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GAME ON A member of the Coast Guard Women's Rugby Team carries the ball up field while being chased by members of the Navy Women's Rugby Team during a match in Annapolis, Md., Aug. 2, 2026. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Austin Canos

Hegseth renames Joint Base Charleston to honor late Sen. Lindsey Graham

by C. Todd Lopez, Pentagon News

Joint Base Charleston, South Carolina, became Joint Base Lindsey Graham during a ceremony Aug. 10 to rename the installation after the late senator, Air Force veteran and South Carolina native son.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth joined South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster and Sen. Darline Graham of South Carolina to dedicate the 32-square-mile installation, home to the 437th Airlift Wing, which provides global airlift capability to the joint force with the C-17A Globemaster III aircraft.

Lindsey Graham served as a U.S. senator from South Carolina from January 2003 until his passing July 11. He also served as a lawyer and commissioned officer in the Air Force's Judge Advocate General Corps, first on active duty from 1982 until 1988, then as a member of the South Carolina Air National Guard until 1995 and finally, in the Air Force Reserve until 2015.

"Sen. Lindsey Graham dedicated his life to serving this state and serving the armed forces of the United States," Hegseth said. "He served this nation both in uniform and in both houses of Congress. ... But in both capacities, it was always the same mission. He knew the timeless truth that to ensure peace, we must be prepared for war. Protect your people, protect your state, protect your sovereignty, or you will lose it to someone else who is willing to take it from you."

Hegseth said he first met Graham as a young first lieutenant in the Army. Hegseth had returned from Iraq and had aligned himself with a veterans group called "Vets for Freedom."

"[We] believed in the surge in Iraq and advocating for the troops on the ground," he said. "We were a young, scrappy veterans' organization with no money and no access and connections."

Only one senator, Graham, was willing to meet with Hegseth and other representatives of the group.

"He welcomed us into his conference room, sat us down as a bunch of lieutenants and [noncommissioned officers] and others around the table — fresh back from Iraq — who wanted the right strategy," Hegseth said. "He said, 'Gentlemen, welcome to a place where you can still say the word victory.' He believed in mission success; he believed in the troops; he believed in giving the troops everything they needed."

In later years, Hegseth said he recalled mentioning to Graham that he was now serving as an instructor at a counterinsurgency school in Kabul, Afghanistan.

"I had mentioned that we ... could give him an update on what the Taliban was up to," he said. "Sure enough, during his reserve duty, there he was — jet-lagged as all hell — because that man had a schedule like nobody else. But he was there to hear from us because he wanted his ear to the ground from the troops on what was actually happening in the war in Afghanistan."

Just weeks before the senator's passing, Hegseth said he met with Graham to discuss the War Department budget — the current request, \$1.5 trillion, is the largest in U.S. history.



AUTO DEALERSHIP TO PAY \$137,000 FOR MISHANDLING SERVICEMEMBERS' VEHICLE LEASES

from Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department announced recently that Holmes Motors Inc., a "lease here, pay here" dealership with locations in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, has agreed to pay over \$137,000 to resolve allegations that it violated the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) by illegally repossessing vehicles owned by servicemembers and failing to refund security deposits and prepaid lease amounts to servicemembers who terminated their vehicle

leases due to military orders.

"The Servicemember Civil Relief Act provides certain rights and protections to the members of our Armed Forces. These protections are designed to lessen the legal and economic burdens of military service and enable our warfighters to focus

on the defense of our nation," said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "The Department of Justice will not waver in its commitment to enforcing these rights."

"As someone with 30 years of military service, enforcing the law to protect servicemembers' rights is of the highest priority to me and to my office," said U.S. Attorney Phillip W. Williams Jr. for the Northern District of Alabama. "The law is clear that when servicemembers are on active duty, they shouldn't have to worry their car will be repossessed while they serve their country. I'm very proud of this settlement."

The Department alleges that Holmes Motors illegally repossessed three vehicles leased by SCRA-protected servicemem-

bers without obtaining court orders. In at least one case, Holmes Motors repossessed a vehicle even after the servicemember gave the company a copy of her military orders requiring her to deploy in support of operations at the southern border.

DOJ also alleges that Holmes Motors violated the SCRA when it failed to refund security deposits and prepaid lease amounts when servicemembers terminated five vehicle leases early after receiving qualifying military orders.

Under the settlement, Holmes Motors will pay \$77,348 in compensation to the affected servicemembers. The company will also pay a \$60,000 civil penalty and will be required to make policy and training changes to avoid committing future violations.



Navy replaces Gassler as drone boss

Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao announced a major leadership shakeup on Aug. 5, removing Rebecca Gassler as the Navy's first Portfolio Acquisition Executive for Robotic and Autonomous Systems (PAE RAS) after eight months. Christopher Miller was named to replace her in an acting capacity. New Acting Lead: Christopher Miller, current head of PAE Maritime, took over Gassler's role concurrently while serving as acting Direct Reporting Portfolio Manager for Robotic and Autonomous Systems (DRPM RAS).

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Navy evaluates new digital health system aboard USS Essex to modernize at-sea care

Courtesy story, Naval Medical Forces Pacific
ABOARD USS ESSEX - In a continued effort to modernize medical capabilities and improve patient outcomes afloat, the Navy conducted a comprehensive assessment of the Joint Operational Medicine Information Systems (JOMIS) Clinical Data Provider (CDP) aboard USS *Essex* (LHD 2) recently.

The integration of advanced digital health systems is a critical step in ensuring medical providers have seamless access to patient data, even in the challenging, disconnected environments often encountered at sea. To rigorously test the new platform, the Navy relied on the expertise of the Sailors who will use it on the front lines.

Essex medical department, alongside elements of Fleet Surgical Team 5 (FST-5) and the 1st Medical Battalion, participated in the evaluation as the primary end-user testers. Key personnel facilitating and participating in the event included Lt. Harley Sheffield, Naval Medical Forces Pacific chief nursing informatics officer and the JOMIS CDP assessment action officer, and Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman William Meyers, *Essex* medical department lead chief petty officer

To prepare for the assessment, the participating medical personnel completed over seven hours of intensive training on the JOMIS CDP system. This training ensured that the medical teams were fully equipped to navigate the software and integrate it into their daily clinical workflows and simulated mass casualty scenarios.

“Getting direct engagement from the fleet during this assessment process is absolutely vital,” Sheffield said. “By working alongside the Sailors who will actually use this system, we ensure the CDP successfully supports health care delivery in an operational environment. This helps guarantee that Navy Medicine continues a legacy that has delivered quality health care and enduring expeditionary medical support to the warfighter on, below, and above the sea, and ashore.”

Throughout the 11-day testing period, these end-users provided critical, real-time user experience insights. Their direct feedback on the software’s interface, reliability, and functionality in a shipboard environment will be used by developers to refine and improve the platform prior to wider fleet implementation.

