

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

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ABOARD USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (September 2024) Sailors conduct firefighting training in the hangar bay aboard aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) in the 5th Fleet area of responsibility. U.S. Navy photo

USS San Diego forward deploys to Sasebo, Japan

by MC1 Brian Reynolds

YOKOSUKA, Japan - San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS *San Diego* arrived to its new forward deployed location at Sasebo, Japan, last month, becoming the newest ship to join the Forward-Deployed Naval Forces Japan.

San Diego replaces USS *Green Bay*, which is headed to Naval Base San Diego after spending more than nine years as part of FDNF-J.

"We're excited to welcome USS *San Diego*, its crew and family members to Sasebo and to the Amphibious Squadron Eleven family," said Capt. Patrick German, commodore of Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) Eleven. "As the newest amphibious ship in FDNF-J, San Diego will further strengthen our strong contingent of ships to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific region."

San Diego will join the *America* Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), which teams with the Okinawa-based 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to deliver integrated naval power to U.S. 7th Fleet by rapidly inserting and supporting forces ashore.

"The crew is enthusiastic about starting our next chapter with USS *San Diego* in Japan," said Capt. David Walton, the ship's commanding officer. "After over a month of transiting across the Pacific Ocean, and many more months of preparation and training, this is the moment we have all been focused on. We are grateful for the support we received entering into 7th Fleet, and we are ready to immediately fold into forward deployed operations."

San Diego's modern platform enhances execution of expeditionary warfare missions, extending the reach of Marines by delivering them ashore via Landing Craft air cushion (LCAC), amphibious vehicles, helicopters and tilt rotor aircraft.

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS DISCUSSES NAVIGATION PLAN 2024

by Joseph Clark, DOD News
 The Navy's top admiral underscored the imperative for the nation's sea service to continue to meet the demands of an evolving technology and national security landscape.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa M. Franchetti discussed her recently released Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy 2024 during a discussion recently hosted by the Center for Strategic and

International Studies, a public policy think tank in Washington.

Franchetti's plan outlines her guidance to the fleet to meet future challenges and expand the Navy's contribution to the joint warfighting ecosystem.

She noted the key role the Navy will play in maintaining the United States' military advantage amid a changing geopolitical environment and increasing competition with China.

"China is clearly the pacing challenge," she said. "They are on [...] a wartime footing."

The CNO added that China presents a multidomain challenge encompassing not only military, but also economic competition. She noted China's lack of transparency about its

actions around the globe, and their affinity for use of dual-use technologies to accomplish its aims.

Franchetti also noted the changing nature of war and the imperative to adopt robotic and autonomous technology and the reach and lethality of the fleet as key guide rails for the strategy going forward.

Domestic fiscal and industrial base constraints add to the Navy's challenge, she said, as the service recognizes the need to grow its fleet.

Franchetti released the plan earlier this week. It identifies two overarching strategic ends: readiness for the possibility of war with China by 2027 and enhancement of the Navy's long-term advantage.

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Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti discusses her recently released Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy 2024 at Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. U.S. Navy photo by Senior Chief Petty Officer Elliott Fabrizio



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- NOV 1 Military & Veterans Appreciation Concert
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- NOV 6 - 8 Student STEM Days (Students only)
- NOV 8 SDSU Fleet Week Football Classic
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OBESITY AMONG TROOPS COSTS PENTAGON MORE THAN \$1 BILLION PER YEAR, NEW STUDY FINDS

by **Corey Dickstein**
Stars and Stripes

American troops are too fat, and it is costing the Pentagon more than \$1 billion of taxpayer funding each year, a study of obesity among active-duty service members published recently found.

Obesity was the leading cause for disqualification among hopeful military recruit applicants, and the top driver of separations among active-duty troops in 2023, according to the new American Security Project study. The Washington-based think tank that studies modern national security issues found the Pentagon spent some \$1.25 billion last year treating military patients for dozens of diseases related to obesity, and another \$99 million in lost productivity among hospitalized overweight troops.

“America can no longer afford

to ignore this [obesity] crisis,” American Security Project researchers wrote. “The United States armed forces face an unprecedented challenge as obesity prevalence among service members continues to rise. As combat and incidental injuries

enlisted troops with health and nutrition education and access to quality foods. They also suggested the military replace long-held, appearance-based body composition standards with health-based standards driven by medical professionals

because of rising obesity rates among the civilian population from which the military needs to recruit, and the loosening of military fitness standards to ensure the services have enough troops in their ranks amid recent enlistment struggles. The Pentagon, the researchers found, has lowered fitness standards to keep overweight troops in the ranks and increased the use of body composition waivers to bring overweight recruits into the military.

The military services have taken steps in recent years to counter obesity. The Army and Navy introduced fitness courses to engage potential recruits early and get them into shape to qualify for service. The Marines, meanwhile, began using more accurate biometric scanning machines last year to assess body fat.

But the American Security Project concluded those measures were not enough to mitigate the threat of increasing weight problems in the force, which were exacerbated during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, which forced many troops away from daily exercise during lockdowns. Obesity rates have not improved since the lockdowns ended, according to the researchers.

They charge reversing military policies that stigmatize obesity — such as tape measure tests — and focusing instead on providing treatment for troops susceptible to obesity or diagnosed with obesity would improve military readiness and save the services money — up to \$1 billion each year, according to the study.

“These recommendations aren’t just well-justified by the existing research, they are highly cost-effective,” the researchers concluded. “Upfront investments in clinical care saves tens of thousands of dollars per patient in the long run, even if those patients remain overweight.”

Unlike nearly all other diseases affecting service members today, obesity itself is not considered a disability nor disease by the service branches nor the Department of Veterans Affairs, making it difficult to proactively identify and treat. - American Security Project study

become less prevalent year-over-year, rates of obesity-related conditions, including diabetes, osteoarthritis, hypertension and steatotic liver disease increasingly meet or exceed civilian trends.”

Researchers suggested the Pentagon take a more proactive approach to preventing obesity, focusing on providing young,

and classify obesity as a disease in the military health system so troops can be treated medically for the condition.

