

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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COVER CORRECTION Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Ashley Thornton fixes a recruit's cover inside Midway Ceremonial Drill Hall before Navy Recruit Training Command's pass in review in Great Lakes, Ill., March 28, 2024. More than 40,000 recruits train annually at the Navy's only boot camp. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher M. O'Grady

Former 3rd Fleet commander takes Pacific Fleet's helm

by Wyatt Olson, Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii - A naval aviator and former commander of 3rd Fleet assumed command of U.S. Pacific Fleet during an April 4 ceremony in Hawaii.

Adm. Stephen Koehler replaces Adm. Samuel Paparo, who is slated to take the reins of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command next month.

Paparo will replace Adm. John Aquilino, who has headed Indo-Pacific Command since April 2021.

During remarks at the pier-side ceremony, Aquilino was effusive in his praise for Paparo and Koehler, describing them as "the world's greatest warfighters."

Pacific Fleet's area of operation encompasses roughly 100 million square miles, spanning from the Arctic in the north to Antarctica in the south.

The fleet consists of about 200 ships, 1,500 aircraft and 150,000 uniformed and civilian personnel.

Koehler is a 1986 graduate of the University of Colorado at Boulder and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps, according to his official Navy biography.

He was designated a naval aviator in March 1989 and has flown more than 3,900 hours in F-14 Tomcat and F-18 Super Hornet fighter jets, making 600 carrier landings.

Among his career commands were amphibious assault ship USS *Bataan*, aircraft carrier USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and Carrier Strike Group 9.

His tours supported operations Desert Storm, Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, Inherent Resolve and Freedom's Sentinel.

He was a deputy commander for Pacific Fleet and commanded the San Diego-based 3rd Fleet. Most recently, he was director for strategy, plans and policy with the Joint Staff in the Pentagon. (see photo, page 8)

MILITARY PHARMACIES RESUME REGULAR OPERATIONS AFTER CYBERATTACK

by Karen Jowers

Military Times reported April 8 that military pharmacies have returned to full operations, six weeks after a cyberattack on the nation's largest commercial prescription processor disrupted

normal business at thousands of pharmacies around the world.

Following the Feb. 21 hack, Change Healthcare - which verifies whether a customer's health insurance will help cover the cost of each medication - discon-

nected its system from other parts of the medical ecosystem in an attempt to limit the attack's impact. Military pharmacies were able to manually fill prescriptions in the company's absence, but warned customers of longer wait times.

Most retail pharmacies restarted filling and refilling patients' prescriptions by March 8, after much of Change Healthcare's network had regained function, according to officials from Optum, the UnitedHealth Group subsidiary that oversees Change. But on-base pharmacies lagged behind for multiple weeks as Change worked with Defense Health Agency officials to re-establish its connection to that separate network.

The connection was restored the week of April 1, a company spokesperson told *Military Times* April 5. Defense Health Agency

officials didn't respond to a request for information about the status of the pharmacies.

At least one military pharmacy has continued to warn of extended wait times as it recovers from the disruption.

"Pharmacy services have been fully restored and we have returned to a fully operational status, including the filling of controlled substances," the 19th Medical Group at Little Rock Air Force Base, Arkansas, said in an April 3 Facebook post.

Earlier, Defense Health Agency officials acknowledged that some beneficiaries may have been asked to pay full price for their prescriptions at Tricare's in-network retail pharmacies affected by the Change Healthcare outage. Those customers should file a claim for reimbursement with Tricare.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Montea Armstrong, 17th Medical Group pharmacy technician, fills a prescription at the Ross Clinic's pharmacy on Goodfellow Air Force Base, Texas, in 2020. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Abbey Rieves

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CNO: INVESTING IN INDUSTRIAL BASE, GROWING THE FLEET ARE TOP PRIORITIES

by Matthew Olay, DOD News

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti said April 8 that investing in the defense industrial base to increase the size of the Navy's fleet in coming years is a top priority for the Department of the Navy.

The CNO made her remarks during a panel discussion that kicked off this year's Sea-Air-Space maritime exposition just outside of Washington.

"We know we need a larger Navy," said Franchetti. "Every study since 2016 has shown that; and I think the most effective way to work on that right now is to invest in our industrial base, invest in the workforce [and] invest alongside our industry partners... to speed up the production and throughput of the ships and submarines that we need."

The Navy currently has 88 ships under contract, with 66 of them currently under construction, Franchetti said.

"When I look at our ability to be a standing force, a crisis response force [and] a force that is ready to go today ... [that all] relies heavily, crucially and critically on the U.S. Navy," Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Christopher J. Mahoney, who was also on the panel with Franchetti, said



(photo, top) Capt. Matthew Hall, commanding officer of destroyer Zumwalt, briefs Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Christopher Mahoney and other officials during a tour of the ship at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss., March 4, 2024. U.S. Navy photo

(photo, above) Amphibious transport dock ship Somers, Indian amphibious transport dock ship INS Jalashwa and Indian tank landing ship INS Kesari steam in formation while underway in the Bay of Bengal, March 26, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Evan Diaz

of how Navy amphibious ships directly contribute to the Marine Corps being able to execute its mission.

Concurring with Franchetti's assessment of the need to strengthen the industrial base, Mahoney said that he believes bundling future purchases of amphibious ships would not only save the taxpayer money but would also attract more workers to the shipbuilding industry thanks to multi-year job security.

"And not just pipe fitters and welders," Mahoney said, "but managers, engineers and architects that otherwise might not see a future that far out."

During the panel, Franchetti and Mahoney offered their perspectives on the Navy's shipbuilding industry, as a result of both leaders having recently toured various shipyards along the Gulf Coast.

