

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

www.armedforcesdispatch.com

619.280.2985

SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR NO. 48

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

APRIL 1-15, 2025



SUPER STRENGTH Marines assigned to the 2nd Marine Logistics Group conduct buddy squats during a beach workout as part of Corporals Course at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., March 19, 2025. Corporals Course provides Marines with the knowledge and skills to become successful small-unit leaders in the Marine Corps. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Christian Salazar

San Diego's USS Spruance joins the southern border operations

from U.S. Northern Command Public Affairs

PETERSON SPACE FORCE BASE, Colo. - Destroyer USS *Spruance* (DDG 111) departed Naval Base San Diego to support U.S. Northern Command southern border operations in the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility March 22.

In support of U.S. Northern Command's mission to restore territorial integrity at the U.S. southern border, *Spruance* reinforces the nation's commitment to border security by enhancing maritime efforts and supporting interagency collaboration. The ship's operations highlight the Department of Defense and Navy's dedication to national security priorities, contributing to a coordinated and robust response to combating maritime related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration.

"USS *Spruance*'s deployment as part of U.S. Northern Command's southern border mission brings additional capability and expands the geography of unique military capabilities working with the Department of Homeland Security," said Gen. Gregory Guillot, commander, U.S. Northern Command. "With *Spruance* off the West Coast and USS Gravelly in the Gulf of America, our maritime presence contributes to the all-domain, coordinated DOD response to the Presidential Executive Order and demonstrates our resolve to achieve operational control of the border."

Spruance will be accompanied by an embedded U.S. Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment (LEDET). Founded in 1982, Coast Guard LEDETs carry out a variety of maritime interdiction missions, including counter-piracy, military combat operations, alien migration interdiction, military force protection, counter terrorism, homeland security, and humanitarian response.

On Dec. 19, 2024, *Spruance* returned to Naval Base San Diego following a five-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation as part of the *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group. The strike group's mission was to bolster U.S. military force posture in the Middle East, deter regional escalation, degrade Houthi capabilities, defend U.S. forces, and sailed alongside allies and partners to promote security, stability and prosperity.

HOW THE NAVY'S NEW 'ROBOT' RATING IS SHAPING CURRENT AND FUTURE OPS

by MC1 Kelby Sanders

When military history enthusiasts, Hollywood producers and cooky uncles predict

a distant future A.I.-driven robot war in the vein of The Terminator, don't shake your head at them.

When defense industry leaders, D.C.-based think tanks and top military brass emphasize to Congress that our success in potential high-end warfare rests on the integrity of our networks and automated systems, don't roll your eyes.

The earliest recorded use of unmanned aerial vehicles in warfare dates back to 1849, and as drone technology and capability continues to develop at a rapid pace, the potential influence unmanned platforms could have on future military operations around the globe is boundless.

Enter the Robotics Warfare Specialist (RW). Reading the trends, the Navy announced NAVADMIN 036/24 to recruit, train and develop a corps of Sailors to operate and maintain

unmanned surface, air, ground and subsurface vessels.

"The RW rating creates expertise that supports current and future advancements in technology," said Master Chief Christopher Rambert, the RW Enlisted Community Manager. "It gives the Navy an opportunity to assess, develop, and retain an agile force of experts capable of mastering skills required to deploy robotic/unmanned systems."

Chief Robotics Warfare Specialist, or RWC, Christian Butler, assigned to Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron 3, explains the importance of the new rating and the role they may play in future missions.

"In future naval operations, see **Rating**, page 2



Sailors assigned to Unmanned Surface Vessel Squadron 3 are shown here with Global Autonomous Reconnaissance Crafts at Naval Base Point Loma, Nov. 26, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Kelby Sanders

DoD to cut \$580 million in spending

by Matthew Olay, DOD News

As part of the Defense Department's ongoing effort to cut wasteful spending, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth signed a memo recently directing the termination of more than \$580 million in programs, contracts and grants. The memo, "Continuing Elimination of Wasteful Spending at the Department of Defense," orders an end to various spending identified by the Department of Government Efficiency that doesn't match the priorities of President Donald J. Trump or the Defense Department, Hegseth said during prerecorded remarks. "In other words, [the expenditures] are not a good use of taxpayer dollars; [and], ultimately, that's who funds us," Hegseth said. The top contract being cut is a software development program for the Defense Civilian Human Resources Management System, which was intended to streamline a significant portion of DOD's legacy human resources program.

INSIDE:
Marines rescue stranded civilian in California desert
... page 8

PRSR STD
ECRMSS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
EDDM RETAIL

Local Postal Customer

Read the Dispatch online weekly
New issues posted weekly online in a downloadable pdf format at www.afdispatch.com.

Your FREE weekly paper
Take one!

Rating
continued from page 1

I can see RWs being a part of almost every domain of operations,” said Butler.

Thinking broadly, proliferation of unmanned platforms can offer a high degree of operational flexibility. Among many other missions, they can act as sensors dispersed around surface action groups to locate and target enemy contacts or rapidly deliver supplies and equipment to units operating in hostile environments while minimizing risk to human life.

“Why send a manned ship so close to danger, just to sense or detect something that an unmanned surface, aerial or underwater vehicle can detect,” wondered Butler. “The other thing they can provide is destruction. I can be hundreds of miles away and cause devastation without putting myself at risk.”

Butler, formerly an Electronics Technician (ET) prior to transitioning to RW, had a lot of relevant career experience before making the transition, but as an ET he was a technician and not necessarily an operator.

“It’s a little bit different as an RW. You’re expected to be technically savvy and also to operate the system you just fixed,” said Butler. “If you go somewhere with a small, unmanned surface vessel or unmanned aerial vehicle, you’re expected to not only work on it and keep it functioning properly, but also operate that same vehicle.”

The RW job description on MyNavyHR.navy.mil reads like something far more complex and science-focused than most other Navy ratings. It contains terms like oceanography, meteorol-

ogy, bathymetry, aerodynamics, fluid dynamics, radio frequency theory, electrical theory, acoustics, information systems, and networking among several others.

When asked about what kind of Sailor should consider applying to become an RW Rampert said, “a motivated, tech-savvy Sailor with the desire to grow professionally in a community that we continue to define.”

Being a new community still in the process of developing its training pipeline affords its early adopters opportunities to influence the rating’s development and blaze the trail for future RWs.

“It’s an exciting space to be in because we’re surrounded by some of the brightest young Sailors in the Navy and the space is evolving and changing rapidly whether its surface, underwater, aerial or ground,” said Butler.

We may not know exactly what the future holds or what a future high-end conflict would look like, but unmanned systems will be involved. If you’re interested in a job that will put you in position to have a direct impact on the full spectrum of operations going far into the future, check out the Robotics Warfare Specialist Page on MyNavy HR.

“There’s a scene in Terminator when they’re shooting lasers or bullets at each other, right? And they’re falling and it’s all scorched earth. It’s like a future hell, and these robots are shooting other robots and there are craters and smoke and stuff,” explained Butler. “It’s right around the corner. It’s already happening in certain spaces. We’re buckled in and ready to see it through.”



Airmen conduct an open ranks inspection at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla, Oct. 4, 2024. U.S. Air Force photo by Samuel King, Jr.

UNIFORM SHORTAGE SENDS AIRMEN SCRAMBLING AS AIR FORCE INSPECTIONS LOOM

by Zade Vadnais
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany - Some airmen are scouring thrift stores and other outlets to find proper attire as the Air Force ramps up uniform inspections ahead of a new policy requiring quarterly checks.

Quarterly inspections begin March 31 and unit commanders began scheduling inspections shortly after receiving the Jan. 30 memo from Lt. Gen. Scott L. Pleus, Air Force director of staff. That led to a surge in demand for certain required uniform items.

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service, which sells uniforms on Air Force bases worldwide, has struggled to keep up. Some locations have run out of stock of various items and all stores have seen a marked increase in sales in recent weeks, according to Chris Ward, an AAFES spokesman.

At Ramstein Air Base, AAFES has seen a 94 percent spike in sales of the service dress uniform over the last four weeks compared to the same period last year, Ward said.

Similar shortages have been reported at other locations and some uniform items are sold out online as well. Air Force service dress trousers, in particular, are on backorder, Ward said. He didn’t specify how long it would take to meet demand.

With required uniform items unavailable through AAFES, airmen have turned to thrift stores, eBay, and other second-hand sources.

“I’ve noticed a huge influx of people coming in, in the past two months,” said Timothy Whalen, a volunteer at Ramstein’s Airman’s Attic, a donation-based store that offers free clothing and household goods to junior enlisted service

members and their families.

Whalen sees anywhere from 20 to 50 airmen visit the Airman’s Attic in search of second-hand uniform items each day, many of them “panicked” by the widespread lack of availability as unit inspections loom.

He often sees the same people returning multiple times per week in hopes that additional items have been donated.

Navy culinary team wins 19 medals at joint exercise

FORT GREGG-ADAMS, Va. - Navy culinary specialists from across the fleet recently competed at the 49th annual Joint Culinary Training Exercise. This year’s training event attracted over 150 U.S. military personnel from installations and activities worldwide, alongside allied forces teams from the Republic of Korea, Germany, the U.K., and France. The exercise, managed by the Joint Culinary Center of Excellence (JCCOE), is the largest American Culinary Federation (ACF) -sanctioned competition in North America. JCTE showcases the talents of military chefs from around the globe and has evolved into the premier culinary competition in the military. Overall, the Navy team managed an impressive showing at this year’s competition taking home 19 medals across various categories including 12 gold medals, 3 silver, 4 bronze, and 3 Best in Show wins. Navy culinary specialists continue to play a vital role in fleet readiness. Beyond traditional food preparation, today’s specialists manage complex food service systems, implement nutritional optimization programs, and ensure food security in contested environments.

