

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 18
SEPTEMBER 16-30, 2025



DADDY DETAILS Navy Cmdr. Brad Pendock receives some assistance during his promotion ceremony at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., Sept. 2, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class John T. Jarrett

FORT IRWIN BREAKS GROUND ON FIRST PRIVATIZED BARRACKS DEVELOPMENT

by Jack Adamyk

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Fort Irwin has initiated construction on a first-of-its-kind privatized barracks development.

Fort Irwin Apartments will significantly enhance the quality of life for unaccompanied Soldiers stationed at Fort Irwin and the National Training Center.

The project, a partnership between the Army and The Michaels Organization, represents a new approach to unaccompanied military housing and is slated for completion in April 2028.

The \$500 million investment will replace existing barracks with 276 modern apartment units across three-story buildings,

accommodating 545 Soldiers. This initiative directly addresses the unique challenges faced by service members training at NTC, where demanding rotations require comfortable and restorative living spaces.

As the Army's premier training destination, Fort Irwin relies on a highly-prepared cadre of Soldiers to facilitate realistic and challenging scenarios for rotational training units – and this project directly supports that mission. The new apartments offer a substantial upgrade from traditional barracks, featuring two-bedroom, two-bathroom units with shared kitchens and a range of community amenities.

Army Col. Steven L. Chadwick, commander of Fort Irwin Garrison, said, "Fort Irwin's remoteness provides a training environment with unparalleled

capabilities, but likewise, its austere nature creates challenges for quality of life for our Soldiers and families. However, today's ground-breaking takes a bold step forward in how we care for our Soldiers, by imagining the commitment to training the force with state-of-the-art living conditions."

These amenities include a clubhouse with televisions and a kitchenette, a covered patio with seating, a swimming pool, lounge areas, to name a few. Unit interiors will boast spacious living and dining areas, creating a more home-like environment. Improved living conditions are directly linked to Soldier readiness and lethality, providing a vital space for rest and recovery between demanding training cycles.

<https://www.army.mil/article/288302/>



Army Col. Steven L. Chadwick, Fort Irwin Garrison commander, speaks during the Fort Irwin Apartments ground-breaking ceremony Sept. 3. U.S. Army photo by Renita Wickes

Trump renames DoD to Department of War

by Matthew Olay, Department of War

President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order Sept. 5 changing the Defense Department's name to the Department of War as a secondary title. The order — the 200th signed by the president since taking office — authorizes Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and DOD subordinate officials to use secondary titles like "Department of War," "Secretary of War" and "Deputy Secretary of War" in public communications, official correspondence, ceremonial contexts and non-statutory documents within the executive branch, according to a fact sheet released by the White House.

Additionally, the order directs all executive agencies and departments to "recognize and accommodate these secondary titles in internal and external communications," as well as instructing Hegseth to recommend actions — including executive and legislative actions — that would be required to permanently rename the department.

"The name 'Department of War' conveys a stronger message of readiness and resolve compared to 'Department of Defense,' which emphasizes only defensive capabilities," the fact sheet reads. "Restoring the name 'Department of War' will sharpen the focus of this department on our national interests and signal to adversaries America's readiness to wage war to secure its interests," it continues.

Prior to signing the executive order, Trump said, "This is something [we've] thought long and hard about; we've been talking about it for months." He added that, under the original War Department, the U.S. achieved military victories in both world wars; however, victories turned into more prolonged conflicts that often resulted in a "sort of tie" once the War Department rebranded as the Defense Department.

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September Observances

National Suicide Prevention Month
National Service Dog Month
V-J Day (Victory over Japan): September 2
Patriot Day: September 11
Constitution Week: September 17-23
Hispanic Heritage Month
--September 15-October 15
Air Force (USAF) Birthday: September 18
Office of the Secretary of Defense Birthday
--September 18
Air National Guard Birthday: September 18
National POW/MIA Recognition Day
--Third Friday in September-Sept. 19, 2025
Gold Star Mother's Day
--Last Sunday in September-Sept 27, 2025
Rosh Hashanah
--Begins at sunset Monday, Sept. 22, and
ends at nightfall on Wednesday, Sept. 24
VFW Day: September 29



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EMERGING DRONE TECHNOLOGY

For the first time, Marines flew untethered sUAS over an Okinawa-based, Marine Corps installation.

by Cpl.
Joaquin Carlos Dela Torre,
3rd Marine Division
CAMP SCHWAB, OKINAWA,
Japan - Last month, Marines and
Sailors with 4th Marine Regiment,
3d Marine Division, trained with,
integrated, and expanded their use
of small unmanned aerial systems
(sUAS). For the first time, Ma-
rines flew untethered sUAS over
an Okinawa-based, Marine Corps
installation.

This aligns directly with the
Secretary of War's drone modern-
ization guidance, released July 10,
2025, which prioritizes training
with autonomous capabilities,
leaning into adaptability, and pur-
suing joint-force integration with
these emerging technologies.

"The Marines and Sailors with
4th Marine Regiment are getting
use to utilizing and innovating
with technology that we haven't
used in the past," said Capt.
Wesley Pond, the lead planner
of the sUAS and autonomous,
unmanned ground vehicle train-
ing on Camp Schwab. "We're
helping them to see new things,
new ways to find an adversary
and new ways of moving about
the battlespace."

