

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR NO. 46
 MARCH 16-31, 2025

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50th

National Vietnam War Veterans Day March 29

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Initial DOGE findings reveal \$80 million in wasteful spending at DOD

by C. Todd Lopez

A quick review of some of the initial findings within the Defense Department by the Department of Government Efficiency reveals some \$80 million in funds wasted on programs that do not support DOD's core mission.

In a social media video posted March 4, Chief Pentagon Spokesman Sean Parnell read off a few of the initial findings from DOGE, which revealed expenditures many service members would be hard-pressed to connect to Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's focus on lethality, meritocracy, accountability, standards and readiness.

"At the DOD, we've been working hand in hand with the DOGE team," Parnell said. "And as the secretary said, we welcome that process because that process will make us more lethal. And that means that our warfighters on the battlefield will be more successful."

Among the DOGE findings, Parnell highlighted \$1.9 million for holistic diversity, equity and inclusion transformation and training; \$6 million to the University of Montana to "strengthen American democracy by bridging divides"; \$3.5 million by the Defense Human Resources Activity to support DEI groups; and \$1.6 million to the University of Florida to study the "social and institutional detriments of vulnerability and resilience to climate hazards in African Sahel."

Altogether, he said, the full set of initial findings of DOGE reveals about \$80 million in wasteful spending that could be better spent on lethality and readiness.

On the day he was sworn in, Hegseth released a message to the force spelling out his three top priorities. Those include reviving the warrior ethos and restoring trust in the military; rebuilding the military by matching threats to capabilities; and reestablishing deterrence by defending the homeland.

Parnell said the DOGE team is just getting started rooting out department expenditures that are not aligned with the secretary's top priorities.

"This stuff is not a core function of our military. This is not what we do. This is a distraction from our core mission," he said. "Today's actions are just the start; more to come this week. Again, we are working hand-in-glove with DOGE. So, stay tuned in the weeks ahead as we trim the fat, preserve the muscle, make the DOD more mission-capable and more lethal."

Marines expand F-35B's presence in Japan, marking new phase for fighter operations

In a report in *Stars and Stripes* March 10, a third Marine Corps squadron of F-35B Lightning II fighters recently arrived in Japan, marking the latest step in the service's efforts to modernize its deployed forces in the Indo-Pacific. The squadron - Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 214, also known as the Black Sheep - arrived from MCAS Yuma, Ariz., according to the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing. The deployment is the first rotational assignment for the F-35B under the Marines' Unit Deployment Program, which cycles units through the region to bolster readiness.

**See National
 Vietnam War
 Veterans
 commemoration events
 on page 2**

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Events honoring our Vietnam Veterans

Vietnam War Veterans Day ceremony Tues., March 25, at Miramar National Cemetery

If you served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces (at any time) from November 1, 1955, to May 15, 1975, regardless of location, then this day is for you – National Vietnam War Veterans Day. Every year on March 29th, our country gives a long overdue THANK YOU and honors Vietnam veterans, and their families, for their service and sacrifice.

A day to unite in gratitude and honor our Vietnam veterans, and their families, for their service and sacrifice. You are invited to a Vietnam War Commemoration Ceremony on Tuesday, March 25 at 9am at Miramar National Cemetery, 5795 Nobel Dr. in San Diego.

The guest speaker is Tony Cordero, Gold Star Son. The featured speaker is Capt. James Sullivan, USCG, (Ret.) who was the commanding officer of a patrol boat operating on the rivers of Vietnam during the war.

Here in San Diego County, it is estimated that approximately 60,000 Vietnam Veterans live among us. We should thank our veterans every day for defending our freedoms, but especially on this day, this generation of American men and women deserve two words – Thank you!

Please join us at Miramar National Cemetery on March 25 at 9am for a special ceremony to truly say thank you to you and your family. While you are on the cemetery grounds, please visit the Vietnam veterans Memorial on our Memorial Walkway.

The Department of Veterans Affairs will be on site to answer benefit questions

O'side Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration Sat., March 29, 9am-noon

Join Hospice of the North Coast and Veterans Association of North County (VANC) in thanking and honoring Veterans of the Vietnam War for their service and sacrifice.

2025 marks the conclusion of the 10-Year Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Join us for our final Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration as we recognize and express our deepest gratitude to Vietnam War veterans, including those who were prisoners of war, remain missing in action, and their families. VANC is located at 1617 Mission Ave., Oceanside, CA 92058.

9am Doors Open (Connect with veterans)

10am Formal Program

11am Complimentary Lunch

Reservations required by March 22

www.hospicenorthcoast.org

Shelly Dew: sdew@hospicenorthcoast.org or 760-431-4100

Vietnam Veterans Recognition Day and Car Show Sat., March 29 in Riverside county

California VFW and American Legion present the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Day Ceremony and Car Show. The ceremony will be held from 10-11am at George Ingalls Veterans Memorial Plaza, 3737 Crestview Dr., Norco, CA 92860

The Car Show and Luncheon will be held from 11am-1pm at American Legion Post #328, 3888 Old Hammer Rd., Norco, CA 92860.

For more information contact John Hernandez (951) 232-8072.

Thank you for your service

The Army at 250: Did you know the Army invented this?

by Jonathan Austin
Army News Service

You might be surprised by the number of things you use or rely on in work and play can be traced back to Army ingenuity or investment.

Check out this list to discover some of the many things created for or by the Army.

Food preservation - The Army is renowned for food preparation research. The U.S. Army Natick Soldier Systems Center in Massachusetts specializes in, among other things, sustaining the military's food.

Anastacia Marx de Salcedo, author of "Combat-Ready Kitchen: How the U.S. Military Shapes the Way We Eat," says much of the processed food we eat today originated through experiments in an Army laboratory.

The Army's Quartermaster Corps funded research at the USDA early in World War II to resolve a problem that had stymied Army food scientists – they couldn't dehydrate cheese to feed soldiers.

USDA scientist George Sanders came up with the solution, and after the war his method of powdered cheese was used to flavor Cheetos.

The Army also expanded research into high-pressure processing, which de Salcedo says is the application of high pressure to eliminate bacteria in food. Once the food industry adopted the Army's techniques, it began using them on foods that are produced for public consumption.

In a 2015 interview with National Public Radio, de Salcedo said she realized "that everything in my kids' lunchboxes had military origins or influence - the bread, the sandwich meat, juice pouches, cheesy crackers, Goldfish Crackers and energy bars," she said. "In a large sense, I estimate that 50 percent of items in today's markets were influenced by the military."

Pringles – The USDA and

the Army Quartermaster Corps worked to develop dehydrated potato flakes, which led directly to the production of Pringles potato crisps.

Super Glue - Cyanoacrylate adhesives were initially discovered during World War II by a scientist at Eastman Kodak Company when the Army was urging American industry to make things to help win the war.

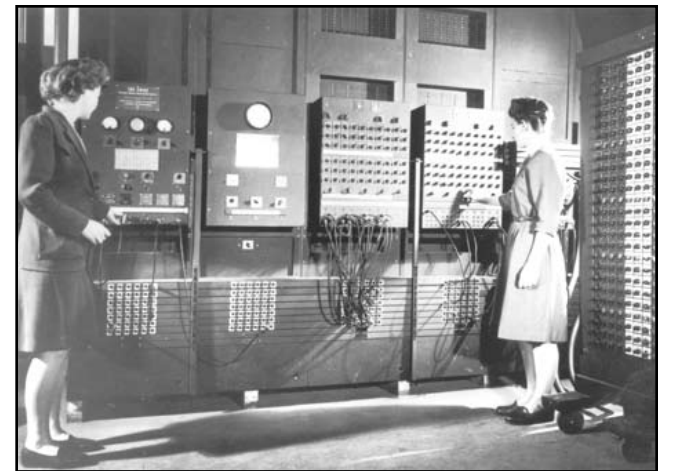
Dr. Harry Coover initially created the new compound in 1942, while striving to create a clear plastic gun sight for Soldiers.

Believing the substance was too sticky, Coover shelved the idea for a decade, but later revisited it while researching material to make jet canopies. This time he realized he had created a super glue, and he filed for a patent.

