness
Credit Education Month
Deep Vein Thrombosis
Developmental Disabilities
Awareness Month
Employee Spirit Month
Endometriosis Month
Expanding Girls' Horizons in
Science & Engineering

Holy Humor Month
Honor Society Awareness
Humorists Are Artists Month
Int'l Ideas Month
Int'l Listening Awareness
Int'l Mirth Month
Irish-American Heritage
Mad for Plaid Month
Malignant Hypertension
Awareness & Training Month
March Frozen Food Month
Music In Our Schools Month
Nat'l Athletic Training
Nat'l Breast Implant Awareness
Nat'l Caffeine Awareness
Nat'l Chronic Fatigue
Syndrome Awareness Month
Nat'l Clean Up Your IRS Act
Nat'l Colorectal Cancer Awareness

Nat'l Craft Month
Nat'l Ethics Awareness
Nat'l Essential Tremor
Awareness Month
Nat'l Eye Donor Month
Nat'l Frozen Food Month
Nat'l Hockey Month
Nat'l Multiple Sclerosis
Education & Awareness
Nat'l Kidney Month
Nat'l Kite Month
Nat'l Ladder Safety
Nat'l March Into Literacy
Nat'l Noodle Month
Nat'l Nutrition Month
Nat'l On-Hold Month
Nat'l Peanut Month
Nat'l Pet Vaccination
Nat'l Snow Guards Safety

Nat'l Social Work Month
Nat'l Umbrella Month
Nat'l Women's History
Optimism Month
Pastor's Wife Appreciation
Paws To Read Month
Play The Recorder Month
Poison Prevention Awareness
Problem Gambling
Awareness Month
Quinoa Month
Save The Vaquita Month
Save Your Vision Month
Sing With Your Child Month
Small Press Month
Spiritual Wellness Month
Supply Management Month
Trisomy Awareness Month
Vascular Abnormalities

Apostolic Faith - Door of Hope Christian Church
"A place of HEALING, HAPPINESS, & MIRACLES!"
Rays Of Hope Sunday Morning Glory Prayer 9:30am
Sunday Morning Worship Celebration 10:15am
2420 52nd Street, San Diego 92105
"Wherever there is GOD there is HOPE!" Join Us!
Visit www.hopeformesd.org or Call 619.414.8251

Bayview Church
Attract... Assimilate... Activate
6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 • (619) 262-8384
Sunday 8am & 10am Worship Services
Studies In Christian Living (formerly Sunday School) Tues & Thurs online only 6pm (contact Church for sign up). In person Saturday 9am & 10am
www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org

Bethany Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach 92107
(Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building)
Worship 11am Sundays
Bible Class, Wednesdays 10am
(619)222-7291 Office@BethanyLutheranOB.org

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

Places of Worship

Place your ad in our 'Places of Worship' directory....as low as \$15 per week!

Christ Community Church
"Helping people love God, find community and make a difference"
Sunday services at 8:45am and 10:30am
Children's ministry for all kids. Life groups for teens and adults.
9535 Kearny Villa Rd. Mira Mesa, 92126. Just off I-15 and Miramar Rd.
More Info: www.gotoChrist.com

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

Mesa View Baptist Church
Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CW03, USMC (Ret.)
Seeking Sinners; Saving Souls. Strengthening Saints
Sunday School at 8:45am • Morning Worship at 10am
Wednesday Night Bible Study 7pm
13230 Pomerado Rd., Poway • 858-485-6110 • www.mesaview.org

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church San Diego
"Evangelizing, Equipping, Exalting and Excellence in Service"
Sunday School at 9:30am, Morning Worship at 11am
Join us for the Installation Ceremony of our new Pastor.
Rev. Dennis Ray Anderson, D. Min. on Sunday, Nov. 10, 3:30pm at
Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church
3045 Greely Ave., San Diego, CA 92113; 619-233-3296

Resurrection Lutheran Church & Preschool of Coronado
Sunday Worship: 10:15am • Adult Bible Study: Sunday at 9am
The Rev. Dr. Timothy Eichler
1111 5th Street, Coronado, CA 92118
www.RLchurch.org
Church (619) 435-1000 • Preschool (619) 435-0286

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

Career and Education

VA dismisses more than 1,000 employees

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the dismissal of more than 1,000 employees.

Those dismissed Feb. 13 include non-bargaining unit probationary employees who have served less than a year in a competitive service appointment or who have served less than two years in an excepted service appointment.

The personnel moves will save the department more than \$98 million per year, and VA will redirect all of those resources back toward health care, benefits and services for VA beneficiaries.

There are currently more than 43,000 probationary employees across the department, the vast majority of whom are exempt from the personnel actions because they serve in mission-critical positions – primarily those

supporting benefits and services for VA beneficiaries – or are covered under a collective bargaining agreement. VA employees who elected to participate in the Office of Personnel Management's deferred resignation program are also exempt from these personnel actions.

Mission-critical positions are exempt from the reductions, which will enable VA to redirect over \$98 million annually to health care, benefits and services for VA beneficiaries.

The dismissals are effective immediately and have been communicated directly to each employee. As an additional safeguard to ensure VA benefits and services are not impacted, the first Senior Executive Service or SES-equivalent leader in a dismissed employee's chain of command can request that the

employee be exempted from removal.

The dismissals announced are part of a government-wide Trump Administration effort to make agencies more efficient, effective and responsive to the American people. To that end, VA is refocusing on its core mission: providing the best possible care and benefits to veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors.

"At VA, we're focused on saving money so it can be better spent on veteran care," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "We thank these employees for their service to VA. This was a tough decision, but ultimately it's the right call to better support the veterans, families, caregivers, and survivors the department exists to serve. To be perfectly clear: these moves will not negatively impact VA health care, benefits or beneficiaries."



Healthy Boundaries for Healthy Relationships
Healthy relationships don't all look the same, but they share a similar foundation. Whether casual or committed, traditional or non-traditional, a healthy relationship starts with open, honest communication. Respect and empathy are also key.

Relationship Green Flags

- Mutual respect and trust
- Open and honest communication
- Active consent & boundary setting
- Emotional intelligence and empathy
- Accountability and responsibility

By focusing on building healthy relationships, you can create a safer and more respectful environment for everyone. Prioritize consent and boundary setting. Practice active listening and empathy. Respect one another's autonomy and decisions. Encourage open and honest communication. Hold one another accountable for living out these relationship green flags. Sexual assault prevention is the responsibility of every Marine. For resources and support, visit: www.usmc-mccs.org/sapr.

my CAL VET Custom benefits and services	Contact CalNet 1-800-952-5626	VA Benefits Hotline 1-800-827-1000	Veterans Crisis Line Dial 988 Press 1	Find a CVSD 1-844-SERV-VET (1-844-7378-938)
---	----------------------------------	---------------------------------------	---	---

Hegseth addresses strengthening military by cutting excess, refocusing DOD budget

by Matthew Olay, DOD News
ARLINGTON, Va. - During a recorded, on-camera address from the Pentagon Feb. 21, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth discussed his priorities of strengthening the military by cutting fiscal fraud, waste and abuse at DOD while also finding ways to refocus the department's budget.

Hegseth began his remarks stating the Defense Department owes the American people transparency related to steps DOD is taking to accomplish its mission while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

"We shoot straight with you. We want you, the American people — the taxpayers — to understand why we're making the decisions that we're making here," Hegseth said, adding that DOD is working as quickly as possible to execute the priorities of achieving peace through strength by rebuilding the military, restoring the warrior ethos and reestablishing deterrence.

Prior to getting in-depth on issues related to the department's finances, Hegseth cautioned viewers to take anything they've heard and/or read on the topic with a "gigantic grain of salt."

"Ever since I've taken this position, the only thing I've cared about is doing right by our service members — Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen and Guardians," Hegseth said. "In short, we want the biggest, most badass military on the planet."

Hegseth then touched on three areas related to the Pentagon's finances.

First, Hegseth said to tackle excess spending and address the issue of fraud, waste and abuse within DOD, the department would be relying on the recently established Department of Government Efficiency.

