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WARM WELCOME ON WATERFRONT Operations Specialist 1st Class Sharee Scantling, of Beaufort, S.C., shares a "first hug" with her family following *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson's* return to its homeport at NAS North Island from a nine-month deployment to the 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations, Aug. 14, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lordin Kelly

EXPEDITION REVEALS 13 SHIPWRECKS FROM WWII BATTLES OFF GUADALCANAL

by Clifford Davis

Naval History and Heritage Command
HONIARA, Solomon Island - A multinational expedition led by the Ocean Exploration Trust aboard the Exploration Vessel (E/V) *Nautilus* has completed a groundbreaking archaeological survey of more than a dozen World War II era shipwrecks in Iron Bottom Sound earlier this month.

During the 22 day mission, which included the visual identification of multiple historically

significant vessels, the team surveyed 13 wreck sites, including four ships documented for the first time. Among the newly identified wrecks are the bow of heavy cruiser USS *New Orleans* (CA 32) and the Imperial Japanese destroyer *Teruzuki*, both lost during intense naval battles in the Guadalcanal campaign.

Other vessels surveyed in high resolution include: USS *Vincennes* (CA 44), USS *Astoria* (CA 34), USS *Quincy* (CA 39),

USS *Northampton* (CA 26), USS *Laffey* (DD 459), USS *DeHaven* (DD 469), USS *Preston* (DD 379), USS *Walke* (DD 416), HMAS *Canberra* (D33), Imperial Japanese Navy destroyer *Yudachi*, and an unidentified landing barge.

"It was wonderful to return to Iron Bottom Sound, where we discovered Japanese, Australian, and American warships over 34 years ago," said Dr. Robert Ballard, president of Ocean Exploration Trust. "This expedition was special, allowing us to film these sites in a manner not possible back then, as well as document other ships, while at the same time sharing our work live to the entire world."

The surveys were conducted using advanced underwater robotic systems, including remotely operated vehicles deployed from *Nautilus*, and an

uncrewed surface vehicle, *DriX*, operated remotely from a shore-based station in Honiara. The *DriX* system, developed by the University of New Hampshire, mapped over 1,000 square kilometers of seafloor, producing the highest-resolution maps of Iron Bottom Sound to date and identifying dozens of potential targets.

"The use of our uncrewed vessel allowed a tremendous increase in exploration efficiency as we were able to continuously map and identify potential targets while the *Nautilus* was deploying its ROVs," said Dr. Larry Mayer, Director, Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping at the University of New Hampshire.

Find this story at <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/4272152/>.



USS *New Orleans*, shown here in English waters, June 1934. Photo courtesy of U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command

America's rapid response force deploys for global operations

by Navy Chief Petty Officer Matthew Jackson, U.S. 2nd Fleet
Sailors and Marines assigned to the *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group – 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) departed for a scheduled deployment Aug. 14.

The amphibious ready group's primary mission is to conduct presence operations and safely embark Marines ashore to conduct a wide variety of contingency missions worldwide.

The *Iwo Jima* ARG – 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) also provides a flexible, forward naval presence by operating close to shore, allowing this specialized Navy-Marine Corps team to conduct missions, unique to the amphibious Navy, at a moment's notice.

"The *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group – 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) is an integral part of advancing our nation's interests abroad and is a dynamic representation of our Navy's 250 years of lethality and warfighting excellence," said Navy Capt. Chris Farricker, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 8. "Our integrated Navy-Marine Corps warfighters are ready to execute the nation's business and deliver quick and decisive combat power, no matter where we are tasked in today's complex global environment."

This deployment follows the Amphibious Ready Group – Marine Expeditionary Unit's final certification event, the Composite Training Unit Exercise, the Navy's most demanding predeployment assessment that concluded July 11, 2025. More than 4,500 Sailors and Marines assigned to the 22nd MEU comprise the force aboard the Amphibious Ready Group's three amphibious ships: flagship USS *Iwo Jima*, and *San Antonio*-class amphibious transport dock ships USS *San Antonio* and USS *Fort Lauderdale*.

"The *Iwo Jima* Amphibious Ready Group – 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) is ready to serve as the nation's force of choice, prepared to decisively respond to any crisis in support of our national interests," said Marine Col. Tom Trimble, commanding officer of 22nd MEU (Special Operations Capable). "We are warfighters, manned, trained and equipped to win — anywhere, anytime."

Vinson strike group returns after 9 month stint at sea

NAS NORTH ISLAND - Ships and air squadrons attached to aircraft carrier USS *Carl Vinson* returned to its homeport here Aug. 14, following a nine-month deployment to the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations. "Our Sailors' dedication and hard work over nearly nine months was vital to sustained operations, including combat, protecting our American values of freedom, prosperity and security on the high seas," said Rear Adm. Amy Bauernschmidt, commander of CSG-1. "I am immensely proud of every member of our team who professionally executed the mission and will now be able to reunite and spend well-earned time with family and friends." "Throughout this deployment, the Sailors of CVW-2 operated with precision and professionalism, safely executing demanding missions across multiple domains," said Capt. Eric Bell, commander of CVW-2. "Their skill and teamwork brought adaptability, survivability and lethality to the air wing of the future, demonstrating that warfighting readiness is not just about the advanced platforms, but the people who make them operationally effective."

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MAYPORT, Fla. — Navy and Marine Corps, and participating nation forces are set to arrive at Naval Station Mayport in support of UNITAS 2025 (66) the world's longest-running multinational maritime exercise, scheduled to start Sept. 15, 2025.

The Navy will host this year's UNITAS featuring approximately 8,000 personnel from 25 allied and partner nations, including multiple ships, submarines, and aircraft (fixed wing and rotary). Forces will conduct operations off the East Coast of the United States and ashore in the vicinity of Naval Station Mayport, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C., and Naval Station Norfolk, Va. through October 6.

