

# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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



SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 13  
AUGUST 8, 2025



**DRIVERS, START YOUR ENGINES** NASCAR will return to Southern California in 2026 with first-of-its-kind street races at Naval Base Coronado. The NASCAR San Diego Weekend marks a full-throttle, three-day event for the first NASCAR events ever contested on an active military base. Graphic from [navylifefsw.com](http://navylifefsw.com)

## NEWS FROM DFAS: NEXT GENERATION USID CARD FOR RETIREES, SPOUSES, & DEPENDENTS

Military retirees are encouraged to update their older paper-based Uniformed Services Identification (USID) cards to the new plastic-based USID cards.

The new cards are more secure and durable, incorporating features like plastic cardstock and enhanced security measures.

You have until Dec. 31, 2025, to get the new USID card.

USID cards are issued to retired military, reserve members, dependent family members of uniformed Service members, and other eligible individuals in accordance with DoD policy.

It's important for USID cardholders to know these older paper-based forms of ID will eventually be terminated, and will need to be replaced by the new plastic-based USID card. This is true even if your old

ID card has an INDEF expiration date on it.

There are several ways to obtain a new ID card:

- (1) Visit the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website (<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/locator>) to find the closest office and call them to make an appointment, or
- (2) Schedule an appointment using the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website. or

Select the "Schedule an Appointment" option under the "More Site Info" header for any of the sites presented in the search results, or

(3) Visit the ID Card Office Online website (<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>), select "Continue" under the "Family ID Cards" header and follow the prompts for Online USID Renewal. Note: It may be necessary to create a myAuth account for login.



## Coast Guard celebrates 235 years protecting nation's waterways

by David Vergun, DOD News

The Coast Guard was established as the Revenue-Marine, Aug. 4, 1790, when President George Washington signed a bill drafted by Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, authorizing the construction of 10 cutters that would be part of the Treasury Department.

The new fleet was used to clamp down on smuggling, resulting from the high tariffs the U.S. had placed on Europe. From 1790 to 1798, the Revenue-Marine was the only military maritime service, as the Continental Navy and Marine Corps were disbanded after the Revolutionary War in 1783; they were reestablished in 1798.

After the Navy's reestablishment, the Revenue-Marine cutters fought alongside Navy ships during the Quasi-War with France, which lasted from 1798 until 1800. The two services captured 20 French ships. This partnership brought the Revenue-Marine under the control of the Navy during wartime.

In 1808, the Revenue-Marine began intercepting slave ships, as importing slaves was illegal following the passage of the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves into law on March 2, 1807.

The Revenue-Marine was renamed the Revenue Cutter Service in 1863.

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Coast Guard Act into law on Jan. 28, 1915, combining the Revenue Cutter Service with the United States Life-Saving Service to form the U.S. Coast Guard. This was the start of the service's maritime safety mission, which the Coast Guard continues today.

In 1939, the Coast Guard assumed the responsibilities of the U.S. Lighthouse Service, and in 1942, it also assumed the responsibilities of the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation.

The Coast Guard Reserve was established in 1950 to support expanded port security responsibilities.

In 1967, the Coast Guard moved from the Treasury Department to the Transportation Department, and in 2003, it moved to its current home, the Department of Homeland Security.

New officers are trained at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Conn., which was founded in 1876. Enlisted recruits train at the Coast Guard Training Center in Cape May, New Jersey, which was established in 1948.

The Coast Guard motto is "semper paratus," which is Latin for Always Ready. It is also the title of the official Coast Guard marching song.

### Submarine Ohio arrives in Brisbane

BRISBANE, Australia – Ohio-class guided-missile submarine USS Ohio arrived here for a scheduled port visit July 27, mooring alongside forward deployed submarine tender USS Frank Cable. Ohio's visit is the first Ohio-class submarine to pull into Brisbane. This historical event was made possible with the support of Frank Cable – which pulled in a day prior – underlining the unique expeditionary logistics capabilities of U.S. submarine tenders and their capacity to facilitate and assist deployed submarines. Ohio's visit coincides with the upcoming 80th anniversary of Victory in the Pacific Day, which marks the end of World War II in the Pacific. The Aug. 15 celebration commemorates decades of shared U.S.-Australian history and cooperation. During World War II, Brisbane served as a major submarine hub, hosting over 70 U.S. Navy submarines and three submarine tenders. Steeped in U.S. naval history, Brisbane continues to play a role in the shared history of the two nations, as evidenced by Frank Cable's visit.

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# Thrill rides all summer long.

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## SAVORY SUNDAYS

AUG 3



Each week we feature a local restaurant in the Plaza de Mexico with drink specials including \$5 Kona Beers and live music.

AUG 10



## TASTE OF THE TURF CLUB\*

New farm-to-table brunch inspired by Amaya at Fairmont Grand Del Mar.

*Turf Club dress code applies.*



## UNCORKED WINE FESTIVAL\*

Saturday, August 2 *Ages 21+*

## TACOS & TEQUILA\*

Saturday, August 9 *Ages 21+*



## BREEDERS' CUP TUMBLER GIVEAWAY

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## TASTE OF NEW ORLEANS\*

Saturday, August 23 BACARDÍ

## FAMILY FUN DAY

Sunday, August 31 power pony



Scan for more information

\*Paid ticketed event

## MID-TERM UPDATE

### 101 Critical Days of Summer

by Douglas Wolf  
Naval Safety Command  
Public Affairs

The weekend of July 12-13 marked the midpoint of the 101 Critical Days of Summer. There were seven motorcycle fatalities, two vehicle fatalities and one pedestrian fatality during the first half of the summer and we still have a significant portion of the second half left. These losses are tragic and sobering and remind us that we must double down on our efforts to apply the principles of risk management in all our efforts and mitigate the risks we identify.

Navy and Marine Corps mishap data additionally shows there have been more than 150 non-fatal, off-duty events resulting in injury to Sailors and Marines within the first 51 days of summer this year. Off-duty motor vehicle and vehicle-related mishaps have hurt the naval enterprise the most, topping the charts with 81 incidents, including 46 from motorcycle crashes and 30 from cars, trucks or other four-wheel vehicles. The vehicle-related injuries included one bicycle and four pedestrians.

The next most common category of injuries is sports and recreation. Basketball, softball, running, soccer and skateboarding, among others, accounted for



64 percent of the 50 sports-related incidents reported. Injuries from falls, including slips and trips, occurred next in frequency, followed by a diverse range of other causes rounding out the reported injuries.

Below are a few narratives that highlight some of the events we are seeing this summer. There is a focus on motorcycle mishaps as that continues to be the activity where we continue to lose Sailors and Marines globally.

A servicemember and two passengers left a bar where they had been drinking sometime after midnight. They got in the car to head back to where they were staying. During the drive, the servicemember, who was driving, drove through the perimeter of a section of highway designated as a construction zone. It was reported they were driving erratically within the construction zone before hitting a stationary, industrial heavy-lift vehicle. While the passengers sustained minor injuries, the servicemember died at the scene.

A servicemember on a motor-

cycle was racing a car on a highway at more than 90 mph. When approaching a sharp curve at the end of the straightaway, a car slowed while the servicemember continued at a high rate of speed. The servicemember entered the curve and lost control. The rider was separated from the bike, losing their helmet while they slid across the roadway. The Sailor sustained major head and bodily injuries and died a few days later.

A motorcycle rider was following a vehicle too closely, when the vehicle stopped abruptly to evade a dog in the road. The servicemember avoided a collision by maneuvering off the side of the road where he laid the bike down. He was taken to the emergency room for evaluation, had surgery a couple days later to repair a broken wrist and spent over a month recovering on convalescent leave. The servicemember was wearing full personal protective equipment at the time of the crash which likely saved him from more extensive injuries.

In these scenarios, a loss of situational awareness, good risk assessment or overconfidence in their own abilities contributed to the outcome. Ultimately, poor decision-making was key in every incident resulting in loss of life.

"While the number of fatalities is slightly lower than where we were at this point last summer, even one is one too many," said Rear Adm. Dan "Dino" Martin, commander, Naval Safety Command. "Safety is the result of effective risk management, and it requires everyone to make a committed effort so that we can avoid those self-inflicted wounds and keep our Sailors and Marines in the fight. We need to be deliberate in how we identify and assess everything we do regardless of the activity."