The Marines and Sailors at-
tended a course with the Skydio
X2D sUAS to sustain their pro-
ficiency with the system. This

in-depth training allowed some
servicemembers to receive an
additional Military Occupational
Specialty as sUAS operators after

The Marines and Sailors with
4th Marine Regiment refined
shared procedures for experi-
mental methods of extracting

In this training scenario, the
Mission Master was used to carry
wounded servicemembers out of
harm's way on the battlefield,
enabling corpsmen to quickly
and tactically bring the casualty
behind friendly lines.

"This takes a huge load off the
humans that would previously
have to physically carry that cas-
ualty on a litter a long distance or
we would have to use a large, loud
tactical vehicle," said Long. "It
also allows us to provide treatment
enroute to the casualty collection
point for follow-on care. This ca-
pability has the potential to help us
save lives and quickly return more
Marines back to the fight."

As the future of warfighting
continues to evolve, 4th Marine
Regiment continues to modern-
ize as well.

"This training demonstrates
the 4th Marine Regiment's com-
mitment to train as we fight and
to compete with adversary capa-
bilities now," said Col. Richard
Barclay, commander of 4thMR.
"Training isn't just about prepar-
ing for a future fight but maintain-
ing a decisive edge in the current
operating environment. What the
3d Marine Division, and Marine
Corps Installations Pacific team
have achieved is just the start
of much more work to be done
within the realms of sUAS and
UGV training."



Marines with 4th Marine Regiment, 3d Marine Division are shown with various unmanned systems on Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Japan, Aug. 13. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Joaquin Dela Torre

they completed all the required
training objectives. The Marines
in the course were able to take
their increased proficiency in
sUAS employment back to their
unit to better integrate the systems
in future training evolutions.

"Marines of any rank are
encouraged to participate in the
courses in order to receive the
qualifications to operate group
one UAS," said Pond. "This
in total increases the Marine
Corps' combat effectiveness by
having capable Marines, of any
MOS, at the ready to operate
drones in any situation."

an emergency casualty via the
Mission Master. This A-UGV
platform can assist with tactical
transport, resupply, and casualty
evacuation, reducing danger to
dismounted troops across a wide
range of missions, including high-
risk situations.

"This is the first time our corps-
men in the 4th Marines Regi-
mental Aid Station have had the
opportunity to train with and
use an autonomous system as a
CASEVAC platform," said Navy
Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman
David Long of the 4th Marines
Regimental Aid Station.



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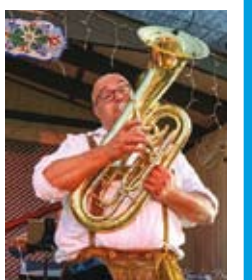
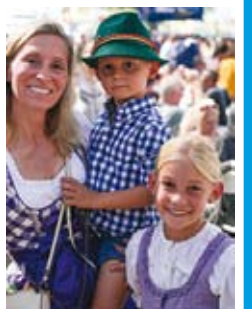
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Top 5

- *Trump order aims to rebrand Defense Department as Department of War
- *Troops will be drug tested for psychedelic mushroom use, Pentagon says
- *Trump nominates Heidi Berg to lead Fleet Cyber Command
- *Georgia to send National Guard troops to DC
- *VA may have sent 35,000 veterans 'erroneous' warnings about home foreclosure

Army

- *Army taps Anduril-Meta team, plus new entrant Rivet, for IVAS recompile
- *Soldier sentenced to 75 months in sexual assault of ROTC student as three others await courts-martial

Navy

- *SEAL Team 6 infiltrated North Korea in a mission gone wrong
- *Navy taps four aerospace primes to design autonomous drone wingmen
- *Navy contracts 5 companies to develop armed, unmanned carrier aircraft
- *Naval drills near Guam and the Philippines coincide with China's military parade

Marine Corps

- *Marines train with NMESIS anti-ship launcher in Japan for first time

Space Force

- *When can Space Force guardians expect their new dress uniforms?
- *Space Operations Command getting new name, new boss

Coast Guard

- *Coast Guard exercises options on \$3B offshore Patrol Cutter contract

National Guard

- *Maryland leaders tell Trump they don't need the National Guard to curb gun violence

EPA partners with local farm to fight food waste, support military families

by Karen Pettitt
375th Air Mobility Wing
Public Affairs Office

Recently, Lee Zeldin, an administrator with the Environmental Protection Agency, joined forces with a local farm to bring over 20 pallets of produce to Scott Air Force Base, Ill., as part of a nationwide collaboration to reduce food waste.

Airmen and their families on base were treated to hundreds of free watermelon, corn and pumpkins and watermelon juice under the EPA's "Feed It Onward" initiative to connect farmers with nearby military installations to share their bounty with those who serve.

As a retired Army officer himself, Zeldin first expressed his thanks to "the line of patriots" and their families, as well as retirees who were in the audience for the event.

"I'm thinking about their collective service and stories of sacrifice ... at times holidays, anniversaries and birthdays missed. The decision to serve in our military may be difficult for some ... and for those who continue to raise their hand [to serve] is something for the rest of America to take a step back

and reflect on, maybe every day of our lives," he said.

"Everything we cherish about being able to live in the greatest country in the history of the world is all made possible because of the men and women who answer the call to defend our freedom, our liberty. I'm honored to be able to say thank you for your service."

He shared how the collaboration came about when addressing the amount of food that is wasted in this country and how it needs to be cut down. He cited an EPA study about the cost of food waste to each American consumer being about \$728 per year.

