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SIXTY-THIRD YEAR NO. 48
MAY 8, 2024



WALL REFLECTION A Vietnam War veteran places his hand on "The Moving Wall" at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington during Honor Flight San Diego's "Tour of Honor," April 27, 2024. A small group of former Navy SEALs and members of Naval Special Warfare's active force volunteered to escort 90 Vietnam War veterans on a three-day trip to Washington, honoring their service and visiting the memorials built for their sacrifice. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Ramon Go

DOD's FY 2025 budget focuses on defense, people, teamwork

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Last month the Defense Department released its fiscal year 2025 budget request, about \$849.8 billion in all, and now Congress has invited DOD leaders of all stripes to Capitol Hill to discuss what's in the budget and what the department's thoughts were when creating that budget.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, as the top Defense Department leader, told lawmakers late last month at the House Armed Services Committee that the DOD budget request centers, broadly, on defending the nation, taking care of service members and their families, and strengthening relationships with like-minded U.S. partners and allies.

"Our budget request for fiscal year 2025 will advance all three of these priorities," Austin said during his testimony.

Defending the nation is of course the No. 1 priority for the Defense Department. And the DOD budget for FY 2025 — which runs Oct. 1, 2024 through Sept 30, 2025 — has a lot to make sure the DOD can carry out that No. 1 mission.

"The president's request will invest in cutting-edge capabilities across all domains," Austin said. "That includes \$48.1 billion for naval and shipbuilding capabilities, \$61.2 billion to reinforce U.S. air dominance, and \$13 billion to bolster Army and Marine Corps combat capabilities."

The department's efforts in space, the secretary said, get about \$33.7 billion, while cybersecurity tools get about \$14.5 billion.

Also, a top priority is the modernization of America's nuclear triad, which involves ground-based missiles — commonly referred to as intercontinental ballistic missiles — submarine-launched ballistic missiles and air-launched cruise missiles, dropped from bomber aircraft.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3761026/>

OPERATION MWR OFFERS FREE EVENTS

by Destiny Sibert
 CNIC Public Affairs

WASHINGTON - As part of its overall effort to improve quality of service, the Navy is launching the Operation MWR entertainment series which will host 65 free events at Navy

installations around the world from May-June 2024 for service members and their families.

"Work-life balance and community fellowship are essential to the well-being and readiness of our Sailors and their fami-

lies," said Leslie Gould, director of Fleet and Family Readiness at Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC). "We hope these events not only provide a fun, recreational outlet, but also an opportunity to bring friends and families together to strengthen personal ties throughout our Navy community."

Entertainment will vary by location and may feature concerts, comedic performances, interactive murder mystery dinners and more! Examples of headlining musical performers include acts such as Andy Grammer, Dierks Bentley, Eli Young Band, Goo Goo Dolls, Ludacris, The All-American Rejects, Switchfoot and others.

Operation MWR events are open to all MWR eligible pa-

trons, are free of charge, and in most cases do not require advanced registration. However, space may be limited at some venues and entry will be first-come first-served.

Service members and their families can find information about events at an installation near them by visiting navymwr.org/operationmwr or contacting their local Navy MWR office.

"Service members can also access other leisure and community offerings through their Navy MWR office," said Gould. "All year long, MWR offers services such as trips, tours, leisure skills classes, sporting events, discounted attraction tickets and more, providing opportunities to recharge and connect through recreation."



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PAPARO TAKES HELM OF INDOPACOM AS AQUILINO RETIRES FROM 40-YEAR NAVY CAREER

by Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii — Flanked by the nation's top defense officials, Adm. Samuel Paparo took the reins of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command during a ceremony May 3 here.

Paparo relieved Adm. John Aquilino, who is retiring after 40 years in the Navy.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and Gen. Charles Brown Jr., chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, took turns at the dais praising Aquilino's tenure and welcoming Paparo, who most recently commanded U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"You know, we ask a lot of INDOPACOM these days, but every day over the past three

years, this command has stepped up under the extraordinary leadership of Adm. Aquilino," Austin told the audience at the joint base.

Aquilino had "helped transform our posture, strengthened our readiness and deepened our alliances and partnerships — and all of that bolstered our deterrence," he said.

Austin lauded Aquilino's oversight in moving toward greater cooperation with allies and partners in the region, his

prioritization of an integrated missile-defense system for Guam and helping to distribute



Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander of Indo-Pacific Command, delivers a speech during the change of command ceremony on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, May 3. U.S. Navy photo by John Bellino

130 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine in the region.

He also credited the admiral for his role in stationing the 12th Marine Littoral Regiment on Okinawa, Japan, and expanding U.S. access to four new sites in the Philippines under the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement.

Austin arrived in Hawaii on May 1 for meetings with his counterparts from Australia, Japan and the Philippines.

Paparo now heads a combatant command that covers a vast area that includes 36 nations and just over half the world's population.

Among INDOPACOM's sub-

ordinate commands are U.S. Pacific Fleet, Marine Corps Forces Pacific, U.S. Army Pacific, Pacific Air Forces and Special Operations Command Pacific.

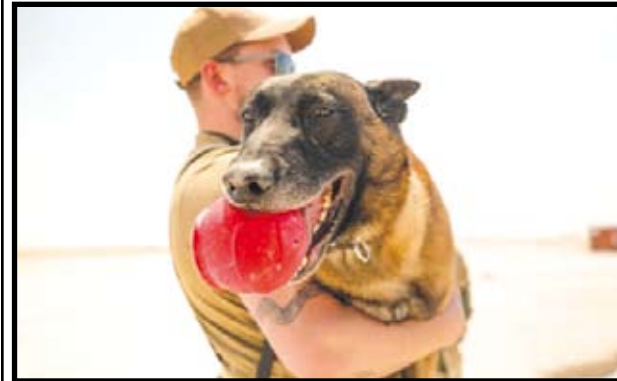
Paparo, a naval aviator, formerly commanded U.S. 5th Fleet and Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain. Among his operational command tours at sea were Strike Fighter Squadron 195 at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan; command of Carrier Air Wing 7, which was embarked in the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* Strike Group; and command of Carrier Strike Group 10.

"Our world faces a complex problem set in the troubling actions of [China] and its rapid buildup of forces," Paparo told the audience. "We must be ready to answer [China's] increasingly intrusive and expansionist claims in the Indo-Pacific region."