The JOMIS CDP is part of a broader Department of War initiative to deploy modern, interoperable electronic health records to operational forces. By conducting these assessments on large-deck amphibious ships like *Essex*, which boasts one of the largest medical facilities afloat, the military ensures that its digital health tools are robust enough to support warfighter readiness and survivability during global operations.

Navy relieves commanding officer of medical training unit in California

Stars and Stripes reported Aug. 7 that the Navy has relieved the commanding officer of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Lemoore, Calif., the service announced in a press release Aug 7. Capt. Mathew Loe was relieved of his command by Rear Adm. Kevin Brown, the commander of Naval Medical Forces Pacific, due to a loss of confidence in his ability to lead. The term “loss of confidence” is frequently used by the military when specific reasons are not disclosed for the removal of a commander. “The relief of the CO does not impact the command’s operational readiness,” the release said.

USS Carl Vinson re-opens modernized fitness facilities, enhancing readiness and quality of life

by Lt.Cmdr. Jack McKeon, USS *Carl Vinson*
SAN DIEGO - Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) has recently modernized onboard fitness facilities, and this was marked by the re-opening of the ship’s mezzanine gym.

Working in close partnership with Commander, Navy Installations Command Deployed Forces Support, ship Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) team members Shawn Ellison, *Carl Vinson*’s fit boss, and Chief Aircrew Survival Equipmentman Chelsea Armendariz, the recreation services officer, secured new fitness equipment and restored multiple workout spaces across the ship. This reinforced the command’s commitment to physical readiness, resiliency and quality of life. As the fit boss, Ellison oversees the ship’s fitness programs, facilities and initiatives designed to improve Sailor wellness and cultivate a culture of fitness across the command.

The fitness facility expansion efforts culminated in the re-opening of the mezzanine gym, which features new free weight equipment, squat racks and functional fitness equipment. These efforts also included the re-opening of the seaside gym, an open-air fitness space where Sailors can lift weights, participate in fitness classes, and train while enjoying fresh air and ocean views.

The ship also received a BeaverFit Shred Shed, a multipurpose functional fitness container system that significantly expands workout capacity and provides flexible training opportunities for the ship’s crew, embarked staffs and air wing and all civilian riders.

The modernized fitness equipment and re-opening of the gyms reflects the command’s continued investment in Sailor wellness.

“Fitness onboard an aircraft carrier isn’t just about physical strength but is also a way to help Sailors relieve stress,” said Ellison. “Staying active onboard doesn’t just keep our Sailors physically fit to meet Navy standards, but it is a critical tool for boosting morale and maintaining mental well-being during a demanding deployment.”

Ship leadership recognizes that maintaining a culture of fitness is essential to sustaining combat readiness in demanding situations.

“On board a carrier, the deck plates demand peak physical performance. This is why MWR looks at fitness as a total package,” said Ellison. “As the Fit Boss, I want to ensure that every Sailor, regardless of their starting fitness level, has access to excellent equipment and functional spaces. By meeting people where they are, we don’t just maintain high standards; we foster a culture of health that keeps the crew physically strong and mentally resilient.”

Beyond maintaining physical standards, MWR continues to expand opportunities for crew engagement through command fitness events, including flight deck 5K runs, group workouts and recreational activities designed to build camaraderie and provide healthy outlets for stress management.

The newly restored fitness spaces are expected to support thousands of Sailors, providing around-the-clock access to equipment and programs that enhance both individual wellness and unit readiness.

“Fitness is more than preparing for the physical readiness test,” said Ellison. “It is about building resilience, improving mental health, and ensuring our Sailors are physically and mentally prepared to answer our nation’s call whenever and wherever required.”

Carl Vinson is America’s third Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, and its mission is to conduct carrier air warfare operations and assist in planning, control, coordination and integration of embarked air wing squadrons in support of naval operations around the globe.

Man On The Street

What food combination you love that everyone else thinks is gross?



“I take hamburgers and hotdogs out of the buns.”
Seaman Michael Buchholz
Wooster, Ohio



“Peanut butter and pickle sandwich.”
EM1 Brian Clinton
San Diego



“Black olives and pineapple pizza.”
FC1 Aaron Frigm
York, Pennsylvania



“Venison with lentil beans, onions and green peppers.”
Scott Nicoll
National Park, New Jersey



“Dipped french fries in ice cream.”
Kameryn Rein Schwarz
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Marines make history with first attack drone live-fire series in South Korea

by Marine Corps Capt. Brennen Yancey
3rd Marine Division

Marines assigned to the 4th Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, successfully concluded the Marine Corps' first series of live-fire first-person view attack drone flights Aug. 5 in South Korea.

This historic training series marks a significant milestone in force modernization, demonstrating the Marine Corps' ability to field emerging technologies in the Western Pacific rapidly. The series featured two distinct training events: an inaugural range conducted July 30 by the 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and a second iteration carried out yesterday by the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment. Both are forward-deployed units to the Pacific region under the unit deployment program.

Throughout the training series, Marines used the Neros Archer drone to execute precise anti-armor and antipersonnel explosive strikes. With an effective range of approximately 20 kilometers, this technology extends the tactical

influence of small units far beyond traditional squad-level infantry weapons, allowing Marines to conduct precision strikes from positions of relative safety.

"Training with these FPV drone systems with deployed Marines, on a live-fire range and in a unique environment allows us to get one step further toward integrating it into real-world operations," said Marine Corps 1st Lt. Evan Brace, 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion company executive officer.

"We learn what works, and most importantly, what needs to be worked on and refined, so that when the time comes to use the Neros Archer on the battlefield, we have perfected the craft."

This training increases the 4th Marine Regiment's tactical proficiency with drones in offensive and defensive scenarios, extending traditional marksman-

ship into the unmanned domain. Small drone platforms like the Neros Archer give Marines at the squad and platoon level a modern, cost-effective alternative to many larger firing platforms that are not organic to smaller units.

"Equipping our Marines with FPV attack drones give us a useful tool that provides an additional kinetic option for us to use," Brace said. "This capability allows units down to the fire-team level to possess organic, precise fires capable of shaping their battlespace."

Conducting this live-fire series on the Korean Peninsula required a comprehensive safety and airspace structure. The 4th Marine Regiment worked in close coordination with the 2nd Infantry Division, 8th Army, and the 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade to establish the necessary regulatory frameworks in conjunction with South Korea. Before each live-

fire execution, Marines conducted rigorous dry-fire safety rehearsals and built-in procedural checks to validate protocols for high-explosive drone training iterations.

"Many of the obstacles we encountered before conducting this training, since it was the first of its kind here in [South] Korea, were overcome through a mission-focused mindset and through close cooperation and coordination with our [South] Korean allies," Brace said.

