

# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR NO. 18  
 OCTOBER 23, 2024



**HONORING VETERANS** Army Lt. Gen. Christopher LaNeve, Eighth Army commanding general, and Command Sgt. Maj. Robin Bolmer, Eighth Army senior enlisted advisor, joined former Eighth Army and U.S. Forces Korea commanders to render their respects while participating in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., Oct. 15, 2024. The wreath-laying ceremony is done to honor all veterans who served in the Korean War. U.S. Army photo by Sgt Eric Kestner

## Elements of 15th MEU return home from deployment aboard USS *Harpers Ferry*

by Capt. Brian Tuthill, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

CAMP PENDLETON - More than 300 Marines and Sailors with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, embarked aboard USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49), returned home to San Diego Oct. 16 after completing a seven-month deployment in the U.S. 7th and 3rd Fleet areas of operation.

The deployment, which began on March 19, marked a milestone as it included the first operational use of the Marine Corps' new amphibious combat vehicles. The experience and insights gained by the ACV Platoon and Battalion Landing Team 1/5 during this deployment have laid the groundwork for refining tactics, logistics, and maintenance practices for future expeditionary operations.

"Our team aboard *Harpers Ferry* made lasting contributions in the Indo-Pacific, conducting training while integrated with our allies, in both the Philippines and South Korea," said Col. Sean Dynan, commanding officer of the 15th MEU. "They accomplished so much during these seven months while taking on the unique responsibility of employing ACVs on their first deployment. The lessons they learned and the procedures they developed with their Navy counterparts will inform future operations for years to come."

Elements of the 15th MEU aboard *Harpers Ferry* included Marines and Sailors from the Command Element, BLT 1/5, and Combat Logistics Battalion 15.

During deployment, 15th MEU forces aboard *Harpers Ferry* engaged in three major exercises. In the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, Marines and Sailors joined other elements of the 15th MEU assigned to amphibious transport dock *Somerset* in the Philippines for Exercise Balikatan 24. This bilateral exercise, conducted with the Armed Forces of the Philippines, focused on securing key maritime terrain, conducting simulated long-range precision strikes, and enhancing missile defense capabilities. *see homecoming photo on page 7*

## SAILOR PERFORMS LIFESAVING CPR ON FREEWAY ACCIDENT VICTIM

by Oscar Garcia  
 PORT HUENEME, Calif. -- Information Systems Technician 2nd Class (IT2)

Donovan Asberry performed CPR on a crash victim on the I-5 freeway in Downey, potentially saving the man's life.

unusual breathing patterns. "It was a deep breath followed by pauses. I hadn't seen anything like it, not even in movies," said Asberry.

a reminder of how important it is to be ready to help others when you can."



The incident occurred on Aug. 19, 2024, when Asberry, driving home from work, noticed a car collide with the freeway median. After pulling over and observing the driver breathing abnormally, Asberry, alongside other concerned motorists, took immediate action to help.

Acting quickly, he and another bystander worked together to break the car window, unlock the doors, and pull the driver to safety.

The crash occurred in Downey, impacting traffic on the busy freeway for hours as authorities cleared the scene. Witnesses described the incident as chaotic but were inspired by the efforts of civilians who intervened.

Emergency responders arrived after 30 minutes of Asberry administering chest compressions. According to paramedics on the scene, the driver's pulse was weak but present, and they credited Asberry's quick thinking and persistence with helping keep the man alive.

Asberry's actions are a testament to the value of CPR training, a skill that, as he learned, can make the difference between life and death.

**IT2 Donovan Asberry performed CPR on a crash victim, potentially saving the man's life. Photo by Oscar Garcia**

Asberry, who had a recent CPR certification, noticed the driver exhibiting

"I'm just glad I was there at the right time," said Asberry, reflecting on the ordeal. "It's

Asberry's efforts serve as a powerful reminder of community responsibility and readiness, and highlighting how training can be crucial in emergency situations.



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- NOV 6 - 8 Student STEM Days (Students only)
- NOV 8 SDSU Fleet Week Football Classic
- NOV 8 - 11 Broadway Pier Opens to The Public w/Military Displays, Ship Tours, and Innovation Zone
- NOV 10 Military Family Day
- NOV 11 Veterans Day Boat Parade
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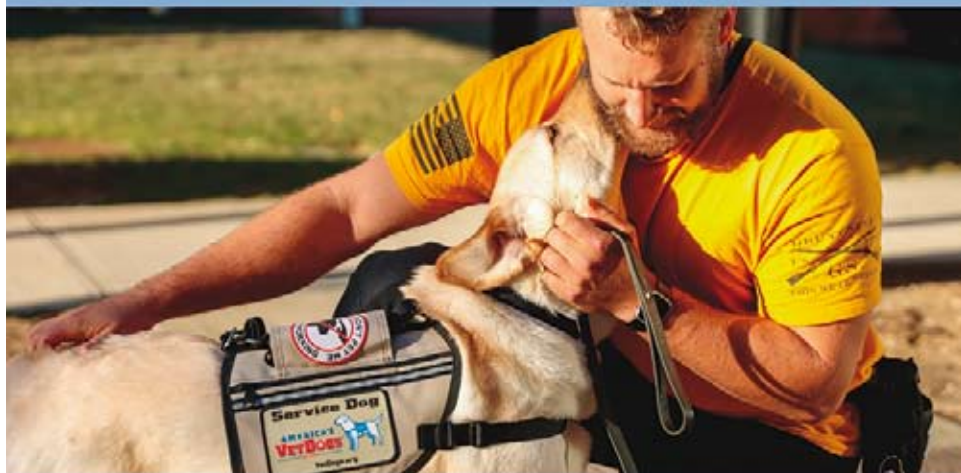
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## Marines with MRF-SEA, 15th MEU, USS *Boxer* begin Exercise KAMANDAG 8 in the Philippines

by Capt. Mark McDonough 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit

MANILA, Philippines -The Marine Corps, including personnel from Marine Rotational Force – Southeast Asia (MRF-SEA) and the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit with USS *Boxer*, and the Philippine Marine Corps have recently began KAMANDAG 8, a bilateral exercise.

Conducted under the annual Mutual Defense Board and Security Engagement Board (MDB-SEB) activities for 2024, the exercise aims to strengthen the interoperability of participating nations while promoting regional security and cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region.

KAMANDAG 8 is designed to enhance combined operational proficiency in key areas such as combat medicine; coastal defense; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; engineering; and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear response. This year's exercise will feature participants from several Allied and partner nations, fostering deeper international military cooperation and readiness.

"KAMANDAG serves as a testament to the enduring and ironclad alliance our nations share. We will enhance our interoperability, strengthen our collective defense, and build personal friendships. Through our efforts, we reaffirm our mutual commitment to regional

security as we face the ever-evolving security environment that threatens a free and open Indo-Pacific," said Col. Stuart Glenn, commanding officer, MRF-SEA.