During the Vietnam War, medical teams caring for severely injured Soldiers realized the material, marketed as Super Glue, was helpful for sealing bloody wounds and to stop bleeding until the patient could be transported to a medical unit for more advanced treatment. Cooper said he took great pride in the fact that his glue saved the lives of many Soldiers injured in combat.

The computer - The Army funded research by John Mauchly and J. Presper Eckert at the University of Pennsylvania into the Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer. This was the first electronic computer used for general purposes. The Army wanted to calculate artillery firing tables for its Ballistic Research Laboratory. Construction began in 1943. Six women, recruited in 1942 for their math skills, programmed ENIAC.

Electric razors – A retired Army colonel invented the first



Programmers Betty Jean Jennings, left, and Fran Bilas, right, operate ENIAC's main control panel at the Moore School of Electrical Engineering, circa 1945. U.S. Army photo from the archives of the ARL Technical Library

electric razor that could be easily manufactured. Jacob Schick patented his invention in 1928.

Duct tape - In 1943, an Illinois woman with two sons in the military during World War II first visualized how to make a waterproof cloth tape to seal boxes of ammunition.

Vesta Stoudt worked at the Green River Ordnance Plant near Amboy, Illinois. According to Margaret Gurowitz, the chief historian with Johnson & Johnson, workers at the plant saw that the paper tape used to seal boxes of rifle ammo was inferior and hampered how Soldiers in combat opened the boxes, often while under fire.

Stoudt told others how the tape could be improved but didn't get help from her supervisors. So, she wrote a letter to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, explaining the problem and detailing her idea to solve it with a better tape. According to Johnson & Johnson company history, the president passed her letter on to the War Production Board.

The board approved of the change and asked a Johnson &

Johnson operating company to make the product based on its experience in making tape.

The Jeep - The brainstorm for a quarter-ton, four-wheel drive truck designed as a cross-country tactical vehicle originated just before World War II for the infantry. The military considered numerous prototypes from America's automakers, and during the war, Willys-Overland and Ford Motor Company produced 643,000 Jeeps for Allied forces.

Two-way portable radio - The Army asked Galvin Manufacturing Corporation, (now Motorola) to make a radio that would allow World War II Soldiers on the move to communicate with each other.

The EpiPen - The roots of a self-directed auto injector go back to 1973, when the Army asked a researcher to create an easy-to-use device to treat chemical warfare exposure for troops in the field. Soon after, experts in the medical industry realized that the auto injector device filled with epinephrine could be carried by civilians who suffer severe allergic reactions.

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Defense secretary discusses security at home, abroad ahead of border visit

by Matthew Olay
DOD News

During a media interview March 5, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth discussed security at the southern border and how the Defense Department is handling the threat of a potential future conflict with China.

The secretary commented on those topics shortly before joining Vice President JD Vance and flying from Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, to Laredo, Texas, for the secretary's second visit to the southern border since being sworn in.

The secretary noted an approximately 97 percent drop in illegal border crossings since the new administration took office; "the deterrent effect is there" when it comes to border security.

"President [Donald J.] Trump gave us a charge: 100% operational control of the southern border. Border security is national security," Hegseth said.

"Our [previous] open border policy [resulted in] recklessness,

death and drugs for our communities," he continued. "We're sending those [criminal illegal immigrants] home, and we're not letting more in."

Hegseth praised the current level of cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments as it relates to controlling the border.

"Right now, we have historic cooperation, military-to-military. But we're letting [Mexico] lead," he said.

"It's their country; it's their fight, and we want them to lead that fight. [And] so far, they have stepped up, which is a very good sign," he added.

The State Department designated eight international cartels

as foreign terrorist organizations on Feb. 20, 2025. Hegseth said "all options are on the table" regarding how the U.S. deals with the criminal cartels, though DOD and the current administration would prefer that the Mexican government handle the issue themselves.

"We will not accept them controlling that border [and] poisoning our people with fentanyl," Hegseth said, then stating that the number of fentanyl-related deaths in the U.S. has not gone down "enough."

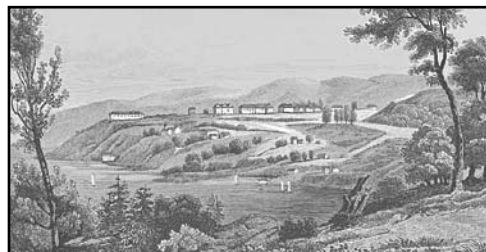
Following the Chinese government's recent statement that it is "ready to fight to the end" in "any type" of war with the U.S., Hegseth said the Defense Department

is prepared.

"Those who long for peace must prepare for war, [and] that's why we're rebuilding our military. That's why we're establishing deterrence," he said.

The president understands peace comes through strength, and he also has a good relationship with the leader of the Chinese Communist Party. The secretary added that the U.S. is not actively seeking conflict with that country.

"We don't seek that war," Hegseth said. "But my job as secretary of defense is to make sure we're ready. [So], we need the defense spending, the capabilities, the weapons and the posture in the Indo-Pacific, which is something we're very much focused on."



The U.S. Military Academy at West Point was established on March 16, 1802, making it the oldest military service academy in the nation. The academy was founded by President Thomas Jefferson to train officers for the rapidly expanding army.



AID FROM ABOVE New York Air National Guardsmen fly an HC-130J Combat King II aircraft while supporting response efforts to wildfires in the Pine Barrens region of Long Island, N.Y., March 8, 2025. The 106th Rescue Wing was the first unit to apply water to the fire during a coordinated response that also included the New York Army National Guard and more than 80 local fire departments. U.S. Air Force photo by Maj. Steven Turner/Air National Guard

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Army

*The Army's top enlisted leader goes dark on social media

*Black Hawk helicopter crashes in Honduras during training mission

Navy

*No victims, shooter found after shots reported at Florida Navy station

*White House's OMB skeptical of Navy plan to boost shipyard wages, SASC chairman says

*U.S. starts two Pacific submarine drills, Chinese Surface Group Operating near Australia

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*Air Force sees historic recruitment surge with delayed entry program

*Budget impasse risks 'Doomsday' plane delay, SNC says

*Air Force beefs up basic training ACE exercise to 57 hours

Space Force

*'Golden Dome' success will require national buy-in, official says

*Space Force challenged to scale new cloud-based satellite ground control system

*How USAF and USSF's Force Generation models overlap: 'You can't part time warfare'

Coast Guard

*\$7 billion Coast Guard maintenance backlog looms as lawmakers decry 'unacceptable' conditions

*U.S., Marshall Islands search vast Pacific sector for missing sea ambulance

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*Soldiers in Alaska landed their Black Hawk on a train in a special ops exercise

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*What troops need to know about Basic Allowance for Housing in 2025

*What service members need to know about retirement pay in 2025

*What troops need to know about the GI Bill, tuition assistance in 2025

*What troops need to know about life insurance in 2025

Your Military

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*Parents of 14-year-old killed in 'senseless tragedy' when wall collapsed at Air Force Base file lawsuit

Veterans

*VA to speed up health records system rollout, with new sites this year

*Democratic lawmakers warn of canceled VA research projects but agency denies it

Military Culture & History

*The Army didn't have a photo of the 'new' Benning, so we found this one

Face of Defense: Canine companion helps former Marine heal

by Bridget Bonnette

Retired Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 3 Thomas J. Heaton's career encompassed over two decades of service, including nine deployments across various theaters of operations. Heaton, who served in both counterintelligence and human intelligence roles in the Marine Corps Special Operations Command, has seen and experienced more than most in his field, but his journey post-service led him to his four-legged partner, Colt.

Entering the U.S. Marine Corps in 2002, Heaton first served as an ammunition technician before deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His dedication to mission and country was clear early on as he volunteered to deploy again for the next rotation. However, it wasn't until 2005 that Heaton transitioned to the counter and human intelligence field, a decision that would change the course of his career.

Through a series of leadership roles, Heaton deployed to various locations around the world including Iraq and Afghanistan. He was instrumental in intelligence operations that shaped military strategy and operations.

Heaton's ability to mentor and inspire other Marines was evident, and he became known for his leadership in high-pressure environments. Yet, despite his professional success, Heaton faced personal struggles upon returning from his numerous deployments.

