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**SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 14
AUGUST 16-31, 2025**



SALUTING THE SKY, EMBRACING THE FALL Airmen exit an Air Force HC-130J Combat King II during a free-fall jump as part of Relámpago de los Andes at Palanquero Air Base, Colombia, Aug. 6, 2025. During the exercise, U.S. and Colombian airmen conducted training together to share tactics and techniques. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. William Rosado

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.

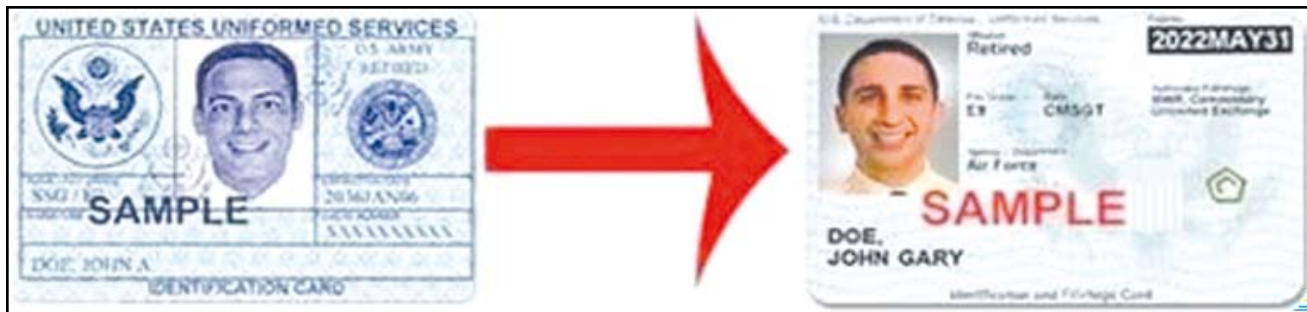
There are several ways to obtain a new ID card:

(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.



TRICARE to implement controls on weight loss medication coverage

by Scott Sutherland, staff writer

FALLS CHURCH, Va. - If you're using your TRICARE benefits for weight loss medication, there's a change coming your way.

The Defense Health Agency will soon implement regulatory controls on weight loss medication coverage. These controls take effect Aug. 31. If you have TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select, some medications are still covered in certain circumstances. Otherwise, if you have an approved prior authorization for weight loss drugs, it's no longer valid. You'll need to see your provider to discuss your options.

"People are taking GLP-1 drugs - like Wegovy and Zepbound - for weight loss now more than ever," said Dr. Paul Cordts, Defense Health Agency chief medical officer. "It's important to understand how - and why - TRICARE covers these drugs, based on your condition and status."

TRICARE beneficiaries affected by the change should soon receive guidance in the mail. Use of Trulicity, Ozempic, Mounjaro or Victoza, to name a few, to treat type-2 diabetes will still be covered provided that the treatment is medically necessary and prior authorization is obtained.

Currently in the U.S., a large portion of the general population of adults are overweight or obese. According to the CDC, nearly 3 in 4 adults (73.1 percent) are either overweight or obese, with over 42 percent considered obese. This includes about 1 in 11 adults with severe obesity.

The Center for Disease Control says weight loss medications can be effective tools for managing weight, but they should be used under the guidance of a healthcare professional. Several prescription medications are available, including injectables like Wegovy (semaglutide) and Saxenda (liraglutide), and oral options like Qsymia (phentermine-topiramate) and Contrave (naltrexone-bupropion).

These medications work through various mechanisms, such as increasing metabolism, suppressing appetite, or affecting fat absorption.

According to DHA, if your weight loss drug isn't covered, you should speak with your provider about other options. These may include nutrition counseling, or lifestyle and exercise changes.

You can also visit <https://dha.mil/> for more details on resources that can help you reach your goals.

Navy recruit dies from self-inflicted gunshot at Naval Station Great Lakes gun range

Officials from the Navy and Lake County (Ill.) Coroner's Office have confirmed that a Navy recruit died after being shot at a gun range at Naval Station Great Lakes in Lake County Aug. 6. NS Great Lakes fire and police departments responded to the shooting range after an initial report indicated Kayshawn Wilkerson, an 18-year-old assigned to the Recruit Training Command, from Ocala, Fla., died from a self-inflicted gun shot after authorities determined that is wasn't an active shooter incident. The shooting occurred at Building 7315 - the USS Wisconsin Firing Range - at Naval Station Great Lakes near North Chicago. First responders found Wilkerson with a gunshot wound and pronounced dead at the scene. The preliminary autopsy report from the coroner indicates Wilkerson died from a gunshot wound to the head, consistent with it being self-inflicted. "The Navy is providing full support to the family, friends, and shipmates affected by this tragic loss," said Lt. Beau Nickerson, a spokesman for Naval Service Training Command. The Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Lake County Coroner's Office are investigating Wilkerson's death. *Compiled from various news sources*