"[DOGE is] here, and they're going to be incorporated into what we're doing at DOD to find fraud, waste and abuse in the largest discretionary budget in the federal government," Hegseth said.

He added that DOGE would be given access to systems — with proper safeguards and classifications — to first find redundancies and identify previous priorities not core

to the department's current mission and then get rid of them.

"With DOGE, we are focusing as much as we can on headquarters and fat and top-line stuff that allows us to reinvest elsewhere," Hegseth said.

He then pivoted to the topic of reorienting the defense budget inherited from the previous administration.

Hegseth said beginning immediately, the Pentagon will pull 8% — or roughly \$50 billion — from nonlethal programs in the current budget

and refocus that money on President Donald J. Trump's "America First" priorities for national defense.

"That's not a cut, it's refocusing and reinvesting existing funds into building the force that protects you, the American people," Hegseth said.

Read more at <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4073041/hegseth-addresses-strengthening-military-by-cutting-excess-refocusing-dod-budget/>.

Chairman of Joint Chiefs of staff, Navy CNO fired

STARS AND STRIPES - Air Force Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was fired Feb. 21 by President Donald Trump, and Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the chief of naval operations, was also relieved of duty.

"I want to thank General Charles 'CQ' Brown for his over 40 years of service to our country, including as our current chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Trump said in a post on Truth Social. "He is a fine gentleman and an outstanding leader, and I wish a great future for him and his family."

Reports have circulated that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth would fire senior officers who were promoted during former President Joe Biden's administration and replace them with others more aligned with Trump's agenda.

Brown and Franchetti were reported as being on the list of names to be fired. Franchetti was relieved of duty Feb. 21, according to a military official who spoke on condition of anonymity. Trump in his social media post nominated retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Dan "Razin" Caine to be the next chairman.

"During my first term, Razin was instrumental in the complete annihilation of the ISIS caliphate. It was done in record setting time, a matter of weeks," Trump said. "Many so-called military 'geniuses' said it would take years to defeat ISIS. Gen. Caine, on the other hand, said it could be done quickly, and he delivered. Despite being highly qualified and respected to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the previous administration, Gen. Caine was passed over for promotion."

Trump added he has directed Hegseth to solicit nominations for five additional high-level positions, which will be announced soon. Minutes after the post, Hegseth in a statement said the Pentagon would be looking for chief of naval operations and Air Force vice chief of staff nominations.

Franchetti has served as the Navy's top officer since November 2023, and Air Force Gen. James Slife is the service's second-highest ranking officer.

Slife was also fired. Hegseth also said he is requesting nominations for the judge advocates general for the Army, Navy and Air Force. "Under President Trump, we are putting in place new leadership that will focus our military on its core mission of deterring, fighting and winning wars," he said. "I salute Gen. CQ Brown, Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Gen. James Slife and their fellow officers for their outstanding service. Each of them have had brilliant careers and led with great courage, honor, and distinction."

Come Pitch With Us!

Southern California Horseshoe Pitchers Association (SCHPA), a charter of the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA), has clubs all over the southern half of California. These clubs all have first class horseshoe courts built to official specifications.

- Organized tournaments most weekends year around
- All skill levels and ages welcome. When you enter a tournament, you will be seeded with other players with similar skill levels for fair, enjoyable and friendly competition.
- Local clubs located at Balboa Park, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Ramona
- For info visit <https://socalhorseshoes.weebly.com/>
- Join today and we'll see you at the pits!



NHPA
National Horseshoe Pitchers Association
"Come Pitch with Us!"



Local Military

USS Stockdale returns home after seven-month deployment

by Petty Officer 1st Class Storm Henry
U.S. 3rd Fleet

SAN DIEGO - After covering 44,000 nautical miles with its helicopter squadron, Navy destroyer USS *Stockdale* (DDG 106) returned to its homeport here Feb. 21 after a seven-month deployment to 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas.

Stockdale departed here July 24 last year on an independent deployment to 5th Fleet to conduct operations in support of regional stability. They joined the carrier *Abraham Lincoln* strike group August to November 2024 and remained in 5th Fleet following *Lincoln*'s departure.

"The crew of *Stockdale* dis-

played immeasurable courage and unwavering dedication while serving in some of the most complex naval combat operations since World War II," said Cmdr. Lauren Johnson, *Stockdale*'s commander.

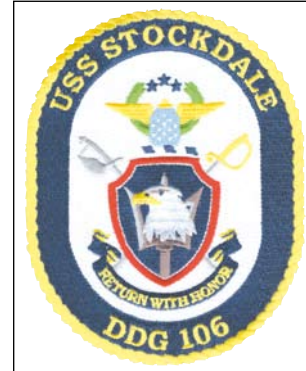
"The crew answered every challenge with strength and resilience. Driven by their determination, professionalism, and training, Team 007 demonstrated that we remain the most lethal destroyer in the Navy. I could not be more proud of every crew member and our families at home who supported us along the way."

While in 5th Fleet, *Stockdale* repelled multiple Iranian-backed Houthi attacks during transits of the Bab el-Mandeb strait and escort operations of U.S.-flagged vessels in the Gulf of Aden. *Stockdale* engaged and defeated one-way attack uncrewed aerial systems, anti-ship ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles. *Stockdale* received no damage and no personnel were hurt.

Stockdale deployed to the U.S. Central Command to bolster U.S. military force posture in the Middle East. While in 5th Fleet, *Stockdale* worked alongside carrier strike group and CENTCOM joint forces.

Stockdale held bilateral part-

nership meetings to reinforce regional stability and capability. The ship made a port call in Safaga, Egypt, where Johnson met with Egyptian Red Sea Naval Base leadership, and



subsequently participated in an at-sea sailing exercise with Egyptian Navy corvette ENS Abu Qir (F941).

In the Republic of Maldives, the destroyer hosted the Chief of Defense Force for the Maldives National Defense Force and other leadership during an onboard reception and dinner. Both events reinforced U.S. commitment to its international network of partners to further enhance free and open seas.

Throughout deployment, *Stockdale*, with an air wing detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71, traveled over 44,000 nautical miles, conducted 12 replenish-

USS Tripoli to forward deploy to Japan

by Ladonna Singleton

Amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli* (LHA 7) will move to Sasebo, Japan, as part of a scheduled rotation of forces in the Pacific, the U.S. Navy announced recently.

Tripoli will replace USS *America* (LHA 6), which will depart Sasebo and move to San Diego.

The forward presence of *Tripoli* supports the United States' commitment to the defense of Japan, enhances the national security of the United States and improves its ability to protect strategic interests. *Tripoli* will directly support the Defense Strategic Guidance to posture the most capable units forward in the Indo-Pacific Region.

Boxer celebrates 30 years of service

by Seaman Tyler Miles, USS Boxer (LHD 4)

SAN DIEGO - Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer* (LHD 4) marked the 30th anniversary of its commissioning with a ceremony held on the mess decks Feb. 11.

This year's theme was "30 years and thriving," attended by current crew members, past and present *Boxer* leadership to celebrate the ship's remarkable history and the men and women who have served aboard.

Senior Chief Information Systems Technician Adam Randle highlighted the ship's storied history and meaning of *Boxer*'s Crest.

"*Boxer* is more than just steel and machinery; it's a home, a legacy, and a symbol of strength," said Randle. "Over the years, this ship has carried generations of Sailors who have stood the watch, answered the call, and upheld the highest traditions of the Navy. I'm proud to serve aboard her and grateful for the camaraderie and resilience of the crew that keeps her mission-ready."

ments-at-sea, 28 sea and anchor details, and HSM 71 conducted over 650 hours of rotary air wing hours and achieved an air-to-air kill of an Iranian-backed Houthi one-way attack UAS.

Stockdale's crew was recognized as Destroyer Squadron 21's recipient of the 2024 Battle Effectiveness Award, and the

Sailors were awarded the Combat Action Ribbon for their actions in 5th Fleet.

As mentioned, *Stockdale* is led by their skipper, Cmdr. Lauren Johnson, executive officers Cmdr. Jacob Beckelhymer and Cmdr. Carissa Moore, and Command Master Chief Gomer Turiano.