“Unlike nearly all other diseases affecting service members today, obesity itself is not considered a disability nor disease by the service branches nor the Department of Veterans Affairs, making it difficult to proactively identify and treat,” the report reads.

“Without this written classification and its associated protections, service members face bias and discrimination for ‘exceeding weight standards,’ becoming ineligible for promotion, educational privileges, deployment or disability compensation.”

Last year, the American Security Project found nearly seven in 10 active-duty troops were overweight or obese, according to their body mass index, including some 21 percent of active-duty troops qualified as obese, a rate that more than doubled in the past decade.

Body mass index, or BMI, is a long-used but controversial method of assessing a person’s body classification by height and weight. A person between 25 and 30 on the BMI is considered clinically overweight and more than 30 is considered obese, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The researchers found the weight problem within the military was at least two-pronged

CNO

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The plan also includes seven, core fleet readiness targets under Project 33, a reference to Franchetti serving as the 33rd CNO. Those targets include:

- *Ready the force by eliminating ship, submarine and aircraft maintenance delays
- *Scale robotic and autonomous systems to integrate more platforms at speed
- *Create the command centers our fleets need to win on a distributed battlefield
- *Recruit and retain the force we need to get more players on the field
- *Deliver a quality of service commensurate with the sacrifices of our sailors
- *Train for combat as we plan to fight, in the real world and virtually
- *Restore the critical infrastructure that sustains and projects the fight from shore

Franchetti said the navigation plan captures how the Navy can think, act and operate differently with the resources it has to make the most gains in the shortest time possible.

“If you look at the ways we’re trying to do that through implementing Project 33, which are really seven areas that as I worked with my team, with our four-star fleet commanders, these are areas that I can put my thumb on the scale,” she said. “We could make a difference in those areas, and it will make a meaningful contribution to our ability to be more ready by 2027.”

The plan also lays out the Navy’s plan to expand its contribution to the joint warfighting ecosystem, building upon the implementation framework for fielding key capabilities outlined in the 2022 Navigation Plan, with an additional focus on scaling robotic autonomous systems.

The implementation framework focuses on five capabilities ranging from long-range fires to contested logistics. It also focuses on four key enablers ranging from artificial intelligence to robotic and autonomous systems.

For further information visit the CNO Navigation Plan 2024 website.

Alaska Air National Guard rescues 2 plane crash victims

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska -Alaska Air National Guard 176th Wing members conducted two missions in one helicopter sortie late last month, rescuing two general aviation pilots at two crash sites in Southcentral Alaska.

The missions started when the Alaska Rescue Coordination Center received notice that a civilian helicopter pilot had witnessed a PA-18 plane crash on Little Mount Susitna about 40 miles northwest of Anchorage.

The AKRCC requested assistance from the 176th Wing. The 176th Operations Group search and rescue duty officer, Alaska Air National Guard Lt. Col. Greg Ulrich, dispatched a 210th Rescue Squadron HH-60G Pave Hawk helicopter with 212th pararescuemen.

The HH-60 crew located the crash site and landed and the PJs loaded the pilot on the helicopter. Though the pilot was uninjured, he was unprepared to stay the night at the crash site.

“It was a fairly easy mission; the weather was good,” Ulrich said. “We didn’t know if it was going to be a hoist or an air land. They were able to air land not too far from the patient, just downhill a way. The Guardian Angels were able to walk up to the patient and he was able to walk down to the helicopter.”

While still working the first mission, Ulrich detailed the team with another mission to rescue the victim of another PA-18 crash near the Knik Glacier about 50 miles northeast of Anchorage. The impact of the crash activated the plane’s 406-MHz emergency locator transmitter.

<https://www.nationalguard.mil/News/Article-View/Article/3913726/>


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Vietnam War ‘Dustoff’ helicopter crews to receive Congressional Gold Medal

by Gary Warner
Stars and Stripes

Vietnam War medevac helicopter crews will be the latest military group to receive the highest award Congress can bestow.

The Dustoff Crews of the Vietnam War Congressional Gold Medal Act won final approval Sept. 20. It honors the estimated 3,000 pilots, medics, and crew who flew between combat zones and field hospitals during the war. The flights were nicknamed “Dustoff” because of the dirt and debris churned up by their helicopter rotors as they landed to pick up wounded.

The crew of a helicopter early in the war took the name as their call-sign, according to the Army. The Dustoffs extracted 900,000 wounded U.S., Vietnamese, and allied soldiers from May 1962 to March 1973. The Army said the medevac crews had a one-in-three chance of becoming casualties themselves.

“They were some of the very

best, and their heroism deserves to be recognized, which we finally did [Sept. 19] by sending this legislation to President [Joe] Biden’s desk to become law,” said Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., a co-sponsor of the legislation.

Congressional testimony included the record of the 54th Medical Detachment, a Dustoff unit of about 30 soldiers with three UH-1 Huey helicopters. During one 10-month stretch of heavy fighting, they extracted 21,435 casualties to safety. The 8,644 evacuation and rescue missions required 4,832 hours in the air.

Unit members received 78 valor awards. Patrick Henry Brady of Seattle was an Army major flying missions with the 54th Medical Detachment from Chu Lai, about 340 miles north-east of Saigon on the coast of the South China Sea.

In January 1968, calls came in from groups of wounded soldiers who were trapped behind enemy lines, including one group in a



Stretcher-bearers in September 1966 carry wounded to “Dustoff” medevac helicopters at a 1st Air Cavalry base near Qui Nhon in Vietnam on the South China Sea, about 375 miles northeast of Saigon. Photo by Lawrence J. Sullivan/National Museum of the United States Army

mine field. Despite heavy fog and smoke, Brady extracted soldiers from a site where two early rescue helicopters had been shot down. Returning several times to pull more soldiers out of the jungle, Brady had one helicopter shredded by machine gun fire and a second damaged at the mine field by an explosion.

At the end of the day, Brady and his crew had lost three helicopters and saved 51 wounded American and South Vietnamese soldiers. Brady received the Medal of Honor, the nation’s highest award for valor in combat.

“A Dustoff was usually vulnerable,” he said. “Of course, the most dangerous time was landing on the battlefield during the battle. The chopper was big and visible -- no armor protection.”