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Press secretary outlines detention center plans, commends National Guard in L.A.

by David Vergun, DOD News

The Defense Department began construction in mid-July on a detention center at Fort Bliss, Texas, in response to a request for assistance from the Department of Homeland Security, said Pentagon Press Secretary Kingsley Wilson, during a wide-ranging briefing at the Pentagon Aug. 7.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth approved DHS access and use of the land at the base, she said, speaking to press in a briefing that covered the shooting at Fort Stewart, Georgia; National Guard activities in California; the return of a confederate monument to Arlington National Cemetery; Purple Heart Day; and NATO members' increased investment in the alliance.

The detention center will have an initial capacity of 1,000 detainees, which is likely to be achieved later this month, Wilson said, and is ultimately expected to reach a capacity of 5,000 in the weeks and months

ahead. "Upon completion, this will be the largest federal detention center in history for this critical mission — the deportation of illegal aliens."

During the briefing, Wilson commended the National Guard and Marines for protecting federal missions, property and people in Los Angeles.

"At its peak on June 6, there were thousands of rioters in LA. Just two months later, on Aug. 5, there were a meager 20 to 25 protesters in and around LA," she said.

"The deployment of 4,700 DOD service members played a crucial role in deterring rioters and ultimately bringing peace back to Los Angeles. In its support of federal law enforcement missions, DOD regularly assisted federal law enforcement and protected them from harm," Wilson said.

Last month, the defense secretary ordered the withdrawal of about 1,350 California National



Marines assigned to protect federal personnel and property arrive in the greater Los Angeles area, June 9. U.S. Marines Corps photo by Cpl. Juan Torres

Guardsmen from the federal protection mission. Approximately 300 guardsmen remain in Los Angeles to continue protecting federal personnel and property, she said.

"DOD will continue to protect federal missions, property and people as we work to ensure violent agitators cannot undermine the rule of law and order in the United States," she added.

Wilson noted that the defense secretary announced this week that the Reconciliation Monument will be returned to Arlington National Cemetery. "We don't believe in erasing American history — we honor it," she said.

The Reconciliation Monument, aka the Confederate Memorial, was designed by Moses Jacob Ezekiel, a Confederate veteran.

In June 1900, Congress passed legislation setting aside Section 16 of the cemetery for the burial of Confederate troops.

By December 1901, 482 Confederate service members' remains were removed from the cemeteries at Alexandria, Virginia; the Soldiers' Home in Washington; and portions of Arlington National Cemetery and buried in Section 16.

The United Daughters of the Confederacy asked that a memo-

rial to the Confederate troops be erected there. Secretary of War William Howard Taft granted the request on March 4, 1906.

The monument was dedicated by President Woodrow Wilson on June 4, 1914, the 106th anniversary of the birthday of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. The memorial is 32 feet high. Atop the memorial is a life-size statue of a female representing "The South," crowned in victory with a wreath of olive leaves. She gestures toward the south with a laurel wreath to "crown" the sacrifice her "sons" made in war. In her right hand is a pruning hook, and at her feet is a plow.

This statue rests on a circular base on which is inscribed the Old Testament passage: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks."

Later today, on Purple Heart Day, Hegseth will be at the White House for a Purple Heart event hosted by President Donald J. Trump.

"The department honors the courage and sacrifice of all Purple Heart recipients," she said.

"The Purple Heart is the na-

tion's oldest military award, and today, we reflect on the dedication and courage of the men and women who have given so much for our freedom. We continue to honor their legacy and extend our gratitude for their unwavering service," Wilson said.

Separately, NATO is delivering to meet immediate needs for Ukraine through investment by the alliance, she said.

"We recognize the leadership of Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway and Sweden to fund over \$1 billion much-needed American weapons and equipment to Ukraine. This process supports the president's priority: ending the bloodshed, stopping the killing and achieving a ceasefire," Wilson said.

Five soldiers were wounded by an active-duty gunman yesterday at Fort Stewart, Ga. The incident remains under investigation.

"Secretary Hegseth expresses his full support to the Fort Stewart community, and our prayers remain with the wounded soldiers and their families. We commend the swift actions of those soldiers who subdued the suspect, as well as the first responders and Fort Stewart leadership," she said.