LET THE GOOD TIMES BLOOM! HOP ON OVER TO ADMIRAL PROUT FIELD FOR A DAY FILLED WITH FAMILY-FRIENDLY FUN. ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: • EGG HUNTS • ALL HANDS CAR SHOW • RIDES, INFLATABLES, AND MORE OPEN TO AUTHORIZED BASE PATRONS AND THEIR GUESTS. NO REGISTRATION REQUIRED.

Research center helping leaders evaluate command climate

Meet the civilian research team working towards force wellness

by John Marciano

Naval Health Research Center

When a Navy ship or shore command is at risk or experiences adverse safety events, leaders need clear information about vulnerabilities that exist, who is most at risk and why, and what actions can be taken to prevent future incidents. Understanding how leadership, workplace cohesion and stressors influence and affect Sailors' mental and behavioral health is crucial for developing meaningful solutions to these issues.

Civilian investigators at Naval Health Research Center developed the Rapid Response Surveillance capability to assess these factors quickly and provide practical recommendations to Navy leaders. The multidisciplinary team is made up of researchers with expertise

in psychology, public health, mixed-methods research and epidemiology, and can deploy when a command experiences an adverse event or mishap, or when a command is at a heightened risk for such events.

After RRS has been requested by a command and funding is secured, the team schedules a one-week visit to conduct an anonymous and voluntary command survey as well as in-depth focus groups. The team may screen for depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety and post-traumatic stress symptoms. They ask about alcohol use, sleep habits and aggressive behavior, and assess participant's perceptions of leadership, workplace cohesion and stressors.

While it can be challenging to recruit enough Sailors to make the study worthwhile, the team provides incentives to participate, and works to establish trust with the participants.

"I think the fact that we're civilian researchers is very helpful because we don't report to their chain of command," said Robyn Englert, the RRS team study coordinator.

Once data collection is complete, RRS works quickly to analyze their findings. They take extra care to review what they have learned and develop recommendations that can be readily implemented without interfering with the command's mission.

Findings are presented to command leadership, and infographics, handouts and summaries are distributed to relevant departments.

"All of the data we collect is for the purpose of trying to make realistic, specific and actionable recommendations that the command can implement to make the experiences of Sailors better," said Dr. Jennifer Belding, who was principal investigator of

RRS from 2023-2024.

"It's little changes to leadership style, schedules or making a tweak here or there in order to ease stressors that commonly can get overlooked," said Englert.

The RRS capability spawned from a similar effort the team was conducting called the Challenges of Operational Environments, or COPE, study. While similar in design and approach, COPE is unique from RRS in that it seeks to understand how work-related stressors impact the mental and behavioral health of sailors throughout the different phases of a command's life cycle.

"We know that Navy commands go through different phases or life cycles. For example, a carrier might be stationed in the U.S. for a while, deploy, then change homeports, then visit the shipyard for repairs. We don't currently have data about how these changes impact Sail-



Naval Health Research Center's (NHRC) Rapid Response Surveillance (RRS) team works to equip Navy leaders with information to better anticipate common service member stressors, with the goal of helping commands offer targeted resources and support. U.S. Navy photo by Danielle Cazarez

ors' well-being," said Belding.

By identifying which stressors are associated with harmful behaviors at specific times, the team can provide commands with crucial information, allowing leaders to anticipate common stressors, potentially preventing issues like suicidal ideation, aggressive workplace behaviors and hazardous drinking. The

goal is to help commands offer targeted resources and support, promoting self-care and overall well-being among their personnel.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/491468/nhrc-helping-leaders-evaluate-command-climate-meet-civilian-research-team-working-towards-force-wellness>

THE DOG WIZARD CORONADO
Veteran Owned & Operated
619-419-0160
15% Off ALL training programs
 for Active Duty & Veterans
 Call us OR scan QR Code to schedule your **FREE** Evaluation. While you're busy serving your country, we are here to serve you!

ACCREDITED BUSINESS
 BBB
 THE DOG WIZARD
 "Where it's the dog that counts"

Veterans Helping Veterans
 DO YOU HAVE Medicare but your needs have changed?
ARE YOU TURNING 65?
 Are you TRICARE or a Veteran using VA Benefits?
ARE YOU A SENIOR?
 Do you have Medicare Part A & B?
 YES! Then you are **ELIGIBLE** up to Additional **\$249/mo.** added to your **S.S.**
Need Dental? Up to \$3500/Year
Vince Parra • 619-763-2425
 SERVING ALL OF CA. • CA LIC: 0M89123
Above Senior Health Plans available to Veterans & Non-Veterans

El Indio
 Mexican Restaurant and Catering
 Family Owned & Operated Since 1940
Best Mexican Food in San Diego
Free Parking! 10% Military Discount

3695 India Street • www.elindiosandiego.com • 619-299-0333
 Open Daily 9am - 8pm

Lifetime Animal Care Center
 Quality Care With A Gentle Touch
NOW OFFERING
10% OFF
 For all Military
 4250-C Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
 San Diego, Ca. 92117
858-274-1760

MILITARY JUSTICE LAWYER
PATTISON LAW FIRM, P.C.
 Daphne Pattison Silverman's mission is to light the path to truth. Focused on defending military members who are accused of crimes within the military judicial system, she has developed exceptional insight into how to uncover and convey the truth. Silverman believes deeply in every case she undertakes. A former Navy JAG and a disabled veteran, she is fully committed to defending the rights of those who serve our country. For each case, Silverman conducts thorough investigations and armed with the truth, fearlessly presents her findings to military commands and juries. She stands up to the most powerful forces in the world - ready and able to seize justice for her clients.
 Daphne Pattison Silverman
 Selected to Super Lawyers
760-500-0455
 daphnesilverman.com

VETERAN COMPENSATION SERVICES
VETERANS WITH LESS THAN 100% VA RATING WE CAN HELP YOU!

- ✓ Risk-Free Consultation
- ✓ Over 95% Success Rate
- ✓ Experts in VA Documentation
- ✓ Thousands of Veterans Served
- ✓ Veteran Friendly Doctors
- ✓ Experienced A+ Rated with BBB

www.VeteranComp.com

"Shop our new sexy lingerie, soft lace and daring designs making you irresistible. Treat yourself & embrace your inner vixen"

DÉJÀ VU LOVE BOUTIQUE
2130 Industrial Ct., Vista, CA 92081
866-711-0425
 Shop online at www.dejavuloveboutique.com
 Hours: 10am-10pm 7 Days a Week

Military Discount 20% Off
 With valid military ID. Some restrictions may apply. Not valid on any sale items. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Exp. 3-31-25

MARCH 1-15, 2025 www.armedforcesdispatch.com 7

USS Theodore Roosevelt DAPA event

by Seaman Apprentice Alexander Bussman

USS Theodore Roosevelt

Aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, in coordination with the Coronado Police Department, held a joint information session on the risks and dangers of driving under the influence of alcohol on board Naval Air Station North Island Feb. 20

As Sailors listened, Corporal

Andrew Hutchens spoke on his experiences with arrests and collisions that involved people driving while intoxicated. Hutchens is an acting sergeant with the CPD and has been working with them for three years.

“DUI enforcement is something I’m passionate about,” said Hutchens. “It’s something I’ve been training on for years, as well as traffic collisions, which

often go hand in hand with DUIs unfortunately.”

During the event, Hutchens described many of the common myths surrounding drinking and driving. One common myth is that in order to be arrested, a driver has to have a blood alcohol level above a 0.08 percent. Although this is true, it isn’t the only factor that can dictate whether a driver gets arrested or not.

“YOU CAN BE ARRESTED BELOW 0.08 PERCENT,” SAID HUTCHENS. “ALL WE HAVE TO SHOW IS THAT IS THAT YOUR DRIVING WAS SOMEHOW IMPAIRED BY THE ALCOHOL IN YOUR SYSTEM. IF YOU’RE UNDER 21, ALL I HAVE TO PROVE IS THAT ANY ALCOHOL AT ALL IS IN YOUR SYSTEM.”