"When I came home, I wanted to be overseas, and when I was overseas, I wanted to be home," Heaton said. "I was so used to the discomfort of being displaced, and that became my comfort zone. Adjusting to being present, to just being where I am, has been a challenge for me. And I still work on that every day."

The difficulties Heaton faced after his deployments were not only emotional but also psychological. Constant hypervigilance, a side effect of his combat experiences, created challenges in daily life. Heaton's mind was always on alert, unable to fully appreciate the moment or relax in everyday situations. This is where his journey took a significant turn.

It was through his connection with a fellow Marine from MARSOC, who had received a service dog that Heaton began to consider how a service dog could support his needs.

"One of my Marines, a subordinate I looked up to, received a service dog, and it made me think, if he can accept a vulnerability and realize he would benefit from additional support, why can't I?" Heaton recalled.

This realization led him to research and eventually apply for a service dog through the Warriors Choice Foundation in September 2023.

When I came home, I wanted to be overseas, and when I was overseas, I wanted to be home."

A.J. Longo, executive director of Warriors Choice Foundation, recalled the initial introduction to Heaton's situation through their alumni network of ambassadors and handlers.

"Tom and I discussed what the brand encompassed, the mission, short- and long-term goals, and ultimately, how were we going to address Tom's needs collectively," Longo said.

The call from Warriors Choice Foundation came in July 2024, when Heaton was matched with Colt, a specially trained service dog that would soon become an inseparable part of his life. The two met for the first time in



Retired Marine Corps Chief Warrant Officer 3 Thomas J. Heaton poses for a photo with his service dog, Colt, at the National Space Defense Center at Schriever Space Force Base, Colo., Jan. 17, 2025. U.S. Space Force photo by Tiana Williams

November 2024 at a Warriors Choice event, the Fairways to Freedom Golf Classic, in Jupiter, Florida. The emotional connection was immediate.

Longo vividly described the moment when Heaton and Colt first met.

"Tom's eyes widened, his shoulders fell, his diaphragm expanded, and his eyes began to fill with tears of joy," Longo said. "I asked him if he had something in his eye or if he was allergic to something before passing the reins to him, but it was in that moment to see someone as humble as Tom [who] has never been gifted something of this magnitude."

The bond between Heaton and Colt was instantaneous.

"We've been together ever since," Heaton said. "Colt is never more than 10 feet away from me and is constantly searching and checking in with me."

Colt now assists Heaton with grounding; proprioceptive, which is the body's ability to sense movement, action, and location; and vestibular support that aids in balance and spatial orientation, helping him manage the hyper-vigilance that often affects his daily life.

The bond between Heaton and Colt has been more than just functional; it has been a source of healing.

"Colt has provided me a peace and a level of camaraderie I have not felt since I left the MARSOC community," Heaton said.

One of the most poignant moments in Heaton's journey came the first night he spent with Colt. He recalls meeting up with other Warriors Choice recipients — a group that included fellow MARSOC Marines, as well as Navy SEALs, Army Rangers and first responders. As he sat with Colt, he was overwhelmed by mixed emotions.

Without being prompted, Colt responded by wrapping his paws around Heaton's shoulders and burying his head in his neck, providing a moment of comfort and reassurance.

"It was surreal," he said. "Here was this dog who didn't know me, but he instinctively knew what I needed. It was like he understood the process I'd gone through to get to that moment, and he was there for me."

Through Colt, Heaton has found a new sense of stability and peace, which has greatly improved his quality of life.

see **Bond**, next page

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Career and Education

Hegseth welcomes U.S. Senate youth delegates, mentors to Pentagon

by Matthew Olay

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth welcomed student delegates and their military officer mentors from the 63rd United States Senate Youth Program to the Pentagon March 7, capping off a weeklong visit to Washington.

Created in 1962 by Senate Resolution 324, the USSYP annually brings 104 high-achieving high school students — two from every state, Washington and the Department of Defense Education Activity — and their 17 U.S. military officer mentors to the nation's capital. The students spend an intensive week learning about the federal government and those who lead it.

Hegseth greeted the students and mentors shortly after they arrived at the Pentagon Library and Conference Center.

"I congratulate you all for being here, and I thank the members of the military who support the program as well, continuing to give back in uniform demonstrating what that kind of leadership looks like so that everybody here sees what that pathway looks like," Hegseth told the room full of student delegates and their mentors.

He added that there are several other paths to service beyond the military, and he believed the many people in the room would one day be leaders at the

state, national and international levels.

"That's important, but build the building blocks of who you are, what you believe what's most important to you first, because that core is what will provide the foundation for any other kind of service that you," Hegseth said.

Alliyah Regala, a senior student council president at EJ King Middle High School on U.S. Fleet Activities, Sasebo, Japan, said that seeing leaders like Hegseth and others in person during the week helped her to more thoroughly humanize those public officials beyond how they are portrayed in the media.

"Seeing in person made me realize that ... he's just another American who loves his country and wants to continue to serve his country," Regala said, adding that, despite any differences she might have with Hegseth or other public figures, she appreciates the common ground of service to the American people that they all share.

Emily Wheeler, a junior and music honor society president at Stuttgart High School in Germany, shared a similar sentiment.

She said you can hear "a lot of divisive opinions," and it's likely a really hard job to be secretary of such a diverse department with so many different people.

Marine Corps Community Services Miramar quality of life programs

MCCS Miramar offers a variety of support center classes, including those for new parents, personal financial management, and military family life, along with fitness classes and other programs.

Here's a more detailed breakdown of the classes and programs available:

New Parent Support Program (NPSP): This program offers services like home visits, parenting classes, playgroups, prenatal classes, baby boot camp, and individual infant massage instruction.

Child and Youth Program: This program offers a variety of programs, including education, personal financial management, individual emergency action plan, information, referral, and relocation, library, military family life, prevention and counseling, single marine program, and transition readiness program.

Military Family Life: This includes programs like LifeSkills Training, which emphasizes skill building in areas such as leadership, communication, resilience, relationship effectiveness, and overall readiness.

Prevention and Counseling: This includes Community Counseling, which is available to active-duty service members, civilian expeditionary forces, spouses, families, children, and recruits.

Single Marine Program: This program offers resources and support for single Marines.

Transition Readiness Program: This program helps

service members prepare for their transition from military service to civilian life.

Education Center: Offers resources and support for military personnel pursuing education and career development.

Military Academic Skills Program (MASP): This free, two-week program helps military personnel and their family members enhance their English & Math skills.

Financial Aid: Provides information and resources for financial aid.

Semper Fit Center: Offers regular cycling, Pilates, yoga, and Zumba classes, offered at no cost for active duty members and offered at a fee for guests.

Miramar Sports Complex: Offers personal training, fitness assessments, sports massages, intramural sports, and the F45 Studio.

Indoor Cycling Classes: Offered throughout the week, free to authorized patrons and \$5 for guests.

Warrior Maintenance - Stress Management: A workshop intended to reduce multiple health risk behaviors and to enhance multiple domains of well-being.

Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) - Empowering Marines and their families through comprehensive programs that strengthen their resilience and overall well-being, ensuring they thrive both on and off the field.

<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/marine-family-support>

DAF senior leaders highlight warrior ethos, lethality during NCLS

by Tech. Sgt. Zach Vaughn
AIR FORCE ACADEMY, Colo. - U.S. military general officers and senior enlisted advisors headlined a senior leader panel during the 32nd annual National Character and Leadership Symposium at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado, Feb. 21.

The panel featured Gen. Stephen Whiting, U.S. Space Command commander, Gen. David Allvin, U.S. Air Force chief of staff, and Department of the Air Force enlisted leaders — Chief Master Sergeant of the Space Force John Bentivegna and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force David Flosi.

The leaders expounded on strategic initiatives and how their services' respective capabilities will shape future battlefields in support of this year's theme: Warfighters to Win. The panel participants spoke to and fielded questions from an audience of

U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, faculty and service members, as well as community leaders and visiting undergraduate students from around the world.