The Feed It Onward program, which is also part of the country's 250th birthday celebration next year, seeks to connect food donors with communities in need while reducing the environmental impact of food waste in landfills.

Zeldin said he believes today's event will serve as an inspiration for other farms across the nation to partner with the Department of War to ensure that this food goes to good use instead of landfills. From the event last week, he said, "we can all serve

as ambassadors" to talk about the many ways to address and solve this issue.

Sarah Frey, chief executive officer of the farm, is one of those passionate ambassadors who brings a depth of understanding about this issue. What started as a small truck route at age 16 has grown into a multi-state operation and a supplier to major retailers. Her business is located about an hour and a half east of the base, and while they grow all types of fresh fruits and vegetables, they are the nation's leading producer of pumpkins.

With the amount of acreage she manages, Frey said she sees

firsthand the amount of food that gets wasted — at the consumer and the farm level.

She told the audience that when they take their "perfectly delicious melons home," to just remember that it was rejected at the grocer because it wasn't the right size or had a small imperfection according to their retail standards. So, the waste, she emphasized, has nothing to do with the quality of the product, but something else.

"This food is so good and nourishes our body, and it kills me to see so much go to waste," she said. "Through Feed It On-

see **Food, page 7**

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U.S., ALLIED FORCES
COMPLETE EXERCISE
PACIFIC VANGUARD '25

by Lt. Victor Murkowski, Destroyer Squadron 15 Public Affairs
Maritime forces from Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Air Force (RAAF), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Royal New Zealand Navy, Republic of Korea (ROK) Navy, U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps concluded a series of integrated exercises and operations as part of Exercise Pacific Vanguard 2025.

The cooperative exercise united service members from five Indo-Pacific nations, enhancing their skills in maritime operations, anti-submarine warfare, air warfare, and advanced maneuvering scenarios to improve overall interoperability between the forces. This year's Pacific Vanguard featured greater participation from partner and allied nations and joint forces.

"Pacific Vanguard provides a vital opportunity for USS *Higgins* and her crew to hone our warfighting skills alongside our allies," said Capt. Dave Huljack, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15. "We're committed to strengthening interoperability, interchangeability,

and building mutual trust, which ensures that together, we can respond effectively to any challenge in support of a secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific."

Shore-based personnel from the participating nations were also able to practice integration across multiple warfare domains, demonstrating the capacity to cooperate across multiple mission areas in support of warfighting units operating in the theater.

The participants also conducted a missile exercise, in which destroyer USS *Higgins* and the Takanami-class destroyer JS *Suzunami* (DD 114) engaged two simulated targets in an integrated

air and missile defense scenario.

Pacific Vanguard 25 participating assets included the RAAF's P-8A Poseidon aircraft, JMSDF's Hyuga-class helicopter destroyer JS *Ise* (DDH 182), Mashu-class replenishment ship JS *Omi* (AOE 426), Takanami-class destroyer JS *Suzunami* (DD 114), ROK Navy's Chungmu-

gong Sun-Sin-class destroyer ROKS *Wang Geon* (DDH 978), USS *Higgins*, Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo ship USNS *Richard E. Byrd* and P-8A Poseidon aircraft

The U.S. military and its allies and partners continually operate in designated land, air, and sea areas of the Mariana Islands to safely train service members in

equipment use, tactics, joint operations, and humanitarian aid missions.

U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

USS *Higgins* fires a missile during Pacific Vanguard. *Higgins* and Japanese destroyer JS *Suzunami* engaged two simulated targets in an integrated air and missile defense scenario. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Trevor Hale



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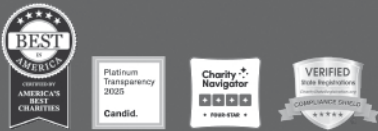


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Space Force to accept Air Force Reserve volunteers for part-time positions

from Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. - Air Force Reservists in space-related career fields interested in volunteering to join the U.S. Space Force as Guardians serving in a part-time capacity can apply now to Oct. 10.

This transfer option is part of the Space Force Personnel Management Act, which was signed into law as part of the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act. The first phase of PMA, which selected Air Force Reservists for full time Space Force roles, was completed June 2025.

When fully implemented, PMA will enable the Space Force to create a new model of service that integrates active-component Guardians and Air Force Reservists serving in space-focused career fields into a unified service that offers both full- and part-time service options.

This new construct will permit the Space Force to forego the use of Reserve component forces to fill steady-state, full-time requirements and will maximize talent alignment to service needs.

"This part-time opportunity is an important next step toward fully integrating the talent we

need into a single component, best equipped to ensure readiness and achieve our nation's war-fighting missions," said Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman.

Air Force Reserve eligibility includes:

- Air Force Reserve Officers who hold the following Core IDs: 13S; 17X; 14N; 6X.
- Air Force Reserve Enlisted Airmen who hold the following Control Air Force Specialty Codes: 1C6X1; 1N0; 1N1; 1N2; 1N3; 1N4; 1N8; 1D7X1; 1D7X2; 1D7X3.
- Eligibility outside of 13S and 1C6 must have space experience. The Transfer Board will review duty history to ensure at least one prior assignment in a space organization is reflected.
- Eligible service members must be fully trained in the career field in which they are applying.