“I’ve even heard people say they went to Stuttgart to get stuff, which is smart on their behalf but also crazy that they have to drive an hour away or longer to acquire those items that they need,” Whalen said.

Despite the shortages, the Air Force has not announced any adjustments to the inspection schedule or the enforcement of uniform standards.

VET TIX
FREE TICKETS FOR TROOPS
Free event tickets for active military members, veterans and their families.
JOIN TODAY AT VETTIX.ORG

SoCalTruck.com
ACCESSORIES & EQUIPMENT
10460 Mission Gorge Rd.
Santee, CA 92071
619-749-0742
Work Smarter, Play Harder!

- Truck Bed Covers • Camper Shells
- Side Steps • Truck Racks
- Tool Boxes • Fuel Tanks
- Carpet Kits • Tow Hitches

MILITARY DISCOUNT
Get \$25 off \$300 or more with this ad

BULLET LINER
Spray on Bedliners

MAIN AUTO REPAIR

“ALL WORK GUARANTEED”

FREE ESTIMATES - Serving Military for Over 23 years

<p>BRAKE SERVICE SPECIAL from \$140 Per Axle, Parts & Labor included. Most Cars Standard Brake Packages Don't Wait Until You Have a Problem!</p>	<p>A/C Service \$95</p>	<p>Body Work and Paint</p>	<p>CLUTCH \$319 <small>Most Cars. Parts & Labor included. Includes: Pressure plate and disc. Adjustment, New throw out bearing, Pilot bearing, Inspect flywheel</small></p>
<p>TIMING BELT SPECIAL from \$199 <small>Most Cars. Parts & Labor included</small></p>	<p>CV JOINT AXLE from \$220 <small>Most Cars. Parts & Labor included</small></p>	<p>FUEL INJECTION SERVICE from \$89 <small>Most Cars. Parts & Labor included</small></p>	

3714 Main Street, San Diego • 619-238-4385

Art Gallery



ARDENT ALLEGIANCE Navy recruits take the U.S. citizenship oath during a naturalization ceremony inside the Recruit Memorial Chapel at Recruit Training Command, Ill., March 13, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Christopher M. O'Grady

PROFILE PIC

Maine Air National Guard Senior Airman Victoria Murphy conducts a midair refueling over North America during Operation Noble Defender, March 17, 2025. Noble Defender strengthens the North American Aerospace Defense Command missions of aerospace warning, aerospace control and maritime warning. U.S. Air Force courtesy photo



Trump, Hegseth announce Air Force's next generation fighter platform

by Matthew Olay
DOD News

During a press conference at the White House March 21, President Donald J. Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that the Air Force would proceed with the production of the Next Generation Air Dominance fighter jet platform.

Intended to eventually replace the Air Force's fleet of F-22 Raptors, the NGAD platform is a network-connected family of systems - including a stealth fighter jet component, drone technology and others - that simultaneously interact to ensure air superiority.

"I'm thrilled to announce that, at my direction, the United States Air Force is moving forward with the world's first sixth-generation fighter jet ... Nothing in the world comes even close to it," Trump said, adding that the aircraft portion of the platform will be designated the F-47.

The president added that the F-47 will be the most advanced, capable and lethal combat aircraft platform ever built and that the NGAD contract represents a historic investment in the

country's defense industrial base, keeping the U.S. on the cutting edge of aerospace technology.

Hegseth said this was a big day for the warfighters. Because of this sixth-generation fighter, America will have generations of air dominance.

"[The F-47] sends a very direct, clear message to our allies that we're not going anywhere and to our enemies that we can, and we will, be able to project power around the globe, unimpeded, for generations to come," he added.

Hegseth also said he sees the NGAD program as a historic investment in both the U.S. military and the U.S. defense industrial base, which will help to revive the warrior ethos in the armed services.

The ability of NGAD's fighter jet component to interact with drone technology will allow more lethality and modernized capability than in previous weapons systems, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David W. Allvin said at the press conference.

"[NGAD] is allowing us to look into the future and unlock the magic that is human-machine

teaming," Allvin said. "We're going to write the next generation of modern aerial warfare with this."

He added that the way the Air Force has assembled the NGAD program will give the government more control, allowing the platform to be updated and adapted "at the speed of relevance [and] at the speed of technology."

Additionally, the F-47 will cost less than the F-22, be more adaptable to future threats and "have significantly longer range, more advanced stealth, be more

sustainable, supportable, and have higher availability than our fifth-generation fighters," Allvin said via a press release following the announcement at the White House.

Though no costs or timelines for NGAD production were released during the press conference, the president said a fleet of F-47s would be "built and in the air" during his current administration.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4131804/>

Armed Forces Dispatch

published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
619-280-2985 • E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com
Editor.....Scott Sutherland

The Dispatch is published online weekly on Thursdays, and in print on the 1st & 16th of each month by Western States Weeklies, Inc., as a commercial, free-enterprise newspaper. The editorial objective of the Dispatch is to promote support for a strong military presence. Contents of the Armed Forces Dispatch are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or U.S. Marine Corps. The opinions and views of writers whose materials appear herein are those of the writers and not the publishers. Appearance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or any other DOD component, this newspaper, or Western States Weeklies, Inc. Subscription cost is \$75/year.

We've Got Your Bases Covered

We're here to help the military community and their families make the most of their money.

Our members could earn and save \$461* per year by banking with us.

Visit navyfederal.org to join.



Insured by NCUA.

*Dollar value shown represents the results of the 2023 Navy Federal Member Giveback Study. The Member Giveback Study takes into consideration internal market analyses comparing Navy Federal products with industry national averages, as well as member discounts, incentives, and other savings. Image used for representational purposes only; does not imply government endorsement. © 2024 Navy Federal NFCU 14233-E (9-24)



ARMY
MARINE CORPS
NAVY
AIR FORCE
SPACE FORCE
COAST GUARD
VETERANS

Our Members Are the Mission



Army

- Army unveils new Mariner and Mountaineer Badges
- 2 West Point grads think it's time for a military academy for cyber, space, and robotics

Navy

- USS Carl Vinson drills with Japanese, South Korean forces; Moscow draws complaint from Seoul over military flights

Air Force

- Trump appoints 5 new members to USAFA Board of Visitors
- Air Force may need to extend the KC-135 service life: AMC boss
- F-35s from Hill AFB arrive in England
- As tanker plans remains uncertain, today's Air Force refuelers may fly past their 100th birthday

Space Force

- Space Force unveils multi-front push to fix its Unified Data Library
- Putting missile interceptors in space critical to defending U.S. citizens: Space Force boss
- Saltzman: Space Force in 'pretty good spot' regarding DoD funding shift

Coast Guard

- House bill offers job security for Coast Guard members near retirement

Veterans

- Pentagon restores histories of Navajo Code Talkers, other Native veterans after public outcry
- The hidden costs of caregiving: Meet the kids taking care of wounded veterans
- Veteran services claims around Spokane more than doubled last year

Overseas Operations

- The last Houthi attack was months ago. But the U.S. military has now launched an open ended campaign in Yemen.

Military Culture & History

- 'Saving Private Ryan' didn't make the Army's list of most accurate movie portrayals
- 'The Unkillable Soldier' who kept fighting despite losing an eye and hand in World War I
- 80 years ago, Patton's Army rolled into what is now the largest U.S. military community overseas

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- Kratos has a hypersonic drone in the works
- Pentagon CIO calls for more offensive cyber capability
- DARPA eyes quantum sensors that are easier to buy, tougher in the field
- A deeper look at Africom's recent airstrikes under the Trump administration

Bringing Medal of Honor heroics to life

by Katie Lange

The Defense Department often partners with filmmakers to create accurate military portrayals, which is why we collaborated with streaming giant Netflix on a big venture: a docuseries celebrating Medal of Honor recipients.

The series highlights the lives and experiences of eight men who earned the honor since World War II. So naturally, several current and former service members were asked to offer their expertise behind the scenes and on camera.

Humvees & script help & actors, Oh my!

"[The DOD] sent several active-duty soldiers to be background in an episode, but they also sent Humvees and other vehicles, which are valuable assets to have for authenticity," said Marine Corps veteran Mike Dowling, who now works in the entertainment industry and did a lot of advising on choreography, tactics and weapons for the show.

Many of those soldiers were from the New York Army National Guard. One of the show's highlighted recipients, Army Master Sgt. Vito Bertoldo, was a member of the 42nd Infantry Division during World War II, which is now part of the NYARNG. So, it made sense for them to be part of it.

For an episode on Air Force

Hegseth gives order to enhance military mission at southern border

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

In an announcement on March 25, service members assigned to Joint Task Force Southern Border have a new directive: conduct patrols.

Until now, the U.S. military mission at the southern border has been static. Service members have been engaged mostly in stationary detection and monitoring activities. But no longer.

On March 20, Defense Secretary



Mike Dowling poses for a photo with actors playing World War II German and American soldiers during the Army Sgt. Sylvester Antolak episode of the "Medal of Honor" docuseries. Several of the actors are military veterans. Courtesy story

Chief Master Sgt. Richard Etchberger, the Air Force reviewed the script, offered historical Vietnam footage to filmmakers and had historians consult on the reenactment scenes.

The other recipients highlighted are World War II soldiers Army Sgt. Sylvester Antolak and Army Sgt. Edward Carter, Korean War troops Army Cpl. Hiroshi Miyamura and Marine Corps Cpl. Joseph Vittori, and more recent recipients Army Spc. Ty Carter and Army Staff Sgt. Clint Romesha, who fought in Afghanistan.

