

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 28

DEC. 16, 2025-JAN. 15, 2026

Centcom Launches Attack Drone Task Force in Middle East



U.S. Central Command low-cost unmanned combat attack system drones are positioned on the tarmac at a base in the Centcom area of operations. The unmanned aerial systems are part of a one-way attack drone squadron recently deployed to the Middle East to strengthen regional security and deterrence. Courtesy photo.

TASK FORCE SCORPION STRIKE

by U.S. Central Command
Public Affairs

U.S. Central Command announced in December a new task force for the military's first one-way attack drone squadron based in the Middle East.

Centcom launched Task Force Scorpion Strike four months after Secretary of War Pete Hegseth directed acceleration of the acquisition and fielding of affordable drone technology. The task force is designed to quickly deliver low-cost and effective drone capabilities into the hands of warfighters.

These drones, deployed by Centcom, have an extensive range and are designed to operate autonomously.

The new task force has already formed a squadron of low-cost unmanned combat attack system drones.

These drones, deployed by Centcom, have an extensive range and are designed to operate autonomously. They can be

launched with different mechanisms including catapults, rocket-assisted takeoff, and mobile ground and vehicle systems.

"This new task force sets the conditions for using innovation as a deterrent," said Navy Adm. Brad Cooper, Centcom commander. "Equipping our skilled warfighters faster with cutting-edge drone capabilities showcases U.S. military innovation and strength, which deters bad actors."

In September, Centcom launched the Rapid Employment Joint Task

Force led by its chief technology officer to fast-track processes for outfitting deployed forces with emerging capabilities.

The joint task force is coordinating innovation efforts among service components in three focus areas: capability, software and technological diplomacy.

Task Force Scorpion Strike's efforts to build the one-way attack drone squadron are led by personnel from U.S. Special Operations Command Central and align with the joint task force's capability focus area.

Navy releases Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group investigations

The Navy released investigations related to the four incidents at sea that occurred during *Harry S. Truman* Carrier Strike Group's September 2024 to May 2025 deployment. These investigations assessed underlying procedural compliance and standards and reviewed how a Carrier Strike Group prepares for and responds to adversity during combat operations.

Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jim Kilby emphasized the Navy's commitment to learning from these events and implementing changes to prevent similar incidents in the future.

"The Navy is committed to being a learning organization," said Kilby. "These investigations reinforce the need to continue investing in our people to ensure we deliver battle-ready forces to operational commanders. Despite the challenges, the Sailors of the *Harry S. Truman* Strike Group demonstrated adaptability, professionalism, and complete commitment to the mission throughout the deployment."

Each investigation was conducted independently and thoroughly, in accordance with Navy policy, immediately following the incidents. Appropriate accountability actions have been taken to address these incidents.

Investigations Summary

USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64) Friendly Fire Incident, (Dec. 22, 2024)

The investigation into the loss of an F/A-18F Super Hornet assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 11 in the Red Sea on Dec. 22, 2024 during a friendly fire incident with USS *Gettysburg* (CG 64) found that a lack of integrated training opportunities between USS *Gettysburg* and the Carrier Strike Group, lack of forceful backup on the cruiser, and lack of cohesion across the Carrier Strike Group contributed to the misidentification, and subsequent engagement, of the friendly aircraft and near miss of another. There were no personnel casualties or major injuries.

See INCIDENT page 4

Hegseth attends slain Guardsman's funeral

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth recently attended the funeral of slain West Virginia Army National Guard Spc. Sarah Beckstrom. Beckstrom, 20, of Summersville, W.V., died Nov. 27 after being shot the day before while on duty near Farragut Square, a small park, in Washington. She served as a military police Soldier with the 863rd Military Police Company. In her honor, President Trump ordered flags nationwide to be flown at half-staff, including here at the Pentagon. The War Department also welcomed Beckstrom's colleagues to visit and tour the Pentagon.

Candidate photos return for some Marine review boards, but not promotions

As reported in a *Stars and Stripes* story on Dec. 8 by Lydia Gordon, Marines will once again need to keep their uniforms photo-ready, per new guidance that reinstates the use of official photos in certain selection board processes. Marines may now be evaluated on appearance for boards "pertaining to assignment, training, education, and command," the service announced. However, the memo reaffirms that photographs remain prohibited for promotion selection boards. This update rolls back a 2020 policy, issued by then-Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, that directed all military branches to stop using official photos in promotion and selection processes to reduce appearance-based bias and ensure "equal opportunity for all who serve."

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Saturday, January 3: 10am – 9pm
Sunday, January 4: 10am – 6pm

Location

San Diego Convention Center
111 W Harbor Drive

Tickets

All tickets must be purchased online at SDautoshow.com.



Navy Exchange Layaway Program laid to rest

by Scott Sutherland

Staff writer

NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO - For years, military families have used numerous options to save at Navy Exchanges - from cost-saving coupons and low prices, to the low-interest STAR card and the layaway program. Things are about to change at all Navy Exchanges early next year.

The NEX Layaway Program will cease to exist on New Years Day. At the Naval Base San Diego Main Exchange, a sign is posted on the layaway counter advising customers of the change. They are accepting layaway items now until Jan. 1. Along with that, the NEX Service Command's warehouse on W. 8th Street off Harbor Drive, formerly used to house all layaway items, is now only accepting large items to be picked up by customers.

A layaway plan allows you to place merchandise on layaway for a specific period of time. A spokesperson at the Main Exchange on the Naval Base here said the program "really helped families who are on a budget, who might be living paycheck-to-paycheck, or who preferred not to use high-interest credit cards."

"I'm sad to see the layaway plan discontinued," she said, "because I saw how many people

relied on it."

The Navy Exchange Command recently offered a No Fee Layaway Promotion, where all stores that currently participated in the layaway program waived the nonrefundable layaway fee for all new layaways from Oct. 19 to Nov. 22. That was possibly the final step before the program went away.

One holiday tradition that may be sorely missed after Jan. 1 is the Pay Away the Layaway program. Selected military families at each Exchange that offers layaway service have their layaway balances paid by the non-profit organization Pay Away the Layaway, Inc. According to the organizations' mission statement, "they help families in need, particularly military families who are saving for essentials but face financial hurdles.

Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM) enables warfighter readiness and strengthens the Navy's quality of life mission. Providing essential products, services, hospitality and outfitting Navy communities around the globe, NEXCOM is continuously evolving.