The estimated total number of exercise participants is over 2,300 personnel. More than 1,000 Marines and Sailors from MRF-SEA and the 15th MEU will train alongside over 1,100 personnel from the PMC and Philippine National Police. Service members from the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force, Republic of Korea Marine Corps, British Armed Forces, Australian Defense Force, and French Armed Forces constitute the remainder of participants. Members of the Royal Thai Marine Corps and Indonesian Marine Corps are in-country to observe the exercise. Training will take place across the Philippines in Northern Luzon, Central Luzon, the National Capital Region, Cavite, and Palawan.

KAMANDAG is an annual PMC and U.S. Marine Corps-led

exercise aimed at enhancing the Armed Forces of the Philippines' defense and humanitarian capabilities by providing valuable training in combined operations with foreign militaries in the advancement of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. 2024 marks the eighth iteration of exercise KAMANDAG.

MRF-SEA is a rotational unit derived from elements of I Marine Expeditionary Force executing a U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Pacific operational model that involves training events and exchanges with partner military subject matter experts, promotes security goals with Allied and partner nations, and ensures a persistent I MEF presence west of the International Date Line.

The 15th MEU is a forward-deployed, flexible crisis response force, embarked aboard amphibious assault ship *Boxer*, capable of conducting amphibious operations, crisis response, and limited contingency operations to support the requirements of geographic combatant commanders.

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## Lack of 'situational awareness' to blame for ground collision with F-16 that sparked fire, Air Force says



by John Vandiver  
Stars and Stripes

A ground collision between a bomb-lifting vehicle and an F-16 jet belonging to the 555th Fighter Squadron at Aviano Air Base resulted in \$30 million in damage to the aircraft, U.S. Air Forces Europe – Air Forces Africa said in a new accident investigation report.

The accident, which happened at an undisclosed location in the Middle East in November 2023, caused no deaths or critical injuries, the report said. However, a lack of “situational awareness” on the part of the weapons loader and a “loose culture” of adherence to Air Force standards were contributing factors in the costly accident, USAFE-AF said Oct. 18 in a statement.

### Test jet begins sea trials with Japanese destroyer in eastern Pacific Ocean

by Michael Land  
PACIFIC OCEAN - A U.S. F-35 Lightning II aircraft landed aboard Japan's multi-functional destroyer JS Kaga (DDH-184) for the first time Oct. 20 off the southern coast of California to begin developmental test aboard the allies' largest ship.

A test pilot flew a specially in-

The Air Force spent an additional \$5,000 on environmental cleanup. The accident occurred after an MJ-1 weapons loader, also known as a “jammer,” was unable to stop while driving in reverse, USAFE-AF said.

The driver panicked and mistakenly hit the accelerator pedal when he thought he was hitting the brakes, the report said. The jammer hit a nearby F-15E Strike Eagle fighter aircraft, causing the operator to hit his head and hurt his back on the jet's bomb rack unit while pinning him to the dashboard of the jammer, the report said.

“The jammer bounced off the landing gear tire of the F-15E, simultaneously throwing the operator off the jammer while also sending the jammer toward

strumented F-35B short takeoff and vertical landing variant of the 5th generation air system and then safely touched down.

Sea trials will leverage the ship's recent modifications to conduct fixed-wing aircraft operations. Changes to destroyer Kaga included painting its flight deck with heat-resistant material

**An Air Force F-16 Fighting Falcon assigned to the 555th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron arrives at Al Dhafra Air Base, United Arab Emirates, July 17, 2023. A weapons-loading vehicle collided with an F-16 on the ground belonging to the same squadron in the Middle East in November 2023, sparking a fire, a newly released Air Force investigation report said. U.S. Air Force photo by Christian Silvera**

the F-16 at a high rate of speed,” the report said.

The jammer hit the F-16's right fuel tank, causing a fuel leak. In turn, sparks emitted from the jammer ignited a fire that engulfed the jammer and the right side of the F-16, the report said.

that tolerates the F-35B's vectored-thrust engines, installing lights for nighttime operations, and reshaping the flight deck's bow from a trapezoid to a rectangular shape.

The trials will also pave the way for allies' increased ability to operate in conjunction with each other.

## U.S. strikes underground targets in Yemen

by C. Todd Lopez  
DOD News

The Pentagon announced Oct. 16 that the United States had deployed B-2 Spirit bombers to the Middle East to destroy targets in Yemen. The target sites, controlled by the Houthis, were buried deep underground, said the Pentagon press secretary during a briefing Oct. 17.

“U.S. military forces, including U.S. Air Force B-2 bombers, conducted precision strikes against five hardened underground weapons storage locations in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen,” Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said. “U.S. forces targeted several of the Houthis' underground facilities housing various weapons components of the types the Houthis have used to target civilian and military vessels throughout the region.”

For more than a year now, the Houthis, backed by Iran, have conducted repeated attacks on U.S. and international vessels in the Red Sea, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Gulf of Aden.

The full impact of the bomber strike isn't yet known, but U.S.

Central Command is conducting an assessment. Ryder did say the mission was successful.

*“We struck exactly what we intended,” he said, adding that the mission sent a message to the Houthis. “There will continue to be consequences for their illegal and reckless attacks which put innocent civilian lives and U.S. and partner force's lives at risk.”*

In a statement Oct. 16, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said the U.S. will do what is needed to protect its forces in the Middle East.

“The United States will not hesitate to take action to defend American lives and assets; to deter attacks against civilians and our regional partners; and to protect freedom of navigation and increase the safety and security in these waterways for U.S., coalition and merchant vessels,” Austin said. “We will continue to make clear to the Houthis that there will be consequences for their illegal and reckless attacks.”

### Hamas leader dead

On Oct. 17, Israel announced that it had killed Hamas leader

Yahya Sinwar.

“The killing today of Yahya Sinwar, the leader of the terrorist group Hamas, by Israeli forces is a major achievement in counterterrorism,” said Austin. “Sinwar's death will not heal the wounds of the Oct. 7 atrocities that he plotted or the many deaths for which he is responsible, but I hope that it may bring some small measure of justice and solace to the families and the loved ones of the many victims of Sinwar's premeditated cruelty.”

The removal of Sinwar is significant, despite the likelihood that Hamas will not go long without selecting another leader, Ryder said.

“I'm certain that's something that the Israelis will continue to keep an eye on, as will we,” Ryder said. “I also don't think you can discount the significance, again, from a counterterrorism standpoint, the role that Sinwar has played in leading this organization, also as the architect, so to speak, of the Oct. 7 Hamas attack against Israel. It's significant that he's been taken off the battlefield.”