Dowling also connected the production to resources in the veteran community, including

getting veterans jobs as actors, stuntmen, editors and production assistants. The DOD helped him verify the vets who applied for positions.

"This production was extremely supportive of getting veterans hired when possible," he said.

Reconnecting long-lost vets

A lot of research went into finding the recipients' brothers in arms to tell their stories on camera — a tough prospect when decades have passed for many of them. But Dowling said their efforts actually helped put the Congressional Medal of Honor Society back in touch with a few of the recipients'

to cover a larger area of the border, affording them dynamic observation across multiple angles and distances."

Being mobile, Staton said, also adds an element of unpredictability for those considering illegal entry into the country. Knowing soldiers are on the move makes it harder to plan movements or cross locations.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4134243/>

families who it had lost touch with over the years.

One of the best connections they made was this:

"We couldn't find anybody to tell Joe Vittori's story," Dowling said.

But he had learned of a man named Lyle Conaway, who fought side by side with Vittori in battle. And Dowling couldn't find any obituaries for Conaway.

"So I started calling American Legions in his hometown and ... we found him. He's alive," Dowling said. "He doesn't even have a phone. I had the commander of the legion drive to his house and call me from his cellphone to put me on the phone with him. I had to speak to him through his girlfriend because he can't really hear all that well. But once he realized what we were calling for, he said, 'Oh my God, I have to tell Joe's story. I needed to do this.'"

But wait: It gets better!

Conaway helped put them in touch with several other living Marines who witnessed Vittori's actions. One of them was Tom Zayas, who producers brought in for an interview with Conaway.

"They had not seen each other since the night of the battle. Lyle had been medically evacuated that night," Dowling said. "They would keep in touch, but they'd never seen each other. So, we reunited them from the battle on camera for the series about Joe's story."

Pretty cool, huh?

This was Netflix's first partnership with the DOD. We're glad they decided to aim high for it!

You can find the docuseries, aptly titled Medal of Honor, currently streaming on Netflix.

Apostolic Faith - Door of Hope Christian Church
"A place of HEALING, HAPPINESS, & MIRACLES!"
 Rays Of Hope Sunday Morning Glory Prayer 9:30am
 Sunday Morning Worship Celebration 10:15am
 2420 52nd Street, San Diego 92105
 "Wherever there is GOD there is HOPE!" Join Us!
 Visit www.hopeformesd.org or Call 619.414.8251

Bayview Church
Attract...Assimilate...Activate
 6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 • (619) 262-8384
 Sunday 8am & 10am Worship Services
 Studies In Christian Living (formerly Sunday School) Tues & Thurs online only 6pm (contact Church for sign up). In person Saturday 9am & 10am
www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org

Bethany Lutheran Church
 Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
 2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach 92107
 (Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building)
 Worship 11am Sundays
 Bible Class, Wednesday 10am
 (619)222-7291 Office@BethanyLutheranOB.org

Canyon View Church of Christ
"Love God, Love People, Serve the World"
 Sunday Bible Classes for all ages 9am
 Sunday Worship 10am
 4292 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 Email:cvooffice@canyonview.org
 (Near corner of Balboa Ave. & Clairemont Dr.)
www.canyonview.org (858) 273-5140

Places of Worship

Place your ad in our 'Places of Worship' directory....as low as \$15 per week!

Christ Community Church
"Helping people love God, find community and make a difference"
 Sunday services at 8:45am and 10:30am
 Children's ministry for all kids. Life groups for teens and adults.
 9535 Kearny Villa Rd. Mira Mesa, 92126. Just off I-15 and Miramar Rd.
 More Info: www.gotoChrist.com

First Baptist Church of Coronado
"Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach Our World"
 Jim W. Balze, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com
 Sunday Adult Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10am
 Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook
 FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado email: secretary@fbcoronado.com
 445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588

Immanuel Oceanside, LCMS
Connecting people to what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do.
 9:30am Worship service
 11am Bible class, Youth, Children's Ministry
 1900 S. Nevada St, Oceanside, 92054
immanueloceanside.com - (760) 458-6570

Mesa View Baptist Church
 Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CWO3, USMC (Ret.)
Seeking Sinners; Saving Souls, Strengthening Saints
 Sunday School at 8:45am • Morning Worship at 10am
 Wednesday Night Bible Study 7pm
 13230 Pomerado Rd., Poway • 858-485-6110 • www.mesaview.org

Resurrection Lutheran Church & Preschool of Coronado
 Sunday Worship: 10:15am • Adult Bible Study: Sunday at 9am
 The Rev. Dr. Timothy Eichler
 1111 5th Street, Coronado, CA 92118
www.RL.church
 Church (619) 435-1000 • Preschool (619) 435-0286

St. Luke's Lutheran Church
 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942
 Phone: (619) 463-6633
 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org
 Worship: 9am
 Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD.
We thank you for your service!

Career and Education

Four-legged Green Berets: The canine operators of Army special forces

by Army Maj. Wes Shinego
DOD News

From selection to retirement, elite multipurpose canines are the silent Green Berets who don't always bask in the spotlight but are equally deserving of it.

These four-legged warriors of the Army Special Forces undergo rigorous vetting, endure the same hardships as their human teammates and retire with the dignity of professionals. Their careers mirror those of the special operators they serve

on meritocracy, standards and lethality.

For one Special Forces dog handler — an 18D medic whose identity remains classified, like that of his canine partner — the connection with his dog is as much a brotherhood as any forged among the soldiers of his team.

"He's a ... soldier himself," the handler said. "He gets a seat in the vehicle, a seat in the helicopter and he's as much a member of the team as anyone else."

grueling assessments faced by human candidates aspiring to join the Special Forces community. Before a canine sets a paw in the Army Special Forces kennels, the dog undergoes a battery of evaluations that include X-rays, physical exams and behavioral screenings.

"They get screened just like we do," the handler said.

The goal is to identify Belgian Malinois with the physical resilience and mental clarity to thrive in the chaos of special operations — a rigorous standard aligned with the defense secretary's vision.

Not every dog makes the cut. Some assessments reveal health issues — hidden until the strain of leaping from helicopters or sprinting toward enemy combatants takes its toll. Others lack the temperament to balance aggression with control. Army Special Forces seek a rare breed that's levelheaded yet fierce, capable of biting a combatant on command while remaining calm under pressure.

"We're going against hundreds of years of breeding that taught dogs not to bite humans," the handler said. "But we need them to do it professionally — until I say, 'no more.'"

Much like a soldier overcoming the instinct to avoid violence, these dogs are trained to channel their prey drive into precision. The result is a canine operator that can lock onto a target with unwavering focus, holding steady until the mission demands otherwise.

Service

Once selected, canines integrate into Army Special Forces as full-fledged team members. They ride alongside their handlers in planes, helicopters and wheeled vehicles, their presence accounted for in every plan.

"You don't plan for the dog to be on the floor," the handler said. "He gets a seat."

This isn't just a courtesy — it's a recognition of the dog's role. They are assets, trained in explosive detection, tracking and apprehension, often deployed on direct-action raids where split-second decisions mean life or death.

The parallels to their human counterparts deepen in combat. Just as Green Berets face the unnatural stress of gunfire and explosions, their dogs endure the same.

"It's not natural for a dog to be around that," the handler admits.

The demanding nature of their service can leave a lasting impact on these courageous dogs. Some, after enduring multiple deployments, return profoundly altered, unable to carry on. Others, scarred by the intense pressures of even a single tour, find themselves needing a different kind of life away from the frontlines. Their struggles serve as a poignant reminder of their sensitivity and the invisible wounds they carry.

Still, many dogs soldier on, their intelligence and work ethic shining through.

The dogs have high IQs and learn to associate stressors — like the roar of a helicopter — with the job, thriving in the pack mentality of the team, the handler said.

"Everyone smells the same,



An Army SOF canine handler guides his military working dog through an obstacle course during a K9 skills competition at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., May 16, 2024. Approximately 20 teams from Air Force, Army and local law enforcement participated in the competition. U.S. Air Force photo by Samuel King Jr.,

dresses the same, gives off the same endorphins," he said. "The dog knows we're going to work, and they love it."

The physical toll of life on a Special Forces team is equally humanlike. The dogs break teeth, rip toenails and jam necks chasing down threats with blatant disregard for their well-being. Preventative surgeries are standard procedure. When injuries occur veterinary services mirror the actions of medics who patch up their two-legged teammates.

Retirement

When a canine's service ends, the parallels between their human counterpart persists. Retirement isn't a haphazard affair — it's a deliberate transition, reflecting the canine's contributions to the team.

Dogs too rattled for further Special Forces missions often move on to serve in conventional units — like Air Force security forces — where they patrol bases in less strenuous environments. Others find new purpose with law enforcement, their explosive-detection skills still sharp. For those too damaged by ser-

vice — physically or mentally — retirement means a quieter life, often with their handlers.

For this particular handler's own dog, retirement looms. After years of surgeries and kennel rest at the handler's home — where he's a family member — the transition promises to be seamless.

"My kids know him, my wife knows him, my other dogs know him," he said. "He'll have no trouble becoming a couch dog."

The deepest parallel lies in the relationships these dogs forge. For the Army Special Forces handler, his canine is more than a system — he's a partner and friend. Bringing the dog home during recovery periods has blurred the lines between duty and family.

"Since I started working with dogs, I've become accustomed to that lifestyle," he said. "My canine inspired me to continue service through some of my toughest years in uniform. He's as responsible for my success as anyone else on my team."



