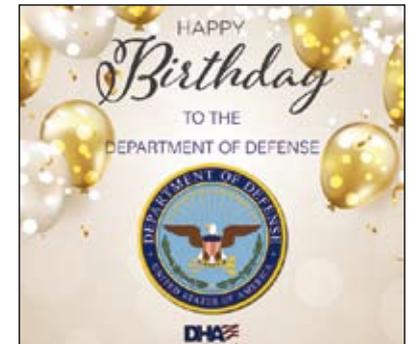


# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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SIXTY-THIRD YEAR NO. 12  
THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2023



**AT SEA WITH USS RONALD REAGAN (July 30, 2023)** A command honor guard detail parades colors during the 20th anniversary of commissioning ceremony for aircraft carrier *Ronald Reagan* during operations in the Indian Ocean. Official U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Keyly Santizo

## Two U.S. Sailors charged with sharing military info with China

In an *Associated Press* report Aug. 3, two San Diego-based Sailors have been arrested and charged with providing sensitive military information to China, U.S. federal officials announced Thursday.

Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Jinchao Wei, 22, assigned to amphibious assault ship *Essex*, and Construction Electrician 2nd Class Wenheng Zhao, 26, of Naval Construction Group 1, were charged in separate indictments.

The two Sailors were charged with similar crimes, but they were charged in separate cases, and it wasn't clear Thursday if the two were connected or if they were courted or paid by the same Chinese intelligence officer.

Wei was arrested on a charge relating to espionage involving conspiracy to send national defense information to a Chinese intelligence official not identified in his indictment.

Zhao is accused of taking bribes in exchange for providing sensitive U.S. Navy photos and videos to a Chinese intelligence officer, according to U.S. officials.

In Wei's first appearance in federal court in San Diego Thursday, a federal attorney for Wei entered a not guilty plea.

During Wei's hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Fred Shepherd noted that Wei was passing information to the Chinese as recently as two days ago to receive more payment, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California summarizing the proceeding.

This week, a detention hearing was scheduled, with a hearing to set a trial date scheduled for Aug. 10, according to officials.

Zhao has also pleaded not guilty and is being jailed until his detention hearing on Tuesday as well, according to officials with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of California.

His trial is set to begin on Sept. 26 in Los Angeles.

The indictments against the two lay out a bevy of alleged violations. - by Geoff Ziezulewicz, *Navy Times*, and Julie Watson and Lolita C. Baldor, *Associated Press*

## TROOPS ON ACTIVE DUTY CAN NOW OPEN FLEX ACCOUNTS TO HELP PAY FOR CHILD CARE, PENTAGON SAYS

by Doug G. Ware  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Hundreds of thousands of American troops will be able to open flexible spending accounts beginning next year to help pay for child

care and other dependent services, the Pentagon said Aug. 3.

Finding and affording on-base child care has been a major issue for military families in recent years, especially in locations

that don't have enough qualified providers. In many cases, families have been placed on lengthy waiting lists for services.

"Access to affordable, reliable and high-quality dependent care is a crucial component of financial and overall military readiness," Gilbert Cisneros, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said in a memo that announced the expansion of Dependent Care Flexible Spending Accounts.

Beginning in November, eligible troops will be able to sign up for the accounts, or DCFASAs, and can contribute as much as \$5,000 per year. The money will be automatically deducted from troops' pay to go toward child care such as preschool,

summer day camp and before- or after-school programs. The DCFASAs can be used only to care for children younger than 13. However, service members also can use the money to care for adult dependents of any age who are "mentally or physically incapable" of caring for themselves, officials said.

The accounts are available only to active-duty troops and those in the National Guard or Reserve serving on Title 10 orders, which means they have been ordered to active duty by the president of the United States. The accounts are not available to Guard or Reserve troops under Title 32 orders or members of the Coast Guard. It's possible, however, that the Pentagon might expand DCF- see **Flex, page 2**



A child care provider at a development center reads a story to children April 11, 2023, at McConnell AFB, Kan. U.S. Air Force photo by Felicia Przydzial

## Thomas assumes command of aircraft carrier Carl Vinson

PACIFIC OCEAN - Capt. Matthew Thomas relieved Capt. P. Scott Miller as commanding officer of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) during an underway change of command ceremony, Aug. 7. "I want to congratulate Capt. Miller for a job well done," said Thomas. "It is clear that Capt. Miller's leadership resonates throughout the ship - from the top of the island down to the bottom-most deck plates. I look forward to taking command of *Carl Vinson* and leading these outstanding Sailors who make it all work." - see photo on page 7

## Pentagon pulling 1,100 troops from U.S.-Mexico border mission

WASHINGTON - *Military.com* reported recently that the Pentagon is pulling 1,100 active duty troops from the U.S.-Mexico border it deployed earlier this year as the government prepared for the end of asylum restrictions linked to the pandemic. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin approved the deployment of a total of 1,500 active duty troops for a temporary 90-day military presence surge at the border in May. At the time, illegal border crossings were swiftly escalating with concerns they'd go even higher after the restrictions ended but instead the numbers have fallen. The 1,100 troops concluded their 90-day mission by Aug. 8; the remaining 400 will be extended through August 31, a defense official told *Military.com*.

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### Career & Education

U.S. Army: Cyber seminar to help recruit and retain talent.

See page 5

### Base Movie Schedule

Sound of Freedom, Joy Ride, Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny, Gran Turismo

See page 10

# Husband passes guidon to his wife during rare Air Force change-of-command ceremony

by David Choi  
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — When the 51st Operations Group at this U.S. air base south of Seoul changed commanders recently, few failed to notice the incoming and outgoing colonels shared the same last name.

Col. Kathryn Gaetke took over on June 14 from her husband, Col. Matthew Gaetke, who moved over to lead the 607th Air Operations Center at Osan.

Married 21 years and the parents of two daughters and a son, the Gaetkes are also F-16 Fighting Falcon pilots with more than 3,800 flight hours, including nearly 850 hours in Iraq and Afghanistan, between them.

Air Force regulations forbid spouses from working in each other's chains of command, but the Gaetkes have managed throughout their military careers to stick together, often by taking assignments in out-of-the way

places like Cannon Air Force Base on the plains of eastern New Mexico.

"Because we can't be in charge of each other, we've always been next to each other," Matthew Gaetke recently told Stars and Stripes at his wife's office near Osan's airfield. "Which makes it harder for anyone to point the finger and say that one of us was really helping the other — except to the extent that by helping and coordinating things that you'd otherwise want to do."

The couple admits their relationship permits them to help their respective organizations by sometimes helping each other.

"We've been in some places where we've been able to capitalize on the level of trust and communication in ways that not every commander-to-commander relationship can [achieve]," Kathryn Gaetke said.

Before taking command of the



In this 2017 file photo, Kathryn and Matthew Gaetke, with their children at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. U.S. Air Force photo

operations group, she was director of operations and plans for 7th Air Force, also at Osan.

She described her husband as the ideal "study partner" and that they "learned from each other's mistakes."

The couple met in 1998 as undergraduates and ROTC cadets at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She was a freshman majoring in mechanical engi-

neering and he was a sophomore in electrical engineering and computer science.

After an on-and-off relationship, the Gaetkes were engaged in 2001 and married a year later.

With their commissions and diplomas in 2001 and 2002, the couple pursued their mutual goal of flying the F-16, a single-engine, supersonic, multirole fighter.

## Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton leadership changes hands

by Curtis Hill, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON - Capt. Peter F. Roberts was relieved by Capt. Jenny S. Burkett as commander of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command and as director of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton during a change of command Aug. 4.



Capt. Jenny Burkett, commander, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Camp Pendleton, Rear Adm. lower half Guido Valdes, commander, Naval Medical Forces Pacific, and Navy Capt. Peter Roberts, former commander, NMRTC CP, cut a cake following the change of command ceremony Aug. 4. Official Navy photo

The ceremony was held outdoors in the hospital's Medal of Honor Mall with the Pacific Ocean as a backdrop. The guest speaker for the event was Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, commander, Naval Medical Forces Pacific, and director of the San Diego Market.