"INDOPACOM, together with our partners, is positioned to deny and defend against attempts to break the peace accorded by the international rules-based order," he continued. "The United States and our allies and our partners will uphold a stable and open international system that has been a pillar of global security and well-being for nearly a century."

https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2024-05-03/indopacom-paparo-aquilino-hawaii-13747090.html

PHOTO GALLERY



PUP PICKUP An airman and a military working dog participate in a training exercise in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, April 29, 2024. The training focused on honing military working dog explosive ordnance detection capabilities in an unfamiliar environment. U.S. Air Force photo



LIKE FATHER Air Force Capt. Jeffrey Kinsey, 910th Logistics Readiness Squadron commander, locks eyes with his youngest daughter during his assumption of command ceremony at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, April 6, 2024. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christina Russo

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Commandant underscores priorities, praises Marines during state of the Corps speech

by Matthew Olay
DOD News



THE MOST IMPORTANT 'M' IN 'MODERN DAY MARINE' IS THE LAST ONE. ... IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU. ... IT'S ALL ABOUT MARINES."
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS GEN. ERIC M. SMITH

The Marine Corps' most senior officer stated his key priorities and praised his fighting force during a state of the Marine Corps speech closing out a three-day defense industry exposition May 2 in Washington.

During his speech, Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Eric M. Smith spoke about maintaining a balance between being ready to respond to crises in the present while at the same time investing in future capabilities; being able to partner with the Navy in meeting the amphibious ship building requirements necessary to keep the Marine Corps mobile across the globe; and recruiting, training and retaining new Marines — a topic Smith spoke about passionately and at length.

"I'm constantly humbled by the quality and dedication of the young Americans who continue to measure themselves against our high standards [and] who compete for the title of Marine: Earned, never given," Smith said.

"It's not a guarantee that they're going to measure up, but those who make the cut earn something few can: the privilege of becom-

ing a Marine, and the privilege of wearing our cloth."

While speaking about the Corps' personnel, Smith praised the newest generation of Marines, saying that not only are they as tough and dedicated as the Marines who came before them, but that they're intelligent, as well.

"They're all smarter than me, I guarantee you," Smith joked to the crowd. "As I walk around this floor and I talk to young Marines, I need a translator; because they are moving at light speed, and I'm moving at 55 miles per hour. They are, in fact, a cut above."

Smith also spoke about the necessity to invest in the well-being of the fighting force.

"After 37 years in the Marine Corps, I've learned that heroic acts come in many forms, and sometimes the simple act of caring about your Marines is heroic," said Smith, adding that "quality of life" doesn't mean giving Marines everything they ask for, "but it does mean giving them everything that they need."

To that end, Smith spoke at length about the need for infrastructure modernization in the Marine Corps. Specifically, he referenced the Corps' Barracks 2030 initiative, a project to improve quality of life for Marines by making meaningful near-term and long-term investments.

"It's our most consequential investment in barracks to date, and it's sorely needed," Smith

said. "The heart of the initiative is improving the barracks that need it, tearing down old ones that are beyond repair, finding efficiencies within individual ... units, and building new ones where we need them."

On the topic of striking a balance between being ready to respond and investing in the future, Smith said doing so would be "difficult."

"Over the next three years, we must effectively synchronize personnel, readiness and investments to achieve that balance," said Smith, "and it might be the biggest challenge I face [in] my time as the commandant."

To meet such a challenge,

Smith said partnering with the Navy in the pursuit of innovation to ensure Marine Corps mobility is key.

"The secretary of the Navy and the [chief of naval operations] have advocated for amphibious ships, and I expect everyone here to show how relevant they are today and into the future through experimentation and innovation," said Smith. "Integration with the Navy — doctrinally, operationally [and] tactically — is mandatory for how we fight."

"There's a technical element to this; there's a planning strategy element to this; but — most importantly — there's a human element ... and I need it to happen at your level, Marines."



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Army

- Army announces Europe deployment for infantry brigade combat team
- Army lieutenant colonel charged with smuggling firearm parts
- Army quickly expanding holistic health and fitness teams following promising early results

Navy

- USS Stout helps injured cargo ship crew member
- Pilots head to Iwo Jima to train for USS Ronald Reagan's final patrol from Japan
- Boxer deployment delay highlights aging fleet, lack of repair capacity
- Retired Navy diver testifies on family's travails with tainted Hawaii water

Marine Corps

- Marine general issues 'call to action' against China hackers lurking in U.S. computer systems

Air Force

- Gaza protests block gate at New Mexico's Kirtland Air Force Base
- U.S. needs better coordination, cheaper ways to counter drones: Pentagon officials
- Fire at U.S. Forces Japan headquarters disperses workforce on air base in Tokyo
- Air Guardsmen, Reservists gear up for wildfire fighting season
- Allvin unveils new details of Integrated Capabilities Command, to stand up this year

Space Force

- Danti search engine answers Space Force location questions with images
- Monitoring the heavens: Space Force has 1,000 'priority targets,' 600 sensors
- Chinese satellites are breaking the U.S. 'monopoly' on long-range targeting

Coast Guard

- Coast Guard commandant says service is maneuvering a tight budget as its worldwide mission expands
- California boat captain is sentenced to 4 years in fire that killed 34

National Guard

- Biden says "order must prevail" on college campuses, but National Guard should not intervene in protests

Air Force researchers design, build, fly autonomous aircraft in 24 hours

by Samuel King, Jr.

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - In an open area of the Eglin Air Force Base range known as B-70, a group of Air Force field grade officers and black-shirted innovators huddled together above an eight-pound model aircraft as they raced against their deadline to build it.

The group of officers and innovators, known as Black Phoenix, created a goal for themselves to design, create, build, and fly an unmanned aerial system within 24 hours. Around the 22.5-hour mark, the team secured the tail pieces and lastly, the propellers. The final step on a journey, that started more than six months prior, was to put the UAS in the air.

The officers began the project as part of their Blue Horizons fellowship. Blue Horizons is an Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology mission that is part think-tank, part incubator that promotes unconventional thinking and processes to Air Force problems with strategic impact.

The Black Phoenix crew is one of five teams wrapping up those projects after year-long fellowships.

Their three-person team took on the task of evaluating how to rapidly adapt small UASs, their technology and payloads based on the need and environment.



Col. Dustin Thomas, Blue Horizons fellow, launches a 3D-printed unmanned aerial system during a Blue Horizons demonstration April 25 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. U.S. Air Force photo by Samuel King, Jr.

"Small UASs are becoming a new warfighting capability," said Col. Dustin Thomas, a Blue Horizons fellow and Black Phoenix team member. "However, the Air Force can't rapidly change these aircraft based on the threat environment or quickly use new technologies to meet the needs of a specific mission. Our project aims to find ways to change that."

the theoretical to practical, the team turned to Titan Dynamics, a small aerospace company focused on rapid and cost-effective UAS designs and development.