A Soldier accompanies his dog during a training exercise at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., March 12, 2025. U.S. Army photo by Maj. Patrick Connelly

alongside, forging bonds that often transcend their time in the military.

In the shadows of America's most exclusive fighting force, these dogs prove that courage, loyalty and sacrifice aren't exclusive to the men and women who wear the uniform — a testament to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's warfighting focuses

He's also a gifted tracker whose natural talent elevates him above his peers and has earned him an exclusive position within the Army's special operations community, his handler said.

Selection

The journey begins with a selection process not unlike the

Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) Southwest

Region Legal Service Office Southwest supports the operational readiness of Department of the Navy commands and Sailors in the Southwestern United States by providing responsive, timely and accurate legal guidance, support services and training in the areas of military justice, administrative law and legal assistance.

Powers of Attorney and Notary Services

For power-of-attorney and notary services, walk-in hours are:

- Monday from 8-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m.
- Tuesday-Thursday from 8:45-11 a.m. and 12:45-3 p.m.
- Fridays from 9-11 a.m.
- The office is closed the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month.

All customers must present two forms of identification:

1. Valid military identification card
2. Valid state-issued drivers license, state-issued identification card, or valid United States Passport.

Divorce Seminar

Eligible clients who would like more information on the divorce process or assistance completing the paperwork for divorce may attend the 3-part divorce seminar. Each part must be taken in sequential order; however, it is not necessary to attend each part in the same week.

Doors open for all seminars at 12:45 a.m. - seminar begins at 1 p.m.

- Monday - PART I: General information (Video) and Q&A.
- Tuesday - PART II: Initial Paperwork
- Thursday - PART III: Service of Process and Financial Disclosures

Commander, Navy Region Southwest Staff Judge Advocate

Mailing address: Commander, Navy Region Southwest SJA (31530), San Diego, CA 92132

Phone number: (619) 532-1418; Fax: (619) 532-1426

Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m, Monday-Friday

Come Pitch With Us!

Southern California Horseshoe Pitchers Association (SCHPA), a charter of the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA), has clubs all over the southern half of California. These clubs all have first class horseshoe courts built to official specifications.

- Organized tournaments most weekends year around
- All skill levels and ages welcome. When you enter a tournament, you will be seeded with other players with similar skill levels for fair, enjoyable and friendly competition.
- Local clubs located at Balboa Park, Carlsbad, Encinitas, Ramona
- For info visit <https://socalhorseshoes.weebly.com/>
- Join today and we'll see you at the pits!



NHPA
National Horseshoe Pitchers Association
"Come Pitch with Us!"



Armstrong assumes command of Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 3

by Lt.j.g. Erin McCullagh
IMPERIAL BEACH - Cmdr. Alyssa Armstrong relieved Cmdr. Brandon Castle as commanding officer, Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron (MSRON) 3, during a change-of-command ceremony at Naval Outlying Landing Field, Imperial Beach, Calif., March 21, 2025.



Castle, from Fremont, Calif., led a team of more than 300 Sailors during his 18-month tenure at MSRON-3 from Nov. 2023 to Mar. 2025. His next assignment will be serving as the Commanding Officer of Maritime Expeditionary Security Training and Evaluation Unit (TEU) One, based in Imperial Beach, Calif.

"It has been an honor and privilege to wear the MSRON-3 patch and work for this team," said

Castle. "We completed every mission given to us, supported other teams when we were asked and supported each other when it was needed. Thank you for everything we accomplished while I was fortunate enough to be on the team."

Armstrong, from Gaithersburg, Md. was selected as commanding officer after completing a successful tour as MSRON-3's executive officer.

"I am incredibly excited to lead the seasoned team of leaders at MSRON-3," said Armstrong. "We are a more lethal, expeditionary force because of Cmdr. Castle's legacy, and I look forward to building further upon it as our teams deploy worldwide in support of harbor and embarked maritime security."

Fleet logistics center fuel facilities honored for 'excellence in fuel management'

by Frank Valdez
NAVSUP FLC San Diego

Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center San Diego teams at Defense Fuel Support Point at Point Loma and Naval Air Station Fallon have been named winners of the CY24 Excellence in Naval Fuel Management Awards in the Bulk Fuel and the Retail Fuel categories, respectively.

Led by NAVSUP FLCSD Code 700 Regional Fuels Director, Lt. Cmdr. Alex Xia, Regional Fuels Deputy Director, Eric Parsha, and Regional Fuels Supervisor, George Sharp, their demonstrated exceptional performance in fuel operations, inventory management, and environmental compliance, ensured seamless support for the fleet in calendar year calendar year 2024.

"These award recipients exemplify the highest standards of excellence in fuel management, ensuring mission readiness and operational success across the fleet," said Rear Adm. Kenneth W. Epps, NAVSUP Commander and Chief of Supply Corps. "Their dedication and expertise are vital to sustaining forces worldwide."

The team at DFSP Point Loma, led by Installation Fuels

Officer Shaun Nace, and Fuels Distribution Manager Moses Truesdale, successfully managed a significant rise in fuel demand, adapting to a 34 percent surge over three years, despite staffing shortages, without compromising efficiency or safety. Their adaptability in the face of such challenges is a testament to their resilience and commitment to the mission. The YON team successfully performed over 100 critical fuel/de-fuel missions, delivering more than 9 million gallons of fuel to vessels in port.

Additionally, in 2024, they conducted nearly 1,900 fueling operations while processing over 200 million gallons of fuel, including vital support for exercises like QLLEX, a unique annual joint mission which heavily involves the National Guard, which involved refueling over 150 trucks. The facility also played a crucial role in maintaining consistent fuel deliveries to key installations such as NAS North Island and MCAS Miramar.

Maintaining rigorous inventory controls, the facility achieved a remarkably low variance in fuel accounting—well below the acceptable threshold—demonstrating meticulous oversight and adherence to regulatory policies. The regional petroleum



Code 700 Regional Fuels Team at DFSP Point Loma. Photo by Frank Valdez

laboratory at the facility provided critical testing services, conducting over 9,000 fuel quality assessments despite being understaffed. Their work has been instrumental in guaranteeing the reliability of fuel supplied to military vessels and air stations across the region.

Training and safety remain cornerstones of the facility's success, with personnel completing over 500 hours of extensive training in safety procedures, equipment operation, and emergency response. Safety and environmental management are consistently upheld, with multiple inspections affirming compliance with stringent regulations. Inspectors did not identify any significant deficiencies and commended the team on their best practices in hazardous material handling.

At NAS Fallon, a dedicated team, led by Henry Nusi, Installation Fuels Officer, and Jack Seymour, Quality Assurance Evaluator, supported vital programs, including training for carrier air wings, Top Gun, and special operations units. Their dedication to these programs, and to the mission, is truly inspiring. The team set a record by dispensing over four million gallons of jet fuel in just two months, a critical contribution to deployment preparations.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/492846/navsup-flc-san-diego-fuel-facilities-honored-excellence-fuel-management>

MILITARY JUSTICE LAWYER

PATTISON LAW FIRM, P.C.
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.

Daphne Pattison Silverman
Selected to Super Lawyers

760-500-0455
daphnesilverman.com

THE DOG WIZARD CORONADO

Veteran Owned & Operated **619-419-0160**

15% Off ALL training programs
for Active Duty & Veterans

Call us OR scan QR Code to schedule your FREE Evaluation While you're busy serving your country, we are here to serve you!

Quality Care With A Gentle Touch

NOW OFFERING

10% OFF

For all Military

4250-C Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
San Diego, Ca. 92117
858-274-1760

Spring is poppin with gorgeous sexy colors!!

Come in & Celebrate our

Annual Adult Egg Hunt

SATURDAY, APRIL 19th

Two eggs per customer while supplies last
Refreshments served all day.

DON'T MISS THIS FUN DAY!

DÉJÀ VU
LOVE BOUTIQUE

2130 Industrial Ct., Vista, CA 92081
866-711-0425

Shop online at www.dejavuloveboutique.com
Hours: 10am-10pm 7 Days a Week

Military Discount 20% Off

With valid military ID. Some restrictions may apply. Not valid on any sale items. Not valid with other offers or prior purchases. Exp. 4/30/25

VETERAN

COMPENSATION SERVICES

VETERANS WITH LESS THAN 100% VA RATING
WE CAN HELP YOU!

- ✓ Risk-Free Consultation
- ✓ Experts in VA Documentation
- ✓ Veteran Friendly Doctors

- ✓ Over 95% Success Rate
- ✓ Thousands of Veterans Served
- ✓ Experienced A+ Rated with BBB

www.VeteranComp.com

USS *Spruance* leaves San Diego on mission to fight 'illegal seaborne immigration'



Cmdr. Matt Adams, skipper of USS *Spruance*, observes the transit through the San Diego Harbor from the ship's bridge March 22. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Joseph Sitter

TIMES OF SAN DIEGO - Guided-missile destroyer USS *Spruance* left Naval Base San Diego March 22 on a border security mission in support of President Trump's immigration crackdown.

Destroyer USS *Spruance* transits San Diego Bay Mar. 22. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Claire M. Alfaro

geography of unique military capabilities working with the Department of Homeland Security," said Gen. Gregory Guillot of Northern Command.

main, coordinated DOD response to the Presidential Executive Order and demonstrates our resolve to achieve operational control of the border," Guillot said.

The warship was last deployed to the Middle East, where it helped repel Houthi missile and drone attacks as part of the *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group.

The U.S. Northern Command said the warship would help fight "maritime-related terrorism, weapons proliferation, transnational crime, piracy, environmental destruction, and illegal seaborne immigration."