Brady said despite the red cross painted on the Dustoffs to show they weren’t combat helicopters, they nonetheless always drew enemy fire.

“We knew it and we were never surprised,” he said. “We did all we could to avoid it. That meant finding the safest way in, taking the shortest time on the
see Dustoff, page 4



Army

- U.S. troops finish deployment to remote Alaska island amid spike in Russian military activity
- Europe-wide drill led by Army puts NATO’s new battle plan into first action
- Army embraces Ukraine-style warfare with new all-drone unit
- After 30 days on Idaho fire line, 250 Army Soldiers from Joint Base Lewis-McChord head home

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- Future Navy oiler named for civil rights and labor icon
- Navy boss lays out ambitious goals on ships and recruiting but dodges on accountability

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- ‘I don’t see myself as a hero,’ says Marine who saved woman from fiery car wreck

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- Airman leadership school in Germany gets name of former chief master sergeant of the Air Force
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- Air Force braces for new nuclear-war scenarios

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- Space Force touts plans for part-time service, even as opposition and Space National Guard proposal loom

National Guard

- N.Y. National Guard: Army report says crew not at fault in deadly helicopter crash

Your Military

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Veterans


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Our Members Are the Mission

Austin says finding the missing is the nation's 'ironclad commitment'

by David Vergun, DOD News

Locating and identifying the remains of service members killed in conflicts remains the Defense Department and the nation's "ironclad commitment," said Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III.

Austin spoke Sept. 20 at a National Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Recognition Day ceremony at the Pentagon.

During the secretary's 41 years of Army service, he said the Soldier's creed has been to never leave a fallen comrade behind. "We lived that value, and we still do. We bring our troops home no matter what."

Over just the past year, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has identified the remains of 111 service members killed during World War II, 28 from the Korean War and four from the Vietnam War, he noted. "No, that's quite a feat."

The agency works with diplomats and others from 46 nations to recover remains, relying on their cooperation and assistance, he added.

During his first month as secretary, Austin visited the

agency's laboratory in Hawaii, where anthropologists, archaeologists and other scientists identify the remains using the latest forensic techniques. "It's hard work both physically and emotionally, but ... it's a labor of love and it is a sacred calling," Austin said.

"From my office, I look out into this parade ground, and every day I see the American flag and the POW/MIA flag. And that flag's motto is a rallying cry, not only for everyone who works in the Pentagon, but also wherever it flies across the country, and it says, 'you were not forgotten,'" the secretary said.

The families of those still missing suffer and mourn and wait. "You have endured terrible uncertainty, lived with terrible absence and suffered terrible grief. We are humbled by your strength, and we're inspired by your resilience. We are proud to stand with you and

we are proud to work with you. Because we will never give up. We will never lose hope, and we will always honor the sacrifice and service of your loved ones," he said.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Air Force Gen. CQ Brown, Jr., thanked the POWs and families in attendance as well as families of those still



missing, and the service organizations that support them.

"Throughout the history of our nation, service members have answered the call to defend liberty. ... These heroes have faced trials many of us can scarcely imagine. Some were captured by enemy forces and held in horrific conditions. Others never made it home. Their legacy lives on in the hearts of their families, their fellow service members and the very fabric of our nation," he said.

Hicks named sponsor of newly named nuclear submarine

by C. Todd Lopez

The Navy revealed that its next Virginia-class, nuclear-powered submarine, SSN-812, will be called USS Baltimore. The service also announced that Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks would serve as the vessel's sponsor.

During a naming ceremony Sept. 20 aboard the historic USS Constellation, a Navy warship built in 1854 that now serves as a museum ship in Baltimore Harbor, Carlos Del Toro, the secretary of the Navy, announced the name of the new submarine and that Hicks would serve as sponsor once it was constructed.

"The ship's sponsor fills a critical role throughout the life of a warship, serving as the bond between the ship, her crew and the nation they serve," Del Toro said. "I can think of no one more fitting to take on this vital role, no one with more resilience and grit and whose spirit embodies that of Baltimore than Deputy Secretary Hicks."

Growing up in a Navy family, Hicks was exposed to the world of submarines early on. Her father, Rear Adm. (Ret.) William J. Holland, was a submariner who served on a variety of nuclear-powered submarines.

"Like all prospective nuclear submariners in those days, he

was personally interviewed by Adm. Rickover, the father of the nuclear navy," Hicks said. "Throughout career, the submarine community was more than just his professional home. It was a family support system; one in which my mother, Anne Holland, was a leader. One that played an important role for me and my six older brothers and sisters. It was the community I was born into."

Hicks said her family history would play an important role in her responsibility as USS

Baltimore's sponsor.

"As sponsor of future USS Baltimore, SSN-812, I will continue to carry on our family's legacy of service and commitment to the submarine force," she said.

USS Baltimore, not yet constructed, will be a Block V, Virginia-class, nuclear-powered sub. So far, more than 20 Virginia-class submarines have been constructed and are now homeported with the Navy in Hawaii, Connecticut, and Virginia.

Dustoff continued from page 3

ground possible and getting the patient to the hospital as soon as we could."

Vietnam Dustoff Association President Steve Vermillion said the Congressional Gold Medal recognized the history of what were often teenagers involved in a life and death mission all day, nearly every day.

"[It's] the story of 18- and 19-year-old men flying unarmed helicopters into battle, at night, in the rain, and multiple times a day, to rescue our wounded and fly them back to medical facilities," he said.

The Congressional Gold Medal requires two-thirds of each chamber to support the bill. In the Democratic-controlled Senate, 71 of 100 senators signed on

as co-sponsors. In the Republican-controlled House, 330 of the 435 members endorsed the legislation.

The final votes sent the legislation to Biden. The White House said Sept. 19 that he planned to sign the bill into law.

The Congressional Gold Medal was first awarded in 1776 to Gen. George Washington for his service in the early days of the American Revolution. In the 248 years since, it has gone to more than 300 individuals and organizations, such as the American Red Cross. Top American generals, from Horatio Gates in the Revolutionary War to Norman Schwarzkopf in Operation Desert Storm, have received the medal.