By rapidly adapting to the demands of the future operating environment and validating these systems alongside the joint force and regional allies, the 4th Marine Regiment continues to ensure that the 3rd Marine Division remains a highly capable, ready and survivable forward-deployed force, uniquely postured to safeguard regional stability. This training aims to enable and expand opportunities for future joint and allied FPV attack drone training.

<https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4565502/marines-make-history-with-first-attack-drone-live-fire-series-in-south-korea/>

Trump establishes Military Spouse Commission

by Matthew Olay

President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order in the White House's Oval Office Aug. 3 establishing the President's Military Spouse Commission.

The commission, which is authorized by Executive Order 14415, will provide recommendations for improving the quality of life for military spouses by addressing common challenges, such as housing, employment, healthcare, childcare, education and "just about everything else you can think of," according to the president.

"America cannot have the strongest military in the world without the love and devotion of our remarkable military spouses, who make the extraordinary sacrifices for our country. ... Many military spouses spend months separated from their loved ones, while our heroes are deployed overseas," Trump said while surrounded by numerous military spouses who will serve in the commission.

He noted that military families also endure frequent moves and other unique challenges.

The commission will be chaired by the spouse of the secretary of war.

During brief remarks, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who attended the ceremony along with his wife, Jennifer Hegseth, explained that strong military families make for strong warfighters.

"If that warfighter knows that their family is good to go, they will go the extra mile, which is what our nation asks," he said.

The executive order states that the spouses of various senior military leaders will serve as members, including the spouses of all service secretaries and the joint service chiefs.

"This entire group has mountains of experience, and they're raring to go put it to use on behalf of the great Americans who serve our nation. ... This is going to be full speed ahead to address every quality-of-life issue we can," Hegseth added.

Jennifer Hegseth said the members have decades of experience that they'll be bringing to the commission, but in addition to the experience, she said support from the top down is the biggest asset.

"Every time [Secretary Hegseth] travels around to the troops, he tells them that the president has [their] back. And now the families know that you have their back, too, and we are grateful," Jennifer Hegseth told the president.

<https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4562726/trump-establishes-military-spouse-commission/>



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- Top 5**
- Iran issues warning to Gulf states: U.S. must desist or you'll be hit hard
 - Senator introduces bill to stop VA from recouping military separation pay from disabled vets
 - Sailors and Marines to be counseled after 6 months of medical shaving waivers
 - Trump denies U.S. low on key munitions in war with Iran after reports of shortages
 - Major VA study to examine effectiveness of psilocybin on depression, PTSD
- Your Military**
- SOUTHCOM replaces Southern Spear with Western Hemisphere task force targeting criminal networks
- Army**
- U.S. Army general in Europe suddenly removed from command
- Navy**
- Navy removes the head of its drone program just 8 months into her tenure
 - Navy's head auditor harassed, ridiculed subordinates, probe finds
 - Navy restricts process for anonymously reporting harassment and discrimination
- Air Force**
- An Air Force robot made the C-17 part no vendor would
 - Former Air Force secretary says he'll sue Trump administration to restore his security clearance
- National Guard**
- North Carolina National Guard settles lawsuit over blocking Facebook critic
- Veterans**
- VA will provide phones, rideshares to homeless vets facing 'outreach' gaps
 - Veterans in this GI Bill scam played along and pocketed millions
- Defense Industry**
- Boeing wins first production contract for jet-powered JDAM
 - Rheinmetall scales down 2026 sales outlook on scrapped frigate program
- Israel-Gaza-Lebanon-Syria**
- Trump's Gaza Board of Peace issues first building contract – for a military base
- International**
- Houthi stage large-scale attack on Saudi-aligned forces in Yemen
 - U.S. military says there was no white phosphorus leak at its air base in South Korea
 - Leipzig drone bomb was found near Ukrainian plane carrying ammunition, say police
 - North Korea fires short-range ballistic missile, South Korea says

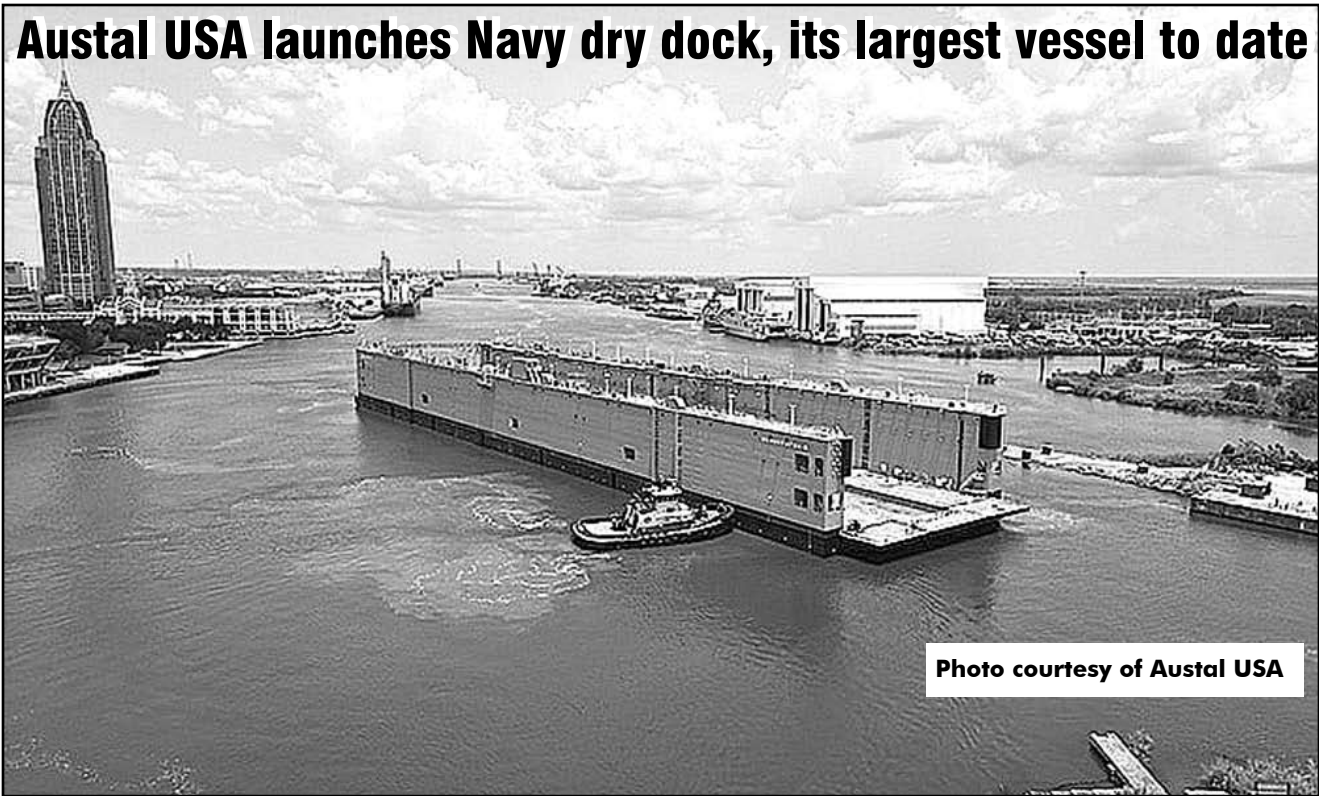


Photo courtesy of Austal USA

Austal USA, Mobile, Ala., launched the Navy's Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium (AFDM) 15 on July 28. It's the first AFDM built in more than 40 years and the largest vessel launched into the Mobile Channel to date.