UNITAS, which is Latin for unity, united, or oneness, was conceived in 1959 when representatives at the first Inter-American Naval Conference in Panama agreed to conduct an annual maritime exercise with one another. The first UNITAS took place in 1960 with forces from Argentina, Brazil, Chile,

UNITAS 2025 to be held across multiple locations along the east coast of United States

Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay, the United States, and Venezuela. This year marks the 66th iteration of the world's longest-running annual multinational maritime exercise.

Including the United States, UNITAS 2025 will bring together 26 nations from all over the world to train forces in joint maritime operations that enhance tactical proficiency and increase interoperability. Participating nations include Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Jamaica, Japan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Singapore, Spain, and the United State.

"In line with the Secretary's guidance, and to bolster defense of the homeland and build on

over six decades of success, UNITAS 2025 is a vital opportunity to demonstrate how our partners in the region work together to defend against hemispheric threats," said Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Southern

"By bringing together 25 nations, we're not just enhancing tactical proficiency and interoperability, we are demonstrating a prime example of regional burden-sharing; we're reinforcing trust and unity crucial for ensuring we stand side by side against hemispheric threats."

*Rear Adm. Carlos Sardiello
U.S. 4th Fleet boss*

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Following the UNITAS 2025 Opening Ceremony on September 15, the in-port phase of the exercise will feature subject matter expert exchanges, professional symposiums, ship rider exchanges, and operations meetings. During this time, Marines and Sailors will conduct training events in Mayport to include medical, cyber defense, and div-

ing and salvage operations.

During the UNITAS 2025 Underway Phase, forces will participate in events testing all warfare operations, to include live-fire exercises such as a SINKEX, an amphibious ship-to-shore landing and force withdrawal in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Additionally, unmanned and hybrid fleet systems will return to UNITAS for a second year as part of the testing and development of the U.S. Navy's future hybrid fleet.

Exercises like UNITAS play a critical role in enhancing the combat readiness of U.S. service members, as well as those of our Allies and partners, by providing a platform for joint training and cooperation in complex maritime environments.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet is the trusted maritime partner for Caribbean, Central and South America maritime forces leading to improved unity, security and stability.

Check out <https://www.fourth-fleet.navy.mil/> for additional information.

TRICARE to implement controls on weight loss medication coverage

by Scott Sutherland, staff writer

FALLS CHURCH, Va. - If you're using your TRICARE benefits for weight loss medication, there's a change coming your way.

The Defense Health Agency will soon implement regulatory controls on weight loss medication coverage. These controls take effect Aug. 31. If you have TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select, some medications are still covered in certain circumstances. Otherwise, if you have an approved prior authorization for weight loss drugs, it's no longer valid. You'll need to see your provider to discuss your options.

"People are taking GLP-1 drugs - like Wegovy and Zepbound - for weight loss now more than ever," said Dr. Paul Cordts, Defense Health Agency chief medical officer. "It's important to understand how - and why - TRICARE covers these drugs, based on your condition and status."

TRICARE beneficiaries affected by the change should soon receive guidance in the mail. Use of Trulicity, Ozempic, Mounjaro or Victoza, to name a few, to treat type-2 diabetes will still be covered provided that the treatment is medically necessary and prior authorization is obtained.

Currently in the U.S., a large portion of the general population of adults are overweight or obese. According to the CDC, nearly 3 in 4 adults (73.1 percent) are either overweight or obese, with over 42 percent considered obese. This includes about 1 in 11 adults with severe obesity.

The Center for Disease Control says weight loss medications can be effective tools for managing weight, but they should be used under the guidance of a healthcare professional. Several prescription medications are available, including injectables like Wegovy (semaglutide) and Saxenda (liraglutide), and oral options like Qsymia (phentermine-topiramate) and Contrave (naltrexone-bupropion).

These medications work through various mechanisms, such as increasing metabolism, suppressing appetite, or affecting fat absorption.

According to DHA, if your weight loss drug isn't covered, you should speak with your provider about other options. These may include nutrition counseling, or lifestyle and exercise changes.

You can also visit <https://dha.mil/> for more details on resources that can help you reach your goals.



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NATIONAL MILITARY PHOTO GALLERY

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS Air Force Senior Airman Jayden Artherton, a military working dog handler, directs Deniz during a high-value individual transfer exercise at Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., Aug. 8, 2025. The exercise provided an opportunity to train military working dogs aboard a C-130 Hercules aircraft and in environments with running aircraft engines. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Hastings



ALL SMILES Air Force Senior Airman Rachel McKinney takes a photo with Patrick Mahomes, Kansas City Chiefs quarterback, during the Chiefs' training camp in St. Joseph, Mo., Aug. 13, 2025. The Chiefs hosted service members and veterans to honor their sacrifice. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Joshua Hastings

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Task Force Forge Marines and Sailors assume southern border mission in Arizona

by Marine Corps 1st Lt. John Carter

Service members assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion 15, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, known as Task Force Forge, assumed operational responsibilities last month from 1st Combat Engineer Battalion, 1st Marine Division, known as Task Force Sapper, to support U.S. Northern Command's ongoing assistance to the Department of Homeland Security under Joint Task Force Southern Border.

Comprised of 500 Marines and sailors, Task Force Forge is conducting vital ground engineering and logistical operations within the U.S. Border Patrol's Yuma Sector located in Arizona.

These missions include reinforcing the existing southern border barrier, emplacing national defense area signage and performing roadway surveys and maintenance — all part of the Defense Department's continued support to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Before starting barrier reinforcement tasks, the unit completed a series of barrier surveys along key segments to evaluate conditions, identify reinforcement needs and guide mission planning. These assessments form the foundation for ongoing operations.