Selected Airmen must transfer in their current career field, with the following exceptions: Officers selected from the 61X, 64P, and 65X career fields will re-core to 62E or 63A Space Force Specialty Codes. Enlisted E-8s and E-9s selected for transfer will re-core to the 5Z800 or 5Z900 SFSCs.

"The Space Force is about to integrate some of the most professional space operators," said


Chief of the Air Force Reserve and Air Force Reserve Command Commander Lt. Gen. John Healy. "I have no doubt they will be key to advancing security in the space domain."

In time, the Air Force Reserve, like the Air Force, will no longer maintain space operations as career fields, meaning Reservists with 13S and 1C6 specialties must volunteer to transfer to the Space Force or re-train under a different Air Force Specialty Code.

Officers selected for transfer to part time duty positions incur a minimum three-year service commitment. Enlisted Airmen must enlist in the Space Force for a minimum of three years, maximum six years.

Air Force Reservists who transfer into the Space Force with 15-18 years satisfactory service will be allowed to remain in a part-time work role until they qualify for retirement. Once retirement eligible, the member must participate in the Guardian Assignment Timeline for a full time or part time work role. These members may elect to participate in the GAT at any time for a full-time work role prior to retirement.

<https://www.spaceforce.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4290878/space-force-to-accept-air-force-reserve-volunteers-for-part-time-positions/>




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Remote maintenance system kits on track to fleet deployment

An Augmented Reality Maintenance System (ARMS) is a Navy technology that uses smart glasses and augmented reality to connect Sailors with remote subject matter experts (SMEs) for real-time, over-the-shoulder guidance on shipboard system issues and repairs

PORT HUENEME - The Naval Surface Warfare Center here recently sent out more than 20 ARMS kits to the fleet, putting it closer to meeting command leadership's goal of ARMS on every deployed ship.

"Our highest priority, based on feedback from (Commanding Officer) Capt. (Tony) Holmes, is to make sure that every deploying ship in the fleet pulls away from the pier with ARMS capability," said Matt Cole, NSWC ARMS project lead.

"So far, we have been accomplishing that by targeting deploying carrier strike groups like USS *Nimitz* and USS *Gerald R. Ford* groups. But our current round of fielding is rolling out capability to all our forward-deployed naval forces (FDNF) ships in places like Rota, Spain, and Yokosuka, Japan."

The ARMS kits left the command in mid-August, heading to more than a dozen FDNF ships in the 6th and 7th Fleets. Additional kits were sent to the Navy's Aegis Ashore Missile Defense sites in Poland and Romania for installation before the end of the calendar year.

According to Chris Black, NSWC PHD rapid prototyping experimentation and demonstration lead, the command also sent kits to the Iwo Jima Amphibious Ready Group and its lead ship USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7).

Using the ARMS kit, shipboard maintainers can contact a shore-based subject matter expert (SME) in real time with audio, video and text chat so the remote expert can see and hear what the Sailor is experiencing.

"We anticipate funding from Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNAP) and Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (SURFPAC), and we will meet the end-of-month deadline to have ARMS on all FDNF ships," said Black, who is overseeing the deployment of the ARMS kits.

"The ARMS team is actively

working toward getting program sponsorship, but while the program is still in the development phase, we are receiving funding from the various type commanders like CNAP and SURFPAC that eagerly want this technology aboard their ships," he added.

Cole said that the ARMS team's intent is to reach 100% of those set to deploy, or already deployed by the first quarter of next fiscal year.

"We also want to push our installations on ships a little earlier in the deployment cycle so Sailors can train with ARMS before they deploy," Cole said.

ARMS team members also continue to collaborate with other systems commands (SYSCOMs) involved in developing and deploying ARMS, including Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) and Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR). NAVAIR developed the software that NSWC PHD combined with commercial off-the-shelf hardware to create and ultimately field ARMS.

Representatives of both SYSCOMs attended a three-day meeting in July that the com-

mand hosted to discuss the overall ARMS fielding strategy, network integration requirements, metrics capturing, sponsorship options and more.

"The metrics that we are getting from Sailors and SMEs are going back to us as well as the NAVAIR software developers to improve the hardware and total kit," said computer scientist Nick Bernstein, ARMS engineering lead.

So far, metrics from nine ARMS-assisted shipboard maintenance events have been collected, showing a 92 percent reduction in SME time by using ARMS and a 94 percent cost avoidance, versus traditional shipboard support.

"Part of the discussion was focused on programmatic — how are we capturing metrics to tell the story of ARMS' impact, and how we can improve what we're capturing," Bernstein said.

Those metrics and feedback also fed into the development of the next version of the ARMS kit, he said.

"We dug into requirements and use cases that each SYS-

COM would like to prioritize as capabilities in the next version of the kit," Bernstein said.

Using the feedback received, the ARMS team ranked priorities for software and hardware development over the next six months.

During the meeting, members of the command's waterfront logistics division briefed the group on the logistical aspects of procuring, assembling and deploying the kits.

"Big picture, the goal of this meeting was to unite all the stakeholders on the requirements of the system and resources for the short-term and long-term plans for this program," Bernstein said.

"Building these cross-organizational relationships will be key to help the program succeed as we all communicate a bit better and have a more common understanding," he added.

All three SYSCOMs, including Naval Sea Systems Command, have also been working toward developing an estimated program cost, with a range between barebones support and full-court press to field across

the fleet over the next few years, until a formal Program Objective Memorandum dedicates program funding to ARMS, Bernstein said.