## Early Bird Brief

### Army

- No, the Army is not introducing a new 'tank top' PT uniform
- Fort Eustis helicopter unit will cease operations amid restructuring
- Army Chaplain Corps is also celebrating its 250th anniversary
- Schumer announces Wheeler-Sack Army Airfield to receive \$18M for upgrades
- Army Reserve is gutting aviation units. Thousands of soldiers are being left in the lurch.

### Navy

- In reversal, Navy will share satellite data with NOAA until fall 2026
- In 1914, the Navy went dry ... but not before it threw a party
- Navy rolls out new software policy on containerization technology usage
- Navy Unmasks Its Vision For Fleet Of Uncrewed Modular Surface Attack Craft
- Alaska senator blocks Navy chief confirmation

### Marine Corps

- The Marines are seeking enlisted volunteers to get out early
- American aircraft flying from British carrier

### Air Force

- Air Force Rebrands Facebook Page to Combat Rumors, Leaked Memos
- New commander takes charge of Edwards Air Force Base
- Space Force
- Fort Huachuca recommended for new Space Force mission

### Coast Guard

- A nightmare: The Coast Guard's harrowing flight to Camp Mystic

### Veterans

- Senate confirms senior VA advisor to become next department watchdog
- Proposal to expand private veterans health care pared down
- Watchdog finds VA missed evidence, failed to order exams for military sexual trauma claims
- Veterans Affairs whistleblowers may not be getting settlement benefits due to a lack of oversight
- Stolen ID – a veteran's war at home

### Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- Former astronaut twin brothers Mark and Scott Kelly on NASA cuts and challenges of being on ISS
- SpaceX Crew-11 launch to ISS scrubbed due to weather
- Expiring cyber information-sharing law puts US maritime infrastructure at risk, experts warn





## Hawkeye Platoon leads Army innovation with tactical drones, 3D-printed lethality

by Army Sgt. 1st Class  
Brittany Conley

When the Army officially ended the RQ-7B Shadow platform in March 2024, it left a void for soldiers trained in unmanned aerial operations. But for Hawkeye Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade, it was also an opportunity to redefine how small units integrate drone technology in the modern fight.

Backed by brigade-level funding, the platoon now leads the charge into a new era of Army aviation. The 173rd Airborne Brigade invested in four C100 drones as well as a fleet of custom-built first person view drones, many of which were designed and assembled by the soldiers themselves using commercial parts and 3D printed components.

"I flew the FPV, which is a first person view aircraft," said Army Staff Sgt. Andy Ortiz, a master trainer and drone pilot. "The reason why it could increase the lethality of the platoon or the Army in general is because it's super cheap to build, and you can 3D print what you want on the aircraft. If it breaks, we fix it in-house."

Ortiz explained that an entire FPV drone setup costs around \$400 to \$500 and can be built in just a few hours.

"Even a beginner can build it in four hours," he said. "It's hard to fly at first, but once you learn the simulator and get good, you can speed up the kill chain. Instead of calling for fire support, someone in your platoon could take out the target with a drone carrying C4."

Hawkeye Platoon doesn't just fly drones: they build them, repair them and constantly innovate with modular payloads to simulate real-world combat effects. The unit's mobile lab functions as a forward tech shop, where soldiers can fabricate FPV parts, test explosive mock-ups and maintain drone readiness in the field.

According to Army Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Daniels, a 173rd platoon sergeant, the C100 expands even further in tactical use cases.

"Today, we saw the C100 mission sets, able to drop ... supplies to a main or forward aid station," Daniels said. "If the mission is beyond 2 or 3 kilometers, we can upload the mission, and the drone will complete it autonomously and return."

With a range of up to 10 kilometers and a flight endurance of 74 minutes, the C100 enables small units to push supplies or

conduct reconnaissance deep into the battlespace without maintaining line of sight — an advantage especially critical in mountainous or contested terrain.

On the other hand, FPV drones, while cheaper and faster

"An infantry platoon should be stacked up with FPV drones," Ortiz said. "They're cheap, easy to build and can close the kill chain fast when you attach simulated munitions."

Daniels said the training model is designed for scalability

**Army Spc. Tyler Dooros, left, and Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Daniels, platoon sergeant, prepare a C100 drone for launch at Norio Training Area, Georgie, Aug. 2, during Exercise Agile Spirit 25. Both soldiers are assigned to Hawkeye Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade. The C100 is a multipurpose platform capable of autonomous flight, aerial delivery of medical supplies and deployment of grenades using modular 3D printed attachments developed by the unit. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brittany Conley**



to field, require a direct line of sight between the operator and the aircraft to remain effective. Despite this limitation, Hawkeye Platoon has embraced them as a powerful tool for short-range strikes and reconnaissance.

across the brigade. The drone manufacturer conducts initial instruction through a train-the-trainer model. Once certified, noncommissioned officers, like those in Hawkeye Platoon, can train other soldiers throughout

## USS Gerald R. Ford and USS Winston S. Churchill make port stop in Marseille, France

from USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78) Public Affairs

MARSEILLE, France — The world's largest aircraft carrier, first-in-class USS *Gerald R. Ford* (CVN 78) and destroyer USS *Winston S. Churchill* (DDG 81) arrived in Marseille, France, for a scheduled port visit in early August.

Both ships are part of Carrier Strike Group Twelve, on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to support the warfighting effectiveness, lethality, and readiness of U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa, and defend U.S., Allied and partner interests in the region.

"The visit of USS *Gerald R. Ford* to Marseille is symbolic of the Franco-American alliance," said Charles Kushner, U.S. Ambassador to the French Republic. "This ship embodies America's excellence in the defense industry—it is the newest and most adaptable aircraft carrier in the U.S. fleet, in addition to being the largest aircraft carrier in the world. Its technology is cutting edge and defining the next generation of military engagement. Most importantly, the 4,500 dedicated service members aboard the USS *Gerald R. Ford* embody the Administration's commitment to peace through strength. I am delighted to welcome them to France, particularly as we enter negotiations with the European Allies about increasing defense purchases and meeting their commitments to NATO."

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/4263196/>

## Armed Forces Dispatch

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Editor.....Scott Sutherland

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the formation.

The Army's pivot to small uncrewed aircraft systems has opened the door for this kind of unit-level innovation. In a June 10, 2025, memorandum, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth noted that "drones are the biggest battlefield innovation in a generation," and he expects the U.S. military to integrate drone technology into its training.

Hawkeye Platoon embodies that shift, transforming from legacy platform operators into agile, tech-savvy instructors and battlefield integrators.

What began as a gap in capability after the retirement of the Shadow platform has become an incubator for battlefield innovation, where lethality is printed, built and flown by the platoon itself.

These real-world training exercises were conducted during Agile Spirit 25, a U.S. Army Europe and Africa-led, multinational exercise designed to enhance interoperability and readiness with allied and partner forces.

Held annually in Georgia, the exercise provides a live operational environment for units like Hawkeye Platoon to test emerging technologies, validate mission sets and lead the way in shaping the future of Army lethality.



**ONE STEP AT A TIME** Air Force Pararescuemen climb up a ladder to a Colombian Aerospace Force UH-1 Huey during exercise Relámpago de los Andes in Coveñas, Colombia, July 30, 2025. Participants rapidly integrated to enhance search and rescue capabilities in life-threatening situations. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. William Rio Rosado



**LEAPFROG FEST** U.S. Army and International Paratroopers conduct a static line Airborne jump using their MC-6 parachutes out of a Ch-47 Chinook Helicopter during Leapfest at Glen Rock Drop Zone, Exeter, R.I., Aug. 2, 2025. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Eric Kestner

## San Diego Outreach

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## Become a USO Volunteer

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

**Ready to apply to be a USO San Diego volunteer?**

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

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

## Camp Pendleton USO Programs Include:

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

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

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

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

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

<https://california.uso.org/>



Adm. Daryl Caudle presents Battenberg Cup, Arleigh Burke Trophy to USS Laboon

NORFOLK, Va. – Arleigh Burke-class guided missile destroyer USS *Laboon* (DDG 58) was named the best all-around ship in the Atlantic Fleet based on accumulation of achievements, and the ship that showed the most dramatic improvement in battle effectiveness, earning it the Battenberg Cup and the Arleigh Burke trophy, respectively.