Allvin, Academy Class of 1986, began the discussion by underscoring the Defense Department's priorities of reviving warrior ethos, rebuilding the military and re-establishing deterrence.

"The three priorities of our defense secretary are crystal clear," said Allvin. "The first one, reviving the warrior ethos, starts here. The values and principles at the height of this warrior culture—this warrior ethos—are courage, commitment and sacrifice... integrity and trust. Those are the things we must value... those are the things we must develop."

Allvin emphasized unity as a paramount characteristic of mission success to service members

veterans' mental and emotional well-being.

"At the end of the day, it's about the right tool for the right job, the right man for the mission, and the right wingman for the fight. Colt is my wingman. And the utility and versatility of these dogs is life-changing," Heaton said. "As a Marine of mine, Gunnery Sgt. Morgan Staal said to me, having is like having an entire Marine special operations team watching your back. It's a bond I never expected but one I'm deeply grateful for."

Heaton and Colt are assigned to the National Space Defense Center, where Heaton supports the protect and defend mission as a counterintelligence analyst.



An audience of cadets, faculty, service members, visiting undergraduate students and community leaders listen to a senior leader panel during the National Character and Leadership Symposium at the Air Force Academy Feb. 21. U.S. Air Force photo by Trevor Cokley

across each component and throughout the joint force.

"My value is what I bring to the success of the team," said Allvin. "When we get into the darkest days of doing the toughest and most dangerous things, I am ready and I know my team is ready to do things for people we've never met. That is what it means to be in this profession of arms."

Whiting, Academy Class of 1989, noted the rapid growth and evolution of the United States' space superiority to deter aggression from foreign adversaries.

"It's our moral imperative to continue to support the joint force with the space capabilities that they've become reliant on," said Whiting. "Space, now, has enabled them to be more precise, more lethal and more far-ranging."

Whiting highlighted two focus areas for his command: protecting America's space capabilities and protecting the joint force from space-enabled attacks. He noted China as a pacing threat to U.S. space capability.

Bond

continued from page 4

For other veterans considering a service dog, Heaton offers some advice: "It's OK to admit you need help. The stigma around getting a service dog can be tough to overcome, but it's about finding the right tool for the right job. The bond between you and your dog is unique, and it requires a level of accountability. You'll have your good days and your bad, but the dog shows up every day, just like you need to."

As Heaton reflects on his military career and his new journey with Colt, he hopes his story will inspire both veterans and civilians to understand the power of service dogs in supporting

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MCRD San Diego shooting team wins at Marine Corps Marksman Competition West

by Lance Cpl. Eric Valerio
 Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego
 MCRD SAN DIEGO - The Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego shooting team recently displayed exceptional skills at the 2025 Marine Corps Marksmanship Competition held at Camp Pendleton last month.

The competition, part of the Competition in Arms Program, not only celebrated the achievements of individual Marines but also highlighted the Marine Corps' 250-year legacy of marksmanship excellence.

The competition featured in-

tense rifle and pistol challenges, where two Marines from the MCRD team earned rifle medals, and four earned pistol medals. Their accomplishments underscore the elite skill set honed through rigorous training. The rifle team earned the prestigious San Diego Trophy, awarded to the top rifle team from a unit with more than 600 personnel, demonstrating the team's outstanding performance.

The victory in this competition reflects the Marine Corps' deep-rooted tradition of marksmanship, dating back to the 1966 Western Division Rifle and Pistol Matches. These early competitions shaped the Corps' focus on firearm

proficiency and continue to inspire Marines to excel under pressure.



Marines with Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego rifle-team pose for a photograph with the San Diego Trophy Western Division at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego Feb. 26. U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration by Lance Cpl. Eric Valerio

Master Sgt. Augusto Zapata, an operations chief with Headquarters Company, Recruit Training Regiment, shared his perspective on the achievement.

"These medals mean both a personal and professional accomplishment. They symbolize a personal challenge of pushing myself beyond my comfort zone, as well as carrying on the Marine Corps legacy and traditions of continuous improvement in marksmanship."

While Marines are required to qualify annually on the rifle range as part of their training, the competition goes beyond typical training events.

Sgt. Darren Singletery, a combat marksmanship coach with Weapons and Field Training Battalion here said, "Being a part of this competition made me step outside of my comfort zone."

The competition demands more than just qualification

skills; it requires determination, advanced proficiency, and the warfighting spirit instilled in every Marine.

The rifle and pistol medals earned in the competition distinguish these Marines as elite marksmen within the Corps. These achievements reaffirm the enduring tradition of marksmanship excellence that has defined the Marine Corps for over two centuries.

From the 1966 matches to today's competitions, the Marine Corps continues to uphold its standard of excellence in marksmanship. The success of the MCRD San Diego shooting team, marked by the San Diego Trophy, reaffirms the Corps' ongoing dedication to high standards of performance and skill.

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7th ESB Marines execute barracks quality of changes in support of Operation Clean Sweep

by Lance Cpl. Christian McGinnis

1st Marine Logistics Group
CAMP PENDLETON -

Marines with 7th Engineer Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group along with other units have been participating in Operation Clean Sweep – an initiative that allocates Marine Corps funds for in-house barracks repairs instead of hiring contractors to complete the repairs.

Designed to improve living conditions and boost morale, this initiative encourages Marines to take ownership of their barracks by directly addressing maintenance issues such as mold, broken fixtures and cosmetic damage.

Maj. Abigail Nagel, a combat engineer officer with 7th ESB, is the lead as the logistics officer for Operation Clean Sweep. She has followed guidance from the I MEF and 1st MLG to improve the quality of life in the barracks for barracks Marines.

“I believe Operation Clean Sweep has brought a lot of awareness to our leaders about the condition our barracks

were in and the improvements that are being implemented,” said Nagel.

That link between leadership and the tenants living in the barracks is the barracks manager, who is tasked with planning, inspecting barracks rooms for damage and determining what needs to be replaced or fixed, as well as ordering cleaning supplies to maintain a safe and healthy homestead.

Sgt. Martin Torres, the barracks manager for 7th ESB, helps coordinate quality of life changes in the areas where Marines reside. He has now been tasked with teaching Marines about their responsibilities as residents in the barracks, including making a list and reporting damaged items in need of repair.

“There was a lot of help from everybody in the command when we first started to plan what was needed at first which cut down in delays with the work that needed to be done,” said Torres.

“The whole battalion took a couple days off their schedule

to come down to provide hands and people for Operation Clean Sweep.”

Torres said some of the highlighted quality-of-life changes that his unit implemented have already improved morale amongst the Marines. He noted that Marines seem more aware of their responsibilities in the barracks and are taking more pride in their living spaces.

“Marines now feel the barracks have become an actual home, transforming it from a ‘prison cell’, as some described it, into a more comfortable space to look forward to after the workday is over,” Torres said.

Cpl. Samantha Ruiz, a maintenance non-commissioned officer with 7th ESB, said Operation Clean Sweep has significantly improved the quality of life for not only her, but also her peers staying in the barracks.

“They replaced light fixtures, filled holes in the walls, and removed mold—problems that had previously gone unaddressed or took too long to get fixed,” she said.

Operation Clean Sweep has highlighted long standing barracks issues emphasizing the need for sustained improvements. However, the long-term success of Operation Clean Sweep depends on the commitment of both current and future Marines to continue to uphold these improvements and take pride in their living spaces. As part of the Barracks 2030 Project, 1st MLG aims to host this initiative twice a year to ensure continued progress for the well-being of its Marines.



Camp Pendleton Marines power wash a basketball court outside of the barracks during Operation Clean Sweep as part of 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. Deja Rogers

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38TH ANNUAL NAVY BAY BRIDGE RUN/WALK RETURNS WITH EXCITING NEW 10K COURSE

The Navy Bay Bridge Run/Walk is back for its 38th year, offering participants a rare chance to race across the iconic Coronado Bay Bridge in support of local Sailors and military families.

Scheduled for Sunday, May 18, this premier event is presented by San Diego Gas & Electric, Leidos, the Unified Port of San Diego, and the Navy Exchange.

Registration is now open at www.navybaybridgerun.com.