The barrier reinforcement mission, previously conducted by Task Force Sapper in the San Diego Sector, was an anticipated requirement that Task Force Forge had prepared for in advance.

Marines and Silors are now welding prefabricated steel brackets onto the existing barrier infrastructure. Once installed in sufficient numbers, these brackets will support the placement of barbed and concertina wire, enhancing the overall security of the barrier.

"The Marines and sailors of Task Force Forge bring precision, professionalism and purpose to every mission," said Marine Lt. Col. Colin Graham, CLB 15 battalion commander and Task Force Forge commanding officer.

"Reinforcing the border barrier is a tangible way we assist our interagency partners to strengthen security and protect the territorial integrity of the United States."

In parallel, following the recent establishment of the Yuma National Defense Area — located adjacent to the Barry M. Goldwater Range and now part of Marine Corps Air Station Yuma — Task Force Forge has been tasked with emplacing NDA signage throughout the NDA 4 East region.

This land, previously owned by the Interior Department, was transferred to the Navy, with Marine Corps Air Station Yuma delegating operational authority to Northcom. Additionally, the task force is conducting detailed surveys of unimproved roads essential for maintaining mobility for CBP and DOD personnel operating in rugged desert terrain. These surveys evaluate road geometry, surface conditions and drainage patterns.

Task Force Forge engineering experts are using these findings to plan targeted maintenance activities such as blading, reshaping and dust abatement.

These efforts aim to preserve the environmental integrity of each route while ensuring safe and reliable travel for mission-critical operations.



Marines Corps with 1st Marine Logistics Group, supporting Joint Task Force Southern Border, tie concertina wire onto a prefabricated bracket to reinforce the southern border barrier in Yuma, Ariz., July 29. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Mary Torres

Early Bird Brief

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•Fort Bliss sSoldier in Russian spy case had criminal past yet maintained top-secret Army clearance

Navy

•Naval Academy gets first Marine superintendent

•Navy moving away from 'optionally manned' vessels as service mulls unmanned future

•Carl Vinson home from deployment that included strikes against Houthis

•Navy report on 2024 landing craft air cushion collision

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U.S. Navy file photo of 'wetside' Naval Base San Diego.

Navy sacks commanding officer of Reserve Readiness Center San Diego

NORFOLK, Va. – The commanding officer of Naval Information Force Reserve Readiness Center (REDCEN) San Diego was relieved Aug. 12 due to a loss of confidence in his ability to command.

Capt. Russell A. Herrell was relieved of his duties as REDCEN San Diego's commanding officer by Rear Adm. Greg Emery, commander of Naval Information Force Reserve (CNIFR). REDCEN San Diego is a subordinate command of CNIFR, which is headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Navy maintains the highest standards for leaders and holds them accountable when those standards are not met. Herrell reported to REDCEN San Diego in February 2023, according to the release.

Capt. Mark Meade, CNIFR chief of staff, has been temporarily assigned as REDCEN San Diego's commanding officer. The readiness center provides administrative support to attached units.

For questions related to this release, contact Navy Reserve Force Public Affairs at CNRF_PAO@us.navy.mil.

I MEF engages public at Seattle Fleet Week, sharpens skills in QUART amphibious exercise

by 1st Lt. Tyler Judd and Capt. Mark McDonough, 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit

CAMP PENDLETON. – Marines and Sailors from I Marine Expeditionary Force and amphibious transport dock ship USS *Somerset* (LPD 25) completed Quarterly Underway Amphibious Readiness Training 25.4 on Aug. 15 here, and in its coastal waters. QUART 25.4 began in late July with an embarkation to take part in Seattle Seafair Fleet Week. Following the festivities, personnel transitioned to operational training on the *Somerset*, focused on essential amphibious skills that define the Navy-Marine Corps team.

While in Seattle, Marines and Sailors engaged with the public and demonstrated the unique capability of the Marine Corps to deploy aboard naval vessels anywhere in the world to project power or lend aid.

On *Somerset*, personnel showcased equipment capable of conducting missions across the spectrum of conflict. In the ship's well deck, U.S. Navy Landing Craft Air Cushions embarked Marine Corps Light Armored Vehicles, Joint Light Tactical Vehicles, Medium Tactical Vehicle Replacements and a M777 towed 155 mm howitzer artillery piece.

Up on the flight deck, UH-1Y Venom and AH-1Z Viper helicopters were on display. Marines from across I MEF provided educational demonstrations on their equipment and mission sets to members of the public during Fleet Week ship tours.

After departing Washington, aviators with the 3rd Marine

Aircraft Wing completed qualifications in the same UH-1Y and AH-1Z helicopters. They performed landings on the flight deck of *Somerset* during day, night, and inclement weather conditions, demonstrating the all-weather capabilities of Marine Corps aircraft, pilots, and crews.

On Aug. 12, after returning to the coastal waters around Camp Pendleton, Combat Logistics Regiment 1 conducted a battle handover with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, who assumed the role of Commander, Landing Force, for the coming days of amphibious operations training.

"This series of events has showcased the unique capabilities of I MEF and underscored the strength of the Navy-Marine Corps team," said Col. Richard Alvarez, 13th MEU commander.

"Operating from the sea in a dynamic environment allowed a focus on amphibious operations.

It's this kind of training that ensures we're ready to respond whenever and wherever our nation calls."

Marines from 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, completed amphibious certifications while operating their Amphibious Combat Vehicles aboard the USS *Somerset* and conducted ship-to-shore landing drills, simulating real-world amphibious operations.

The iterative ACV certifications demonstrated I MEF and U.S. 3rd Fleet's commitment to the safe execution of realistic, complex amphibious training.

"The primary weapon of this warship is the United States Marine," said Capt. Andrew Koy, commander of *Somerset*. "There's no other fighting force out there that can do what we do: embark Marines, seamlessly integrate them and get these highly trained warriors to wherever they need to go and back home safely."