"All of the industry partners are facing some of the same challenges in the workforce [that the military is], said Franchetti. "So, we're working alongside industry to generate some of these pipelines where people can be recruited, they can come in and get training, and they come out with a certification and then immediately go and be employed," she further explained.

When asked about how much responsibility to build up the industrial base both DOD and industry should share, Franchetti

and Mahoney each agreed that such responsibility should be closely and mutually shared.

"It has to be a partnership with [DOD] and industry," said Franchetti. "It's a commitment on the part of both to be able to move forward."

According to the Congressional Budget Office, there were 290 battle force ships in the Navy's fleet at the start of fiscal year 2024. The sea service hopes to upscale that number to the mid-to-high 300s by 2053.

Additional naval priorities the CNO listed during the panel included near-term readiness of the force and investment in the upcoming Columbia class of nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.

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Army's top Pacific leader mum on 'where or when' new missiles will deploy

by Seth Robson
Stars and Stripes

TOKYO - The U.S. Army will field newly developed missiles in the Indo-Pacific region this year with additional types in the pipeline, it's Pacific-area commander told reporters on a recent visit to the Japanese capital.

"I'm not going to discuss what system and I'm not going to say where and when," Gen. Charles Flynn said during a media roundtable April 2 at the U.S. Embassy. "I'm just saying that there will be a long-range precision fires capability."

The U.S. and allies Japan and the Philippines are gearing up for a potential fight with China, which boasts a formidable missile force, around Taiwan or in the South China Sea.

In November, Flynn told reporters at the Halifax International Security Forum in Canada that the Army would deploy a limited number of



Then-Lt. Gen. Charles A. Flynn, in a file photo from Jan. 26, 2021, when he served as assistant deputy chief of staff for G-3/5/7. U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Scott Longstreet

Tomahawk and SM-6 missiles to the region, according to a Nov. 19 report in Defense One.

Land-based Tomahawks, with a range of over 1,500 miles, were banned under the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. But the U.S. pulled out of the treaty in 2019, due to Russian non-

compliance, and the Marine Corps established its first Tomahawk unit in July 2023 at Camp Pendleton.

"I'm not going to say where or when we will deploy in 2024," Flynn said in Halifax. "There's actually multiple systems in development."

Flynn during the Tokyo

roundtable mentioned the Typhoon launcher, which is designed to fire the SM-6 and Tomahawk missiles. That system has a "hypersonic capability," he said, referring to missiles that can travel faster than five times the speed of sound.

Flynn also spoke about the long-range, anti-ship Precision Strike Missile, which is set to reach initial operating capability this year.

"This new surface-to-surface weapon system will deliver enhanced capabilities to attack, neutralize, suppress and destroy targets using missile-delivered indirect fires out to 499+ kilometers (310+ miles)," manufacturer Lockheed Martin wrote on its website.

"We shoot HIMARS in a number of these countries today," Flynn said in Halifax. "This is just a different missile to put into it. So, I don't necessarily think we need to have an agreement (with other countries) ahead of time."



Army

- Army job fair in Texas aims to fill thousands of openings in its civilian workforce
- Defense lawyers for former Army Soldier facing federal riot charge allege 'questionable tactics' by FBI, police
- Army's top Pacific leader mum on 'where or when' new missiles will deploy
- How two brigades are leading the Army's charge toward cutting-edge tech
- Burleson hands Eighth Army to his successor, ending nearly 4 decades of Army service

Navy

- Navy destroyer *Gravelly* takes out Houthi drones, missile in the Red Sea
- Koehler, former 3rd Fleet commander, takes U.S. Pacific Fleet's helm as Paparo heads to INDOPACOM
- FBI gate crash suspect to remain in custody until Monday hearing

Marine Corps

- GoFundMe for family of U.S. Marine who went missing off Puerto Rico approaches \$10k goal
- Chinese national detained after breaking onto Marine base in California
- Marine commander forces thrift store to shut down on air station in Japan
- New tech give Marine force-on-force training a reality boost

Air Force

- Medics' innovative blood transfusion field kit honors fallen Osprey airman
- How the 10th Air Force hopes to boost readiness with 'Carnivore Hunger Games'
- Former Air National Guardsman facing child porn charges may have defected to Russian military
- Contractor crashed MQ-9 on loan from Air Force in 2023, causing \$16 million in damage
- Virtual reality preps Tokyo-based Airmen for Japan's very real threat: earthquakes
- Allvin, Kendall tour Pacific islands to see progress on ACE



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U.S., Chinese military officials resume talks on operational safety

by Joseph Clark, DOD News
Military officials from the U.S. and China met last week for working-level talks focused on ensuring safe and professional air and naval interactions between their forces.

The two-day discussions, held in Honolulu, marked the resumption of the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement Working Group, a series of annual operational safety dialogues. The MMCA dialogues were established more than two decades ago; they were last held in December 2021.

This year's discussions included representatives from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet and U.S. Pacific Air Forces, who met with their counterparts from China's People's Liberation Army.

The head of the U.S. delegation, Army Col. Ian Francis, Indo-Pacific's director of Northeast Asia policy, said the delegation is encouraged by representatives from China's army honoring their commitment to attend the talks. He said he looks forward to future discussions aimed at safeguarding forces operating in the region.

"The Military Maritime Consultative Agreement is U.S. Indo-Pacific's primary means to directly discuss air and maritime operational safety with the PLA," Francis said. "The United States will continue to operate safely and professionally in the Indo-Pacific wherever international law allows, and we take this responsibility seriously."

"Open, direct and clear communications with the PLA and with all other military forces in the region is of utmost importance to avoid accidents and miscommunication," he said.