What's new For the first time, participants can choose between the classic 4.4-mile course or a brand-new, U.S.A. Track and Field-sanctioned 10K race, both offering stunning views of San Diego and the bay. Whether you're a competitive runner or looking for a fun fitness challenge, this event delivers an unforgettable experience.

Event highlights Participants and spectators can enjoy live entertainment, an event expo, prize giveaways, photo ops, and an awards ceremony for age group and team division winners.

Participant perks

- ✓ Commemorative race shirt & finisher's medal
- ✓ Complimentary transportation back to Hilton San Diego

Bayfront via bus or ferry (provided by Flagship Cruises & Events)

✓ Exclusive VIP Finish Line Experience (\$25 add-on) featuring premium seating, continental breakfast, and custom caricature drawings

Why it matters Proceeds from the event directly support quality-of-life programs for service members and their families across Navy installations in the San Diego metro area.

Register today Spots are limited to 10,000 participants - early registration is encouraged. Sign up now at www.navybaybridgerun.com.

Calling all volunteers

There are multiple volunteer opportunities to take part in during race weekend from May 16-19. Duties include set up, pre-race registration, refreshment distribution, water stations, t-shirt and medal distribution, to name a few. Volunteers will receive a Letter of Appreciation after completion of duties. If you registered for multiple events, you will receive an e-mail for each event that you have volunteered for.

Volunteer at <https://runsignup.com/Race/Volunteer/CA/SanDiego/NavysBayBridgeRun>, or call (619) 520-8179.

Dust Devils turn the page: VX-31 welcomes new commanding officer

by Michael Smith
Naval Air Warfare Center
Weapons Division

CHINA LAKE, Calif. - The "Dust Devils" of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron VX-31 held a change of command ceremony March 6 at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake.

A cool desert breeze greeted about 300 friends, family and local officials who watched two F/A-18F Super Hornets fly overhead. The aircraft bore the squadron's iconic Dust Devils logo on their tails as Cmdr. Christopher "Murdock" Putre and Lt. Col. Timothy "Little Buddy" Burchett read their orders over the radio.

Their transmissions boomed from speakers on the flight line, capturing a dramatic midair

transfer of leadership.

"Little Buddy, you have the lead. Assume the callsign Devil One," Putre said, handing over flight authority from his cockpit.

When the jets landed, fire trucks formed a water-arch salute for Putre's final flight as commanding officer. He also received a traditional wetting down from his wife and three young children using a water extinguisher. This highlighted the personal and time-honored aspects of naval aviation culture.

Following the flight line celebration, the ceremony moved inside the new hangar, where sideboys piped Putre ashore to mark his tour's end.



IN LIVING COLOR Marines with the Silent Drill Platoon execute the "long line" sequence during a Battle Color Ceremony at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, on Mar. 7, 2025. This marks the first time that the Battle Color Detachment has traveled to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego since 2022. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Christopher Prella

NAVFAC Southwest Metro Production Office recovers Navy aircraft asset

by Mario Icarri

SAN DIEGO - Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest Metro Production Office Crane and Rigging personnel completed the salvage operation of a Navy EA-18G Growler air asset from the Pacific Ocean Feb. 28 in San Diego.

The NAVFAC Southwest Crane and Rigging team utilized the NAVFAC YD-254 floating crane and began the task of removing the salvage 33,388 lbs. of debris from the Bay of San Diego near Shelter Island Feb. 16 with the help of U.S. Navy divers.

The Navy EA-18G Growler air asset mishap occurred the morning of Feb. 12.



Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest crane and rigging personnel complete the salvage operation of a Navy EA-18G Growler air asset from the Pacific Ocean, Feb. 28. U.S. Navy photo by Mario Icarri



LETHAL GRIZZLY The 163d Attack Wing Maintenance Group performs an internal Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) inspection on March Air Reserve Base, Calif., March 1, 2025. The inspection, called Lethal Grizzly, ensures Airmen are able to perform their job duties while operating in a CBRN-contested environment. U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Joseph Pagan

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Cool UAG accessories for your phone & watch

Recently Apple introduced a new iPhone. That got me thinking about my iPhone and my Apple Ultra 2 watch, which charge together on my kitchen counter. That, in turn, led to me deciding to write this week's column about accessories for phones and watches.

Urban Armor Gear (UAG) was founded in Orange County — a focal point for SoCal's active lifestyle and beach scene. For their first product, UAG's founders wanted to create "a case that could provide unrivaled protection for their phones in the most challenging situations." That philosophy has carried all the way through to their current, broad line of high quality, military-grade, strong accessories for phones, tablets, laptops and watches, as well as AirPods & Galaxy Buds cases, power products, bags & sleeves, and gear.

The design of that first phone case featured what has become UAG's signature pattern, which was inspired by jerry cans — "first popularized during World War II, made of pressed steel to create rigidity and strength while remaining lightweight to transport liquids like gas and water to troops."

UAG breakthroughs include being "the first major case brand to have all our products third-party certified to Military Standards (MIL-STD 810G 516.6)." They were also "the first company to send an iPhone 6 into space (and have it survive)." Their rugged watch band for the iPhone was the first specifically designed for surfing. Outdoor enthusiasts and people from all walks of life appreciate the durability, quality and style of their products.

UAG approached me to review several of their products, and I looked forward to do so.

First, I shot photos of the products in their boxes. Then, one at a time, I unboxed them, photographed them again and tried them out.

My phone is an iPhone 14 Pro Max. It is a couple of generations old now, but it still does its job well. With that in mind, I asked to review the UAG Monarch Pro premium protection case for that phone model, since it and the other products that I review should be

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



representative of products for many other models and brands of devices.

The case is accented with top grain leather, and its style is bold. Its jerry can signature pattern helps give the case a rugged, military look. My iPhone's buttons and ringer switch are all easy to operate, and the case has a built-in magnet for MagSafe. The MagSafe feature works as it should — both for charging and for use with my ShiftCam camera grip (see "AutoMatters & More" 871). The bezel surrounding the phone's screen seems to provide a bit more room to press the virtual buttons in the Contacts app of my iPhone, which is much appreciated. It is drop protection rated at 25 feet (7.6 meters). I easily transferred the wrist strap from my previous case.

I had not worn a watch in years so, when I bought my Apple Watch Ultra 2, I wanted it to have a comfortable, fabric strap. UAG's Active

Strap is more comfortable than Apple's. The fabric is noticeably thicker and it is also wider. Surfers will appreciate that, with its hook and loop fastener, and end stop, this is UAG's most secure Apple watch band. Its elastic webbing construction is designed to minimize water retention and dry quickly, and its hardware is stainless steel.

The rugged UAG MagSafe-compatible Charging Pad, with real carbon fiber inlay, does double duty with a built-in metal alloy stand. It comes complete with a rugged USB-C cable, but not a QC/PD 15W+ power adapter, which is recommended. I plugged the Charging Pad into an available USB-C port on my Apple Studio Display, and stood my phone horizontally on that. I was pleasantly surprised to see my iPhone display a handy analog clock, showing me the time, day and date.

Finally, I also reviewed UAG's 360-degree rotation, Magnetic Ring Stand. This is a substantial, strong metal stand, again featuring UAG's jerry can signature pattern.

For more information, and to find models specifically made for your cellphone and watch, visit Urban Armor Gear (UAG) at: <https://www.urbanarmorgear.com>. You can also find their products on Amazon, and at Best Buy, Verizon, AT&T, Target and other retailers.

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

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

Sure, there will be parades, funny hats, silly buttons, green decorations, and wild parties during the week of March 17th. But what really makes or breaks holidays and special occasions?

Let's face it — it's all about the food.

Halloween and Valentine's Day are lucky enough to have chocolate as their traditional treat. Easter gets savory ham and cheesy scalloped potatoes. Thanksgiving hit the luck jackpot with succulent roasted turkeys, mouth-watering dressings, tartly sweet cranberry sauce, and pies loaded with whipped cream. And who doesn't love Christmas and Hanukkah foods like cookies, doughnuts, prime rib, latkes, brisket, and gingerbread?

With the luck of the Irish on it's side, you'd think that St. Patty's Day would be associated with delectable culinary delights. But corned beef and cabbage?