Through QUART 25.4, Marines and Sailors of the 13th MEU, CLR-1, and other I MEF forces, honed their ability to deploy anywhere in the globe, task organized for any situation, through effective training under real-world circumstances.

QUART is a joint training exercise involving the integration of multiple units from I MEF and U.S. 3rd Fleet to enhance their amphibious warfare skills, enabling the Navy and Marine Corps to prepare for seamless operations in contested and permissive environments.

I MEF provides the Marine Corps a globally responsive, expeditionary, and fully scalable Marine air-ground task force, capable of generating, deploying, and employing ready forces and formations for crisis response, forward presence, major combat operations, and campaigns.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/545900/>

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Drone, AI, and technology development under field conditions

The roar from cutting-edge drone technology filled the sky above the Naval Postgraduate School’s (NPS) latest Joint Interagency Field Experimentation (JIFX) event at Camp Roberts in central California. Over a hundred flights tested new drones, artificial intelligence (AI), combat operations, swarms, countermeasures, sensors, navigation, communications, and more. For more than two decades, small and large businesses wanting to expedite the development of their emerging defense technologies and get them operational as soon as possible have experimented at JIFX and forerunner field experimentation programs. Early campaigns by NPS research centers also provided the proving grounds that enabled JIFX to flourish, even as the threats to national security have continually evolved. In fact, all the way back in 1998, the Center for Interdisciplinary Remotely Piloted Aircraft Studies (CIRPAS), founded in 1993, converted the dirt strip at Camp Robert’s McMillan Airfield into a 3,500-foot long and 65-foot wide concrete runway dedicated to drones—uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAV)—and built the supporting facilities. This airfield is home to JIFX. <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/4271876/>

Marines showcase lethality, readiness during desert training

Marines assigned to the 10th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, recently conducted intensive artillery training with M777 howitzers during Service Level Training Exercise 4-25 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms. The training included day and night live-fire operations in desert training ranges. It also featured air assault operations where Marines prepared the lightweight howitzers for helicopter transport, demonstrating rapid deployment capabilities. The exercise provided a challenging, realistic training environment to produce integrated, capable and combat-ready forces. <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/4266776/>



Using a Navy Lodge soon? Your cash isn’t good there, so bring your plastic

Beginning September 1, all locations of Navy Lodges, including both Naval Base San Diego and NAS North Island, will no longer accept cash or personal check for payment.

Guests can still use a credit card and Military Star card as well as branded debit cards or gift cards to pay for their stay at a Navy Lodge.

“We made the change to align our Navy Lodge locations with best practices from the commercial hospitality sector,” said Ronald Loman, senior vice president of Navy Exchange Service Command Hospitality Group. “The change also brings our Navy Lodges into alignment with our Navy Gateway Inns & Suites and Navy Inn locations, which have been cashless for many years.”

This update comes amid the NEXCOM Hospitality Group’s rebranding effort currently underway at all Navy Lodge and NGIS properties. The rebranding of nearly 100 properties and 18,000 rooms is being made to elevate the guest experience and reflect best practices to ensure these Navy hotels are the preferred choice in accommodations for military personnel, Department of Defense travelers and their families.

This initiative, which began in 2024, will ensure all NEXCOM



A Sailor uses his Military Star card to pay for lodging at Navy Lodge Naples, Italy. Beginning Sept. 1, 2025, Navy Lodge locations will no longer accept cash or personal check for payment. Guests can still use a credit card and Military Star card as well as branded debit cards or gift cards to pay for their stay at a Navy Lodge. Photo by ristine Sturkie/Navy Exchange Service Command

Hospitality Group hotels receive a refresh. As NGIS locations are updated, they will be rebranded as “Navy Inn.”

Additionally, a new brand, “Navy Inn Crew Stay,” will be introduced to provide lodging for Sailors on long-term mission stays. Navy Inn Crew Stay locations will feature cutting-edge gaming rooms, personal hubs with comfortable seating and ample lighting for recharging and productivity and hydration stations with ice and filtered water.

Finally, Navy Lodge properties will undergo a logo redesign as part of the rebranding effort. Once refreshed, guests will find



Navy Lodge NAS North Island (top) and Navy Lodge Naval Base San Diego. Courtesy photo

updated amenities with eco-friendly premium in-room bath products, plush towels and bedding from the exclusive Harbor

Home collection, designated workspace and complimentary Wi-Fi, all crafted to offer an unparalleled hospitality experience.

Supporting both permanent change of station, temporary duty and leisure travel, Navy hotels offer guests award-winning hospitality and empowers mission readiness by providing exceptional, high-quality accommodations worldwide, while optimizing government travel budget savings. In 2024, Navy hotels saved the Department of the Navy and guests over \$170 million.

The Navy Exchange Service Command enables warfighter readiness and strengthens the Navy’s quality of life mission. Providing essential products, services, hospitality and outfitting Navy communities around the globe, NEXCOM is continuously evolving to meet the demands of today’s military operational environment.

As further sustainment to Navy Warfighters and military families, 100 percent of the command’s earnings are directed to Navy quality of life programs, amounting to over \$3.7 billion since 1946. NEXCOM’s enduring mission and lines of effort serve as a critical resource and a vital capability within the Naval Supply Systems Command Enterprise.

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Uniform Services Identification Card online renewal saves time for retirees, dependents

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — A recent DOD self-service initiative helps Navy personnel, retirees, and family members save time by skipping the trip to the ID Card Office.

Uniformed Services Identification Card (USID) card holders or sponsors can renew USIDs from home using the ID Card Office Online. Retirees and family members use the Next Generation USID for benefits, privileges, and facility access.