During this year's MMCA, officials from both countries reviewed specific instances of safety-related events in the region that have occurred in recent years. The officials also discussed sustaining maritime and aviation operational safety and professionalism.

President Joe Biden secured China's agreement to return to military-to-military talks in November after meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Woodside, Calif.

That meeting was quickly followed by talks between Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. CQ Brown, Jr., and his Chinese military counterpart, People's Liberation Army Gen. Liu Zhenli, in December.

In January, senior U.S. and Chinese military officials resumed the U.S.-China Defense Policy Coordination Talks at the Pentagon. The high-level talks were last held in September 2021.

According to the most recent China Military Power Report, the U.S. has documented more than 180 coercive and risky air intercepts against U.S. aircraft in the region between 2021 and 2023.



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class John Valor stands watch on the bridge aboard USS Rafael Peralta while transiting the Taiwan Strait, Nov. 2, 20h23. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alexandria Esteban

That is more risky intercepts in the past two years than in the past decade, according to the report.

In previewing this week's military-to-military talks, defense officials

noted a decrease in China's unsafe behavior toward U.S. maritime and air operators in the region.

"We've observed a reduction in unsafe behavior between us and

PLA aircraft and vessels over the last several months," a senior military official said. "So, we're encouraged by that, and we're happy that we have this opportunity with the MMCA to talk about ways to make sure that trend continues in the right direction."

U.S. officials noted they maintain concerns over China's continued unsafe behavior toward non-U.S. maritime operations in the region.

"In recent months, we do continue to see the PRC acting very dangerously and unlawfully against routine maritime operations the Philippines was conducting in the South China Sea," a senior defense official said. "We'll continue to press [China] on those issues."

Biden and Xi met again last week for a phone discussion featuring "candid and constructive discussion on a range of bilateral, regional and global issues, including areas of cooperation and areas of difference," according to a White House summary of the call.

During the discussion, Biden emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. He also raised concerns over China's support of Russia's defense industrial base.

The two leaders "welcomed ongoing efforts to maintain open channels of communication and responsibly manage the relationship" through diplomatic channels and working-level dialogue, according to the summary of their talk.

HOME & GARDEN

Expert landscaping tips for choosing and installing plants

(StatePoint) The perfect landscape may start with a healthy, lush lawn, but for interest and depth, you'll also need to consider the plants that surround it.

Thankfully, it's easy to make considerable improvements to your backyard life using tips from professionals. Landscape designer Doug Scott has partnered with lawn care equipment manufacturer Exmark, to offer these tips for selecting and installing plants that will beautify your outdoor living areas.

Choosing Plants

- Choose plants well-suited for your specific growing conditions. Knowing your growing zone is important, however you should also be mindful how conditions like sun exposure can change as you move around your yard.

- Choose the right size plants for the space. Bear in mind that what you're planting today is much smaller than what it will be once it's matured. Always read a

plant's care label to understand its optimal growing conditions and size at maturity.

- From a design perspective, think in terms of texture, layers and drifts. When addressing the overall texture of your planting beds, choose plants that vary in form, size, color and leaf structure. This will create greater interest, and a space that's more visually appealing and enjoyable to spend time in.

For a lush look, think in terms of layers when considering composition. Much like in a painting, you should have background, middle ground, and foreground layers. Your background layer should consist of taller evergreen shrubs to provide something alive and green to look at all year long, no matter what's happening in front of them. Your middle ground layer should be lower than the background layer to create interest, and is where you can add a contrasting evergreen shrub or pop of color with a perennial plant. Finally,

your foreground layer should help transition the planting beds to your lawn space. You can accomplish this with smaller perennials, evergreens, annuals or creeping ground covers.

When addressing drifts, read the plant labels to know how large they'll grow. This can help ensure plants grow in together as they mature, but are not overcrowded.

Installing Them

1. Dig a hole that's about two times the diameter of the pot your plant's being transplanted form, and about the depth of the pot.
2. Mend in compost or soil conditioner to give your plant the organic material it needs to thrive. If you'd like, add slow-release fertilizer, and mix well.
3. Place your plant in the hole, making sure that it sits at, or just above, the level it did in the pot.
4. Backfill with soil, stopping

to add water when the hole is about halfway full.

5. Fill the rest of the hole with soil, then firmly press down.

6. Soak your plant with more water.

7. Finish by adding mulch, making sure it's pulled away from the base of your plant.

Scott offers more insights in "How to Choose Plants for Landscaping," a recent episode of "Done-in-a-Weekend Projects," an original series from Exmark. To watch the video, visit Backyard Life, which is part of a unique multimedia destination with a focus on helping homeowners make the most of outdoor spaces.

"Now that you have the inspiration and know-how needed to choose and install plant material, you can create landscaping that reflects who you are and how you'd like to live outside," says Scott.

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Expedited naturalization returns to MCRD San Diego

by Staff Sgt. Courtney White, 12th Marine Corps District

As recruits arrived at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego recently, a new chapter of patriotism and opportunity unfolded. With the revival of expedited naturalization, eight recruits from the 12th Marine Corps District arrived to embark on a journey that will conclude with both the title Marine and U.S. citizen.

Commencing April 1, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Western Recruiting Region, in collaboration with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, have reinstated the expedited naturalization program in order to provide qualified recruits the opportunity

to become naturalized U.S. citizens upon completion of recruit training.

“It’s an opportunity for us to bring in non-U.S. citizens that have I-551 Green Cards that are going through the typical naturalization process,” said CWO3

Matthew Alderman, the enlisted operations officer for 12th MCD. “April 1 is going to be the first week we turned this program back on in several years.”