Adm. Daryl Caudle, commander, Fleet Forces Command, presented the 2024 Battenberg Cup and Arleigh Burke trophy awards to the crew of *Laboon* during a ceremony held aboard the ship.

“For the first time that I’m aware of, it’s my honor today to let the crew of the *Laboon* know that you won both of these prestigious awards against all your peers – not only your peers at U.S. Naval Surface Force Atlantic, but as the best ship across the other Type Commanders,” said Caudle. “The competition was fierce, but you became the benchmark and emerged on top.”

Since 1977, the Battenberg Cup award is presented annually to a ship or submarine selected by the fleet commander as the best all-around in the Atlantic Fleet, based on crew achievements. *Laboon* was selected as this year’s Battenberg Cup Award Winner after exhibiting superior battle efficiency during the 2024 calendar year.



The Arleigh Burke trophy honors the spirit of Adm. Arleigh A. Burke—renowned as a relentless tactician and stalwart reformer. Burke challenged tradition for the sake of effectiveness, taking underperforming units and making them lethal.

*Laboon* met the demanding requirements of a carrier strike group deployment to the U.S. Fifth and Sixth Fleet areas of operations. Supporting multiple combatant commanders, *Laboon* reinforced multinational exercises, operating seamlessly with Allied and Coalition Navies and Joint U.S. services.

“It is a tremendous honor and privilege to receive the 2024 Battenberg Cup and Arleigh Burke Trophy,” said Commander Frank Dorei, commanding officer of *Laboon*. “It is a culmination of TEAM LABOON’s training, hard work, and toughness demonstrated over the past year. It is powerful to know that USS *Laboon* is a small part of a much greater Navy, capable and ready to fight and win against all challenges to democracy.”

*Laboon* successfully supported Operations Prosperity Guardian, Poseidon Anchor, and Pandora Throttle, neutralizing 28 UAVs, 8 anti-ship ballistic missiles, 4 land-attack cruise missiles, and 2 anti-ship cruise missiles.

While in the 5th Fleet Area of Operations, *Laboon* conducted 12 vital escorts through the Bab al-Mandeb and Strait of Hormuz—critical arteries in global commerce and regional stability. Additionally, *Laboon* conducted the first-ever at-sea reload of the NULKA system.

Airmen rapidly deploy to support Philippine disaster relief efforts

by 1st Lt. Cullen Drenkhahn  
353rd Special Operations Wing

CLARK AIR BASE, Philippines - Within six hours of notification, Air Force Airmen from the 353rd Special Operations Wing shifted from training operations in northern Japan to deployment for crisis response operations in the Philippines in late July.

While participating in Resolute Force Pacific 2025 in Misawa, Japan, the 353rd SOW received orders to conduct life-saving efforts in response to severe flooding across Northern Luzon. At the request of the Philippines government, and in coordination with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command mobilized joint forces to respond to isolated communities.

The CV-22 Osprey served as a vital platform throughout the operation. Its ability to fly long distances at high speed, take off and land vertically and operate in remote areas made it the ideal aircraft for reaching hard-to-access locations such as Basco, Batanes. On July 30 and 31, CV-22s transported emergency food packs from Clark Air Base to flooded communities. Thousands more are scheduled for delivery in the days ahead. This is the 353rd SOW’s most significant employment of CV-22s since the loss of Gundam 22.

In addition to air operations, the 353rd SOW deployed a range of specialized forces and capabilities. Special Tactics teams were equipped and ready for missions involving swift water rescue, mass casualty response, collapsed structure recovery and operations at austere landing zones and drop zones. The wing also provided Special Operations Medical Element personnel and Security Forces, ensuring a full-spectrum response to humanitarian needs in the region.

The wing’s deployment was only possible thanks to the support from units across Japan. After a CV-22 conducted a precautionary landing at Iwate Hanamaki Airport on July 24, the 374th Airlift Wing at Yokota Air Base dispatched a C-12 Huron to deliver critical parts, enabling a swift return to mission-ready status. The 374th AW also supported by sending logistics and maintenance personnel forward with the contingent. The 35th Fighter Wing at Misawa AB provided ground support and personnel, including a public affairs specialist, to document the operation. At Kadena AB, the 18th Wing provided fuel to transiting CV-22s en route to the Philippines over the weekend, fully outfitted the base gym to serve as temporary lodging for deploying personnel, and provided a public affairs specialist to document.

“This was a true team-of-teams effort,” said U.S. Air Force Col. Stewart Parker, commander of the 353rd SOW. “Special Operations Forces cannot respond to crisis without the robust support we received from our Pacific Air Forces teammates. This operation demonstrates the importance of interoperability between Special Operations Command Pacific and joint components in the Indo-Pacific.”

The operation was conducted in close coordination with the Philippines’ Office of Civil Defense and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, further reinforcing the strong and enduring alliance between the two countries.



Navy Chief Petty Officer Trevor Feinburg embraces his wife and daughter after USS *Ralph Johnson*’s return to Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan, July 31, 2025, following a seven-month underway period. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Taylor DiMartino

‘Atomic Echoes’ follows the stories of atomic bomb survivors 80 years after World War II



In their new documentary, “Atomic Echoes: Untold Stories of World War II” (airing now on PBS nationwide to coincide with the 80th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombs), co-producers Karin Tanabe and Victoria Kelly share never-before-seen voices from both sides of the war. Additionally, they travel to Japan and in the United States, interview 100+ year-old American servicemen and highlight those who fell in Japan and the U.S.

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[www.bayviewbc.org](http://www.bayviewbc.org) info@bayviewbc.org

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Jim W. Baize, Pastor [www.fbcoronado.com](http://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](mailto:secretary@fbcoronado.com)

445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588

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Phone: (619) 463-6633

website: [www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org](http://www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org)

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Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD.

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PCS Task Force launches call center, delivering answers on military moves

by Senior Airman  
Keira Rossman,  
PCS Joint Task Force

The Permanent Change of Station Joint Task Force launched a 24/7 call center Aug. 1 to help service members, Defense Department civilians and their families with their government moves. Service members can call 833-MIL-MOVE (833-645-6683), e-mail [PCSCallCenter@mail.mil](mailto:PCSCallCenter@mail.mil) or visit the PCS JTF Spotlight webpage for support.

Personnel using the 1-833-MIL-MOVE number will have their cases triaged prior to being escalated to the PCS JTF call center.

“When a military family reaches out for help, they shouldn’t have to chase answers,” said Army Maj. Gen. Lance G. Curtis, PCS JTF commander. “This call center ensures someone takes responsibility and stays with them until the issue is fixed.”

Once a service member undergoing a government household goods move reaches the call center, trained military personnel log the issue into a centralized tracking system. Callers will receive regular, personalized



A moving contractor carries boxes onto a truck during a military move near Scott Air Force Base, Ill., July 18. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Keira Rossman

updates until their issues are resolved.

Task force leaders estimate that 40 percent of calls that currently go to 833-MIL-MOVE will be escalated to the PCS JTF call center to help resolve moving issues.

“First, we receive a warm transfer from the system response center, where they explain the issue the service member is experiencing,” said Marine Corps Sgt. Garay Reyes, a PCS JTF call center action officer. “Next, we pull the incident number or ticket to review the history of the situation. From there, we begin our own process to pinpoint the issue and find a reliable solution that meets the service member’s

needs. Throughout the entire process, our team follows up with the service member until the incident is fully resolved.”

The call center offers around-the-clock support worldwide, ensuring military families receive assistance with household goods moves regardless of their time zone.

Personally procured moves are still the responsibility of service members who elect to use that option, and the task force call center personnel will help wherever possible. Detailed guidance for PPMs is available on the Military OneSource website.

Reyes said the PCS JTF call center focuses on case ownership and ensuring a tailored and consistent communication experience.

“Case ownership means it becomes personal,” he explained. “It builds a sense of commitment; when you take ownership of a case, you’re driven to help the service member to the best of your ability, even if you don’t have the answer right away. That effort makes the customer feel heard and supported.”

To prepare, call center action officers received training to ensure they could deliver expert-level support from day one. This included a call-answering workshop, which emphasized best practices in clarity, empathy and effective communication.