“The retirees, military members, and dependents we serve have lives, jobs, and families too,” said Rear Adm. Stu Satterwhite, commander, MyNavy Career Center. “Renewing USIDs online instead of waiting in line gives back valuable time to our customers.”

USID online renewals officially went live for all eligible cardholders in September 2024. Since December, online USID renewals outnumber in-person

renewals by 70 percent according to MNCC’s Navy Project Office.

“We want our customers to be able to eliminate the hassle of traveling to an ID lab, which may be hours away from home,” said Satterwhite. “Sponsors can easily renew their dependents’ USIDs without having to visit an ID lab in person, which is especially convenient for those deployed or stationed in a different geographic area from their family.”

Retirees and sponsors can renew USIDs online by visiting the ID Card Office Online at <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>. A USID recipient’s photo and address must be current in the Defense Eligibility Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) to receive their USID via USPS mail.

“Renewing a USID online saves time for both the sponsor and the cardholder,” said Erika Marks, MNCC Navy Project

Officer. “The military sponsor simply needs their Common Access Card (CAC) or DS logon to get started with the renewal request today.”

Issuing a new USID, including replacing a lost card, still requires an in-person appointment at an ID lab for the sponsor and recipient. For military members and civil servants, CAC issuance and renewal still require in-person appointments.

MNCC’s mission is to deliver modern hire-to-rotate HR services through 24/7 customer service to Sailors, veterans, and their families.

Through Sailor feedback, MNCC constantly strives to provide more resources and accurate resolutions. Contact MNCC at (833) 330-MNCC (6622) or AskMNCC@navy.mil. Find online self-service options on MyNavy Portal at my.navy.mil.



NAS NORTH ISLAND (Aug. 13, 2025) Operations Specialist 1st Class Matthew Muenster, assigned to cruiser USS Princeton (CG 59), attached to the Carl Vinson Carrier Strike Group, reunites with his children after the ship’s return to its homeport here following a nine-month deployment. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brandon Roberson



TWENTYNINE PALMS (Aug. 8, 2025) Gunnery Sgt. Louis Yacono reenlists during Service Level Training Exercise 4-25 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center. The exercise was designed to provide a challenging, realistic training environment to produce combat-ready forces capable of operating as an integrated Marine air-ground task force across all domains of military operations. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Judith Ann Lazaro



CAMP PENDLETON (Aug. 6, 2025) Marines fire an M41A7 Saber system during a battalion field exercise here. The exercise tested Marines’ decision-making against a simulated thinking enemy and incorporated a live-fire portion to reinforce combat lethality and operational efficiency. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Juan Torres

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8 www.armedforcesdispatch.com AUGUST 23, 2025

The Meat & Potatoes



of Life

by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

My hydrangeas act out summer's story, as their bleaching pastel blooms wilt sadly in the beating August heat. I shut myself inside, windows and doors closed tight to keep out the relentless humidity. Shutters are put down, darkening my rooms. Curtains are closed to nature's drama.

Electric bills be damned. I turn the clunky old window air conditioner in my dining room up to its highest setting, and use a box fan to direct the cooler air into my kitchen. Living in a house built in the 1800s is charming nine months of the year, when we can pretend to be Victorian aristocrats cozing up around our fireplace and drinking hot toddies. But for the three warmest months, we mar our gorgeous old home with unsightly air conditioners, rattling dripping, and hanging from the windows, spoiling the house's classic coastal New England vibe.

It's been hot and abnormally dry for weeks in the Northeast. No measurable precipitation yet this month, and none predicted in the ten-day forecast. Our lawn, once a luscious emerald green blanket, is now patchy with tufts that have turned a sickly flaxen hue, highlighting the stubborn weeds that survive in contrasting shades of olive.

Somehow, even without a

The drama of summer storms

drop of rain in weeks, humidity is constant, thickening the air, dampening my upper lip and unmentionable areas, and turning my hair into a ball of frizz. I feel wasteful being indoors, missing out on these fleeting summer days, but it's just too damned hot and muggy to stay out there for more than a quick trip to the mailbox.

Working at my laptop in the kitchen, I find myself wishing for rain. Not only to satisfy the theatrical hydrangeas and the parched grass, but also for the refreshing break that rain brings during long hot summers like this. Sitting at the kitchen island, I close my eyelids like shutters, withdraw into my darkened, air-conditioned cocoon, and envision a mid-August thunderstorm...The first signs appear in the low clouds that gather on the horizon. Usually, their formations are dark, thick, and featureless, but today, fluffy marshmallows grow towering and ominous, heralding more than just rain. I walk out onto our porch to watch the developing spectacle.

As the clouds expand and come closer, the muggy, stagnant air abruptly shifts as if it's being inhaled by a giant in the sky. I am suddenly aware of the scent of earth. The needy soil gives off its distinct musty fragrance like pheromones to attract the coming storm.

I hear a rumble in the distance as the giant takes another step towards me. He still seems so far away, I'm not afraid, but rather excited to see him approaching. There's a flash in my peripheral vision. The fine hairs

on my arms lift off my skin just in time for a surprise — a cool breeze rolls out like a red carpet making way for the superstar's arrival.

The air is now crisp, electric, as flashes and rumbles close in like paparazzi. I feel a drop, then another, before a "CRACK!" splits the sky, sending me back indoors to watch from my window.

The giant has arrived. His thunderous entrance is not gracious or polite, but he brings gifts for everyone. A deluge of rain pours down over the hard earth, softening soil and soaking roots, feeding thirsty flora and fauna, and cooling searing sidewalks, streets, asphalt and chrome.

With rain pelting the windows and thunder rumbling over the house, I don't feel wasteful being indoors anymore, because seeking shelter is justified during a summer thunderstorm. I curl up with my laptop, safe and sound.

The giant departs as quickly as he arrived, and as his cloak of clouds trails off with him, the sun appears again. For once, I am glad to see her. I walk out onto the porch again, and along with the hydrangea blooms, I turn my face upward in appreciation.