"With *Spruance* off the West Coast and USS *Gravelly* in the Gulf of America, our maritime presence contributes to the all-do-

Spruance will be accompanied by an embedded U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement detachment.

The ship joins another destroyer that deployed to the Gulf of Mexico, which Trump has renamed the Gulf of America, on a similar mission.

"USS *Spruance*'s deployment as part of U.S. Northern Command's southern border mission brings additional capability and expands the

MCRD SAN DIEGO
 BAY VIEW RESTAURANT
 Wine Dinner ON THE BAY
 Wine paired dinner, featuring DAOU wine
 Saturday, April 12, 2025
 1700-1800 Cocktails | 1800-2100 Dinner
 \$90 per person plus gratuity

Veterans Helping Veterans
 DO YOU HAVE Medicare but your needs have changed?
ARE YOU TURNING 65?
 Are you TRICARE or a Veteran using VA Benefits?
ARE YOU A SENIOR?
 Do you have Medicare Part A & B?
 YES! Then you are **ELIGIBLE** up to Additional **\$249/mo.** added to your **S.S.**
Need Dental? Up to \$3500/Year
Vince Parra • 619-763-2425
 SERVING ALL OF CA. • CA LIC: 0M89123
 Above Senior Health Plans available to Veterans & Non-Veterans

GRAND CANYON Railway & Hotel
 EST. 1901

MILITARY SAVE
 ON HOTEL/ RV PARK STAYS & TRAIN RIDES

Visit your local ITT/ Latitudes office to book or use promo code **STRONG** at www.thetrain.com.

ASMAR'S AUTO CARE
 "Where Trust is a Tradition"
 Free smog retest when repairs are done at our shop. We can take care of ALL your auto needs.

FREE TOWING with repairs up to 15 miles for all ACTIVE and RETIRED military personnel (with valid ID)

6 Months 0% Financing Available

Do you need your Engine Steam Cleaned?
 Looking for an oil leak?
 We offer Professional Engine Steaming Cleaning and Full Undercarriage Steam Cleaning while protecting our environment.

10% off Parts and Labor (Max Discount \$100) for all ACTIVE and RETIRED military personnel (with valid ID)

619-589-1188
www.asmarsautocare.com

LOCAL MILITARY IMAGES



SAN DIEGO (March 5, 2025) - Sailors heave out a line detail on the fantail of aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln is underway conducting routine training operations in the U.S. 3rd fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Aljay Monzales



SAN DIEGO (March 20, 2025) - Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Aircraft Handling) 2nd Class Daniel Gonzales serves as a team leader during an aviation fire and medical rescue drill aboard amphibious assault carrier Tripoli. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Kristine Joy Nool



MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT CENTER TWENTYNINE PALMS (March 21, 2025) Hospital corpsmen assigned to the Multi-Service Unit at Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms participate in Tactical Combat Casualty Care training alongside. The hands-on exercise reinforced critical trauma response skills, ensuring corpsmen are prepared to provide life-saving care in mass casualty and combat scenarios U.S. Navy photo by Christopher C. Jones

VMX-1 CH-53K crew rescues stranded civilian in California desert

by Capt. Derek VanWyck, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma
 MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. - A crew of United States Marines assigned to Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron One (VMX-1) recently rescued a stranded civilian in the remote California desert, demonstrating the capabilities of the CH-53K King Stallion and the Marine Corps' commitment to readiness and response.

While conducting a routine flight near Twentynine Palms, California, the crew spotted a neon green signal flag being waved from a large boulder in a rugged valley. Initially uncertain of the nature of the signal, the crew opted to circle back and investigate further.

"I saw a flag being waved on top of a big boulder," said Sgt. Conrad Kerr, CH-53K crew chief. "At first, I wasn't sure what it was, but I asked the rest of the crew if they saw it. When they didn't, we decided to take another pass to confirm."

Upon closer inspection, the Marines identified a stranded off-road motorcyclist who had been stranded in the desert for nearly two days without food or water. The individual had suffered a broken leg after his adventure motorcycle overturned on a steep incline, leaving him unable to move.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the VMX-1 crew assessed the difficult terrain and quickly identified a safe landing zone approximately 500 meters from the individual's location.

"The CH-53K's fly-by-wire system made it easier to get down quickly and safely in a tight landing zone. We train for scenarios like this, and everyone in the crew knows their role to execute the rescue efficiently."
 - Maj. Dale Metcalf, CH-53K pilot.

Sgt. Kerr and Gunnery Sgt. Theodore Young, the lead crew chief, disembarked and hiked up the hillside to assess the civilian's condition.

"He had been out there for almost two days, completely out of water and food," said Young. "When we reached him, he was conscious but clearly exhausted and in pain. He told us he had been hoping someone would see him before it was too late."

After confirming the individual's injuries, the Marines stabilized him before coordinating with the range control at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms and their chain of command to determine the best course of action. With no immediate search-and-rescue assets available, and upon receiving authorization from VMX-1 Commanding Officer Col. John D. Dirk, the crew loaded the injured motorcyclist onto the CH-53K and transported him to Marine Corps Air Station Yuma for medical care.

Once on the ground at MCAS Yuma, base emergency personnel swiftly transferred the individual to Yuma Regional Medical Center for treatment. The Marine Corps and civilian emergency services worked in seamless coordination during the transfer. The MCAS Yuma Fire Department played a vital role in receiving the injured motorcyclist, assisting with his stabilization and transport.

"We took over care as soon as the aircraft landed," said Greg Lopez, MCAS Yuma Fire Department Chief. "We packaged the patient, which included splinting the injured leg, administering a large-bore IV, and monitoring vital signs. After stabilization, we transported him to a local Emergency Room for treatment. The process was smooth, and the patient was transferred to the civilian facility within 25 minutes of our arrival."



Marines with Marine Operational Test and Evaluation Squadron 1 are shown here at MCAS Yuma, Ariz., March 12. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Christian Radosti

The civilian's injuries were primarily focused on his left leg, where an obvious ankle injury was sustained. The Fire Department team ensured proper stabilization before transport. Fortunately, this was not a complicated case, and the patient is expected to make a full recovery.

"The cooperation between military and civilian emergency services is crucial in these situations," said Lopez. "Our mutual aid agreements allow for smooth integration, and we often support each other in emergency response efforts. On average, we handle close to 300 mutual aid calls a year, including assisting with structure fires in the area. This mission is a great example of that teamwork."

The success of this rescue highlights the Marine Corps' adaptability and operational effectiveness in real-world contingencies.

"This mission reinforced the importance of vigilance and teamwork. From spotting the distress signal to executing the rescue, the entire crew worked seamlessly to bring this individual to safety."
 - Capt. Ryan Hogan, CH-53K co-pilot.

VMX-1, based at MCAS Yuma, is responsible for the operational testing and evaluation of the CH-53K King Stallion, the Marine Corps' newest and most advanced heavy-lift helicopter. The aircraft's enhanced capabilities, including increased lift capacity and improved flight control systems, were instrumental in the success of this rescue mission.

The collaboration between VMX-1 and the MCAS Yuma Fire Department highlights the effectiveness of military and civilian services working together to address emergencies, ensuring that individuals in need receive timely and life-saving care.

El Indio
 Mexican Restaurant and Catering
 Family Owned & Operated Since 1940
Best Mexican Food in San Diego
 Free Parking! 10% Military Discount
 3695 India Street • www.elindiosandiego.com • 619-299-0333
 Open Daily 9am - 8pm

VA Disability Claim Denied?
 Know Your Rights and Don't Take "No" for an Answer!
 Don't Risk a Permanent Denial and Lose Back Pay
 Call the Professional Advocates Today!
 Claims Agents Have over 80% Success Rate on Appeals
 No Fees Unless You Win - Free Consultation!
800-921-0310
 www.VetDisabilityAid.com

USS Midway
 MUSEUM
The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.
 Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
<https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/>

Inaugural Thermal Club IndyCar Grand Prix - well worth seeing in-person

After contesting a successful exhibition race in 2024, this year IndyCar returned to The Thermal Club on March 21-23 for the inaugural Thermal Club IndyCar Grand Prix — a points-paying race that was a round in the IndyCar series.

I had never been here before and did not know quite what to expect. The Thermal Club is a private club with spacious homesites, luxury residences and wide-ranging amenities — “including full-service clubhouses, world-class dining, a fitness center & spa,” and more — but instead of a golf course, the claim to fame of this 490-acre private community is its world class motorsports facility, complete with a challenging 17-turn, 3.067-mile race track. Here, a feature element of members’ homes is their garages. They appreciate fast cars and have their very own track upon which to drive them.

I was there to cover Saturday qualifying and the race on Sunday. I spent much of the day exploring, to get familiar with the layout and find spots to hopefully get good photos on race day Sunday. I got some good shots of qualifying from what I think of as the back side of the track and also the front side — the two sides being separated by the pitlane, the IndyCar garages area and the common buildings.

For a private club, I was amazed by how prepared they were in all respects to host this race weekend. Parking was plentiful. The food was great. There was live pre-race entertainment. The IndyCar crews had spacious garages.

Even though we in the Media did not have access to the private homes and facilities, with their

elevated views of the racetrack, there were nevertheless plenty of good vantage points from which to see the racing action. On the ‘front’ side of the track, the General Admission grandstands provided wonderful views of half the race track. All that was needed to photograph a variety of locations was a long zoom lens, which I had.

However, even though free shuttles were available, I had hardly spent any time in the Coachella Valley for decades. I was ill-pre-

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



pared for the dry, hot weather, and paid the price for that lack of knowledge. The sun got to me.