Weighing 12,000 tons and measuring 694 feet long, with a deck working area of 90,800 square feet, AFDM 15 is the largest vessel launch coordinated and executed by Austal USA's test and activation team in the company's 26-year history.

The launch process began July 25 with the transfer of AFDM 15 from its assembly location at Alabama Shipyard to the shipyard's dry dock. The dry dock was then flooded, allowing AFDM 15 to be launched and towed into the river July 28.

The milestone required coordination among Austal USA's test and activation, crane and

rigging, engineering and AFDM program teams, along with the Navy, Alabama Port Authority Harbor Pilots, Alabama Shipyard, Berard Transportation, E.N. Bisso & Son and Crescent Towing.

"The successful launch of AFDM 15 is a proud moment for everyone at Austal USA and a remarkable achievement for our entire team," Austal USA President Gene Miller said. "Building the Navy's first Auxiliary Floating Dry Dock Medium in over 40 years is no small feat, and to see it launched into the Mobile River is a testament to the skill, dedication, and expertise of our workforce.

"This launch reflects the incredible capability we have right here on the Gulf Coast. We are grateful for the strong partnerships with the Navy and our industry partners that made this milestone possible, and we look forward to delivering a world-class asset that will serve the fleet for decades to come."

AFDM 15 is a Rennie-type floating dry dock, featuring continuous wing walls and several sectional pontoons that provide the stability and displacement needed to lift vessels from the water and submerge the dry dock using buoyancy.

The dry dock has an 18,000-long-ton lifting capacity and 90,800 square feet of clear deck working area and is designed to accommodate Navy destroyers

and cruisers. It measures 694 feet long, with an overall pontoon breadth of 157 feet and a height of 65 feet from the baseline to the wing deck.

The design incorporates features aimed at improving operability and maintainability based on Austal USA's experience and lessons learned from owning, operating and maintaining a similar dry dock at its Mobile ship repair facility.

Enlisted service members to enjoy modern living in new barracks

FORT MEADE, Md. — Nearly three years after ground was broken on a long-awaited project, Fort George G. Meade officially celebrated the grand opening of the Freedom Center IV Barracks during a ribbon-cutting ceremony July 30, marking a significant investment in the quality of life and readiness of the installation's enlisted Service members. The new complex consists of two four-story barracks buildings that will house 380 enlisted personnel from every branch of the Armed Forces who support the National Security Agency, U.S. Cyber Command, and other mission partners at Fort Meade. The facilities are expected to welcome their first residents this fall. Leaders from U.S. Army Garrison Fort George G. Meade, the National Security Agency, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Baltimore District and other partner organizations gathered to celebrate the completion of a project more than a decade in the making.



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Career and Education

Acting SECNAV launches new academic year at Naval War College

by Lt.Cmdr. Seth Koenig
NEWPORT, R.I. – Acting Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao, delivered keynote remarks as the Naval War College began its 2026-2027 academic year with two ceremonies, Aug. 3-4.

On Aug. 4, NWC held its annual Convocation ceremony, welcoming a total of 477 students to the academic year.

Cao, who addressed the Convocation audience virtually from Washington, D.C., called the war college “the leadership laboratory,” urging the enrolled military officers to embrace their roles as leaders, build relationships and stay loyal to their oath, their fellow service members and their allies.

“We’re coming in at a very particular time, with threats looming around the world, but our Navy and Marine Corps are doing the job and securing the pathways,” said Cao. “The strength of our military is not the equipment we have; it’s our Sailors and Marines. As leaders, our one call is to lead those young sailors and Marines the right way. The Naval War College is the leadership laboratory we need, because the first time you meet one another should not be on the battlefield—it should be in places like this where we’re able to share ideas and get to know each other.”

The total of 477 included 292 new students from all six branches of the U.S. armed forces and U.S. federal government agencies, as well as 81 U.S. students continuing into the fall courses after previous November and March enrollments, and another 104 international students from partner and allied nations.

NWC students work to earn Joint Professional Military Education credit and either a diploma or a master’s degree in National Security and Strategic Studies or Defense and Strategic Studies.

“Those who enroll in the U.S.



Hung Cao, Acting Secretary of the Navy, delivers keynote remarks virtually at the Naval War College Convocation ceremony, beginning its 2026-2027 academic year, on Aug. 4. Convocation welcomed a total of 477 students to the 2026-27 academic year. U.S. Navy photo by Kristopher Burris

Naval War College can expect a rigorous curriculum that will challenge them and, ultimately, forge them into strategists and warfighters who can be successful in any conflict, any time and any place,” said NWC President Rear Adm. Darryl Walker. “Many of the greatest military leaders our nation has seen in the last century and a half have been students or faculty at the war college. We know there are many future commanders and flag officers among the students in the audience at convocation every year. It’s a proven fact.”

Each year, nearly 500 in-resident students graduate, with 60 percent being selected for command of ships, squadrons and other military units. In the U.S., the college has also produced three Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 CNOs and 13 other service branch heads.

Additionally, the college welcomes between 100 and 150 foreign officers to the U.S. from around the world each year to study strategy, warfare, decision making, and operational art. Since creating a program for international officers in 1956, the NWC has more than 5,500 international alumni from 145 countries worldwide. Approximately 10 percent of the alumni from the college’s international programs have gone on to become heads of their country’s respective navy.

The day before Convoca-

tion, NWC’s annual Cloister ceremony welcomed more than 300 faculty members from the college’s in-resident and distance education programs to celebrate faculty accomplishments and prepare for the academic year ahead.

During the event, the faculty was formally introduced to the war college’s new provost – the institution’s top academic officer – retired U.S. Navy Capt. Michael O’Hara, Ph.D. O’Hara previously served as the dean of the college’s Center for Naval Warfare Studies (CNWS).

“As a military and civilian faculty team, we teach in rigorous ways to prepare officers to be critical thinkers,” O’Hara told the assembled faculty during Cloister. “We challenge them through readings, case studies, and seminar discussions to take estimates of situations, to express intent, to consider alternate points of view and counterarguments. We immerse them in practical problems to plan and integrate joint all-domain operations from seabed to space. We wargame them and pit them against thinking opponents who sharpen their abilities to think at the operational-level of war and at the strategic-level, too.”