Despite the loss of layaway,

NEXCOM wants the Navy community to know that they're still offering great deals and savings. "We are very aware of the wide spread in household incomes our stores have to serve," said Tess Paquette, senior vice president, chief merchandising officer,



Last holiday season, nearly 200 NEX Pensacola, Fla., patrons were surprised by having their layaway balances paid by the non-profit Pay Away the Layaway, Inc. Courtesy photo

Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM). "We want our Sailors and families to know they have choices at the NEX that will meet their budget, no matter what that may be."

There are approximately 100 complexes and over 300 NEX stores on Navy installations worldwide.

SAN DIEGO AUTO SHOW ROARS INTO SAN DIEGO JAN 1-4

The San Diego International Auto Show, or SDIAS, one of the most anticipated events for both new car buyers and enthusiasts, and - Where the Cars are the Stars - roars back into the San Diego Convention Center, Jan. 1-4, 2026.

"With so many new and exciting vehicles and technologies being introduced, we can't wait to open the doors to the 2026 edition of the San Diego Auto Show," said enthusiastic Scott Webb, show director, SDIAS. "Our show is truly a celebration of all things automotive, and once again we've been working closely with vehicle manufacturers and a variety of other exhibitors to create an event that will inspire, educate and entertain."

The automotive landscape continues to evolve rapidly, with automakers introducing innovative features, advanced safety technologies, next-generation powertrains and refreshed lineups across every category. There is no better place to explore this changing marketplace than at the San Diego Auto Show - California's second-largest auto show.

Webb said show-goers should look forward to getting up close and personal with hundreds of new cars, trucks, SUVs, crossovers, EVs,

hybrids and other vehicles in a convenient, non-selling environment. Among the vehicles on display will be a wide variety of all-new models not yet in showrooms. Both behind-the-wheel test drives and an indoor EV Test Track experience will enable attendees to experience the handling and performance characteristics of today's newest vehicles.

"Test drives provide an exceptional opportunity for car-buyers to experience a variety of vehicles, and consumers may even find brands new to the show offering drives this year," Webb said. "Our EV Test Track continues to give attendees a unique chance to feel the instant torque and smooth performance of electric vehicles, as professional drivers demonstrate their capabilities on a special course created inside the convention center."

Other special displays and exhibits expected to return to the show include Electric Avenue, the Mobility Zone, Classic Cars and more. Electric Avenue will showcase a selection of EVs and charging solutions in one central location, providing attendees with a clear, easy-to-understand look at electric mobility options and ownership considerations.

Auto show tickets will be on sale in early December and

tickets will only be available online at www.sdauto show.com. Purchased tickets may be printed at home or shown and scanned on the smart phones of show patrons at the convention center.

This year, Toyota supports the San Diego Auto Show as the new Military Appreciation sponsor. As part of that program, free tickets to the Auto Show will be available at participating Toyota dealerships across San Diego County and Imperial County for active and retired military personnel beginning in mid-December (while supplies last).

Ticket prices are as follows:

Adult (ages 13-61): \$18
Military (active duty w/ ID): \$15 (one ticket per ID)
Senior (ages 62+): \$15
Child (ages 7-12): \$12
Child (6 and under): Free
Child (12 and under): Free on Family Day, Sunday, Jan 4 (when accompanied by a paid adult)
Show hours:
Thursday, Jan 1: 10am-9pm
Friday, Jan 2: 10am-9pm
Saturday, Jan 3: 10am-9pm
Sunday, Jan 4: 10am-6pm (Family Day)



Top 4

- Navy releases 'catastrophic' findings involving USS Harry S. Truman (see page 1)
- Admiral says there was no 'kill them all' order in boat attack
- IG finds Hegseth risked endangering Houthi mission with Signal use
- Legal experts fail to see justification for continued U.S. military strikes on drug boats.

Army

- U.S. military deploys 4 Army-built surveillance and reconnaissance systems for southern border mission

Navy

- Navy releases investigation on 3 lost planes, including one to friendly fire (see page 1)
- Destroyer USS Thomas Hudner arrives in US Southern Command

Marine Corps

- Camp Pendleton Marine killed in tactical training vehicle mishap

Air Force

- How the Air Force brought a B-2 Spirit back to life
- Air Force drops parts of previous administration's revamp
- Pentagon refines zero trust for OT as Air Force treats its bases as frontline targets
- Texas base set to get Air Force's new pilot training aircraft, begin first steps to flying it locally

National Guard

- Court decision calling for end to National Guard deployment in DC paused by appeals court Washington, D.C.

Pay & Benefits

- CVS to pay almost \$40M for overbilling Tricare and other federal insurers for insulin pens

Hegseth outlines new National Defense Strategy during speech at Reagan Library

by Matthew Olay
Pentagon News

During a Dec. 6 keynote speech that one Pentagon official speaking on background said represented a preview of the War Department's forthcoming National Defense Strategy, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth outlined four distinct lines of effort for the department to take, so as to guarantee peace through strength for the U.S. and its allies in the coming years.

While delivering his remarks at the Ronald Reagan National Library's annual defense forum in Simi Valley, California, Hegseth underscored numerous parallels that he believes exist between the military strategies and policies of presidents Reagan and Donald J. Trump, while also emphasizing his view on the current president's commitment to strengthening the U.S. military.

"Make no mistake about it: President Trump is hellbent on maintaining and accelerating the most powerful military the world has ever seen; the most powerful, the most lethal and American-made ... the Arsenal of Freedom," Hegseth said.

He added that the War Department is also working to get

back to basics on the topics of restoring the warrior ethos, readiness, accountability, standards, discipline and lethality.

Hegseth also said that the Trump administration and the War Department are committed to putting America first and avoiding getting into seemingly unending foreign entanglements, as well as prioritizing the nation's security, freedom and prosperity of its citizens.

"We're doing it in a way that leaves not only our nation better off, but the world. Out with utopian idealism, and in with hard-nosed realism," he said.

To achieve those goals, Hegseth said it's necessary to prioritize the aforementioned "four key lines of effort" at the War Department: defending the U.S. homeland and its hemisphere; deterring China through strength rather than force; increasing burden sharing between the U.S. and its allies and partners; and supercharging America's defense industrial base.

Speaking on the first topic of defending the U.S. homeland and its citizens, Hegseth said that since Jan. 20 and under Trump's direction, the War Department has made increasing security at the southern border and gaining

100 percent operational control a top priority.