“Being that voice on the other end of the line when a family is stressed is all too familiar,” said Army Staff Sgt. Robert Fryerson, a PCS JTF call center action officer. “Being able to empathize and understand their concerns allows me to address the needs of each service member better, knowing that their property will be taken care of and providing a safe place where they feel valued and cared for, not just another number.”

The action officers also received hands-on instruction in Defense Personal Property Program systems and procedures, enabling them to assist with a broad range of PCS-related concerns beyond household goods tracking.

“It’s an honor to be part of such an important mission,” Reyes said. “There’s nothing I enjoy more than helping military families have a smooth move and making a lasting impact on how PCS moves are handled today.”

The call center launch follows a series of reforms to the Defense Personal Property Program.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth directed the creation of the PCS JTF as part of an effort to fix long-standing issues within the PCS process and to improve the quality of life for

service members and civilian employees.

“Our people are not just names on a roster,” Curtis said. “They’re warfighters, parents, spouses and public servants. Reducing the stress of relocation is not just the right thing to do, it’s a strategic imperative.”

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## POINT MUGU IS BUILDING THE FUTURE OF NAVAL AVIATION

by Lt.j.g. Drew Verbis

Naval Base Ventura County

POINT MUGU - Leaders from Airborne Command & Control and Logistics Wing (ACCLOGWING), Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR), Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC), Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) and civilian partners, break ground on the MQ-25 Stingray hangar here July 29.

The MQ-25 Stingray will be the world's first operational, carrier-based unmanned aircraft and provide aerial refueling for the Carrier Air Wing (CVW) and Carrier Strike Group (CSG).

"We're not simply constructing a building, we are building the future of Naval Aviation," said Capt. Daniel "DB" Brown, commanding officer, NBVC. "NBVC is proud to be selected to host this platform that is leading the way in the transition from manned to unmanned carrier-based aviation."

Brown said the MQ-25 Stingray will be a source of growth and prosperity for this area, boosting opportunities and economic development.

"NBVC is the largest employer in Ventura County," Brown stated. "We expect this platform to add civilian and military jobs to the base, to include approximately 650 uniformed service members."

Designed to operate from aircraft carriers, the Stingray's primary mission is to extend the range of the carrier air wing by providing unmanned aerial refueling capabilities, with a secondary mission of gathering intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

"There were seminal moments in our history where we shifted tremendously from the way things were done to the way we will do the future," said Capt. Daniel Fucito, program director, Unmanned Carrier Aviation Program Manager (PMA-268). "In the 1800s, we shifted from wooden ships to ironclads. In the 1900s, we shifted from battleships to aircraft carriers. Today we are at the dawn of a new golden age of naval aviation shifting from manned to unmanned."

The Stingray unmanned aircraft system will provide the needed robust refueling capability to extend the combat

range of deployed E-2D Hawkeye, F/A-18 Super Hornet, EA-18G Growler, and F-35C fighters.

"This is the future of Naval aviation, this is a big deal, not just for Point Mugu, but for the Navy," said Capt. Daniel S. Bense, commodore, ACCLOGWING. "It represents a transformational era in our history, providing capability that is meant to upset the Great Power Competition; putting the United States of America one step ahead."

The \$149M DoD military construction project, includes a hangar facility, maintenance shops, administration support spaces, aircraft parking apron, training areas, and communications shelter. The project is estimated to be completed in the Fall of 2027.

NBVC is major shore warfighting platform; providing sustained ready forces to deploy, fight, and win. Composed of three operating facilities: Point Mugu, Port Hueneme and San Nicolas Island and home of the Pacific Seabees, West Coast E-2D Hawkeyes, 3 warfare centers and 110 tenant commands.

see photo, page 8



Capt. Jose Roman, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One, right, and Cmdr. Kevin Smith, center, outgoing CO of USS Omaha (LCS 12), exchange salutes during a change of command ceremony held at Naval Base San Diego, July 29. Littoral combat ships are fast, optimally-manned, mission-tailored surface combatants that operate in near-shore and open-ocean environments, winning against 21st-century threats. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kassandra Alanis



## Shelter dog to make life on Navy ship less ruff

A black lab named Raider is on a mission. He's what you'd call a "morale dog" from a San Diego nonprofit organization named Shelter to Soldier, where rescue dogs are trained to become emotional support animals for military veterans.

And now, he's training to set sail on the Navy ship, USS *Makin Island* next year, a first in the program.

"Raider is a one-year-old

lab mix adopted from Labs and More Rescue currently in training with Shelter to Soldier as a shipboard Morale Dog through our Canine Ambassador program," the Shelter to Soldier program said in a Facebook reel that highlights Raider's training. "This initiative is designed to support the emotional wellness, morale, and mental health of sailors and marines."

*Makin Island* is the first to

partner with Shelter to Soldier, which occurred after the program's director, Nicky Moore, began to bring therapy dogs to Navy ships, NBC San Diego reported.

"Every single time it was like, 'I really wish we had a dog that stayed on board.' Like, 'Can we take this dog on deployment with us?' And so, we just kind of were like, 'Actually, yeah,'" Moore told the news outlet.

And now, providing emotional support to those on board will be Raider's goal. "Aboard *Makin Island*, Raider will serve as a four-legged crew member, offering support through structured interaction, presence, and engagement," Shelter to Soldier continued in the Facebook reel. "Shelter to Soldier's Canine Ambassadors work across a range of settings to support the military and veteran community."

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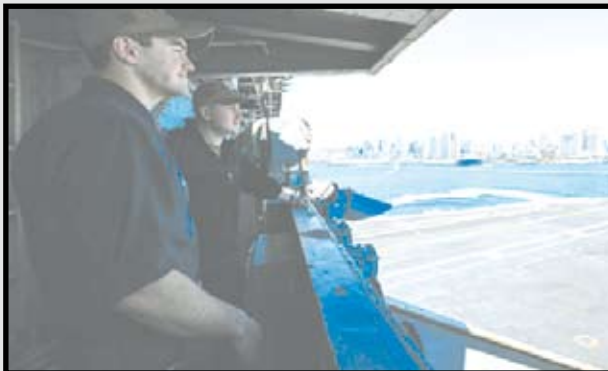
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## PHOTO GALLERY



**ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE** Aviation Structural Mechanic (Equipment) Zhibin He conducts testing on an oxygen generation system of a Super Hornet aboard Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier underway July 28, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Jordan Steis



**THE BEST VIEW** Navy Electronics Technician (Nuclear) 1st Class Trent DeSactis, front, and Electronics Technician (Nuclear) 2nd Class Kaleb Fisher, stand watch aboard aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt as the ship returns to San Diego, July 29, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Adam Barnett



**TRUE GRIT** Marine Corps Sgt. Shawn Miller, the motor transport chief of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and other logistics section Marines compete in a game of tug-of-war as part of the 15th MEU Beach Bash at Camp Pendleton July 31, 2025. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Luis Agostini

# Medical Service Corps chief visits NMRTC Twentynine Palms for corps' 78th birthday

by Christopher Jones, Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms

TWENTYNINE PALMS, - Rear Adm. Matthew Case, Chief of the Navy Medical Service Corps (MSC) and Acting Assistant Director for Healthcare Administration for the Defense Health Agency, visited Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Twentynine Palms on July 30 to commemorate the corps' 78th birthday and highlight the continued importance of military medical readiness in an increasingly challenging global environment.

Over the course of his visit, Case toured key facilities, including the hospital and Adult Medical Care Clinic to learn firsthand how the command helps keep the warfighter in the fight. He met with NMRTC Twentynine Palms commanding officer Capt. Janiese Cleckley, executive officer Capt. Candace Foura, acting command master chief Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Matthew Ritchie, and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center commanding general Maj. Gen. Mark Clingan to discuss how the command bolsters medical readiness while delivering high-quality care to service members and their families.

The two-star admiral's visit centered on celebrating the MSC's legacy while addressing the challenges and responsibilities ahead for both Navy Medicine and the Defense Health Agency as a whole. During a traditional cake-cutting ceremony, Rear Adm. Case, the most senior MSC officer present, joined Lt. j.g. David Naiman, the youngest MSC officer, along with Capt. Cleckley and the command's director for administration Cmdr. William "Bill" Lawson, to cut the ceremonial birthday cake together — marking 78 years of the Medical Service Corps.

Case also hosted an all-hands call with MSC officers at Robert E. Bush Naval Hospital, with Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Detachment

(NMRTD) China Lake and NMRTD Bridgeport Sailors attending virtually.