Also during Cloister, faculty members were recognized and presented awards for superior achievements in teaching and research related to their specific disciplines.

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Sept. 5, 2026

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Point Loma Complex
\$102,246.00 - \$109,063.00 Per Year
Aug. 19, 2026

MWR Recreation Assistant (Golf)
Coronado
\$21.28 - \$21.28 Per Hour
Aug. 21, 2026

CYP Child and Youth Program Direct Care Supervisor
Point Loma Complex,
\$63,835.00 - \$68,090.00 Per Year
Sept. 5, 2026

CYP Child and Youth Program Cook
Point Loma Complex
\$50,061.00 - \$54,235.00 Per Year
Aug. 19, 2026

MWR Sales Clerk (Barista)
San Diego
\$21.28 - \$21.28 Per Hour
Aug. 21, 2026

MWR Snack Bar Operator
San Diego
\$21.28 - \$21.28 Per Hour
Sept. 6, 2026

FFSP Clinical Counselor/FAP Case Manager
Coronado
\$102,246.00 - \$122,697.00 Per Year
Aug. 19, 2026

MWR Assistant Golf Superintendent
San Diego
\$68,863.00 - \$75,123.00 Per Year
Aug. 28, 2026

MWR Recreation Assistant (Golf)
San Diego
\$44,406.00 - \$44,406.00 Per Year
Sept. 6, 2026

A-10S TAKE FINAL FLIGHT AT DAVIS-MONTHAN AFB

By Airman Najzee Kuzu, 355th Wing Public Affairs

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. - The familiar growl of the A-10C Thunderbolt II echoed across southern Arizona one final time July 29, as Airmen and local civic leaders gathered here to witness the aircraft’s final flight, marking the end of nearly five decades of A-10 operations at the installation.

“It’s not a place. It’s not people. It’s a mindset,” said Chief Master Sgt. Dave Anderson Jr., 355th Operations Group senior enlisted leader. “Hopefully that attack mindset will continue to live on, and it will make every single Airman it touches, every single airframe it touches, every single organization it touches better.”

The flight served as both a celebration and a farewell, honoring an aircraft that became synonymous with the 355th Wing and its close air support mission. As the aircraft passed overhead, the sound that had long defined Tucson’s skies became a reminder of the generations of Airmen who flew, maintained and supported the A-10 throughout its legendary service at Davis-Monthan AFB.

“The reason the A-10 flies, and the reason why our enemies are afraid of that, is because of the level of support every single Airman in all career fields gives to make sure that platform departs and comes back safely,” Anderson said.

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Local Military

Navy acting surgeon general accounts for immeasurable attributes during San Diego visit

Courtesy story
Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAN DIEGO - The visit illustrated that despite operating in an environment of finite budgets and personnel, the overabundance of heart, dedication, and innovation is what prevails across Navy Medicine.

These immeasurable attributes that exemplify the force were on full display when Acting Surgeon General and Chief, Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Rear Adm. Matthew Case visited Navy Medicine and Readiness Training Center San

Diego and Naval Medical Center San Diego, 6 Aug.

While here, Case met with executive medicine leadership. Among the attendees was Capt. Shannan Rotruck, commanding officer of Expeditionary Medical Facility Bravo. Her presence highlighted *Navy Medicine's Line of Effort 1: Deliver Expeditionary Medicine Systems*, which provide tailorable Role 3 care ashore theater hospitalization for all classes of patients in a distributed maritime environment.

"It was incredibly valuable for Rear Adm. Case to see first-

hand where the Sailors of EMF Bravo conduct the majority of their training," said Rotruck. "NMCS is the vital training ground that ensures our personnel are fully equipped to deliver the expeditionary medicine systems required to support global and combat operations. Seeing this training pipeline in action illustrates exactly how we achieve Line of Effort 1."

Case also toured NMCS's newly established Patient Advocacy and Resource Center (PARC). Having just celebrated its grand opening on June 9, the facility serves as the central hub for the command's patient relations personnel and resources. He then visited with participants of the *RELATIONS for Healthcare Transformation* core course, a five-day effort designed to equip staff with practical tools to positively influence the human experience of care.

Both the PARC and the *RELATIONS* course directly support Navy Medicine's Line of Effort 3: Provide Quality Healthcare and Patient Safety Programs Across the Naval Force.

"The PARC is more than just see **PARC**, page 7

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PARC
continued from page 6

a physical space; it represents our unwavering commitment to ensuring our warfighters and their families receive the quality healthcare they deserve,” said Jenn Deer, NMCS’s Patient Relations department head. “By centralizing our resources, we can better listen to our beneficiaries and build the trust that is essential to our mission.”

“Facilities like the PARC and training programs like the RELATIONS course are a testament to the ingenuity of our staff,” said Capt. Jerry J. Bailey, NMRTCS’s skipper. “Even in a resource-constrained environment, we are constantly innovating and focusing on relationship-centered approaches to provide the safest, highest quality care possible to our warfighters and families.”

Case concluded his visit by touring nursing wards, including NMCS’s Medical Surgical Department, where he met directly with the staff members executing the mission on the deckplates. Aligning with Navy Medicine’s Line of Effort 4: Recruit and Retain Navy Medicine Professionals, Case recognized three Sailors who represent the enterprise’s most vital assets, handing out command



Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Geraldine Tucker (left) and Jenn Deer, Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS) Patient Relations department head (center left), escort Acting Surgeon General and Chief, U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Rear Adm. Matthew Case (center right) and Capt. Jerry J. Bailey, Navy Medicine and Readiness Training Center San Diego (NMRTCS) commander (right), to NMCS’s newly established Patient Advocacy and Resource Center. Case visited the command to engage with executive leadership, tour facilities, and recognize deckplate Sailors supporting Navy Medicine’s strategic readiness priorities. Official U.S. Navy photo

coins to Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Alexander Barnes; HM3 Kaitlyn Crosby; and HM3 Zoe Miner.

“Our corpsmen and nurses bring an immeasurable amount of heart to these wards every single day,” said Capt. Richard Pozniak, NMCS director for

Nursing Services. “Seeing Rear Adm. Case recognize Petty Officers Barnes, Crosby, and Miner highlights the dedication that happens behind the scenes here around the clock. Retaining outstanding professionals like them is critical, because without our people, the mission simply doesn’t happen.”

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Operations Specialist Senior Chief Stephanie Hare, assigned to destroyer USS Pinckney greets her children upon the ship's return to Naval Base San Diego, Aug. 9, 2026. An integral part of the Pacific Fleet, 3rd Fleet leads naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute the Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations. 3rd Fleet works together with allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation and overflight, the rule of law and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region. U.S. Navy photo by Airman Apprentice Ethan Oase

Fisher takes command at NBPL

Naval Base Point Loma (NBPL) welcomed its newest commanding officer July 31 when Capt. Michael D. Fisher assumed command from Capt. Jeff Yackeren.