"Perhaps the most rewarding milestones and positions to have in the Navy is that of holding command," Valdes said. "A commanding officer's decisions and actions directly impact the readiness and well-being of those who defend our nation. It is a sacred trust."

Speaking of Roberts' time in command, Valdes said, "The combined execution of patient care, training, research, and operational readiness requires great skill and expertise, and Captain Roberts has performed exceptionally with grace and poise."

many people for what has been accomplished here at Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton over the past two years," Roberts said.

He went on to talk about the challenges and successes achieved during his time in command.

"Two years ago, we had barricades at the front entrance, limited access point to the hospital, [and] care being delivered in expeditionary tents in the parking lots," he said. "From providing critical medical support to our service members and beneficiaries to extending as much support as possible to the commands we support in the field and across our bases, this command has had a profound impact," Roberts said.

"Nearly 2000 babies were brought into this world right there [pointing to the hospital], 1.5 million patient encounters occurred, and more than 16,000 person-days were provided for refugee and COVID support across the country."

Roberts will transfer to the Office of the Naval Inspector General at the Washington Navy Yard in the District of Columbia.

After reading her orders and assuming command of NMRTC, Burkett gave her remarks and spoke directly to her command, "I am a firm believer in servant leadership. I came here today to support you as the team, working together to achieve our common goals."

"Each one of you brings your unique skills and abilities to the table," she added. "I am thrilled to join this amazing team."

Burkett comes to NHCP from her previous position as the executive officer of Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan.

| Ships Underway          |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Total Battle Force      | 299 (USS 240, USNS 59)     |
| Deployed                | 101 (USS 69, USNS 32)      |
| Underway                | 74 (47 Deployed, 27 Local) |
| Ships Deployed by Fleet |                            |
| 2nd Fleet -             | 4                          |
| 3rd Fleet -             | 3                          |
| 4th Fleet -             | 3                          |
| 5th Fleet -             | 14                         |
| 6th Fleet -             | 18                         |
| 7th Fleet -             | 59                         |
| Total -                 | 101                        |

Matthew Gaetke attended flight school a year after his wife at Vance Air Force Base, Okla., a fact he said led to light ribbing from his instructors.

"The F-16 wing instructors said things like, 'Your wife was a lot better at this than you are,'" he said. "I think they wanted me to get mad — but yeah, she's also better looking, smarter and more pleasant than me. Why does it surprise you?"

Despite the odds, the couple managed to stay relatively near each other throughout their careers, due in part, Matthew Gaetke said, to "great leaders" in the Air Force.

"I can, at each point, name those who stuck their necks out or worked hard behind the

scenes ... to try to align some of these things because all of them seemed low probability at the time," he said.

Kathryn Gaetke said their circumstance is the result of hard work from "people making the system work for people."

"I can't tell you how many times I've heard that 'sooner or later, you're going to have to pick one of your careers,'" she said.

The colonels and their children are planning another change of duty station next year.

"We'll start all of the same processes again for what comes next," Kathryn Gaetke said. "We'll have to see what happens."

### Flex

continued from page 1

SAs to include more troops in the future, officials said.

"These accounts are a key part of the department's 'Taking Care of Our People' initiative," DCFSA Executive Director Jennifer Walker said. "A service member can lower their taxable income ... [and] this can result in more money in their pocket, more take-home pay."

The Defense Department said about 400,000 service members will be eligible for the flexible spending accounts, which have been available to civilian DOD workers for months.

"The funds that are contributed — up to \$5,000 per family, or as little as \$100 — are not subject to any payroll taxes," Walker said. "Service members will be able to enroll starting in mid-November through mid-December."

Troops who sign up during the upcoming enrollment period will be able to access the flex spending accounts on Jan. 1, officials said. Troops also can enroll outside the regular period if there's a "qualifying life event" such as the birth of a child, a death in the family, a divorce or a permanent change of station. Under the program, service members will file claims through the Federal Flexible Spending Account Program website, FSAFEDS.com, which then can pay the provider directly or reimburse money already spent on a service.

The lack of affordable child care is an issue that often comes up when defense leaders ask military families to voice some of their top concerns. When Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Fort Liberty, N.C., in May, he spoke with families who voiced immense frustration with finding and keeping military-certified child care that's affordable. A central part of the problem for some is there aren't enough providers on base, which leaves families only one option: finding private, and more expensive, child care off the base.

The Pentagon has taken some action in recent months to ease the problem. In December, it authorized higher rates for on-base providers as an incentive to keep them from leaving. It also raised a child care subsidy available to military families from \$1,500 to \$1,700 per child, per month.

"Helping families afford care for their loved ones while pursuing their career goals supports the economic well-being of families and a mission-ready force," said Ashish Vazirani, deputy undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

The Pentagon has been studying DCFSA expansion for nearly a year and decided to approve it in March. Three months later, President Joe Biden ordered active-duty troops have access to the accounts no later than Jan. 1.

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## Navy approves service life extension for four Arleigh-Burke class destroyers

WASHINGTON—The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Surface Warfare Division (N96) recently approved the service life extension of four Arleigh Burke class guided-missile destroyers.

USS *Ramage* (DDG 61), homeported in Norfolk, VA, and USS *Benfold* (DDG 65), based in Yokosuka, Japan, have been extended by five years to FY 2035 and FY 2036, respectively.

USS *Mitscher* (DDG 57), also homeported in Norfolk, and USS *Milius* (DDG 69), homeported out of Yokosuka, have been extended by four years to FY 2034 and FY 2035, respectively.

These extensions follow the March 2023 extension of USS *Arleigh Burke* (DDG 51) by five years through FY 2031. The extension puts each destroyer beyond their estimated service life of 35 years.

“These service life extensions demonstrate the Navy’s commitment to ensuring the surface fleet has the right ca-

pability and capacity,” said Rear Adm. Fred Pyle, director of Surface Warfare (N96) “Adding 23-years of service life cumulatively over the last six months is a significant investment in surface warfare. These extensions align to Secretary of the Navy Del Toro’s commitment to Congress during the FY-24 posture hearings to analyze service life on a hull-by-hull basis and extend the correct ships in order to be good stewards of resources invested in the U.S. Navy by the American people.”

Each of these ships have received Aegis baseline nine upgrades through the DDG Modernization program. The program provided a comprehensive mid-life modernization to these destroyers, ensuring they have the right systems to remain capable and reliable to the end of their service life. Based on analysis by the Navy’s technical community, these extensions were feasible because each ship properly adhered to lifecycle maintenance plans and were well maintained in good material condition by their crews.

“These DDGs bring the right

capability and capacity to our operational commanders in an affordable manner maximizing the Navy’s targeted return on investment for these ships,” Pyle added. “Each of these extensions takes into account where these ships are in their lifecycle maintenance schedules. Extending Mitscher and Milius by an additional year to five years would require each ship to spend a year of that extension in a docking availability, which would not be a prudent use of resources entrusted to the Navy.”

The surface community will continue to evaluate the service life of each surface ship based on combat relevance, reliability data, and material condition. Currently, the Navy has 73 Arleigh Burke-class destroyers in service and is continuing to modernize the class with the latest technologies and capabilities.

For more information on the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer, visit: <https://www.navy.mil/Resources/Fact-Files/Display-FactFiles/Article/2169871/destroyers-ddg-51/>

## Air Force pulls off first AI flight in pilotless plane

by Kyle Alvarez  
Stars and Stripes

Air Force researchers are touting the achievement of the first unmanned flight using artificial intelligence algorithms after a successful three-hour sortie by an XQ-58A Valkyrie.



