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HONORING ATHLETICISM Meet Camp Pendleton's Male and Female Athletes for 2025. Photo, left to right, Brig. Gen. Nick I. Brown, commanding general of Marine Corps Installations West; Capt. Landon Nagao, male athlete of year; Sgt. Stephanie Evtodi, female athlete of year; and Sgt. Maj. Sherri N. Cook, senior enlisted leader of MCIWEST. Courtesy photo by Nava Kiss

Introducing ... Golden Dome for America

from Department of War

Senior leaders from the Department of War, U.S. government, and defense industry gathered at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story, April 23, to provide an update about Golden Dome for America (GDA), the nation's initiative to build a next-generation missile defense shield to protect the Homeland.

Speakers represented Secretary of War's research, engineering and technology office; Golden Dome for America; and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).

The event, set against a backdrop of current missile defense capabilities, underscored the urgent need to modernize the nation's defenses against a new generation of advanced threats, as directed by President Trump.

"Golden Dome is the decisive response to a new era of threats," said Gen. Mike Guetlein, director of GDA. "We are moving with purpose and urgency to forge a shield that is layered, integrated, and automated. The progress on display today is tangible proof that this is not a future concept, but a reality we must build now."

GDA is a layered defense architecture designed to protect the United States from complex ballistic, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, as well as advanced aerial threats. It enhances national security by integrating a persistent space-based sensor network for global tracking, a portfolio of advanced interceptors providing defense-in-depth, and an integrated command and control system to manage threats at machine speed.

The program's momentum was a central theme, with officials confirming GDA is ahead of schedule and on budget. Key achievements highlighted include the completion of the initial architecture blueprint, the establishment of a Command-and-Control Consortium, and the awarding of active contracts for critical system components.

"It's this Department's mandate to definitively secure our homeland," said Emil Michael, Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering. "We are embracing an open architecture that harnesses the full power of American innovation—from artificial intelligence to the commercial space industry—to build the impenetrable shield that this nation deserves." Continue reading at <https://www.war.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/4468089/department-of-war-showcases-progress-on-golden-dome-for-america-the-nations-nex/>.

ADT TO PAY \$1.3M TO SERVICEMEMBERS FOR ILLEGAL CHARGES

U.S. Justice Dept.
 Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department recently announced that ADT LLC doing business as ADT Security Services, the nation's largest home security services company, will pay over \$1.3 million to resolve allegations that it violated the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) by imposing unlawful charges on at least 3,400 servicemembers who terminated their home security services contracts after receiving military relocation orders.

"Members of our Armed Forces dutiful-

ly respond to the defense needs of our Nation, sometimes with very little notice," said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "We're committed to ensuring that our servicemembers' rights are protected so that they can focus on



their military mission."

The department alleges that ADT illegally imposed a 30-day notice requirement on servicemembers who terminated their home security contracts.

The department maintains that ADT's 30-day notice policy violated the SCRA, which allows servicemembers to terminate certain consumer contracts any time after receiving military orders to relocate to a location that does not support the contract. When a servicemember terminates a contract under the SCRA, companies can't charge any fees beyond the current billing period.

Under the settlement, ADT will pay up to \$1,260,000 in compensation to the affected ser-

vicemembers. ADT will also be required to pay a \$79,380 civil penalty, which is the maximum penalty for a first violation of the SCRA, and make policy and training changes to avoid committing future violations.

The department's enforcement of the SCRA is conducted by the Civil Rights Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section in partnership with U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the country. Since 2011, the department has obtained over \$488 million in monetary relief for 152,000 servicemembers through its enforcement of the SCRA. For more information about the department's SCRA enforcement efforts, visit www.servicemembers.gov.

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Marines awarded Male and Female Athlete of the Year

by Cpl. Noah Martinez
Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON - Marine Corps Capt. Landon Nagao, a UH-1Y pilot with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267 and Sgt. Stephanie Evtodi, a maintenance management specialist with 3rd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, were named Camp Pendleton's Male and Female Athletes of the Year for 2025, recognizing their sustained excellence in competitive athletics while serving on active duty.

The award highlights Marines who demonstrate superior performance in their respective sports while maintaining the standards and responsibilities required of military service, reflecting discipline, commitment and resilience.

Nagao, a native of El Dorado Hills, Calif., began his athletic career in gymnastics before transitioning to obstacle course competition at the national level. After earning a NROTC scholarship to the University of California-Davis, he was commissioned in 2017 and has since balanced his duties as a Marine aviator with elite-level competition.

"Being named Camp Pendleton's Marine Athlete of the Year is both an honor and a recognition I'm deeply grateful for," Nagao said. "It reflects years of dedication to both my role as a Marine and my time competing in Ninja Warrior."

Nagao has competed across multiple seasons of American Ninja Warrior, steadily improving

his performance and qualifying for national level finals in both the United Ninja Athlete Association and National Ninja League circuits. In 2024, he achieved his best result to date, advancing to the semifinals and finishing 22nd overall.

In 2025, he earned top five finishes in all UNAA competitions he entered and qualifying for the World Championship finals.

Juggling operational demands with competition has remained a consistent challenge throughout his career.

"Balancing my military responsibilities with opportunities to compete ... has been challenging," Nagao said. "Over time, I've become more proactive by coordinating with my squadron and working with the show's producers, allowing me to manage both commitments effectively."

Evtodi, a native of Ontario, Canada, began playing rugby at a young age and quickly developed into a competitive athlete, earning early recognition and competing at elevated levels throughout her youth and high school career.

At Camp Pendleton, she served as the starting fullback and kicker for the West Coast Marines Women's Rugby team.

In 2025, she helped lead the team to a Southern California Rugby Football Union Division II championship and was selected as team captain during the summer season, guiding the team to a Wine Country 10s Rugby Festival title

while finishing as one of its top scorers.

Her performance earned her selection to the All-Marine Corps Women's Rugby Team, where she competed at the All-Armed Forces level in her first year as a starter.

Evtodi credits her success to discipline and the direct connection between her sport and her role as a Marine. "Rugby is built on toughness, discipline and teamwork, the same values we live every day as Marines," Evtodi said. In addition to competing at the Marine Corps level, she expands her experience through high tempo tournament play and with outside club teams, further developing her performance against top competition.

She now competes for the Temecula Mountain Lions to further develop her rugby career.

She also emphasized the importance of maintaining perspective while balancing the demands of service and athletics.

"The mission comes first, and staying committed long-term matters more than any single event," Evtodi said. Both Marines' achievements reflect a shared commitment to excellence, demonstrating the ability to perform at a high level while meeting the demands of military service.

Their recognition as Camp Pendleton's Athletes of the Year underscores the Marine Corps' emphasis on physical fitness, perseverance and the pursuit of excellence both on and off duty.

John Phelan out, Hung Cao in, as Navy secretary

Multiple news outlets reported recently that Secretary of the Navy John Phelan is leaving his position effective immediately. Chief Pentagon spokesman Sean Parnell said in a post on X, "Secretary of the Navy John C. Phelan is departing the administration. On behalf of the Secretary of War and Deputy Secretary of War, we are grateful to Secretary Phelan for his service to the Department and the United States Navy. We wish him well in his future endeavors."

Under Secretary Hung Cao will become Acting Secretary of the Navy

Hung Cao assumed responsibility as Acting Secretary of the Navy on April 22, 2026.

After immigrating to the United States in 1975, Cao and his family moved to West Africa. He returned to Northern Virginia at the age of 12 and later graduated with the inaugural class of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. He entered the Navy as a seaman recruit in 1989 and was later commissioned as a Special Operations Officer from the Naval Academy in 1996.