Yackeren's tour was marked by infrastructure modernization and strengthened community partnerships throughout the San Diego region.

Fisher brings extensive operational and leadership experience

to the position. As the incoming commanding officer, he will oversee the base's comprehensive daily operations, security, and support services for military personnel, dependents, and civilian employees.

Naval Base Point Loma is one of the Navy's most diverse installations, providing premier shore installation management, support, and services to over 70 tenant commands located across the Point Loma peninsula.

Most recent Marine Corps general and special court-martial results

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Sgt. A. M. Hernandez, pursuant to the accused's pleas, of battery, and resisting apprehension. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to a bad conduct discharge and reduction to E-1.

At a general court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Cpl. J. G. Lease, pursuant to the accused's plea, of possessing or receiving or viewing child pornography. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to a dishonorable discharge, 24 months of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At a general court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Cpl. Sidney C. Pointer, pursuant to the accused's plea, of one specification of burglary with intent to commit certain offenses. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to a dishonorable discharge, 6 months of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At an Art. 16(c)(2)(A) court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Sgt. R. Jimenezcordero, contrary to the accused's plea, of battery. The military judge sentenced the accused to 5 months of confinement, reduction to E-1, and a reprimand.

Secretary of War flag officer announcement

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth announced Aug. 3 that the president nominated Rear Adm. (lower half) John D. Saccomando for appointment to the grade of rear admiral, with assignment as chief of Navy Reserve, N095, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations/commander, Navy Reserve Forces, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Saccomando is currently commander of Naval Air Force Reserve, San Diego.



Friends and family members of Sailors assigned to aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), watch an air show on the flight deck, Aug. 8, 2026. Family day cruises showcase carrier strike group capabilities and the professionalism of the crew. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Aaron Haro Gonzalez



A Sailor, assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 51, executes a pre-flight check on an MH-60R Sea Hawk on the flight deck of Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Rafael Peralta (DDG 115), July 30, 2026. Rafael Peralta is deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations to support maritime security and stability in the Middle East. U.S. Navy photo



Amphibious assault ship Makin Island (LHD 8) transits behind amphibious transport dock ship John P. Murtha (LPD 26) during a strait transit exercise, July 23, 2026. John P. Murtha is underway with Makin Island ARG and the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducting routine operations in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy photo by MCSA Jadiel Santoni Martinez

Flight deck crew gives the go-ahead aboard USS Makin Island to launch an F-35B Lightning II July 28, 2026.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Micah Malala

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by Jan Wagner

I use social media often — just not in the way most people think of social media. My personal twist on using social media is to talk to people one-on-one, and through my weekly “AutoMatters & More” columns.

I am a one-man-band. As such, there is only so much that I can physically do by myself. That is simply not enough to achieve my one over-riding, long-term goal, which has long been to put my photography and the huge variety of experiences that I’ve written about in over 900 columns out into the world, for all to see and enjoy, in roughly 25 years.

Back when I started writing my columns, newspapers and magazines were still viable. That is where my columns were published, but the rise of social media hurt traditional media.

Sharing my vast number of varied experiences, through my words and mostly my still photography, was the original and ongoing purpose for my creation of a website — first through my short-lived, labor-intensive Microsoft FrontPage website, with many of my earliest columns and photos. That first version of my website was essentially killed when Microsoft pulled the plug on FrontPage, since it would no longer be supported with necessary updates that would be required for it to work on subsequent versions of computer operating systems.

My twist on social media, to share ‘AutoMatters & More’ with a world-wide audience

My website was eventually reborn as a WordPress website, and I proceeded to do the massive amount of work necessary to upload thousands of photos and hundreds of my columns to it. That work is ongoing and will likely never be fully completed.

To upload my older, FrontPage columns, to my WordPress website, they were simply cut-and-pasted screen captures of those already-formatted columns. Technically they do not look great, but at least the content is there. I still plan to upload their text and much higher resolution photos from my source files, if and when I find the time to do so.

Fortunately, all of my then-current production of columns was picked up for publication on the very popular “DriveTribe” website, which was created and hosted by the three former co-hosts (presenters) of the BBC’s wildly, and internationally popular, “Top Gear” TV series. Even on this primarily automotive website, even my non-automotive columns became popular. However, its founders eventually shut down “DriveTribe,” and with it went my large audience.

Since I already keep myself fully occupied by creating new content for my weekly columns, I do not have the additional time needed to create a large and ongoing volume of posts on social media, which is what content providers do to attract huge numbers of followers, by frequently posting their short-form content. Occasionally they eventually hit paydirt with a particularly popular post, and some earn millions of likes and followers. In turn, these new social media stars attract the attention of companies who pay them well.

I need help — particularly with social media, but since my columns generate little income, I cannot justify paying much to anyone to help me. Those who I have hired on-the-cheap have not produced the desired increase in my column’s audience. Perhaps those who might help me would be interested in doing social media for me in exchange for a generous share of the proceeds that their efforts would hopefully realize from a large increase in the number of followers, but despite some initial interest shown for that idea, no one has ever actually followed through with doing the work.

My column’s vast and varied archive of roughly 25 years’ worth of entertaining and informative content, combined with my rare combination of being a skilled photographer and a professional writer, is what sets me apart from other content providers. My idea that could get my best work out in front of a potentially large international audience, in an easily accessed and digestible format, and without me investing a huge amount of time that I do not have to create social media posts, is to combine the best of that in a book. I even have a name for it: “AutoMatters & More: Portrait of a Retirement Well Spent.” Please share your thoughts with me.

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

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

After my blasted alarm went off at an ungodly hour, I dragged my carcass to the bathroom to brush my fangs and make the necessary deposits to our plumbing system. Humans aren’t meant to get up this early, I thought, especially recent empty nesters who no longer have to make breakfast for three kids, pack lunches, and drive the carpool.

However, I’d made a commitment to our local Rotary Club to be at the breakfast meeting, and I couldn’t let them down.

I arrived in the church parking lot expecting to see a dozen or so cars, but there were only four. After my Navy husband retired from active duty military service and we bought a house on this small island, we joined the Rotary Club to meet friends and get involved in our new hometown. Back then, the breakfast meetings were so well-attended, we had to share songbooks.

But membership has dwindled.

“Hello, Lisa!” Win exclaimed when I walked in the door as if I’d risen from the dead, silently reminding me that I’d missed the last few meetings. The meeting commenced, as our local Rotary meetings have for decades, with the Pledge of Allegiance, a corny song from the club songbook, and the jokes that our singing inevitably inspires. The men allowed me

Helpers’ High: Getting addicted to doing good

to fill my plate first, and I heaped it high with fresh fruits, hot quiche from our local market, and a bagel slathered in butter and cream cheese, thank you very much.