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**Top 3**

- Israel confirms Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar was killed in Gaza
- U.S. stealth bombers strike 5 Houthi weapons bunkers
- Navy finds wreckage of fighter jet that crashed during training in Washington state (see story, this page)

**Army**

- Army leaders hope revamped Best Squad Competition will increase teamwork, outreach
- Army secretary: Is it time to cut back on military moves?
- In tropical jungles, Army Soldiers are training to own the night in a Pacific war
- Army revamps basic training to simulate battlefield stalked by drone swarms

**Navy**

- Navy says EPA report that found low-level contamination proves water is 'safe'

**Marine Corps**

- A first for the Marines and Camp Pendleton as ACVs return from Indo-Pacific deployment

**Air Force**

- Headbands that can take vital signs: Air commandos try out high-tech fabrics
- Tinker Air Force Base responds to criticism over National Coming Out Day event
- What we signed up for: Wright-Patt's sole flying mission ready to defend in peacetime and war
- 125 lawmakers urge limits to Air Force's plan to transfer National Guard space troops

**National Guard**

- His country trained him to fight. Then he turned against it. More like him are doing the same.

**Veterans**

- Unclaimed for years, veterans' remains laid to rest in Connecticut cemetery: 'We claim them'
- Canceled appointments, unexplained mixups – veterans facing challenges getting VA mental health care

## 2 aviators who died in Growler crash were trailblazing female duo, Navy says

by Caitlyn Burchett  
Stars and Stripes

Two aviators who died when their fighter jet crashed last week near Mount Rainier during routine training were a trailblazing female duo who recently returned from a Red Sea deployment, the Navy said.

Lt. Cmdr. Lyndsay Evans and Lt. Serena Wileman, both 31, were identified Oct. 21 by Naval Air Forces Pacific. The two were declared dead Sunday — five days after the EA-18G Growler jet from the Electronic Attack Squadron 130, nicknamed “Zappers,” went down east of Mount Rainier in Washington state.

“More than just names and ranks, they were role models, trailblazers, and women whose influence touched countless people on the flight deck and well beyond,” according to a tribute from Carrier Strike Group 2, the unit with which the aviators recently deployed.

Evans’ and Wileman’s fates were unknown Oct. 15 following the crash, which proved difficult to locate. On Oct. 16, search and rescue crews found the wreckage site resting at about 6,000 feet in a remote, heavily wooded area that was inaccessible by foot or vehicle.

Special Forces Soldiers trained in mountaineering, high-angle rescue and technical communi-



(from left) Lt. Serena N. Wileman, 31, a naval aviator, and Lt. Cmdr. Lyndsay P. Evans, 31, a naval flight officer, were killed Oct. 15 when the EA-18G Growler that they were flying crashed near Mount Rainier in Washington state. U.S. Navy photo

cations were brought in Oct. 17 to reach the wreckage and locate the aviators.

“It is with a heavy heart that we share the loss of two beloved Zappers,” Cmdr. Timothy Warburton, commanding officer of the aviators’ Electronic Attack Squadron, said Sunday.

Evans, a naval flight officer, commissioned in 2014. Evans was a native of Palmdale in Southern California’s Antelope Valley, according to a report in the *Culver City Observer* highlighting her role as a pilot in an all-female flyover of the 2023 Super Bowl.

The newspaper said she gradu-

ated from Paraclete High School in 2010 and graduated from the University of Southern California in 2014. Her awards include the National Defense Service Medal and Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal.

Wileman, also a California native, was commissioned in 2018 from Officer Candidate School. She reported in November 2022 to the squadron, which is based at Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Wash. Her awards include the National Defense Service Medal and three Strike-Flight Air medals.

Both women also were awarded the Combat Action Ribbon for their roles in defending mari-

time merchant ships from Houthi drone attacks during their recent deployment.

Evans and Wileman are among the few women to fly combat missions over land, flying multiple strikes into Houthi-controlled territories in Yemen, according to the Navy. The duo returned in July from a nearly nine-month deployment with the strike group as a part of Carrier Air Wing 3 aboard USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower*. They primarily operated in the Red Sea.

“During their deployment, Evans and Wileman distinguished themselves in combat operations. Their efforts directly contributed to the Navy’s mission defending U.S. and coalition forces while keeping the seas open and free with precision and purpose,” Carrier Strike Group 2 said. “These role models cemented legacies by making history that will inspire future generations of Naval officers and aviators.”

Capt. Marvin Scott, commander of Carrier Air Wing 3, said Evans and Wileman will be remembered for their tenacity, their outstanding contributions to the defense of others and the positive energy they brought to naval aviation.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2024-10-21/navy-crash-mount-rainier-aviators-dead-15582069.html>

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## DOD seeks to inspire youth in hypersonics career field

by David Vergun  
DOD News

The Defense Department is sponsoring a Hypersonics Horizon High Speed Video challenge, open to high school and undergraduate students, with cash prizes.

“The Hypersonics Horizons High Speed Video Challenge is integral to building an enduring advantage by investing in the workforce of tomorrow,” said Aprille Ericsson, the assistant secretary of defense for science and technology. “The Joint Hypersonics Transition Office continues to cultivate and invest in future talent by utilizing our Smart Scholarship program and partnering with Academia which develops pathways for both a diverse and technically proficient workforce to protect both our national security and American prosperity for years to come.”

“The challenge is designed to inspire the next generation workforce in hypersonics,” said Mark A. Glenn, director of the Joint Hypersonics Transition Office.

Glenn said instructions for high school teams, of up to three students, involve making a three-to-five-minute video explaining the type of challenges a spacecraft might encounter on Mercury, Venus, Titan (Saturn’s moon), Ceres (asteroid) or Pluto. They would also have to address how the spacecraft design would be impacted by challenges of their chosen celestial body’s environment and would need to explain how they would overcome those issues.

For post-secondary student teams, Glenn said students are required to make a three-to-five-minute video discussing a



**A X-60A hot fire test is conducted at Cecil Spaceport in Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 14, 2020. The X-60A, developed through an Air Force Research Laboratory Small Business Innovation Research contract, is an air-launched rocket designed for hypersonic flight research. U.S. Air Force photo courtesy of Air Force Research Laboratory**

design for a plane-like spacecraft engineered to launch, reach hypersonic speeds and safely touch down on Mars. Then they must address challenges the spacecraft and astronauts may face upon landing. He added that the problem sets involve multidisciplinary challenges and solutions so students can pull from diverse subject matter, not just physics and engineering.

Lori Michelle Stiglitz, JHTO workforce development lead, said this is the second year for a challenge involving hypersonics.

Last year’s challenge involved ways to transport people at hypersonic speeds. Many college and high school students applied and the students as well as their science and engineering teachers were enthusiastic about it. The students conducted research, delving into many open-source documents on the topic and related topics, she said.

One of last year’s university student who participated in the

assessment. They might also gain novel insights by this challenge, she added.

About a month ago, Stiglitz

said she spoke to about 300 mechanical engineers at Montana State University and shared the upcoming challenge with them and they all started chatting

eagerly about it.

<https://www.challenge.gov/?challenge=hypersonic-horizons-2024-the-high-speed-video-challenge>.

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# Local Military

## Lincoln strike group conducts 2nd multi-large deck event with Italian Navy

U.S. 5TH FLEET AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY - The *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group (CSG) conducted a Multi-Large Deck Event (MLDE) with the Italian Navy's ITS Cavour CSG, Oct. 18.