By the end of the day, I felt like I was close to collapsing and had a mild headache as I walked for blocks looking for where I parked my RAV4, while pulling my very heavy Pelican case with my two cameras. I must have looked as bad as I felt because three people stopped driving to ask me if I wanted a ride. The third person insisted, so I accepted. That was fortunate because I was lost and far from where I needed to go.

Race day Sunday went much better. The weather was Coachella Valley, California beautiful. I was MUCH more better prepared for the heat — drinking water all day and asking (and waiting for)

shuttle rides, rather than walking long distances in the sun like I did on Saturday.

The Official Starting Line Up for the race numbered 27 IndyCars. I returned to the great, elevated place that I discovered on Saturday to view a lot of the track for the IndyCar race, in front of General Admission grandstands. I ended up watching the entire race from there, shaded in the light breeze by an American flag banner. The only things that I could not see from there were the pits (blocked from my view by pit wall) and the back side of the track (blocked by buildings).

The only incidents in this caution-free race were on the back side of the race track — a couple of ‘offs’ through the dirt, which I could see on a big screen.

Our trackside big screen TV stopped working for about a half hour during the race. I thought it might have just been our big screen, but I learned later that the cause also interfered with the TV coverage of the race. In case you were watching and missed that part of the race, there is a full race replay on YouTube at https://youtu.be/GgoDs_TV-w?si=1bk5u5EaVbHtFZ88.

For results and more information about this season’s IndyCar races, visit <https://www.indycar.com/>.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit “AutoMatters & More” at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue ‘years’ boxes and browse. Copyright © 2025 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #876

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

It was a bad idea, and I knew it. But like most bad ideas, it was based on want rather than need. Walking into the animal shelter armed with unsound reasoning and weak self-control, I knew I wouldn’t leave empty handed.

“Gilligan needs a playmate,” I told myself. It was a true statement for our two-year old yellow lab, who was particularly demanding of constant attention. However, adopting a kitten was a risky solution with all sorts of potential inconveniences.

Instead of facing the stark realities of cat attitudes, smelly litter boxes, pricey pet sitters, scratched furniture, and increased veterinary bills, I chose to focus on Instagram Reels depicting dogs and cats snuggling or playing with each other in precious displays of companionship. I placed my faith in googled articles stating that kittens (as opposed to adult cats) often bond with dogs in the same household if conditions are right.

Having previously owned Zuzu, a family cat who lived for 16 years, we were familiar with the potential inconveniences of cat care. But Zuzu was our cat before Francis retired from the Navy, so she endured six moves, complicated pet flights, and a six-month quarantine during our overseas tour in England. It would be easier this time, I told myself.

Frisky kitty is risky business

My husband, Francis, was doubtful, but I ignored his naysaying and forged on with my ill-conceived plan. In my defense, I was being influenced by our young adult children. “C’mon Mom!” they shamelessly propagandized, “The cat will become Gilly’s best friend! Kittens are so cute! Don’t worry about litter boxes and pet sitters — we’ll help out!”

It was hogwash, but as an empty nester, I guess I wanted another live being to nurture in my life. I wanted more connection, companionship and affection. And so, when I learned that the local Animal Shelter had taken in several new foster kittens, off we went.

I filled out registration forms required for anyone to meet the adoptable animals. “The kittens go fast, so there’s only one left,” the staff member told me as she led Francis and I down the hall to the cat enclosures. She left us in one of the small rooms where cats were kept in tidy cubicles.

“There she is!” I exclaimed, seeing a skinny black kitten hiding in bedding. Her yellow-green eyes peered timidly at us. The card posted on the enclosure listed her as a three-month-old domestic shorthair. I reached into the cube and gently lifted her lanky three-pound body out, and held her close to my chest, stroking the fine fur over her tiny bones. Francis held her too, and she soon began to purr.

That was all it took. The staff could have warned that she had contagious diseases, would develop psychotic tendencies, or was

the spawn of Satan. It wouldn’t have mattered. She purred, so we were adopting her, period.

Retrieving her records at the shelter front desk, I learned that our new kitten had been found alone at five-weeks of age in a commercial area of Boca Raton, Florida, where she was fostered until she arrived our Rhode Island shelter. Her heart-rending backstory only served to cement our fate — we took the little bugger home.

After considerable family debate, we settled on the name Minnow for our lithe new family member, a nautical homage to the 1960s sitcom that was the origin for Gilligan’s name. In the five weeks since she’s been with us, Minnow has staked her claim in my home office, and hasn’t become pals with Gilly yet.

She has, however, managed to dirty seven boxes of litter, devour pounds of cat kibble, scatter dozens of cat toys, lure Gilly close only to hiss at him, mischievously knock items off of my desk, claw her fish-hooks into the upholstery of my antique goose-neck rocker, and sink her teeth into my fingers, arms, and hair.

I now see that I didn’t make an intelligent decision to adopt a cat. On the contrary, every time Minnow curls into our laps to lovingly purr, touches our cheeks with her soft toe beans, or licks our skin with her prickly tongue, I realize that Minnow very wisely made that decision for us.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Veterans News



Telehealth study recruiting Veterans now

Veterans must be at least 60 years old

March 25, 2025

Jessica Plew
Research Services Professional, Eastern Colorado VA

The VA Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center is recruiting 126 veterans nationwide by October 2026 for a telehealth physical therapy program.

This program provides high-intensity rehabilitation, coaching and social support to veterans. It provides physical rehabilitation through telehealth, which is effective in improving and sustaining physical function for older veterans.

This program will compare physical functioning results of

the telerehabilitation group to the education control group.

To be eligible to participate in the study, veterans must be at least 60 years old and have some need for physical therapy. Final eligibility for participation will be made by the program staff at the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System and the University of Colorado School of Medicine.

Program designed to improve strength and mobility
Called the Multicomponent

Telerehabilitation Program, this structured program provides physical therapy for veterans experiencing physical difficulties in their day-to-day life. The program is designed to improve strength, mobility and social engagement with exercise using technology to help veterans achieve their health and wellness goals.

All study sessions occur by video call three times a week for 12 weeks, followed by four additional coaching sessions in the next 12 weeks. Participants will

The 2025 National Veterans Day Poster Contest

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is inviting artists to participate in the 2025 National Veterans Day Poster Contest.

The annual competition seeks artwork that honors and celebrates the service of American veterans. The winning design will serve as the official Veterans Day poster, distributed nationwide to VA facilities, military installations, and various communities.

Last year, the Fleet Reserve

Association hosted Veterans Day and selected the motto “Loyalty and Service” to commemorate the occasion.

Artists are encouraged to create a visually striking design that captures the spirit of Veterans Day. Submissions will be judged on originality, clarity of message, and artistic merit.

Steps to submit an entry

•Understand the Theme: Ensure your artwork reflects the designated theme for the 2025

Veterans Day celebration.

•Create Original Artwork: Develop a unique design that embodies the theme and honors Veterans.

•Prepare Digital Files: Save your artwork in an electronic format suitable for submission.

Submit Your Entry: E-mail your digital artwork to vets-day@va.gov by 8:59 p.m. (PDT) on May 2.

For more details, visit the official announcement: news.va.gov

provide coaching and technology support that is lacking from many established Veterans Health Administration rehabilitation programs.

For more information, visit the study website or contact Jessica Plew with the Geriatric Research Education and Clinical Center if interested in participating.



CLASSIFIED ADS

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH CLASSIFIEDS

To place your ad, please call our Classified Advertising Department at (619) 280-2985.

CAREGIVER

CAREGIVER/CNA – 25 years experience. 24 hour live-in. California requirements. Call for more info 760-234-2644. 4/1

CATERING

We can cater your event with the 'Best Mexican food in San Diego!' Military Discount. El Indio 619-299-0333

HELP WANTED

Armed Forces Dispatch newspaper delivery driver for news racks, stands, countertops, etc. Coronado, Silver Strand, Imperial Beach. 2 Thursday mornings a month (approx 3 hours). Must have clean driving record, dependable car w/insurance, base access. 619-280-2985.

HELP WANTED

Delivery driver. 2 Thursday mornings a month. Must have own vehicle w/proof of insurance. Approx. 3 hours \$80. Milspouse/retired military pref. Nat'l City area. 619-280-2985.

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

RENTALS APARTMENTS

BONSALL – 2BR/2BA fully furnished, W/D \$3200/mo. utilities & high speed internet included. Pet ok. 760-758-8582. 4/1

CHULA VISTA – 2BR/2BA. \$2700 (265 Woodlawn) & 3BR/2.5BA \$3800. New construction, near I-5, W/D in unit, 10 minutes to NASNI/32nd. 619-454-2545. 4/1

CORONADO – 1 BR apt. lovely, quiet, tv & internet included, laundry on-site. Terrace view to SD & bay. 1 year lease \$3000/mo. all utilities included 619-435-8738. 5/1

MOUNTAIN VIEW – 1BR/1BA. Gated parking, utilities included, 1 year lease, no smoking, no pets. \$1750/mo. pjaptsd@gmail.com 4/1

NORTH PARK – Fully furn. 1BR apartment in lovely area, near restaurants, bars, Walkable! \$2,500/mo. Call for showing (858)967-0147. 4/1

PACIFIC BEACH – Sunny 2BR, one mile from beach, very walkable to restaurants, bars. \$3,650/mo. Call for showing (858)967-0147. 4/1

RENTALS APARTMENTS

AVAILABLE NOW!!!
1, 2 or 3 BR's Apartments, Townhouses & Houses

MOVE-IN SPECIAL!