According to Alderman, the district’s goal was to get at least half of the qualified shippers leaving for recruit training on April 1 to submit for the program. Ultimately, the district had eight eligible shippers and all eight elected to participate.

“I think it’s awesome,” said Alderman. “It’s an excellent sign of what’s to come and I hope they keep applying. There’s really no draw back here.”

Since 2002, more than 148,000 service members have been naturalized, and many were assisted in the process through the DoD and USCIS partnerships such as the “Naturalization at Basic Training Initiative.”



Marine Corps Capt. Timothy Bowman, the Los Angeles Military Entrance Processing Station operations officer, administers the oath of enlistment to applicants enlisting into the U.S. Armed Forces at the LA MEPS in El Segundo, Calif., April 1. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Staff Sgt. Courtney G. White

“It’s not difficult and it’s available to any immigrant that’s in our pool that’s a non-citizen that’s shipping,” said Alderman. “The only steps required prior to shipping are to complete the N-400 form application for naturalization and get a passport photo taken and then everything else is done here on the depot including the extra fingerprints.”

Upon arrival at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, during

receiving week, the WRR Recruit Liaison Section will assist the recruit in obtaining a signed USCIS Form N-426, also known as a Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service, and submitting their application. While the recruit is in training, the liaison will mail the recruit’s fingerprint cards on their behalf to the USCIS National Benefits Center for processing.

During the recruit’s Team

Week, USCIS will interview the applicant, administer the citizenship test, and administer the Oath of Allegiance. At this point, the recruit will be a naturalized citizen of the United States of America.

Lastly, during the final week of recruit training on Family Day, a ceremony will be held to present the new U.S. citizens with their naturalization certificate see **MCRD, page 8**

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Camp Pendleton opens 11 Area military post office

by Lance Cpl.
Mhecaela Watts

CAMP PENDLETON - Marine Corps Installations West Camp Pendleton Consolidated Postal System opened a new military post office in the 11 Area, April 2.

Service members, to include those residing in the Bachelor Enlisted Quarters, or barracks,

on base will now have direct access to their mail and the opportunity to put new features of the MPO to work. Camp Pendleton is committed to improving the welfare of Marines, Sailors and their families through new quality of life initiatives.

Camp Pendleton's primary mission is to support training, sustain and deploy the war-

fighter, while providing them and their families with services that enrich their lives. As the largest west coast expeditionary training facility, Camp Pendleton prioritizes quality of life for those who live here by recognizing needs and implementing changes. With thousands of Marines and Sailors living in the BEQs, the concern for adequate mail services continues to be a priority.

The addition of the 11 Area MPO supports and expands on the mission of the MCI-West Camp Pendleton Consolidated Postal System in acceptance and delivery of official and personal mail addressed to military commands, agencies, authorized civilian organizations, and service members at MCB Camp

Pendleton. The operation of this new facility will not only increase morale but will help to maintain the Marine Corps' lethal edge by supporting and investing in our top talent.

"It will be a huge morale builder because it allows [service members] to receive their mail quickly," said Master Sgt. Mario Lute, the postal finance officer of the MCI-West Consolidated Postal System.

The service members residing in the BEQs are a major factor for expanding MPO services on base.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/467733/camp-pendleton-opens-11-area-military-post-office>

USS Omaha Gold crew conducts change of command

Petty Officer 1st Class Vance Hand
Commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1

SAN DIEGO - Cmdr. Ben Nehrke was relieved by Cmdr. Kevin Smith as commanding officer of Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS *Omaha* (LCS 12) Gold crew Naval Base San Diego, April 2. Capt. Douglas Meagher, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 3, was the presiding officer and guest speaker at the ceremony.

"Thank you for what you do for the nation, for Omaha, and for each other," said outgoing CO Nehrke. "Remember that each and every one of you matter, not just because of the work you do but for who you are. You each have unique talents, gifts, abilities, experiences, and perspectives that only you can bring to the team. I can't wait to read about all of the great things you will accomplish as a team. I'm proud to have served alongside you."

"I know that this crew, on-board this ship, USS *Omaha*, has worked to bring a ship back from deep maintenance and to prepare both the equipment and ourselves for the many challenges ahead," said incoming skipper Smith.

MCRD continued from page 7

cates in front of their family and friends in attendance.

"This program means a lot to me because it allows me to get expedited citizenship through service," said Jonas Sinhue Hernandez, a native of Oaxaca, Mexico, and a recruit participating in the program. "It helps me get to another goal that I've been wanting to complete."

According to Hernandez, his path like many other immigrants, has been a long journey.

"The road to becoming a citizen is just very long," said

Hernandez, a graduate of Wallis Annenberg High School in Los Angeles. "It can take several years, maybe up to a decade depending on where you start off on that road. Each path to becoming a citizen has its own trajectory and several years that you have to wait just to become eligible to apply for citizenship. This program is important as it helps a lot of people especially those who have been waiting a long time."

Jun Young Kim, a native of Seoul, South Korea, is also a recruit utilizing the

program.

"This means everything to me," said Kim. "It's finally giving me a chance to become a citizen and that has been something I've been waiting to do for a very long time."

Kim, a graduate of Granada Hills Charter High School in Granada Hills, Calif., immigrated to the United States at 8-years-old with every document necessary to become a citizen. Unfortunately, through the shuffle of life, documents were lost, and Kim and his family have since been trying to get everything sorted.

FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

APRIL CLASSES

If you're interested in attending one of these classes, call the Centralized Scheduling Center at 866-923-6478.