"We discussed who our potential sponsors are and which SYSCOM makes the most sense as the primary ARMS home," he said. "There are still some open questions from this portion of the meeting, but we captured the plans for what's next."

Finding a permanent sponsor is just one goal of the long-term sustainment plan for ARMS, according to Cole. What started as a Naval Innovation Science and Engineering-funded research project under NSWC PHD's Office of Technology has now grown into a full-blown program with several areas of command support.

"We have been building out the team into multiple technical swim lanes, with different departments leading the development of ARMS and overseeing fielding and product support," Cole said.

<https://www.usff.navy.mil/Press-Room/News-Stories/Article/4297906/remote-maintenance-system-kits-on-track-to-fleet-deployment/>

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MIDSHIPMEN GET TASTE OF FLEET LIFE ABOARD USS BOXER

by Seaman Dustin Drake

USS *Boxer* (LHD 4)

SAN DIEGO – Part of a Navy midshipman’s indoctrination to the fleet includes a visit to an active-duty ship to get hands-on experience and exposure to different warfare communities.

This summer, for more than a month, amphibious assault ship USS *Boxer* hosted 44 midshipmen, fulfilling a core component of the midshipman curriculum, distinct from the initial “indoc-trination,” they receive upon entering the program.

Midshipmen come from many paths and backgrounds, some from difficult home lives, others with prior service in another branch, and some with family who escaped communist countries to live in America. Though these future officers come from different walks of life, their paths have all led to the Golden Gator, aka *Boxer*.

Each midshipman was assigned a sponsor to guide them during their time aboard *Boxer*, showing them what various jobs in the Navy entail and how they function. Each path was organized by the ship’s midshipmen coordinator, Lt. Cmdr. Cody Walker, *Boxer*’s plan and tactics officer.

“I had experience with midshipmen for my shore duty while I taught at Penn State,” said Walker. “I would send them off to their summer cruises, but I wanted to be on the other side of that this time.”

Visiting *Boxer* was an opportunity for each midshipman to see how the ship conducts business and to be inspired by a vision of what their future military service might look like. *Boxer* has both Sailor and Marine officers with many different designators aboard, which

provided a broad spectrum of potential career paths for midshipmen to explore.

“Midshipmen have great ideas, but they don’t have a lot of opportunities to try out those ideas and see how they turn out,” said Walker. “So, a lot of their real leadership experience they get is once they show up and they become division officers after they’ve already commissioned.”

Boxer identified challenges for the midshipmen to come up with solutions so they could learn that process as early as possible. While working aboard, midshipmen took departmental walkthroughs and toured ships of other classes on the waterfront. During a short underway, the midshipmen got their first experience of life at sea aboard a landing helicopter dock.

“They saw a crew that was

members and their families.”

Air Force 1st Lt. Colton Stanislawski, 458th Airlift Squadron, added, “I can’t think of a better way to use the produce that doesn’t fit the bill at the grocery stores. It’s obvious there’s a huge demand for it, and for it to go to waste would be quite a shame. As we see here, it only took about 15 minutes for it to pretty much be gone ... so this is great.”



Capt. Jason Tumlinson, USS *Boxer* skipper, speaks with midshipmen in the wardroom during a mentorship meeting Aug. 7. *Boxer* is currently homeported in Naval Base San Diego. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Tyler Miles)

excited to be underway,” said Walker. “Every event we accomplished, everybody was high-fiving each other at the end of it. I think that sort of experience for a midshipman is one in a million, and I think that’s what’s going to drive them in the right direction for their career.”

One of the midshipmen sponsors was Religious Program Specialist 1st Class Anais O’Brien. “It’s been a good experience overall,” he said. “I have a lot of other command collaterals, but for me to be a sponsor, I’ve helped show what needs to be done when the Midshipmen are

in charge of people and how they can better understand how different people interact with each other and the kind of things that some officers forget that junior enlisted Sailors have to deal with.”

Sponsors showed the midshipmen what a normal day aboard the ship looks like. They taught them how to navigate their way around ship, understand its culture, and build relationships with crew members in order to develop skills that will help them when they are officers responsible for many enlisted Sailors.

“Just be open and honest,” said O’Brien. “Be able to understand that everybody was on those footprints at one point in time, so everyone goes through different experiences, but by being open with them, they can feel better connected to you, and you can build better camaraderie.”

Each Sailor aboard contributed to the midshipmen’s decision-making process as they pursue careers in the Navy. Working with officers in various warfare areas and specialties will help them make informed choices about their future paths.

Food

continued from page 3

ward, I feel we have an opportunity to connect the military bases across the U.S. with farmers, and to get fresh food to our military heroes, [and] for this to be an incredibly successful partnership that will ultimately reduce the amount of food that is wasted in our country.”

On behalf of the men and women at team Scott, Air Force Col. Matt Collins, 375th Air

Mobility Wing and installation commander, thanked the EPA and the farm, as well as those who worked behind the scenes to bring this fresh “fall-themed” produce to the base.