"We went in search of a young, smart, new start-up company, who was willing to take on a big risk," said Lt. Col. Jordan Atkins, Black Phoenix member. "We couldn't be more impressed with their ability to yield a miracle like this in only two months."

To take their project from

The team used Titan's software automated design software to create an aerodynamic UAS body based on weight, power, dimensions, and payload in less than 10 minutes. That design code gets fed into 3D printers to create the lightweight UAS body parts. Once all the pieces are printed, the team builds the newly created UAS designed specifically for its mission parameters.

Black Phoenix took this meth-

od and first tested it in Southwest Asia in March with Task Force-99 with some success. Then, they brought that test data and lessons learned to Eglin for their final in-the-field tests. They sought out the Air Force Chief Data and AI office's Autonomy Data and AI Experimentation proving ground, which aims to accelerate development and experimentation in programs like the Black Phoenix project.

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Top Reserve component officials express support for pay, benefit alignment

by **Matthew Olay**
DOD News

Senior leaders from five of the uniformed services' reserve component branches spoke out in favor of aligning pay and benefits within their organizations during a House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense budget hearing April 30.

As part of the 2016 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress directed the Defense Department to establish duty status reform legislation that would seek to better align reserve component members' pay and benefits in order to improve warfighting readiness, according to DOD's website on military compensation.

When queried about duty status reform, Chief of the National Guard Bureau Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson explained that the proposed legislation streamlines 27 separate military duty statuses down to nine. This would ensure that all service members — whether active duty, Guard or reservist — who are working side by side at the same time and location, and who are on the same duty status, would be afforded the same pay and benefits, Hokanson said.

"It would streamline the process significantly," he added, "[and] also ensure that we no longer have disparity ... between our service members."

Other senior leaders on the panel spoke favorably of duty

status reform and the need to implement it. "The Air Force Reserve is absolutely supportive," Lt. Gen. John P. Healy, chief of Air Force Reserve, said of duty status reform. "It's all about aligning and getting rid of the deficiencies that we currently have for the multitude of statuses."



A graphic shows duty status reform from the Defense Department's military compensation webpage. Courtesy illustration

status reform and the need to implement it. "The Army Reserve is greatly supportive of duty status reform and whatever we can do to help make that a success," said Lt. Gen. Jody J. Daniels, chief of Army Reserve. "It would help us with our efficiencies of processing pay actions, as well."

Regarding those actions, duty status reform would miti-

gate disruptions in pay caused by reserve component members who often have to endure multiple changes in pay status while on active-duty orders by creating four broad pay categories, according to DOD.

Healy added that he believes the passage and implementation of duty status reform

would help with retention.

"It makes it easier for airmen to serve," he said, adding that would be especially true if the airmen can easily comprehend what pay and entitlements are due to them.

Though Congress originally directed the DOD to address the numerous pay and benefit disruptions and disparities that reserve component members were vulnerable to in 2016, there is still no clear date on when duty status reform will finally be passed into law.

"I can tell you the Navy is strongly supportive [of duty status reform] and disappointed that it's taken this long," Vice Adm. John Mustin, chief of Navy Reserve,

told the subcommittee. "We've talked about it for several years — since before 2019 in my case — and we all enthusiastically support the concept."

When asked about the current status of the proposed duty status review legislation, Hokanson

said that it is currently with the Office of Management and Budget.

"It has cleared [DOD] and almost everyone that I know of is supportive of that," he said. "I think the issue is getting it through OMB to come forward."



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NEWS IN PHOTOS



CAMP PENDLETON (May 1, 2024) Marine Corps Master Sgt. Jessica Jimenez-Buccat promotes to master gunnery sergeant here. Jimenez-Buccat was the first female ever to be promoted to master gunnery sergeant in the 5821 Criminal Investigation Division Military Occupational Specialty. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Mary Jenni

SAN DIEGO (May 1, 2024)

The crew of destroyer USS Sterett was presented the Battle Effectiveness

Award during a ceremony on the ship's flight deck. The Battle 'E' is a accolade requiring a ship to demonstrate excellence on a day-to-day basis in addition to superior achievement during certifications and qualifications conducted throughout a calendar year. Photo courtesy of U.S. Navy



USNS Robert E. Simanek christened at NASSCO San Diego

by Sarah Cannon
Military Sealift Command Pacific

Expeditionary sea base USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB-7), Military Sealift Command's newest ship, was christened during a ceremony at the General Dynamics NASSCO shipyard in San Diego May 4.

Guests in attendance included Rep. Scott Peters, Calif. 50th District; Vice Adm. Yvette Davids, superintendent, Naval Academy; Brig. Gen. Robert Weiler, assistant division commander, First Marine Division; and Capt. Micah Murphy, commander, Military Sealift Command.

The 785-foot ship honors Private 1st Class Robert E. Simanek, a U.S. Marine who was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Korean War at Outpost Irene, Korea. During the battle, Simanek threw himself on a grenade, absorbing the explosion with his body and shielding his fellow Marines from serious injury or death. While he sustained severe injuries to his legs, Simanek survived, and spent a year recovering.

"Today we gather in a time-honored tradition to christen this

vessel, which will represent the unmatched strength and fortitude of the United States Navy and the United States Marine Corps," said Peters.

"We honor the industrious sense of the local workers who

his conspicuous gallantry during the Korean War."

The official christening moment happened when the ship's sponsor, Simanek's daughter, Ann Simanek Clark, broke a bottle of champagne over the

said Weiler. "Just as Private First Class Simanek stood as a protector amongst his fellow Marines and Sailors, this ship will daringly sail the oceans as a protector of American freedom."

Simanek is the seventh ship in the expeditionary mobile base platform build for MSC, and the third expeditionary staging base model.

When activated, Simanek will primarily support aviation mine countermeasure and special operations force missions. In addition to the flight deck, the ship has a hangar with two aviation operating spots capable of handling MH-53E Sea Dragon-equivalent helicopters; accommodations, work spaces, and ordnance storage for embarked force; enhanced command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence to support embarked force mission planning and execution; and reconfigurable mission deck area to store embarked force equipment to include mine sleds and rigid hull inflatable boats.

"The USNS Robert E. Simanek will be ready to serve as a power for peace; a critical asset during crisis, or deliverer of decisive action during time of war, if called to do so," said Davids.



The official party at the christening ceremony for USNS Robert E. Simanek (ESB 7) render honors as the Marine Corps Recruit Depot Color Guard presents the colors. Photo by Sarah Cannon

constructed this ship, and the ingenuity of companies like General Dynamics NASSCO who designed and built this vessel, to help us meet the complex challenges of this world during uncertain and dangerous times. And of course, we honor the legacy of the U.S. Marine, Robert Earnest Simanek, who received the Medal of Honor for

ship's bow with the words, "For the United States of America, I christen you, USNS Robert E. Simanek. May God bless this ship and all who sail on her."