As a Navy diver, Cao led underwater missions around the world. As an explosive ordnance disposal officer, he led counter improvised threat missions for special warfare and special forces around the world with multiple deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. In his final tour of duty, he led sensitive activities, exploitation, counter-messaging and counter-drone operations in support of the geographic combatant commanders and special operations command. He retired from active duty in October 2021 as a captain.

Previously, Cao served as Under Secretary of the Navy. Fifty years after arriving in Guam as a Vietnamese refugee, Cao returned as the Department of War's Senior Defense Official of Guam, whereby he provided oversight, advocacy, and support for on-island infrastructure development consistent with operational requirements. Prior to his appointment, Cao was a vice president and client executive at CACI International. He helped in fielding electronic warfare packages, counter-drone technology, optical communications, photonics, enterprise IT and shipyard infrastructure optimization in support of the Department of the Navy.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Ocean Engineering, a master's degree in Applied Physics and was a fellow with MIT Seminar XXI and Harvard Kennedy School. He is fluent in French and Vietnamese. Cao and his wife April have five children.




The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These weekly or monthly assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
<https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/>



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SOUTHCOM's JTF Southern Spear continues to choke off illicit financing with string of successful maritime interdictions

MIAMI, Fla. - Six months since its inception at the direction of U.S. Southern Command, Joint Task Force Southern Spear has significantly disrupted illicit maritime activity within the Western Hemisphere, dealing a critical blow to narco-terrorist networks and other illicit or sanctioned activities.

A cornerstone of the task force's mission is the execution of complex maritime interdiction operations.

To date, JTF Southern Spear, working with interagency partners, has successfully intercepted and seized six vessels illegally transporting sanctioned

oil within the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility.

"Joint Task Force Southern Spear continues to conduct decisive operations to detect, disrupt, and dismantle narco-terrorist networks. In support of the President's directives, the U.S. Coast Guard's Mari-

time Security Response Team, accompanied by U.S. Marine Corps Special Purpose Forces, continue to support maritime interdiction operations to target the dark fleet that is enabling U.S. adversaries across the globe," said Gen. Francis L. Donovan, U.S. SOUTHCOM commander.

While each interdiction is backed by the full force of the *Iwo Jima* ARG, Marines and Sailors of the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit's Maritime Special Purpose Force, and the Coast Guard's Maritime Security Response Team are at the tip of the spear for each operation. The specially trained Marines, Sailors, and Coast Guardsmen train relentlessly and possess a special set of skills and authorities to safely and efficiently board and

clear maritime vessels.

To date, the 22nd MEU has supported five interdictions of sanctioned vessels Skipper, Centuries, Sophia, Olina, and Veronica. These targeted seizures systematically choke off critical financial nodes for criminal entities and Designated Terrorist Organizations seeking to destabilize the Western Hemisphere and threaten the safety of the U.S. homeland.

Chinese national arrested at JFK International Airport on federal charges for illegally photographing military aircraft at Nebraska Air Force base

from Dept. of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

Tianrui Liang, 21, of China, has been charged by complaint for conduct related to illegally documenting Air Force planes located at Offutt Air Force Base in Bellevue, Nebraska, announced U.S. Attorney Lesley A. Woods and Assistant Attorney General for National Security John A. Eisenberg.

Offutt Air Force Base is a key base in the Air Force's Strategic Command. Liang was allegedly present at Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota in the days leading up to his visit to the Air Force installation in Nebraska. Liang crossed the

Canadian-United States border on March 28, 2026, from Vancouver, Canada, to Washington on a valid B1/B2 visa.

A complaint affidavit filed in the District of Nebraska alleges that Liang drove to New York after being confronted by the FBI in Nebraska. The FBI obtained an arrest warrant for Liang who was subsequently arrested at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York.

Following Liang's arrest on April 7, Liang appeared in a federal magistrate court for the Eastern District of New York on the Nebraska federal charge. The magistrate judge

released Liang and refused a government request for a stay to allow federal prosecutors in Nebraska to appeal the release to a federal judge in the District of Nebraska.

Federal prosecutors in Nebraska then successfully appealed Liang's release and he was then taken back into federal custody on April 10, 2026, by order of the Chief District Court Judge for the District of Nebraska. Liang is presently in the custody of the United States Marshals Service and is being brought to the District of Nebraska for further proceedings in the case.

"Any individuals who unlawfully attempt to acquire sensitive information about military aircraft located in the District of Nebraska will be held maximumly accountable under federal law," said Woods.

The criminal complaint is only a charge. Liang has not been convicted and is presumed innocent until proven guilty. If convicted, he is subject to a term of imprisonment of up to 1 year. The investigation into whether more serious charges are implicated by the facts in this case is ongoing. The arrest warrant was pursued to prevent Liang fleeing the country while the investigation was ongoing.

Navy commissions submarine Idaho

The Navy commissioned submarine USS Idaho in a traditional ceremony at Naval Submarine Base Groton, Connecticut, April 25.

The ceremony marked the culmination of a multiyear construction process and officially brought USS Idaho into the fleet. It is the fifth Navy vessel named for the Gem State. The most recent predecessor, USS Idaho, was a battleship commissioned in 1919 that earned seven battle stars for its service during World War II, including action at Iwo Jima and Okinawa, Japan.

Sen. James Risch of Idaho delivered the principal address as the ceremony's keynote speaker.

Hung Cao, acting Navy secretary, also delivered remarks, emphasizing the strategic importance of the new submarine.

"We are a maritime nation, bordering on both the Atlantic and the Pacific. Our commerce depends on safe and secure sea lanes of communication," Cao said. "President Trump's commission to our military is simple: to achieve peace through strength. The USS Idaho joins the fleet ready to answer the call to action, in any ocean, at any time."

Cmdr. Chad J. Guillerault is the ship's commanding officer.



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Secretary of War general & flag officer announcements

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth announced April 15 that President Donald J. Trump has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps **Lt. Gen. Roger B. Turner, Jr.**, for reappointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as commander, Marine Corps Forces Pacific and commanding general, Fleet Marine Force Pacific, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii. Turner is currently the commanding general, III Marine Expeditionary Force and commander, Marine Forces Japan, Okinawa.

Army **Maj. Gen. Constantin E. Nicolet** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as director, Warfighter Support, Office of the Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Nicolet is currently special assistant to the Under Secretary of War for Intelligence and Security, Pentagon.

Air Force **Maj. Gen. Christopher J. Niemi** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy chief of staff, Strategy, Design and Requirements, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon. Niemi is currently the military deputy, Air Force Futures, Headquarters U.S. Air Force, Pentagon.

Marine Corps **Maj. Gen. Keith D. Reventlow** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as director for Logistics, J-4, Joint Staff, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Reventlow is currently the commanding general, Marine Corps Logistics Command, Albany, Ga.

Army **Maj. Gen. Monte L. Rone** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as commanding general, First U.S. Army, Rock Island, Ill. Rone is currently the commanding general, 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley, Kansas.

Marine Corps **Maj. Gen. George B. Rowell IV** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H. M. Smith, Hawaii. Rowell is currently director, J-5, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Camp H. M. Smith.

Marine Corps **Maj. Gen. James B. Wellons** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commandant for Programs and Resources, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Pentagon. Wellons is currently special projects officer to the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Pentagon.

Marine Corps **Col. Peter D. Houtz** for appointment to brigadier general. Houtz is currently an assistant judge advocate general of the Navy, Office of the Judge Advocate General, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Washington Navy Yard.

Air Force **Col. Deane E. Thomey** for appointment to brigadier general. Thomey is currently the deputy director of Air National Guard Operations, Air National Guard Readiness Center, Joint Base Andrews, Md.