“This exemplifies the selfless collaboration for which team Scott is known and highlights the amazing relationship our installation enjoys with our local community. We deeply appreciate their commitment to our service

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CAMP PENDLETON (Sept. 5, 2025) Graduates from on-base and off-base colleges participate in a commencement ceremony here. The commencement ceremony recognizes the academic achievements of graduates who have completed associate, bachelor's, or master's degrees. Participants include active-duty service members, Department of War civilians, retirees, and family members. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Haley Fourmet Gustavsen

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NAS NORTH ISLAND (Sept. 8, 2025) Navy Culinary Specialist Seaman Heaven Edoigbe grills chicken in a galley aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* aircraft carrier. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Maddix Almeyda



CAMP PENDLETON (Sept. 5, 2025) Armor of Light volunteers tailor a dress for a military spouse during the annual Marine Corps Ball Gown Giveaway here. The event is hosted by volunteers with Armor of Light. They gather free dresses, shoes, and accessories along with a seamstress helping services members and their spouses to have something to wear at the Marine Corps Birthday Ball. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Stella Tedesco



LIT LAUNCH An E/A-18G Growler, attached to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 139, launches from the flight deck of aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* Aug. 28, 2025 during flight operations in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Official U.S. Navy photo

TANK YOU

Navy Sailors transport a drop tank in the hangar bay of aircraft carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* Sept. 4, 2025. *Theodore Roosevelt*, flagship of Carrier Strike Group 9, is currently pierside at its homeport on Naval Air Station North Island.



U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Cesar Nungaray




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Today’s cell phones have the potential to be great cameras, but out of the box from the manufacturer, they lack the ergonomics and accessories that dedicated cameras have for us that enable us to take our best photos and videos. I especially like the grips on the higher-end Nikon and Canon cameras, as opposed to the boxy ergonomics of cell phones.

Added to the superior ergonomics, a Bluetooth-enabled, physical shutter button that resides somewhere near your right-hand index finger is far more reliable for consistently and effortlessly taking pictures, shot after shot, and video after video, than the hit or miss nature of the virtual shutter button on the screen of a cell phone.

Furthermore, adding an actual camera-style, ergonomic grip to a cellphone provides room to add a battery for convenient wireless charging.

The combination of the ShiftCam ProGrip Starter Kit, as well as their shotgun mic and their travel tripod is a big improvement over the basic cell phone.

Enabling Bluetooth so that pressing the grip’s shutter release was easy. It works every time and, since it is right where my right index finger is, it is quick and easy to find.

The ShiftCam’s ergonomic ProGrip conforms to your hand, making it feel natural to securely and comfortably hold the cell phone while carrying it and while taking pictures — especially when using the included handstrap. There’s a comfortable, balanced heft to it that makes it easy to hold and use. No more will you have to guess where the shutter release is and wonder if your cellphone

Review: ShiftCam ProGrip & accessories, TravelPod Pro & ProMic Shotgun

actually took the pictures that you were trying to take — or have to look away from your subject because you cannot find the virtual shutter button. It is indeed much like using a professional camera.

The ShiftCam ProGrip also can double as a weighted stand, to support your phone for viewing its screen.

A robust battery is built into the grip that significantly extends shooting time, without having to deal with the hassle of a separate battery connected by a cord.

A ProGrip pouch, cold shoe mount and adapter, a hand-strap and a USB-C to USB-C charge cable round out the well-equipped kit.

To consistently recording audio while you shoot video, a shotgun mic works better than the tiny, mic inside the cellphone. The high-sensitivity, high-fidelity ShiftCam ProMic shotgun mic, available separately and when used with one of the two wind socks, reduces undesirable noise. It has a sturdy yet lightweight aluminum body, a shock absorbing mount, a universal cold shoe mount that attaches to the grip and a 3.5mm headphone output jack to connect to the cellphone’s adapter, as well as to a camera or a computer.

The TravelPod Pro is a compact, multi-adjustable, lightweight (under two pounds) aluminum travel tripod that will steady your videos or help you precisely frame your still images. It includes a clamp mount for smartphones and a 1/4-inch screw-type mount for DSLRs, a 360-degree ball head and a carrying sling. It also converts into a detachable monopod. It extends to just over 4.5-feet, and collapses down to approximately 8.5-inches for travel.

However, when I assembled everything and used it, I dis-

covered some problems. To play back audio that you have recorded, you must unplug the shotgun mic. Also, my two different Lightning adapters (Apple’s own, which is discontinued, and an “Apple MFI Certified” adapter from Amazon) that enable me to plug the mic’s supplied cord into my cell phone were blocked when my long iPhone 14 Pro Max is in the landscape position. I had to slide the phone far forward, to where the MagSafe charging would no longer connect. Hopefully ShiftCam will address these concerns in the future.

For information about the full range of ShiftCam photo products for smartphones, including these products, as well as lenses, lights and more, visit: <https://www.shiftcam.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 #898

What is American cuisine, anyway?

“Baseball, hot dogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet ... they go together, in the good ol’ USA!” was a familiar car commercial jingle when I was a kid. It featured iconic scenes from small town America, like aproned grandmothers rolling out pie crust, boys sliding into dusty first base, dogs slathered in mustard, and a sporty yellow 1975 Chevy Vega.

I ethnocentrically believed that Americans had invented these treasures. Eventually, I grew up and gained global perspective. While living overseas as a military spouse, I began to doubt the origins of many things I believed to be quintessentially American.

Take the hot dog for example. Also known as wieners or frankfurters, it doesn’t take a Michelin Star Chef to figure out that these simple sausages originated in Germany. Frankfurters were brought over to the US by German immigrants in the mid-1800s, and were initially sold from street carts in New York City. There is, however, evidence that at least the hot dog bun was invented around 1870 by Brooklyn baker Charles Feltman, who sold hand-sliced buns and hot dogs by the thousands in Coney Island. For the same obvious reasons, hamburgers also originate in Germany, even

if you top them with “American cheese” which was invented in Switzerland.