<https://www.stripes.com/veterans/2024-09-20/dustoff-crews-vietnam-congressional-medal-15236668.html>

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Miss America challenges Airmen to tackle Air Force misconceptions during AFA panel

by **Miriam Thurber**
Air Force Recruiting Service

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. (AFNS) - Second Lt. Madison Marsh, crowned Miss America 2024, is on a mission to change the public's understanding of what it means to serve in the U.S. Air Force. During a panel discussion at the Air and Space Forces Association's 2024 Air, Space and Cyber Conference on Sept. 17, Marsh issued a challenge to her fellow Airmen: use your voice to reshape the narrative.

"I honestly feel like we're a mystery to a lot of people," Marsh said. "People are genuinely curious all the time about what we do every day and why you put on the uniform."

Marsh emphasized that Airmen have a unique opportunity to share personal stories that resonate with others - whether in face-to-face conversations or through social media. By revealing the real people behind the uniform, Marsh believes Airmen can challenge misconceptions about the Air Force and demonstrate that servicemembers have hopes, dreams and lives just like anyone else.

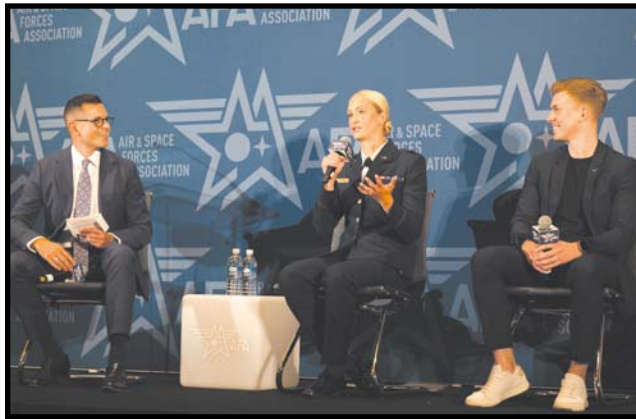
Her message stemmed from

her travels across the country this year as both a pageant titleholder and a commissioned officer. Marsh has seen firsthand how many Americans misunderstand life in the military.

On Marsh's recent trip to Colorado, a freshman at the Air Force Academy shared that she initially hesitated to join because she feared the uniform would compromise her femininity. After seeing Marsh win Miss America while still embracing femininity in uniform, the cadet realized she could do both too. On the same Colorado trip, Marsh encountered a mother who was hesitant about her son enlisting because she thought he was too tall for the Air Force. "He wasn't," Marsh laughed and then explained that she frequently receives questions about eligibility and military life.

From her conversations with the public, Marsh has fielded a range of questions — some funny, others more serious. People have asked Marsh if she, as a servicemember, can have a dog, if she is required to live in the military barracks, if she's allowed to vote and, the most popular one — if she was the fighter pilot who just flew by.

"I have to remind them that,



Second Lt. Madison Marsh, center, Miss America 2024, challenges her fellow Airmen to share their stories during a panel discussion at the Air, Space and Cyber Conference in National Harbor, Md. on Sept. 17. U.S. Air Force photo by Miriam Thurber

no, I'm not a pilot. In fact, only a small percentage of the Air Force flies planes." Marsh has also clarified that Airmen can have pets and live off-base, and they are encouraged to participate in elections — dispelling several of the more common myths about military life.

These questions reflect a broader disconnect between the military and civilian communities. According to data from Joint Advertising, Market Research & Studies (JAMRS), many young Americans have limited knowledge about the

realities of military service. It's not unusual for people to wonder if you can have a family or get pregnant while serving. JAMRS research shows that less than 15 percent of young people between the ages of 16 and 24 have a parent who served in the military, which deepens this divide.

For Marsh, social media and community engagement are critical tools to close that gap.

"You don't have to be Miss America or have a particular rank to share your story," Marsh said. "Everyone in here can share

your individual experience with the public, and that can get one more person to join. You don't need a title, you don't need a social media platform to do that; it's just day-to-day when you can go out and share your good experiences with the people. That's been such a special part of this year."

Brig. Gen. Christopher Amrhein, Air Force Recruiting Service commander, echoes Marsh's call to action. He believes that authentic, personal storytelling is one of the most effective ways to engage the public.

"When Airmen share their

stories - whether it's about balancing service with family life, pursuing a passion outside of work or sharing why they serve - Airmen show the world that serving doesn't mean giving up who you are," Amrhein said.

As Miss America 2024 and an officer in the Air Force, Marsh is committed to using her platform to bridge the gap between civilians and service members.

"At the end of the day, it's about connection," she said after the panel. "When we share our stories, we not only dispel myths — we inspire others to see the Air Force as a place where they, too, can thrive."

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NHCP opens new medical and dental clinic in Camp Del Mar

by Curtis Hill

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton

It's official. Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton opened its new and improved 21 Area Branch Health Clinic aboard Camp Pendleton's Camp Del Mar last month.

The new state-of-the-art facility stocked with up-to-date equipment was constructed through a collaborative effort by Soltek Pacific, HKS-WSP Joint Venture, Holitna, the Defense Health Agency, and Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest.

"Replacing a clinic built in 1966, this new clinic embodies the Navy's and the Defense Health Agency's dedication to delivering the highest standard of care, using the latest technology and clinical advancements to serve our troops," said Navy Capt. Jenny Burkett, NHCP director.

The 21 ABHC provides medical and dental care to the active-duty service members serving aboard Camp Del Mar.

"This state-of-the-art facility was designed to ensure the

readiness of the 5,000 Warfighters across the various tenant commands," said Navy Capt. Nathan Wonder, NHCP director of branch clinics and master of ceremonies for the event.

DOD recognizes eleven installations, commands for suicide prevention success

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

The Defense Department recently recognized 11 United States' military installations and commands for suicide prevention programs and efforts conducted last year.

It's at military installations and commands around the U.S. and the world where dedicated military and civilian personnel work to identify the root causes of suicide, identify those who may be at risk for suicide and apply suicide prevention efforts, said Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks during an event at the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

"We want to recognize all of the installations here for the exemplary suicide prevention efforts," Hicks said. "Today's ceremony highlights all of your contributions. The honored teams reflect the wide-ranging and cutting-edge approaches that the department is taking to save lives and address root causes."