The flight took place at Florida’s Eglin Air Force Base on July 25, according to a statement issued Thursday by the Air Force Research Lab, which developed the unmanned plane in partnership with Kratos. The AI algorithms used in the flight were created by the lab and honed through millions of hours of simulations, the statement said. “AI will be a critical element to future warfighting and the speed at which we’re going to have to understand the operational picture and make decisions,” said Brig. Gen. Scott Cain, the research lab commander. “We need the coordinated efforts of our government, academia and industry partners to keep pace.”

The Valkyrie is a reusable unmanned plane that was designed to be far less costly to operate than traditional counterparts, whether they have a pilot or not, according to the Air Force Research Lab website.

The July 25 flight put a capstone on a multiyear partnership that began with the Skyborg Vanguard program, the statement said.

The Valkyrie used in the flight arrived at Eglin last year.

It is rocket-launched off a rail system and controlled from a ground station or airborne fighter. An onboard computer system can determine the best flight path and throttle settings to comply with commands, the Air Force said.



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- 3 acting chiefs, 3 black boxes: Army, Navy to join Marines without confirmed chief
- Soldier killed after civilian vehicle collided with Stryker in Germany
- Fort Campbell Soldier convicted of killing his pregnant wife and sentenced to life in prison



**Navy**

- U.S. nuclear submarine visits Western Australia as allies increase defense preparedness
- Navy safely recovers mock space capsule off San Diego in big step toward sending humans to the moon
- Navy Week returning to Cleveland in September
- VCNO Franchetti talks STEM skills at autonomous sub contest

**Marine Corps**

- Marine Corps now has unit in Indo-Pacific flying Reaper drones
- A baby was found in the rubble of a U.S. raid in Afghanistan. But who exactly was killed and why?
- U.S. Marine acting commandant details future direction of service
- Seneca, Ky., High School ending Marine Corps JROTC program after more than 40 years

**Air Force**

- USAF will retire the U-2 in 2026. Until then, expect 'unique, innovative' uses
- For NGAD's new capabilities, Air Force turns to 'about... a dozen' non-traditional vendors: General
- Air Force propulsion czar: NGAD engines will have different size, similar tech to AETP
- Sprawling Pacific exercise revealed Air Force needs some doctrine 'refresh': General
- Husband passes guidon to his wife during rare Air Force change-of-command ceremony

**Space Force**

- Enhancing 'lethality': First Space Force 'operations' doctrine cements role within Joint Force

**Coast Guard**

- Coast Guard investigating diesel spill in Lake Michigan
- U.S. Coast Guard, hazmat team responding to oil spill in Delaware River at Philadelphia Navy Yard National Guard
- Iowa governor taps COVID funds to send troops to Mexico border
- Fight for a Space National Guard moves to next round

**Your Military**

- U.S. service member trafficked synthetic cannabis, South Korean police say
- Radford Army Ammunition Plant holds groundbreaking ceremony for EWI

**Veterans**

- IT workers at VA get 17% pay boost to narrow gap with private sector

# U.S. forces arrive to support deterrence efforts at Strait of Hormuz



by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Sailors and Marines with the Navy's *Bataan* Amphibious Ready Group and the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit arrived in the Middle East Aug. 6 as part of a pre-announced deployment to support deterrence efforts in the Strait of Hormuz and elsewhere, said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder.

"As we have been for a very long time, we're coordinating with our partners in the region when it comes to U.S. military presence because, again, it's not just the U.S. military that's out there patrolling commercial shipping lanes. We're working as part of a broader coalition ... on that effort," Ryder told reporters.

Sailors and Marines arrived in the region aboard amphibious assault ship *Bataan*, and dock landing ship *Carter Hall*.

Last month, the Iranian navy attempted to illegally seize two merchant vessels in the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.

According to a news report from U.S. Central Command, on July 5, U.S. forces already in Centcom's area of responsibility participated in preventing two commercial tanker ships from being seized by the Iranian military in international waters near the coast of Oman.

One of those ships, Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker TRF Moss, was approached by an Iranian naval vessel, but the naval vessel departed after the U.S. Navy guided-missile destroyer USS *McFaul* arrived.

Later the same day, Bahamian-flagged oil tanker Richmond Voyager was also approached

by an Iranian naval vessel. That Iranian naval vessel got within one mile of the tanker and fired on it using small arms and crew-served weapons. As happened with the TRF Moss, the Iranian vessel left when *McFaul* arrived on the scene.

According to Centcom, Iran has attacked or seized about 20 merchant vessels since 2021.

Ryder said the increased U.S. presence in the Middle East is meant to help partners there keep open important shipping lanes such as at the Strait of Hormuz, which is a choke point between the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf. It also contributes further to a long-standing goal of preserving security and stability in the region.

"That's why we've deployed

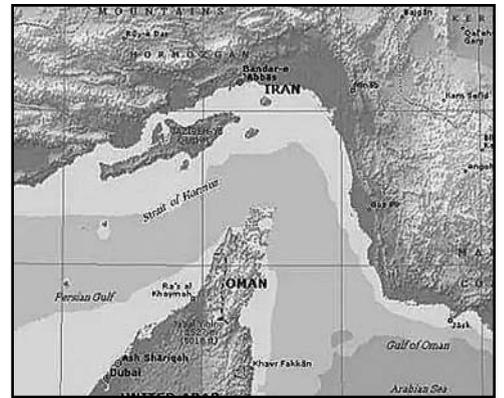
these additional assets, to give us additional options, to speed up timelines and, again, broadly, to ensure stability," Ryder said.

According to a news release from U.S. Central Command, an amphibious assault ship, such as *Bataan*, can carry more than two dozen rotary-wing and fixed-wing aircraft. That could include

MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and AV-8B Harrier attack jets, in addition to several amphibious landing craft. A dock landing

ship, such as *Carter Hall*, supports operations for various rotary-wing aircraft, tactical vehicles, and amphibious landing craft.

**USS Bataan and USS Carter Hall sail on the Mediterranean Sea, Aug. 3, 2023. They arrived in the Middle East three days later. DoD photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alisha Gleason**



**Attacks on cargo vessels in the Strait of Hormuz, the shipping lane that carries about a fifth of the world's oil, have raised concerns about how disruptive a conflict in the Gulf could be for the global oil trade. Courtesy graphic**

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# Career and Education

## Cyber seminar to help recruit and retain talent

by Joe Lacdan,  
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – A panel of Army senior leaders will select 12 Soldiers and civilians to learn the intricacies of cyber strategy and policymaking.

As part of the service's broader effort to retain and recruit its top talent, the first annual Secretary of the Army's Cyber Strategic Seminar will give participants the rare opportunity to receive exposure to top Army and government leaders.

The proposed activities in the nine-month session include meetings with officials from across the federal government, industry and academia, and practical exercises with Army senior leadership. The dozen finalists will also brief Army senior leaders at the conclusion of the program.

The seminar, jointly administered by Army Principal Cyber Advisor Michael Sulmeyer and Army Cyber Command commander, Lt. Gen. Maria Barrett, will also help identify and train the Army's top talent in cyber security.

"What we're looking for is to develop leaders who have a particular aptitude for cyber-related issues," Sulmeyer said. "And hopefully, they will use this program to increase their awareness and creativity around how cyber operations fit into multi-domain operations, [and] how cyber operations can inform operations in other domains."

As the Army competes for top talent in cyber security, the seminar will showcase career opportunities in the field.

The Soldiers and Army civilians will discuss topics that include weapons systems security, intelligence support to cyber functions, the defense industrial base and acquisition support to cyber operations. Participants will gain an understanding of

partnerships with foreign allies to defend and secure critical data, as well as meet with leaders in cyber security across government, the private sector, and academia.

The dozen selectees will include Soldiers in the grades of sergeant to sergeant first class, warrant officer 1 through chief warrant officer 3, and first lieutenant to major, and civilians GS-9 through GS-13. Finalists must have a minimum secret clearance and be available to attend all sessions of the seminar.