"We did so by surging forces, where our troops partner with [the Department of Homeland Security] and [U.S Customs and Border Protection] to seal the border," Hegseth said, adding that the number of illegal border crossings today is at virtually zero.

Enforcement in the deportation of dangerous criminals here illegally and that the War Department and its interagency partners are leaning on the U.S. Mexican counterparts to do their part to combat illegal immigration and drug trafficking.

Hegseth said that the U.S. border should be the last line of defense rather than the first, and that's why the War Department is prioritizing combatting narco-terrorist throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Noting that NATO countries have recently agreed to spend 5 percent of their gross domestic product on their defense, Hegseth said the Trump administration now hopes to apply that template to U.S. allies all around the globe.

Read more at <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4351527/>.

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MEDEVAC training enhances military working dog readiness

by Michelle Thum
WIESBADEN, Germany -Veterinarians and veterinary care technicians from Veterinary Readiness Activity, Rheinland Pfalz facilitated a training exercise focused on helicopter medical evacuation familiarization for the 525th Military Police Detachment in Wiesbaden on Nov. 26.

This unique training event provided military working dogs, or MWDs, and their handlers with critical exposure to helicopter operations, reinforcing the importance of readiness and safety in high-stress situations.

According to veterinary care technician Sgt. Joshua Carr, the training aimed to provide confidence for MWDs and handlers in navigating the helicopter environment.

Pilots from A Company, 1-214th Aviation Regiment shared their expertise, offering insights into helicopter operations and the specific procedures involved in MEDEVAC missions. This collaboration underscored the importance of inter-unit cooperation in enhancing operational readiness.

“This training is unique and extremely valuable. The goal is to expose the MWDs to helicopters as much as possible, so if they ever need to be evacuated, they aren’t encountering this environment for the first time.” said Carr.

This proactive approach is es-

sential for ensuring that MWDs remain calm and focused during real-world operations.

“This is the first time me and her [the MWD] have received this training together,” said Staff Sgt. Aaron Stevens, control and explosives working dog handler. “It helped me built a stronger relationship with her and I learnt more about how she reacts in new situations.”

The training involved various exercises designed to acclimate the dogs to the sounds and movements of helicopters. Handlers worked closely with their MWDs, guiding them through the process of boarding and exiting the aircraft. By familiarizing the dogs with the helicopter environment, the training aimed to reduce anxiety and improve their overall performance during potential MEDEVAC scenarios.

MWDs play a vital role in military operations, serving in capacities such as explosive detection, patrol, and search and rescue. Their ability to remain



Military working dog takes a break before helicopter medical evacuation familiarization on Nov. 26. Photo by Michelle Thum

composed directly impacts mission success and the safety of their handlers.

By integrating helicopter familiarization into their training regimen, the 525th MPD is ensuring that these dogs are prepared for any situation they may face in the field.

Moreover, this training not only benefits the MWDs but also enhances the readiness of their handlers. Understanding how to manage their dogs during helicopter operations is crucial for handlers, who must maintain control and ensure the safety of their canine partners.

The insights provided by the

aviation pilots were invaluable, offering handlers a deeper understanding of the operational dynamics involved in airlifting personnel and animals alike.

As training concluded, handlers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to participate in such a vital exercise.

Stevens said, “The training gives us peace of mind. Knowing our MWDs are comfortable with helicopters means we can focus on mission, knowing they’re ready for anything.” By exposing working dogs to the helicopter environment, troops are taking proactive steps to ensure that both dogs and handlers are mission-ready, no matter the circumstances they may encounter.

Incident investigation results

Continued from page 1
Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) collision with Merchant Vessel BESIKTAS-M, (Feb. 12, 2025)

The investigation into the collision between USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) and the merchant vessel BESIKTAS-M near Port Said, Egypt, in the Mediterranean Sea on Feb. 12, 2025, found that the collision was avoidable. The carrier’s bridge team failed to safely navigate past the merchant vessel. No personnel or engineering casualties occurred on either vessel. The Navy relieved the commanding officer of USS Harry S. Truman in February due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command.

Following the collision, Harry S. Truman pulled into U.S. Naval Support Activity Souda Bay, Greece. While in port, Forward Deployed Regional Maintenance Center personnel, Norfolk Naval Shipyard, and local industry partner Theodoropoulos Group removed exterior portions of the damaged ship and installed bulkheads inside each of the damaged spaces for weathertight integrity. Following the repairs, the Harry S. Truman returned to the Red Sea to resume combat operations. Complete repair of the damage is scheduled during the ship’s upcoming Refueling and Complex Overhaul at HII-Newport News Shipbuilding.

Loss of F/A-18E Super Hornet and Tow Tractor, (Apr. 28, 2025)

An F/A-18E Super Hornet from VFA-136 and a tow tractor were lost from Truman’s hangar bay on April 28, 2025, during evasive maneuvers in

response to an incoming ballistic missile in the Red Sea. While all actions taken were within standard operating procedures, the investigation determined that the primary cause was an aircraft brake system failure, compounded by insufficient communication between the bridge, flight deck control, and hangar bay control. The crew’s quick thinking and resourcefulness prevented any personnel injuries or further damage.

Failure of Arresting Wire Leading to Aircraft Loss, (May 6, 2025)

On May 6, 2025, an F/A-18F Super Hornet from VFA-11 was lost following the failure of the #4 arresting wire aboard Truman. The investigation found the failure was caused by a malfunctioning #4 starboard sheave damper. Contributing factors included inadequate maintenance practices, low manning levels, limited knowledge, and insufficient training. The high operational tempo and combat conditions also contributed to a strained environment. No injuries occurred, and flight operations resumed within hours.

“The Navy’s sustained combat operations in the U.S. Central Command area of operations for the past two years demonstrated our battle effectiveness and ability to maintain freedom of navigation,” said Kilby. “As we reflect on these incidents and ongoing improvement efforts, the Navy remains laser-focused on producing battle ready Sailors and forces to ensure the Navy provides our nation with the most lethal, combat-credible, and ready force possible.”