"We have an incredible mission," Case told the assembled officers. "We have to be prepared for the fight tonight—not tomorrow, but tonight. Because, we do have adversaries in the world that threaten us."

Case outlined four strategic priorities that guide the MSC: warfighting requirements, force generation, force preservation and force development. He emphasized the need to balance direct patient care with long-term operational readiness.

"These areas are all connected," he said. "We're generating and preserving force, we're developing ourselves and our teams, and we're standing ready to fight. That's what we do."

The visit came as part of a larger effort by Navy Medicine leadership to stay connected with front-line personnel. Case's stop at the Twentynine Palms installation underscored the vital role MSC officers play in supporting both healthcare delivery and the warfighter mission — especially in remote and resource-limited environments.

He also touched on the Navy's laser focus in the Pacific region, noting the importance of ensuring medical support remains agile, distributed and capable across long distances.

"Pacific operations are at the center of our planning," he said. "We must maintain the same standard of care in forward-deployed environments as we do in major medical centers."

Case encouraged ongoing professional development and the power of learning every day, urging officers and all Sailors to take advantage of every learning opportunity to better serve the fleet and their country.

"Our adversaries can outnumber us, but they will never outsmart us. That, and the fact that we are a volunteer fighting force—not a conscripted one—is what makes us the leading military in the world."

Case also emphasized the critical role military families play in supporting service members' missions, describing military service as "a package deal" that affects entire families through frequent relocations, deployments and the uncertainties of military life.

"Sometimes the stuff we get to do is kind of cool, but our spouses and loved ones are dealing with other things, trying to move forward, maybe going to school for the first time or going to a new school for the seventh time," Case said, encouraging service members to actively thank their families for their support.

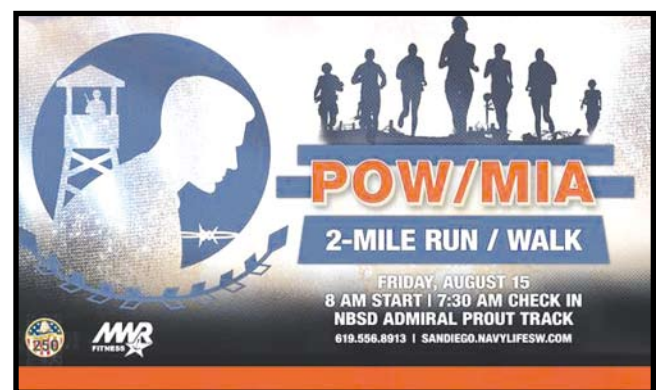
Established in 1947, the Navy Medical Service Corps is composed of healthcare administrators, clinical specialists and sup-

port personnel who enable the delivery of care across the fleet. Officers serve in specialties ranging from medical logistics and operations management to research and clinical practice.

At NMRTC Twentynine Palms, Medical Service Corps officers support a range of services critical to both patient care and operational success. The hospital plays a key role in preparing Marines and Sailors for combat and responding to any potential injuries sustained during live-fire training at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center.

"We need to take care of the next patient through the door, not only take care of them safely, but take care of them and make sure that they're doing well," Case said. "That's a lot, but you all signed up for it. Thank you for signing up for it. Thank you for choosing this profession."

The visit underscored the continued relevance of the Medical Service Corps and the critical role it and the Defense Health Agency play in supporting medical readiness around the world.



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## 7th annual Military Heroes Festival at Liberty Station to honor military families



### Liberty Station and Rock Church partner for superhero-themed celebration

Liberty Station, formerly the Naval Training Center (NTC), and Rock Church will host the 7th annual Military Heroes Festival Saturday, August 16.

Set in historic Ingram Plaza, this event is a heartfelt tribute to the service and sacrifice of our nation's military heroes. With a Superhero theme, the festival promises a fun-filled morning for service members, military and Gold-Star families, active-duty, reservists, along with veterans in need—all free of charge.

Attendees will enjoy complimentary services and giveaways including groceries, diapers, backpacks, haircuts, and more. Entertainment includes live music, a kid's zone, a sports zone, face painting, crafts, prize giveaways, and special appearances by Star Wars Stormtroopers.

**WHEN:** Saturday, August 16, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM

**WHERE:** Ingram Plaza  
– Liberty Station  
2751 Dewey Road  
San Diego, CA 92106

**COST:** Free for military and gold-star families, reservists, and veterans in need.

Register here: <https://brushfire.com/sdrock/events/603945/details>.

Bring your family and friends to the festival as we honor you for your service. You have been invited as our guest to receive the following complimentary items, while supplies last:

- Groceries
- Backpacks (for ages 5-12)
- Lunch
- Diapers (Newborn-Size 6)\*

In addition, there will be resources, entertainment, complimentary haircuts for all ages, giveaways...and much more!

## Singapore, U.S. strengthen defense ties with launch of new joint master's degree at NPS

MONTEREY, Calif. — In a milestone for international defense collaboration and education, the Temasek Defence Systems Institute (TDSI) at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) formally launched a new joint degree program, underscoring decades of trusted partnership and a shared commitment to preparing future leaders for the complexities of modern warfare.

NUS president professor Tan Eng Chye and NPS president retired U.S. Navy Vice Adm. Ann E. Rondeau, Ed.D. signed the new partnership agreement during a ceremony held in Singapore at NUS, July 23.

Senior leaders in attendance included the Singapore Minister for Defence (MINDEF) Chan Chun Sing; MINDEF Permanent Secretary (Defence Development) Melvyn Ong; TDSI Board Chairman and Chief Defence Scientist Tan Peng Yam; dean of the NUS College of Design and Engineering professor Teo Kie Leong; as well as Lisa S. Liao, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'Affaires and U.S. Navy Capt. Manuel Picon, Defense Attaché.

"Over the years, the Naval Postgraduate School has always held a special place in our Singapore defense ecosystem," said Sing. "For generations, many of our defense personnel have gone to the Naval Postgraduate School and brought back networks and knowledge to help build our own defense ecosystem."

The joint program is designed to equip defense professionals with cross-disciplinary knowledge and system-level competencies, with a particular emphasis on digital systems engineering, emerging technologies, and strategic systems thinking. With rapid technological change reshaping the character of warfare, both institutions emphasized the urgency of adapting defense education to reflect the evolving global security environment.

"This momentous milestone reflects the strength of the enduring collaboration between our institutions," said Rondeau.

"We talk about integration, we talk about systems thinking, which is about working these things together with respect for all different points of view to create solutions to problems. Our bonds are deep, and the joint degree we are establishing today is not only a new initiative but also representative of what we are going to become."

Sing emphasized that the new joint degree would enhance the preparation of defense engineers by focusing on digital systems engineering and systems thinking, which are increasingly vital in today's rapidly evolving technological and security landscape.

He added that the collaboration reflects the enduring defense ties between Singapore and the United States, rooted in mutual trust and a shared focus on peace, stability, and technol-

ogy, and noted that many of Singapore's defense engineers have emerged from this partnership, which dates back more than 50 years, to help strengthen the nation's military.

Singapore's formal academic collaboration with NPS began in the early 1970s, with more than 700 Singaporean officers graduating from the school throughout the partnership including current TDSI professor Lui Pao Chuen, a 1973 NPS graduate in operations research. Chuen rose to become Singapore's Chief Defence Scientist, and was inducted into the NPS Hall of Fame in 2002.

Another milestone in the NPS-TDSI partnership came in 2001 with the establishment of the dual degree program, with an inaugural cohort of 27 graduates. To date, more than 300 Singaporean military officers and 68 U.S. officers have earned degrees from both institutions through the program, with the new joint degree opening avenues to greater collaboration.

***"This undertaking is a testament to our vision and commitment to advancing defense education and research at the highest standards. I am pleased that NUS will be furthering our relationship with NPS, a leading institution for military and defense-related fields, through this joint program."***

For both nations, the strategic value of this collaboration extends far beyond academic credentials. As a maritime nation located at the heart of the Indo-Pacific, Singapore plays a vital role in maintaining open sea lanes and upholding a stable order. U.S. Navy Adm. Samuel J. Paparo, commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, welcomed the development.

"In today's contested environment, success requires more than just platforms and presence — it depends on people," said Paparo, also an NPS alumnus.