The group will meet monthly for a different activity planned by Army Cyber Command. The application period began last month and ends Aug. 11. The participants will be announced at the Association of the U.S. Army annual meeting in October, with the seminar set to begin shortly after.

The search will not be limited to individuals in cyber or tech-related positions. Soldiers and civilians in all military occupational specialties and career fields can apply.

"What we wanted to do is to identify the Army's top talent across enlisted [Soldiers], warrant officers and civilians and provide a way to broaden their exposure to strategic policymaking, to be able to take them to different venues," said Sulmeyer, who previously served as senior

### Red Cross: Donation shortfall may impact blood supply

SAN DIEGO - The American Red Cross has seen a shortfall of about 25,000 blood donations in the first two months of the summer, which makes it hard to keep hospital shelves stocked with lifesaving blood products.

By making an appointment to give blood or platelets in August, donors can keep the national blood supply from falling to shortage levels.

"To thank you for helping, all



**Sgt. Ashley Wagner, a signal support specialist with the California National Guard, simulates a cyber attack while acting as part of the Red cell team during Cyber Dawn, an annual training exercise in Sacramento, Calif., on June 13, 2023. Qualified Soldiers and Army civilians can apply to participate in the Secretary of the Army's Cyber Strategic Seminar, which gives the the opportunity to learn about career possibilities in Army cyber security as well as meet Army and government leaders. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elizabeth Buck**

policy advisor for U.S. Cyber Command. "Our hope is that [the seminar] is a tool not just to develop their careers and make them into even stronger Army leaders, but also to retain them in the force."

Cyber and data centrality have increasingly become important factors in multi-domain operations. Secretary of the Army Christine E. Wormuth has prioritized recruiting Soldiers with expertise in the field.

"[Secretary Wormuth] has placed such a premium on strategic

recruitment and retention," Sulmeyer said. "[The seminar] was a way that she thought the Army could lead in identifying our top talent and giving them exposure to strategic cyber issues."

Interested Soldiers and civilians can apply at <https://army-etaas.sharepoint-mil.us/teams/CyberStrategicSeminar>. Candidates must self-nominate to apply but will need a supervisor endorsement if they are selected for an interview. Finalists will be selected based on an interview and written application.

who don't know their blood type, making a donation is an easy way to find out this important personal health information. The Red Cross will notify new donors of their blood type soon after they give.

The Red Cross needs donors now. Schedule an appointment to give by downloading the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

who come to give throughout the month of August will get a \$10 e-gift card to a movie merchant of their choice," said Christine Welch from the Red Cross Southern California Region.

Details are available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Movie](https://RedCrossBlood.org/Movie).

The Red Cross especially needs type O negative, type O positive, type B negative and type A negative blood donors, as well as platelet donors. For those

## FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

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Wednesday, September 6 | 0900 - 1100 | NBSD (IP)

##### •Capstone

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Thursday, September 7 | 0800 - 1130 | KMB (IP)

##### •Job Search Strategies

Are you a military family member new to San Diego and looking to get back into the job market? Would you like to learn how to find, federal, state, county or local jobs?

Thursday, August 31 | 1000 - 1200 | (V)

Wednesday, September 13 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

##### •Resume Writing

Make sure your resume stands out! Get the latest tips and techniques to wow employers with an organized, effective and winning resume.

Wednesday, August 16 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

Friday, August 18 | 1000 - 1130 | KMB (IP)

Wednesday, August 23 | 1300 - 1500 | NBPL (IP)

Tuesday, September 5 | 1000 - 1200 | GVB (IP)

Thursday, September 7 | 0900 - 1100 | BVH (IP)

##### •Spouse Employment, Empowerment and Development

Are you a military spouse looking for work in San Diego? Attend this workshop and gain insights about the San Diego job market, as well as educational benefits, networking, resume writing and more.

Thursday, August 31 | 0900 - 1100 | KMB (IP)

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Thursday - Friday, August 24-25 | 0730 - 1630 | KMB (IP)

Thursday - Friday, August 31-September 1 | 0730 - 1630 | KMB (IP)

##### •Winning Interview Techniques

Make your dream job a reality! Gain information and resources to develop expert interviewing skills.

Wednesday, August 23 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

Thursday, August 24 | 1000 - 1200 | NBC (IP)

Friday, August 25 | 0900 - 1030 | KMB (IP)

Wednesday, September 6 | 1300 - 1500 | NBPL (IP)

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# Local Military

## Department of Defense completes Underway Recovery Test 10 with NASA

SAN DIEGO - NASA's Landing and Recovery team and the Department of Defense completed the first recovery test for the crewed Artemis II mission aboard amphibious transport dock *John P. Murtha* off the coast of San Diego, Aug. 1.

Underway Recovery Test (URT) 10 was the 10th in a series of tests and the first time NASA and its partners from the Navy and Air Force put their

Artemis II recovery operations to the test.

"The U.S. Navy has many unique capabilities that make it an ideal partner to support NASA. Amphibious transport dock ships, such as ours, provide the capability to embark helicopters, launch and recover small boats, monitor three-dimensional air space and provide high-end care through our advanced medical facilities," said Capt.

Doug Langenberg, commanding officer of USS *John P. Murtha*. "Each organization that participated in this mission underwent extensive training - our ability to work together demonstrates our maritime recovery experience and capabilities."

Working in support of U.S. Space Command, additional Navy units included Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 23,

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Expeditionary Support Unit 1, Amphibious Construction Battalion 1, and Strike Group Oceanography Team San Diego, with support from Air Force's First Air Force, Detachment 3, and Space Force's 45th Space Launch Delta Weather Squadron.

After last year's successful recovery of the Orion spacecraft

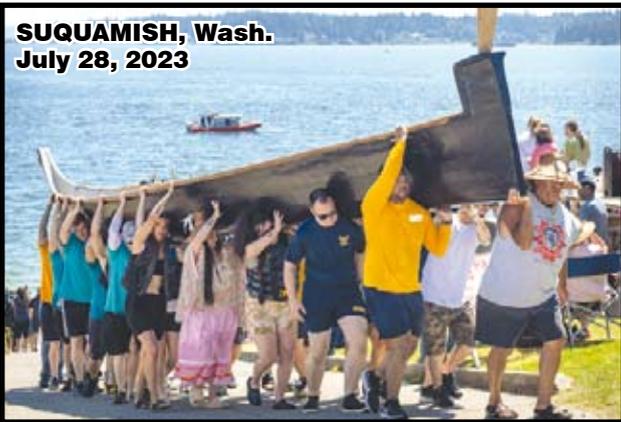
from the Artemis I mission using amphibious transport dock USS *Portland*, and with the addition of crew for the Artemis II mission, the recovery teams have begun modifying their timelines and procedures to ensure the astronauts will be safely on the recovery ship less than two hours after splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

Once the crew splashes down, a group of Navy divers will ap-

proach Orion and ensure it is safe for the astronauts to exit the spacecraft. The divers will then open the spacecraft hatch and help the astronauts exit one by one onto an inflatable "front porch." This raft wraps around the capsule and allows for the crew to be picked up via helicopter and flown back to the recovery ship. Once the astronauts are on board the recovery ship, teams will secure **see Orion, page 8**

### PHOTO GALLERY

**SUQUAMISH, Wash.**  
July 28, 2023



Sailors and members of Pacific Northwest Tribes haul a tribal canoe ashore during the Tribal Canoe Journey at the House of Awakened Culture. The Tribal Canoe Journey is a celebrated event of the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast who travel from tribe to tribe by canoe. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sarah Christoph

**ANAHEIM, Calif.**  
Aug. 6, 2023



Sailors with Navy Talent Acquisition Group Southwest time attendees in the arm plank test during TheFitExpo Anaheim at the Anaheim Convention Center. U.S. Navy photo by MCC Charles White

**INDIAN OCEAN**  
July 29, 2023



Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Alexander Arroyo fends off Sonar Technician (Surface) 1st Class James Jones during an oleoresin capcicum spray course aboard destroyer USS *Paul Hamilton* (DDG 60). *Paul Hamilton* is deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Elliot Schaudt

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# Office of Naval Research, NIWC Pacific host RoboSub competition

by Mason Piedfort

Naval Information Warfare Center, Pacific  
 SAN DIEGO - The Office of Naval Research (ONR) and Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific hosted RoboNation's 26th international RoboSub Competition at NIWC Pacific Transducer Evaluation Center (TRANSDEC) July 31 - Aug. 6.