LEADINGHAM REALTY
1062 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach
619-424-8600 TF

RENTALS CONDOS

BONITA – 1BR/1BA. 766 Sq ft, fully renovated, patio, green belt access, off street parking. \$2500/mo. 619-852-1598. 4/1

RENTALS HOUSES

Beautiful one of a kind 4BR/3.5BA in Chula Vista



Email Jessica at jessica@socalprem.com to schedule a tour

"Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam, Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home." --John Howard Payne

RENTALS HOUSES

SAN DIEGO – 3BR/3BA, 2 car garage. No smoking/drinking/drugs/pets, no evictions. W/D hookups. \$250 off 1st month rent. \$3250/mo. 4300 Newton Ave. 951-210-8392. 4/1

ROOM FOR RENT

NATIONAL CITY – 5 min. from 32nd St. Dry side, close to Petco Park. Kitchen has diner theme & all appll, large patio. \$1200/mo. 619-908-9977. 4/1

STABLES

HORSE BOARDING CARLSBAD \$400/month
Western casual, family-oriented ranch. We have roomy 12x48 or 12x24 corrals and provide a veterinarian recommended diet twice daily. **760.840.0187**

THRIFT STORE

AMVETS NEW STORE NOW OPEN IN OCEANSIDE
40,000 clothing items & 10,000 miscellaneous items on our floor daily!
1527-A Mission Ave., Oceanside Just east of I-5 (760) 286-8880
Open 7 days a week 9am-7pm
Sales support veterans & their families

VOLUNTEERS 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/>

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

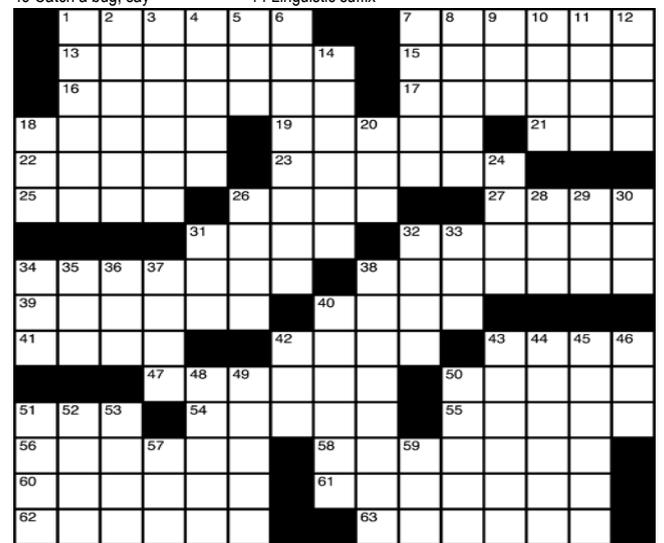
Across

- It may break and crash
- It has an eye on TV
- Slightly open
- Sea that's a victim of irrigation projects
- Water park feature
- Heavyweight fight?
- Capital founded by Pizarro
- They may draft briefs
- Saloon door's lack
- Civil War topper
- Tattoo joint?
- Folklore monster
- Move furtively
- "Breaking Bad" org.
- Verne who created Nemo
- Dodger rival of shortstop Rizzuto
- Bucket of bolts
- "Evita" narrator
- Gummy bear ingredient
- YouTube clip, for short
- Prefix with call
- Meek
- Tubes on the table
- Sonicare rival
- Get into a stew?
- One who digs hard rock
- Wedding reception hiree
- Pressing
- Catch a bug, say

Down

- Constitutional events
- Disney mermaid
- Blood-drinking mammal
- "Seinfeld" regular
- High light
- Delta of "Designing Women"
- Spelunking sight
- Try to date
- Support for Tarzan
- Love, to Luigi
- Judicial attire
- One working on bks.
- Linguistic suffix

- It may be tapped
- Fifth of 12, alphabetically. Abbr.
- Place for shooting stars?
- Free (of)
- Shoe that's full of holes
- Dance that may involve a chair
- Reddit Q&A session
- Cal.-to-Fla. highway
- Gossip
- Poisonous flowering shrub
- Terraced structure of ancient Mesopotamia
- Naval lockup
- Surrealist Joan
- Magical potion
- Persian king
- "Trigger": Bugs Bunny cartoon
- Stud fee, maybe
- Hawaiian goose
- Anatomy book author Henry
- Five-star
- Smoked salmon
- Cuckoo clock feature
- Baseball glove part
- Vegas snake eyes



Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. <http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>

Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free
Veterans/Seniors: \$4 • Adults: \$5 • Student ID: \$2
2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300
Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>

Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.

FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

San Diego Outreach
Neil Ash Airport Center
San Diego MEPS Center
Camp Pendleton



Become a USO Volunteer

Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a soldier with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" troops from deployment, volunteers are vital to the success of the USO's mission. While the duties of a volunteer may vary, the goal is always the same – to improve the quality of life of service members, boost their morale, and serve as the link between service members and the American people.

Ready to apply to be a USO San Diego volunteer?

Visit <https://volunteers.uso.org/>

Once you navigate to the web page, scroll down to and look at the right side of the page to find information about volunteering.

<https://california.uso.org/>

Armed Forces Dispatch • (619) 280-2985

Published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.

2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008

E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com

ROY'S SUDOKU

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

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

D	E	S	L	E	V	E	S	O	S	E	P	M	I	
E	G	V	L	S	O	H	E	T	L	E	V	A	S	
R	E	K	E	R	C	A	V	E	S	E	H	C		
L	N	P	N	I	E	T	V	O	H	S	S	A	V	
S	N	W	A	D	D	E	H	O	A	R				
K	I	V	S		O	L	T	A	V		N	V	E	D
E	N	N	T	R	O	F	E	N	O	O	R	A	V	
S	E	I	X	V	T	E	S	O	H					
K	S	T	E	L	E	S								
M	E	K												
O	S	N	V	C	I	R	E	M	A	V	E	S		
H	V	A	P	A	R	L	U	G						
S	E	I	N	S										

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.navylifefsw.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.

SD Humane Society Community Pet Pantry offers help to pet parents in need

San Diego Humane Society is supporting families and their pets who need a little extra help. Through the Community Pet Pantry, anyone can visit our campus locations in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday, to pick up a bag of dog or cat food as well as other supplies as available. No appointment is needed. Tuesday-Sunday | 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

San Diego Humane Society Campus Locations

El Cajon Campus
1373 N. Marshall Ave.
El Cajon, CA 92020

Oceanside Campus
572 Airport Road
Oceanside, CA 92058

Escondido Campus
3500 Burnet Drive
Escondido, CA 92027

San Diego Campus
5480 Gaines Street
San Diego, CA 92110

Improving warfighter readiness using augmented reality

March 17, 2025

by Paul Lagasse,

Medical Research and Development Command

FORT DETRICK, Md. – The Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs’ Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health Research Program recently awarded a \$3.4 million grant to a team of Cleveland Clinic researchers to develop an innovative augmented reality tool for assessing whether warfighters recovering from concussion are ready to return to duty. The new tool, called Troop Readiness Evaluation with Augmented Reality Return-to-Duty, or Troop READY, promises to provide answers more quickly and reliably than existing methods.

Concussion, also referred to as mild traumatic brain injury or mTBI, is a relatively common injury in the military. According to the DOD Traumatic Brain Injury Center of Excellence, over 80% of the TBI injuries sustained by service members between 2000 and 2024 were classified as mTBI. Service members can experience an mTBI while on deployment, during training, and even when participating in a sport. Most injured service members are able to return to

duty within two weeks. Military doctors currently follow a six-step protocol called the Progressive Return to Activity for safely returning an injured service member to duty, but the PRA has some shortcomings.

“The PRA is not 100% objective,” explains Dr. Dwayne Taliaferro, CDMRP’s TBIPHRP program manager. “While a medical professional guides the service member through the protocol, progress is dependent on the service member’s self-assessment of the mildness or severity of their symptoms. Troop READY offers an opportunity to provide more objectivity in the PRA protocol.”

Troop READY uses a Microsoft HoloLens 2 augmented reality headset and simulated M4 carbine assault rifle to generate a series of realistic and increasingly intensive scenarios that a patient must complete in order to simultaneously assess their cognitive and physical readiness. The exercises involve marching, shooting while standing and kneeling, and breaching and clearing a room. The patient’s cognitive, motor, and task performance capabilities are then analyzed using specially trained machine learning algorithms to

Military doctors currently follow a six-step protocol called the Progressive Return to Activity for safely returning an injured service member to duty, but the PRA has some shortcomings.



determine the severity of any detected symptoms.

Dr. Jay Alberts, director of Cleveland Clinic’s Concussion Center, is leading the three-year project to further refine Troop READY, which he originally developed and tested under a previous CDMRP grant. In partnership with Microsoft Federal, Alberts and his team will use the new grant to improve the tool’s

ability to detect signs of mTBI and to recommend personalized treatment plans for patients that streamline their return to duty.

Under the TBIPHRP grant, Alberts and his team will conduct a usability study with volunteers to refine the simulation modules, which will then be tested on a larger cohort of volunteers to identify baseline performance levels. Those baseline data will

be used to train the machine learning algorithms to ensure a high degree of accuracy when assessing a patient’s current condition and guiding their continued treatment.

Taliaferro says that Troop READY offers several potential advantages over existing methods for assessing mTBI recovery in service members. For example, doctors use a battery of neurocognitive tests called Automated Neuropsychological Assessment Metrics to assess a service member’s readiness to return to duty. The computer-based ANAM assesses changes to a service member’s attention, reaction time, memory, and decision-making abilities based on their answers to a series of survey questions. However, as a sit-down multiple-choice test, ANAM lacks the fidelity of an active 3D simulation.