"This joint degree program enhances the intellectual and operational capabilities between our nations, preparing defense leaders who can integrate technology smartly, think critically about complex challenges, and work together to maintain the partnerships that underpin regional security, stability and prosperity."

Rondeau also highlighted the deeper significance of the collaboration, calling the NPS-

TDSI program one of NPS' proudest traditions for its role in building long-term bonds among U.S. and Singaporean officers across careers and continents. She emphasized that the joint degree not only enhances technical and critical thinking but also strengthens the human dimension of learning by advancing trust and peace through shared values, integration, and mutual understanding.

The International Graduate Programs Office (IGPO) at NPS oversees the educational outreach to allied and partner nations. To date, NPS' international military alumni network exceeds 7,000 graduates from 128 countries. IGPO deputy director Mowafiq W. Alanazi, Ed.D., emphasized NPS' long-standing connection with the TDSI program.

"We are stronger together," said Alanazi. "This joint degree program with NUS stands as a testament to NPS' status as a global leader in military education. We look forward to welcoming many more Singaporean students in the near future to our growing defense-diverse student body of allied militaries."

Concluding his remarks at the ceremony, Chan said, "I look forward to the continued partnership between NUS and NPS, and to seeing how our engineers apply their skills to strengthen our national defense."

With the launch of this new joint degree, NUS and NPS reaffirm their shared commitment to cultivating operationally informed, technologically proficient defense leaders, and to ensuring deterrence through strength, innovation, and enduring friendship.

The Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) is located in Monterey, California, and provides defense-focused graduate education, including classified studies and interdisciplinary research, to advance the operational effectiveness, technological leadership, and warfighting advantage of the U.S. Naval service.

Established in 1909, NPS offers master's and doctorate programs to Department of Defense military and civilians, along with international partners, to deliver transformative solutions and innovative leaders through advanced education and research.

• Learn more about International Graduate Programs at NPS: <https://nps.edu/web/igpo>



**POINT MUGU (July 29, 2025) Members of Jacobs engineering and technical support team attend the groundbreaking ceremony for the MQ-25 Stingray hangar onboard Naval Base Ventura County (NBVC) Point Mugu, July 29. The MQ-25 Stingray will be the world's first operational, carrier-based unmanned aircraft and provide aerial refueling for the Carrier Air Wing (CVW) and Carrier Strike Group (CSG). NBVC is major shore warfighting platform; providing sustained ready forces to deploy, fight, and win. Composed of three operating facilities: Point Mugu, Port Hueneme and San Nicolas Island and home of the Pacific Seabees, West Coast E-2D Hawkeyes, 3 warfare centers and 110 tenant commands. U.S. Navy photo by Lt.j.g. Drew Verbis**

see story, page 6

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Youth sports is great, until it’s not

“C’mon! Pick it up if you wanna make the team!” my father bellowed over the “braaap-braaap-braaap” of his smokey Honda moped. I ran faster, my cheeks beet red from the August heat.

That was how I spent every morning during our family’s two-week vacation the summer after high school graduation. My father, who’d earned a football scholarship to college, was dead-set on his children being college athletes.

My older brother had always been a natural athlete, and was recruited for track to the U.S. Naval Academy. But after a hellish Plebe year, he quit the team to concentrate on academics. My father was furious.

“You would’ve competed against Hershel Walker!” Dad blared, not able to fathom giving up college sports.

I, on the other hand, was a squishy kid who collected puffy stickers, sang along to old records alone in my room, played with Barbies well into middle school, and stuck blades of grass in my nose to make myself sneeze. Sure, I earned a third-place ribbon at church camp in the Standing Broad Jump, but I was no athlete.

It wasn’t until ninth grade, after my best friend dumped me for the pot head crowd, when I wandered into a swim team meeting.

“I swim I.M. What’s your stroke?” asked Patti, a new ninth grade girl who would become my lifelong best friend.

“What’s I.M.?” I asked, totally unaware that it stood for “Individual Medley,” a basic competi-

tive swimming term.

When I told Dad I’d joined swim team, he mumbled, “Hmm, good for you,” barely looking up from his newspaper. That year, I was the worst one on the team. Despite my lack of ability, I loved the sense of belonging, camaraderie, team spirit, bus trips, team dinners, physical challenge, and feeling that I was accomplishing something important.

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

At the season banquet, I cheered enthusiastically for my teammates who won awards, having no idea that I’d receive one, too — “Most Improved.”

That recognition turbo charged my motivation. By senior year, I was Team Captain and had broken a school Breaststroke record. Dad developed the same fervor for my swimming as he had my brother’s sports. He lectured me after meets on improving and becoming a college swimmer. After graduation, he monitored my summer fitness regimen, and made me run two miles beside his moped every morning while on vacation.

I’d been accepted to Miami of Ohio, a Division I school. My skills weren’t enough to attract recruiters at that level, so I tried out. There were two walk-on spots, and only two of us tried out. The other walk-on was better than me, but she quit after two weeks

because practices were so hard.

They were hard, but I’d witnessed Dad’s anger and disappointment when my brother quit. Once again, I was the worst one on the team and I had to stick it out.

Freshman year was a struggle. I woke at dawn for morning practices, and swam again afternoons, swimming nearly eight miles in yardage a day. I came to class with frozen hair, and developed serious ear infections. I wasn’t on the travel team, wasn’t issued team sweats, and was a “floater” for home meets. I was exhausted and out of my league. I never improved.

Dad came to the last home meet during Parents Weekend. Coach put me in 200 Backstroke, my worst event. After the start, I spied teammates and spectators through my watery goggles and thought, “Are they cheering for me?” But by my last two pool lengths, everyone was seated and silent, waiting for me to finish.

“If you wanna do something else next year, that’s okay,” my father offered that night, without lectures. Even he could see, it had gone too far.

Youth participation in sports offers scientifically-proven health and psychological benefits. It not only combats childhood obesity, it gets kids away from screens and involved in healthy activities where they can make friends, learn teamwork, develop coping skills, and build self-esteem and a sense of belonging.

However, like most things in life, balance is key.

The next fall, I joined a sorority and practiced a different skill — how to have fun in college.



by Jan Wagner

As always, there was way too much to see and do at San Diego Comic-Con. In past years I’ve tended to meander around, splitting my time between what was inside the Convention Center and exploring the many offsite activations outside. The problem with that approach is that I always seem to miss highlights that I was not aware of until it was too late, so this year I spent some time before Comic-Con to make arrangements to attend certain offsites, and planned for which panels that I would most like to cover.

On Wednesday Preview Night, I took advantage of the somewhat reduced crowds to see what was in the massive Exhibit Hall. Even on Preview Night, lines at the most popular Exhibit Hall booth were quickly capped. It has become a tradition of mine to go over to the Hulu exhibit space and pick up the annual cardboard poster tube. Usually, by the time I work my way over there on Preview Night, the evening’s allocation of tubes to be distributed was already given out, which meant that I would have to try to get one on a following day, and then have to carry it around for hours. This time, however, I got lucky and got a poster tube on Preview Night. Strangely, though, this year’s tube did not include the printed year.

LEGO built an incredible recreation of the Convention Center, and attendees built booth to place on the Exhibit Hall be-

San Diego Comic-Con 2025

hind the exterior.

There were numerous outside activations. This year’s FX activation was for the upcoming new TV series “Alien: Earth” — located behind the Convention Center, overlooking the waterfront. As always, FX had a multi-component activation with sets and props to recreate the sorts of things we’ll see in the TV series. That included the crash-landed spaceship and so busted open alien containment vessels. I found out that there were actually two versions of this activation: the daytime version and a nighttime version, which I saw on Saturday evening.

I covered this year’s “Her Universe Fashion Show,” at the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel. In order to get a position of the press photo riser, I had to commit several hours to this — from a little after 1:00 PM to when the fashion show ended at around 7:00 PM This year’s fashion show was themed to “Wicked.” The fashions, which were presented on a long runway were spectacular. It had been many years since I last covered this fashion show. Back then it was a small event in a downtown restaurant, as I recall.

I covered several panels. Unfortunately, the crowd in the packed Ballroom 20 for “Resident Alien” were told that this would be the show’s final season. It is one of my favorite shows, starring Alan Tudyk in the title role. Chris Sheridan, the creator of this show, told us that as early as last year he suspected that this year would be the show’s last year, so the scripts were written to nicely wrap things up. It sounds like money is the issue.