The actors in this neighborhood play are the same but the story has changed dramatically. I see steam rising from the street. I smell the wet grass. I hear birds chirping excitedly. Rested and refreshed, my world is alive again.

Shelby at the Segerstrom

Recently I revisited the Segerstrom Shelby Event Center with the Motor Press Guild for an exclusive media event showcasing the future of the Shelby brand. There we got up close and personal with the latest Shelby products, connected directly with the team behind the legend, and experienced the thrill first-hand with ride-alongs in the 2025 GT350 — "an 810hp supercar that will blow your socks off!" — featuring Vince LaViolette and Gary Patterson behind the wheel. This was the first opportunity for the Press to actually experience the car, and I drove it. We also learned about Shelby parts and merchandise; Carroll Shelby's foundation and Team Shelby in the community; a question-and-answer session, and exploration of the Shelby GT350's interior and exterior; and were taken by Ted and Rae Segerstrom on a personally guided tour of the Segerstrom, which they founded.

At our presentation we learned that 2025 represents three big 60th anniversaries: the 60th Anniversary of the Shelby GT250 — the very first Shelby Mustang, the 60th Anniversary of the FIA World Championship (and its history with the Daytona Coupe) and the 60th Anniversary of the 427 Cobra — a car that on January 27th re-defined American muscle.

Gary Patterson is the President of Shelby American. He has risen through the ranks since he started there in 1996. Since then, he "has had his hands figuratively and literally on every car that has come out of Shelby since then." He is as enthusiastic as you can be about cars.

Gary told us that Carroll Shelby was a very big innovator — that he has got more patents than anybody in the world. — always trying

something new. He made two turbine-powered IndyCars. That tradition for innovation continues to this day at Shelby American. Along with the University of California, they had a hydrogen-powered Cobra in 2003. It was not practical at the time but that does not mean that it does not have a future.

Innovation is evident in the 2025 Shelby GT350. The 2025 model has been significantly reimagined from its 1965 namesake, with "cutting edge upgrades and design enhancements." Especially

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

noteworthy specifications are its 5.0L V8 engine, available in 480 or supercharged 810 horsepower with a Borla cat-back exhaust and tips, "built to deliver maximum power at an affordable price." It also features improvements in exhaust, aerodynamics and suspension — fine-tuned for a balance between everyday comfort and track-ready performance. It is available with both a manual or an automatic transmission. Suspension upgrades include front and rear lowering springs and sway bars. As I experienced on my drive in the GT350, the manual transmission automatically matches revs for smooth downshifts. The engine's power delivery is just right for calm, everyday driving, but it accelerates hard — yet well under control, if you punch it.

The Shelby Heritage Center in Las Vegas serves as a tribute to the

legendary Carroll Shelby. It provides an in-depth look into Carroll Shelby's life and achievements, including his long, rich history of competition and success in motorsports. It has engaging exhibits, interactive displays, a gift shop full of Shelby memorabilia and, of course, a vast collection of rare and historic Shelby vehicles. The Shelby Heritage Center also has an assembly line where vehicles arrive from Ford and are meticulously upgraded with Shelby components. I have visited there many times.

For those of you who have not yet visited the Segerstrom, do so and you'll be in for a real treat. This modern, two-story museum and special events center in Irvine, California houses an amazing collection of Shelby automobiles — from the very first that were built to the latest models, as well as iconic neon signs, vintage gas pumps and more.

Ted and Rae have collected more than 90 Shelby and Ford vehicles, and are very hands-on in the day-to-day operation of the Segerstrom. Rae's father raced stock cars and she helped him work in the garage. The net proceeds of their center are donated to the Shriners for Children Medical Center — Pasadena and the Carroll Shelby Foundation, which aids children who are battling deadly diseases, as well as providing educational opportunities for young people. Learn more about the Segerstrom Shelby Event Center and how you can visit, at <https://segerstromshelbyeventcenter.com>.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse. Copyright © 2025 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #895

Veterans News

Caregivers file suit over denied benefits

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION Two survivors of Vietnam-era veterans have filed a potential class-action lawsuit against the VA, challenging its practice of denying family caregiver program appeals when a veteran dies before a final decision is issued.

One plaintiff is a daughter who cared for her father, and the other is a wife who assisted her husband. Both had appeals pending at the Board of Veterans' Appeals when the veterans passed away, and both were denied benefits for the period of care they had provided.

The lawsuit, supported by the National Veterans Legal Services Program and Chisholm Chisholm & Kilpatrick, could affect dozens of caregivers each month.

The Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers provides training, counseling, health care, and a

monthly stipend ranging from \$1,800 to \$2,800 for those caring for severely ill or injured veterans.

Attorneys for the plaintiffs argue that caregivers should remain eligible for these benefits regardless of the veteran's death

before a decision is issued. This challenge highlights the broader issue of recognition for the unpaid and often difficult work performed by family caregivers, a role that has been essential for generations of veterans, particularly those from the Vietnam era.

The outcome of this case could set a significant precedent, potentially affecting VA policy and the way caregiver benefits are administered for veterans who pass away while appeals are pending. It also raises important questions about fairness, accountability, and how the VA

supports the families who provide critical care.

Veterans and caregivers alike are encouraged to stay informed about the case, as it emphasizes the ongoing need for policies that recognize the sacrifices and contributions of those who care for our nation's heroes.

The Fleet Reserve Association

(FRA) will be paying close attention to the outcome of this case, as it closely aligns with our mission of advocating for the fair treatment of veterans and their families.

The FRA is committed to ensuring that caregivers, who make significant sacrifices to support our nation's heroes, receive the recognition and benefits they deserve.