Student participants from across the globe built robotic submarines designed to overcome simplified versions of challenges relevant to the autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) field.

"The Navy employs unmanned systems in every domain — in the air, on the sea, and under the sea," said Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti, who attended Aug. 2. "The innovation and creativity we see through programs like RoboSub push the imagination of what is possible in unmanned platforms. These competitors represent the leaders of the future who will bring solutions to some of our most difficult challenges in the fleet and industry."

This year 35 teams represented five countries: the U.S., Canada, Bangladesh, India, and Singapore. Teams are affiliated with high schools, university undergraduate and graduate programs, and non-profit organizations.

Though teams compete for various amounts of prize money, cross-team cooperation is common at RoboSub, in what RoboNation Program Manager Julianna Smith called a spirit of



**Texas A&M University's team heads to the water with their Autonomous Underwater Vehicle in tow at the 2023 RoboSub competition at the Transducer Evaluation Center at Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific Pacific. U.S. Navy photo by Alan Antczak**

"cooperatition," a combination of cooperation and competition.

In the spirit of cooperatition, Team Inspiration, a local team affiliated with non-profit organization Advancing Science, Technology, and Art, hosted a visiting team who arrived to the competition early for dinner at a teammate's home in the San Diego suburbs.

"It's rewarding to work with

the other teams," one Team Inspiration member said. "We get to learn from them and then pass that knowledge down to younger teams, not just here at RoboSub but at all the robotics events we do. We help mentor kids interested in robotics both locally and globally and check in with them on Zoom and Discord often."

The Ohio State University team helped several teams with mechanical fixes throughout the competition. "Of course we want to win, but not because one of the competitors had an issue we could have helped them fix," one student team leader said.

Students from local team "SDSU Mechatronics," affiliated with San Diego State University, drove back and forth from their facility to retrieve spare parts for other teams. "When I first joined RoboSub, I worried that it would be overly competitive, but the atmosphere is completely different," an SDSU Mechatronics

team member said. "One of the best parts of RoboNation events is that all the schools help each other out — and as a local team, we want to be a part of that."

Teams submitted pre-event technical design documentation before arriving at the TRANSDEC. During the competition, volunteer judges evaluated the teams' performances in underwater autonomy challenge tasks, team presentations, and system

"Not only do we get to meet the next generation of talented scientists and engineers, but we also introduce them to some of the most pressing challenges faced by our Sailors and Marines."

assessments. Judges inspected vehicles for design, craftsmanship, technical innovation, and visual impact.

"From my perspective as both the Chief of Naval Research [CNR] and the Naval Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math [STEM] Executive, RoboSub is truly a valuable and important event for fostering greater naval innovation," said CNR Rear Adm. Kurt Rothenhaus, who also visited the competition Aug. 2. "Not only do we get to meet the next generation of talented scientists and engineers, but we also introduce



**Capt. Matthew Thomas, commanding officer of aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson, is piped aboard for the first time during an underway change of command ceremony in which Thomas relieved Capt. P. Scott Miller as Vinson's skipper. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Isaiah Goessl**

them to some of the most pressing challenges faced by our Sailors and Marines. This is especially prevalent as autonomous systems and capabilities play an increasingly important role in current and future battlespaces."

In one of the six challenges, autonomous underwater vehicles navigated through one of two gates; in another, the vehicles dropped path markers into bins and earned bonus points for dropping markers in bins coinciding with the gate passed through earlier.

"Teams have been in the pool at TRANSDEC nearly non-stop," said Travis Moscicki, NIWC Pacific lead for RoboSub, on the third day of the competition. "Hands down, the number one indicator of performance is time spent in water. This highlights the exact reason we hold the event — there is no substitution for experience."

Continue reading this story at <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3485438/office-of-naval-research-niwc-pacific-host-26th-international-robosub-competiti/>

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**Sailors aboard amphibious transport dock ship USS John P. Murtha (LPD 26) train alongside NASA on proper line-handling during Underway Recovery Test 10. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Joshua Samoluk**

## Orion

continued from page 6

Orion with a series of lines and slowly tow it back inside the ship, just as they did during the Artemis I mission.

During the test, the team practiced the Artemis II recovery procedures, releasing and recovering the crew module test article, a full-scale mock-up of Orion.

Prior to URT-10, Navy dive teams were trained at NASA Johnson Space Center's Neutral Buoyancy Laboratory, a large pool where astronauts train for spacewalks and engineers refine procedures.

"We're experts in mobile salvage and towing as well as open water, small boat operations," said Senior Chief Navy Diver Ryan Crider, a master diver assigned to EODESU-1 who oversaw his unit's tactical participation. "This mission is an example of how the explosive ordnance disposal community has evolved over time and a glimpse of what EODESU-1 hopes to achieve in the future alongside NASA and Fleet partners."

Before the underway test, Artemis II astronauts Navy Capt. Reid Wiseman, Navy Capt. Victor Glover, Christina Hammock Koch, and Jeremy Hansen visited Naval Base San Diego to meet with the recovery team and learn more about the recovery vessel and

testing that will help bring them safely back to shore.

The recovery team will capture lessons learned and apply them to future underway tests to make sure they are ready to recover the Artemis II crew and bring them home safely.

"The crew module retrieval operation following Orion's flight is part of a Department of Defense effort that integrates combatant command and service capabilities to determine best practices for safely retrieving spacecraft and crew, in both nominal and contingency scenarios," said Lt. Col. David Mahan, director of operations for First Air Force, Det. 3, which provides DoD Human Space Flight Support to NASA.

"URT-10 is the first time that the DoD and NASA have exercised the additional recovery requirements critical to future crewed missions. This event allowed NASA and the Department of Defense to put their years of training into practice to safely recover the capsule and simulated crew. Lessons learned from URT-10 will ensure that recovery for subsequent crewed Artemis flights be safe and effective."

Expeditionary Strike Group comprises three amphibious squadrons, 15 amphibious warships, and eight naval support elements including approximately 18,000 active-duty and reserve Sailors and Marines.



**Ensign Ilana Silva observes as Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Amanda Eldridge demonstrates how to apply gauze to a wound during training in the medical bay of Boxer. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Connor Burns**

## Medical students receive operational medicine training aboard USS Boxer

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Connor Burns

Eight second-year medical students from the Army, Air Force and Navy enrolled at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) spent two weeks on board USS Boxer (LHD 4) training in operational medicine.

Based in Bethesda, Md., USU is the nation's federal health professions academy and includes a military specific curriculum. OPMED is the healthcare provided in unconventional settings where access to certain resources may be diminished.

Throughout the last half of July, Boxer's Medical Department provided the students an understanding and training of OPMED that will help further their careers in the medical field. The students underwent a number of training evolutions with Boxer's hospital corpsmen (HM) that utilized skills they learned at USU but had not put into practice before.

"The corpsmen did an excellent job," said Ensign Jonathan Nase. "They showed us how to properly locate a patient's veins in order to insert an intravenous (IV). I hadn't ever done that on a real person before, only on training dolls, so that was really valuable."

The students were also able to take part in a simulated medical emergency. "We had them go hands on," said Hospital Corpsman Chief Petty Officer Daniel Jimenez, the leading chief petty officer overseeing the drill. "We made some of the students look injured and act as patients so they could see the HMs respond in real time. They got hands-on stretcher bearer training and had to go through safety routes to get to triage."