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<p>Bayview Church Attract... Assimilate... Activate Terry W. Brooks, Sr. Pastor 6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 • (619) 262-8384 Sunday Worship Services 7:30am, 9:15am, 11:15am Studies In Christian Living (formerly Sunday School) Tues & Thurs online only 6pm (contact Church for sign up). In person Saturday 9am & 10am www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org</p>	<p>New military families are moving to the area. Invite them to worship with you in the Dispatch Church Directory. (619)280-2985</p>	<p>Southwest Baptist Church "To know Christ and to make Him known" Welcome All Retired Military/Chaplain as Pastors Sunday Bible Study: 9:30am Sunday Worship Service: 11am Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm 2295 Leon Avenue, San Diego, CA 92154 Phone: (619) 423-2477 Email: pastor@swbcsd.org www.swbcsd.org</p>
<p>Bethany Lutheran Church Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod 2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach 92107 (Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building) Worship 11am Sundays Bible Class, Wednesdays 10am (619)222-7291 Office@BethanyLutheranOB.org</p>	<p>First Baptist Church of Coronado "Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach Our World" Jim W. Baize, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com Sunday Adult Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10am Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado email: secretary@fbcoronado.com 445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588</p>	<p>St. Luke's Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. We thank you for your service!</p>

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RECRUIT TRAINING COMMAND GRADUATES FINAL CLASS OF FY 2025, ACHIEVES HIGHEST PRODUCTION IN A DECADE

from U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command

NAVAL STATION GREAT LAKES, Ill – The final training group of Sailors who arrived at Navy Recruit Training Command (RTC) during the Navy’s record-breaking year for recruiting, training and retaining Sailors, graduated from basic military training, commonly known as “boot camp,” during a ceremony here Dec. 4.

With the graduation of Training Group 52, more than 42,000 Sailors completed initial training during Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25), marking the highest production year for RTC in the past decade—an increase of 10,000 Sailors over last fiscal year.

Today, more than 46,000 Sailors are enrolled in courses throughout the Navy’s accession pipeline to increase mastery of their craft before joining the fleet in defense of the nation. This level of force development is the highest in 20 years, sustaining a battle-ready force that is built to fight and win at sea. Every month, more and more of these Sailors report to commands around the globe.



Navy officials ring a ceremonial bell during Recruit Training Command's Pass-In-Review in Midway Ceremonial Drill Hall Nov. 20. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Stuart Posada

“Future Sailors arrive at RTC, leaving home for the first time, taking that first critical step into the world seeking adventure,” said Capt. Ken Froberg, commanding officer, Recruit Training Command. “As these men and women mature through boot camp, they realize they are capable of so much more by embracing our professional values of honor, courage and commitment. It really is amazing week-to-week to see these new Sailors graduate and embark on their own journeys with

our Navy, unified by a strong warrior ethos. I know the watch is in good hands!”

This milestone coincides with U.S. Navy Recruiting Command surpassing its FY25 recruiting goal for active component Sailors, beating its active duty, enlisted goal by nearly 3,500 future Sailors.

Recruit Division Commanders (RDC) are responsible for training new recruits during boot camp.

“Being an RDC has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career,” said Master-at-Arms First Class Selena Barragan. “From the first day of training to Pass-In-Review, it’s a privilege to watch recruits grow through discipline, teamwork, and resilience. Seeing that growth firsthand—watching civilians become Sailors who carry themselves with confidence and integrity—is what makes this role so meaningful. Every division I train reminds me why this work matters and why preparing them for the Fleet is both an honor and a responsibility.”

FY25 also saw continued innovations to Navy boot camp, including the further development of the Future Sailor Prep Course (FSPC) and the optimization of training from 10 weeks to 9 weeks.

The FSPC is designed to physically and mentally prepare recruits before starting boot camp, reducing attrition and increasing career opportunities for Sailors after graduation.

To celebrate this achievement in production, commander, Naval Service Training Command,

Rear Adm. Matthew Pottenburgh and Training Group 50 Top Sailor, Seaman Yazmine Gaines, rang the ship’s bell – a Navy tradition used to mark important occasions – at a recent RTC graduation.

“RTC is the foundry where Recruits are forged into battle-ready Sailors,” said Pottenburgh. “Here in Great Lakes, our success is measured by the quality of the Sailor who leaves boot camp, the ‘Quarterdeck of the Navy’, following graduation as total Sailors – fit to fight and

ready to win tonight, tomorrow, and well into the future.”

The mission of RTC, the Navy’s only boot camp, is to transform civilians into smartly disciplined, physically fit, basically trained Sailors who are ready for follow-on training and service to the fleet, while instilling in them the highest standards of honor, courage, and commitment.

For more information, visit: <https://www.bootcamp.navy.mil/>.

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Units of Carrier Air Wing 17 return to San Diego

Courtesy Story
USS Nimitz (CVN 68)

The squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 17 returned to their home stations after a nine month mission to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, Dec. 7.

CVW 17, embarked aboard aircraft carrier *Nimitz*, operated as part of the *Nimitz* Carrier Strike Group during operations spanning the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Central Command areas of responsibility.

Nimitz, the Navy's oldest aircraft carrier and its crew will be home for Christmas, scheduled to pull in at Naval Base Kitsap in Bremerton, Wash., on Dec. 16, the Navy said Dec. 5. The Navy has said the deployment is likely the last of the carrier's 50 years in service.

"The men and women of Carrier Air Wing 17 successfully

executed a multitude of missions with incredible professionalism, ingenuity and grit," said Rear Adm. Fred Goldhammer, commander, Carrier Strike Group 11. "Their dedication throughout a challenging nine month deployment that spanned more than two thirds of the planet enabled our team to consistently project naval power and forward presence while demonstrating the opera-

tional flexibility and responsiveness our nation demands of its Carrier Strike Groups."

While operating in the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, CVW-17 conducted international exercises and engagements alongside Saudi Arabian, Bharani, Omani, Emirati, Qatari, French, Pakistani and Indian partners. The air wing also supported U.S. Africa Command by conducting strikes against

ISIS targets in Somalia. On USS *Wayne E. Meyer*, members of HSM-73 supported combat operations against the Houthi threat in the Gulf of Aden, earning the Combat Action Ribbon for their actions.

"Putting the pressure on our adversaries involves more than flying planes and helicopters. It involves thousands of Sailors

this important nine-month mission. It was a pleasure serving with America's finest sons and daughters."

While operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet AOO, CVW 17 supported operations to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific, operating as part of the NIMCSG to provide credible deterrence and reassure allies and partners

"Putting the pressure on our adversaries involves more than flying planes and helicopters. It involves thousands of Sailors working tirelessly to support our aircraft in harm's way," said Captain Brent Jaquith, commander, CVW 17

working tirelessly to support our aircraft in harm's way," said Captain Brent Jaquith, commander, CVW 17.