County of San Diego Veterans Service Office

Location: 5560 Overland Ave, Suite 310, San Diego 92123

Services: Provides assistance with benefits counseling, claims preparation and submission, appeals, and networking/advocacy.

Contact: You can e-mail sdcvso.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov to make an appointment or for general inquiries, according to the County of San Diego.

North Inland Military and Veterans Resource Center

Location: 649 West Mission Avenue, Escondido 92025

Purpose: Serves as a resource hub for veterans in the North Inland region.

Office of Military & Veterans Affairs

Main Location: 5055 Ruffin Road, San Diego 92123

This office provides support services to military, veterans, survivors, and dependents. Services range from benefits counselling, transition assistance, home loans, educational, employment, vocational rehab, to health care services by Accredited County Veteran Services Representatives.

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- 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.

NC-17 – No one 17 or under admitted.

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

Continued next column

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

I'm a retired veteran; Why must I pay for Medicare?

Dear Rusty: I'm a retired Navy veteran who is going to be turning 65 years old this year. My question is concerning mandatory Medicare sign-up requirements. Why do I have to sign up for Medicare coverage at 65 when I can't start collecting full Social Security benefits until I turn 67? My Social Security benefits will not pay for my mandatory Medicare because I can't start collecting full Social Security benefits until I'm 67!

I currently pay for Tricare and utilize my local Veterans Administration medical facilities and referrals for my healthcare. With me turning 65 and having to wait until I'm 67 for my full Social Security benefits, it just seems unfair that I'll have to pay out of pocket Medicare monthly expenses for two years! Is there any way to avoid this unfair penalty?

Signed: Retired Navy Vet

Dear Retired Navy Vet: First, I want to thank you for your military service to our country. Please know that here at the AMAC Foundation we care a lot about our veterans, and you may find the “For Veterans” section of our Foundation website interesting (www.amacfoundation.org).

Regarding your question, you should be aware that enrolling in Medicare is not mandatory, but there are consequences if you do not enroll when you become eligible (normally at age 65). For one thing, if you are a retired veteran on military TriCare, you will lose your TriCare benefits if you don't enroll in Medicare when you are eligible (TriCare requires that you enroll in Medicare when eligible). And, since you are not yet collecting Social Security, you will be required to separately pay the Medicare Part B premium directly to Medicare (they will bill you when you enroll in Medicare). Another potential consequence is that if you do not enroll in Medicare Part B when you are first eligible, you may incur a lifetime late enrollment penalty for enrolling in Part B later.


Something else to keep in mind is that there are two “parts” to Medicare - Part A (which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services), and Part B, which is coverage for outpatient healthcare services (doctors, medical tests, etc.). Medicare Part A is free to you, but there is a premium for Medicare Part B (\$185/month for 2025). Note that you will need to pay a Part B premium as long as you are enrolled in Medicare Part B (it doesn't go away after you are collecting Social Security, but it is taken from your Social Security payment). And there is no way for you to avoid the Part B premium after enrolling, and enrolling in Part B is necessary for you to continue your military TriCare-for-life benefits. Note that Medicare Part A and Part B do not include prescription drug coverage, but your TriCare coverage usually does.

It's important to note that Medicare and Social Security are two independent senior programs with different eligibility rules. As you may know, you can collect early (reduced) Social Security at age 65 (and have your Medicare Part B premium deducted from your SS payment). But you would be collecting Social Security early and, in addition to a reduced benefit, you would also be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test if you are still working. The SS earnings test limits how much you can earn before some of your SS benefits are taken away (if you exceed the earning limit prior to your full retirement age).

So, is it unfair that you must pay for Medicare Part B before you are collecting Social Security? Well, I think not, because the two programs are completely independent benefits (the Social Security Administration merely administers Medicare payments as a convenience). Remember your Medicare Part A is free, but you must pay a premium for Part B, and you must take both to retain your military TriCare-for-Life benefits. You can visit this site to see how to pay your Medicare premiums until it is later deducted from your Social Security payment: www.medicare.gov/basics/costs/pay-premiums/online-bill-pay.

Once again, thank you for your service to our country.

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85°	105°	130°	
90°	125°	140°	
95°	140°	155°	
7 SECOND RULE - PLACE HAND ON THE SURFACE TOO HOT FOR YOUR HAND, TOO HOT FOR YOUR HOUND			

Addressing childhood obesity: Give kids a healthy start

newsinhealth.nih.gov
Obesity affects about 1 out of every 5 kids. Carrying too much body fat can affect almost every system in your body. It can contribute to many long-term health problems. These include heart disease, diabetes, and mental health issues.

“Prevention and detection of childhood obesity is important because the longer you have it, the more at risk you are of developing related complications,” explains Dr. Stavroula Osganian, an NIH scientific advisor on childhood obesity.

If you think your child has obesity, see their doctor. The doctor can calculate your child’s body mass index, or BMI. BMI is a measure that helps determine if your child’s weight is within a healthy range for their height, age, and sex. It’s not a direct measure of body fat. But it’s a useful way for doctors to screen for obesity. If your child’s BMI is high, the doctor can help you plan how to lower it.

“The earlier you take action, the better,” says Dr. Leonard Epstein, a psychologist at University at Buffalo. “It’s easier to help a child who’s young to make changes. And it’s easier for the parent, too.”

NIH studies are now testing ways to prevent and treat obesity in kids.

Starting Early

Researchers are studying interventions for childhood obesity as early as preconception and pregnancy, Osganian says. Studies have found that a mother’s weight, diet, and physical activity during pregnancy can affect a child’s risk of obesity. Scientists are trying to unravel how diet and exercise during pregnancy influence an infant’s weight, body fat, and metabolism.

Infants who have a high birth weight or gain weight too fast have an increased risk for childhood obesity. NIH research has also



shown a link between obesity and a lack of sleep that begins as early as infancy.