Other misconceptions include the number of drinks that it takes to get to a 0.08 percent and various ways to get sober faster. In many cases, two to four 12 oz cans of beer will result in a blood alcohol level above the legal limit.

Once someone is intoxicated, there is nothing that will sober them up other than time. Methods like drinking water, rolling down the window to get fresh air or chewing peppermint gum won’t help to avoid a DUI.

“If you feel a little bit better with the window rolled down, congratulations,” said Hutchens. “But when one of my partners and I pull you over, smell the alcohol coming off your breath and we end up arresting you, you’re going to jail.”

After Hutchens spoke, multiple Sailors participated in sobriety tests that simulated being under the influence. This involved a Sailor wearing goggles that simulated the effects of being intoxicated while a police officer ran them through the same tests that they use in the real world to gauge a person’s level of intoxication.

“Once I put on the goggles, I couldn’t process anything,” said Retail Services Specialist 3rd Class Savannah Watkins, from Fort Smith, Ark., who participated in the event. “All I knew was that I was about to fall every time I tried to take a step.”

Throughout these exercises and the discussion held by Hutchens, the effects alcohol has on judgment and coordination was made clear, encouraging young Sailors to stay safe and responsible. Safe alternatives to driving under the influence include San Diego and Coronado public transport, rideshare services, and Safe Ride, a program put in place by the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions which pays for a ride home in the event that a Sailor is too intoxicated to drive.



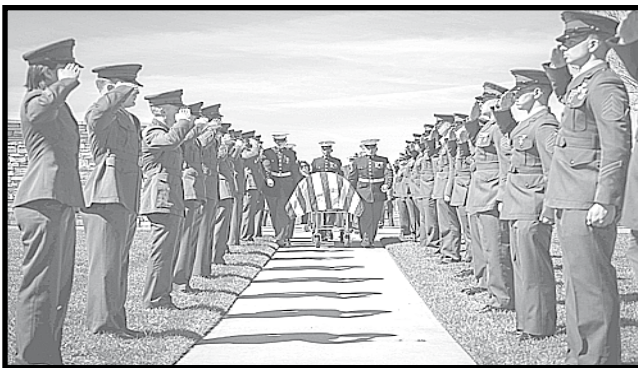
Navy Aviation Maintenance Administrationman Airman Antonio Nicdao, left, and Coronado Police Department A/CPL Danny Aguirre, participate in a Drug and Alcohol Prevention Association event aboard Theodore Roosevelt U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Alexander Bussman



LOCAL PHOTO GALLERY



SAN LUIS OBISPO California Polytech engineering students Alex Gray and Hunter Herring-Alderete check the power generation and loading statistics of an Expeditionary Ocean Power Generator system, for a capstone project collaboration with the Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center and Cal. Poly here to bring agile technology to the warfighter. Courtesy photo



LONG BEACH Marines with I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group salute to pay respects to the passing of Sgt. Jacob M. Durham, an electronic intelligence/electromagnetic warfare analyst on Feb. 22, 2025. Durham, a native of Long Beach, passed away in an aircraft incident during a routine mission in support of U.S.-Philippine security cooperation activities, Feb. 6. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Amelia Kang

The Pendleton Pantry

by Cpl. Mary Jenni, Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON - On Feb. 12, Camp Pendleton Armed Services YMCA hosted the Pendleton Pantry grand reopening at the AYSMCA on base. After being temporarily closed for improvements, the pantry moved to a larger space within the ASYMCA with the aim of improving facilitation for the growing needs of military families, which means that military families have more access to nutritious food and other essential resources.

The Pendleton Pantry is a donation-based organization that fights against food insecurity for active-duty military personnel and their families. In 2024, the Pantry served 4,279 individuals and 2,836 families and is on track to distribute over 100,000 lbs. of food to over 2,800 families in 2025. This January alone, they distributed 9,056 lbs. of food, an average of 35 lbs. per family, which resulted in a 40 percent increase from last year.

“This growth is a testament to the unwavering support of our partners, volunteers and donors, as well as the resilience of our military families who continue to serve our nation with honor,” said Samantha Holt, the executive director for Camp Pendleton ASYMCA.

Camp Pendleton ASYMCA believes that putting food on the table should not be a challenge for struggling military families, a demographic that already faces challenges like deployments, relocations, and the high cost of living in Southern California. Therefore, the organization aims to alleviate these burdens by offering a selection of fresh produce, non-perishable items, and other essentials, as well as the ability to access resources discreetly and without judgment.

“This organization has been a tremendous support for [my family]. It provides much-needed assistance with food, clothes, and diapers and made a significant difference to [us]. I’m truly grateful for everything they’ve done and continue to do,” said Cpl. Jacquelyn Hernandez, a Camp Pendleton AYSMCA member and single mother of four. “This resource has been invaluable not just to me but also to many active-duty members, their dependents and families in similar situations,” said Hernandez, who is one of many service members who Pendleton Pantry aims to support through nutritional assistance in the face of the increased cost of living.

Camp Pendleton ASYMCA invites the community to volunteer and spreading its news of food insecurity relief. The pantry is open Tues.-Wed. from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 200090 Ash Road, Camp Pendleton.



MCRD SAN DIEGO Drill Instructor Staff Sgt. Celise Phillips with Golf Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, supervises recruits during an introduction to the combat fitness test here Feb. 19, 2025. The Combat Fitness Test, required annually for all Marines, includes an 880-yard sprint, ammunition can lifts, and a maneuver under fire drill. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Janell B. Alvarez

8 www.armedforcesdispatch.com MARCH 1-15, 2025

VA Disability Claim Denied?

Know Your Rights and Don't Take "No" for an Answer!

Don't Risk a Permanent Denial and Lose Back Pay

Call the Professional Advocates Today!

Claims Agents Have over 80% Success Rate on Appeals

No Fees Unless You Win - Free Consultation!

800-921-0310

www.VetDisabilityAid.com



El Indio
Mexican Restaurant and Catering

Family Owned & Operated Since 1940

Best Mexican Food in San Diego

Free Parking! 10% Military Discount



3695 India Street • www.elindiosandiego.com • 619-299-0333
Open Daily 9am - 8pm



The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
<https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/>

Food trucks as an alternative to cookie-cutter institutional fast food

Many decades ago, when I was a kid living at home with my parents, life was very different than it is today. Dad earned a living to financially support our family, and mom stayed at home to otherwise take care of us. I especially loved my mother's cooking, and took it for granted. Only occasionally did we venture out of the house for meals - burgers, fried chicken and Chinese food.

I really miss my mom's cooking. The contrast is perhaps the greatest when compared to institutional cooking, like what I find when I am out of town to cover events at convention centers. Their meal choices are typically mediocre and overpriced — not food that I especially look forward to eating, while taking a break from hours of working the show floors, but we all need to eat.

Last year, while covering two conventions, I tried something different for some of my meals. Foregoing the safe but boring certainty of mass-produced convention center food, I walked into the sunshine and fresh air to check the food trucks parked just outside the convention centers' doors.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas, I checked out the King's Sausage food truck. Their tag line is the popular Polish phrase "STRAIGHT OUTTA POLAND," which is a play on the phrase "Straight Outta Compton."

I ordered their stuffed cabbage. It consists of beef and rice covered in a thick tomato sauce (not spicy, which is the way that I like it). It is like home cooking, and absolutely delicious. I enjoyed it so much so that I returned to the same food truck the next day and ordered the very same thing.

While there, I met Jerry Kozielec — the owner. I raved about his stuffed cabbage and about how much more I enjoyed it than my

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

previous day's meal at the convention center's food court. I must have mentioned to him that I was a journalist, because he insisted that I also try their pierogies — on the house, so I did.

While I was at my table finishing the stuffed cabbage, he brought over the pierogies. Let me tell you, either one of these entrees is a meal in itself, but the pierogies were so good that I ate all of them, too!

Then we walked inside the Las Vegas Convention Center. In a large hall that was not being used for exhibits, was where Jerry's other location was — and it offered an expanded menu. His wife was working there. Together they do the cooking at this family business.