MLDE provide the ships and aircrafts of the two naval forces,

comprised of more than 7,500 U.S. and Italian Sailors and Marines, an opportunity to advance interoperability by carrying out integrated planning and coordination, communications, cross-deck leadership exchanges, a fast-roping exercise, and an air defense exercise to strengthen combined maritime operations

and combat readiness.

"The opportunity to exercise our interoperability with our Cavour CSG counterparts for a second time in our deployment, highlights our strategic advantage inherent to our network of strong alliances," said Rear Adm. Adan Cruz, commander, Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 3.

"We have seized every opportunity to fly and sail with our Italian counterparts to deepen our combined operational capacity anywhere in international waters."

During the event, Rear Adm. Giancarlo Ciappina, commander, Cavour Carrier Strike Group, hosted Cruz, aboard the ITS Cavour for a visit focused on building relationships.

"We're proud to work once again alongside *Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group, after almost two months from our first interaction in the Pacific Ocean," said Ciappina. "[It] has represented another precious opportunity to train together and to exchange experiences and knowledge, highlighting the versatility and flexibility of Navies operating on a global scale, wherever a presence is required to keep

maritime lines of communication open and safe to strengthen our bonds and to enhance levels of cooperation with commitment to security."

This marks the second time the *Abraham Lincoln* CSG participated in an MLDE with the Italian Navy during the 2024 deployment. The previous event in August marked the first-ever MLDE between U.S. and Italian Navies in the Indo-Pacific.

Besides *Abraham Lincoln*, other U.S. Navy participants were USS *Frank E. Petersen*, Jr., destroyers USS *O'Kane* and *Michael Murphy* (DDG 111).

"It is an honor to once again have the opportunity to work jointly with our NATO Allies," said Cruz. "I am grateful to Rear Adm. Ciappina and his entire crew of the ITS Cavour for their gracious hospitality aboard their ship. I am also grateful to continue training and operating together to drive interoperability forward."

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3941813/abraham-lincoln-carrier-strike-group-conducts-second-multi-large-deck-event-wit/>

## 41st Surface Line Week kicks off in San Diego

by Joseph Millar, Commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet  
SAN DIEGO - Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (CNSP) kicked off the 41st Surface Line Week (SLW) Pacific competition at Naval Base San Diego Oct. 21.

The two-week competition highlights professional and athletic skills while enhancing camaraderie and team building among the Surface Force. About 1,000 Sailors, Marines and Department of the Navy civilians are expected to participate.

"This year's motto is 'Stronger Together - Fight and Win!' Surface Line Week provides an opportunity for our sailors to showcase their skills and training while building bonds and relationships across the waterfront," said Lt. Jazzmine Ennals, SLW coordinator.

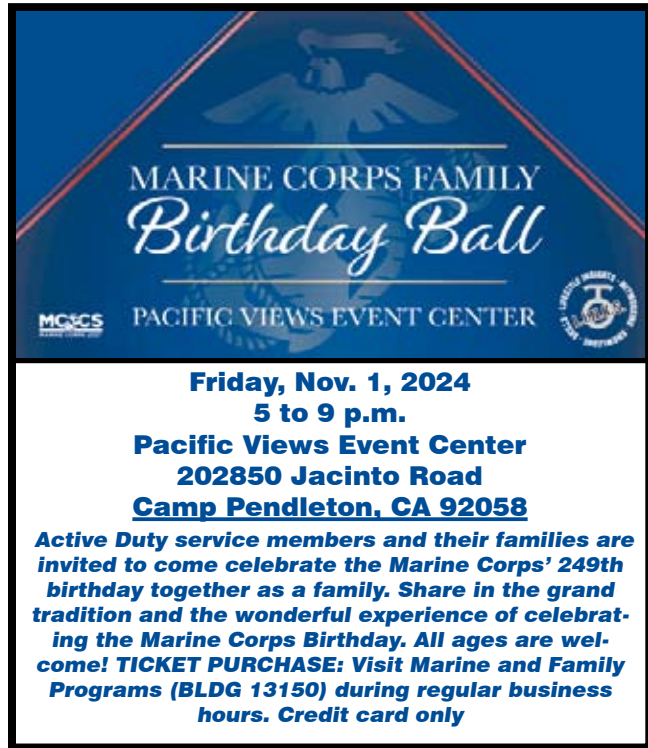
SLW consists of seven athletic, five professional, and two additional events, such as Damage Control Olympics, Marksmanship, Navigation Olympics, and Shiphandling. Activities culminate with an awards ceremony, Friday, October 25.

Participants are active duty, regularly assigned Navy Reserve or other military personnel and government civilians formally attached to a Navy command. Commands earn points as they compete in the different events to determine large, medium and small unit winners.

The mission of CNSP is to man, train, and equip the Surface Force to provide fleet commanders with credible naval power to control the sea and project power ashore.

CNSP will post highlights and updates on Facebook at <https://facebook.com/surfacewarriors>

For more news from Naval Surface Forces, visit <https://www.surface.navy.mil/> and [www.dvidshub.net/unit/COMNAVSURFPAC](http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/COMNAVSURFPAC).