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NATIONAL MILITARY PHOTO GALLERY

DRONE DUTY Army Spc. Max Boatner operates a C100 drone during a field demonstration as part of Agile Spirit, a multinational training exercise, at Norio Training Area, Georgia, Aug. 2, 2025. The demonstration highlighted the integration of unmanned systems into tactical sustainment operations. **U.S. Army National Guard Sgt. 1st Class Brittany Conley**



MONITORING THE SCENE Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Abel Blaze monitors the approach of an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter to USNS Robert E. Peary during an ammunition offload in the Atlantic Ocean, Aug. 5, 2025. **U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Michael Gomez**

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NATIONAL GUARD TASK FORCE MOBILIZED TO RESTORE SAFETY IN NATION’S CAPITAL

by C. Todd Lopez
President Donald J. Trump declared a crime emergency in the nation’s capital Aug. 11 and vowed to make its streets safe again for both residents and visitors.

“Washington, D.C., should be one of the safest, cleanest and most beautiful cities anywhere in the world, and we’re going to make it that,” Trump said during a press conference at the White House. “We’re going to make it safe; we’re going to make it smart; we’re going to make it beautiful.”

The National Guard will play a role in that effort, said Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth after the president issued a memorandum to mobilize the D.C. National Guard.

Hegseth said the mobilization will be operationalized by Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll, and guard members will be deployed in the streets of Washington in the coming week.

Approximately 800 Soldiers were activated Aug. 11 as part of the D.C. Safe and Beautiful Task Force, with about 100-200 of them supporting law enforcement. Duties for those personnel include administrative and logistical roles, as well as providing a physical presence in support of law enforcement.

Hegseth also stated that, beyond the D.C. National Guard, other guard units are ready to participate.

“There are other units we are prepared to bring in; other National Guard units, other specialized units,” Hegseth said. “They will be strong, they will be tough, and they will stand with their law enforcement partners.”

In recent months, the secretary said the National Guard has played similar roles, both at the border,

where troops have worked alongside Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Customs and Border Protection to put a stop to illegal border crossings, and in Los Angeles, where they helped protect ICE and CBP agents from criminal attacks.

Now, the D.C. National Guard will contribute by helping to stop violence on city streets in the nation’s capital.

“We will work alongside all D.C. police and federal law enforcement to ensure this city is safe this city is beautiful,” Hegseth said, adding, “As I always say about President Trump to the troops, ‘He has their back.’ And my message to the National Guard and federal law enforcement in Washington is, ‘We have your back as well. Be tough. Be strong. We’re right behind you.’”

According to a White House fact sheet, two embassy staffers were murdered in Washington this May. A congressional intern was shot and killed near the White House in June, and on Aug. 3, 2025, a federal employee was beaten by a mob.

A White House executive order reports that the 2024 murder rate in the District of Columbia was 27.54 per 100,000 residents, and the vehicle theft rate was at 842.4 thefts per 100,000 residents.

“It’s becoming a situation of complete and total lawlessness in Washington,” the president said. “Caravans of ... youth rampage through city streets at all times of the day. They’re on ATVs, motorbikes — they travel pretty well. Entire neighborhoods are now under emergency curfews.”

Trump said that it will soon change. “We have people that love this country, and they love this ... really beautiful capital,” he said. “I flew over it the other

day and I said, ‘What a beautiful place,’ but if there’s crime all over the streets when you get there, it doesn’t look so beautiful ... We’re going to fix crime.”

The president also said that he aims to literally clean up the nation’s capital in the way

of repairs, specifically noting trash, graffiti and broken marble panels.

“We’re going to restore the city back to the gleaming capital that everybody wants it to be,” Trump said. “It’s going to be something very special.”

Early Bird Brief

Army

•Autonomous vehicle makes rounds with mortar rounds in live-fire test drive by Army paratroopers
•Army’s laser weapons ‘pretty mature,’ could ‘contribute’ to next-gen missile defense

Navy

•Adm. Caudle relinquishes command of U.S. Fleet Forces Command
•Navy orders stand down, audit after improper radiation exams
•Navy veteran Butch Wilmore, who spent months stuck in space as a NASA Astronaut, retires
•Coyote loitering drone interceptors have arrived on hNavy destroyers
•Airborne autonomy is the next frontier in naval power

Marine Corps

•Naval research hydrogen tech goes tactical
•Marine Corps seeking lateral career requests to boost retention
•Corporal’s death in Cuba under investigation by NCIS

Air Force

•Spain takes over ‘heart and soul of our Air Force’ at Air Combat Command
•Bombers should be ready for continuous ops, 2-star says
•B-1 bombers return to Norway to train with allies
•Democrats press Air Force on Qatar jet funding details

Space Force

•Space Force wargame could inform framework for allied info sharing
•ULA’s heavy-lift rocket prepares to launch first Space Force mission

Veterans

•Federal watchdog calls out lack of research on burn pits in Vietnam
•Trump says he expects decision soon on reclassifying marijuana for pain, other ailments

Coast Guard

•Coast Guard commissions first new icebreaker since the 1990s

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

•Small defense firms are tempting targets for nation-state hackers: NSA
•Documents detail China’s AI-powered propaganda push

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Local Military

Marines showcase lethality, readiness during desert training

DOD News

Marines assigned to the 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, recently conducted intensive artillery training with M777 howitzers during Service Level Training Exercise 4-25 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms.