"When you have aircraft launching off the flight deck around the clock, you need a crew full of capable service-members ready to support. I am exceptionally proud of all of our squadrons and Sailors who supported launching, flying and recovering aircraft throughout

of enduring U.S. commitment to the region.

CVW-17 also conducted combined exercises and deterrence operations alongside Malaysian, Filipino and Japanese partners and conducted joint exercises with U.S. Air Force and U.S. Marine Corps assets.

In total, CVW-17 completed over 7,400 sorties and 18,000 flight hours.



A Super Hornet launches from *Nimitz* aircraft carrier while operating in the Pacific Ocean Dec. 5. *Nimitz*, the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 11, is set to return home after long deployment. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Hannah Kantner

Night at The Mechanized Museum

Camp Pendleton's Mechanized Museum's inaugural evening Open House Dec. 20 will celebrate with live music by the 1st Marine Division Jazz Combo. Additionally, a special escorted appearance by Santa Claus at 6 p.m. will highlight the evening's activities. Holiday decorations, refreshments, music and photos with Santa will make this a night to remember while exploring and learning about the world's largest Marine Corps vehicle collection. This free event is specially designed for the whole family. Great photo opportunity for young and old alike with free guided tours available. The museum is open to all with base access. The museum is located at the foot of Rattlesnake Canyon along the former 1881 California Southern Railroad. DETAILS: Saturday, Dec. 20 from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. To learn more, visit <https://www.pendleton.marines.mil/About/#tab/history>.

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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?

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Navy celebrates completion of major energy generation project at NWS Seal Beach

by Gregg Smith
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach
The Department of the Navy, through a leasing initiative with energy solutions provider, Ameresco, today announced the completion of a major energy generation project at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach (NWSSB), in Seal Beach.

To mark this significant achievement, a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held officially recognizing the commencement of commercial operations under a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) between Ameresco and

San Jose Clean Energy.
The energy project—developed through a forward-thinking leasing initiative—represents a model of collaboration between the Navy and the private sector. Ameresco financed, designed, and constructed the project on Navy-owned land and will continue to operate and maintain the energy generation and storage assets through the term of the lease.
Designed with a focus on mission readiness and energy dominance, this project includes

12 megawatt solar photovoltaic installation paired with a 16.7 MW-hour battery energy storage system, as well as switchgear and local distribution upgrades. Instead of traditional cash rent, Ameresco is providing infrastructure upgrades and completion of mission critical projects at NWSSB, delivering long-term value to the installation and its mission supporting the warfighter.
“This successful leasing initiative strengthens our national security by allowing us to leverage the value of our land to fulfill

mission-critical projects that harden our infrastructure against disruptions and deliver resilient energy where it matters most,” said Capt. Kyle Caldwell, commander of NWSSB. “It ensures that NWSSB remains a ready, capable installation prepared to support the Fleet at any time.”
By leveraging Naval Facilities and Engineering Systems Command, Southwest’s team of professionals and available Title 10 Real Estate authorities, NWSSB successfully aligned real property solutions with mission objectives – achieving



smarter, faster and more strategic outcomes than traditional contracting methods. **Ammunition pier at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach. U.S. Navy photo**

LOCAL PHOTO GALLERY



AIR SUSPENSION A Navy explosive ordnance disposal technician rappels from an MH-60S Sea Hawk during a helicopter rope-suspension techniques course at Silver Strand Training Complex in Coronado Dec. 3. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class August Clawson



SAFETY CONSCIENCE Sgt. Megan Marano conducts maintenance on an F-35C Lightning II, attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 314, in the hangar bay of aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on Nov. 27, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Cesar Zavala



UP AND OVER Gunnery Sgt. Brian Giera races through an obstacle course as part of the semi-annual Atlas Games at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Nov. 26, 2025. The event tested competitors’ strength, knowledge and endurance. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Jesse K. Carter-Powell



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California National Guard enters State Partnership Program with Mexico's Secretariat of National Defense

by Joint Force Headquarters California National Guard
MEXICO CITY- The California National Guard and Mexico's Secretariat of National Defense (Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional) held their State Partnership Program signing ceremony recently.

The SPP pairs a U.S. state or territory's National Guard with a partner nation's military forces, security forces or government organization, to foster long-term, mutually beneficial relationships.

Maj. Gen. Matthew Beevers, the Adjutant General of California, and Maj. Gen. Javier Sandoval Dueñas, Deputy Chief of Military Doctrine of the National Defense Joint Headquarters Staff (EMCDN), signed an official

document formalizing the agreement with the two partners.

"I am extremely pleased that the California National Guard was selected to partner with the Mexican army," said Beevers. "This partnership will enhance our homeland defense by fostering strong relationships between California and Mexico, enabling shared training and interoperability, exchanges, and collaborative security efforts that ultimately strengthen our national security."

This new partnership marks a milestone as it is the second State Partnership Program for U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and builds upon USNORTHCOM's already strong defense relationship with the Mexican armed forces. A de-

cadec-long relationship based on trust, mutual benefit, and respect for sovereignty.

"The California National Guard's partnership with Mexico through the State Partnership Program reflects our shared commitment to advancing security cooperation efforts," said Gen. Gregory M. Guillot, Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and USNORTHCOM. "This collaboration enhances practical cooperation between our forces to address shared security challenges, fostering a safer and more secure Western Hemisphere."

The California National Guard and Mexico partnership will work to collaborate on shared initiatives including disaster

response and joint training exchanges. The SPP is designed to strengthen enduring partnerships across the globe and build partner capacity. California is also partnered with the Armed

Forces of Ukraine since 1993 and Nigerian Armed Forces since 2006.

For more than 30 years, National Guardsmen have built

enduring connections with foreign counterparts through the SPP. Annually, Guardsmen have conduct approximately 1,000 training exchanges with their foreign counterparts.

USS Tripoli, USS Robert Smalls arrive in Da Nang, Vietnam

by Lt. Cmdr. John Mike
Commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 7 Public Affairs
DA NANG, VIETNAM, Cruiser USS *Robert Smalls* (CG 62) and amphibious assault ship USS *Tripoli* (LHA 7) with embarked elements of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) 11 and Commander, Task Force (CTF) 76 arrived in Da Nang in early December while conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.