First of all, what is "corned" beef anyway? Is corn even an ingredient? Does the corning process make an otherwise inedible piece of meat safe for human consumption? Is it one of those cuts of meat that grandfathers hang from rafters in basement corners, so that it smells like sweaty feet and grows a hazy coat of mold spores? Is the term "beef" just a genteelism for "pickled squirrel meat my Paw-

St. Patrick's Day cuisine not so lucky

Paw shot in the backyard?"

Corned beef is undeniably delicious in a grilled reuben sandwich, sliced and piled high on buttered marbled rye with melted Swiss, tangy sour kraut, and creamy thousand island dressing. But when boiled with cabbage, it can be a smelly, stringy affair.

I've enjoyed well-prepared corned beef and cabbage on many occasions; however, those were the times that, by sheer happenstance, the cooking time was precisely correct for that particular size cabbage, acidity, elevation, boiling point, and tilt of the Earth's axis.

What average cooks don't realize is that, within mere seconds, the otherwise crispy, sweet vegetable can become an overcooked ball of sulphur-gas-emitting mush that will stink up the house for at least a week. Corned beef and cabbage cannot just be tossed into a Crock Pot. Properly cooking this finicky dish requires a doctorate in chemistry, a precision timing device, and catlike senses. But who wants to stand around on St. Patrick's Day watching cabbage steam for precisely six minutes and 39 seconds? There's green beer to drink after all!

Speaking of which, green beer is festive and all, but let's not kid ourselves. Order a green beer in any pub on St. Patrick's Day and it's likely to be the most tasteless brew on tap. Why? The rich gold, amber and brown tones of the better beers turn an unappetizing hue of olive drab when mixed with green food coloring. It's the watery, faintly yellow beers that make the prettiest kelly-green tones, but beware that the attractive color is masking a gut-rot swill that will

stain your tongue and leave your head throbbing in the morning.

To make matters worse, my Irish mother-in-law, Alice Murphy, bakes a loaf of Irish Soda Bread every year around this time, and the whole family raves. I just don't get Irish Soda Bread. I've never been a raisin fan, but also, the dry, bland loaf has always confused me. It's not sweet enough to eat like coffee cake or dessert, but it's too sweet to use as a pusher for the corned beef and cabbage. What good is it?

"It's good with butter," my mother-in-law would say. But doesn't everything taste good with a thick slab of butter?

There's one saving grace of St. Patrick's Day cuisine. That sweet frozen delight with a creamy hint of something reminiscently herbal like mint (or is it parsley?) that tingles the senses and cools the cabbage-scalded tongue. Whether eaten past midnight with a Super-size Fry and a Filet-O-Fish after guzzling green beer, or sipped solitarily from the drive-thru window on the way home from work, the McDonald's Shamrock Shake mercifully delivers us from culinary evil.

When it all boils down to it, St. Patrick's Day isn't "all about the food" like other holidays and occasions. It's really a day to experience the luck of the Irish.

Obviously this luck doesn't stem from the lousy food, but rather it comes from being fortunate enough to share some fun with good friends and family.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Veterans News

OLYMPIAN SERVED IN WORLD WAR II AS A FIGHTER PILOT

by David Vergun, DOD News

Iris Cummings Critchell was a highly competitive person, and she used that competitive drive to succeed as a swimmer and, later, as a World War II fighter pilot.

At age 15, Critchell won the American national 200-meter breaststroke championship in 1936 and, in the same year, represented the United States at the Summer Olympics in Berlin, placing fourth in the women's 200-meter breaststroke.

In 1939, she entered the University of Southern California's Civilian Pilot Training Program, earning a pilot's license the following year. In 1941, Critchell became a flight instructor for the Navy Cadet Training Program.

The following year, she joined the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, which became part of the Women Airforce Service Pilots, better known as WASP, in 1943.

When WASP was deactivated on Dec. 20, 1944, Critchell joined the 6th Ferrying Group, Air Transport Command, flying



Iris Cummings Critchell is pictured wearing her Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron uniform in 1944, in Long Beach, Calif. Photo courtesy of Library of Congress

P-38 Lightning and P-61 Black Widow fighter aircraft and the P-51 Mustang fighter bomber.

After the 6th Ferrying Group was deactivated near the end of the war, she married fellow military pilot Howard Critchell and returned to USC to teach aviation to veterans. During a luncheon at Los Angeles Air

Force Base in March 2007, Critchell said her generation of fliers stood on the shoulders of those who came before them.

"Their dedication and competency made it possible for us to gain experience quickly and move into the ranks of experienced pilots to adapt in order to serve in World War II, and my place to follow on with a career in aeronautics for the next 65 years in flight," she said.

"Our challenge is to inspire youth to question and look with wonder at the physical world around them; help them be aware of flight, aeronautics and space; help them to welcome a broad physical and academic preparation for life; and offer the balance provided by our humble respect for those early pioneers of aviation on whose shoulders we all stand," Critchell said.

Her other career highlights include:

- *Racing airplanes and winning the 1957 All-Woman Transcontinental Air Race.
- *Founding the Bates Founda-

tion's Bates Aeronautics Program, whose students included future astronauts Stanley G. Love and George Nelson.

*Serving as a Federal Aviation Administration pilot examiner.

Her awards include:

*Induction into the National

The 2025 National Veterans Day Poster Contest is now open

Attention Artists: The 2025 National Veterans Day Poster Contest is now open for submissions.

Here's your opportunity to show off your talent and use your artwork to honor veterans. VA and the Veterans Day National Committee are now accepting entries for the 2025 Veterans Day Poster Contest. Submissions are due by 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on May 2, 2025.

This contest is open to all, and your art should reflect this year's theme: "Service to our Nation."

After receiving more than 150 entries last year, Myisha Go-

Flight Instructors Hall of Fame in 2000.

*Awarded the FAA's Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award in 2006 for her dedication to airplane safety.

*Awarded the Nile Gold Medal of the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale in 2007

dette, a retired, disabled Army veteran from Queens, N.Y., was selected as the winner of the 2024 contest. In describing her design, Myisha's inspiration was "the shared experience of service members—past, present and future—with elements like the American flag, military "dog tags," and the enduring strength of veterans, embodied by a solid, dark concrete background in my design."

The winning poster will be distributed to VA facilities, military installations worldwide, and across cities and towns in our nation. It will also serve as the cover of the official program for the Veterans Day National Observance at Arlington National

for her lifetime of dedication to aviation education.

Critchell was born Dec. 21, 1920, in Los Angeles. She and her husband Howard had two children and numerous grand and great-grandchildren. When she died Jan. 24, 2025, the 104-year-old was the last-known surviving Olympian of the 1936 Berlin Games.

Cemetery on Nov. 11, 2025.

To ensure your submission meets the technical requirements, please review our design submission guidelines (<https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/veterans-day-poster-guidelines/>) before engaging your creativity. Successful designs are very simple, with minimal imagery and verbiage. To view examples of past winning submissions, visit The Veterans Day Poster Gallery.

Submit electronic versions as jpg/jpeg images or PDF files to vetsday@va.gov. Questions? E-mail the Veterans Day Coordinator at vetsday@va.gov.

MARCH 16-31, 2025 www.armedforcesdispatch.com 9

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HELP WANTED

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

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

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

RENTALS APARTMENTS

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

Remember.....