My only regret — and it is a big one — is that Jerry does not have a food truck in San Diego. I would love to eat their homemade stuffed cabbage or pierogies right now.

If you visit Las Vegas for a convention or trade show, check out King's Sausage at the con-

vention center, and on Yelp and Facebook. They also do private parties, events and catering.

Last summer I was covering a major event at the Anaheim Convention Center. I had eaten inside the convention center before and was underwhelmed, so I decided to check out the food trucks that were assembled in two rows on the promenade, in front of the convention center.

The German Yum Truck caught my attention. Years earlier its owner, Samuel Caklo, had left his home in Germany and invested his life savings in pursuit of his dream to serve popular food from there in America.

The German Yum Truck's "German-Turkish-Mediterranean Fusion" cuisine features daily fresh grilled and thinly sliced rotisserie meats, and includes kebabs, shawarma, falafel, German bratwurst, chicken tenders and more. My protein bowl was delicious and filling. You'll find them at <https://germanyumtruck.com>.

Food trucks co-exist with brick-and-mortar food service outlets at convention centers. Wouldn't it be great if shopping centers also included food trucks, so that we could enjoy food truck food at home?

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

Copyright © 2025 by Jan Wagner - AutoMatters & More #872

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

Our young Navy family was stationed in Norfolk, Va., in late 1998, where we bought a starter home on a cul-de-sac and settled in to get therapies for our developmentally delayed toddler son. House poor, single-income and with doctor's bills not covered by the early versions of "Tricare's Exceptional Family Member Program," we lived comfortably, but paycheck to paycheck in those days.

I remember withdrawing one crisp \$20 bill from the drive-thru Navy Federal Credit Union ATM machine each Monday, often while listening to the juicy Monica Lewinsky scandal on my minivan's AM radio, and making it my goal for my cash to last until the weekend. I used my debit card sparingly for gas and groceries, but back then, a gallon of gas, a two-liter bottle of soda, and a dozen eggs cost less than a dollar each.

Before our first Norfolk tour was over, 9/11 happened, and recruitment, pay and benefits increased to meet military readiness demands. In 2002, military pay was increased by 6.2 percent, the highest increase since Reagan raised military pay by 14.2 percent in 1982.

By contrast, today's military families are paying at least three times as much for groceries and gas, and they'd be lucky if twenty bucks lasted a day or two. How did we get here?

After George W. Bush's big

Military families hit harder by inflation than civilians

military pay increase in 2002, annual military pay raises slowly but surely plummeted as the country grew weary over the War on Terror. In 2014 and 2015 under Obama, military pay increased only one percent in the midst of widespread Pentagon budget cuts and military drawdown.

And recently, four years of record inflation has taken a particularly hard toll on military families, whose pay rates have not been equal to their civilian counterparts. During this time, Biden authorized military pay increases of 3 percent for 2021, 2.7 percent for 2022, 4.6 percent for 2023, and 5.2 percent for 2024. For 2025, Biden signed a bill allowing a 4.5 percent increase for most military members, while the junior enlisted ranks will receive 14.5 percent more to lessen their financial struggles.

Not surprisingly, the recently released results of Blue Star Families' 2024 Military Lifestyle Survey shows that military pay was a top concern for active duty military families for the fifth year in a row.

Active duty military families have high spouse unemployment and underemployment rates, relocation costs, and unreimbursed housing costs to contend with, but their household income has not kept pace with civilians.

"In inflation-adjusted terms, military households are worse off now than they were in 2011," the report states, explaining that military families have received a 21 percent increase in income since 2011, while civilian households received more than double that figure in the same time period. Junior enlisted ranks have struggled the most, with 64 percent reporting

that they are "just getting by" or finding it "difficult to get by."

If history, studies and the military families themselves prove that military families are financially stressed, then why did the Pentagon conclude in a January-released Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC) that military base pay should not be increased because "the pay table is sound" and "adequate" compared to civilian income?

QRMC didn't use inflation and the current cost of living to reach its conclusions, but rather, it simply compared civilian pay rates to military pay rates, without taking into account military relocation costs, out-of-pocket housing costs, inadequate childcare, spouse unemployment, and other military-specific financial challenges.

QRMC acknowledged that "concerns have been expressed regarding recruiting and food insecurity," but it didn't believe that increases in salary or housing allowances were the answer because money "may not be efficient options to address certain concerns of Service members." Instead, the Pentagon group suggested "non cash" compensation to address financial woes.

Hmm. I'd like to see a military family try to buy a dozen eggs with that "non cash" compensation. Times may have changed — after all, Monica Lewinsky is 51 years old now — but cash is still king. Whether it comes in the form of better military paychecks, or crisp \$20 bills, the Pentagon and the President should give military families the pay they need and deserve.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Veterans News

Seven ways veterans can protect themselves from scams

by Social Security Administration

Veterans exposed to Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic substances during their military service may receive expanded health care and benefits under the PACT Act. That's good news for millions of veterans.

Here's the bad news: The PACT Act, signed into law in August 2022, created another opportunity for scammers to target and cheat veterans.

Posing as employees of the Veterans Administration (VA), scammers contact veterans by phone, mail, email, and social media and offer to help them access or file for benefits on their behalf — for a fee.

March 6 is National "Slam the Scam Day," organized by our Office of the Inspector General to raise awareness about government imposter scams.

This year, we're focusing on educating veterans about how they can identify and avoid

PACT Act and other scams.

How to identify and avoid scams

If you're a veteran, here are 7 ways you can protect yourself:



- Be cautious of companies that advertise that you can only get VA benefits with their help. These companies may charge illegal fees for services that you

can get for free. You can check their credentials using VA's online Accreditation tool.

- If a company pressures you to sign a contract right away or take some other immediate action, that's a red flag. If they insist "You must act now," ignore them.

- Disregard advertisements that promise an immediate or overly generous payout. Claims like these are also red flags. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

- Be alert to "phishing" and requests for personal information about you, your benefits, medical records, and finances.

The VA — like Social Security — will generally not call you to request information unless you have pending agency business. When we need to reach you or

to update your record, we'll mail you a letter with instructions.

- Limit the personal details you share on social media. The more you post about yourself online, the easier it may be for criminals to use that information to access your VA accounts, steal your identity, and more.

- Be careful about the Internet sites you visit. Before doing business online, check for "https://" at the start of the website address. The "s" stands for "secure" — these sites use extra measures to keep your information safe.

Watch out for common red flags in emails, texts, and on social media. You should be suspicious:

- If they come from a public domain, such as gmail.com or yahoo.com. Emails from government agencies will generally end in .gov, like va.gov or ssa.gov.

- If they contain suspicious or random links or attachments and "urgent" requests for action.

- If they have spelling and

grammatical errors.

Where to get help and more information

- Report and learn more about Social Security-related scams at ssa.gov/scam.

- Sign up for free consumer alerts from the Federal Trade Commission and, if necessary, file a complaint at [Reportfraud.ftc.gov](https://reportfraud.ftc.gov).

- Report suspected fraud to the VSAFE Fraud Hotline at 833-38V-SAFE and find resources

at [VSAFE.gov](https://vsafe.gov).

- Subscribe to [MilitaryConsumer.gov/blog](https://militaryconsumer.gov/blog) for the latest news on scams.

- Visit Operation Protect <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/Veterans>, a joint program of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and AARP.

Please help us spread the message by sharing this important information with other veterans and loved ones. Don't forget to join us on March 6 to help "Slam the Scam".

If you receive a suspicious call:



- Hang up
- Don't believe them
- Don't trust your caller ID
- Don't give them money
- Don't give them personal information
- Report the scam at oig.ssa.gov



SSA.GOV/SCAM

Social Security Administration | Publication No. 66-024 | June 2023 | Produced at U.S. taxpayer expense

CLASSIFIED ADS

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH CLASSIFIEDS

To place your ad, please call our Classified Advertising Department at (619) 280-2985.