Hegseth also announced that the president has made the following nominations:

Navy **Rear Adm. Douglas L. Williams**, for appointment to vice admiral, with assignment as director for Strategic Systems Programs, Washington Navy Yard. Williams is currently the director for Test, Missile Defense Agency, Fort Belvoir, Va.

Eyes, ears of joint force: Caine honors unsung intelligence community heroes

by David Vergun

Successful military operations depend on those in the intelligence community, including the Defense Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, National Reconnaissance Office, Central Intelligence Agency and others, said Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, during a press conference at the Pentagon April 24.

“The totality of their work is

Braker breakthrough: Drone-delivered bunker-busting warhead passes test

by Eric Kowal, Picatinny Arsenal

In a significant leap forward for battlefield technology, Army infantry drone operators successfully tested a new warhead designed for delivery by an unmanned aerial system.

The recent live-fire demonstration of the bunker rupture and kinetic explosive round, which took place at Redstone Arsenal, Ala., comes only weeks after the initial design and rapid prototyping of the system, and showcases the Army’s accelerated approach to innovation in the face of evolving threats.

The Army continuously transforms by using the latest technologies to gain a warfighting advantage, ensuring the force is lethal, modern and ready. The development of this air-delivered munition directly supports that mission, as well as Secretary of War Pete Hegseth’s readiness and transformation priorities.

The Braker project, led by a team from the Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Armaments Center and Project Manager Close Combat Systems, aimed to create a lightweight, powerful and lethal warhead that could be deployed from a small, agile drone.

“Our Picatinny team went from concept to live-fire in two weeks,” said Army Col. Vinson Morris, project manager of Project Manager Close Combat

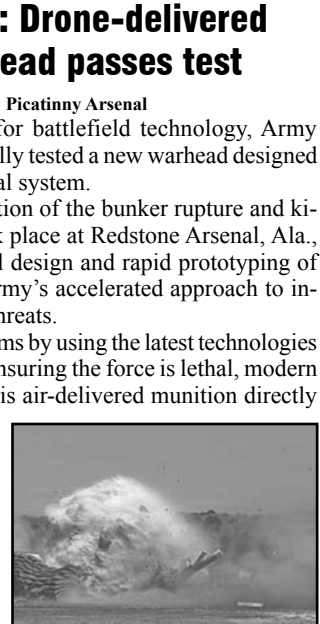
Systems. “Braker proves our ability to rapidly develop and safely deliver devastating effects from small, unmanned aircraft systems. We are now creating the architecture with Picatinny Common Lethality Integration Kit and the small, universal payload interface for industry to scale this critical warfighter advantage.”

The Picatinny Common Lethality Integration Kit is a safe and effective method for integrating lethal payloads with UAS platforms, designed and developed by engineers at the U.S. Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Armaments Center.

The rapid development-to-testing timeline of Braker was made possible by the Army’s emphasis on additive manufacturing, also known as 3D printing.

the culmination of days, months and in many cases, years of work by our uniform and civilian intelligence professionals,” he said, adding that America’s intelligence force, including collectors and analysts, has spent decades searching for every loose thread that could impact national security.

These intelligence professionals spend their careers answering important questions before, during and after operations.



Army infantry drone operators test the bunker rupture and kinetic explosive round, delivered by an unmanned aerial system, during a live-fire demonstration at Redstone Arsenal. U.S. Army photo by Eric Kowal

“They live in the enemy’s mind,” Caine said, working in windowless sensitive facilities, 24/7, 365 days a year.

The general went on to commend them for their tireless work sifting through mountains of collected information using classified tools, tactics, techniques and procedures.

“The sun never sets on these world-class professionals, and their goal is, every minute of every day,

to be on the account. And they know the enemy,” he said.

“They know their combat capability, their weapons, their industrial and economic systems, and they know their leaders, their leaders’ pattern of life, where they go, what they think and what they do.”

Thanks to their work, the War Department knows Iran, its leaders, its military and its capabilities, Caine said.



Top 5

- *Trump says Lebanon and Israel agree to extend Israel-Hezbollah ceasefire by 3 weeks
- *U.S. Soldier charged with making \$400,000 on Maduro removal bets
- *Marine creates ride-hailing app to combat impaired driving among service members
- *U.S. Navy is reviewing cost of future Ford-class carriers to ensure they ‘make sense’
- Navy**
- *Navy rushing to arm carrier strike groups with Hellfire missiles
- *U.S.-backed war risk cover for Hormuz will have to wait for convoys
- Air Force**
- *Air Force doubles planned F-15EX fleet to 267 fighters
- Army**
- *Army nurse accused of actively helping separatist militants in Cameroon
- Space Force**
- *Space Force selects reservists to become new part-time Guardians
- Cyber, Space & Unmanned**
- *Exploding shells may turn the Apache helicopter into a drone hunter
- *The Pentagon replicated a Ukrainian-style drone attack in Florida. Now it’s changing its counter-drone strategy
- Defense Industry**
- *Lockheed Martin CEO sees Trump’s Pentagon as ‘golden opportunity’ for growth
- *SpaceX wins \$57 million U.S. military contract for satellite crosslink demo
- *Iran war delays U.S. weapons deliveries to Estonia, raising defense concerns
- Ukraine**
- *As Iran saps U.S. focus, the troop math for monitoring a Ukraine peace deal looks grim
- *\$106 billion loan reflects EU’s view that peace in Ukraine is far away
- Military Culture & History**
- *Could the U.S. military handle a monster invasion? Monarch: Legacy of Monsters begs the question

Places of Worship

<p>Apostolic Pentecostal Church - Faith Mountain <i>Come experience the power, the joy, the difference!</i> Sunday afternoon at 2pm Tuesday evening at 7:30pm 14069 Ridge Hill Rd. El Cajon, CA 92021 Rides: 619-938-1070 www.faithmtn.org Instagram: @FaithMtn</p>	<p>Christ Community Church <i>"Helping people love God, find community and make a difference"</i> Sunday services at 8:45am and 10:30am Children's ministry for all kids. Life groups for teens and adults. 9535 Kearny Villa Rd. Mira Mesa, 92126. Just off I-15 and Miramar Rd. More Info: www.gotoChrist.com</p>	<p>Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church San Diego <i>"Teamwork Makes the Dream Work" - Nehemiah 4:1-6</i> Join us for worship services: Sunday School 9:30am, followed by Morning Worship at 11am Rev. Dennis Ray Anderson, D. Min., Pastor 3045 Greely Ave., San Diego, CA 92113 619-233-3296 - office</p>
<p>Bayview Church <i>Attract...Assimilate...Activate</i> Terry W. Brooks, Sr. Pastor 6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 • (619) 262-8384 Sunday Worship Services 7:30am, 9:15am, 11:15am Studies In Christian Living (formerly Sunday School) Tues & Thurs online only 6pm (contact Church for sign up). In person Saturday 9am & 10am www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org</p>	<p>First Baptist Church of Coronado <i>"Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach Our World"</i> Jim W. Baize, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com Sunday Adult Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10am Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado email: secretary@fbcoronado.com 445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588</p>	<p>Southwest Baptist Church <i>"To know Christ and to make Him known"</i> Welcome All Retired Military/Chaplain as Pastors Sunday Bible Study: 9:30am Sunday Worship Service: 11am Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm 2295 Leon Avenue, San Diego, CA 92154 Phone: (619) 423-2477 Email: pastor@swbcsd.org www.swbcsd.org</p>
<p>Bethany Lutheran Church Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod 2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach 92107 (Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building) Worship 11am Sundays Bible Class, Wednesdays 10am (619)222-7291 Office@BethanyLutheranOB.org</p>	<p>Mesa View Baptist Church Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CWO3, USMC (Ret.) <i>Seeking Sinners; Saving Souls; Strengthening Saints</i> Sunday School at 8:45am • Morning Worship at 10am Wednesday Night Bible Study 7pm 13230 Pomerado Rd., Poway • 858-485-6110 • www.mesaview.org</p>	<p>St. Luke's Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. <i>We thank you for your service!</i></p>

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Navy boosts support for military families with major childcare expansion

by Coleen R. San Nicolas-Perez
CNIC Public Affairs

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Navy is expanding its Child and Youth Programs (CYP) with more than 900 new childcare spaces slated to open at key fleet concentration areas through 2028.