Their scheduled port visit underscores the two nations' commitment to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that spans political, security, economic and people-to-people ties. The previous U.S. port visit to Da Nang was in June 2023 by aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* and cruisers USS *Antietam* (CG 54) and *Robert Smalls*.

"We could not have asked for a warmer welcome from our Vietnamese partners," said Rear Adm. Tom Shultz, commander, Task Force 76, whose flagship is *Tripoli*. "Our visit highlights the strengthening relationship between our two nations and militaries, enables us to build operational understanding and trust, and reinforces our relationship on a personal level while advancing our shared goals of peace, prosperity, and economic security in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific."

Tripoli and *Robert Smalls'* visit brings nearly 2,300 Sailors and Marines to Da Nang where they will have an opportunity to meet the city's people and experience its unique culture. It also serves an important role in celebrating the 30th anniversary of U.S.-Vietnam relations.

"The visit by USS *Tripoli* and USS *Robert Smalls* coming as we close out celebrations to mark 30 years of bilateral relations is proof that the U.S.-Vietnam partnership has never been better," said U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Marc E. Knapper. "It is so heartening to see the warm welcome U.S. service members have received here in Da Nang, a city that holds a special place in the history of our bilateral relations and recently faced challenges following multiple typhoons. The United States has provided \$1.75 million in disaster relief support in response to recent events, and our growing security cooperation, including through humanitarian assistance and disaster response trainings, has helped enhance Vietnam's response capacity in disaster prone areas and strengthened people-to-people ties."

Within the 7th Fleet area of operations, CTF-76 is responsible for conducting expeditionary warfare operations with Navy and Marine Corps capabilities to support theater contingencies that range from crisis response to full combat operations.



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2025 SEMA Show & AAPEX in Las Vegas

Each year the SEMA Show and AAPEX bring together exhibitors from around the world in a massive exhibition showcasing the automotive industry. The SEMA Show is rightfully billed as “the epicenter of automotive culture and lifestyle, connecting the aftermarket to millions of enthusiasts worldwide and fueling growing interest and demand for industry products.”

Filled with equipment and parts to service and repair automobiles, AAPEX brings together innovative suppliers, service providers, distributors, buyers and thought leaders to equip automotive aftermarket professionals.

Together, the 2025 SEMA Show & AAPEX were huge, primarily occupying space in the massive Las Vegas Convention Center, Caesars Forum and The Venetian Expo. The SEMA Show alone had more than 153,000 attendees from 140 countries and regions, 2,300 exhibiting brands — including 500 first-time exhibitors — and more than 2,500 members of the global media.

The SEMA Show and AAPEX automotive aftermarket trade shows feature thousands of the latest in innovative automotive specialty products, industry trends, networking, education and, of course, more cool custom vehicles that you are likely to see anywhere else. Public access is limited to the final day of the SEMA Show, ending in a ticketed celebration filled with motorsports demonstrations, the SEMA Cruise and live music that they call “SEMA Ignited.” Extend you stay by a couple of weeks extra and you can also see the Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix.

The Show officially opened with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by key leaders, including SEMA President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mike Spagnola, National Hot Rod

Association (NHRA) President Glen Cromwell, Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority (LVCVA) CEO/President Steve Hill, Fédération Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA) President Mohammed Ben Sulayem, First Congressional District of Nevada Rep. Dina Titus, and SEMA Board

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



Chair Melanie White. Their presence underscores the Show’s global significance and its status as Las Vegas’ longest-running citywide event.

“Every year, the SEMA Show introduces technologies and ideas that transform the automotive landscape,” said SEMA Vice President of Events Tom Gattuso. “From ADAS solutions to alternative propulsion and performance builds, innovation here drives progress across the entire aftermarket.”

SEMA revealed its New Products Award winners during the 2025 SEMA Show Kickoff Breakfast, recognizing the most innovative and cutting-edge advancements shaping the automotive aftermarket.

More than 1,300 products vied for top honors across 15 New Products Showcase categories, each evaluated for its breakthrough engineering and business potential. These standout products represent the technologies and trends that will revolutionize performance, personalization, and automotive customization in 2026.

The New Product Award winners -- and thousands more of the latest and most exciting products hitting the aftermarket -- were on display all week in the New Product Showcase, a must-see destination for any SEMA Show attendee.

Battle of the Builders, presented by Mother’s Polish, is the aftermarket industry’s ultimate vehicle competition. This year’s program celebrated 12 years of providing SEMA Show builders a platform to showcase their craftsmanship and skills to a worldwide audience. These builders represent an elite group of individuals who have demonstrated extreme talent, creativity, and craftsmanship in modifying cars, trucks, and SUVs.

The shows are huge, presenting much more than can be covered here in words,. That is why I take a lot of pictures. However, when I transferred the photos for this year’s SEMA Show & APPEX I was stunned to discover that I had taken 5004 high-resolution photos! No wonder my storage space is almost full. I encourage you to visit the “AutoMatters & Mor” website, to see some of these photos.

The 2026 editions of the SEMA Show and AAPEX are scheduled for November 3-6 and November 3-5, respectively. For more information, visit <https://www.semashow.com/> and <https://www.apexshow.com>.

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

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

“So, what does everyone want for Xmas?” the text from my daughter, Anna, to our family read this morning. The coffee in my gut curdled. As usual, I have no idea what anyone wants, much less myself. I dread the mere thought of Christmas shopping.

When our three kids, Hayden, Anna, and Lilly, were young, gift giving was fun. As long as there was a pile of gifts to open on Christmas morning, they were happy. I’d visit a couple toy departments and the outlet mall, and my holiday shopping was done faster than it took to wrap everything.

Now, our kids are single young adults. Although they still rely on their parents to provide a gift-filled Christmas morning, each individual has his or her own specific wishes, motivations, and tolerance levels.

Hayden (30) gives generously, but already has everything he needs. Three years ago, he declared, “Don’t give me anything that doesn’t fit in the palm of my hand.” Anna (27) has such specific tastes, I know better than to buy her anything she hasn’t already picked out online and sent me the link to. Lilly (25) is the opposite of her siblings. She just wants a whole bunch of presents to open, regardless of what’s inside.

I simply can’t keep track. It may be the Season of Giving, but

Gift giving? Good grief!

instead of feeling festive when I think of Christmas shopping, I’m filled with confusion, exhaustion, and dread.