The training included day and night live-fire operations in desert training ranges. It also featured air assault operations where Marines prepared the lightweight howitzers for helicopter transport, demonstrating rapid deployment capabilities.

The exercise provided a challenging, realistic training environment to produce integrated, capable and combat-ready forces.



A CH-53E Stallion lands during Service Level Training Exercise 4-25 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms July 28. (insets) (1) Marines operate an M777 howitzer. (2) Marines prepare an M777 howitzer to conduct an air assault mission. U.S. Marine Corps photos by Lance Cpl. Judith Ann Lazaro

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JIFX
continued from page 7

continually operate across rural landscapes and work within the confines of urban dwellings, hug the ground in flight and soar thousands of feet in air, and cruise the water's surface and submerge into its depths. All this for real-world, early-stage testing and refining of their capabilities. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) has been engaged with NPS' field experimentation programs from the start and continues to be a dominant driving force behind

JIFX for identifying and adding cutting-edge technology to maintain operational advantages for national defense.

While JIFX continues to prove its exceptional value on a shoestring budget by a very innovative team, developing defense critical technologies and hands-on learning for the researchers and students involved, there is great promise to expand operations and impact as the call to action for accelerating drone applications in DOD demands increased access to ready ranges.

"JIFX participation contributes to technological development, strategic business positioning, and long-term outcomes, such as funding, acquisitions, and follow-on contracts," said JIFX's operations manager Ashley Book in "The Impact of the Joint Interagency Field Experimentation Program on Small Business Success," research published in the proceedings of the 2025 NPS Acquisition Research Symposium and Innovation Summit. JIFX serves as a strategic entry point into the defense market and fosters a resource-based

competitive advantage for its participants," her research continued.

Persistent Systems is one such company that made the most of numerous NPS field experimentation events and rose up through the ranks. First attending in 2007, while only a two-person company with its founders fresh out of graduate school, it worked with SOCOM to build high-bandwidth mesh network technology.

Since then, the company has

grown into a leading defense company that also services first responder, commercial, and other government markets. Its mobile networking products are vital components of drones made by manufacturers that have also participated at JIFX, such as Insitu and Shield AI.

In Book's research, she identified many participants fostered at JIFX that not only experienced enormous growth, but also underwent massive mergers. Her research reported, "Notable examples include Splunk's acquisition by Cisco for \$28 billion and

Inmarsat's acquisition by Viasat for \$7.3 billion, both of which underscore the high value placed on innovations demonstrated through JIFX."

As drones, AI, and other technical innovations regularly undergo vigorous testing at JIFX, they encounter field conditions mimicking some of those faced during operational deployment. And importantly, just like in the real world, no single technology functions completely on its own without other technology.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/545374/>



ALAMEDA, Calif. (Aug. 10, 2025) A crewmember attached to Coast Guard Cutter *Bertholf* (WMSL 750) greets his significant other here. *Bertholf* participated in Operation BORDER TRIDENT, a Coast Guard-led interagency approach to detection, monitoring, interdiction, and apprehension operations to combat Transnational Criminal Organization and illegal migration activity in the California coastal region. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenneth Wiese



USS SOMERSET, at sea (Aug. 8, 2025) Marines with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 369 board a MV22B Osprey during a Deck Landing Qualification training as a part of Quarterly Underway Amphibious Readiness Training 25.4 aboard *Somerset* DLQ ensures aircraft pilots are capable of landing on ships when attached to Marine Expeditionary Units when underway. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Jesula Jeanlouis



TWENTYNINE PALMS (July 31, 2025) Navy Sailors with Combat Logistics Battalion 8 check the vitals of a simulated casualty for a mass casualty drill during a tactical logistics operations course here. The course is designed to be a challenging, realistic training environment that produces combat-ready forces capable of operating as an integrated Marine Air Ground Task Force across all domains of military operations. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Quantarius Johnson

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Tiki Oasis is billed as “the nation’s premier island-themed weekender and musical event,” and it just celebrated its 25th year.