This initiative, part of a broader readiness strategy for Sailors and their families, includes construction of new facilities, innovative facility conversions, and long-term capital investments in modern infrastructure.

“Supporting our Sailors means supporting their families,” said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of Navy Installations Command. “Access to high-quality, reliable childcare reflects our commitment to

new facilities, the Navy is using innovative approaches to accelerate the availability of care. At Naval Base Kitsap, a former chapel and community center were converted into modern Child Development Center (CDC) spaces, adding approximately 154 more slots for children.

The Navy is committed to enhancing the quality of its CYP programs. By the end of FY26, the Early Learning Matters (ELM) curriculum will be fully implemented across all Navy CDCs worldwide. The world-class ELM curriculum is grounded in the latest research on child development and brain science, promoting school readiness through a play-based, inquiry-driven approach.

“The ELM curriculum is a game-changer for everyone in our centers,” said Maryann

The Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) program is adding 1,000 fee-assistance spaces in FY26 to give families more high-quality choices in their local communities. The MCCYN program is a Department of War initiative that provides fee assistance to eligible military families, helping offset the cost of community-based childcare when installation care is unavailable.



Groundbreaking for Child Development Center at Naval Base Point Loma May 10, 2024. U.S. Navy photo

Construction, NBPL

Naval Base Point Loma continues construction of a new 35,987-square-foot Child Development Center (CDC) to provide quality childcare services for military personnel and authorized civilians.

Designed to accommodate up to 292 children aged six weeks to five years, the facility includes age-appropriate activity rooms, administrative offices, training rooms, and staff support areas.

This project aims to reduce the current childcare waitlist and support the needs of military families in the San Diego area.



Four major construction projects are currently ongoing - one at Naval Base Point Loma, two at Naval Base Kitsap, and one at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story. These projects represent the next phase of the Navy's long-term strategy to modernize and expand its childcare infrastructure.

our people and increases fleet readiness. This year's expansion makes significant progress toward that commitment, and it is only the beginning.”

Four major construction projects (MILCONs) are currently ongoing - one at Naval Base Point Loma (see sidebar story and photo), two at Naval Base Kitsap, and one at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story. These projects represent the next phase of the Navy's long-term strategy to modernize and expand its childcare infrastructure.

In addition to construction of

Coutino, director of the Navy Child and Youth Programs. “For children, it provides a predictable, engaging, and rich learning environment that builds critical thinking skills and eases the stress of PCS moves. For our Child and Youth Program professionals, it is an empowering tool that offers a clear framework for intentional teaching, fostering their professional skills and allowing them to focus on what they do best - creating meaningful interactions that help our youngest learners thrive.”

To further support families, the Navy is also expanding community-based care options.

A list of holidays and observances for May

NAT'L STROKE AWARENESS MONTH
CELIAC DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH
NAT'L PRESERVATION MONTH
NAT'L INVENTORS MONTH
ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH
NAT'L STRAWBERRY MONTH
AMERICAN CHEESE MONTH
OLDER AMERICANS MONTH
NAT'L HAMBURGER MONTH
NAT'L BRAIN TUMOR AWARENESS
NAT'L PHOTOGRAPHY MONTH
ALS AWARENESS MONTH
NAT'L CYSTIC FIBROSIS AWARENESS
MOTORCYCLE SAFETY AWARENESS
NAT'L DENTAL CARE MONTH
BETTER SPEECH AND LANGUAGE MONTH
NAT'L RETURNING YOUTH MONTH
STURGE-WEBER SYNDROME AWARENESS
NAT'L FOSTER CARE MONTH
NAT'L MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

NAT'L MINIATURE GARDEN MONTH
GLOBAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH & FITNESS
NAT'L BIKE MONTH
NAT'L ASPARAGUS MONTH
NAT'L WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH
NAT'L BLOOD EDUCATION PRESSURE
NAT'L WATER SAFETY MONTH
NAT'L RECOMMITMENT DAY
DATE YOUR MATE MONTH
NAT'L MEDITERRANEAN DIET MONTH
NAT'L LYME DISEASE AWARENESS EDS
NAT'L MOVING MONTH
NAT'L CHAMBER MUSIC MONTH
SKIN CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
JEWISH AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH
CORRECT YOUR POSTURE MONTH
NAT'L EGG MONTH
GET CAUGHT READING MONTH
MELANOMA AWARENESS MONTH
NAT'L SALSA MONTH
NAT'L MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Hegseth: Flu vaccine optional

by C. Todd Lopez

Annual influenza vaccines are no longer mandatory, said Secretary of War Pete Hegseth in a video posted April 21 on social media.

“The notion that a flu vaccine must be mandatory for every service member, everywhere, in every circumstance, at all times, is just overly broad and not rational,” the secretary said. “Our new policy is simple: If you, an American warrior entrusted to defend this nation, believe that the flu vaccine is in your best interest, then you are free to take it; you should. But we will not force you.”

The secretary signed a memorandum that provides updated guidance that states, effective immediately, the annual influenza vaccine is voluntary for all active and reserve component service members and War Department civilian personnel.

The new mandate follows similar department efforts regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Between Aug. 24, 2021, and Jan. 10, 2023, the department required service members to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Over 8,000 service members were involuntarily discharged from the military for refusing the vaccine. Hegseth said that won't happen again.

“Our men and women in uniform were forced to choose between their conscience and their country, even when those decisions posed no threat to our military readiness,” Hegseth said. “That era of be-



Influenza vaccines lined up on a tray at Aviano Air Base, Italy, Nov. 19, 2024. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Raya Feltner

trayal is over. Under President [Donald J.] Trump, the War Department continues to take decisive action to once again restore freedom and strength to our joint force. We're seizing this moment to discard any absurd overreaching mandates that only weaken our warfighting capabilities.”

Influenza vaccines, he said, are examples of overreaching mandates. The secretary said the decision to make it optional is common sense for the War Department and the service members.

“It's the kind of common-sense approach we are undertaking in this department,” he said. “Rest assured that under President Trump, the War Department will always honor our brave warriors and do everything we can to restore the American people's trust in their military for generations to come.”

Space Force selects first Air Force Reservists to transfer into part-time work roles

from Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. - The Space Force announced that 247 Air Force Reservists in space-related career fields were selected for transfer into the service in part-time work roles. The announcement marks an important milestone in the implementation of the Space Force Personnel Management Act.

When fully implemented, the PMA will enable the Space Force to create a new model of service that integrates currently serving Guardians and Air Force Reservists serving in space-focused career fields into a unified service that offers both

full- and part-time work roles.

“The integration of these talented Air Force Reservists is an important step in the evolution of our service,” said Chief of Space Operations Gen. Chance Saltzman.

“They bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our force, and we're excited to welcome them as Guardians.”

Guardians in part-time work roles will be known as Guardians on Non-Sustained Duty (GNSD), and they will be embedded in the day-to-day institutional and warfighting-enabling missions of the force.

The participation requirements for GNSDs will be a minimum of the equivalent of 36 days (48 IDT periods and 12 AT days) per year to have a “good year” toward retirement.