The past can't be changed
Opinions don't define your reality
Everyone's journey is different
Your thoughts affect your mood
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Kindness is free
Smiles are contagious

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

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SAN YSIDRO - 3BR/1BA \$2750/mo move in special: 50% off 1st month, newly remodeled, near freeway and schools, 10 miles from 32nd St Naval Base- txt 619-417-8307. 3/16

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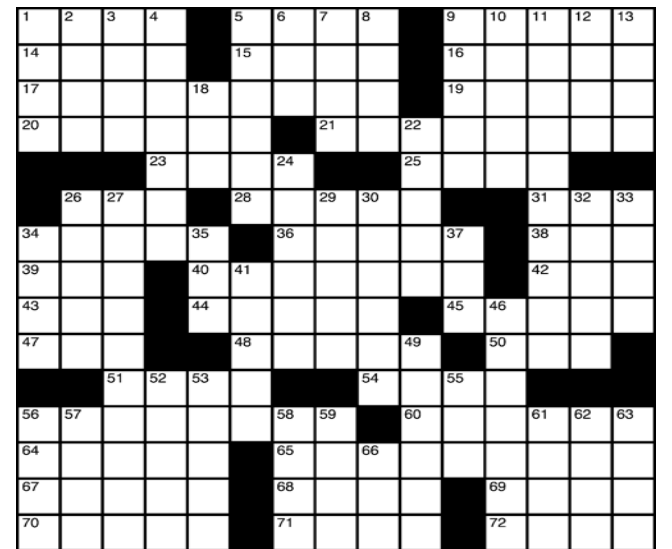
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Sales support veterans & their families

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

- Across**
- 1 Soothing ointment
 - 5 Criticize harshly
 - 9 Deep-voiced singer
 - 14 Great Lake that stretches from New York to Michigan
 - 15 Every 12 mos.
 - 16 Significant ___ partner
 - 17 Place for junk
 - 19 Genetic twin
 - 20 "Honey, I'm Home" singer
 - 21 Twain
 - 21 Wagons at midday socials
 - 23 B and B's, e.g.
 - 25 Home of twigs
 - 26 Did a marathon, say
 - 28 Relaxation of govt. rules
 - 31 Skip, with "out"
 - 34 Turn loose
 - 36 Annoys
 - 38 Off-stubbed digit
 - 39 In time gone by
 - 40 U.S. Congress, informally
 - 42 Enjoyed a meal
 - 43 Web or nanny follower
 - 44 Reef makeup
 - 45 Some youth ctrs.
 - 47 Cotton gin inventor Whitney
 - 48 Defy authority
 - 50 Approves
- Down**
- 1 "Porgy and ___"
 - 2 Half a McDonald's logo
 - 3 Old Italian money
 - 4 Definition
 - 5 Manually
 - 6 "... you comfy?"
 - 7 Venetian blind piece
 - 8 Promote big-time
 - 9 Italian lawn bowling
 - 10 Book of maps
 - 11 Small order of pancakes
 - 12 FedExed, say
- 13 Unrefined minerals
 - 18 ATM code
 - 22 ___-hair pasta
 - 24 Extremely harsh
 - 26 Fit for a monarch
 - 27 Nuclear reactor
 - 29 Get-well program, briefly
 - 30 Banished from one's country
 - 32 Greek i's
 - 33 Golfer's pegs
 - 34 Dolly trim
 - 35 Needing no Rx
 - 37 Like a fox, it's said
 - 41 Lena who sang "Stormy Weather"
 - 46 Took a drive
 - 49 Wood-shaping machines
 - 52 Place of refuge
 - 53 Chemically nonreactive
 - 55 Fish eggs
 - 56 Traffic tie-ups
 - 57 Touched down
 - 58 Ginger ale or root beer
 - 59 "The Catch" actress
 - Mireille ___
 - 61 Liver secretion
 - 62 Shipwreck site
 - 63 Stick shift choice
 - 66 "Shame on you!"



Visit our military museums

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Become a USO Volunteer

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

Ready to apply to be a
USO San Diego volunteer?

Visit https://volunteers.uso.org/
Once you navigate to the web page, scroll down to and look at the right side of the page to find information about volunteering.

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

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MOVIES AT THE BASES

MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF TO MAKE SURE THE TITLE AND TIME ARE STILL CORRECT...

https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/ select movies at dropdown menu on left
https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies
https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater

NBSD and Lowry Theater Policy

- Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.
- **Premium Offerings**
- Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.



Movie Rating System

- G - General audiences ALL ages admitted.
- PG - Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.
- PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
- R - Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

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

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

San Diego Humane Society Campus Locations

- | | |
|--|---|
| El Cajon Campus
1373 N. Marshall Ave.
El Cajon, CA 92020 | Oceanside Campus
572 Airport Road
Oceanside, CA 92058 |
| Escondido Campus
3500 Burnet Drive
Escondido, CA 92027 | San Diego Campus
5480 Gaines Street
San Diego, CA 92110 |

About Your Health



NMRTC Awards at Quarters highlights exemplary Sailors

Capt. Marcy Morlock, Navy Medicine Readiness Training Command San Diego (NMRTC) San Diego's Acting Commander, awarded four exemplary Sailors during Awards at Quarters, March 7, 2025.

Congratulations to the following:

Lt.j.g. Whitney J. Ellis, Nurse Corps - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal - While serving as the Charge Nurse in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit at NMRTC Portsmouth, Virginia, LTJG Ellis led Basic Life Support classes as an instructor, was a member of the Controlled Substances Inventory Board in support of Continuing Promise 2022, acted as a customer service representative and serves with professionalism, dedication,

and personal initiative, leading to an overall more knowledgeable and skilled work force.

HM2 Nicole A. Ratcliff - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal - HM2 Ratcliff contributed to a 91% total work force medical readiness during her role as work center supervisor at Naval Branch Health Clinic, North Island. She facilitated over 1,000 hours of training for 82 personnel, resulting in 89% of the students earning national certification from the American Society for Clinical Pathology. She serves with exceptional professionalism, unrelenting perseverance, and dedication to duty.

HM2 Patrick J. Deguzman - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal - HM2 Deguzman contributed to an increase in access

to care and a decrease in treatment and screening wait times during his role as a drug and alcohol abuse counselor intern at the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program at NMRTC Okinawa, Japan. His efforts led to a higher rate of the work force returning to full duty across multiple commands.

YN2 Marcius A. Donaldson - Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal - YN2 Donaldson displays outstanding leadership in her role as work center supervisor for the Human Resources Department at NMRTC San Diego and her efforts contribute directly to overall mission readiness across multiple commands. She serves with exceptional professionalism, unrelenting perseverance, and dedication to duty.

DOD offers Health Care Flexible Spending Account to service members

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

Enrollment for the new Health Care Flexible Spending Account benefit runs from March 3-31, 2025. Service members can sign up and put as much as \$3,300 in pretax earnings into an account each year, which can be spent on qualifying health care expenses.

"A Health Care Flexible Spending Account is an optional benefit that enables service members and their families to use pretax earnings to pay for eligible health, dental and vision care expenses," said Ronald T. Garner, the assistant director of military compensation policy within the Defense Department.

Garner said that married service members who are both eligible for an HCFSA can maintain two separate accounts and contribute as much as \$6,600 each year.

Component service members, reservists and National Guardsmen on Active Guard Reserve duty and members of the U.S. Coast Guard Reserve on active duty for more than 180 days are all eligible to participate.

The HCFSA is already available to federal civilian employees and to many in the private sector, but it's only now available to service members. Garner said it's something

the department has been working on for a while. TRICARE, he said, is an extensive program, but can't cover everything, and in some cases, an HCFSA may help.

"No health care, no health insurance program is going to cover every cost, and many costs are unforeseeable," he said. "For instance, if your child gets sick in the middle of the night, you're not going to wait until you can go see a doctor to get some cold medicine. You're going to run down to the local pharmacy and grab some cold medicine and bring it back so that you can take care of your child. That's a cost that will be covered by the HCFSA."

Eligible service members should look closely at their own financial situation and how much they expect to spend each year on health care expenses before deciding to contribute, he said, adding that some service members are more likely to benefit from an HCFSA than others.

"I would say that, in my experience, this is going to be really valuable to military families," he said. "For example, I think that there's going to be a lot of value to those who have family members who are part of the Exceptional Family Member Program. I think those families tend to incur a lot of expenses and often

unforeseen expenses that others do not. I think a program like this is going to be particularly beneficial to that group of service members and their families."