“The Computer Assisted Rehabilitation Environment Laboratory at the National Intrepid

Center of Excellence blends virtual reality with a treadmill, immersive video, surround sound, and even smells,” Taliaferro says. “It is very powerful, but it’s in a fixed location and not very portable. Whereas with Troop READY, you can deploy the goggle set and the mock weapon anywhere quickly.”

In addition to helping warfighters return to duty, the Troop READY tool has the potential to be adapted for use in other fields where mTBI is a risk, such as professional sports, construction, and law enforcement, says Taliaferro.

Before it can be deployed with the military or other users, Troop READY will need to be assessed by both the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the DOD for its safety and readiness for use. “CDMRP’s role is to accelerate the development of products like Troop READY so that they can be properly evaluated to determine how, when, and where they can be deployed,” explains Taliaferro.

“We do not always put things directly in the hands of warfighters at the end of a study, but we get them as close as we can. That is a great use of taxpayer dollars.”

Operation Blue Horizon 2025: Joining forces to strengthen medical readiness

by Airman 1st Class
Alicia Campbell

6th Air Refueling Wing

MACDILL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. – A sense of urgency emboldens their movement as they trudge through the muddy waters to reach their wounded. Amid exhaustion and upheaval, these service members come alive. Operation Blue Horizon is a Navy Reserve-led joint-service exercise that allows medical personnel to hone their critical medical care skills while under pressure.

Operation Blue Horizon, now in its third iteration, is an annual training event that combines traditional classroom learning with simulated scenarios to mimic a deployed environment. It reinforces medical professionals’ core competencies and fundamental practices for providing life-saving care such as Tactical Combat Casualty Care, advanced trauma life support and patient transportation.

“We have two main goals with this exercise, the primary goal being medical readiness with an emphasis on operating in an austere environment,” said U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Cameron Cushenberry, officer in charge of Operation Blue Horizon. “Our second goal is joint service interoperability. We want to understand the different platforms of our sister services and what

their capabilities are.”

MacDill AFB’s multi-service community makes this event a unique experience for trainees. The opportunity to partner with the 927th Aeromedical Staging Squadron, 5th Army Reserve Battalion-159th Aviation Regiment, 130th Airlift Squadron and the 167th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron brings together resources that prepare medical personnel for the real-world possibility of working in a joint environment downrange.

The culminating event combined the capabilities of sister services in an immersive full-service patient movement for participants.

The final exercise was the culminating event of the training courses and combined the capabilities of sister services to create an immersive full-service patient movement for participants to experience. From performing TCCC to en-route patient staging systems (ERPSS) set up by the 927th ASTS to aeromedical evacuations supported by an Army Reserve UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter assigned to the 5-159th AR, the exercise highlighted the benefits of exposure to other services and the resources that could save lives.

U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Chief Brooke Christenson, an



U.S. Navy Commander Flavia Soto, a participant of Operation Blue Horizon, performs Tactical Combat Care on a manikin at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on Feb. 26, 2025. OBH is a joint force exercise that reinforces core competencies and fundamental practices for military medical professionals. Instructors graded participants on their proficiency in providing tactical combat casualty care, trauma nursing and aeromedical evacuation. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alicia Campbell.

instructor for the exercise, reflects on her experience, “At [the United States Transportation Command] I do en-route patient care, so it’s nice to see it from this perspective because I’m seeing what I’m talking about on the computer,” she said. “I get to see everything come full circle, seeing it from the flightline all the way to the ERPSS.”

This year saw the addition of an emergency evacuation flight on a C-130J Super Hercules where trainees had the opportunity to watch a simulated medical care scenario while in-flight. The 130th AS provided air support while the 167th AES showcased the critical medical capabilities that allow personnel to envision the type of care

that can be delivered while en-route to a more safe and stable facility.

“I’m grateful for the opportunity to return to Blue Horizon,” said Lt. Cmdr. Peter Losi, a trainee in the exercise. “We had the chance to train advanced trauma life support skills with our peers, and I always learn something new every time I come.”

Sailors and Airmen teamed up in the University of South Florida Center for Advanced Medical Learning and Simulation to learn from some of the Navy’s most proficient medical instructors to better operate on patients both stateside and in the field. Losi’s attendance this year marked his second appearance at the exercise, and he hopes to

return for more in the future.

The organizers aim to enhance the exercise’s impact for participants in the coming years. They concluded the week-long exercise with a tour of a Coast Guard Cutter at Coast Guard Base St. Petersburg and the introduction of the Navy’s Enlisted Leadership Development course, a requirement for sailors to be promoted to non-commissioned officers.

“Understanding the capabilities of our sister services can assist our medical personnel in planning downrange operations, guiding how we can integrate their strengths into our medical missions. This is valuable information and could mean the difference between life and death,” said Cushenberry.



U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Hailey Lisska, a participant in Operation Blue Horizon, reviews tactical combat casualty care methods with an instructor during Operation Blue Horizon at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, Feb. 26, 2025. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Alicia Campbell.

THE MILLENNIUM TOUR 2025

TREY SONGZ OMARION BOW WOW

PLIES BOOSIE YING YANG TWINS

RAY J | SAMMIE | BOBBY V | PLEASURE P

NIVEA

AND SPECIAL GUEST RICK ROSS!

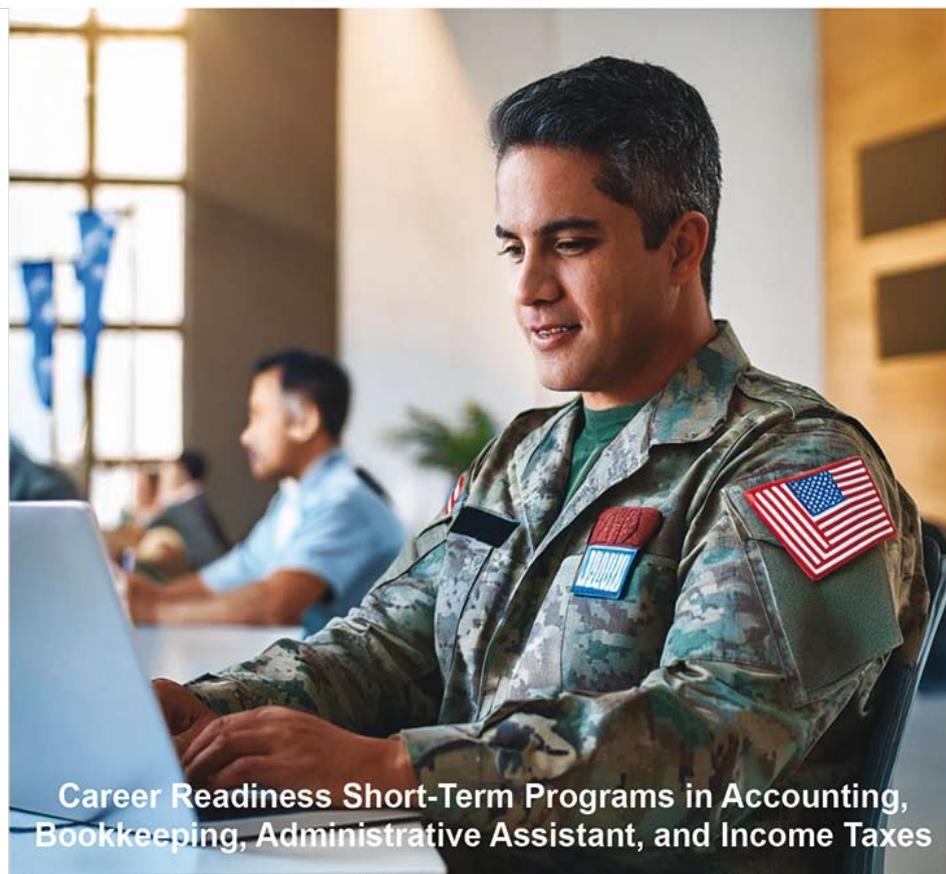
APRIL 27
KIA FORUM

Tickets INFO Marcus (619)851-8401

GET TICKETS AT TICKETMASTER.COM

Military/Veteran-Friendly Career Technical School

Find Your Calling In Business



Career Readiness Short-Term Programs in Accounting, Bookkeeping, Administrative Assistant, and Income Taxes

Call Sylvia at:
858-836-1420

ACCOUNTING
★ ACADEMY ★

theaccounting
academy.com



Support Heroes

Donate Your Unwanted Goods to AMVETS Today!



Store information



AMVETS Thrift Store Locations

1527-A Mission Ave., Oceanside • (760) 286-8880
999 Cardiff St., San Diego • (619) 697-9796
3441 Sutherland St., San Diego • (619) 297-4213
We also have locations in Long Beach & Fresno

Help is here
HOPE IS ON THE HORIZON

Are you struggling with drugs or alcohol?
Are you afraid of getting in trouble?

Active duty service members in San Diego can now seek treatment without involving their command.

Confidential Recovery is in network with TRICARE, so you and family members 18 and over on your plan can come to us in Mission Valley for *private outpatient drug and alcohol treatment.

Support is covered, private and easier than ever.

CALL US AT 619-452-1200 - FELLOW VETS ARE STANDING BY.

No stigma. No judgment. We've been there.

CONFIDENTIAL
RECOVERY
www.confidentialrecovery.com

*We will not share information with your command per HIPAA and Title 42 CFR, but TRICARE has records of services billed (if not the medical record). Records could be accessible for a special duty screening, medical board or security clearance check.