Air Force Reservists who accept their part-time work role assignments as GNSDs will begin to transfer into the Space Force this summer.

The list of individuals selected for transfer can be found on the Space Force Transfer page. Individuals on the select list may decline transfer into the Space Force in a part-time work role up until receipt of official transfer orders.

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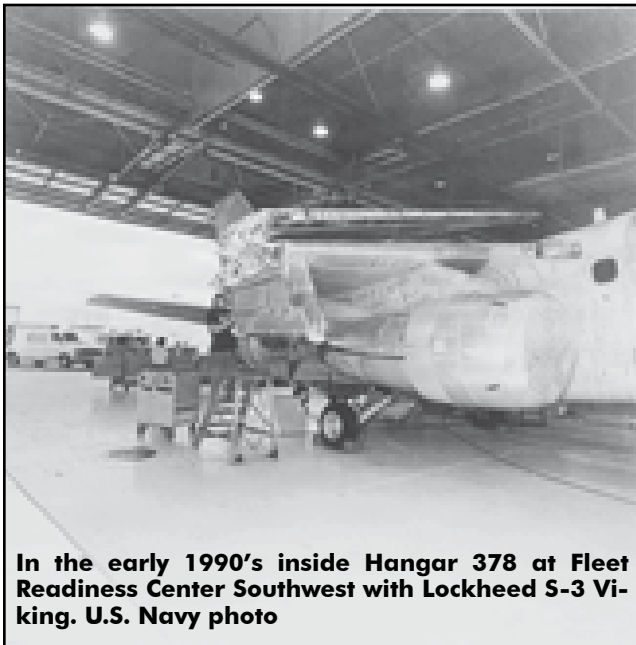
NHPA
National Horseshoe Pitchers Association
"Come Pitch with Us!"



FRCSW - First S3 Viking aircraft inducted at the command

by Michael A Furlano
Fleet Readiness Center Southwest
In the early 1990's inside Hangar 378 at Fleet Readiness Center Southwest

(FRCSW), an artisan works quietly beneath the wings of a Lockheed S-3 Viking, the first of its kind inducted at the command.



In the early 1990's inside Hangar 378 at Fleet Readiness Center Southwest with Lockheed S-3 Viking. U.S. Navy photo

Originally designed as a carrier-based anti-submarine warfare platform, the S-3 Viking quickly proved itself as one of the most versatile and reliable aircraft in the fleet, evolving to take on roles in sea surveillance, electronic warfare support, and aerial refueling.

Known for its exceptional mission reliability and consistently high sortie success rates, the Viking became a dependable workhorse for carrier strike

groups around the globe.

Behind that success stands the sustained efforts of FRCSW, where skilled maintainers, engineers, and artisans extended the aircraft's operational life through meticulous inspection, structural repair, and system overhauls.

This image reflects not just a moment of maintenance, but a legacy of craftsmanship and commitment that kept the aircraft mission-ready for decades, long after its original design life was surpassed.

FRCSW employees are the Backbone of Military Readiness.



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Man-on-the-Street What's been the best part of 2026 for you?

"My children, and concentrating on all the blessings I have."

Mindy Shanes
NB San Diego
Thrift Shop lead volunteer



"We had our baby this year. Her name is Ocean Edith Lopez."

Erick Lopez
NASNI Fitness Center

"I finally got a full-time position here {Navy Landing Field Imperial Beach Fitness Center}."

Sinai Garcia
OLF Imperial Beach Fitness Center

"Transferring to San Diego from Virginia."

AD1 Crys Chaney
Fleet Readiness Center Southwest



"I started my own business this year. A barber shop called Styled Studios, near Petco Park."

Jonathan Hidalgo
NASNI Fitness Center

"Going back to church, and getting more involved there."

YN1 Angelica Hernandez
NB San Diego

"I just moved into a new home. I'm a first time homeowner!"

Nishka Leon
NB San Diego Olde Gym



NAVFAC Southwest releases Palos Verde Blue Butterfly in San Pedro

by **Mario Icarì**
NAVFAC Southwest

SAN DIEGO - Members from NAVFAC Southwest's Environmental Team joined the team of biologists affiliated with The Urban Wildlands Group, The Teaching Zoo at Moorpark College, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, California Department of Fish & Wildlife, and Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy for Moorpark College's Breeding Program's 20th breeding season to assist with recovery and delisting efforts for the Palos Verde Blue Butterfly April 20 at Defense Fuel Supply Point San Pedro.

"This recent release is more than just a milestone for our program; it is the culmination of over two decades of relentless dedication from the Navy and our cooperating partners," said NAVFAC Southwest Environ-

mental PVB Project Manager Dustin Janeke. "To see a species once thought lost to the world now flying in its historic range is a true victory for conservation. Every butterfly we release brings us one step closer to our ultimate goal: fully recovering the Palos Verdes Blue and removing it from the endangered species list."

Conservation efforts headed by Lead Biologist Dr. Jana Johnson with Moorepark College included a release of PVB in adult butterfly and larva stages at its native habitat on DFSP San Pedro. Moorpark College's Breeding program is part of the growing, hands-on, multi-agency recovery effort for the stability of the PVB, a federally listed endangered species once presumed as extinct. Volunteers of the PVB Breeding program recently completed work to help



Lead Biologist Dr. Jana Johnson with Moorepark College included a release of PVB in adult butterfly and larva stages at its native habitat on DFSP San Pedro. Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest photo by Mario Icarì

rebuild the PVB's population by planting native host and nectar plants, stabilized soils to rebuild the PVB's ecosystems, removed invasive plant species not native to the area, and managed potential fire hazards.

The release of PVB in San Pedro included participation from Navy Weapons Station Seal Beach Natural Resources Manager Biologist Chloe Van Grootheest joined by entomologists and biologists with varied specialties from NAVFAC Southwest Environmental team which included former PVB Project Manager Albert Owen, Janeke, Melanie Madden, Kellen

Eastwood, Karolina Leja, Lisa Lyren, and Peggy Wilcox.

NAVFAC Southwest environmentally manages DFSP San Pedro, which occupies approximately 331 acres in San Pedro, California. The facility is located west of the city of Long Beach and north of the unincorporated community of San Pedro. The facility is bordered by an oil refinery, a cemetery, and residential and commercial properties. DFSP San Pedro's primary mission is storage and distribution of fuels to support military installations and other operations. DFSP San Pedro is owned by the U.S. Navy and is a

Special Area assigned to Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach.

NAVFAC Southwest's Environmental Division provides quality, timely, and cost-effective

environmental support to the Navy and Marine Corps in direct support of the warfighter by enabling the mission and enhancing mission readiness.

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Coast Guard interdicts 18 aliens near San Clemente Island

SAN DIEGO - A Coast Guard boarding team assigned to Coast Guard Cutter *Terrell Horne* (WPC 1131) interdicted 18 suspected aliens aboard a vessel approximately 30 miles south of San Clemente Island recently. At approximately 9:30 a.m., U.S. Customs and Border Protection Air and Marine Operations notified Joint Harbor Operations Center watch

standers of a cuddly cabin-style vessel transitioning into U.S. waters and *Terrell Horne* was diverted to intercept. *Terrell Horne*'s boarding team was launched and gained compliance of the vessel without the use of force. Eighteen suspected aliens were found aboard, all claiming Mexican nationality. All suspected aliens were transferred to U.S. Border Patrol custody at Ballast Point.