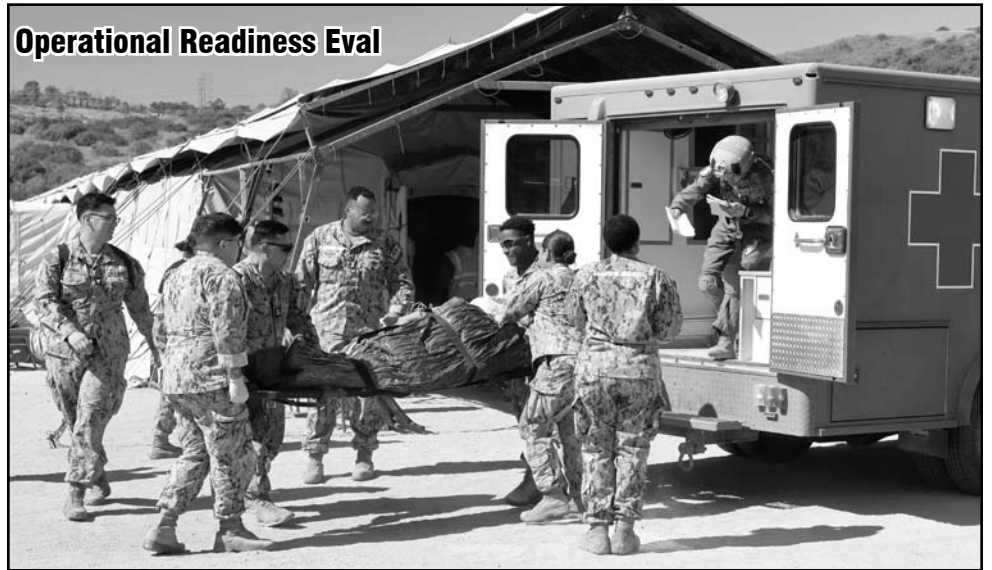
Typically, enrollment in programs like an HCFSA occurs only during Federal Benefits Open Season, which runs from mid-November through mid-December. With the announcement of the new HCFSA benefit for service members, a special enrollment period is available from March 3-31, 2025.

At other times of the year, Garner said, an array of qualifying life events will also allow service members who are not already signed up for an HCFSA to enroll outside the typical open season. Some of those life-changing events include deployment, a permanent change of station, marriage, or the birth of a child, he said.

According to DOD's "2023 Demographics Profile of the Military Community," about 46.7% of service members are married, and about 36.7% of service members have dependent children. For those members, making sure their families are taken care of and that their financial situation is squared away is something that contributes to military readiness, said Garner.

"When families are more finan-

Operational Readiness Eval



ABOVE: CAMP PENDLETON, Feb. 24, 2025 -- The casualty receiving team of Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) 150-Alpha unloads a simulated patient from an ambulance in front of the facility during an EMF training and Operational Readiness Evaluation (ORE) at the Naval Expeditionary Medicine Warfighter Development Center (NEM-WDC), Camp Pendleton, Calif., Feb. 15-28. An EMF is a role 3 platform, designed to provide in-theater hospitalization with a hold capacity of up to 150 beds. Photo by Arsenio R. Cortez Jr., Naval Medical Forces Pacific

Confidential Recovery now helps active-duty military recover from addiction as well as veterans

When the staff of Confidential Recovery hosted their 10-year anniversary celebration at their San Diego office in October, there was a huge contingent of military veterans in attendance. While the outpatient alcohol and drug rehab program is open to any adult with a sincere desire to get sober, it is attended by many U.S. veterans who have found it a place where they can get the support they need to get off of drugs and alcohol.

The culture of this treatment program that is so inviting to veterans starts with Operations Manager Jay Wylie, a 22-Year Naval Veteran, who himself is in recovery. Veterans who meet Jay can bond over shared



Operations Manager Jay Wylie, a 22-Year Naval Veteran.

experiences and know that they can trust him. When Jay talks from experience about the difficulties of accepting help as a U.S. service member, he talks about the "warrior ethos" that is ingrained during basic training and how it makes it difficult for members of our military forces to seek the help that could save their life.

"Our military members and veterans have been taught that they must be self sufficient and that they must 'never say die.' Unfortunately, when it comes to substance addiction we are talking about a medical condition that is both treatable and progressive.

Help is available, and treatment works," says Jay, "they have a great chance at a full recovery if they come and see us."

Confidential Recovery Now Treats Active-Duty Military

In January of 2025, Confidential Recovery made the exciting announcement they could accept TRICARE insurance and therefore treat active-duty military members and their families. It was a logical step given the program's excellent track record with veterans.

Active-duty service members can contact Confidential Recovery directly, and their privacy is protected by HIPAA laws, so they do not have to disclose their drug treatment to the military (note: there are potential exceptions to this, contact Confidential Recovery, or visit the Confidential Recovery website for the full disclosure).

What Does Outpatient Drug Rehabilitation Really Entail?

Outpatient drug & alcohol rehabilitation is a manageable commitment that fits in with most people's schedule. It's 3 days per week, and 3 hours per session, for a total of 9 hours per week. Confidential Recovery utilizes a "social model," which features group therapy, but includes individual counseling as well. Confidential Recovery offers day & night meetings, including weekends, and some sessions can be attended remotely (via Telehealth).

What if I Want More Info or to Get Started?

To get more information or to get started with treatment, contact Confidential Recovery directly at (619) 452-1200 for a private and complimentary assessment of your situation. It may expedite the process to have your TRICARE details ready. For more information you can visit the Confidential Recovery website at: <https://www.confidential-recovery.com/>

Help is here
HOPE IS ON THE HORIZON

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

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

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

Support is covered, private and easier than ever.

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

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

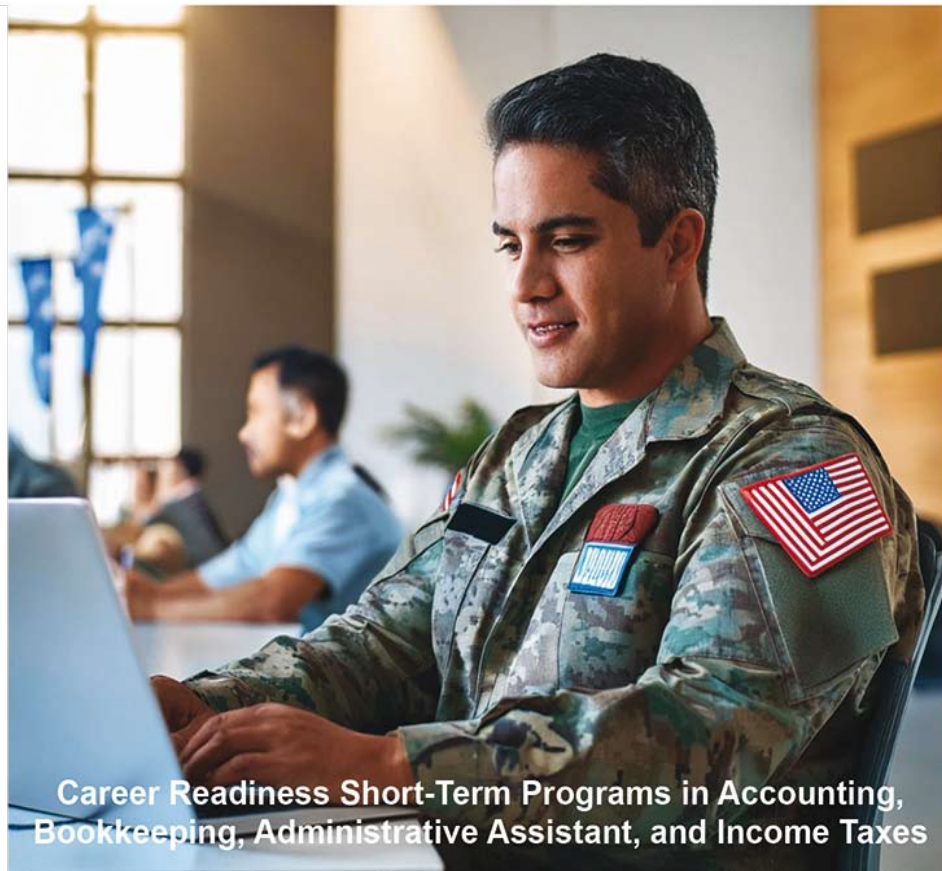


*We will not share information with your command per HIPAA and Title 42 CFR, but TRICARE has records of services billed (if not the medical record). Records could be accessible for a special duty screening, medical board or security clearance check.



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