While stationed in England, I met a neighbor who glued herself to her telly for days on end watching cricket matches that

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

looked a lot like baseball, except with squished bats and dapper sweaters. Baseball originates from the 18th century English game, which was later brought by colonists to America.

As for apple pie, the fruit didn’t even grow in America until apple seeds and saplings were brought over and planted by French Jesuits and European colonists. Even then, the sour apples produced by those trees were only used for hard cider. The English and Dutch had been making apple pies centuries before the ink was dry on the Declaration of Independence.

While stationed overseas, there were times that I wanted to treat my local friends to foods from my home country, but I didn’t understand, with so many supposed American dishes originating elsewhere, “What is American cuisine, anyway?”

I was disappointed to find out that, although American children would arguably starve without macaroni and cheese, the dish does not originate in the U.S. On the contrary, pasta with cheese dates all the way back to 160 BC in ancient Rome! “Roman Macaroni” made its way to France, Great Britain, and eventually America, when colonists called it “vermachelly” and it became a favorite of Thomas Jefferson.

British friends asked me to

buy peanut butter for them at the commissary while we were stationed in England, but I discovered that the Argentinian legumes were brought over to colonial America by West African slaves who were fed peanuts by their European captors. Who knew the beloved PB&J had sordid foreign origins?

Despite these disappointments, I was happy to find out that the first bowls of chili were served along the Texas - Mexico border. And clam chowder was born when Native Americans convinced European colonists that clams should be used for more than hog feed.

Furthermore, colonists added other Native North American foods to their diet such as wild turkey, bison, squashes, corn, strawberries, black raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, papaya, guava, sunflower seeds, artichokes, avocado, pecans, black walnuts, cacao, wild rice, amaranth, pumpkins, beans, maple syrup, allspice and vanilla.

If you find yourself needing to bring an American dish to an overseas gathering — you certainly don’t need to put out a plate of empty hot dog buns or hunt down a 20 pound wild turkey. Thankfully, there are two authentic American delicacies that will impress foreign friends.

Lucky for Americans, brownies were first introduced at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1893 by wealthy socialite Bertha Palmer, and in 1938, Ruth Wakefield first baked chocolate chip cookies for her Massachusetts Toll House Restaurant, later selling her rights to the original recipe to Nestle for a reported one dollar.

Americans can’t claim fame for the many foods originating in other countries that have been mistakenly associated with our country, but when you bring brownies and chocolate chip cookies to the party, no one really cares.

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ROY'S SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

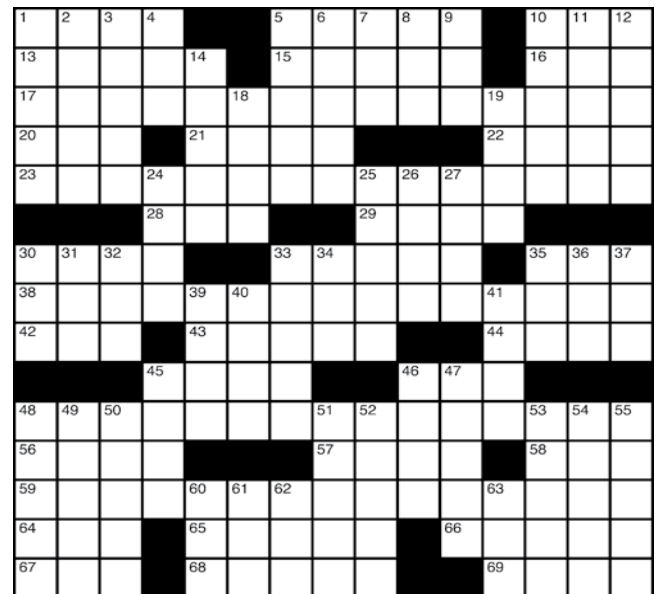
1 Prepared, as a bed
5 Scuttlebutt
10 Col. Sanders's chain
13 Soft palate feature that translates to "little grape"
15 Battery terminal
16 Right-angle shape
17 Where Alcatraz sits
20 Towel embroidery word
21 Like many meds
22 "A ___ Day's Night": Beatles song
23 Disc sport popular on college campuses
28 Shakespearean fairy queen
29 Jay of late-night TV
30 Lady's man
33 "A Room of One's Own" author
35 Admirer
38 Give-it-a-test-run advice
42 Kiki, Sandra or Ruby
43 Brainiacs, maybe
44 Mass ___: an I-90 nickname
45 Fair
46 "Dude!"
48 Storied pot-of-gold spot
56 Achy
57 What a slob makes
58 Nitrogen-based dye

59 Hiding-your-eyes parent-baby game
64 Veer off course
65 Vegan and Paleo regimens
66 Roadside hot dog seller
67 NBC staple for 45 years
68 Daisy variety
69 Three in a deck

Down

1 ___ pork: Chinese menu item
2 To no ___: in vain
3 Kirsten of Spider-Man films
4 Toymaker for Santa
5 Charged
6 Mom's brother
7 "Surely you don't mean me?"
8 Has too much, briefly
9 ___ center
10 Skewered dish
11 Bell-bottom bottom
12 Only non-rhyming Pac-Man ghost
14 Roastery draw
18 Many a Mideast native
19 Very, very
24 Website for film buffs
25 Polar bear hangouts
26 Bank (on)
27 Inside scoop
30 Inc., in England