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PROCLAMATION NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Apr. 02, 2026) - Capt. Brian C. Bungay, commanding officer, Naval Base San Diego signs a Proclamation declaring last month as Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Nettie Manfull



SHOT LINE Marines with 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct marksmanship training aboard amphibious assault ship USS Boxer in the Pacific Ocean, April 23, 2026. The 11th MEU is a persistent, combat credible force contributing to deterrence and crisis response in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Trent A. Henry

Preventive medicine team helps establish 29 Palms Farmers Market at MCAGCC

by Christopher Jones
 Naval Hospital Twentynine Palms
 TWENTYNINE PALMS - Sailors assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Twentynine Palms are playing a key role in supporting the health, safety, and success of the 29 Palms Farmers Market at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), bringing fresh food options and community engagement to service members and their families.

Held every Thursday evening and featuring local vendors, fresh produce, hot foods, and handmade goods, the 29 Palms Farmers Market provides a family-friendly community space that connects service members with local farmers and artisans while expanding food options available on base.

The recurring 29 Palms Farmers Market introduces new food and produce options not typically available on base, drawing crowds from across the installation while reinforcing quality-of-life initiatives for the MCAGCC community.

Hospitalman Apprentice Wilson Current, a preventive medicine technician from Virginia Beach, Va., said his role centers on ensuring vendors meet strict food safety standards.

“My role is ensuring every vendor is following food safety practices and guidelines implemented by NAVMED P-5010 Chapter 1 and the Tri-Service Food Code,” Current said.

Preventive medicine technicians (PMTs) conduct on-site inspections and enforce requirements designed to protect public health. Their responsibilities include verifying proper food handling, ensuring adequate handwashing capabilities, and monitoring temperature control for food storage and service.

“We focus on proper handwashing techniques and making sure food is being held at the correct temperatures,” Current said.

Beyond food safety, PMTs also evaluate broader public health considerations.

“We’re also checking certifications, general pest management, and ensuring vendors have proper handwashing capability,” Current said.

Establishing a farmer’s market on a military installation presents unique challenges, particularly when balancing safety requirements between permanent facilities and temporary vendors.

“One of the challenges is understanding the differences in inspections between permanent establishments and temporary food operations while still ensuring the safety of all service members,” Current said.

The effort requires close coordination across multiple organizations. Preventive medicine personnel work alongside Army Veterinary Food Inspection Specialists and Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) to ensure the event runs smoothly and safely.

“We work hand in hand with the Army Veterinary Food Inspection Specialist attached to the base and the civilians at MCCS,” Current said.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Raphael Claxton, senior enlisted leader for the directorate for public health at NMRTC Twentynine Palms, emphasized the scale and coordination required to bring the market to life.

“Bringing the farmer’s market



SCI. Courtesy photo

NAVY TO PREPARE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR MILITARY READINESS ACTIVITIES ON SAN CLEMENTE ISLAND

SAN DIEGO - Your comments are solicited as the Department of the Navy prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of continued and expanded military readiness activities at San Clemente Island.

The Navy invites public input on the scope of the EIS, including identifying potential alternatives or issues that should be addressed in the National Environmental Policy Act analysis, relaying environmental concerns, identifying historic properties, and providing information or analyses relevant to the Proposed Action or the project’s potential to affect historic properties in line with the National Historic Preservation Act. The Navy is accepting comments during a 30-day scoping period now to May 24.

Military readiness activities include training; research, development, testing, and evaluation (collectively referred to as “testing”); and range improvement and maintenance. The Proposed Action is the continuation of ongoing land-based military readiness activities, new proposed military readiness activities, range improvements and maintenance, and the implementation of a new Wildland Fire Management Plan. Proposed activities would occur on land ranges and over-the-beach training areas of the SCI Range Complex.

SCI is an essential military readiness asset because of its proximity to the largest concentration of naval forces in the United States. SCI provides rugged terrain and unique range capabilities critical to maintaining the readiness of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, and units from other military services. The Proposed Action is needed because the number and type of military readiness activities currently conducted at SCI are inadequate to meet the Navy’s statutory responsibility to organize, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces. The Proposed Action would enhance existing training resources and prepare service members for operations in a real-world environment.

Scoping comments may be submitted via the project website or by mail to:
 Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest
 Attention: SCITT EIS Project Manager
 750 Pacific Highway, Floor 12
 San Diego, CA 92132-0058

to MCAGCC has been a rewarding but deliberate process that required coordination amongst several stakeholders on the installation,” Claxton said, noting collaboration with MCCS, Army veterinary technicians, and the local farmer’s market coordinator.

The initial inspection day took place Feb. 5, 2026, when more than 50 vendors were authorized to participate.

“That is a lot of inspections to conduct in one day,” Claxton said. “It was an all hands-on

preventive medicine personnel, Army 68S and Navy L12A PMTs who answered the call to bring this experience to the community.”

In addition to supporting community health, the farmer’s market provides valuable training opportunities for junior Sailors.

“The farmer’s market is a great learning opportunity for all junior PMTs—repetition and experience are the keys to success as an inspector,” Claxton said. “Experiences like the farmer’s market are a perfect opportunity to hone their skillset and display their readiness for warfighters in the fight.”

The market’s impact extends beyond training and compliance, contributing to morale and overall well-being across the installation.

<https://www.med.navy.mil/Media/News/News-Article/Article/4467138/navy-preventive-medicine-team-helps-establish-29-palms-farmers-market-at-mcagcc/>



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Fri., April 17, 5pm	Quad City Steamwheelers at San Diego Strike Force
Sun., April 26, 4:30pm	Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*
Sat., May 23, 7pm	NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., June 19, 7pm	Vegas Knight Hawks at San Diego Strike Force*
Mon., July 6, 6pm	Arizona Rattlers at San Diego Strike Force*
Sat., July 18, 8pm	New Mexico Chupacabras at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., July 24, 6pm	Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*

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by Jan Wagner

Chicano Park Day 2026, lowriders & the San Diego Trolley

Day featured not only a large and diverse collection of lowriders, as well as customized bicycles and motorcycles, and customized radio-controlled cars and trucks, but also live music, dancing, food, arts and crafts vendors, and more. I had not been to this event in several years. This year's was much larger and more heavily attended.

Therein lies the reason for the reference to the San Diego Trolley in the title of this week's column. Events likely to attract large crowds require lots of parking. Chicano Park is in a neighborhood, surrounded by houses and small businesses, so parking large numbers of cars nearby is an issue. Online I read that since parking is limited, a better way to get there is to take the San Diego Trolley's Blue Line to Barrio Logan Station, which is very close to where Chicano Park Day is celebrated.

Since I live in coastal North County, and already have plenty of experience parking in the free San Diego Trolley levels of the Nobel Station parking structure, and then taking the Blue Line as my first leg of taking the Trolley to San Diego Comic-Con each summer, this seemed like a no-brainer — certainly better than driving all the way to south of downtown San Diego and then trying to find convenient parking.

When I go to Comic-Con, the Trolley fills up mostly with people going there, often wearing their costumes. It is friendly, jovial, laid-back bunch of fellow travelers. This was just a typical Saturday, and the Trolley ride would pass through downtown San Diego — an area popular with our homeless population.

able seats when I boarded the Trolley, so I sat down and placed my large shoulder bag on the seat beside me. As the Trolley proceeded south, more and more people got on board, and the seats filled up. A loud, hyperactive young man boarded and asked me to move my shoulder bag, so that he could sit there. I moved my bag and gave him a thumbs-up. He was very fidgety and moved around a lot — both in his seat, and out and quickly back into the Trolley car at the stations. He played loud music and initiated loud and clearly unwelcome conversations with strangers. A woman told me that he was high on drugs. Other people in the car voiced their displeasure with his behavior — one shouting at him to “Shut up!”