"The drill was good practice," said Army 2nd Lt. Racheal Lee. "I helped transport people to the battle dressing stations and the HMs integrated us well. We were able to see a little of everything."

The students were also able to simulate the daily tasks of Navy medical practitioners.

"I learned how to suture, how to be a stretcher bearer and how to check airways," said Ensign Anne-Elizabeth Stone. "We have our advanced combat medical experience coming up at school, so I'm grateful for all of this. The HMs taught us their skills and made it an enjoyable experience."

Boxer's Senior Medical Officer, Lt. Cmdr. Paul Flood, believes that the skills and training the students received will be beneficial throughout their careers. "The goal in doing this was to give these students an understanding of OPMED and what corpsmen and Sailors do," Flood said. "They were able to see what OPMED is all about. This was an invaluable lesson for them."

## Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 3 welcomes new CO

by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Eshleman

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 3

NAS NORTH ISLAND – The "Merlins" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 3 welcomed a new commanding officer during an official change of command ceremony Aug. 3.



The ceremony, presided over by Capt. William Eastham, commodore, Helicopter Sea Combat Wing, Pacific, saw Capt. David Ayotte, Jr., relieved by Cmdr. Thomas Butts (shown at right) as the 46th commanding officer of HSC-3.

"I'm honored to turn over command to a friend and HSC community superstar, Cmdr. Tommy 'Smokey' Butts," said Ayotte. "Leaving command is always bitter-sweet, but I am beyond excited to see Cmdr. Butts as my relief. His servant leadership, deep understanding of community challenges and prior experience as a Fleet Replacement Squadron (FRS) instructor will be a great match for this high-functioning command. I look forward to seeing the Merlins continue to lead the HSC community during his command tour."

Ayotte, who hails from Greenbrae, Calif., led the Merlins from August 2022 to August 2023. While serving as HSC-3's 45th commanding officer, he directed the efforts of 61 staff officers, 171 students, 638 enlisted personnel, and an additional 173 civilian employees in the maintenance and operation of 37 permanently assigned aircraft.

Under Ayotte's leadership, HSC-3 surpassed 11,559 cumulative flight hours, accumulated 6,500 MQ-8 hours, and trained 57 Fleet Replacement Pilots and 68 Naval Aircrewmen in both manned and unmanned aircraft. Ayotte skillfully managed the command, encompassing the Pacific Fleet MH-60S FRS, MQ-8 FRS, Search and Rescue Model Manager (SARMM) and the Fleet Support Detachment (FSD) in the safe execution of all training and operational events. Under his command, HSC-3 met all CNAF Mission Capable readiness goals while drastically reducing the number of long-term down aircraft assigned.

"It is an honor to lead the HSC-3 Merlin team," said Butts, as he addressed the squadron as commanding officer for the first time. "As a team, we will continue to build upon our sustained culture of excellence while fostering an environment in which every member will be afforded the opportunity to succeed both professionally and personally. As commanding officer, I will ensure that our dedication to one another, and the mission of delivering the next generation of qualified pilots and aircrew to the fleet will continue to set the standard for the Naval Aviation Enterprise."

Butts, who is an Erlanger, Ky., native, is joining the Merlins from his position as commanding officer of the "Dusty Dogs" of HSC-7 in Norfolk, Va. Originally enlisting as a Radioman in the Navy in 1995, Butts was selected for the Enlisted Commissioning Program, and graduated from the University of North Florida in 2002. After earning his "Wings of Gold," Butts reported to HSC-3 for the first time for initial training in the MH-60S Kighthawk.

Previously, Butts was air boss aboard amphibious transport dock ship USS San Antonio. His shore tours included two Fleet Replacement Squadron flight instructor tours with HSC-2.

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## Austin, Morgan Freeman discuss upcoming documentary

by C. Todd Lopez  
DOD News

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III met Aug. 2 at the Pentagon with actor and producer Morgan Freeman, who is featured in an upcoming documentary about the heroics of a segregated, all-Black Army tanker unit that fought in Europe during World War II.

The two men discussed Freeman's motivation for making the documentary and what he learned in the process during a fireside chat held for an invited audience of service members.

All Americans should be inspired by the story of their 761st Tank Battalion, a unit known as the 'Black Panthers.' ... It's an incredible story and a deeply American story. This battalion earned its place in our history alongside the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry and the Tuskegee Army.

Austin said as the men of the 761st trained before they would finally deploy, they also were

forced to contend with the racist restrictions of the Jim Crow South.

"But they persisted," he said. "And in 1944 they finally saw combat when they took back a German-held town in France. As one of their commanders remembered, 'my men were tigers. They fought like seasoned veterans. We got our lumps, and we took that town.'"

Freeman is featured in the film that documents the 761st and also served as executive producer. He said that the history the film serves up is not new, it's just that so very few people have ever heard it before.

A man looks up from inside the open hatch of a tank.

"The history of Blacks, in the military, [in] war, has always been ... heroic, from the Revolutionary War until today," Freeman told Austin. "The difference is who knows about it, what do you know about it?"

Freeman said he experienced that lack of knowledge after his



**Gunner Cpl. Carlton Chapman poses in the hatch of his M4 Sherman tank near Nancy, France, Nov. 5, 1944. U.S. Army photo**

1989 film "Glory," which told the story of Black soldiers who fought for their own freedom during the U.S. Civil War. He told Austin that people who had viewed the film told him they had wept because they never knew the story.

Growing up, Freeman told Austin, he learned much about American history from watching movies. But the history in the

films he watched never told the whole story, because those films often lacked the contributions of African Americans.

"The only thing that was wrong with me learning history in the movies was I didn't see me," Freeman said. "That bothered me. It still bothers me. But if I want my story told, I have to tell it, don't I? That's my mantra: If you want your story told, you got to tell it."

In a panel discussion that followed the fireside chat, Charles R. Bowery Jr., executive director of the U.S. Army Center of Military History, said what the 761st and other segregated units did in WWII was to prove wrong the prevailing wisdom at the time — that Black men could not be trusted to perform in combat.

"What the 761st and other units like it did was incredibly important because ... one of the core ideas of Jim Crow, of segregation, was that Black people could not perform in combat, that they could not take up a weapon and serve in harm's way," Bowery said.

Studies done after World War I, he said, claimed Black soldiers could not be trusted to serve in combat units and that they didn't possess the mental or physical attributes to take on that responsibility.

"What units like the 761st — which is a combat arms unit, it's an armor battalion, a tank battalion — what they did was

demonstrate that this was nonsense," he said.

During WWII, Bowery said, the men of the 761st earned a Presidential Unit Citation, a Medal of Honor, 11 Silver Stars and about 300 Purple Hearts.

"Black Patriots: The 761st Battalion" premieres Aug. 20 on the History Channel.

### VA launching 25 mobile medical units in U.S. cities to help homeless veterans

STARS AND STRIPES - Veterans Affairs delivered its first mobile medical unit to Orlando, Fla., Aug. 3, launching an effort to deploy medical vehicles in 25 American cities to provide health care to homeless and at-risk veterans throughout the nation, agency officials announced.

Mobile medical units, or MMUs, are trucks or vans designed to provide a private space for eligible military veterans to access medical providers when they might be unable to visit local VA medical centers, according to a VA statement. The MMUs will be able to travel throughout cities to reach veterans to provide them access to primary care, women's health, audiology, laboratory work, mental health specialists, social workers and telehealth services, according to the VA.

"Veterans experiencing homelessness face a variety of barriers to accessing health care, including a lack of transportation," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said. "With these new mobile medical units, homeless and at-risk veterans don't have to visit VA hospitals - we come right to them." An MMUs should be delivered to San Diego by late February, the VA said.