"This ship will serve as a floating testimony to Private First Class Simanek's valor and esprit de corps that all Marines and Sailors carry with them,"

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Daphne Pattison Silverman's mission is to light the path to truth.

Focused on defending military members who are accused of crimes within the military judicial system, she has developed exceptional insight into how to uncover and convey the truth.

Silverman believes deeply in every case she undertakes. A former Navy JAG and a disabled veteran, she is fully committed to defending the rights of those who serve our country. For each case, Silverman conducts thorough investigations and armed with the truth, fearlessly presents her findings to military commands and juries. She stands up to the most powerful forces in the world - ready and able to seize justice for her clients.

Physical office in North County San Diego, California; virtual address in Austin, Texas

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"Congratulations to my fellow dragon swimmers at NAS North Island Aquatics!"



Your Local USO Wants You!

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.

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- Navigate to the webpage and click on "Volunteer at a USO Center"
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Special Events



USS Abraham Lincoln completes Board of Inspection and Survey

by Petty Officer 3rd Class
Aleksandr Freutel
USS Abraham Lincoln

Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) completed its Board of Inspection and Survey (INSURV) assessment May 1.

During INSURV, over 150 inspectors embarked Abraham Lincoln to observe and assess hundreds of spaces, events and demonstrations in port and at sea. INSURV inspectors examined the readiness of multiple warfare areas on the ship, to include engineering, combat systems and navigation, as well as the habitability and quality of living spaces.

“Congratulations to the *Lincoln* crew for their outstanding performance on this rigorous inspection,” said Capt. Pete Riebe,



Board of Inspection and Survey member observes an MK 38 machine gun system live-fire exercise on aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln is currently underway conducting routine operations for the 3rd Fleet. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Nathaly Cruz

Abraham Lincoln's commanding officer. “Your efforts in ensuring our combat readiness matters, and it does not go unnoticed. You have proven to the Navy and nation that our ship stands ready to go in harm’s way and our systems are ready to conduct the full spectrum of operations.”

Abraham Lincoln's successful performance is the result

Flag officer assignment May 3, 2024

The secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced May 3 that Capt. **Todd F. Camicata**, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as commander, Logistics Group, Western Pacific; and commander, Task Force Seven Three, Singapore. Camicata is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

of the crew’s dedicated efforts and preparation. Leading up to INSURV, the crew completed preceding inspections from Material Condition Assessment Team (MCAT) to ensure the ship and crew were prepared.

INSURV is a Congressionally-mandated inspection of all U.S. Navy ships to report ship readiness and ensure all spaces, equipment and warfare areas meet Navy standards required to support and sustain combat operations.

“We are gathered here today as a team to do the vital preparations for the biggest inspection this ship will face in a three-year

period, second only to actual combat, and that’s our combat readiness inspection,” said Lt. Cmdr. Aaron Mitchem, ship’s security officer and the INSURV coordinator of *Abraham Lincoln*. “Combat readiness is our mission, so this inspection is incredibly important. I am excited to show the inspectors that are coming onboard how ready we are to answer the Nation’s call, anytime, anywhere.”

Immediately following INSURV, the crew will continue to prepare for ongoing excellence in maintaining combat and mission readiness for the future.

USS Gabrielle Giffords (LCS 10) Blue crew conducts change of command

SAN DIEGO - Cmdr. Phillip Herndl was relieved by Cmdr. Matthew Harris as commanding officer of Independence-variant littoral combat ship *USS Gabrielle Giffords* Blue crew during a change of command and retirement ceremony on board the USS Midway Museum, April 30. Capt. Douglas Meagher, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1 (LCSRON 1), was the presiding officer and guest speaker at the ceremony. During Herndl’s time in command, *Gabrielle Giffords* Blue completed ship the phases of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan, and deployed to the 7th Fleet Area of Operations. The C7F deployment included escort of unmanned surface vessels, cooperative deployments with the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force, Philippine Navy, and Royal Australian Navy.