Legend: (V) Virtual (IP) In Person (NBSD) Naval Base San Diego (NBPL) Naval Base Point Loma (NBC) Naval Base Coronado (KMB) Kearny Mesa Branch (GVB) Gateway Village Branch (VSM) Village at Serra Mesa Branch (BVH) Bayview Hills Branch

Finding Federal Employment

Wednesday, April 17 | 1-3 p.m. | NBPL (IP)

Insights to Starting a Home-Based Business

Get resources for starting your home-based business
Wednesday, April 17 | 12-3:30 p.m. | KMB (IP)

Job Search Strategies

Tuesday, April 16 | 9-11 a.m. | BVH (IP)

Monday, April 29 | 1:30-3:30 p.m. | KMB (IP)

Resume Writing

Make an organized, effective and winning resume.

Tuesday, April 16 | 9-11 a.m. | VSM (IP)

Wednesday, April 17 | 9-10:30 a.m. | NBSD (IP)

Monday, April 22 | 1-3 p.m. | KMB (IP)

Friday, April 26 | 10-11:30 a.m. | NBPL (IP)

Spouse Employment, Empowerment and Development

Thursday, April 18 | 1-2:30- p.m. | BVH (IP)

Navy Spouse in Transition

Thursday, April 25 | 10 a.m.-12 p.m. | NBC (IP)

Winning Interview Techniques

Wednesday, April 24 | 9-10:30 a.m. | NBSD (IP)

Find more classes at <https://www.navylifesw.com/>.



<https://hr.nih.gov/working-nih/civil/>



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Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society kicks off Active Duty Fund Drive

by Sgt. Bryant Rodriguez
I Marine Expeditionary Force
CAMP PENDLETON – The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society launched its annual Active Duty Fund Drive during a kickoff event here April 8. The campaign will continue until late May 2024.

The yearly event provides Marines and Sailors with the chance to support NMCRS through a one-time donation, monthly allotment, or online contribution. This year's event included attendance from I Marine Expeditionary Force commanders, department heads, executive officers and sergeants major.

“Every one of us in this room

has that personal touch by the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society in some way either by awareness or a personal experience,” said Maj. Gen. Robert C. Fulford, the deputy commanding general for I Marine Expeditionary Force.

The purpose of the NMCRS is to offer financial, educational, and other forms of aid to Marines, Sailors, their eligible family members, and survivors in times of need.

“I’m here to support you, and I’m here to help you be successful – just give me a phone call or send me an email and I’ll guide you,” said Donna Miranda, the director of the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society here.

From 2021-2023, NMCRS provided over \$7M to Marines and Sailors across I MEF.

“What we’re looking for is 100 percent meaningful contact to create awareness among the Marines and Sailors,” said Fulford while addressing the audience.

The desired outcome is to raise awareness and charitable support for the NMCRS office and support service members with the necessary tools during times of financial need. Marines and Sailors can donate to the NMCRS Active Duty Fund Drive through their unit representative or online.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/468077/>

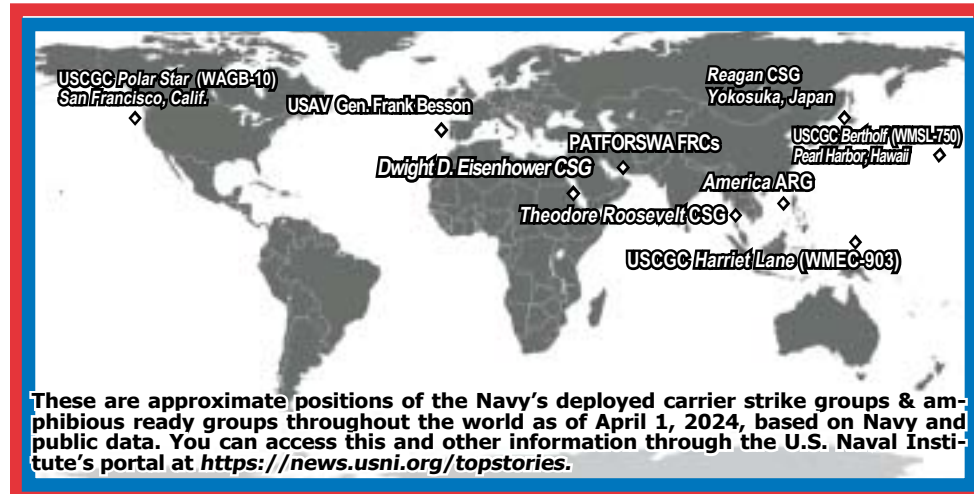


PHOTO GALLERY

PEARL HARBOR (April 4, 2024) Adm. Stephen Koehler addresses the audience after becoming the commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet during the COMPACFLT change of command ceremony onboard Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, April 4. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jeremy R. Boan



CAMP PENDLETON (April 2, 2024) Melissa Nosik, chief executive officer of Competency & Credentialing Institute, presents operating room nurses at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton with the 2024 CCI TrueNorth Award. The award is presented to one medical facility per year. Courtesy photo

NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (April 2, 2024) Command Master Chief Toyna Grace of USS Tripoli salutes the ensign during morning colors aboard Tripoli here. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Malcolm Kelley



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Hopping into Spring at the Goodguys Del Mar Nationals car show

side. At the “Nitro Thunderfest Dragster Exhibition,” several very loud dragsters roared to life.

In front of the main grandstands of the Del Mar Fairgrounds was the Swap Meet & Cars 4 Sale Corral. I usually have difficulty resisting the temptation to buy some hidden treasure at swap meets, and this year was no exception. I could never have imagined that I would discover a historically significant, “Flower Show Special Award” trophy from the 1966 Meguiar’s Del Mar Nationals, featured 2,500 rods, customs, classics, muscle cars, imports and trucks thru 1999. “AutoMatters & More” visited on Saturday, the second day of the three-day show. The weather was picture-perfect.