I was worried because I was wearing one of my large, expensive, professional Canon cameras on my camera vest, and there were no security officers on board. I busied myself with my cellphone, but I should have stood up and moved away from him.

At one of the stations where he got off the Trolley, he failed to get back on quickly enough before the Trolley left the station. A loud cheer erupted from my fellow passengers. Soon thereafter I arrived at Barrio Logan station. I had a great afternoon at Chicano Park Day and took hundreds of photos.

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 © 2026 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #926

I love lowriders and the culture of Mexican American familia that is integral to them. Lowriders are amazing, extremely customized cars and trucks. They are lowered, colorfully painted (often with air-brushed murals), typically American cars and trucks — especially iconic classics including Chevrolet Impalas and Monte Carlos, Cadillacs, Lincolns and pickup trucks — with meticulously engraved chrome, pinstripes, heavily customized interiors and manually controlled hydraulic or airbag suspensions. These are low and slow cruisers, often simultaneously seen raising and leaning back-and-forth, and side-to-side on their hydraulic suspensions.

Often entire families are involved, from building the vehicles to going out as a family on cruises and gathering around at events, including the annual Chicano Park Day in the historic Barrio Logan area of San Diego, just south of downtown.

Chicano Park Day dates back to April 22, 1970, when the community discovered, and subsequently peacefully overcame, the City of San Diego's plans to turn the area under the Coronado Bridge into a CHP station. The park is located under the welcome shade of the bridge, with beautiful, large and culturally significant murals painted on the massive bridge supports.

The April 25, 2026 Chicano Park

There were still plenty of avail-

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

“Did they email you yet?” my husband asked, yet again.

“No, not yet,” I told him, yet again.

The email finally arrived yesterday. When I opened my laptop at our kitchen island and saw it in my inbox, my stomach jumped.

“Dear Lisa, Thank you for applying to the leadership program class of 2026,” the email read. “Regretfully, we will not be offering you a place in this year's class. We received an extraordinary number of strong applications,” blah, blah, blah.

My stomach, which had leapt into my throat, sunk back into place with a queasy plop. I sat a moment, dazed, not sure how to feel. On one hand, I was relieved that I hadn't been picked for the leadership program for which I'd interviewed and submitted an extensive application, because it would have required a lot of work, travel, and time away from home while juggling my full-time job.

On the other hand, I'd failed. No matter how much failure may turn out to be a blessing in disguise in the long run, it still feels bad in the moment. Suddenly, the inner child that has lived deep within me since I was a chunky middle schooler with

How to succeed at failing

average grades and no extraordinary skills spoke up. “See, you're just not good enough,” she told my consciousness. “You had no business applying in the first place.”

My husband had been telling anyone that would listen that I had applied to the prestigious leadership program. “Honey!” I'd admonish him, “Stop telling everyone! What if I don't make it?”

“You're gonna make it,” he'd reply, without the slightest doubt. But I'd known all along that there was a very good chance I would be rejected. Applicants were informed early on that it might take several application cycles to succeed, because the committee promulgated different criteria each year to create a unique cohort. The rational side of me knew that my qualifications were good enough for the overall program — I just didn't fit into this year's unique set of criteria.

Despite this rational, healthy and intelligent assessment, I still felt bad.

“I told you,” I wrote in the email forwarding my rejection letter to my husband.

When he got home that evening, he kissed me and said, “Sorry, Hon.”

“Ugh,” I groaned, “now I have to tell everyone.” I wasn't looking forward to admitting failure to all those people my husband had informed of my application. I couldn't blame him. At least, he had believed in me. I really wasn't looking forward to telling the people who'd taken the time to write my recommendations. I told my husband I wouldn't tell anyone yet.

The news was too fresh to accurately process. I needed time for the shock and pain of rejection to fade, so that my rational assessment would put this blip in time in proper perspective. While thinking things through, I recalled failures and successes from my past. Interestingly, while I vividly recalled many losses and defeats, my memory of achievements was foggy.

Although a few decent boys liked me when I was a teen, my stronger memory is of the many dances, Valentine's Days and Carnation fundraisers when I desperately longed for a boyfriend that never materialized. Although I was voted Most Improved and Team Captain, I can still smell the chlorine from countless high school swim meets when my father was disappointed that I didn't get my best time. Although I earned my degree from a good college, I'll never forget that Poly Sci C minus that was nearly a D thanks to skipped classes and pulling all-nighters before exams. Although I earned my J.D. cum laude, passed the bar with flying colors, and became a litigation attorney, the rejection letter I received from Wake Forest University Law School will forever be burned into my memory bank.

I realized that the sting of failure can obscure perceptions of successes and achievements. During moments of inevitable disappointment, it's important to keep your inner child from blowing things out of proportion. More importantly, when you are victorious, bring that inner child out of hiding, and teach her to celebrate your success so you'll never forget all that you've achieved.

Veterans News

Medal of Honor spotlight: Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields

by David Vergun
Pentagon News

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Marvin G. Shields has the distinction of being the only Seabee to ever be awarded the Medal of Honor.

He was born Dec. 30, 1939, in Port Townsend, Wash., and joined the Navy Jan. 8, 1962. He wanted to be a Seabee, construction mechanic, as he was good with his hands and liked the outdoors, having worked for a gold mining company in Hyder, Alaska, in 1958, just after high school.

On Nov. 1, 1964, he was assigned to Seabee Team 1104, Naval Construction Battalion 11, which consisted of eight enlisted service members and one officer.

Shields and his team deployed to Saigon, South Vietnam, Feb. 1, 1965, and were later assigned to a newly established Army Special Forces camp at Dong Xoai, about 55 miles northwest of Saigon, arriving June 4, 1965, to assist in repair and construction.

On the night of June 9, 1965,

the camp was bombed and attacked by approximately 2,000 Vietcong soldiers. Besides the Seabees, the camp was manned by only 11 Green Berets and about 200 South Vietnamese soldiers.

By morning, the camp was overrun.

After being wounded by mortar fire, Shields fought alongside the Green Berets against the enemy, carrying ammunition to the firing line positions. Although wounded again by shrapnel and shot in the jaw, he helped a soldier and a Seabee carry a badly wounded special forces captain in charge of the camp to a safer position.

According to his Medal of Honor citation, Shields continued to resupply his fellow Americans with needed ammunition and returned enemy fire for approximately three hours. At that time, the Vietcong launched a massive attack at close range with flamethrowers, hand grenades and small-arms fire.

Wounded a second time during this attack, Shields helped carry a critically wounded man



Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Northwest, as well as past and present military members, family, friends and community members, gathered to pay a heartfelt tribute to the unparalleled heroism exemplified by local hero and Medal of Honor recipient Marvin G. Shields during a ceremony at the Gardiner Cemetery in Gardiner, Wash., Nov. 11, 2023. U.S. Navy photo by Shawna Tindal

to safety and then resumed firing at the enemy for four more hours. When the commander asked for a volunteer to accompany him in an attempt to knock out an enemy machine-gun emplacement, Shields unhesitatingly volunteered for this extremely hazardous mission.

Proceeding toward their ob-

jective with a rocket launcher, they succeeded in destroying the enemy machine-gun emplacement and saved the lives of many of their fellow servicemen. However, Shields was mortally wounded by hostile fire while returning to his defensive position and died June 10, 1965.

Two Seabees, Shields and

Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class William C. Hoover lost their lives, and seven other Seabees were wounded in the battle. Three Green Berets were also killed, and many South Vietnamese soldiers were killed or wounded.

President Lyndon B. Johnson posthumously awarded Shields the Medal of Honor and presented it to his family Sept. 13, 1966. Shields is buried in Gardiner Cemetery in Gardiner, Washington, and his medal is displayed at the Seabee Museum and Memorial Park in North Kingstown, Rhode Island.