We made plans for an annual community service project, but when the regular discussion was over, I brought up the elephant that sat conspicuously in our meeting room — our desperate need for new members.

Our Rotary Club is not unique. All service organizations have experienced drastically declining memberships — from 20 to 70 percent — since the 1980s, when volunteerism defined community life. Although service organizations haven’t changed much, Americans have, especially since the Digital Age transformed the way socialize, work, parent, and live.

Simply put, modern Americans just don’t have time. Today’s families have 43 percent less family dinners than their parents’ generation, they do a significant amount of socializing and networking online, and they are more involved in their children’s activities. They aren’t motivated to make time for a Wednesday night Kiwanis Club dinner or a Thursday morning Rotary Club breakfast meeting.

Unfortunately, the decline of volunteerism has left communities without the robust manpower they need for effective fundraising and civic events that benefit the needy, reduce food insecurity, beautify public spaces, and help youth.

Despite declining volunteerism, studies show that modern adults still care deeply about their communities, charitable causes, and bonding with other

humans. Clearly, the survival of community service organizations hinges on whether they can adapt their aging traditions to meet the modern needs, limitations, and lifestyles of younger generations.

Additionally, for old and young alike, the mental and physical health benefits from volunteering are undisputed. Carnegie Mellon scientists found that 3 to 4 hours of community service per week lowers the risk of hypertension by 40 percent. A study in the Journal of Social Science found that as little as 50 to 100 hours per year of volunteering will offer emotional and social benefits. Other research suggests that in-person civic engagement gives volunteers a “helpers high,” combats loneliness, lowers anxiety and depression, contributes to cardiovascular health, maintains mental acuity, reduces the risk of dementia, and helps people live longer.

In a nutshell, doing good is good for everyone.

I left the meeting clutching a paper plateful of leftover fruit and a surprising realization: maybe my alarm clock isn’t my enemy — it simply has terrible bedside manners. Just two hours earlier, I’d been certain that nothing worthwhile happens before daybreak. But I made it through the meeting, fueled by weak coffee, strong opinions, and a few people stubborn enough to keep showing up. Turns out, the desire to serve isn’t dying, it’s just waiting for modern society to stop hitting snooze. I understand now that the real wake-up call isn’t my alarm — it’s the reminder that doing good for others might be the best healthy habit we’ve forgotten how to keep.

Veterans News



Editor’s note from the VA: This website, <https://news.va.gov/148610/>, contains links to jobs that are active at the time of publishing. Most job listings close 7–30 days after posting. The sharing of any non-VA information does not constitute an endorsement of products or services by VA. Veterans should verify all information with the organization offering the opportunity.

Each week, the VA receives job announcements from employers and employment websites seeking to hire veterans. Current posts include links to job listings for the specific week. VA continues to post relevant and timely listings as they receive them for the locations listed.

By recognizing the skills, discipline, leadership and problem-solving abilities that veterans possess, employers can benefit greatly from hiring them. Veterans bring adaptability, a diverse perspective and a strong work ethic to the workplace, enriching company culture and fostering innovation.

A sample of recent national listings include Senior Business Analyst – EndRun, Senior Project Manager – OTC Industrial Technologies, and Workers Compensation Associate Claim Rep – Travelers Insurance.

Senators target separation pay recoupment

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION - Two separate Senate bills introduced recently would change how the Department of Veterans Affairs recovers military separation pay from veterans who later qualify for disability compensation.

Under law dating to the 1940s, VA is required to withhold disability compensation until separation pay, severance pay, or a separation incentive is repaid, and the withholding can arrive by letter decades after a service member leaves active duty.

Sen. (Arizona) Ruben Gallego introduced the “Restore Veterans’ Compensation Act,” which would bar VA from recouping voluntary or involuntary separation pay from veterans approved for disability compensation, allow veterans who later qualify for retired pay to repay only the net amount received after taxes rather than the gross amount, and lower the maximum recoupment rate for re-

tired veterans from 40 percent of the monthly payment to 25 percent.

“It’s ridiculous to claw back money from a veteran who has put life and limb on the line, just because later in life they qualify for disability benefits,” said Gallego. “Separation pay



and disability compensation serve two entirely different purposes—one honors time served, while the other addresses workplace injuries sustained. This bill ensures we stop unfairly penalizing our heroes and guarantees that veterans keep every dollar of the benefits they have rightfully earned.”

Gallego, a Marine Corps combat veteran, carried earlier versions of the bill in the House, most recently as H.R. 7027, the “Restore Veterans’

Compensation Act of 2026,” introduced January 13, 2026. Separately, Senator James Risch of Idaho introduced S. 5266, the “Veterans’ Earned Benefits Access Act,” on Aug. 5.

Risch’s measure leaves the recoupment obligation intact but caps monthly withholding at 25 percent of disability compensation so a veteran is not left with nothing while repaying. Both bills were referred to the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee.

FRA supports ending surprise benefit recoupment against disabled veterans and views this as the same principle that animates the Association’s top legislative priority.

Separation pay and disability compensation serve different statutory purposes, one compensating time served and the other compensating a service connected injury, and offsetting one against the other repeats the offset logic FRA

has fought in the concurrent receipt fight.

VA recouped \$2.44 billion from 112,834 veterans between 2013 and 2023, with collections peaking in 2018 at more than \$396 million from 17,066 veterans. Transitioning shipmates who accepted a drawdown incentive in good faith should not face financial crisis decades later when they seek care for an injury incurred in service.

The two bills take different approaches and are not companions. Gallego’s would eliminate the recoupment; Risch’s would limit its monthly bite. FRA will monitor both through SVAC and will press for the strongest available relief, while watching for offsets attached to either vehicle that would pay for the fix out of other earned benefits.



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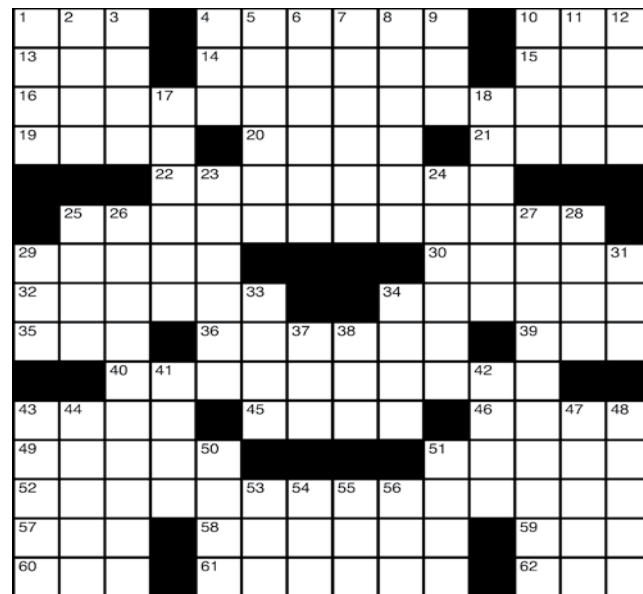
Across