Show vehicles cruised slowly, back and forth along the palm tree-lined main boulevard, passing by the exhibit halls where many of the show vehicles were on display, and some of the many vendors were located.

The PPG Lowrider Palace ‘Special Indoor Exhibit’ was filled with spectacular, amazing lowriders. It was a car show within a car show, complete with a lowriders hopping exhibition just outside, on Saturday. At long last, this was finally my opportunity to see lowriders participating in extreme hopping, whereas in the past I’d only seen them engaging in little hops as they cruised down aisles at car shows and, occasionally, on city streets. Hopefully I will edit together a short video of the lowrider hopping action, and post a link to it with the expanded photo coverage at <https://automatters.net>.

In addition to the Lowriders Palace, other indoor halls contained numerous show vehicles and vendors’ displays.

Many more unique vehicles were out-

There was much more to see and do, as well as food to eat, but unfortunately I ran out of time before I could enjoy any more: live Music by Santana Soul; a Suede & Chrome special indoor exhibit in the Bing Crosby Hall (All New For 2024!); the “Kids Make and Take,” where kids could make and then take home a plastic scale car model; the “Kids Zone,” with Free Arts and crafts, games, prizes & more; the awards presentation and parade, culminating in the presentation of the 2024 Meguiar’s Street Rod D’ Elegance award; and “All American Sunday,” which welcomed American-made or American-powered vehicles of all years. I used to enter my 2011 Ford Mustang in the “All American Sunday” Goodguys AutoCross, back in the days when it was held on a different short, tight autocross course that occasionally tested its unforgiving concrete barriers (see: <https://automatters.net/goodguys-del-mar-nationals-part-one-the-autocross-slow-down-to-go-fastends-with-a-crash-captured-on-video/>).

“AutoMatters & More” has provided coverage of this tradition for many years, with extensive photography to accompany the text, at <https://automatters.net>. Enter Goodguys in the search bar in the middle of the Home Page.

For more information about the Goodguys Rod & Custom Association and “America’s Favorite Car Shows,” visit: <https://www.good-guys.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. Copyright © 2024 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #834r1.

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

I tend to wax poetic about the way it used to be in the 80s when ignorance was bliss, before modern advancements turned us all into anxious, over-informed, indulgent ingrates, dependent on 24/7 digital information and instant gratification.

But I have to admit, there are a few modern improvements that have made life better today. Way better.

“Are we doing a few foils to brighten your color up today?” my hair stylist asked yesterday, as I sat in her cozy chair frowning at my gray roots in the mirror.

“Definitely,” I smiled, and sipped hazelnut creamed coffee from my Yeti mug.

I’ve been using the same hair stylist since our Navy family PCSed to Rhode Island back in 2013. We’ve settled into a comfortable routine, getting cut and colored every seven weeks to hide my mousy grays and tame my natural frizz.

My salon is a bastion of beauty and relaxation, with contemporary, organic decor, thriving greenery, pleasant scents of coconut and jasmine, and soothing background music. During my regular appointments, I chatter softly with my stylist about this and that, whilst my hair is delicately painted with enriching colorants, tenderly bathed

The evolution of the cosmos and cosmetology

in warm water and moisturizing conditioners, softly snipped, gently dried, expertly styled, then finished with a lightweight holding spritz.

Yesterday, I walked out of the salon feeling confident and refreshed, wishing I had somewhere to go other than the commissary. Not so long ago, hairstyling was very, very different.

As a child, I recall my mother flitting around our brick ranch with her hair in pink plastic rollers, usually covered with a padded scarf. She’d have her rollers in all day, sometimes overnight, before her hair was set. Then, she’d enamel everything in place with an aerosol cloud of Aqua Net. Back then, it was common to see a woman in a grocery store, bank or gas station with her rollers in. It’s what women endured just to curl their hair.

One year, my mother was gifted a square case containing a heavy-duty shower cap attached to the motorized case by a long hollow hose. She’d put rollers in, put the cap over her head, plug the case in and flip the switch. Hot air blew through the hose, inflating the cap. Tethered to the case, my mother had at least an hour to smoke cigarettes, read the paper, and watch an episode of “Lavern and Shirley” before her hair was dry.

Thankfully, in high school, I owned a curling iron. But the curling irons of the 80s were very hot and had small barrels. Hence, teenage girls like me showed up at school with elongated burns

on their foreheads and bangs that looked like curved links of kielbasa.

When “permanent waves” became trendy, I decided to get one. All I had to do was sit in the beautician’s chair for two hours while she painstakingly put a gazillion tiny hair rollers all over my head, then doused it with an acrid ammonia-based liquid curling agent. If I managed to survive the chemical fumes, I was guaranteed to have ringlets like Sarah Jessica Parker or Stevie Nicks. However, after sitting under the hair-drying hood, my perm was flat on top and poofed on the ends à la SNL’s Rosanne Rosanna Danna. To make matters much worse, I’d driven my moped to the salon without a helmet. It was the 80s after all. By the time I arrived home, I looked like a blonde bride of Frankenstein.

In the late 90s while stationed in rural England, I went to the village hair salon for “highlights.” The hairdresser placed a thick, perforated rubber cap over my head, then used a crochet hook to pull tufts of my hair through, then proceeded to smear a harsh-smelling bleaching paste over the exposed strands. An hour later, I walked out of the establishment looking like I had a striped poll cat on my head.