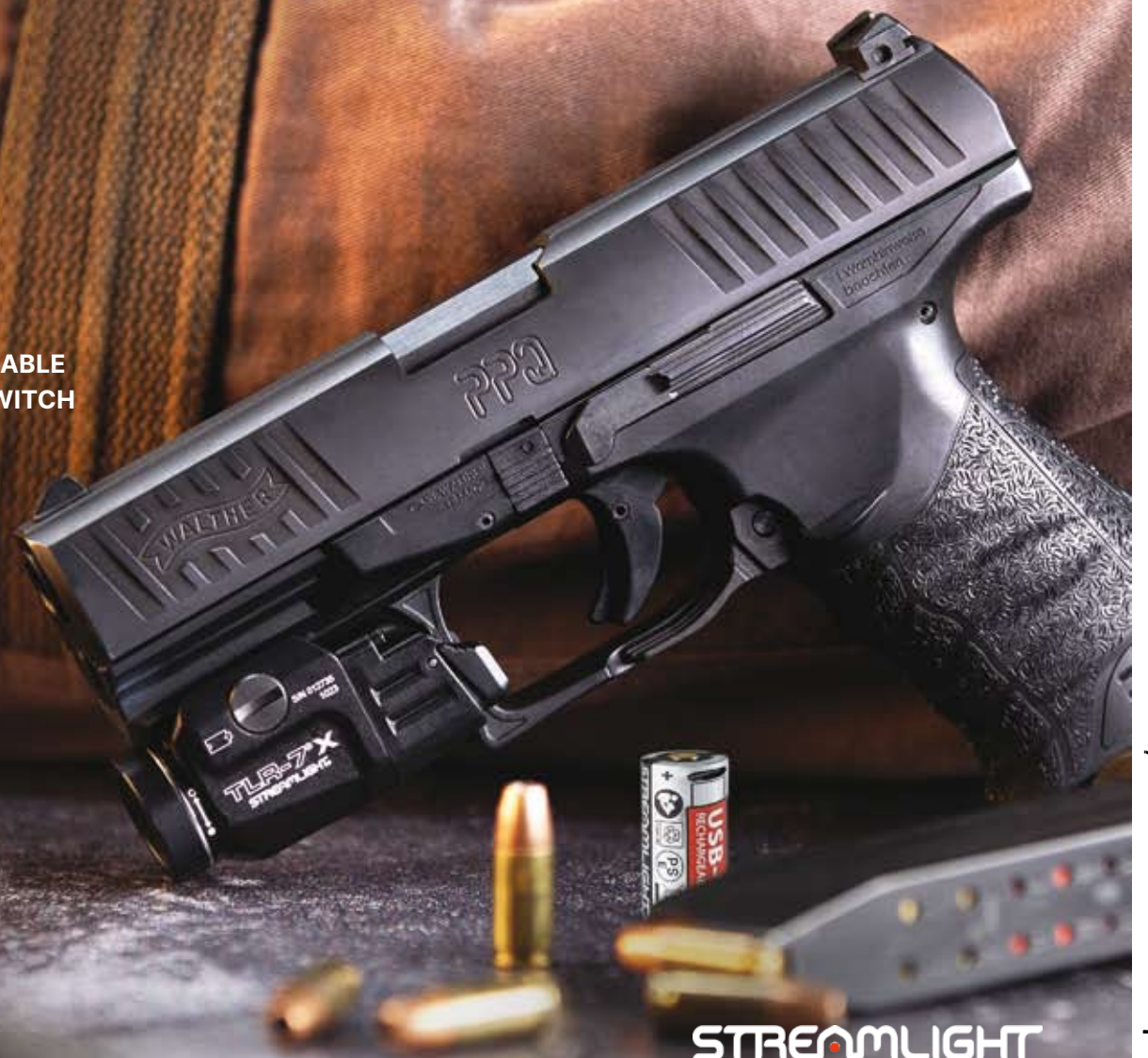


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U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Anna Higman

DAD! DAD! Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Christian Latham, platoon sergeant with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, left, embraces his family upon returning from a unit deployment program at Victory Field, Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, April 17, 2024. UDP's enhance the U.S. forward presence and provides a consistent and rapid response capability.

Veterans News

VA to expand health care coverage to veteran family members and caregivers through CHAMPVA

The VA will soon expand coverage for medical services, including mental health care, for family members and primary family caregivers participating in the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA).

Starting at the end of May, these beneficiaries will have new coverage for audio-only telehealth, extended mental health care and contraceptive services.

“Our mission is to provide world-class care to our nation’s heroes, which includes care provided through CHAMPVA to eligible family members and caregivers of veterans,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Shereef Elnahal. “The extension of these additional services is part of VA’s continuing efforts to ensure CHAMPVA beneficiaries can access high value care where they need it, when they need it.”

Here’s what this means for CHAMPVA beneficiaries:

- Access to audio-only telehealth. With audio-only telehealth coverage, beneficiaries will have expanded access to care, which is particularly important for rural beneficiaries.



Courtesy photo

The coverage will also be retroactive; providers and beneficiaries who received audio-only telehealth services on or after May 12, 2020, will have until Nov. 26, 2024, to file claims for reimbursement of covered care.

- Elimination of caps on visits for mental health and substance use visits. CHAMPVA beneficiaries will no longer be limited in the number of visits for mental health and substance abuse services. Additionally, beneficiaries and providers will no longer need pre-authorizations for outpatient mental health visits in excess of 23 visits per calendar year and/or for more than two sessions per week.

- Eliminating deductibles and

cost sharing for certain necessary contraceptive services. VA is also eliminating deductibles and cost sharing for contraceptive services or contraceptive products approved, cleared or granted by the FDA.

Currently, there are more than 737,500 CHAMPVA beneficiaries. CHAMPVA is a health care program for certain spouses, surviving spouses, children and primary family caregivers of eligible vets. Through CHAMPVA, VA shares the cost of medically necessary health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries, to name a few.

To learn more and apply for CHAMPVA care, visit the CHAMPVA website, <https://www.va.gov/health-care/family-caregiver-benefits/champva/>.

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

Every weekday, for six months, I reported to a windowless room in downtown Washington, D.C. It contained a conference table and chairs, file boxes, harsh fluorescent lighting, and a dozen temporary law clerks just like me. For eight hours each day, we sat at that table reviewing thousands of documents in the file boxes that were stacked high around us.

We were paid only \$9 per hour.

It was 1993, and my Navy husband and I were newlyweds. I'd resigned from my job as a litigation attorney in a Pittsburgh law firm, to become a Navy wife. In Pittsburgh, I had a cushy office, a secretary, my Pennsylvania law license on the wall, a decent salary, and a clear path to success.

In D.C., I was unlicensed, unemployed, and desperate for a job to pay my humongous student loan debts. After a month of searching, an agency called "Law Clerk Temporaries" finally placed me at MCI's Legal Office with the other temporary law clerks. We were hired to review documents in preparation for a class action fraud case involving 1-900 "pay-per-call" numbers.

During the first few days, we all kept quiet while completing our task, but eventually we began to speak. By the end of the week, I'd formed mental bios of the key players in the room.

There was Tory, an older clerk with a

Military spouses make do out of 'doo doo'

superiority complex that had permission to leave early on Tuesdays to teach a first-year legal writing class at George Mason University Law School.

Corrine, a Columbia Law School graduate, who actually was superior, but remained sweet and pleasant. She'd eventually get snapped up by a good law firm, but I respected her for slogging away for \$9 an hour rather than resting on her laurels.

Clayton, a geeky Catholic University Law School graduate with a dry sense of humor and red hair.

Wendy, an accounting major with a huge engagement ring and perfectly painted nails. She spoke often about her upcoming wedding to Joshua and her demanding future in-laws.

And finally, Marcus, a finance major with a flair for pocket squares, pin-stripes, and wing-tipped shoes. Marcus chattered all day, using big words in the wrong context and leaning dangerously back in his office chair.

I'd go home each night and tell my new husband Francis who said what in the windowless room each day. Francis was entertained, and I was grateful to at least have good stories to supplement my lousy pay.

Eventually, my initial amusement about my coworkers slowly turned to irritation, which was only natural considering the tedious monotony of our work and our tight proximity to each other. In fact, everyone became annoyed.

"I don't care!" Tory yelled at Clayton one day, before storming out of the

room, bellowing, "I'm going to my REAL job, losers!" Clayton grinned, pleased to have pressed Tory to her breaking point.

Corrine was never rattled, but Wendy was in tears one afternoon. "These people are driving me nuts, too," I whispered to console her.

"Huh?" she responded. Apparently she was upset that the custom wedding yarmulkas her in-laws ordered didn't match her color scheme.

My last straw came one day when Marcus was yapping away and lounging precariously in his chair with his wing-tips dangling above the floor. "Marcus, you're full of it!" I finally snapped. Clayton smiled, fully enjoying the drama.

"You're so hoydie paloydie!" Marcus retorted.