Eleven military installations and commands were identified as having exemplary suicide prevention programs and efforts from September 2022 through August 2024. They include:

- USS Makin Island, Naval Base San Diego (Navy);
- Naval Construction Battalion 18, Port Hueneme (Navy Reserve);
- Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. (Army);
- MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. (Marine Corps);
- MacDill Air Force Base, Fla. (Air Force);
- Space Systems Command at Los Angeles AFB (Space Force); and
- Coast Guard Base Kodiak, Alaska (Coast Guard).

"All of these programs and initiatives are making an impact, and they're reaching people before they are at a point in crisis," Hicks said.

"I would like to recognize and thank the leaders and dedicated teams who made this project possible: our service members, medical and dental professionals, and all the men and women

who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure the Marines and Sailors receive the best care possible," said Burkett.

"Specifically, Branch Clinic staff, Medical and Dental Battalion staff, and staff from the MEF, Division and Marine Logistics Group, who work here in the clinic. At the heart of all we do is the commitment to take care of our people. Every Marine and sailor who walks through these doors can be assured they are receiving world class care."

Joining Burkett for the ceremonial ribbon cutting were Lt. Gen. Michael Cederholm, commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), and Brig. Gen. Nick Brown, commanding general of Marine Corps Installations West / Camp Pendleton.

"As we cut this ribbon, and witness the opening of this incredible facility, we are reminded of the powerful role medical and dental care plays in the readiness and resilience of our force. This clinic is both an investment in care and an investment in the future of the Navy/Marine Corps team," said Burkett.

Marine at Camp Pendleton who sold 'ghost guns' sentenced to 3 years in prison

By Caitlyn Burchett
Stars and Stripes

A Camp Pendleton Marine who illegally sold 22 homemade firearms to undercover agents was sentenced to 37 months in prison, federal officials said.

A federal judge handed down the more than three-year sentence recently to Christian Ferrari, 23, for selling the nearly two-dozen weapons known as ghost guns across four separate transactions for \$23,000.

Ghost guns are firearms made by individuals who buy parts and use specialized tools to assemble them into a functional weapon. Unlike firearms made by licensed manufacturers, ghost guns do not have a serial number, making them virtually untraceable.

Ferrari was accused of selling the guns to undercover Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents between March 13 and May 9, 2023, according to a news release from the U.S. Attorney's

Office for the Southern District of California.

At the time, Ferrari was a lance corporal stationed at Camp Pendleton. During one of the transactions, undercover agents told Ferrari that the guns would be taken to Mexico. "Ferrari responded, 'All right, perfect,' and agreed to sell the agents 10 more ghost guns for \$10,000," according to the release.

Ferrari was arrested after the final transaction as part of a joint crime reduction project across San Diego. The project resulted in the seizure of 165 ghost guns and the prosecution of 33 people, including Ferrari.

After his arrest, agents found evidence that Ferrari was manufacturing firearms at a family residence in California. Agents also found a drill press covered in metal shavings consistent with material used to manufacture firearms.

Continue reading at https://www.stripes.com/branches/marine_corps.

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MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO (Sept. 11, 2024) Marine Corps recruits with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, conduct warm-up exercises before their Marine Corps Martial Arts Program class focusing on bayonet techniques here. Bayonet techniques tie into MCMAP that aims to strengthen the mental and moral resiliency of individual recruits and Marines through realistic combative training, warrior ethos studies, and physical hardening. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Sarah M. Grawcock



MAINTENANCE CHECK Petty Officer 3rd Class Maurice Hawkins, right, and Petty Officer 1st Class Ouachita Green conduct maintenance on an F/A-18E Super Hornet aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Indian Ocean, Sept. 14, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Pimpaka Kruthun

Armed Forces DISPATCH

USS HARPERS FERRY, at sea (Sept. 4, 2024) An Amphibious Combat Vehicle from Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/5, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, enters the well deck of amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49) during exercise Ssang Yong 24 in waters east of the coast of South Korea. Exercise SY24 strengthens the Republic of Korea-U.S. Alliance through bilateral, joint training, contributing toward combined amphibious capability in defense of the Korean Peninsula. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sang Kim



CAMP PENDLETON (Sept. 20, 2024) Brig. Gen. Nick I. Brown, left, Marine Corps Installations West commanding general, passes the Marine Corps noncommissioned officer's sword to Sgt. Maj. Sherri N. Cook during a relief and appointment ceremony here. Sgt. Maj. Fausto H. Cabrera relinquished the responsibility of command senior enlisted leader for MCI-West to Cook. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jeslianne A. Torres

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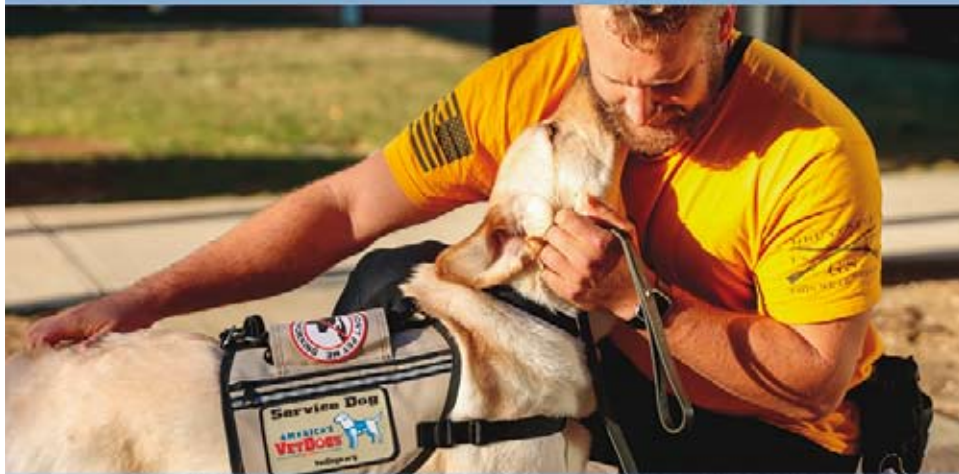
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Makin Island tops in logistics readiness

SANDIEGO—Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet recognized amphibious assault ship *Makin Island* as the recipient of the Logistics Readiness Excellence Award for fiscal year 2023.