In Hall H I covered panels for

“The Long Walk” (do not stop walking or you will be shot!); “Predator Badlands” (with a cool mask giveaway; “Alien: Earth,” where we were shown a preview of the scary new alien series; and “TRON: Ares,” for which Disney attached red lasers all over the ceiling of Hall H, to further dramatize the entrance of characters from the upcoming movie. From the preview, this looks fantastic.

The panels for “The Simpsons” and “Family Guy” provided welcome comic relief.

Outside activations that I visited included the immersive Paramount+ The Lodge activation, with activities that included “Mission: Impossible,” “Dexter,” “STAR TREK,” “NCIS: Tony & Ziva” and “The Landman,” a bumper car ride at an outside activation for the “Twisted Metal” TV series; the “Abbot Elementary” Block Party; a “STAR WARS”-themed Coca-Cola experience; an Old Spice “Superman”-branded deodorant experience; “King of the Hill,”

The “ANIME FANFAST” took over the Rady Shell for two days with live music and activities.

Saturday ended with the Comic-Con Masquerade. Sunday wrapped up with George Lucas’ first appearance at Comic-Con, where he presented a preview of next year’s Lucas Museum of Narrative Art.

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 #893

Veterans News

Fisher House opens 100th home to support military families, veterans

by Katie Lange  
DOD News

For military families or veterans going through a medical crisis, a new resource in the Chicago area may be able to ease the logistical and financial burden of getting treatment.

In late July, the Fisher House Foundation officially dedicated its 100th Fisher House, which was built at the James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center in north Chicago.

Fisher Houses offer critical housing and support to the military and veteran communities. Service members, veterans, their families and their caretakers can stay at a Fisher House at no cost while their loved one receives treatment and/or rehabilitation — similar to the care afforded to the families of sick children by the Ronald McDonald House or St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

“This is one of those basic, yet underappreciated needs that kind of slipped through the

cracks,” said Ken Fisher, chairman and CEO of Fisher House Foundation.

It’s taxing on a family to have a loved one in a hospital, but that stress is often exacerbated by having to drive back and forth, sometimes for hours each day, to a treatment facility. Fisher Houses help relieve that burden and allow families to start the healing process during treatment.

“It makes them better caregivers because the financial burden is removed,” Fisher said. “It also makes the patient better because now they don’t have to worry about ... how their [family will] get home at 11 p.m., because most of these houses are all within walking distance of the facility.”

The north Chicago house marks a major milestone for the Fisher House Foundation, which built its first house to serve military families at Walter



The 100th Fisher House opened its doors north Chicago, July 29. Photo courtesy of Fisher House Foundation

Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, in 1990.

The crowd attending the dedication included Veterans Affairs Secretary Doug Collins and Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient Army Sgt. Allen Lynch, who presented a plaque to hang inside the new house to symbolize support for the families

staying there.

As of June 2025, Fisher Houses have served 534,000 military and veteran families, saving them more than \$650 million in lodging and transportation costs. That equates to 12.5 million days of free lodging offered.

“I think the most important impact that the foundation has had, other than the free lodging and the other things that we provide, is that we have been able to evolve in a way that met the changing needs of the today’s veteran,” Fisher said, referring to the Hotels for Heroes and Hero Miles programs the foundation runs, along with its support of the Warrior Games and the Invictus Games.

The location for the new house was chosen largely because Lovell FHCC is a joint VA and Defense Department facility in a city that handles a huge number of veterans and service men and women. Aside from its main hospital, Lovell FHCC also operates two outpatient clinics elsewhere in Illinois

and one in Kenosha, Wisc. It also has four clinics at Naval Station Great Lakes for Navy recruits, other area military members and their families.

The new house follows the mold of most of the other Fisher Houses. It boasts more than 14,000 square feet of room with 16 suites, all of which are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The home has a spacious kitchen for cooking and

a large communal living area, as well as dining and family rooms, a laundry room and a shared patio.

There’s no time limit for stays, either; people can receive lodging for a few nights or several months.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/4259550/fisher-house-opens-100th-home-to-support-military-families-veterans/>

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## Can my wife get her full spousal benefit at 62, or must she wait?

*Dear Rusty: I'm 64 and my wife is 62. If my wife starts her own benefit now, she will get about \$700 on her own at 62. I will retire next year and claim Social Security when I am 65. SSA says my wife can draw \$1,100 under spousal benefits, so if she claims now will they give her spousal benefits of \$1,100, or does she need to wait until I claim at age 65 to get the \$1,100? Signed: Trying to Understand*

**Dear Trying:** If your wife is now 62, then her full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is age 67, and if she claims any SS benefit before reaching her FRA, the amount will be reduced for early claiming. If your wife were to claim now (before you), she would get only her own SS retirement amount (the \$700 amount), and that would be a reduction of about 30% from what she would get if she waited until her FRA to claim.

Your wife cannot get a "spousal boost" (an additional amount as your spouse) until you claim your SS retirement benefit (at age 65?). And her benefit as your spouse at that time will also be reduced because she will not have yet reached her FRA. If your wife is already collecting her own SS retirement benefit when you later claim, she will be given her "spousal boost" to make her benefit equal what she is entitled to as your spouse. But her total monthly benefit as your spouse will also be reduced because it will be awarded before her FRA. The only way your wife can get her full spousal benefit from you is to wait until she is 67 to claim Social Security. If she claims any earlier, her monthly amount will be permanently reduced.

FYI, if you plan to claim at age 65, you should also be aware that your full retirement age (FRA) is also age 67, and claiming at age 65 will mean that you will get about 87% of the amount you would get if you waited until age 67 to claim. Again, these reductions are permanent, except for normal Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) awarded annually thereafter.

Having said all of that, deciding when each of you should claim your Social Security benefit is a matter of financial need, while also considering your life expectancy. If your life expectancy is short and/or you need the money, then claiming early is likely the right decision. But if your life expectancy is longer and you don't urgently need the money, then you might both consider waiting longer to claim a higher monthly amount and get more in cumulative lifetime benefits.

Finally, please remember that whenever SS is claimed before full retirement age, Social Security has an annual earnings test which limits how much can be earned by working while collecting early SS benefits. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 and, if that is exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 over the limit (they take back by withholding future SS payments). FYI, the earnings limit for those who claim SS early changes (increases a bit) yearly and goes away entirely once full retirement age is reached. So, if either or both of you are working, you should evaluate whether claiming your Social Security benefit early (before your respective FRA) is a prudent choice.

## 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. <http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>

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  
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/](http://www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/) for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

**Marine Corps Mechanized Museum Camp Pendleton.** Managed under the auspices of Camp Pendleton's Museum Division Office, the collection of over 50 vehicles ranges from World War I to the first Gulf War. It includes Patton tanks, armored wheeled and tracked vehicles, trucks, jeeps and amphibious vehicles. When coming aboard Camp Pendleton, please ensure that you have a valid photo ID for every vehicle occupant along with current registration and proof of insurance. <https://www.themec.org/>

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

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

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- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.
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PG-13 – Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

R – Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

NC-17 – No one 17 or under admitted.