Despite all my griping about our modern life, I’m actually very grateful for all the amazing cosmetological advances. The cost of a day at the salon may have quadrupled, but its the one place that money can buy happiness.




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Melatonin use in children: Is a sleep aid supplement safe?

Mayo Clinic

Melatonin is a hormone naturally produced in the brain that's linked to your body's sleep and wake cycle. The natural release of melatonin is stimulated by darkness and suppressed by daylight. It's also available as a supplement that you can take as a pill or chewable gummy.

As a supplement, a small dose can trigger your body to produce melatonin that makes you feel sleepy and helps you fall asleep.

More people are asking their healthcare team about melatonin and report using it, including parents giving it to children. Here's what you need to know about melatonin use in children and how to improve sleep hygiene without a sleep aid.

Research on melatonin

In the U.S., melatonin is available over the counter as a dietary supplement. This differs from other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia, where melatonin is regulated as a prescription medication.

Research has shown that melatonin is generally safe for short-term use in adults and adolescents. Fewer studies have been done to evaluate the effects of its long-term use and safety. It's also unclear whether melatonin supplements are safe for children.

Melatonin use/side effects

While melatonin can help children fall asleep, it doesn't keep them asleep. Difficulty falling or staying asleep can be a sign of an issue in the body, including:

- Iron deficiency can cause rest-

lessness during sleep.

- Enlarged tonsils or adenoids can lead to snoring or obstructive sleep apnea.

- In children who have nightmares, melatonin may make dreams more vivid, which can worsen sleep.

That's why it's crucial to consult with your child's healthcare team to find and treat issues causing sleep disturbances.

Melatonin may be recommended for children with neurological conditions like autism spectrum disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and managed with routine evaluation and follow-up by their healthcare team.

In gummy form, melatonin supplements can be enticing for children, leading to a risk of overconsumption. Taking a large dose of melatonin can cause gastrointestinal issues or irritability. A large dose also can keep your child's body from naturally producing melatonin to make them sleepy.

Evaluate sleep hygiene

Melatonin use is intended as a short-term aid. When sleep issues are a long-term problem for children, evaluating sleep habits and the environment can identify the causes of those issues. Here are some things to consider when striving for good sleep hygiene:

- Screen use. Looking at a back-light screen tells the brain it's time to be awake and engaged.
- Have a routine.
- Create a sleep-friendly space. A dark, quiet room is ideal for sleep.

Lights should be kept low or dim.

Vaping linked to 19% higher risk of heart failure, study finds

The study notes that vaping specifically increases the risk of a form of heart failure known as heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

by Scripps News Staff

People who use vapes have a higher risk of heart failure compared to those who have never used e-cigarettes.

According to a new study published by the American College of Cardiology, researchers analyzed data from a larger study that examined the link between e-cigarette use and new cases of heart failure, and found that among 175,667 participants,

those who had used e-cigarettes were 19% more likely to develop heart failure.

"More and more studies are linking e-cigarettes to harmful effects and finding that it might not be as safe as previously thought," said the study's lead author, Dr. Yakubu Bene-Alhasan. "The difference we saw was substantial. It's worth considering the consequences to your health, especially with

regard to heart health."

When researchers looked at different types of heart failure, the study notes that they found that using e-cigarettes specifically increased the risk of one type of heart failure called HFpEF, or heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, in which the heart muscle gets stiff and doesn't fill with blood properly between contractions. The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

shows that in the U.S., 4.5% of adults over the age of 18 use e-cigarettes. Meanwhile, 25.2% of middle and high school students who used e-cigarettes reported using them daily, with a striking 89.4% reporting the use of flavored e-cigarettes.

The CDC also notes that most of these cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and also harms brain development in younger people.

What to know about the rise of colorectal cancer in younger adults

Rates of colorectal cancer have been rising consistently in younger adults — a trend that concerns surgeons and other medical professionals at the forefront of treating the disease.

"We've been noticing an alarming rise in colorectal cancer in adults under the age of 50. In fact, people born in the 1990s are two times more likely than people born in the 1950s to develop colorectal cancer," said James T. McCormick, DO, FACS, FASCRS, a colorectal surgeon and American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) State Chair of the Pennsylvania chapter. "And that's remarkably striking. We're not quite sure why that's happening or how to screen for it at such a young age. That's the conundrum."

How much is colorectal cancer increasing in younger adults?

Researchers have noted a 15% increase in colon cancer diagnoses in people aged 18-50 since 2004, according to hospital-based data from the National Cancer Database (NCDB). By comparison, there was only a 3% increase in colon cancer diagnoses in adults aged 45-55 during the same period.

The NCDB, a clinical oncology database jointly operated by the CoC and the American Cancer Society, captures approximately 74% of all newly diagnosed can-

cers in the U.S.

Colorectal cancer is also killing more young adults. According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is now the leading cause of cancer deaths in men younger than 50 and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women of the same age group.

Why is colorectal cancer increasing among young people?

The exact causes behind the increase of colorectal cancer in younger people are not fully understood. However, most experts believe that the rise results from multiple factors, including environmental changes, potential exposure to toxins, genetic factors that may increase a person's risk of developing the disease earlier in life, and lifestyle factors such as high consumption of ultra-processed foods. Research is ongoing.

What can people do to prevent colorectal cancer?

Despite the unknown, there are several steps everyone can take to reduce their risk. First and foremost, ACS experts recommend that people of all ages remain vigilant and report any changes in bowel habits, including bleeding and persistent changes such as constipation or diarrhea, to their primary care physician. Be persistent, and don't be afraid to

ask questions.