## My Sailor won't batten down the hatches

Ahoy, fellow soldiers' and sailors' spouses! Are you tethered to a spouse who won't hang a ceiling fan? Does your soldier plead ignorance when it's time to program the remote? Are you anchored to a sailor who can't assemble the baby's crib? Does your partner call the plumber when the faucet leaks?

If you answered, "Aye, aye" to any of these questions, then I've got the scuttlebutt for you! Just sit right back and you'll hear a tale, a tale of a fateful sailor's wife who'd thought she'd snagged a handyman, but instead, found herself stuck doing all the home repairs.

Three decades ago, I left home to marry a Navy man. A true greenhorn, I assumed that all military men were "manly" types who tinkered with cars, hooked up stereos, and fixed stuff around the house. I envisioned a happy marriage involving traditional gender roles, where I, as wife and mother, managed the children and domestic tasks, and he, as husband and father, took primary responsibility for yard work and home repairs.

Shiver me timbers, was I off course!

For the first few tours of duty, we rented or lived on base, where housing management was primarily responsible for repairs. So my misconceptions about my husband's fix-it skills persisted. It wasn't until we bought our first home in 1998 that I realized — not only did my husband have no fix-it skills — he also didn't feel an ounce of embarrassment if I handled the bulk of the yard work

and home repairs.

In denial at first, I believed he'd change as the demands of our growing family increased. I decided to set a good example, and bought a manual on DIY. With a baby on my hip and a toddler at

### The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

my feet, I replaced the kitchen faucet. I hung new light fixtures. I assembled the crib. I aerated the lawn. I replaced the sprinkler heads. I jig-sawed my son's Cub Scout soapbox derby car.

The feeling of accomplishment was so exhilarating, I forgot to notice that my husband hadn't joined in my DIY efforts. He even stood idly by as I embarked on a complicated two-month project to build shelving along one wall of our playroom. I couldn't see past the sawdust to notice that he was conveniently and contentedly absent.

One night while simultaneously nursing our third baby and chopping onions for dinner, I asked my husband to assemble a new tabletop grill. The parts bag only contained four metal legs, two handles, and six screws. An hour later, he was still looking cross-eyed at the instructions. "I swear Honey, you could strand me on a deserted island with this thing, and I'd never figure this out."

A few days later, I was venting my frustrations to another Navy wife. Expecting compassion, I was surprised when she told me ... it was all my fault.

At first I thought that she didn't understand, because her aviator husband was mechanically inclined; whereas, my husband couldn't identify a "Phillip's head" and referred to hardware stores as "Haunted Houses."

However, she explained: "I'm no stranger to a tool box," she whispered. "That's my little secret. Try being helpless every once in a while and see what he does. Trust me, it works."

But it was too late for my damsel in distress act to work. My husband had already seen me chop onions, nurse a baby, and assemble a grill all at the same time. There was no going back.

Now, as a salty ol' navy wife, I'm still the one who programs the remote, does the weed-whacking, and assembles the Ikea furniture.

It was too late for me, but if this is your maiden voyage as a military spouse, there's still time! You may be perfectly capable of skippering your own boat, but don't go overboard. Stow those fix-it skills in your ditty bag and play the roll of dizzy Ginger or goofy Gilligan while your spouse takes the helm. They'll figure out how to replace the toilet float or fix the cabinet hinge in no time.

Be ye mariner or landlubber, heed this whale of a tale and your marital DIY projects will always be smooth sailing.

### AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



Now celebrating its 26th year, the Corvette Owners Club of San Diego's Main Street America People's Choice Charity Car Show — sanctioned by the San Diego Association of Car Clubs — is a San Diego tradition. Once again it was held on the grass in beautiful Embarcadero Marina Park North, overlooking San Diego Bay, Coronado and Navy ships. Unfortunately, the Port of San Diego is not giving dates for this park next year, because they are in the process of redeveloping the waterfront. Groundbreaking will likely be taking place in January 2024. Tentative plans are being made to hold next year's car show in the waterfront park at the County of San Diego Administration Building.

The car show and its large, popular raffle were a fundraiser to benefit the San Diego Center for the Blind. Lunch was served and music filled the air. The organizers were hoping to match or exceed last year's fundraising total of \$25,000.

This car show is very well supported by San Diego County car clubs. There were classes for: Pre-War Classics (completely stock cars from model years 1900-1942), 1946-1960 Domestic (essentially stock U.S. cars except for Corvettes and T-Birds). Significantly modified cars were to be classified as Customs), 1961-1966 Domestic (essentially stock U.S. cars, except for Corvettes, Pony Cars and T-birds — again with significantly modified cars being

### COCSD Main Street America Car Show

classified as Customs), 1967-1989 Domestic (essentially stock U.S. cars, except Corvettes, Pony Cars and T-Birds, with significantly modified cars being classified as Customs), 1946-1989 Foreign (essentially stock non-U.S. cars, with significantly modified cars being classified as Customs), 1990-2023 Foreign (stock and modified non-U.S. cars, except Mazda Miatas, EVs and hybrids), 1964-1989 Pony Cars (essentially stock AMXs, Barracudas, Camaros, Challengers, Capris, Challengers, Cobras, Cougars, Firebirds, Javelins and Mustangs — with significantly modified cars being classified as Customs), 1990-2023 Pony, Sports and Muscle Cars (stock and modified U.S. cars — except Corvettes, T-Birds and EVs), 1953-1967 Corvettes (stock first and second generation Corvettes, except those with modifications, which will be classified as Customs), 1968-1996 Corvettes (stock and modified third and fourth generation Corvettes), 1997-2013 Corvettes (stock and modified fifth and sixth generation Corvettes), 2014-2019 Corvettes (stock and modified seventh generation Corvettes), 2020-2023 Corvettes (stock and modified eighth generation Corvettes), 1990-2005 Miatas (stock and modified), 2006-2023 Miatas (stock and modified), Thunderbirds (stock and modified, all model years), Trucks and Sport Utility Vehicles (stock and modified, any make and model), Low Riders — 1954 and older (any make and model, customized with under-sized tires), Low Riders — 1955-1989 (any make and model, customized with under-sized tires), All-Electric and Hybrid Vehicles (any make, model and year with electric motor propulsion), 1900-1942 Street Rods (custom cars based on pre-war vehicles), 1946-1960 Customs (cars other than T-Birds, with significant modifications), 1961-1989 Customs (cars other than T-Birds, and

1968-1989 Corvettes with significant modifications) and the GOLD CLASS (last year's class-winning vehicles, competing for Best of Show — for which the winner receives a "very cool trophy" and an embroidered jacket).

I parked my 2019 Mazda MX-5 on what was appropriately nicknamed Miata Mountain — a gentle hill overlooking the rest of the car show. There were many Miatas there besides mine but if you were there you probably would have noticed one Miata in particular. This one was wrapped to look like Lightning McQueen from "Cars." There were even the large Cars eyes on the windshield.

Craig Moya, the Main Street America Planning Committee Chairperson, introduced the awards presentation. Here are excerpts from what he said: "This car show is my child. It just means the world to me. I thank you all! We sold out earlier than we ever have (17 days before the car show). We pretty much always sell this show out. We actually ended up with 367 plus I don't know how many Day of Show, so probably roughly 380 registrations altogether — an all-time record. Thank you so much."

After all of his hard work, it seemed fitting that Craig's raffle ticket was picked out of the large drum full of tickets for the Grand Prize: shown on the raffle tickets prize list as a Ceramic Pro Package from SD Auto Salon (\$1,500 value).

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 © 2023 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #802



## NMCS D utilizes Stryker MAKO system during total knee arthroplasty

by MC3 Raphael McC Corey

Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) continues to lead in medical technology being the first Navy Medical Treatment Facility to conduct a total knee arthroplasty (TKA) utilizing the Mako Robotics system, April 26. The Stryker Mako system is a state of the art robotic arm that uses haptic technology, or commonly referred to as 3D touch, to achieve high precision arthroplasty – or knee replacement.