Tiki Oasis was first held in Palm Springs, in 2001, at the Caliente Tropics Hotel. Its goal that year was “to save that location from a de-tiki remodel.” It succeeded but soon outgrew that location. It moved to the Hanalei Hotel in San Diego. That was one of several Tiki Oasis locations in San Diego over the following years, including not only the Hanalei Hotel (which became the Crowne Plaza) in Mission Valley, but also Vacation Village (Paradise Point) on Mission Bay, Bali Hai Restaurant on Shelter Island and, most recently, the Town & Country Resort in Mission Valley and, since 2024, the Catamaran Resort & Spa — “a classic Pacific Island-themed hotel on Mission Bay in San Diego, and home to the area’s longest-running annual summer luau” — Tiki Oasis’ opening night party on Wednesday. Then Tiki Oasis moves over to the Town & County Resort, through Sunday.

The theme of this year’s Tiki Oasis was a celebration of themes from past years in its seminars, and showcasing bands and DJs that have played at Tiki Oasis before.

There was much to see and do. In addition to the opening night party, on Wednesday there was a preview of the annual Art Show & Sale, where a selection of original framed art and some incredible, one-of-a-kind Tiki-themed lamps were on display. They went on sale at 10 a.m., Thursday morning and sold quickly.

Tiki Oasis 2025 ... at 25

Of course, a mainstay of Tiki life is rum, and there were sponsored tropical tastings of that and other beverages throughout Tiki Oasis.

Informative and entertaining presentations took place throughout the event. They included: “Tiki Chic: Fashions for the Sophisticated” with Dave Temple, “Polynesian San Diego: Mid-Century Modern Locations” with Martin Lindsay, “Donn Beach’s Buttery Pearly Diver: Mystery Solved!” with Shelley Bowers, “It’s Tiki Time!” with Robert and Asia Estigoy, “The Book of Tiki Turns 25” with Sven Kirsten, “Edithe Beutler: Artist, Entrepreneur and Mother” with CJ Cook, “The Adventurous World of Disney Parks” with Kevin Lively, “Mission Possible: Spy Au Go Go” with The Devil-Ettes, “Sugar and Spice To Make Your Cocktail Nice” with Kyle Rioux, “Vintage Polynesia En México” with Mr. La Cultura Tiki.

Others are “Dances from the Big Band Era” with Steve Conrad, “Sustainable Tropical Cocktails” with Tiki Lindy, “Ray Buhen of Tiki-Ti: A Tiki Icon” with Adrian Eustaquio, “25 Year Rums: Tastings and Tales” with Bryan Inman — The Rum Champion, “The Ultimate Vintage Hairstyle: Waves & Victory Rolls” with Miss Holly Dawn, “Slip: The Secret Sauce of Tiki Mugs” with VanTiki, “25 Years of Tiki Oasis” with Baby Doe & Otto and Friends, “Surf’s Up! A Wild History of 60s Beach Party Movies” with Bo Bennett, “Sneak Peek into the Historic Mai-Kai’s Secret Bar,” “Intoxicating Illumination” with Tiki Doug, “Jamaica’s Influence on Tropical Cocktails” with Ian Burrell, “Bowlarama: The Architecture of Mid-Century Bowling” with Chris Nichols, “The Evolution of Ska to Rocksteady” with Junor Francis, “Tales of the San Diegoan Bartender from Far and Wide (panel discussion)” and “Googieland” with the incredible Charles Phoenix.

Participatory activities included: “Welcome Singalong” with King Kukulele, “Caftans & Coffee: Breakfast with the Aloha Caftan Society,” “Aloha Caftan Society Presents...The Tiki Oasis Caftan Stroll!,” “Beauty BouTiki & Barbershop,” “Tiki Oasis Photo Studio,” “Hulabilly Country Two-Step” with Steve Conrad, “Tiki Oasis Book Club Presents ‘Sharks in the Time of Saviors’ by Kawai Strong Washburn” — hosted by Karen Finlay.

Let’s not forget “Tiki Oasis Swizzle Swap featuring Coasters, Postcards and Matchbooks,” “11th Annual Cabana Suit Strut,” “Lamp Building from Layout To Illuminate” with Patrick Thompson, “Brooches and Brims” with Kristen James & Jennifer Watson, “Posing for Photos... Underwater!” with MeduSirena and the 11th Annual Tiki Oasis San Diego Bartender Battle.”

Throughout the day, DJs kept everyone entertained at poolside and on the lawn of the Town & Country Resort. At night there were Live bands on the Resort’s lawn stage.