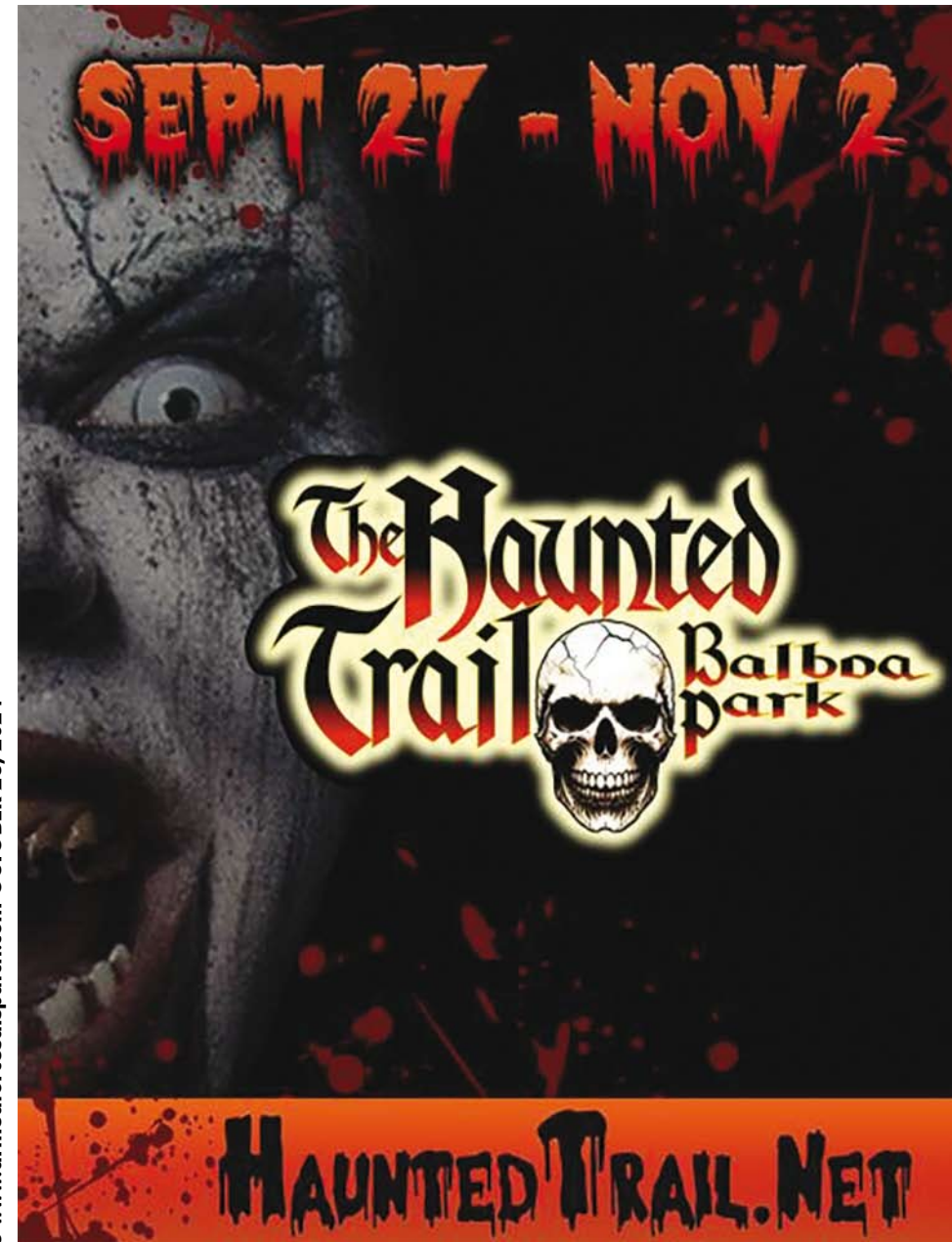
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# Photo gallery



**C3F VISIT**  
**NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE CORONADO** (Oct. 18, 2024) Vice Adm. John Wade, commander, Third Fleet (C3F), poses for a photo with Sailors assigned to Maritime Expeditionary Security Group (MESG) 1 after recognizing their hard work and dedication during a visit to MESG 1 here. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Melanie Perez

**CLEAN SWEEP**  
**CAMP PENDLETON** (Oct. 18, 2024) Marines with Headquarters and Support Battalion, Marine Corps Installations West, sweep sidewalks during Operation Clean Sweep here. Operation Clean Sweep is the first step in a larger Barracks 360 Reset initiative, which aims to improve the living conditions and operational readiness of Marines and Sailors. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jeslianne A. Torres



**FOGGY FLIGHT**  
**USS TRIPOLI**, at sea (Oct. 15, 2024) CH-53E Super Stallion attached to Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 prepares to take off from USS Tripoli (LHA 7) during flight operations. Tripoli is homeported in San Diego. The ship is currently underway conducting routine operations in 3rd Fleet. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Austyn Riley

**HAPPY HOMECOMING**  
 Marine Corps Sgt. Philip Maupin, a vehicle repair technician assigned to Alpha Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/5, 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, holds his daughter after arriving at the Del Mar Boat Basin aboard Base Camp Pendleton, Oct. 16. Elements of the 15th MEU embarked aboard amphibious dock landing ship USS Harpers Ferry (LSD 49), returned to Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton after a seven-month deployment to the Indo-Pacific region in support of regional stability and a free and open Indo-Pacific.



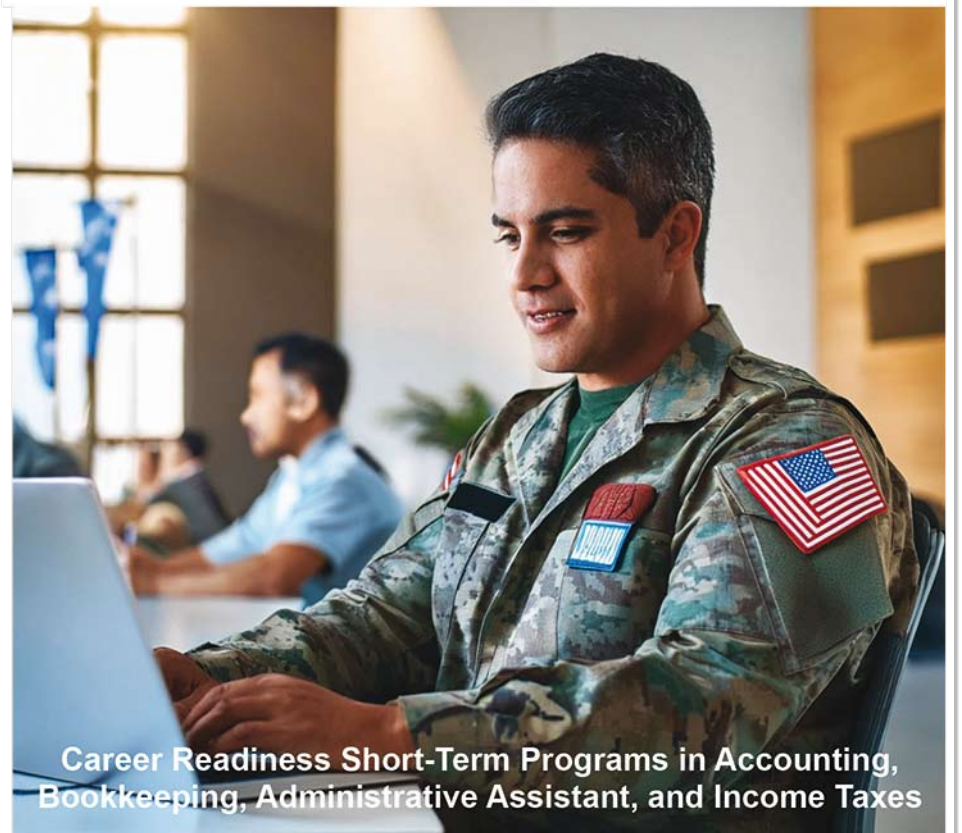
U.S. Marine Corps photo by Pfc. Kenneth Twaddell



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Courtesy photo

## VA has housed more than 43,000 homeless veterans

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced that between October 2023 and August 2024, it housed 43,116 veterans experiencing homelessness, surpassing its FY 2024 goal of housing 43,000 veterans one month before the end of the fiscal year.

VA has also ensured that 96.3 percent of the veterans housed so far this fiscal year have not returned to homelessness and engaged 38,476 unsheltered veterans to ensure they have access to housing and other necessary services.

Preventing and eliminating veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA. Between 2022 and 2023, VA permanently housed nearly 87,000 veterans. As a result of these efforts, the number of veterans experiencing homelessness in the U.S. has fallen by over 4 percent since early 2020 and by more than 52 percent since 2010.