CAREGIVER

CAREGIVER/CNA - 25 years experience. 24 hour live-in. California requirements. Call for more info 760-234-2644.

CATERING

We can cater your event with the 'Best Mexican food in San Diego!' Military Discount. El Indio 619-299-0333

CHIROPRACTIC

NuSpine CHIROPRACTIC
EXCLUSIVE MILITARY PRICING
4 Visit Membership for \$69/month (\$20/month savings or regularly \$89)
2530 Vista Way, Ste P
Oceanside • (760) 600-5553

HELP WANTED

Delivery driver. 2 Thursday mornings a month. Must have own vehicle w/proof of insurance. Approx. 3 hours \$80. Milsponse/retired military pref. Nat'l City area. 619-280-2985.

USS Midway Museum is recruiting volunteers for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety. www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/

Armed Forces Dispatch newspaper delivery driver for news racks, stands, countertops, etc. Coronado, Silver Strand, Imperial Beach. 2 Thursday mornings a month (approx 3 hours). Must have clean driving record, dependable car w/insurance, base access. 619-280-2985.

RENTALS APARTMENTS

BONSALL - 2BR/2BA fully furnished, W/D \$3200/mo. utilities & high speed internet included. Pet ok. 760-758-8582.

CHULA VISTA - 2BR/2BA. \$2700 (265 Woodlawn) & 3BR/2.5BA \$3800. New construction, near I-5, W/D in unit, 10 minutes to NASNI/32nd. 619-454-2545.

DOWNTOWN/GASLAMP - Furnished apt. Free cable TV/wifi/laundry. Full kitchen, parking available, 1 mo. min., king size bed, no smoking, no pets. \$3500/mo. Call 619-232-4045, www.mudvilleflats.com.

- "Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm possible'!"
- "You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think".

RENTALS APARTMENTS

AVAILABLE NOW!!!

1, 2 or 3 BR's Apartments, Townhouses & Houses

MOVE-IN SPECIAL!
LEADINGHAM REALTY
1062 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach
619-424-8600

NORTH PARK - Fully furn. 1BR apartment in lovely area, near restaurants, bars, Walkable! \$2,500/mo. Call for showing (858)967-0147.

PACIFIC BEACH - Sunny 2BR, one mile from beach, very walkable to restaurants, bars. \$3,650/mo. Call for showing (858)967-0147.

RENTALS HOUSES

4-XL Master Bedrooms
home central in Mission Valley West. 7 min. to everything in SD. Trolley 5 min walk. Panoramic Views Atop a Hill. Total remodel, Granite kitch/bath, all new floor, everything new, all SS. appl. W/Dr. Short term ok 1-3-6 month leases. \$6,500 monthly. 310-975-4538 Avail. now!!

NATIONAL CITY - 3.5BR/1.5BA. 5 min. from 32nd St. Dry side. Kitchen has diner theme. Large patio. \$3900/mo. 619-908-9977.

RENTALS HOUSES

SAN DIEGO - 3BR/3BA, 2 car garage. No smoking/drinking/drugs/pets, no evictions. W/D hookups. \$250 off 1st month rent. \$3250/mo. 4300 Newton Ave. 951-210-8392.

SAN YSIDRO - 3BR/1BA \$2750/mo move in special: 50% off 1st month, newly remodeled, near freeway and schools, 10 miles from 32nd St Naval Base- txt 619-417-8307.

STABLES

HORSE BOARDING CARLSBAD
\$400/month
Western casual, family-oriented ranch. We have roomy 12x48 or 12x24 corrals and provide a veterinarian recommended diet twice daily.
760.840.0187

THRIFT STORE

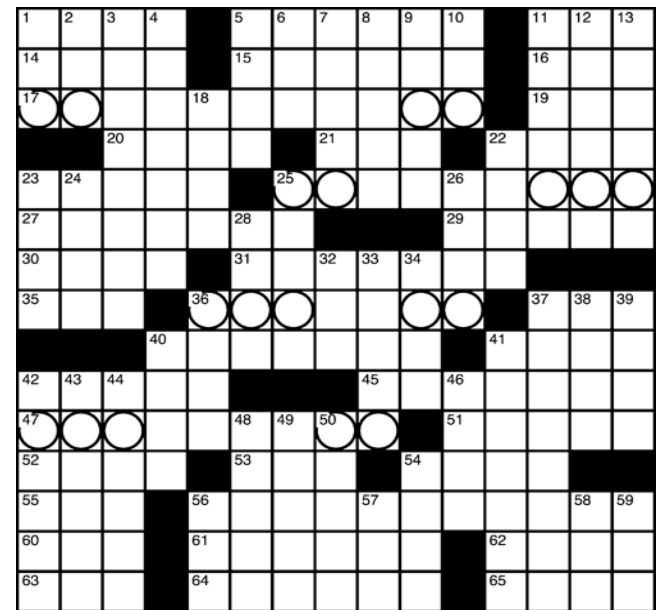
AMVETS NEW STORE NOW OPEN IN OCEANSIDE
40,000 clothing items & 10,000 miscellaneous items on our floor daily!
1527-A Mission Ave., Oceanside
Just east of I-5
(760) 286-8880
Open 7 days a week 9am-7pm
Sales support veterans & their families

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

USS Midway Museum is recruiting volunteers for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across
1 California wine region near Sonoma
5 Not quite
11 Zamboni surface
14 Nowhere to be seen, for short
15 Simple shelter
16 Prom rental
17 *Performer who may wear harem pants
19 Lob's path
20 "Star Wars" heroine
21 Taylor Swift's "___ Song"
22 If not
23 Tree frog sound
25 *People in a love-hate relationship
27 Transmission choice for driving uphill
29 Stockpile
30 Chips ___!: cookie brand
31 Creme Egg candymaker
35 Hearty holiday drink
36 *Body-lifting exercises
37 Spigot
40 Ambushed
41 Corn Belt tower
42 Storybook brutes
45 Tracks down
47 *Veers from the straight and narrow
51 Pet rabbit's home
52 Wallop
53 Feel crummy
54 Carpenter's clamp
55 Source of milk for pecorino cheese
56 Dieting advice, and what the answers to the starred clues literally do
60 Time zone word: Abbr.
61 Dined at a bistro, say
62 Nerd
63 That lady
64 Tinkers (with)
65 Avant-garde
Down
1 Capture
2 Knock the socks off
3 Tadpole
4 Hay fever, e.g.
5 "Marriage Story" actor Alan
6 Actress Thompson
7 Regal home
8 Promptly
9 Rudder's locale
10 Only Canadian MLB city
11 Firenze locale
12 Swear words
13 More than necessary
18 Cry of pain
22 Television award
23 Tartan-sharing kin
24 Santa's jolly syllables
25 Physically delicate
26 Disneyland hat pair
28 Sore
32 Genetic material
33 Construct
34 Bun, e.g.
36 Wine barrel
37 Giggled self-consciously
38 Smart ___: know-it-all
39 Swanky
40 Like disappointing coffee
41 McMuffin meat option
42 Think too much (about)
43 Old-___ forest
44 Ebb
46 Rather smart
48 Cook in some olive oil, say
49 Tugs at a fishing line
50 Choir section
54 November honorees
56 Pic taker
57 Shade on a color wheel
58 Plead
59 Big ___ Country



MOVIES AT THE BASES

MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF TO MAKE SURE THE TITLE AND TIME ARE STILL CORRECT...

https://sandiego.navylifsw.com/ select movies at dropdown menu on left
https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies
https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater

NBSD and Lowry Theater Policy

- Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.
- Premium Offerings
 - Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
 - Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.



Movie Rating System

- G - General audiences ALL ages admitted.
- PG - Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.
- PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
- R - Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Something different coming to Scripps Miramar Ranch Library: Songs and Dances from Shakespeare

The "Pleasure of Your Company" music series will welcome back Courtney Noye on Sunday, March 16, at 2:30pm to the stage of the Scripps Miramar Ranch Library Center. Garbed in period costume, this lively ensemble will play a variety of Renaissance period replica instruments in a program of 'Songs and Dances from Shakespeare' featuring works composed as incidental music for performances of works by the Bard. There is no charge for the concert, which is sponsored by the Scripps Ranch Friends of the Library, although donations are appreciated to help continue the tradition of bringing fine musicians to perform on special Sunday afternoons for monthly concerts in this sought after venue. Visit https://srfol.org/music.htm for the schedule of monthly concerts and information about sponsorship opportunities. Scripps Miramar Ranch Library Center is located at 10301 Scripps Lake Dr. Visit www.srfol.org or call (858) 538-8158 for information.

Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free
Veterans/Seniors: \$4 • Adults: \$5 • Student ID: \$2
2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300
http://www.veteranmuseum.org/
Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/

Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.

1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

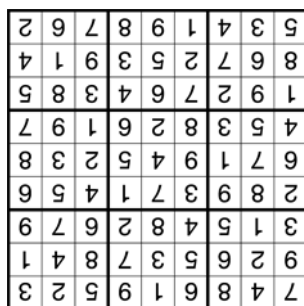
USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.

FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. https://www.midway.org/

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

ROY'S SUDOKU

				1		2	
9	6			7			1
		5				6	9
	8		3			4	5
				4			
	5	3			6		9
1		2				3	
8				2		9	
	3			9			



USU's MISL turns ideas into inventions and drives innovation

by Vivian Mason

"Inspiration exists, but it has to find you working."
- Pablo Picasso

Housed in Building 59 at Naval Support Activity Bethesda, the Uniformed Services University (USU) Medical Innovations Student Lab (MISL [pronounced "missile"]) is a hub of creativity and invention for medical students. Here, students aren't just learning—they're designing, building, and transforming ideas into tangible solutions. The lab serves as a think tank where students identify real-world problems and develop functional prototypes, making it a valuable resource for all health profession students.

"Not many people know of the lab," says Dr. Rodrigo Mateo, director of the MISL Lab and associate professor of surgery at USU. "It's very new, student-run, and student-driven. Currently, several student-initiated projects are in progress with plans for completion."



U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Geovanny Reyes-Matute (back) and U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Jonathan Wang (front) constructing pelvic models. Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy Ensign Robert Weishar, USU.

Originally known as the Medical Innovations Interest Group (MI2G) Lab, the MISL Lab has grown from a concept on paper into a functional space.

"I was introduced to it about a year ago," says Mateo. "I was very

interested in the lab's intentions. So, I dropped by for a visit, but it was merely a storage room with construction equipment, unused supplies, and a broken 3D printer. I got involved and, with the MI2G members, we were able to renovate the space a little and started building the lab. Right now, it's functional and still growing."

Mateo plays an active role in guiding students through hands-on learning. "We have an incredible group of advisers and mentors who support us," says Army 2nd Lt. Jameson Williams, current MI2G president. "Dr. Mateo helps us troubleshoot, refine ideas, and develop prototypes."

Students can take their projects with them throughout their careers. Williams envisions the MISL Lab fostering long-term innovation. "We hope to establish continuity, allowing younger students to take over and build upon existing projects."

Navy Ensign Robert Weishar, a fourth-year medical student, has been with the MISL Lab since its inception. "We want to expand our equipment and build our reputation on campus and at Walter Reed," he says. "We want to be the first stop for students and faculty with new ideas that need proof-of-concept prototypes."

Dr. Martin Ottolini, professor of pediatrics and director of the Capstone Program, connects students to faculty advisers and research opportunities. With support from the Office of the Vice President for Research, Ottolini helps secure funding and resources for student projects, ensuring they receive national recognition.

The MISL Lab is equipped with CAD software, 3D printers, 3D scanners, resin molding and casting equipment, a laser cutter, and electronics. "Students collaborate with physicians to identify real-world medical challenges and develop innovative solutions," says Williams.

Projects at the MISL Lab include:

- A newly developed surgical device created for Dr. Shawn Gee,

a sports medicine orthopedic surgeon at West Point. Designed and fabricated entirely in the MISL Lab, it is currently in the patent process with the U.S. Army.

- A rapid glove-loading device
- 3D-printed anatomical models

for mass casualty events, developed by Air Force 2nd Lts. Noah Smith and Andrew Bayne, which improves efficiency while maintaining sterile technique.

for the anatomy curriculum, developed by Army 2nd Lts. Jonathan Wang and Geovanny Reyes-Matute in collaboration with Dr. Guinevere Granite, offering cost-effective learning tools.

Beyond prototyping, the lab is exploring artificial intelligence applications in medical education. "In the near future, I see the MISL Lab becoming the primary prototyping service for USU students and faculty," says Weishar.

The lab empowers students to experiment and innovate without fear of failure. "The MISL Lab allows students to think creatively and develop solutions for healthcare challenges," says Mateo. "Innovative projects lead to a new generation of physicians with diverse skills and experiences."

First-year Army 2nd Lt. Margaret Pritchett, the MISL research representative, encourages students to join. "We provide a supportive environment for problem-solving and invention. We invite you to share your passion for innovation with us."



Dr. Rodrigo Mateo leads USU first-year medical students on an introductory tour of the MISL Lab. Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy Ensign Robert Weishar, USU.

TRICARE Online Patient Portal decommissioning: Download your health records now

TRICARE Communications
FALLS CHURCH, Virginia – On April 1, the TRICARE Online Patient Portal will no longer be available. The Department of Defense's new electronic health record—MHS GENESIS—has replaced the TOL Patient Portal. As part of the transition, the DOD is decommissioning the TOL Patient Portal.

If you want to keep a copy of your legacy health records for personal use, you must download them from the TOL Patient Portal before April 1.

"All military hospitals and clinics have transitioned to MHS GENESIS. We encourage you to take these important steps to save your personal health records before the TOL Patient Portal decommissions," said Rear Adm. Tracy Farrill, Principal Deputy, Assistant Director for Health Care Administration, and Military Health System EHR Functional Champion at the Defense Health Agency. "Your medical history is a valuable resource for managing your health, and saving your records now ensures you have access if you need it."

Here's what you need to know before the TOL Patient Portal decommissions.

Why is the TOL Patient Portal decommissioning?

The MHS GENESIS Patient Portal has replaced the TOL Patient Portal. As detailed in the TRICARE Choices in the United States Handbook, MHS GENESIS allows you to access your EHR 24/7. You can also book and cancel appointments, request prescription refills and renewals, see clinical notes and certain test results, and exchange

secure messages with your military healthcare team.

The change from TOL to MHS GENESIS eliminates the need to maintain two systems and streamlines EHR management.

What will happen to my records?

Provider access: Your provider will continue to have access to your complete health records.

Personal access: You can use the steps below to download your legacy records for personal use before April 1. You can also request a physical copy from your military hospital or clinic's records management office. To do this, you'll need to complete a request form in person, and then return at a later designated time to pick up the records. Beginning April 1, if you want your legacy health records, you'll have to follow this process.

What should I do now?

To keep copies of your legacy health records, follow these instructions:

- Visit www.TRICAREOnline.com.
- Log in: Sign in using your DS Logon, CAC, or DFAS myPay credentials. If you don't have a DS Logon, you'll need to create one by clicking "Need An Account."

• Access: On the TOL homepage, click the blue "Health Record" button to view your personal health data.

• Find data: Select "Download My Data." You'll see several data categories.

• Customize: Choose the person, data types, date range, and format for the records you want to download.

• Download: You can choose to download your records in

portable document format (.pdf) or as a (.xml) continuity of care document. The CCD format allows you to share your data with family, caregivers, providers, and healthcare systems, or to document data in your preferred personal health record.

• Save: After downloading, you can either open the file or save it securely for future use. You can also print your records and store them in a safe place.

Important details

• Your records won't transfer to MHS GENESIS once TOL decommissions.

• Your TOL health records only reflect periods of time when your military hospital or clinic was using TOL. Note: If you moved from one duty station to another, and one military hospital or clinic used TOL and the other used MHS GENESIS, your records in MHS GENESIS may have gaps. You'll find these "gap" records in the TOL Patient Portal. Be sure to download them.