The award recognizes the contributions, achievements, and support of a float supply departments.

“I’m honored that the *Makin Island* team earned the Logistics Readiness Excellence Award,” said Cmdr. Matthew Miller, ship’s supply officer. “Winning this award is a testament to the hard work, attention to detail, and persistence displayed by our Sailors in the Logistic Readiness Divisions and all of the repair parts petty officers.

“Readiness results in lethality, and I am immensely proud that

our team is committed to driving operational lethality through logistical readiness.”

The LREA is broken down into five ship class categories;

for the time, effort, and dedication we have to this crew.”

Winning this award does not come easy. A lot of hard work from the entire supply department goes into this achievement.



Small, Medium 1, Medium 2, Medium 3, and Large. *Makin Island* was selected as CNSP’s Large-category recipient.

“Being a cohesive team across all work centers drives our success,” said Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Deandre Kidd, a Sailor assigned to the *Makin Island* Supply Department. “We are honored to receive this award and appreciate the recognition

“It is an honor to be a part of such an amazing crew here on the *Makin Island*,” said Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Stephanie Cardenas, a Sailor assigned to the *Makin Island* Supply Department. “Regardless of the long and busy days, and the often stressful, high-paced environment, we always come together to accomplish the mission.”

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Have you noticed that these days it seems as if parking spaces in parking lots are getting smaller — at the same time as more and more people are switching from cars to SUVs? I did too, purchasing a new, 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime to replace my relatively small 2012 Toyota Prius Plug-in. My RAV4 has much more interior room than the Prius had, and it is comfortable.

In stark contrast, I also have a fun but much less practical car. It is an orange, fourth generation (ND), 2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata (special 30th Anniversary edition). Unlike my Miata, my RAV4 has an automatic transmission and it is MUCH easier to get into and out of. You almost need to be a contortionist to do that in my Miata. I do not drive it very often.

Unfortunately (as I shared with you in AutoMatters & More # 851), over a month ago my RAV4 was sideswiped at night on a freeway by a hit and run driver. The damage to my RAV4 was extensive (over \$19,500., according to the most recent estimate). It is supposed to be repaired and ready to go this Friday — almost exactly six weeks since my big accident.

I did not have rental car insurance (I do now, if there ever is a next time), but even if I had, that would have been limited by my insurance company to 30 days. With parts availability sometimes challenging, that may not be enough for some repair jobs. I resigned myself to driving my Miata until my RAV4 was back home.

A fourth generation Miata is not what I consider to be suitable as a daily driver. The passenger compartment is cramped, and it has a tiny trunk that only has a horizontal trunk opening (no ver-

Please park between the lines



Close up of an over-the-line view. Photo by Jan Wagner

tical opening). Large objects that would otherwise fit in the trunk cannot be put into the trunk.

Furthermore, since I am 70 years old and relatively tall, getting into and out of my Miata — even in the best of situations — is especially difficult. I was not looking forward to enduring that torture for over a month. Little did I know that my situation would soon get much worse.

A few weeks ago I sprained my left knee and could not bend it without experiencing sharp, stabbing pain. I have made multiple trips to see medical professionals, and was fitted for a knee brace that keeps my leg straight. Now getting into and out of my Miata is much more difficult, even when I fully open the door. Part of the problem is that the footbox of the Miata is set quite far forward of the leading edge of the door opening.

Last week, while I was at the medical center, I parked in a narrow parking space. It and the empty parking space to its left were clearly marked COMPACT.

After my appointment I returned to my car to discover that the very wide, passenger-side rear fender of a widebody Porsche 911 was well over the first of two lines that marked its parking space. That left only about a foot between that fender and the door of my Miata. Since my Miata has a high center console, entering my car from the

passenger-side was not an option. Bending my sprained knee enough for me to squeeze through the narrow drivers-side door opening was awkward and very painful — and I had to hold the edge of the door with one hand, to avoid scratching either car.

After days of pain, making two visits for x-rays and seeing several medical professionals, in addition to my ongoing lack of mobility, I was already not in a good mood. This was the last straw. Out of frustration, I wrote a short note on the back of one of my business cards, and left it on the other driver's car (in retrospect I know that was not a wise thing to do). I never heard back from them.

Other people have told me how difficult — if not impossible — it can be to get little children into and out of car seats when someone parks too close to them. Please be considerate and park between the lines.

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

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Teenagers, 40 years later

Even though "Lose 10 pounds" hasn't been crossed off my To Do list, I'm nonetheless flying to my 40th high school reunion this weekend. About 75 classmates I graduated with in 1984 will be there, to include my BFF, the mean girl on my bus, my mauve-tuxed prom date, and a myriad of others from my insecure teen years.

If that weren't enough to handle, the reunion committee, on short notice, asked me to give a speech at the event since I was Class Clown. "Just a recap," they said, "something to get them laughing."

As I packed my luggage with garments carefully selected to hide my expanding menopausal waistline, I wracked my brain for high school memories. So much had changed in the intervening decades: Our hometown, attitudes, the country, technology, society, the world.

Today's teenager is awakened by his iPhone 15 Pro Max alarm, and immediately checks his texts and notifications. His well-developed thumbs tap out any necessary replies, likes, and comments replete with trending language and emojis, before playing his favorite playlist on Spotify.

"Call Bae," he instructs Siri before brushing his unblemished teeth with Crest 3D Whitening toothpaste. His girlfriend says she's not picking him up because her lips are swollen from filler injections (a birthday gift from mom), so she's skipping school.

Dressed in a White Claw t-shirt, Lululemon track pants, and Air Pods, he takes a quick selfie, then downs a free-range chicken breakfast burrito and a can of Starbucks Vanilla Sweet Cream Cold Brew before calling an Uber. He's late for his Eco-Feminism class, but he usually spends that hour on SnapChat anyway.