"Wait, did you just call me 'hoydie paloydie'?" I've heard of hoy polloi and hoyty toity, but 'hoydie paloydie'? Now that's rich!" I barked, wishing Marcus' chair would finally tip over. On the Metro ride home, I wondered, "Is this job some kind of secret social experiment? Are scientists waiting for us to crack? Is the windowless room nothing more than a human petri dish?"

Eventually, we PCSed to another state in which I didn't have a license to practice law, but I found a better law clerk job, and forgot about my fellow guinea pigs in the windowless room. Strangely enough, I don't regret taking that first job after marriage. The experience taught me my first military spouse lesson: In the face of less-than-ideal circumstances, there's respect in just making do.

Why do we pay more for auto insurance?

Why do you think we pay so much these days for auto insurance? If you think it is because the auto insurance companies just keep charging us more and more to increase their profits, think again. Their costs to repair damage have been skyrocketing. I submit to you for consideration two of my recent personal experiences.

In Southern California, it is pretty much a fact of life that we drive many miles on our freeways. Our freeways are littered with everything from stuff that fell out of vehicles to tire treads. I once hit a sheet of plywood broadside, after it was kicked up by the vehicle ahead of me in the carpool lane. Another time I was driving on a freeway at night passing a semi-trailer truck when one of its tires exploded and impacted my vehicle.

In the past six months, through absolutely no fault of my own, my late model vehicle has suffered expensive and time-consuming-to-repair damage. Both times the damage initially appeared to be very light, but the cost to repair it was sky high. The cause, in both cases, was the deplorable condition of our roads and freeways.

Locally, numerous drivers have suffered expensive repairs due to torn-up roads and potholes. The cities simply cannot keep up, no matter how hard they try.

For both of my recent accidents, I was driving at a reasonable speed on SoCal freeways. The first incident happened as I was heading south in San Diego. A box truck was several car lengths ahead of me.

Suddenly, the truck ran over and kicked up into the lower front of my vehicle a pretty large, black object. It

was probably a chunk of tire tread.

It hit the lower front bumper cover of my vehicle hard. When I could do so safely, I exited the freeway and looked to see if there was any damage. The damage looked light. My vehicle has a two-piece bumper cover — a lower piece and an upper piece. Since my vehicle was made in Japan and shipped to the U.S. by ship, it had two small caps that concealed tow hooks, so that my vehicle could have been secured to the

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

ship for its voyage to North America. A lower tow hooks cover was slightly pushed in. That seemingly minor damage led to a weeks-long repair.

The cover and the hooks cap were damaged, so they needed to be replaced. Also, since today's vehicles have all kinds of sensors behind the bumper covers, they all need to be recalibrated when the covers are replaced.

The repair cost my insurance company over \$3,000 and, since I do not have rental car coverage, I was without a comparable vehicle for several days.

More recently, I was driving that same vehicle on the freeway at Long Beach. I had almost reached my exit when, without any warning whatsoever, the SUV that I had been follow-

ing kicked up another black object. This time it impacted my windshield very hard, directly in front of my face. I honestly thought that it was going to penetrate the windshield, but thankfully it did not. There was a large, wide mark on the windshield that washed off when I used the windshield wipers.

When I reached my destination, once again I inspected my vehicle for damage. I observed that the windshield directly in front of my face had multiple, tiny scratches. Furthermore, the body-colored panel directly about the windshield was also scratched.

I have since gotten an estimate from my dealer's bodyshop. Their initial estimate, subject to approval by my insurance company, is over \$11,500, due to the parts that have to be removed, replaced and recalibrated.

In case you are wondering, both of these more recent claims are charged to my Comprehensive insurance, not my Collision insurance, so neither counts as a valid reason to deny me car insurance come renewal time (which two claims against Collision insurance within a three-year period, would trigger). Oh, and when it eventually goes in to be fixed, I still do not have rental car insurance.

The next time you get a bill for the renewal of your auto insurance, keep this in mind.

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 #837r1



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ARMED SERVICES YMCA CAMP PENDLETON

STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILY SM



WHO WE ARE

The mission of the Armed Services YMCA Camp Pendleton is to enhance the lives of military members and their families in spirit, mind, and body through programs relevant to unique challenges of military life. For the past 81 years, our goal has been to strengthen military families who work or reside on Camp Pendleton.

OUR IMPACT

<p>QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE</p> <p>Helped combat high rates of military spouse unemployment by providing military families with 50k+ hours of childcare in 2023.</p>	<p>ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS</p> <p>Ensured 4k+ military children received academic and social-emotional support to overcome the unique challenges of their parent's military service.</p>
<p>FOOD, DIAPER, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</p> <p>Distributed 90k+ lbs of food to 14 8K military families in 2023; supported 3.4k+ individuals with commissary cards and gifts during the Holidays.</p>	<p>SINGLE MARINE SUPPORT</p> <p>Supported 13 2k School of Infantry Marines with recreation and respite on the weekends.</p>

OUR CORE PROGRAMS

<p>FISHER CHILDREN'S CENTER</p> <p>Offers accessible, accredited, quality and affordable childcare for young children to help prepare them for future success.</p>	<p>OPERATION LITTLE LEARNERS</p> <p>An interactive parent and child education program that offers parents and their preschoolers an opportunity to learn and grow.</p>	<p>OPERATION HERO</p> <p>A no-cost after school program designed to help military kids who may be struggling with change get back on track at home and in school.</p>
<p>CAMP HERO</p> <p>Encourages healthy living and provides outdoor activities and social bonding opportunities for military children.</p>	<p>OPERATION KID COMFORT</p> <p>Custom, hand-made quilts to help children cope with the separation of a parent's deployment.</p>	<p>SERVICE EVENTS</p> <p>Support military families through dances, giveaways, and community events.</p>
<p>HOLIDAY SUPPORT</p> <p>Toy giveaways and financial assistance for active duty service members and their families during the holidays.</p>	<p>SOI RECREATION CENTER</p> <p>Open on the weekends, this recreation space provides a place for School of Infantry students to relax and recharge.</p>	<p>FOOD DISTRIBUTION & FINANCIAL SUPPORT</p> <p>Assistance with food, diapers, gas, and other necessities through monthly distributions, a food pantry, and emergency commissary and gas cards.</p>

STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILY | <https://camppendleton.aymca.org>

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Lowry Theater - NASNI, ★
 619-545-8479 Bldg. 650

Thursday, May 9
 6pm

Thursday - May 16
 6:00 PM Monkey Man r

Friday - May 17
 6:00 PM Abigail r

Saturday - May 18
 1:00 PM Godzilla x Kong: The New

Empire pg13

3:30 PM Monkey Man r

6:00 PM The First Omen r

Sunday - May 19
 1:00 PM The Ministry of Ungentle-

manly Warfare r

3:30 PM The First Omen r

Thursday - May 23

6:00 PM The Ministry of Ungentle-

manly Warfare r

Pendleton Theater ★

and Training Center ★

Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across

from Mainside Center)