“No person who has served this country should ever have to experience homelessness,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “And make no mistake: we won’t rest until every veteran has a safe, stable, accessible, and affordable home to call their own.”

The House passed (408-10) the FRA-supported “Housing our Military Veterans Effectively Act” (HOME Act-H.R. 3848) to help lift veterans out of homelessness.

The HOME Act would increase the per diem rate that VA pays nonprofit organizations that assist veterans with short-term transitional housing, such as the Salvation Army.

The per diem rate would also continue to adjust for inflation every year. The HOME Act also creates a stipend that homeless veterans can use to purchase necessities such as food, shelter,

## Supreme Court hears challenge to denials of disability claims by vets

STARS AND STRIPES - The U.S. Supreme Court weighed oral arguments Oct. 16 in a case over how a century-old law is applied to decide Department of Veterans Affairs benefits when there is an equal balance of evidence to support or deny a disability claim.

In *Bufkin v. McDonough*, the nation’s highest court is examining the existing “benefit-of-the-doubt rule,” which requires the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims to favor the veteran when supporting documents including medical records are considered close calls in determining disability compensation.

“There may be no more fundamental precept in the system of veterans benefits than the rule that the veteran, not the government, receives the benefit of the doubt in a close case,” according to the complaint brought by veterans Joshua Bufkin and

Norman Thornton against VA Secretary Denis McDonough. clothing, and hygiene items; transportation services; or communications equipment such as smartphones, so veterans can maintain contact with health care providers, prospective landlords, and family members.

Members can weigh in on this issue at <https://www.voterveice.net/FRA/Campaigns/110027/Respond>.

Norman Thornton against VA Secretary Denis McDonough.

The Supreme Court is being asked to determine whether the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims must consistently apply the benefit-of-the-doubt rule. A decision is expected next summer.

Bufkin and Thornton filed separate claims that were denied in veterans appeals court, which the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit later upheld. Bufkin served in the Air Force

from 2005 to 2006 and sought benefits for post-traumatic stress disorder, a mental health condition that arises from witnessing traumatic events. But doctors disagreed whether Bufkin had PTSD, according to court documents. His disability claims for benefits were denied.

Thornton served in the Army from 1988 to 1991 with deployments to the Middle East. He was denied a higher rating for his military service-connected disabilities. Attorneys for the two veterans said the claims were

rejected, despite the presentation of equal evidence that was positive and negative.

Their cases advanced to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, which found that the veterans appeals court did not have to enforce the benefit-of-the-doubt rule beyond a review of the evidence for factual errors. “

Refer to <https://www.stripes.com/veterans/2024-10-16/supreme-court-veterans-disability-benefits-15529514.html>.

### NEWS OF THE WEIRD

#### Baby Nibi

They found baby Nibi on the side of a road but her rescuers couldn’t find her parents and so they wanted to keep her and raise as their own. It took a while but finally, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey intervened and ruled that the Newhouse Wildlife Rescues could take charge of the two-year-old baby beaver, noting that “Nibi has captured the hearts of many of our residents, mine included and we’re excited to share that we have issued a permit for Nibi to remain in Newhouse’s care, continuing to educate the public about this important species.”

by John Grimaldi, editorial contributor, The Association of Mature American Citizens. The 2.4 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [<https://www.amac.us>] is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. We act and speak on their behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at <https://amac.us/join-amac>.

#### They carried their wives

The North American Wife Carrying Championship took place recently in Newry, Maine, attracting 30 men who carried 30 women in a race splashing through water, leaping over logs and trudging through mud. It appears that everyone is a winner in this race, said one husband participating with his wife, “we come each year for the fun. There is really a low chance of us winning. Pretty much everybody cheers everybody on and it’s a blast.”

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## MCAS Miramar Air Show 2024



by Jan Wagner

Acemaker T-33 Shooting Stars formation demo, Aaron Deliu Extra 330 aerobatics, Marine Corps MAGTF, Vicky Benzing P-51 "Plum Crazy," Alaska Airlines flyby, Air Force F-22 Raptor demo with P-38 Heritage Flight, Marine Corps F-35B demo and, to top it all off, the Navy Blue Angels with Fat Albert.

18 Super Hornet, along with the Marine Corps' premiere logistics support aircraft, the C-130 Super Hercules. The team consists of 138 world-class, active-duty Sailors and Marines." This was their 51st flight demonstration of the 2024 season.

The Blue Angels maintenance crew and their equipment travel aboard Fat Albert, a USMC Loughheed Martin C-130 Super Hercules. Its capabilities, as were demonstrated at the air show, began with the aircraft accelerating along the runway to a speed of 125 miles per hour, and then executing a high-performance takeoff climb at a steep, 45-degree angle.

This year, for the first time at this air show, an Air Force Lockheed Martin F-22 Raptor deployed flares in multiple passes as it flew over the air station. Previously, the only time that I'd ever seen flares being deployed from an aircraft was at last year's Pacific Airshow Huntington Beach, but those passes were over the ocean.

One of the highlights of the airshow is always the USMC MAGTF — the Marine Air-

I returned on Sunday to shoot the exhibits and activities that were on the ground, including at the indoor Tech Expo where I observed a heartwarming interaction between ROSCOE the robotic dog, from RESTORE Laboratory, and a wide-eyed child.



Roscoe the robotic dog at the Tech Expo.

Ground Task Force rapid response team, in an action-packed demo. We read in the glossy, full-color, complimentary air show program (complete with photos and information about many of the aircraft and participants), "as F/A-18 "Hornets" and F-35B "Lightning IIs" scream through the air, helicopter-borne Marines rappel from the sky and infantry platoons move in on their objective in armored vehicles.

In the air and on the ground, the men and women of the Marine Corps perform a simulated combat assault for the MCAS Miramar Air Show audience."

The final demonstration of the day was the Blue Angels, from Naval Air Station Pensacola, "showcasing the mainstay of modern naval air power operating off U.S. aircraft carriers, the combat-proven F/A-

Both were fully engaged as each stood face-to-face, while another curious young child looked on from its stroller.

There were military and civilian aircraft, as well as land and water-based vehicles, with crew members on-hand to answer questions and show visitors around; food, air show souvenirs, law enforcement agencies' exhibits with helicopters, and even an opportunity to experience high-performance exotic vehicles.

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 © 2024 by Jan Wagner - AutoMatters & More #858

In their welcome to the air station, Major Gen. James B. Wellons, commanding general, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, and Col. R. Erik Herrmann, commanding officer, MCAS Miramar, previewed what we were about to see: "a robust and thrilling lineup of both civilian performances and military demonstrations of state-of-the-art fighter, attack, and assault support aircraft!"

They told us that "beyond the high-speed aircraft and cutting-edge equipment, this air show is a reflection of who we are as Marines and where we are headed as a forward-thinking, premier warfighting organization. Three core themes underpin the spirit and vision of the air show: Who We Are, Where We Are Going, and How We Fight. Many of these men and women have deployed multiple times, possess extraordinary enthusiasm for their work, and are eager to share their experiences with you."