Almost instantly, my husband, Francis, responded to Anna’s text, “Cologne for me,” followed quickly by, “Also, I really liked the pajama pants Lilly got me two years ago. Another pair, same material, please.” Firmly planted on the narcissistic side of the personality scale, Francis has multiple ideas for gifts that people could (and really, should) buy him, because he deserves nice things.

However, even Francis’ clear wish list drives up my blood pressure, because it’s never finalized. Just when I think I’ve gotten everything on his list — a Vineyard Vines quarter zip, L.L. Bean whalebone corduroys, New Balance sneakers in size 11 quadruple E, scented candles, cigars, cologne, pajamas, and various other luxury items he’s requested — he’ll add one more thing. “If anyone’s still looking for a gift for me...,” he’s been known to say on the afternoon of Dec.24.

A few years ago, I tried to make the family gift giving ordeal fun again. I planned a game night, and cleverly drafted “The Molinari Christmas Questionnaire.” The survey asked for favorite Christmas cookies, movies, and activities, as well as personal gift requests. I made tacos and set up games, thinking my brilliant idea would become a time-honored holiday tradition.

Instead, Hayden and Anna rolled their eyes at the questionnaire, Lilly disliked the taco

meat, and all three got into an argument after I forced them to play shuffleboard. “That’s it! Everybody out!” I blared only minutes into the first game. That night not only lives on in perpetual infamy in our collective holiday memories, it provided zero relief from my holiday shopping dread.

Recently, a young Army spouse coworker asked to reschedule our Zoom meeting time so she could take advantage of a one-day holiday sale at her local mall. She explained that she buys five gifts for each of her three school-aged boys each year — “Something they need, something they want, something to read, something to do, and something from Santa.”

I was amazed at the simplicity of her idea. Her five-gift plan eliminated guesswork, managed expectations, and was budget-friendly — but still included the element of surprise. Genius!

“Why didn’t I think of that in my 30 years of motherhood?” I asked myself, spiraling into self-loathing. “It’s no wonder I loathe Christmas shopping! I reluctantly buy a bunch of crap without knowing what anyone wants, then on Christmas morning, I wince as they open their gifts, seeing that look in their eyes that says, ‘What the hell am I gonna do with a hand blender?’”

As I wait for the rest of my family to answer Anna’s text, I will resolve this shopping season to give myself the one gift that I really need and deserve — Grace. And that’s exactly what I’ve always wanted.

Veterans News

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

The Department of Veterans Affairs recognize the important role of family caregivers in supporting the health and wellness of veterans. Find out if you may be eligible and how to apply for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Are you eligible for the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers?

You may be eligible if you and the veteran you’re caring for meet all of these requirements.

You must be at least 18 years old. And at least one of these must be true for you:

- *You’re a spouse, son, daughter, parent, step-family member, or extended family member of the veteran, or you live full time with the veteran, or you’re willing to live full time with the veteran if we designate you as a family caregiver.

Eligibility requirements for the veteran

All of these must be true for the veteran you’re caring for:

- *The veteran has a VA disability rating (individual or combined) of 70 percent or higher, and the veteran was discharged from the U.S. military or has a date of medical discharge, and the veteran needs at least six months of continuous, in-person personal care services, and the veteran needs to be enrolled in VA health care.
- *Personal care services are services the veteran needs from another person. They include care or assistance to support these parts of the veteran’s life:
 - *Health and well-being.
 - *Everyday personal needs (like feeding, bath-

ing, and dressing)

- *Safety, protection, or instruction in their daily living environment.

Note: Active-duty service members undergoing a medical discharge will need to apply for VA health care before or after submitting their application for caregiver assistance.

Learn more about active-duty service members and VA health care at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/eligibility/active-duty/>.

How many caregivers can the eligible Veteran appoint?

The veteran can appoint one Primary Family Caregiver (the main caregiver), and up to two Secondary Family Caregivers (people who serve as backup support to the primary caregiver when needed).

What benefits can eligible Primary and Secondary caregivers receive?

Eligible Primary and Secondary Family Caregivers can receive:

- *Caregiver education and training.
- *Mental health counseling.
- *Certain travel benefits when traveling with the Veteran to receive care.

Learn more about VA travel pay reimbursement at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/file-travel-pay-reimbursement/>.

You can apply online, by mail, or in person.

Start here: <https://www.va.gov/family-and-caregiver-benefits/health-and-disability/comprehensive-assistance-for-family-caregivers/apply-form-10-10cg/introduction>.

Marine Corps Magazine outlines history, trends, future

by Gunnery Sgt. Laiqa Hitt
Defense Media Activity

The Marine Corps, founded Nov. 10, 1775, marked its 250th birthday by publishing a comprehensive magazine introducing readers to foundational knowledge of the service branch.

Designed for Marines of all ranks, service members from other branches, civilians and anyone interested in gaining a clear understanding of the Marine Corps, the magazine highlights the service’s history, structure and global presence. It opens with an accessible overview of the mission and major campaigns and battles — tracing the evolution of Marine Corps warfighting from its origins to modern-day operations.

It examines the Marine Corps’ worldwide network of bases and installations, illustrating how forward-deployed forces enable rapid responses and sustained

graphic trends, showcasing how roughly 200,000 Marines serve today, as well as the path forward outlined by Gen. Eric M. Smith, the 39th commandant of the Marine Corps.

M A R I N E CORPS QUIZ:

What does the blood stripe on the Marine Dress Blue trousers symbolize? Answer: The blood shed by Marines at the Battle of Chapultepec during the Mexican-American War. Other common questions cover the motto Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful), the mascot Chesty, and key history like the birthplace (Tun Tavern) or famous battles.

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Single Elimination Best of 1: Rounds 1-3 Best of 3 Games: Semi-Finals & Finals Teams Size: 4 Total Players: 128

Rocket League

Tournament Dates and Times Fri., Dec. 26, 2025 at 8pm EST Sat., Dec. 27, 2025 at 2pm EST Fri., Jan. 2, 2026 at 8pm EST Sat., Jan. 3, 2026 at 2pm EST

Rocket League Format:

Single Elimination Best of 3 Games Teams Size: 3 Total Players: 96

Tournament Prizes For All Events:

First Place: \$150 gift card for each member of the team Second Place: \$100 gift card for each member of the team Redemption Bracket Winning Team: \$75 gift card for each member of the team | The Redemption Bracket (often called a "consolation" or loser's" bracket") gives teams a second chance to showcase their skills and win prizes. Teams that lost in the 1st round, and if time permits the 2nd round, are grouped together, creating a more balanced playing field for them, and compete for a separate prize.