31 Underground find
32 Pastrami holder
33 Value
34 Chicago airport code
35 "The X-Files" org.
36 Arctic seabird
37 TV's "Science Guy"
39 Plenty, in texts
40 Gala
41 "Once ___" "
45 Kangaroo kid
46 Diamond bag
47 Daredevil dangers
48 TV sports awards
49 Hall of Fame pitcher
Ryan
50 Southern twang
51 E, on a gauge
52 Peanut Butter Cup creator
53 Storybook elephant
54 Layer with a hole
55 "Toy Story" cowboy
60 "Yes, indeed!"
61 Give a thumbs-down
62 "___ whiz!"
63 Law firm fig.



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Perpetual silence....

by Tech. Sgt. Rose Gudex

81st Training Wing, Keesler AFB
"He's gone. Shawn...he's gone."
Silence.

"Did you hear me?"
Pause.
My voice cracked when I responded, understanding I would never be able to call or talk to my younger brother again.
"Yeah."

Shawn had ended his own life.

Suicide can happen quietly and sometimes it's the people closest to us who are struggling. A lesson painfully learned throughout my life and career: we are not meant to carry our struggles alone. Losing my brother reminded me that silence can be deadly, and seeking help is not just normal—it's necessary.

I was halfway across the globe stationed at Incirlik Air Base in Turkey when the call came that shattered my world. Now, it has been three years since I lost my brother, and there are more questions than answers.

For a long time I blamed myself. What if I had texted him more? What if I called him just for fun instead of only around a holiday or family event? When I first arrived at Incirlik, time passed quickly and I hadn't reached back home.

It wasn't long before the summer heat faded to something a bit more

bearable, and yet I thought about how my coworkers were doing away from loved ones and didn't check in with my own siblings. Suddenly it was Shawn's 28th birthday and I messaged him to wish him a happy birthday, but was it too little too late?

He saw my message, but didn't respond. I'll never know if a few more phone calls would have made him feel loved enough to stay.

I moved to Germany just two months after Shawn died and I spent endless hours at work because going home meant confronting what else I could or should have done differently. The echo in my newly-rented, still-empty house screamed at me.

Everyone said "it's not your fault" and "there's nothing you could have done," but I questioned if that was true.

After my family lost our mom nearly eight years previously, I focused on my teammates to ensure they felt cared about and as the years passed, thought less about the family back where I grew up. If I was fine, then they were fine, too. Right?

Guilt clouded my thoughts day and night. I knew all the resources available and yet I couldn't bring myself to do anything about it. Maybe



U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Rose Gudex, 81st Training Wing public affairs senior enlisted leader, reflects on the loss of her younger brother to suicide. U.S. Air Force photo by Airmen 1st Class Kaleb Tewes

I was subconsciously punishing myself - working myself to the bone so I didn't have to feel the heartache of losing someone close to me.

My 30-minute drives on the autobahn home allowed too much time for my thoughts to wander. What if what happened to my brother happened to me? I was scared, but eventually a new coworker helped me realize that I needed to seek mental health treatment, rather than just tell other people about how

helpful it was.

The misconception about being on antidepressants lingered at the back of my mind, but I knew I couldn't tackle this hurdle on my own. After I started medication, I began to feel like myself again. I even had the opportunity to deploy and thrived under the pressure. All of us were away from loved ones and it reminded me to check in with family more often, and we slowly tried to heal, together.

In our personal and professional lives, time is precious. We can't afford to be passive when it comes to our relationships. It's so easy to get stuck with day-to-day responsibilities that we forget to slow down and connect.

We can have the best intentions and think we'll do the right thing, but did we do something? When you say "yeah, my door is always open," is it? As leaders or parents, when you say "yeah, let me know whatever you need," are you listening when someone tells you exactly what they need?

It is not enough to say "I'm here." You have to back it up with action.

Checking in regularly, spending time with colleagues, friends, or family, helps you notice when someone might be struggling. Even small gestures matter: a thoughtful message, a shared meal, or simply asking, "How are you, really?" These moments build trust and give people the space to speak up. No amount of annual

training is going to replace getting to know the people around you.

It's a sign of courage to admit you need help and to ask for it, but it looks different for each individual. Sometimes it's as small as talking to a peer or supervisor about a stressor, or talking to a first sergeant or chaplain. Military and Family Readiness Centers have a plethora of resources, or sometimes more specific medical care is needed.

Beyond resources, what matters most is to be human. I am forever grateful to my first supervisor who watched me cry in his office when my mom died and showed me what it meant to work for someone who cared, and that asking for help wasn't frowned upon.

To the first sergeant who spent the whole short tour getting to know

our American Forces Network crew as his own even though we didn't technically belong to him and who immediately called me on a Friday night when I messaged him to say I got bad news from back home - you're the kind of leader I want to be.

If all the challenges in my life have taught me anything, it's to be loud. To speak up when I need help or someone else might need help. It's to have a backbone to do the right thing when it's not the easy thing.

Nothing is quite as loud as the silence of the phone call telling you someone took their own life. I refuse to let that silence happen again. Speak up. Check in. Be present. Your voice can make the difference.

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