Shopping opportunities abounded at the huge Tiki Oasis Marketplace. At 10 p.m. the Official Suite Soirees opened, followed by the Midnight Burlesque Show.

Tiki Oasis 2025 wrapped up on Sunday evening with the “Tiki Oasis Rock ‘n Roll Party! Shake, Shout, Shimmy!” It included arcade games, record vendors and Go-Go Dancers!

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.

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Home is where my garden grows

“I like this one,” I told my husband of eight months while inspecting an empty house on Fort Ord in California in 1994. The exterior was drab beige with dull brown trim, just like the other Army houses. But this one had something different.

Like the rest, it was coated in countless layers of government paint, the kitchen contained worn appliances and cheap Formica countertops, the heavy closet doors didn’t slide smoothly on their ancient tracks, and the concrete “patio nook” was a haven for spiders.

However, the house sat at the breezy top of Ardennes Circle like a sentinel, shaded by an enormous Monterey Pine. On the southwest corner of the house grew a tall shrub with fiery red bottlebrush flowers drooping from its branches. The best part was behind the house, where the scrubby lawn met a weedy, thorny, perimeter separating base housing from a vast abandoned weapons range, and rumored mountain lions prowled among undischarged munitions.

There on the edge of unknown dangers was a tiny fenced garden. A four-foot square of dry earth enclosed with ramshackle posts and chicken wire. It appeared that the last tenant hadn’t used the garden, allowing vines to invade. Another tour of duty without caretaking, and the little pen would’ve disappeared into the enveloping brush.

I saw potential. As a newly married Navy wife who’d come from a cramped DC Beltway apartment, I had a vision. To me, our new home would be a comfy place where things were made from scratch, and a vegetable garden fit perfectly into my cozy cross-stitched picture.

The only problem was, I wasn’t a gardener. Or cook, or cross-stitcher for that matter. Nonetheless, I dug into my garden with

vim and vigor, planting seedlings of peppers, tomatoes, and squash without bothering to read instructions about zones, planting distances, watering needs, or fertilizing. I assumed that

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

plants thrived in the fertile land of Gilroy garlic and Castroville artichokes.

I forgot how long it took for those vegetables to die, but they lived long enough for me to paint an intricate sign reading “Lisa’s Garden” — letters shaped from colorful painted eggplants, carrots, tomatoes, broccoli and zucchini.

That sign went with us to Joint Analysis Center, Molesworth, England, where it hung beside another four-foot patch behind our rented house. We’d moved in on a cold, rainy February day, so I began composting kitchen scraps in the plot, envisioning rich soil in a few months.

But I was busy with a one-year-old son, and never managed to plant vegetables that spring. Mother nature took mercy, performing a small miracle. Tomato seeds from my composted kitchen scraps sprouted that June and grew into a massive tangle. Though unintended, I’d grown a productive garden patch.

Three tomato-rich years later,

we moved to a Dutch colonial on a cul-de-sac in Virginia Beach, shaded by towering loblolly pines. Without a sunny plot, I hung my garden sign near the curb and lined up potted vegetables in the gutter. When my “gutter garden” failed, my neighbor took mercy, sharing her extensive backyard garden, complete with raised beds, a watering system, and plant supports.

At Patch Barracks in Germany, “home” was a fifth floor walk-up apartment, but the pot of wilting basil on my kitchen windowsill just didn’t cut it. So, I nominated myself “Stairwell B Gardener,” planting perennials beside the stoop, brightening the otherwise bleak communist-era building with a splash of cheerful color.

While in Naval Station Mayport, Florida, housing, I resorted to container gardening on the lanai, which produced only a few deformed tomatoes, but in Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island housing, I yielded my best harvests from an overcrowded triangular plot in our fenced back yard.

Finally, Francis retired from the Navy, and we bought a house where I’ve been planting gardens ever since. Problem is, I’m still not much of a gardener. Or cook, or cross-stitcher for that matter.

It’s okay, I never really planted gardens to grow vegetables. No matter where the military sent our family to live, we planted ourselves and made it our home, rooting, blooming, and living life. Gardening was my way of nurturing hope within myself ourselves, and growing my belief in tomorrow.

Veterans News

DPAA provides updates to families of missing in action personnel

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

More than 400 family members of service members who never returned home from the Korean War or who were lost during the Cold War met Aug. 7 with representatives from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency in Arlington, Virginia, during the agency’s annual update to families of missing personnel.

Nearly 7,500 Americans are still unaccounted for from the Korean War, with about 125 unaccounted for from missions conducted during the Cold War. Many of those families are looking for answers from the department, and the annual event allows that to happen.