• You can only download your records from the past 30 years, from the date you log in to TOL.

• Protect your health information. When you download or print your personal health information, it becomes your responsibility to keep it safe. Use secure options. Avoid saving personal data on

unsecure devices or platforms.

It's also important to know that if you're planning to file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs, this decommissioning won't affect your ability to do so. Providers will still have access to your complete health records.

Can I see my children's health records?

Yes. You can view all available health data for your children under the age of 12. For children aged 12 to 17, you may view COVID-19, coronavirus, and flu test results, as well as allergies, vitals, and immunization data.

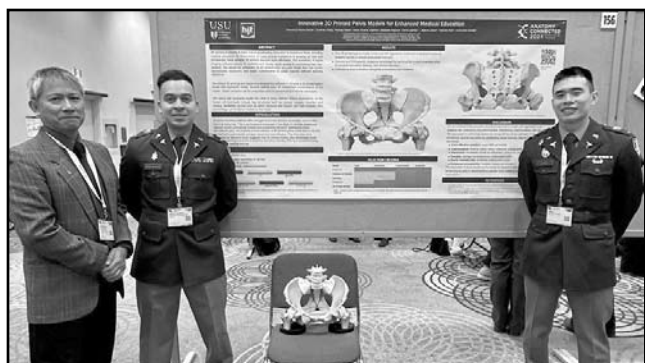
Due to state privacy laws, there are limits to what health data you can view online for your children aged 12 to 17. You can request printed results from your child's clinic or provider.

Don't wait — take action

Remember: The TOL Patient Portal will only be available until April 1. Take the time now to download and store your health records to ensure you can easily access them if needed.

To get started or learn more, visit the TOL Patient Portal.

<https://www.tricareonline.com>



Dr. Rodrigo Mateo (left), U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Geovanny Reyes-Matute (center), and U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Jonathan Wang (right) presenting their pelvis model at the 2024 Anatomy Connected annual meeting in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, sponsored by the American Association for Anatomy. Photo courtesy of U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Margaret Pritchett, USU.

QUOTES ABOUT HEALTH

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of the dynamic and creative intellectual activity"

— John F. Kennedy

"The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not"

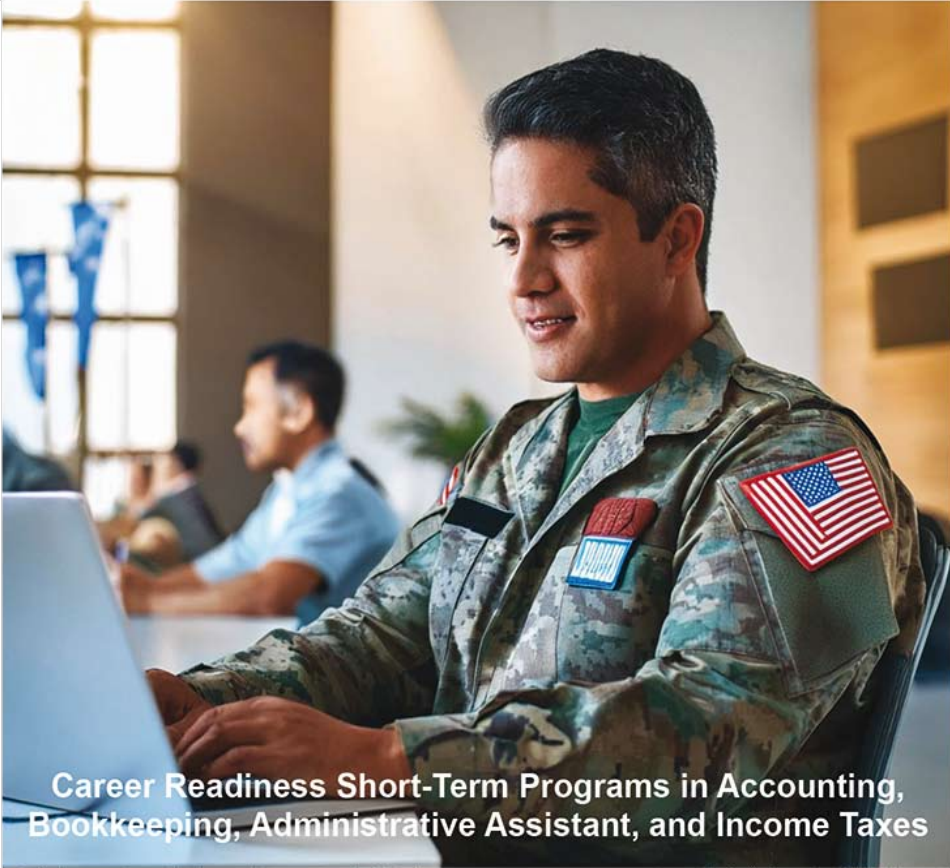
— Mark Twain

"Take care of your body, it's the only place you have to live"

— Jim Rohn

Military/Veteran-Friendly Career Technical School

Find Your Calling In Business



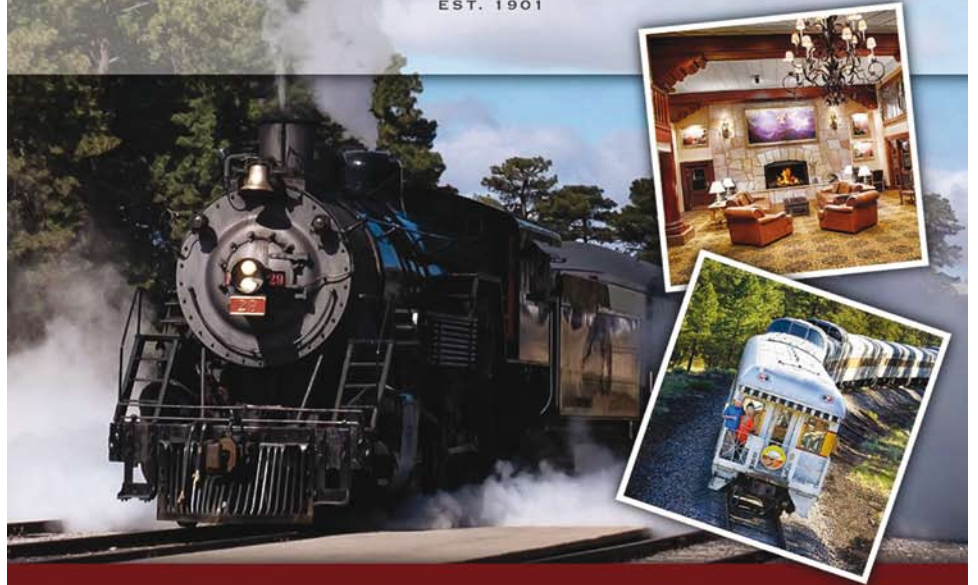
Career Readiness Short-Term Programs in Accounting, Bookkeeping, Administrative Assistant, and Income Taxes

Call Sylvia at:
858-836-1420

ACCOUNTING
★ **ACADEMY** ★

theaccounting
academy.com

GRAND CANYON
Railway & Hotel
EST. 1901



VALENTINE'S DAY & PRESIDENT'S DAY LIMITED TIME OFFER

SAVE UP TO 50% ON TRAIN TICKETS
WITH 'STAY & SAVE PLATINUM'

Visit your local ITT or Latitudes
Travel office to book!



Support Heroes

Donate Your Unwanted
Goods to AMVETS Today!



Store information



AMVETS Thrift Store Locations

1527-A Mission Ave., Oceanside • (760) 286-8880
999 Cardiff St., San Diego • (619) 697-9796
3441 Sutherland St., San Diego • (619) 297-4213
We also have locations in Long Beach & Fresno

THE MILLENNIUM TOUR 2025

TREY SONGZ **OMARION** **BOW WOW**

PLIES BOOSIE YING YANG TWINS

RAY J | SAMMIE | BOBBY V | PLEASURE P

NIVEA

AND SPECIAL GUEST **RICK ROSS!**

APRIL 27
KIA FORUM

Tickets INFO Marcus (619) 851-8401

GET TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER.COM