Saturday, May 4
 1:30pm Arthur the King (PG13)

4:30pm Immaculate (R)

Saturday, May 11
 FREE ADVANCED SCREENING

2:00pm The Blue Angels

Saturday, May 18
 1:30pm Godzilla x Kong: The New

Empire (PG13)

4:30pm Monkey Man (R)

Naval Base Theater - NBSD, ★
 619-556-5568, Bldg. 71

3465 Senn Rd.

Thursday, May 9
 5:50 PM Monkey Man r

8:20 PM The First Omen r

Friday - May 10
 6:00 PM Civil War r

Saturday - May 11
 2pm The Blue Angels ADVANCE SCREENING g

4:10 PM Civil War r

6:30 PM Godzilla x Kong: New Empire pg13

Sunday - May 12
 1:00 PM Civil War r

3:20 PM The First Omen r

Thursday - May 16
 6:00 PM SPECIAL SCREENING AN-

NIVERSARY TOP GUN 1986

8:30 PM Civil War r

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143 ★

MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

Friday, May 10
 6:00 PM - Monkey Man (R)

Saturday, May 11
 1pm Top Gun: Maverick PG-13 FREE

4:00 PM - The Blue Angels (G)

FREE ADVANCE SCREENING

Sunday, May 12
 12pm Godzilla x Kong: New Empire PG-13

3:00 PM -The First Omen (R)

Friday, May 17
 6pm Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare (R)

Saturday, May 18
 3pm Godzilla x Kong: New Empire PG-13

6:30 PM - Abigail (R)

Sunday, May 19
 12pm Godzilla x Kong: New Empire PG-13

3pm Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare (R)

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Can I claim Social Security and still be working?

Dear Rusty: I will be turning 63 soon. Can I apply for Social Security and continue to work? Would I be limited to how many hours or how much I could make? I know my monthly SS amount would be cut by 30%, or somewhere around there, but how would working affect me? I was trying to read up on this, but the \$1 and \$2 thing confused me. I have an offer to take a work-at-home position and need to decide soon, but it is a cut in income. The cut would be okay if I could draw my Social Security too.

Signed: Wanting Work at Home
Dear Wanting: If you claim your Social Security to start in the month you turn 63, you'll be claiming 4 years before your full retirement age (FRA) of 67, which means your monthly benefit at 63 will be about 25% less than it would be if you claimed SS at age 67. And if you are working before your FRA, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test."

The 2024 earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits is \$22,320 (this limit changes annually). If your annual earnings exceed the limit, Social Security will assess a penalty of \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit. They will recover that penalty amount by withholding future benefits until they recover what you owe. If your work earnings are under the annual limit, you will get all your monthly SS benefits. But if you exceed the limit, they will find that out after you submit your income tax return (the following year) and issue you an overpayment notice, telling you how much you owe for exceeding the limit last year. They will then withhold your benefits until they get back what you owe, or you can repay them in a lump sum. To avoid the overpayment notice, it is best to inform Social Security in advance that you will exceed the annual earnings limit, and they will simply withhold your monthly SS benefits during the year for enough months to avoid overpaying you.

So, what you should do depends largely on how much your earnings from your new work-at-home position will be. If your earnings are below the annual limit, no penalty will be assessed. If you only exceed the annual limit by a little bit, then you can still work and earn and simply repay them what is owed for exceeding the limit (or have your SS benefit temporarily withheld). If you only exceed the earnings limit by a little, you'll still get benefits for most months of the year. But if you significantly exceed the annual earnings limit, you could even be ineligible to receive SS benefits until you either earn less or reach your full retirement age (the earnings limit goes away at your FRA).

So, what you should do depends on what "a cut in income" means in terms of your expected annual earnings amount. If your total annual earnings will be under the annual limit, your SS benefit won't be affected. If you only exceed the limit by a little bit, then you will get SS benefits for most months of the year. But if your annual earnings are significantly over each year's annual earnings limit, then you won't get SS benefits for most months of the year and may even be temporarily ineligible to receive benefits. It now will have no effect on the survivor benefit she will get as your future widow.

HELP WANTED

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

Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society volunteer opportunities. Receive training, mentorship, make a difference in the lives of our active duty service personnel & family members. 619-767-6800 or visit <https://www.nmcrs.org/get-involved/volunteer>

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San Diego Humane Society reminds us about summer safety for our pets

As we gear up for summer, it's important to keep in mind how the sounds, sights and shifts of the season impact our pets! During the warmer months, we may leave our pets with sitters or take them to new places. Our neighborhoods often have more people and pets enjoying the outdoors, loud fireworks being set off and delicious smells and chatter coming from next door. These changes may lead to pets experiencing more stress or excitement than usual, which can lead to animals becoming lost. The tips below can help you and your animals have a safe and enjoyable summer.

- Safety first! Microchips are the most effective way to reunite lost pets with their families, so make sure your pet has been microchipped and that the phone number on file is up to date. If your pet needs a microchip, contact your veterinarian or visit one of our microchip clinics (<https://www.sdhumane.org/services/vaccinations>)!

- Management second! Make sure yards, doors and windows are in good condition and secure. While your pet may never have tried to escape before, if something scary and unpredictable happens (like a neighbor setting off fireworks), many pets will try to escape and will sometimes try an unexpected exit route.

- Training always and in advance! Work on socializing your pet to new things on an ongoing basis. Use treats or other rewards like petting or toys to create positive associations with unfamiliar sounds, smells, places, people or items. This can help our pets feel more comfortable, build confidence and reduce fear! Visit sdhumane.org/training to find articles, videos and classes to support this process.

Cornhole Tournament slated for Saturday, May 11 in Oceanside

Sign up for a day of friendly competition on Saturday, May 11 from 8am-4pm, at Camp J.H. Pendleton Oceanside Detachment 21 Marine Corps League Cornhole Tournament! Grab your bags, and bring your boards, and get ready to toss like a pro. This in-person event will take place at the Veteran Association of North County, 1617 Mission Ave., Oceanside.

Bring your A-game and show off your cornhole skills. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, everyone is welcome to participate. Get ready for a day filled with fun, camaraderie, and some serious cornhole action. Don't miss out!

Scan the QR code to Find out more about the tournament and/or sign up at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/detachment-21-marine-corps-league-cornhole-tournament-tickets-805465026577?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete>



Help 'Empty the Shelters' at all San Diego Humane Society campuses

Shelters are over capacity with wonderfully deserving animals — so it's time to Empty the Shelters! Through May 15, we're joining BISSELL Pet Foundation's Spring National adoption event to reduce fees for adult dogs and cats (7 months and older) to just \$25! Visit any of our campuses to find your new best friend! Campus locations in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside, Ramona and San Diego.