At lunchtime, he orders a quinoa bowl, a Red Bull and a JUUL pod from Doordash,

which he enjoys while watching "Stranger Things" on his iPad in the cafeteria.

That afternoon, while copying a Chat-GPT-generated essay on "The Cultural Benefits of Doom Scrolling," he hears the Principal announce, "Due to an outbreak of the COVID-19 variant KP311, the graduating class ceremony will be held via Zoom."

Packing Spanx into my suitcase, I realized that my own high

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

school experience was nothing like a modern teen's scenario. Drifting back to 1984, an 8mm film clicked on, and I saw myself, forty years ago.

After being awakened by Culture Club's "Karma Chameleon" on my clock radio, I dragged myself off to the bathroom shared by my entire family, before selecting one of seven outfits that I rotated each week. When my curling iron was hot, I coiffed for maximum height, rolled Tickle deodorant under my arms, then applied purple frosted eyeshadow and Bonnie Bell root beer lip gloss.

As I shuffled toward my bus stop a half mile down the road, ignorantly wearing a Pep Club button declaring "Injuns have more fun," I realized that the

bowl of Captain Crunch that I'd hastily eaten for breakfast had shredded my gums. Carrying my German, Chemistry, Algebra II, and The Illiad books, I stepped onto the bus sweating profusely. My bus driver had one 8-track tape, which he played on a loop my entire senior year — AC/DC's "Dirty Deeds Done Dirt Cheap."

After 1st period, my BFF handed me a folded hand-written note before scooting off to class. During Chemistry, I placed the unfolded note in my textbook and read important updates on who liked who, what happened in study hall, Friday night plans, and other crucial matters.

Over a scoop of spaghetti with a side of Jell-O Jewels in the cafeteria, my friends and I strategized, mostly about getting boyfriends and being invited to parties. Without dates or fake IDs, our prospects seemed slim. But on Friday night, we'd take my parent's Chevy Blazer and cruise past the video arcade, hang out at the Mall, or sneak into the Palace Garden's Drive In theater and eventually find some fun.

For better or for worse, we were left to figure things out on our own, through passed notes, lunchroom gossip, rotary-dialed telephone calls, and Friday night visits to teenage haunts.

Our uncomplicated teenage lives might seem strange today. But social media, political correctness, advanced technologies, and instant gratification would have seemed even stranger to us back in 1984. Stranger things, indeed.

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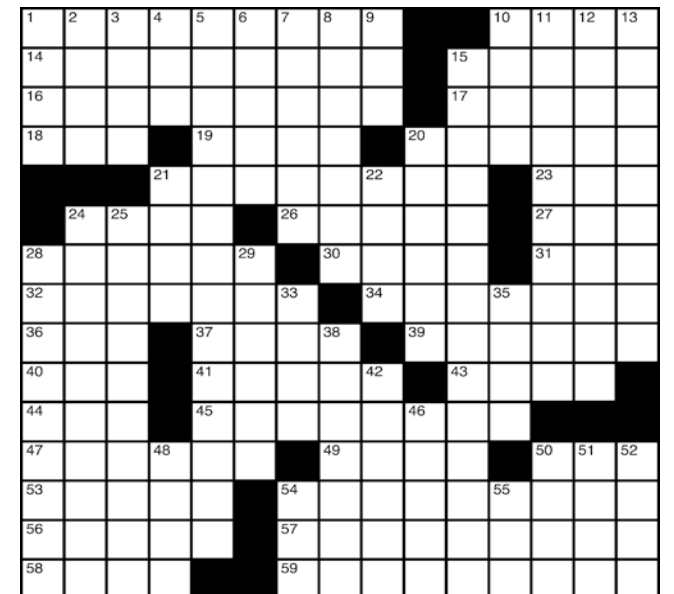


Across

1 Heard but not seen, as sound effects
10 Disconcerts
14 In a fog
15 Shore seen on TV
16 Tests
17 Film composer Morricone
18 ___Caps
19 Stand up
20 ___ Waters, most senior Black woman in Congress
21 Reached the nadir, with "out"
23 Waffle center?
24 ___ spot
26 Court figures
27 Bluffer's objective
28 Casual Fridays attire, perhaps
30 Account
31 ___ Valley: Tucson suburb
32 Begrudges
34 Breville product
36 "___ luck?"
37 Five carats
39 Tswana for "fly"
40 Bridge action
41 Sights seen by seers, maybe
43 Throw
44 Doce meses
45 Valiant
47 Abstract
49 Plant with corms
50 Greek letter used in the Schrödinger equation
53 Put forward
54 Black Sabbath devotee, say
56 Hirsch of "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood"
57 Fair-haired
58 Estonian neighbor
59 Reels

Down

1 Decides
2 Flowerless plant
3 Texas river named for its chilly waters
4 Busy pro around this time
5 "Seriously ..."
6 Distinction
7 Celebrates big-time
8 Let
9 They're seen in some wars
10 Spell
11 She plays Sheldon's grandma (Meemaw) on "Young Sheldon"
12 Much of Vancouver Island
13 Skechers milieu
15 The Israel Museum display
20 Wine denigrated in "Sideways"
21 Make madeleines, e.g.
22 Heart
24 Conformist's phrase
25 "Not too much"
28 Fourth-grade teacher in Springfield Elementary School
29 Automotive suspension components
33 First name in desserts
35 See 55-Down
38 Blue- or gray-furred cat
42 Wrap snugly
46 Small-muzzled horses
48 TD Garden NBAer
50 Four-time Gold Glove winner Tony
51 ___ City: Baghdad suburb
52 Ancient midpoint marker, more or less
54 Family figures
55 With 35-Down, precarious place



Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

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PHOTO OF THE WEEK



DOG DIVE

Air Force Staff Sgt. Jordan Cantrell watches as a military working dog jumps into a pool during water familiarization training at Aviano Air Base, Italy, Sept. 4, 2024. The training ensures the dogs are comfortable with various scenarios and environments. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Noah Sudolcan

Five Fun Facts about Military Working Dogs

1. Dogs have served with U.S. soldiers since the Revolutionary War.
2. MWDs are trained in detection, tracking, and attacking the enemy.
3. Dogs have earned their jump wings.
4. No dogs left behind.
5. There is a U.S. War Dogs Memorial.