On my first day — Saturday — I mostly shot the planes in the air. The weekend's schedule included the Red Bull Air Force, Navy Leap Frogs, Ed Hammill Folds of Honor Pitts S-2C, Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey demo, Air Force KC135 Stratotanker demo,

# The realities of now

Back then, I danced. I mean I really danced.

During my twenties and thirties, I'd hear a song that would make me spring to my feet. Channeling the beat of the music through gyrating torso and limbs, I swung my hair in loop-de-loops just for laughs. Rivulets of sweat trickled down my back, and when my evening was done, I slept like a rock.

I danced often. At cousins' weddings. On Friday nights with friends who came over for dinner and didn't end up leaving until 1 a.m. At bars or nightclubs when I was still young enough to patronize them without looking pathetic.

Now, decades later, dancing just isn't the same.

When I get the opportunity to dance, which isn't often, for the most part, I sit and watch. But every once in a while, like an old dog who's feeling frisky, I give it a go. A really good eighties song fools me into believing I've still got it, so I shuffle to the dance floor doing a sort of pre-dance—biting my bottom lip with one fist pumping in the air—that signals everyone else to pay attention.

Once positioned, I begin, but soon realize my body doesn't dance spontaneously like it used to. I'm stiff, uncoordinated. I must deliberately recall the moves that used to come so freely, as I awkwardly recreate The Roger Rabbit, The Van Halen Jump, and The Hair Swing from faded memory. Eventually, thirst and a twinge of humiliation prompt me to slink back to my seat.

Later, in the wee hours, I bolt awake when my calf seizes up with cramps. And in the morning, I discover I have a kink in my neck and won't be able to turn my head to the left for three more days.

Back then, when my husband Francis and I were in our twenties and thirties, we were still discovering ourselves and

setting standards for our life together.

We'd ponder, "Perhaps we're the kind of people who brew craft beers in our garage, using interesting ingredients like apricots and toasted malts? Maybe we surf, play tambourine in a coworker's band, bake gourmet biscotti, ride Harleys, or run marathons?"

When we planned our home life together, we thought we'd insist on stainless steel appliances and quartz countertops.

## The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

We believed we'd use the china from our wedding registry every Thanksgiving. We were certain that romance will not be diminished when we had kids.

Naively, we believed our babies would be born without pain medications. They'd eat organic, homemade baby foods, and when old enough, they'd strictly adhere to a system of marble jar behavior rewards as set forth in the June issue of Parenting magazine. As teens, our children would never defy our authority, because we'd raise them in an environment of mutual respect.

Yeah, right.

Now, in our fifties, our days of self-discovery are behind us. Somewhere along the way, life simply happened. We were too busy working, paying taxes, raising kids, and keeping our marriage intact to bother with all those standards we'd made and forgot to abide.

We simply became a family, naturally.

Our house has mismatched furniture, and tumbleweeds of dog hair. I drive used cars and take fiber supplements. Francis is bald and falls asleep in his recliner. I haven't seen our wedding china since we boxed it for storage before an overseas move fifteen years ago. The money we dreamed we might spend on exotic travel and trendy décor ended up being used on braces for our three kids, mortgages, fan belts, plumbers' bills and college tuition. Our idea of a great Friday night is fire-pitting with the neighbors and still being in bed by eleven.

Life didn't follow the principled, high-minded blue print we planned way back then, but believe it or not, we've had more fun than we ever imagined.

After more than two and a half decades of marriage, parenting, and military life, I may not dance all that much anymore. But I've gained the wisdom to know that, to me, it's the love of family, the companionship of friends, the honor of military service, and the richness of experience that make a life worth living.

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## SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

### About signing up for Social Security and Medicare Part B at 70

*Dear Rusty: I just turned 69 years old in August 2024 and am still working full time. I signed up for Medicare Part A but, it is my secondary insurance because I have great health insurance through where I work. My wife is retired and has Medicare Part A but, is on my insurance also, and she is taking Social Security. Our plan is for me to work until August 2026 when I'll be 71. I'll file for Social Security when I turn 70, and bank all of it for a year until I retire. That is money we plan to use for travel and fun things. I have three questions: when should I file for my Social Security so it starts in September; when do my wife and I file for Medicare Part B (with a supplement) so it starts in September; and are there negative tax implications to this plan that I haven't thought of?*

Signed: Needing Info

**Dear Needing Info:** Sounds like you have a great strategy planned for your personal Social Security benefits and your Medicare Part B enrollment for both of you. To your questions:

If you will be 70 in August 2025, you can apply for Social Security about 3 months prior (e.g., in May 2025). Just be sure to specify that you wish your SS benefits to start effective with the month of your 70th birthday. Signing up a few months early is perfectly okay – you will indicate your desired benefit start date on your application, and that is when SS will start your benefits. Remember, SS pays benefits in the month following the month earned, so your first payment will be received in September 2025 (on the 2nd Wednesday if you were born before the 11th of the month).

As for Medicare Part B coverage for you and your wife, both of you can enroll in Medicare Part B a couple of months prior to you leaving work, but request that Medicare Part B coverage starts in the month your work coverage ends. In other words, you can enroll in Medicare before you retire from work but request that your Part B coverage starts in the first month your employer coverage ends (to avoid any gap in health-care coverage). Obviously, you should begin your private supplemental healthcare coverage to coincide with the start of your Medicare Part B coverage.

Regarding the tax implications, just be aware that a portion of your received Social Security benefits become taxable income if your Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) as a married couple exceeds certain thresholds. FYI, "MAGI" is your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) on your tax return, plus 50% of your received SS benefits, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had. If you file your taxes as "married/jointly" and your MAGI is more than \$32,000, then 50% of the SS benefits you receive during the tax year becomes taxable income, or if your MAGI as a married couple is over \$44,000 then up to 85% of the SS benefits received during the tax year becomes taxable income (at your normal IRS tax rate). Income tax on SS benefits occurs when your MAGI is over the thresholds for your tax filing status, so you should plan accordingly. If your MAGI will be consistently over these thresholds after you retire from working, you may choose to have income tax withheld from your SS benefits, which is easy to do by submitting IRS FORM W-4V to your local Social Security office.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org).*

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## Visit our military museums

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

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<http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>  
 Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

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

Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.

1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426  
 Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

**USS Midway Museum.** The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal. FREE-Children 5 & under, Active Duty military including reservists (w/ valid ID). Adult \$34 (ages 13+). Youth \$24 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$24\*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: [MCBCAMPEN\\_history@usmc.mil](mailto:MCBCAMPEN_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/](http://www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/) for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

## San Diego County Toys for Tots: Share the joy of Christmas

Toys for Tots Coordinator Cpl Lavell Kenney

**Official website:** <https://san-diego-ca.toysfortots.org/>

Thank you for your interest in the 2024 San Diego Marine Corps Toys for Tots campaign and for considering us to be your charity to support this year! We are very thankful to have received such a generous response from the community in 2023. **Please take a few moments to navigate through**

### MARINE CORPS RESERVE



**the website for most frequently asked questions.** Every minute spent on the phone or answering emails is a minute taken away from serving the children.