1 Winnipeg NHLer
4 Dwellings
10 Retirement outfit?
13 Tailless primate
14 Low-ranked British peers
15 "La Bamba" star __ Diamond Phillips
16 "No, no, more user-friendly than DOS. __!"
19 Make the same point as
20 Ran
21 Hogwarts letter carriers
22 Throws a bomb, in football
25 "No, no, flatter than sharks. __!"
29 Some Strads
30 Hosiere hue
32 "The Great" pope between Sixtus III and Hilarius
34 "Peanuts" character spelled with a hyphen until 1981
35 __ chi
36 At home with
39 Also mention
40 "No, no, bigger than Humvees. __!"
43 Former Cubs exec Epstein
45 Hardy heroine
46 Watchdog gp. created under Nixon

Down

1 Mocking remark
2 Really cool
3 Georgia __
4 Disney monkey
5 Mop manager?
6 Promise of dire consequences
7 IKEA kit pieces
8 City about 250 miles NNW of Dallas, TX
9 Govt. ID
10 Clear of snow
11 Fleishy fold
12 Puzzle (out)
17 Alt-tab function
18 GI ID
23 Yves' eager assent
24 Turkey, for one

25 Brine-cured Greek cheese
26 Uneducated group
27 Travel authorization for citizens of a 27-mem. union
28 Zoomed
29 Winter hrs. in IL
31 Terminate
33 Wasn't present?
34 Education support gps.
37 Stretch (out)
38 RB stoppers
41 With 42-Down, city on the Pearl River Delta
42 See 41-Down
43 Starts to disperse, as a crowd
44 Round-tripper
47 Looks (for)
48 Befuddled
50 Serious violations
51 Brand with a paw print on its logo
53 Punctuating word indicating sarcasm
54 Long-legged runner
55 Lake Mead creator
56 Genre for Master P or Heavy D



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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/>

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBPCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758
The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open Mondays 10am-2pm

Marine Corps Mechanized Museum Camp Pendleton. Managed under the auspices of Camp Pendleton's Museum Division Office, the collection of over 50 vehicles ranges from World War I to the first Gulf War. It includes Patton tanks, armored wheeled and tracked vehicles, trucks, jeeps and amphibious vehicles. When coming aboard Camp Pendleton, please ensure that you have a valid photo ID for every vehicle occupant along with current registration and proof of insurance. <https://www.themech.org/> 24194 Vandegrift Blvd, Oceanside, CA 92058. (760) 725-5758. Mon-Thur 8am-4pm, Fri 8am-1pm, Closed Saturday & Sunday

THANKS FOR READING THE DISPATCH!

Immersive tech, maximum readiness: DHA and VA partner to transform warfighter and veteran healthcare

This immersive technology supports pain management, anxiety and PTSD treatments, addiction recovery, and physical and recreational therapy.

by Robert Hammer,
Defense Health Agency

Retired U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Carrie Howe had difficulty beginning and managing tasks with anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder — but a mixed reality game at the Immersive Health Care Technology Demo Day challenged her to move, react and engage with activities.

The former combat helicopter pilot tried an extended-reality headset July 15 during the joint Veterans Health Administration/Defense Health Agency event at the Washington VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. The game had a simple outcome: It encouraged her to “get started,” she said.

“I think this would be a great tool for people who just need that little kick-start of dopamine or adrenaline to help them get up and unload the dishwasher or go outside to take a real walk,” Howe said.

DHA’s Web and Mobile Technology Program Management Office and the VHA’s Strategic Initiatives Lab hosted the event, where service members, clinicians, veterans, and agency leaders tested tools and provided developers with feedback on their potential uses in military and veteran healthcare.

DHA, VA partnership benefits the warfighter and veteran

The event joined the two federal health systems that care for many of the same patients at different stages of their lives. “The Department of War is in the business of making veterans. It’s a byproduct of what we do,” said James Perkins, acting program executive officer for the Portfolio Acquisition Executive Medical Digital Solutions. The DHA and Department of Veterans Affairs share utmost responsibility for continuity of care as patients move from active duty to veteran status, Perkins said.

DHA leaders emphasized the partnership supports the DHA director’s priorities by delivering warfighter medical readiness, giving service members access to tools to get them back into the fight sooner, and providing the healthcare enterprise all benefi-



The Veterans Health Administration and Defense Health Agency hosted the Immersive Health Care Technology Demo Day at the Washington VA Medical Center in Washington, D.C. The event provided veterans, service members, clinicians, and agency leaders with an opportunity to try technology designed to treat veterans and service members with a range of healthcare issues. Journalist: Robert Hammer

ciaries deserve. “It’s really important that we’re collaborating, that we have these innovation opportunities to explore different tools and capabilities that benefit all service members and their families,” Perkins said.

The event also demonstrated how the key partnership helped the agencies collect stronger evidence, improve tools, and decide on future expansion. The DHA and VA aim to strengthen their collaboration to give more veterans and service members access to immersive technology to support pain management, anxiety and PTSD treatments, addiction recovery, and physical and recreational therapy.

Technology designed to help warfighters, veterans navigate challenges

Attendees tested virtual reality, augmented reality, and

mixed reality tools, known as extended reality or XR.

The DHA demonstrated various tools and software, including:

- Immersive Wellness: A mixed reality mindfulness and wellness toolbox
- VR PTSD Runner: An empathetic therapy for PTSD management and trauma-informed care
- VR for Mental Health: An immersive support tool for therapeutic engagement and psychological resilience

U.S. Public Health Service Rear Adm. Ivonne Arena, DHA’s acting assistant director for Research, Development and Acquisition/Component Acquisition Executive said the tools could strengthen clinical care and military readiness. “Technologies like VR have the potential to transform how we train our workforce” to strengthen skill-

the overall experience of our patients and providers.” Arena emphasized the technology has a further benefit: access to key data.

“It’s not just about the VR technology itself but also having access to the biometrics that are collected by users. This data can be useful to develop more tools, and to be able to use them in the right way in the future,” she said.

For providers and clinical staff, the event was designed to demonstrate how technology can improve patient outcomes, serve as a new tool for complex cases, support their own wellness, and offer an opportunity to try the technology. For leadership, the demo day provides

an opportunity to offer clinical and operational perspectives to development teams and learn how the intersection of joint warfighting capabilities — research, technology, and mental healthcare — directly impact lethality.

“Immersive technology isn’t just about innovation; it’s about readiness,” said Alistair McLean, program manager for DHA’s Web and Mobile Technology Program Management Office. “Whether we’re helping providers strengthen how they deliver care or supporting a service member’s recovery so they return to full duty faster — today’s demonstrations show that these tools have direct implications for how DHA delivers on its core mission.”

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