ROY'S SUDOKU

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4	9	6	2	8	3	5	7	1
2	3	9	6	7	5	4	1	8
6	8	1	4	2	9	7	3	5
5	4	7	3	1	3	8	2	9



MOVIES AT THE BASES

MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF TO MAKE SURE THE TITLE AND TIME ARE STILL CORRECT...

<https://sandiego.navylifew.com/> select movies at dropdown menu on left
<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>
<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

NBSD and Lowry Theater Policy

- Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.
- Premium Offerings
• Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.



Movie Rating System

- G - General audiences ALL ages admitted.
- PG - Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.
- PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
- R - Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

Friends don't make friends wait in hot cars!

When the outside temp is 90° your car heats up to 109° in 15 minutes and 124° in 30 minutes.

@cocotheadventurepup



Tired, achy eyes? Finding relief for eye discomfort

Are your eyes tired, dry, or achy? Many factors can contribute to these types of symptoms. But a big culprit can be intense use of your eyes. Spending too much time looking at screens and held devices, like smartphones, can strain your eyes. So can normal aging. What can you do to find relief?

One major cause of eye discomfort is not blinking enough. "When we focus on tasks like reading or computer work, our blink rate just plummets," says Dr. Chantal Cousineau-Krieger, an NIH ophthalmologist.

Not blinking enough can cause your eyes to become dry and uncomfortable. Certain people are more prone to eye dryness, too. This includes those over age 50, women, and people who wear contact lenses. Certain medications, like antihistamines, and health conditions can also add to eye dryness.

Avoiding other factors that increase eye dryness may help your eyes feel better, too. Air blowing directly in your face



from a fan or from air vents in the car can contribute to eye dryness, says Cousineau-Krieger. So can smoke or windy conditions.

Normal aging can also lead to eye strain. With age, we start to lose our ability to focus on close objects. This is called presbyopia. Our eyes need to work harder to focus.

"When we look at something up close, we flex the muscle inside of our eye," Cousineau-Krieger explains. "And just like

any other muscle, if you hold the contraction for a long time, the muscle can become fatigued. Eventually, in your 40s, you end up not being able to see things up close as well. It's a natural part of aging that goes along with gray hairs and wrinkles. And then we typically need reading glasses to be able to see things up close."

But eye strain doesn't only happen to adults. Children can also develop symptoms from intensely using their eyes. They may not tell you that their eyes

hurt. Instead, they may start blinking forcefully or rubbing their eyes.

Spending too much time on screens is also now believed to be contributing to children developing nearsightedness. Studies have shown growing rates of nearsightedness in children over the past few decades.

To relieve eye discomfort, you can try some simple steps. Experts recommend the 20-20-20 rule. Take eye breaks every 20 minutes and look far in the distance, about 20 feet away, for about 20 seconds.

"Experts are recommending that children spend time outdoors playing to help them focus on things further at a distance," says Cousineau-Krieger. "Hopefully, this will also help decrease the amount of nearsightedness. The amount of nearsightedness is going up around the world."

Taking screen breaks and focusing on more distant objects can be helpful for everyone's eye health. See the Wise Choices box for more eye health tips. If simple lifestyle changes don't bring you relief from eye discomfort, it may be time to see a doctor for an eye exam.

WISE CHOICES

Protect your eye health

- Rest your eyes. Take a break from tasks that require focusing on nearby objects every 20 minutes, and look at something about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.
- Limit screen time and take breaks often. Encourage kids to spend more time outdoors and focus on things in the distance.
- Keep your eyes moist. Use eye drops called artificial tears when your eyes feel dry.
- Prevent the air in your home from getting too dry. Use a humidifier. Limit air conditioning.
- Wear sunglasses when outside. Choose sunglasses that block 99 to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB radiation.
- Keep your eyeglasses and/or contacts prescription current. Learn how to properly care for your contacts.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Drink plenty of water, eat healthy, and get enough physical activity. Healthy habits can lower your risk for diseases and conditions that lead to eye or vision problems.
- Quit smoking and keep your home smoke-free. Get free help at smokefree.gov, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or by texting QUIT to 47848.

Dial **988** then **PRESS 1**

Don't give in to gum disease

Periodontal, or gum, disease is an infection of the tissues that hold your teeth in place. It usually arises because of poor brushing and flossing habits. This can lead to a sticky film of bacteria called plaque, which builds up and hardens on teeth. The hard buildup, called tartar, can only be removed by a dentist or dental hygienist.

If not treated, gum disease can spread to the bones around the gums. It can make chewing painful. Eventually, it can lead to loose or lost teeth.

People with gum disease often have swollen, red, or bleeding gums. Other symptoms include persistent bad breath or sensitive teeth. People who smoke are especially at risk for gum disease. Other factors that raise your risk include hormone changes in girls and women, certain genes, and

health conditions like diabetes and AIDS and their medications.

Treatment options range from non-surgical to surgical interventions. It's important to keep brushing and flossing every day. Changing unhealthy habits and quitting smoking can be part of a treatment plan. Some patients may be referred to a specialist called

a periodontist. These are doctors who can provide advanced treatment for gum disease.

To keep your teeth and gums healthy, use fluoride toothpaste and brush your teeth twice a day. Floss regularly or use another dentist-recommended device to clean between teeth. Be sure to visit your dentist regularly.

Microbes in your mouth

Do you know what's in your mouth? It's home to about 700 species of microbes. These include germs like bacteria, fungus, and more.

"Everybody has these microbes in their mouth," says Dr. Robert Palmer, an NIH expert on oral microbes.

Some microbes are helpful. Others can cause problems like tooth decay and gum disease. Troubles begin when microbes form a sticky, colorless film called plaque on your teeth.

Brushing and flossing help to keep your mouth clean. But after you brush and floss, germs grow again and more plaque forms. That's why you need to clean your mouth regularly.

Different microbes grow in different places. Some stick to your teeth. Others prefer your tongue. Some lurk in the tiny pockets between tooth and gum.

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- Navigate to your area
- Finally, select the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

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