## Armed Forces Dispatch • (619) 280-2985

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E-mail: [editor@navydispatch.com](mailto:editor@navydispatch.com)



## SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

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# Enjoy the outdoors, support local farmers at one of the county’s farmer’s markets

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

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

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

**Downtown / Gaslamp Quarter**  
**City Heights Certified Farmers Market**  
Saturday: 9am-1pm  
On Wightman St from Fairmount Ave to 43rd St, San Diego, CA 92105

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

**Little Italy Mercato Certified**

**Farmers Market**  
Saturday: 8am-2pm  
501 W Date St from Kettner Blvd to Front St, San Diego, CA 92101

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

**Hillcrest / Uptown**  
**Hillcrest Certified Farmers Market**  
Sunday: 9am-2pm  
3960 Normal St from Lincoln Ave to University Ave, San Diego, CA 92103

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

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

**Mission Bay and Beaches**  
**Ocean Beach Certified Farmers Market**  
Wednesday: 4pm-8pm  
4900 Newport Ave from Cable St to Bacon St, San Diego, CA 92107

**Pacific Beach Certified Farmers Market**  
Saturday: 8am-12pm  
4150 Mission Blvd from Reed St to

Pacific Beach Blvd, PB, CA 92109

**Pacific Beach Tuesday Certified Farmers Market**  
Tuesday: 2pm-7pm  
4500 Bayard St. from Garnet Ave to Hornblend St  
San Diego, CA 92109

**Mission Valley and Old Town**  
**Kearny Mesa Certified Farmers Market**  
Saturday: 10:30am-2:30pm  
Service Road from Lightwave Ave to Spectrum Center Blvd, San Diego, CA 92123

**South Bay Chula Vista - Otay Ranch Certified Farmers Market**  
Tuesday: 4pm-8pm  
2015 Birch Rd. and Eastlake Blvd. Chula Vista, CA 91915

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

**South Bay Certified Farmers Market**  
Wednesday: 3-7pm  
4475 Bonita Rd. Bonita, CA 91902

**East County**  
**Borrego Springs Certified**

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

**La Mesa Village Certified Farmers Market**  
Friday: 3pm-7pm  
La Mesa Blvd from Palm Ave and Allison Ave, La Mesa, CA 91942

**Santee Certified Farmers Market**  
Wednesday: 3pm-7pm (March - October)  
Wednesday: 2:30pm-6:30pm (November - February)  
9600 Carlton Hills Blvd and Mast Blvd, Santee, CA 92071

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

**North Coastal**  
**Carlsbad State Street Certified Farmers Market**  
Wednesday: 3pm-7pm (March-Oct)  
Wednesday: 3pm-6pm (Nov-Feb)  
2900 State St from Carlsbad Village Dr to Grand Ave, Carlsbad, CA 92008

**Del Mar Certified Farmers Market**  
Saturday: Noon-4pm

Civic Center, 1050 Camino Del Mar, Del Mar, CA 92014

**Leucadia Certified Farmers Market**  
Sunday: 10am-2pm  
Paul Ecke Elementary, 185 Union St, Encinitas, CA 92024

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

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

**Solana Beach Certified Farmers Market**  
Sunday: Noon-4pm  
444 South Cedros Ave, Solana Beach, CA 92075

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

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

**Mira Mesa Certified Farmers Market**  
Tuesday: 3pm-7pm (February - October) Opens 2nd Tues in Feb.

Tuesday: 3pm-6pm (Nov-Dec, closed in January)  
Mira Mesa High School, 10510 Reagan Rd. San Diego, CA 92126

**North San Diego (Sikes Adobe) Certified Farmers Market**  
Sunday: 10:30am-3:30pm  
Sikes Adobe Historic Farmstead, 12655 Sunset Dr, Escondido, CA 92025

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

**Rancho Bernardo Certified Farmers Market & Specialties**  
Friday: 9am-1pm  
Bernardo Winery, 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte, San Diego, CA 92128

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

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



# Support for serious illness: Palliative care is here to help

Being diagnosed with a serious illness is life-changing. Many decisions must be made, with many unknowns. But there are experts who can help you navigate the complicated landscape of a long-term, serious illness. Palliative care specialists focus on comfort care and improving your quality of life during a serious illness.

“Palliative care is a holistic approach to medicine and caregiving,” explains Dr. Matthew DeCamp, a physician at University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus. “It places the patient’s quality of life and needs and values front and center.”

Sometimes, palliative care is confused with hospice care. Both offer comfort care and symptom management. Hospice is a type of palliative care that’s only offered at the end of life. It requires all treatments be stopped. But other types of palliative care can be offered alongside life-saving treatments.

“Embracing palliative care does not mean that you’re giving up on treatment,” says Dr. Alexis Bakos, an aging expert at NIH. “Ideally, palliative care should be offered at the very beginning of a diagnosis of any serious illness.”

What makes an illness “serious?” A high risk of death or one that lowers your quality of life or ability to perform daily tasks. Ex-



amples include chronic heart and lung diseases, cancer, neurodegenerative diseases like dementia and Parkinson’s, and many others.

A palliative care team can assist with many aspects of a serious illness. They can help you find ways to cope with physical, psychological, emotional, or spiritual suffering. They can support you with symptom management and assist health care providers in coordinating your care.

The palliative team can also help you create an advance care plan. This describes your wishes for future medical treatments. It includes who you want to make your medical decisions if you’re not able to. The team can also support you with end-of-life care, hospice care, and bereavement if needed.

**Making a Plan**  
The goal of palliative care is to lessen symptoms and enhance quality of life,” says Dr. Lori Wiener, a palliative care expert for children with cancer at NIH. “And there’s good data to support that early palliative care integration improves health-related quality

of life.”

But what makes a better quality of life can be different for everyone. “The palliative care provider will meet with you really early on. They’ll find out about your medical history and the symptoms that are most distressing to you,” says Wiener. “They will learn your preferences for care and communication.” Then, the provider can work with you to make sure your advance care plan reflects your concerns and goals.

“Unfortunately, advance care planning conversations often don’t happen until too late,” Wiener says. “If you wait until you are experiencing a medical crisis or if you are at the end of your life, you don’t really have the time to contemplate what is most important to you.”

Wiener’s team studies ways to help children with cancer communicate their care wishes to their family and health care providers. They’ve created an advance care planning guide, called “Voicing My CHOICES.” It helps teens and young adults consider and document their values, hopes, and fears.

The team also developed an electronic distress screening tool, called “Checking IN.” This tool assesses what’s most distressing to the child. It asks about symptoms that interfere with their life when they check in to their appointment. Then, it provides a report to the

doctor ahead of time. Emotional and physical distress are often missed in children and teens with serious illnesses. Checking IN helps doctors learn about youths’ needs before their visit.

**Gaining a Better Understanding**  
Planning for a serious illness can be complicated. “Patients and families often remain unaware of how their serious illness may progress,” says DeCamp. “They may not know how long they might be expected to live or how long or what types of symptoms they might have. Physicians, nurses, and other members of the care team are also historically not very good at predicting the course of a disease.”

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have become available to help predict the course of a person’s disease, or prognosis. “Understanding prognosis is one critical piece of information that people need for their future life and care plans,” DeCamp says. “The promise of AI-based tools is that we can make better predictions for clinicians, patients, and families to enable them to get care that’s most consistent with their wishes.”

DeCamp is studying ethical issues around using an AI tool that calculates a “mortality score.” This score estimates a patient’s chance of survival over the next six to 12 months.

Sometimes these scores are automatically included in medi-

cal records, DeCamp says. So a patient may accidentally see it when they don’t want to know their chances of survival. Or health care staff may be able to view the scores, despite the families not wanting them to.

Knowing the mortality score has the potential to change how a patient is treated. “If we become overly focused on that number, it could affect how we talk to patients,” DeCamp explains. “It could also affect the way patients and families make decisions versus what palliative care is really about, which is providing care across all of physical, social, psychological, and spiritual needs.”

The accuracy of AI predictions depends on many factors. These include whether the AI was trained using data from people with backgrounds and health conditions like the patient’s. DeCamp’s team is hoping to help address these

types of ethical issues as AI tools become more available.

**Getting the Help You Need**  
If you’ve been diagnosed with a serious illness, ask your doctor about palliative care. Some providers may not offer it to you early on. Others may not offer it at all. But your provider may be able to refer you to a palliative care specialist.

“Earlier NIH research was focused on making sure that primary care clinicians were aware of palliative care,” Bakos explains. Now, NIH is looking at how to involve more specialists in palliative care conversations, such as emergency department physicians, neurologists, and intensive care unit providers.

Palliative care can help you improve your quality of life and understand your treatment options. It’s available as soon as you are diagnosed with a serious illness.

### Discuss Advance Care Planning

Here are some tips for starting a conversation about advance care planning with your loved ones:

- Start simple. Ask about any concerns they may have, what decisions they may need to make, and who they trust to make decisions for them.
- Share what’s important to you. Your loved one may feel more comfortable discussing their preferences if you share, too.
- Remind them why it’s important. By documenting their wishes, they are more likely to get the care they want. It can also help loved ones feel less burden, guilt, and depression.
- Try to be understanding. After a recent diagnosis or health change, it can be overwhelming and difficult to discuss the future.
- Keep the conversation going. Listen carefully to what the person says and encourage them to continue sharing.





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