“Part of this is obviously ... us being able to connect and communicate with them, to provide them updates on their cases,” said Kelly McKeague, director of the DPAA, during a press briefing Aug. 5.

For many families, it’s likely that the remains of their missing loved ones who served during the Korean War are in North Korea. And for now, North Korea is not cooperating with the United States to repatriate remains in the same way as other nations.

“I think what they will come away with is consolation from the standpoint of being amongst their peers,” McKeague said.

“Many of them come back, despite knowing that things haven’t changed, that North Korea isn’t amenable to access; they come away knowing that they’re not alone. And so, this is a family reunion for many of them, who come back repeatedly, year after year, simply to be amongst themselves and to reestablish friendships.”

As of 1973, more than 8,000 service members were missing from the Korean War. Since then, 753 have been accounted for, leaving nearly 7,500 still missing.

Around the world, the DPAA works with dozens of nations to locate the remains of unaccounted-for service members and to bring them home, McKeague said.

“The 46 countries we work in all cooperate, some being former enemies — Japan, Germany, Vietnam — and everybody looks at it as cooperation that is part of responsibility,” he said. “It’s part of strengthening people-to-people ties. But the North Koreans are the only country that doesn’t see it as other countries do.”

Even while tensions exist between the U.S. and China, the Chinese cooperate with the United States on the DPAA mission, McKeague said.

“We have a team in China that’s been operating there for four weeks; they are, ironically, looking at three Korean War air losses,” he added. “Despite the trade differences, the geopolitical differences between China and [the] United States, China looks at this as an opportunity

to cooperate [and] further the bilateral relationship, as well as develop people-to-people ties.”

McKeague said the United States will continue to try to establish a dialogue with North Korea.

“The Trump administration is very open to establishing communications with North Korea,” he said. “It’s something that could serve to build goodwill. It could serve to bring North Korea out of the dark and into the light of the world, to see that they are cooperating on a humanitarian mission.”

This year, the DPAA has added a new tool to its kit to help better identify the remains of service members. The single-nucleotide polymorphism assay, also called the SNP assay, has been in use since January 2024.

The tool is used to evaluate DNA to determine ancestry.

“In 2017, we started a long process of developing our own

single-nucleotide polymorphism assay, or SNP assay,” said Tim McMahon, director of Defense Department DNA Operations for the Armed Forces Medical Examiner Service. “It took us about nine years to develop the software and the method to be able to go after about 95,000 SNPs that talk about identity and ancestry. So, we specifically target those.”

The new process enables

DPAA to significantly increase the likelihood of matching remains to a pool of DNA samples from family members, thereby aiding in individual identification.

For many of the families with loved ones who are still missing from the Korean War, McKeague said, there is frustration. However, the DPAA is still working to provide them with the answers they need.

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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.themech.org/>
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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. (Aug. 1, 2025) Medical Service Corps Officers from across Southern California gathered for a group photo during the 2025 Southern California MSC Symposium at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's Officers' Club, Aug. 1, 2025. Hosted by the Southern California Medical

Service Corps Officers Association, the event focused on "Leading and Defining Roles of MSC Officers in Expeditionary Platforms" and brought together senior Navy Medicine and operational fleet leaders to discuss readiness, leadership, and expeditionary medical support. Photo By Marcelo Calero

Defining expeditionary roles: SoCal MSC officers convene at 2025 symposium

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR, Calif. (Aug. 1, 2025) – Medical Service Corps (MSC) Officers from across Southern California gathered at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's Officers' Club for the 2025 Southern California MSC Symposium, hosted by the Southern California Medical Service Corps Officers Association (SoCal MSCOA).

This year's theme, "Leading and Defining Roles of MSC Officers in Expeditionary Platforms," focused on the evolving contributions of MSC officers to the Navy's global medical mission.

The symposium featured senior leaders from Navy Medicine and the operational fleet, including Rear Adm. Matthew Case, Defense Health Agency Acting Assistant Director, Healthcare Administration; Rear Adm. Brent DeVore, Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group THREE; Capt. Virginia Damon, Director,

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton; CAPT Kevin Bailey, Commanding Officer, Naval Expeditionary Medical Warfare Development Center; MSC Detainer Team led by CAPT Kimberly Oelschlager, and VADM(Ret) Charles Martoglio.

A Readiness-Focused Event

Through a blend of keynote addresses, panel discussions, and peer engagement, attendees explored how MSC officers directly support expeditionary and maritime operations. Discussions included operational planning, digital medical technologies, and maintaining clinical skills in austere environments.

A significant highlight was Capt. Damon's presentation on "Leading Navy Medicine Through the Walker Dip" — a term referencing the loss of combat casualty care readiness during peacetime, requiring deliberate retraining before future conflicts.