Who Can Play:

The competitions are open to authorized Navy MWR patrons ages 18+, with priority given to active-duty Sailors. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, please contact us at:

https://www.navywmr.org/programs/esports/

Navy MWR Esports is a Community Recreation initiative designed to provide entertainment and recreation opportunities through competitive sports. This multidimensional initiative will also increase programming opportunities at MWR Liberty Centers through technological improvements and provide top-quality esports competitions to the Navy community.

ROY'S SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

1 Morse code component
5 John Wick, for one
11 Wedding reception VIPs
14 Puerto Rico, por ejemplo
15 Blueprint
16 Legendary bird of prey
17 *Carpe diem
19 Rap sheet letters
20 "Zip your lip!"
21 Lust or greed
22 "And how!"
23 *Be the first to begin
27 Hug
29 Mom's mom
30 Extended pd. away from work
31 Notable period
33 Commercial charge
37 U.K. network
38 *Party gifts container
41 Coffee dispenser
42 Invite for
44 Aggregate
45 Container cover
46 Escape clauses
49 Letters in alphabet soup
52 *Act in desperation
56 Retinal cells
57 Fannie or Ginnie follower
58 Silently understood

61 Dismissal metaphor, with "the"
62 Familiar slogan ... and what each answer to a starred clue is?
65 A-list
66 Wind instruments
67 Biter on a pooch
68 Nonetheless
69 Corporate jet maker
70 Hide partner

Down

1 Frisbee, for one
2 Befuddled
3 Shoe with a strap that nearly encircles the ankle
4 More smoke-filled
5 FDR's successor
6 German pronoun found in half of Munich?
7 What we have here
8 Highway divider
9 Actress Seales of "Insecure"
10 Opposing vote
11 Emmy category
12 Phoenix's 2019 Best Actor role
13 Few and far between
18 "At Last" singer James

22 Hardly any
24 Taiwanese PC maker
25 Queen of Olympus
26 Reel trouble
27 Napoleon's 1814 place of exile
28 Unruly crowds
32 Tummy muscles
34 Comprehensive
35 Shallowest Great Lake
36 Goals
38 Rise, as prices
39 Batter's job in a squeeze play
40 Eros, in Rome
43 Discard
47 Husk-wrapped cantina food
48 Something to update on Facebook
50 Solemn vow
51 "Whistle While You Work" septet
52 Turkey topper
53 "Chicago" showgirl Hart
54 Highly skilled
55 Splinter groups
59 Understanding words
60 Hardwood tree
62 Ozone-depleting chemical
63 Farm layer
64 Free TV spot

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San Diego Humane Society Campus Locations

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Oceanside Campus 572 Airport Road Oceanside, CA 92058

Escondido Campus 3500 Burnet Drive Escondido, CA 92027

San Diego Campus 5480 Gaines Street San Diego, CA 92110

Health & Fitness

Navy medicine resident leads women's marathon team to victory at Armed Forces Championship

WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES - Lt. Megan Walsh, a psychiatry resident at Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) San Diego, led the Navy Women's Marathon team to its second consecutive victory at the Armed Forces National Marathon Championships held in Washington D.C., Oct. 23-27. Walsh, a second-year resident, served as team captain for the All-Navy Marathon Team.



WASHINGTON, D.C., UNITED STATES - Lt. Megan Walsh, psychiatry resident at Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) San Diego and All-Navy Marathon Team Captain, pushes through mile after mile at the Armed Forces National Marathon Championships in Washington D.C., Oct. 26, 2025. Walsh previously took the individual gold medal in 2024, and this year secured the bronze, leading the Navy Women's Marathon team to their second consecutive victory. U.S. Navy photo contributed by Marcelo Calero.

This was not the first time Walsh, a native of Southborough, Massachusetts, represented the Navy at what was also the 50th Marine Corps Marathon. At last year's individual competition Walsh took the gold. This year Walsh takes the bronze at what was a podium dominated by Navy women winners.

Walsh's leadership and athletic prowess propelled the team to victory against fierce competition from other branches of the U.S. military. Her achievement highlights the dedication and well-rounded nature of Navy Medicine professionals.

"Competing on the All-Navy team the past two years has been such an incredible experience," expressed Walsh. "To race with

a team goal in mind, feeding off the energy of the amazing women on my team, is so special. We had a really powerful and infectious team energy this year and I think that's reflected in the fact that we all outperformed our expectations for our individual races, with all four of us finishing the marathon in under three hours."

Cmdr. David Nissan, the program director of the psychiatry residency at Naval Medical Center San Diego, praised Walsh's character and dedication.

"From day one of her training Dr. Walsh has impressed us by

her dedication to her patients, her passion to perform her craft at the very highest level," said Nissan. "Equally impressive is her character, professionalism, and spirit. She was the intern of the year at our program, is producing scholarship at the national level, and to top it off, is an amazing athlete! Navy Medicine is truly lucky to have her leading the way, and we are so proud of her accomplishments."

Capt. Elizabeth Adriano, commander of NMRTC San Diego, echoed this sentiment.

"We are immensely proud of Lt. Walsh and her consecutive victories," said Adriano. "She ran for all of NMRTC San Di-

ego, and it's a testament to the quality of our people that the Navy had such a sweeping performance at the marathon."

Balancing marathon training with the demands of residency can be challenging, with plenty of 04:00 a.m. wake-ups to fit in training before work, but it's so energizing to pursue these diverse goals, added Walsh.

"I love running and I love what I do, and I'm grateful I have the space and support to pursue both," said Walsh.

Walsh's accomplishment demonstrates the commitment of Navy Medicine professionals

to not only provide exceptional care to warfighters, their families, and veterans, but also to maintain peak mental and physical readiness themselves. This dedication underscores the Navy Medicine mission to develop, generate, and preserve the Naval human weapon system.

Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command San Diego supports Navy and Marine Corps readiness by ensuring its medical forces are ready to deploy and provide medical support, ashore or at sea.



Digital Appointment Portal (DAP)

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To better serve our patients and optimize the efficiency of our services, NMCS D's Laboratory Department is pleased to announce outpatient hours on Saturdays, effective 6 Dec. Specimen collection services will be available by appointment only, from 08:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please note that only standard blood draws and urine collections will be performed during Saturday appointments.

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