“Total knee replacement is a very precise and reproducible operation,” said Cmdr. Brian Barlow, Orthopedic Surgeon assigned to NMCS D. “Traditionally, we would use X-Rays to plan our surgeries, take measurements we’re making in the surgery, and place all knee replacements in the same orientation. The Stryker MAKO robot transforms a CT scan of the joint into a digital model, measures soft tissue balance, allowing the surgeon to register a 3D model of the patient’s anatomy.”

Utilizing this procedure gives surgeons the opportunity to provide patients with personalized and optimal functional utility once the procedure is finished.



**SAN DIEGO (Apr. 26, 2023)** Sailors attached to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command San Diego utilize the 3D model from the Stryker Mako system while conducting a Total Knee Arthroplasty in the main operating room. NMRTC San Diego’s mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMRTC San Diego employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Raphael McC Corey.

“We are recognizing that different people have different knee phenotypes,” said Barlow. “Similar to the fact that not every one’s face is the same, not every knee is the same either. We want to use the robotic technologies to start adjusting the way we place the implants according to that patient’s anatomy, the goal is to match patients’ phenotype to improve their outcomes. There may be a benefit in matching the patient’s knee phenotype when performing the knee replacement, but requires

an enhancing technology.”

NMCS D’s mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMCS D employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere.

### SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

#### I’m a veteran. How do I get my extra Social Security?

*Dear Rusty: As a military veteran, I was told that the final amount of my Social Security should be a little higher as a reward for military service. If so, I have two questions: 1. How much is the boost? 2. How can I know that amount has been applied?*

Signed: Unsure

**Dear Unsure:** We receive questions about this fairly often from our military veterans. I want to first thank you for your service to our country and then assure you that, as a military veteran myself, I have thoroughly investigated this subject - the so-called “Special Extra Credit for Military Service,” which is widely misunderstood. Although someone suggested that your Social Security benefit “is supposed to be a little higher” because you are a military veteran, allow me to share how this somewhat obscure rule actually works.

Any extra money for military veterans does not come in the form of a special “boost” to their Social Security benefit because of their military service; instead, certain older veterans receive extra credit to their earnings for the years they served. Those extra earnings are applied only to those who served in specific years, as additional dollars added to their actual earnings record for their service-years. The amount added to the veteran’s true service-year earnings varies a bit depending on which years you served. For example, if you served between 1957 – 1977, your actual earnings for each service-year would be increased by \$300 for each full quarter you had active duty pay to a maximum of \$1200 additional earnings per service-year. The credit is computed a bit differently for those who served between 1978 – 2001, but the maximum annual earnings credit for those service years is the same - \$1,200. And, for clarity, those who served before 1957 get extra earnings credit under an entirely different formula, and those who served after 2001 receive no extra credits for their military service years.

So how might this affect your Social Security benefit? Well, when your benefit is claimed, Social Security reviews your lifetime earnings record, inflates each actual annual amount to equal today’s dollar equivalent, and selects the highest earning 35 years from your lifetime record to calculate your “Primary Insurance Amount” or “PIA” (your PIA is the amount you are entitled to at full retirement age). If your military service-years are among the 35 years used to compute your PIA when you claim, then the “Special Extra Credit for Military Service” will result in a somewhat higher PIA (a slightly higher monthly SS benefit). If the highest earning 35 years in your lifetime record do not include your military-service-years, then those extra credits added to your earnings for your military-service-years will have no effect on your Social Security benefit (because using those service-years would result in a lower benefit). How Social Security applies those special extra credits to your service-year earnings also varies depending on when you served. Those who served before 1968 needed to show their DD-214 to get the extra credits, but those who served in between 1968 – 2001 were automatically given the extra credits based on their military service records.

So, if your military service was between 1968 and 2001, your earnings during the years you served were automatically increased by SS to reflect your “special extra” earnings and - if those years are among the highest of the 35 years used to compute your SS benefit - you are now receiving the extra benefit amount you’re entitled to from those credits. If you have at least 35 years over your lifetime where you earned more than your pay while serving in the military, your current benefit is more than it would be if your military service years were included. If you have questions about your earnings during your military service years, you may wish to obtain a copy of your lifetime earnings history from Social Security to review those amounts (easiest way to get your lifetime earnings history is via your personal “my Social Security” account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount)).

## Have a lifesaving summer: Step up and donate blood

Summer is the time to give back to those who need blood most in order to combat the reduction in donations that comes during these warmer months.

The Armed Services Blood Program is urging donors to step up and donate blood this summer. The ASBP provides lifesaving blood products to service members, their families, retirees, and veterans worldwide. By donating this summer, you can help ensure blood is available when it’s needed most.

The need for blood never takes a vacation. During the summer, blood banks across the country tend to experience a significant decline in supply. Travel, vacations, a permanent change of station, and other summer activities are reasons that donors don’t give on the same regular basis they normally would.

“Military readiness cannot be achieved without sufficient blood products, and because most of these products have a limited shelf life, it is vital that donations are consistent to sustain the supply. We typically experience a decline in donations every summer, however, the need for this lifesaving resource remains unchanged no matter the time of year. It’s not only important for donors to step up and donate this summer, it’s also important that they donate year-round,” explained U.S. Navy Captain Leslie Riggs, ASBP Division Chief.

The ASBP is the official blood program of the U.S. military, with a mission to provide quality products and support worldwide to military operations. The only way to know your donation will go to the military community is by donating with the

ASBP. Individuals frequently need multiple units of blood, and blood donors, many who commit to regularly giving, are the heart of the ASBP.

The Need for Blood

Blood is needed to treat cancer patients, for surgical patients, battlefield injuries, and more. A leukemia patient undergoing treatment can require eight units of platelets on a daily basis. A trauma victim can need 40 or more units of blood. Right now, more donors are needed so the ASBP can collect, process, sort, transport, and distribute blood products for our military community worldwide, whenever, and wherever needed.

“Blood donations are essential for our military medical professionals to provide lifesaving care for our service members, veterans, and their families. We encourage everyone who is eligible to donate blood this summer. If you are unsure if you’re eligible to donate, contact your local ASBP blood donor center,” shared U.S. Army Colonel Christopher Evans, director of the Army Blood Program.

More people are eligible to donate in 2023 than in recent history thanks to recent changes opens Health.mil by the Food and Drug Administration to certain deferrals (restrictions) affecting those who were once deferred for geographic risk factors related to Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, commonly referred to as “Mad Cow” disease. These individuals may now be eligible to donate, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

To schedule an appointment to donate with the ASBP, visit [health.mil/militaryblood](http://health.mil/militaryblood) opens health.mil today. Your potentially lifesaving

donation will help combat the decline in supply during the summer and directly contribute to military readiness.

#### About the Armed Services Blood Program

Since 1962, the Armed Services Blood Program is the official blood program of the United States military. Our mission is to provide quality blood products and support to military health care operations worldwide; from the battlefield to the local hospital, whenever and wherever needed. The ASBP collects, processes, stores, transports, and distributes blood products to service members, their families, retirees and veterans in peace and

war. In an ASBP Enterprise view – Military Health Affairs, Defense Health Agency, Service Blood Programs and Combatant Commands – we operate under common goals, metrics, procedures, and work together to shape the future.

The ASBP is one of four organizations tasked with providing a safe blood supply to the nation. Our program also works closely with our civilian counterparts in times of need to maximize the availability of this national treasure.

To find out more about the ASBP or schedule an appointment to donate, please visit [health.mil/military-bloodopens health.mil](http://health.mil/military-bloodopens health.mil).

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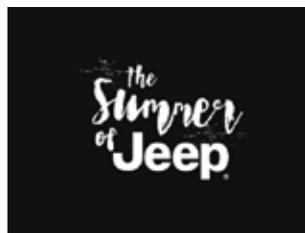
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