"This symposium underscores the MSC's operational value and our flexibility to serve wherever the mission demands," said Lt. Adam Shults, SoCal MSCOA Vice President. "The diversity of experience represented here today proves that our officers are ready for the challenges of tomorrow's expeditionary environment."

Future-Forward Collaboration

By linking MSC officers with operational commands and senior DHA leadership, the symposium ensured attendees walked away with a broader understanding of Navy Medicine's strategic priorities and their personal role in ensuring readiness and capability.

"Bringing MSC officers together in this format strengthens our shared sense of purpose and enhances how we support warfighters," said Cmdr. Temitope Ayeni, Naval Medical Center San Diego's

Director for Administration. "It's also a space to cultivate mentorship, innovation, and leadership across the MSC community."

Organized by SoCal MSCOA, the event is one of several regional

initiatives supporting the U.S. Navy's broader medical force development strategy and contributes directly to sustaining a medically ready force and a ready medical force. The premise of these events

is to navigate professional challenges, foster career development and networking, and give a broader understanding of how the Medical Service Corps functions and supports the operational mission.



Naval Medical Center San Diego: For 21 NMRTC San Diego 1st Class Petty Officers, it was a glorious day as they were informed of their selection to U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer. The CPO Initiation process will challenge them to bring out their absolute best, and we wish them nothing but the best. BZ CPO selectees!

A sprint into the night: How a Sailor's quick action saved a life

by 1st Lt. Aaron Selikovitz
1st Marine Division

It was nighttime on the I-805 north when a motorcycle went over a median between the H Street and Bonita Road exits, July 12. The crash left Silverio Gurrola injured on the pavement and his wife, Melinda Gurrola, with a traumatic leg amputation. Amid the chaos and speeding cars, U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Samuel Goodwin, a hospital corpsman with 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, sprinted across four lanes of highway to help. His fast, calculated response was the deciding factor between life and death for Gurrola, who was critically injured in the middle of one of San Diego's busiest highways.

After witnessing the crash, Goodwin pulled over to the shoulder of the freeway. Without hesitation, he grabbed two tourniquets and his medical bag from his trunk. He ran full speed towards the crash, weaving between vehicles still moving on the highway. Goodwin ran about 150 yards and crossed the four lanes to reach Gurrola.

"When I got there, I could see she had a below-the-knee amputation of her right leg, with a pool of blood under it," Goodwin recalled. "The belt wasn't stopping the arterial femoral bleed. She



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Samuel Goodwin, a hospital corpsman with 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, was a hero for Melinda Gurrola who was critically injured in the middle of one of San Diego's busiest freeways. U.S. Marine Corps courtesy photo

was fading fast."

Goodwin applied a combat-application tourniquet 2-4 inches above the site of amputation. He instructed a bystander to search for the severed limb and two other bystanders to use the light on their cell phones. He quickly wrapped the leg with an abdominal combat wrap and another ace wrap to prevent further contamination and control the hemorrhage.

Following the M.A.R.C.H. protocol, which stands for massive bleeding, airway, respiration, circulation, and hypothermia/head injury, Goodwin discovered a second wound on the woman's left knee. He packed it with combat gauze and secured it with adhesive wrap. The amputated leg was found and carefully wrapped to preserve its viability for potential reattachment.

After 22 minutes, emergency

medical services arrived the site of the crash. Goodwin worked alongside paramedics to roll Gurrola over and check her back for additional injuries. After assessment, Goodwin assisted the paramedics to her into the ambulance.

Upon Gurrola's arrival to the hospital, one of the attending trauma surgeons told hospital staff that Goodwin's wound packing was one of the best he'd seen.

Goodwin's actions His selfless actions to risk his life to cross the highway and commitment to help others reflect strongly upon the United States Navy's and United States Marine Corps' values of honor, courage, and commitment.

"The level of risk involved was extreme," said Kailah Rose, a witness to the event. "There were no barriers, lighting was poor, and cars were not slowing down.

I genuinely feared for his life. Yet, with total disregard for his own safety, he pressed forward with the full intent to save another. I watched in awe as he knelt beside the injured motorcyclist and immediately began performing life-saving medical interventions amidst oncoming traffic."

"It all goes to God, my loved ones and the Corpsmen who served with me and before me," stated Goodwin. "They motivate me daily to always be there for those that are in need. By God's grace I was there with my gear on time and did not get killed in the process. If I would have driven 12 seconds faster or slower. I would have missed the accident completely."

To witnesses and the Gurrola family, Goodwin's split-second decision to run into traffic with a medical bag made the difference between life and death.

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