The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program is to collect new,

unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the community in which the campaign is conducted.

### How to get started?

Simple... First, decide how you'd like to contribute. You can coordinate a toy drive in your community, volunteer your time in the warehouse, or provide a monetary donation to support our effort in providing toys to children.

If you are hosting your own toy drive, be sure to bring the toys collected back to our warehouse (Naval Marine Corps Reserve Center) or to any San Diego Fire Department.

Note: Toy requests for individual families are all facilitated through local nonprofit organizations of the San Diego County area. We do not personally work with individual families due to the volume of requests we get. If you are interested in receiving toys for your family, please contact your local social welfare organization to register with Toys for Tots.

### Key Dates

Campaign dates: 1 October, 2024 to 20 December, 2024  
 Campaign begins accepting toys: 1 November, 2024  
 Campaign stops accepting toys and donations: 20 December, 2024  
 Toy distribution begins: 18 November, 2024

(This is for the registered nonprofit organizations who give the toys to children)

Last day of toy distribution: 13 December, 2024



## Connective tissue disorders: Recognizing and treating structural defects

Our bodies are held together by structures called connective tissue. Connective tissues make up the ligaments and tendons that help your joints move. They also provide structure and flexibility for body parts, such as your skin and blood vessels.

Damage to your connective tissue can cause serious health issues. Normal wear and tear from aging can start to erode connective tissues. So can certain autoimmune diseases, like lupus, and specific connective tissue disorders. The effects of these conditions can range from mild to severe.

Researchers are looking for better ways to diagnose and treat conditions that lead to connective tissue damage. Getting treatment may help improve a person's quality of life. But connective tissue disorders can be hard to recognize.

### Connecting the Dots

Connective tissue disorders aren't common. Several can be passed down genetically. Those tend to run in families. Each disorder affects different body parts.

One condition, known as Marfan syndrome, can lead to balloon-like bulges called aneurysms in blood vessels. These bulges are especially dangerous when they occur in the body's largest blood vessel, the aorta, which carries blood to the heart. If it bursts, it can cause sudden death.

Another disorder, called hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (or hEDS), can cause pain in the joints and other parts of the body. The condition epidermolysis bullosa (EB) weakens the skin. And the disorder osteogenesis imperfecta can make bones prone to breaking.

Although the symptoms and affected body parts are different, these conditions all stem from damaged connective tissues. The severity of symptoms for these disorders varies widely among patients. They can range from hardly noticeable to life-threatening (see Wise Choices box).



"Milder forms of these conditions are probably under-recognized and underdiagnosed," says Dr. Anna Bruckner, a skin expert at the University of Colorado.

The symptoms caused by connective tissue disorders can also often arise from many other health conditions. "And symptoms like chronic pain and chronic fatigue are often missed, or dismissed," explains Dr. Cortney Gensemer, a genetics researcher at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC), who has hEDS herself.

Tell your doctor if you have a family history of a connective tissue disorder or if you have a relative who died suddenly at a young age. That information can help with a diagnosis, explains Dr. Jason Cook, a vascular surgeon at the University of Nebraska Medical Center.

### Finding the Cause

Sometimes, having a connective tissue disorder in the family can delay diagnosis, Gensemer explains.

"People can get accustomed to thinking that something painful is normal," she says. "You might say something to your mom and dad, and their answer might be 'Oh, that happens to me all the time.'"

But you can't always be sure what's causing your symptoms. So it's important to talk with your doctor about any symptoms you have. Your

doctor will ask about your personal and family medical history. Some common tests that look for connective disorders include imaging tests or genetic testing.

Genetic testing on its own isn't enough to rule out some conditions, including Marfan syndrome, Cook says. That's because the test doesn't detect all possible genetic factors that can lead to the condition.

Researchers are continuing to search for the causes of connective tissue disorders. Gensemer, working with Dr. Russell Norris from MUSC, has built a registry of families living with hEDS. They're now carrying out a large study looking for genes that can cause the condition.

"Having a genetic test would provide a definitive, easy, objective diagnosis," Gensemer says. "It would also let people get a diagnosis earlier."

### Living With Connective Tissue Disorders

Researchers hope that a better understanding of the causes of these disorders will eventually lead to a cure. Currently, treatments for connective tissue disorders focus on managing symptoms.

Both Marfan syndrome and hEDS can affect your blood vessels, which makes them vulnerable to tearing. People with these conditions often need frequent monitoring. Some

may eventually need surgery to make sure a blood vessel doesn't tear.

The same gene changes that affect the blood vessels in Marfan syndrome can also weaken the heart, Cook says. His team is studying how to repair blood vessels without putting extra stress on heart tissue.

Treatment for connective tissue disorders needs to be personalized, Cook explains, because the same condition can affect people very differently. Medications are available to help with some symptoms of these disorders, like high blood pressure and reduced bone strength.

Recently, the first two medications to help heal skin damage in people with EB were approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. "So now having a diagnosis can open the door to treatment for these patients," Bruckner says.

She and her team are working on ways to repair skin damage for people with severe EB. They're taking stem cells from patients' skin, fixing the broken gene, and then returning repaired cells to the body. They're testing whether these cells can heal blisters that arise in people with EB and prevent new ones from forming.

"The skin is visible, so we can just look to see whether this works," Bruckner explains. "If it does, then we have the potential to change the stem cells into other types of cells that

could potentially heal the person's other organs."

"It's potentially one treatment, and you're done for the rest of your life," adds Dr. Anthony Oro, a stem cell researcher at Stanford University.

Oro and others are now working on a large NIH-funded project to make it easier to get stem cell

therapies manufactured, so the treatment can be used for more patients. They're starting with skin repair for EB. But other research teams are already looking at how to repair other tissues like bone, muscle, and heart tissue.

"We hope this technology will be applicable to many different disorders," Bruckner says.

## Could you have a connective tissue disorder?

### Common signs and symptoms:

#### Marfan Syndrome

- Arms, legs, fingers, and toes that are long compared to your body.
- A chest wall that caves in or sticks out.
- A curved spine.
- A long, narrow face.
- Heartbeats that skip, flutter, or feel too hard or fast.
- Vision problems, like blurry vision or extreme nearsightedness.

#### Hypermobile EDS

- Joints that stretch farther than normal (joint hypermobility).
- Joints that pop out of place (dislocations).
- Skin that is soft or velvety, highly elastic (stretchy), or bruises easily.
- Chronic pain.
- Feeling tired all the time (fatigue).

#### Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB) and Related Skin Conditions

- Skin that blisters easily.
- Blisters in the mouth.
- Rough, thickened, or missing fingernails or toenails.
- Changes in the color of the skin.

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