San Diego Humane Society main campus, 5500 Gaines St., San Diego, CA 92110. 619-299-7012.

Crafting for Critters

Thursday, May 16, 2:30-3:30pm.

College-Rolando Library, 6600 Montezuma Rd., San Diego

Make enrichment items for shelter animals! No supplies or advance registration needed — show up and have some fun while giving back! Children of all ages are welcome.

Animal Story Time and Activity

Tuesday, May 21, 4-5pm.

Valencia Park/Malcolm X Library, 5248 Market St., San Diego

Reading has never been more fun! Join us for animal-themed story time and activity at Malcolm X Library! No sign-up needed.

Turtle & Tortoise Microchip Clinic

Saturday, May 25, 10am- 2pm.

San Diego Campus, 5500 Gaines St., San Diego

Every year hundreds of animals including turtles and tortoises are found as strays — so in honor of World Turtle Day, we are offering a microchip clinic to keep pet turtles and tortoises safe! Microchips are \$40 pet chelonian, and all turtles and tortoises must have a shell diameter of 10cm or larger. Semi-aquatic turtles must be dry-docked for at least 24 hours prior to implantation. Make an appointment for your speshell pet today!

HOT ASPHALT!

Air Temp	Asphalt Temp
77°	125°
86°	135°
87°	143°



At 125° skin destruction can occur in just 60 seconds. Always check the asphalt prior to allowing your pet to walk on it.

Paws will get burned.

TIP: If it's too hot for your bare feet it is too hot for theirs!

5 things to know about stroke

A stroke can happen at any time and to anyone. You might be talking to your loved one and notice they're suddenly slurring their words. Or, while grocery shopping, you realize you can't move your hand to pick up a jar from the shelf. You can go from feeling as usual to feeling sick within a matter of seconds to minutes.

Here are five key things to know about stroke:

1. Strokes affect the oxygen and nutrients supplied to your brain.

Strokes occur when nutrients and oxygen are not delivered to the brain through blood vessels, leading to the death of brain cells. This lack of delivery can be caused by a clot in a blood vessel obstructing the blood flow to the brain, known as an ischemic stroke, or when a blood vessel ruptures and prevents blood flow to the brain, known as a hemorrhagic stroke.

Sometimes, the obstruction to the blood flow and the resulting symptoms are caused by a temporary clot and are transient, resulting in a mini-stroke or transient ischemic attack, or TIA.

2. Strokes can happen to anyone.

Strokes can happen to anyone regardless of age, gender or race. Certain risk factors can put you at a higher risk of stroke.

Risk factors are divided into two categories:

- **Controllable** — the ones you can control or improve
- **Uncontrollable** — those that are not within your control

Common controllable risk factors include:

- Atrial fibrillation, which increases stroke risk by five times
- Diabetes
- Excessive alcohol intake — an average of more than one drink per day for women or more than two drinks a day for men
- High blood pressure

- High cholesterol
- Illicit drug use
- Obesity
- Obstructive sleep apnea
- Physical inactivity
- Sick cell anemia
- Smoking or vaping

Uncontrollable risk factors include:

- Gender
- Heredity
- Increasing age
- Race

3. Be prepared to spot the signs of a stroke.

Learn to recognize the signs of stroke quickly.

The American Stroke Association lists these symptoms to help you know when to seek medical care:

F = Face drooping: Ask the person to smile and see if the smile is uneven.

A = Arm weakness: Ask the person to raise both arms and see if one arm drifts down.

S = Speech difficulty: Ask the person to speak and see if the speech is slurred.

T = Time to call 911: Stroke is an emergency. Call 911 at once. Note the time when any of the symptoms first appear.

Other stroke symptoms to watch for include:

- Numbness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body
 - Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or difficulty understanding speech
 - Sudden onset severe headache with no known cause
 - Sudden vision issues, such as trouble seeing in one or both eyes
 - Trouble walking, loss of balance, dizziness or coordination
- If you or someone you are with have any stroke-like symptoms, seek immediate medical care.

4. A stroke is a medical

emergency.

Every second counts when someone is experiencing a stroke. Once a stroke starts, the brain loses around 1.9 million neurons each minute. For every hour without treatment, the brain loses as many neurons as it typically does in nearly 3.6 years of regular aging.

While waiting for paramedics, do these things if possible:

- If the person is conscious, lay them down on their side with their head slightly raised and supported to prevent falls.
- Loosen any restrictive clothing that could cause breathing difficulties.
- If weakness is obvious in any limb, support it and avoid pulling on it when moving the person.
- If the person is unconscious, check their breathing and pulse, and put them on their side.
- If they do not have a pulse or are not breathing, start CPR straight away.
- Do not give them anything to eat or drink if you feel they may have trouble swallowing.

5. Women have an increased risk of stroke.

According to the American Stroke Association, stroke is the third most common cause of death in women. Over 90,000 women die from a stroke in the U.S. each year. Every 1 in 5 women will have a stroke, and about 55,000 more women than men have a stroke each year, with Black women having the highest prevalence of stroke.

The risk of stroke increases in women who have atrial fibrillation, migraines with aura, smoke, take birth control pills, use hormonal replacement therapy, are pregnant or have preeclampsia.

Talk to your healthcare team about your stroke risk and ways to lower your risk by addressing controllable factors.

Prashant Natteru, M.B.B.S., M.D., is a neurologist in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Yell at sports events? Take care of your voice

Most people have a distinctive voice. We can usually recognize people by their voice even if we can't see them. But many people don't think much about their own voice until something goes wrong.

Signs of voice problems can include having a hoarse or raspy voice or an achy throat. It may feel hard to talk. Or your voice may suddenly sound deeper. Another sign of trouble is repeated clearing of your throat. Or you may lose your ability to hit high notes while singing.

Voice problems can arise if you've been talking a lot or loudly. Teachers are especially at risk. Voice trouble can also arise from colds or other infections that affect breathing. Acid reflux, or heartburn, can sometimes harm the voice, too. A more serious cause is cancer in the throat—specifically in the larynx, or voice box.

Many voice issues resolve

on their own over time. Most difficulties can improve by treating the underlying cause. Surgery or behavioral treatments are sometimes needed.

The good news is that you can take steps to protect your voice and avoid many problems.

- It helps to stay hydrated.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Use a humidifier in your

home, especially if you live in a dry climate.

- Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Don't smoke, and avoid second-hand smoke.



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