"I think a lot of prevention starts with awareness," said Paula Denoya, MD. "We've all seen patients who had rectal bleeding that was dismissed as hemorrhoids or IBS symptoms for a while before they were found to have colorectal cancer. Knowing your family history is also critically important."

Starting at age 45, all people should be screened for colorectal cancer annually. Screening may need to start earlier for people with a family history of the disease or for people considered high-risk for the disease due to other health factors.

The gold standard of colorectal cancer screening is with a colonoscopy, which can help physicians detect colorectal cancer at

its earliest stage, when it's more treatable, and even prevent colorectal cancer through the detection and removal of precancerous growths called polyps. Screening with colonoscopy may be one factor of many that has resulted in nearly 16,000 fewer colon cancer diagnoses among older adults per year, according to hospital-based data from the NCDB. Still, approximately 1 in 4 adults of screening age are not up to date with colorectal cancer screening recommendations, according to national data estimates.

Finally, exercising regularly to maintain a healthy body weight and eating a balanced diet high in lean meat, fiber, whole grains, vegetables, and fruits may also help reduce risk.



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- FOOD, DIAPER, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**
Distributed 50k+ lbs of food to 14 BC military families in 2023, supported 3.8k+ individuals with commissary cards, and gifts during the holidays.
- SINGLE MARINE SUPPORT**
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Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a Sailor or Marine with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" ships and troops from deployment, volunteers are vital to the success of the USO's mission.

While the duties of a volunteer may vary, the goal is always the same — to improve the quality of life of service members, boost their morale, and serve as the link between service members and the American people.

Ready to apply to be a USO San Diego volunteer?
Visit www.volunteers.uso.org.

- Navigate to the webpage and click on "Volunteer at a USO Center"
- Next click "Continental United States."
- Then select "California"
- Finally, select the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

Positions may be available around San Diego county at:

Neil Ash Airport Center
Camp Pendleton USO Center
San Diego MEPS Center
Special Events Outreach **WE WANT YOU!**





WELCOME HOME

With respect, honor and gratitude — Thank you for your service.

Guaranteed Rate is your trusted VA loan expert.

Military Veterans and those actively serving have earned a number of significant VA home loan benefits.

Guaranteed Rate understands the value of those benefits, and we're here to help you maximize them and make the smartest decisions for you and your family.

To show our support for those who serve, we also offer a number of additional benefits, including waiving the lender fee and increased credit flexibility.

Contact me today to explore your options!



Mohamed Tawy

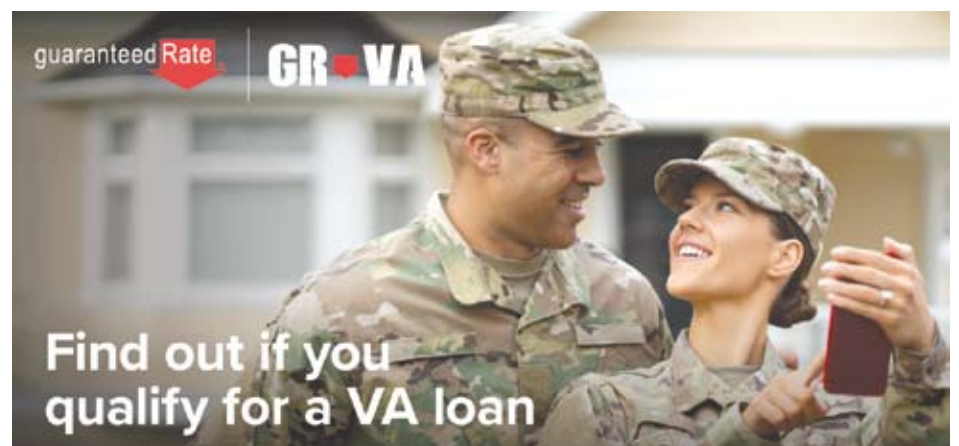
Producing Branch Manager/SVP of Mortgage Lending

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C: (619) 599-5643

rate.com/mohamedtawy mohamed.tawy@rate.com

12680 High Bluff Drive Ste. 250, San Diego, CA 92130



Find the right VA loan for you

Apply on line and receive expert advice with 100% transparency, including rates and payments.

Proud partner of the USO

We are one of a small group of lenders that partner with the USO and their USO Pathfinder® program.

Great savings & choice

We waive the lender fee (\$1,440) and have loan options for NO MINIMUM FICO credit score.

FREE appraisal on home purchase or refinance

In honor of your service and to show our gratitude, we are offering a FREE Appraisal on a home purchase or refinance through May 31, 2024.

A dedicated team of VA loan experts

Our VA specialist team includes 55 Vets and has processed more than \$12 billion in VA loans.



Receipt of application does not represent an approval for financing or interest rate guarantee. Restrictions may apply, contact Guaranteed Rate or Mohamed Tawy for current rates and more information. CA: Licensed by the Department of Financial Protection and Innovation under the California Residential Mortgage Lending Act. Mohamed Tawy NMLS ID: 450660, AZ - 1018822, CA - CA DFPI450660, CO - 100522433, CT - LO-450660, DC - MLD450660, FL - LO81708, GA - 450660, HI - HI450660, ID - MLO-2080450660, IL - 031.0065248, KS - LO.0049014, KY - MC738712, LA - Licensed, MA - MLO450660, MD - Licensed, MN - MN-MLO-450660, MO - MO-450660, MT - 450660, NC - I194568, NH - Licensed, NJ - Licensed, NV - 69645, NY - Licensed, OR - Licensed, TN - 227350, TX - Licensed, VA - MLO-62142VA, WA - MLO-450660 Guaranteed Rate Inc.; NMLS #2611; For licensing information visit nmisconsumeraccess.org