An NIH-funded program called INSIGHT tested ways to address these early risk factors. The program taught first time moms healthy feeding and sleeping behaviors for their infants. Moms learned how to put their baby to sleep and calm them when fussy without using feeding to soothe them. They also learned how to use growth charts and how to limit sedentary time. Children of these parents showed healthier weight status through age 3 years compared with kids in the control group.

Having childhood obesity increases your chances of having obesity as an adult, says Dr. Charlotte Pratt, an NIH expert on child nutrition. Giving kids a healthy early start can help set them on the right path. But they also need to learn how to build healthy habits for themselves as they grow.

Growing Healthy Habits

Obesity comes from taking in more energy, or calories, than your body uses. So it’s important for kids to choose both healthy foods and appropriate portion sizes. Getting enough physical activity helps their bodies use more of the calories they take in.

“Parents can help prevent childhood obesity by focusing on their child’s diet, activity, and sleep within the home through the teenage years,” Pratt says. They can teach kids healthy habits by modeling these behaviors themselves. But helping kids keep up with healthy habits can get harder as they age.

“When kids are really young, all they want to do is run around,” Epstein says. “But something happens around ages 9 to 10. Their motivation to be active decreases, while their motivation to be sedentary increases. And being physically active as you get older means shifting from playing on the playground to more organized activities, like sports.”

Once a child develops obesity, “the lifestyle treatment that’s required to take a child who has obesity to a normal healthy weight is much different and more intensive than for prevention,” explains Dr. Sarah Armstrong, a pediatrician at Duke University. “You need at least 26 hours of intensive face-to-face nutrition and physical activity guidance for a child over [a] three to 12 month [period].”

That amount of time can be hard for a doctor to deliver. Armstrong’s team has developed an intensive obesity treatment program called Fit Together. It partners pediatricians with local parks and recreation centers. In the program, doctors screen kids for obesity and counsel on lifestyle changes. The parks and recreation centers provide physical activity options.

Kids who participated in the program were able to reach lower BMIs. Armstrong’s team is now trying to create more partnerships between doctors and local parks and recreation centers across the country.

Getting Healthy Together

Diet and physical activity are both key for obesity treatment. Epstein’s work has shown that treating the whole family can have added benefits. His group has developed family-based behavioral interventions. These target both parent and child for healthy eating and more physical activity. They also include guidance for parents on modeling healthy behaviors and positive parenting tools.

“The parenting tools help create

a more positive family environment,” Epstein says. His studies have shown that family-based interventions help both parents and children lose weight. And the weight loss could be maintained for at least 10 years. The treatment has also helped reduce participants’ symptoms of depression and anxiety. And it led to siblings also losing weight, without getting the treatment themselves.

“Kids don’t just grow out of obesity,” Armstrong explains. “They tend to develop more severe forms of obesity as they get older, and they develop health complications. So we want to offer people the most effective, evidence-based treatments as soon as we can.”

Other NIH-funded researchers are assessing how kids’ eating behaviors, genetics, environment, and brain structure contribute to weight gain.

“If your child has a high BMI and needs their weight addressed, model those healthy behaviors and have a healthy environment for them,” Osganian says. “Be supportive. Talk openly with your child and their primary care provider about weight and staying healthy.”

Some kids with severe obesity may be unable to lose weight with

intensive lifestyle changes. These kids can be evaluated by an obesity medicine specialist. The specialist can screen them for genetic causes and advise on other treatments.

Help kids keep a healthy weight

- Be a role model. Show your kids what a healthy lifestyle looks like. Eat healthy family meals together. Get moving together. Try family walks or biking.
- Encourage healthy eating. Prepare healthy foods that are lower in saturated or unhealthy fats, added sugar, and salt. Choose foods high in nutrients. Make sure kids eat regular meals, starting with breakfast. Avoid snacking throughout the day.
- Help kids get active. School-aged kids should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
- Ensure kids get enough good-quality sleep. For the recommended hours for children by age, see go.nih.gov/NIHNIHMay25Sleep.
- Reduce screen time to help free up their time for other activities and improve sleep.
- Use positive parenting to shape kids’ healthy behaviors. Use praise to motivate children to engage in healthy behaviors. Don’t use food to reward or punish your child.
- Take your child to their health care provider every year for a wellness check-up. They can monitor your child’s growth and BMI. Parents can also track their child’s BMI using the CDC’s child and teen BMI calculator at <https://www.cdc.gov/bmi/child-teen-calculator/>



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WHO WE ARE
The mission of the Armed Services YMCA Camp Pendleton is to enhance the lives of military members and their families in spirit, mind, and body through programs relevant to unique challenges of military life. For the past 81 years, our goal has been to strengthen military families who work or reside on Camp Pendleton.

OUR CORE PROGRAMS

FISHER CHILDREN'S CENTER Offers accessible, accredited, quality and affordable childcare for young children to help prepare them for future success.	OPERATION LITTLE LEARNERS An interactive parent and child education program that offers parents and their preschoolers an opportunity to learn and grow.	OPERATION HERO A no-cost after school program designed to help military kids who may be struggling with change get back on track at home and in school.
CAMP HERO Encourages healthy living and provides outdoor activities and social bonding opportunities for military children.	OPERATION KID COMFORT Custom, hand-made quilts to help children cope with the separation of a parent's deployment.	SERVICE EVENTS Support military families through dances, giveaways, and community events.
HOLIDAY SUPPORT Toy giveaways and financial assistance for active duty service members and their families during the holidays.	SOI RECREATION CENTER Open on the weekends, this recreation space provides a place for School of Infantry students to relax and recharge.	FOOD DISTRIBUTION & FINANCIAL SUPPORT Assistance with food, diapers, gas, and other necessities through monthly distributions, a food pantry, and emergency commissary and gas cards.

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