Shields' heroics during the Vietnam War continue to be appreciated. On Veterans Day in 2019, more than 100 service members, veterans and guests gathered at Gardiner Cemetery to honor him.

“It's a tremendous honor for Naval Facilities and Engineering Command Northwest to host this event every year,” said Navy Capt. Chad Brooks, NAVFAC Northwest commanding officer. “We have great support from other units in the area, and it's a

privilege every year to celebrate the Shields family and the Seabee community.”

“Of all of the opportunities I've had to share my thoughts at different events and ceremonies, being here today is by far the most humbling,” said retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer Doug Heiner, NAVFAC Northwest employee. “His Medal of Honor citation is the basis of legend and is retold every year as Seabee chief [petty officer] selectees are charged to keep our heritage alive.”

The event included the placement of a Medal of Honor flower box on Shields' grave, as well as a 21-gun salute.

“Today was exceptionally moving and exceptionally thoughtful, and I'm very grateful for the Seabee family that continues to make this day very special for me and my family,” said Joan Bennett-Shields, Marvin Shields' widow. “We couldn't do this without them.”

Camp Shields, a Seabee base in Okinawa, Japan, and frigate USS *Marvin Shields* were named in his honor.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Maggie Young to lead Fleet Week San Diego as President & Chief Executive Officer

The Board of Directors of the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation has selected Margaret "Maggie" Blumberg Young to be the President and Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation effective 1 April 2026.

Ms. Young is a graduate of San Diego State University and has been a member of the Fleet Week Staff since 2014, serving in a variety of leadership positions most recently as the Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, a position she held since 2022. Prior to joining the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation, Maggie was employed by Booz Allen Hamilton as a Senior Consultant. Ms. Young is a member of the San Diego Coast Guard City Committee and a Life committee member of the San Diego Bowl Game Association, (Holiday Bowl). Ms. Young is the widow of CWO3 Kenneth A. Young U.S. Navy (Ret.) and the mother of two adult sons and an adult daughter.

Fleet Week San Diego is delighted to have Maggie Young as our new President and Chief Executive Officer said Michael, "Mick" Fulton, Board Chair of the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation. "Her proven experience as a long-time member of our leadership team makes her uniquely qualified to lead us into the future as we honor and thank the men and women of our sea services during the 25th Anniversary of our foundation and the 250th Anniversary of our country."

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 Arrest
- 5 Dwarf planet named for goddess
- 9 Places to relax
- 14 Prefix meaning "personal"
- 15 Caribbean isle seriously damaged by a 1995 volcanic eruption
- 17 Threshold adjoiner
- 18 Law enforcement tool that may be triggered by a siren
- 19 Natural healer
- 20 First-class freebie on long-haul flights
- 21 1959 winner of
- 11 Oscars
- 23 Alfred of coffee fame
- 24 Mollycoddle
- 26 Jocular headlock accompaniment
- 31 Yani ___, youngest golfer to win five majors
- 33 Trendy
- 35 Head make-up
- 36 Loose
- 38 Some holy city dwellers
- 40 They go with guys
- 41 Ithaca opening
- 43 Pirogue, e.g.
- 44 Campaign buy
- 46 Reply card, say

Down

- 25 Parrot
- 27 Prime spot for stargazing?
- 28 Cuban city with a U.S. Navy base
- 29 SSN, e.g.
- 30 To be, in Latin
- 31 Harbor sights
- 32 Flip out
- 34 Mononymous supermodel
- 37 Jazz group guy
- 39 In the loop
- 42 Accessory with a suit
- 45 Artist Modigliani
- 47 Equilibraria
- 49 Big name in apple products
- 51 "The Girl Who Played With Fire" author Larsson
- 52 Medicinal shrub
- 53 Cosmonaut's insignia, once
- 54 Spaghetti ___ putanesca
- 55 Krystle and Alexis on the 1980s "Dynasty," e.g.
- 56 Stew
- 57 Maui's twisty Road to ___

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<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>

<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

NAS NI 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.

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NBSD Theater is temporarily closed for renovations as we work to bring you a better movie experience. We appreciate your patience and can't wait to welcome you back in spring 2026.

In the meantime, catch the latest films at NASNI Lowry Theater! Open, and ready to serve you!

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Armed Forces Day Operation Appreciation returns to O'side

Oceanside is gearing up for its annual Armed Forces Day Operation Appreciation. Created by the Chamber in 2002, Operation appreciation is a heartfelt event dedicated to honoring and celebrating our military's brave men and women. On Saturday, May 16, from 11am to 4pm, the Oceanside Chamber will bring the community together to provide a day of recognition for active-duty military stationed on Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton and nearby military bases.

Thousands of active-duty military and their families will be treated to a day of free food, entertainment, and a fun zone for kids. This event will be held at the Junior Seau Pier Amphitheater. Free parking is available in both the Civic Center Parking Structure and the Transit Center parking structure.

The day features a variety of activities, including a children's fun zone, live music, and free food provided exclusively for active-duty military members and their families. All active-duty military and their dependents must bring an active-duty military ID card for fun zone activities and a free lunch. This event is open to the public, and food and fun zone tickets are available for purchase.

SANDAG unveils 'Bike Anywhere Day' 2026 Pit Stop Map

Participants Can Pedal to More Than 100 Pit Stops Across the San Diego Region on Thursday, May 21

The SANDAG Bike Anywhere Day 2026 Pit Stop Map is now available to help participants plan their route for the annual event on Thursday, May 21, from 6:30 to 9:30 a.m. The map includes more than 100 pit stop locations, from Oceanside to El Cajon, and Tijuana.

For more than 30 years, SANDAG has hosted this regional event to celebrate National Bike Month in May to alleviate traffic and reduce air pollution while promoting biking as a fun, sustainable, and healthy transportation choice. Participants can pick up a free commemorative t-shirt and enjoy refreshments and snacks at any Bike Anywhere Day Pit stop on Thursday, May 21, while supplies last. Pit stop hosts include community organizations, local businesses, healthcare providers, schools, and government agencies.

Register to participate in Bike Anywhere Day, at org/bikeday.

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Camp Pendleton's historic Santa Margarita Ranch House complex now open most Mondays for tours

For those interested in visiting the Santa Margarita Ranch House National Historic Site, an additional opportunity has been made available to the public.

The Santa Margarita Ranch House complex, which includes the Ranch House, Bunkhouse Museum and Chapel, is now open every Monday (except on Federal holidays) between the hours of 10am and 2pm.

During these hours, Docents will be available to welcome visitors and give tours, or simply answer questions related to the history of the ranch and other historic sites on Camp Pendleton. In 1841, Don Pio Pico and his brother Andres Pico were granted the 133,000 acres Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores.

Their historic ranch house became the headquarters of a working cattle rancho that would expand to over 230,000 acres into today's Orange County. Before private ownership and possibly as early as 1806, it was an outpost of Mission San Luis Rey de Francia, with an adobe building, vineyards and crops.

Before Spanish and Mexican control, the site was the location of the prehistoric/ethnohistoric Native American Payómkawichum (Luiseño) village, Topomai.

In 1942, nearly the entire original Mexican land grant became Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. The historic adobe Ranch House served as the private resi-



Many have driven up the pathway leading to the Camp Pendleton Rancho Santa Margarita Ranch House, but few know the history of one of the oldest structures on base. The Ranch House staff will conduct regular open house tours, in which docents will guide visitors through the historical site every Monday (except Federal holidays) from 10am to 2pm. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Shannon E. McMillan 2010.

dence for thirty-five different Commanding Generals and their families, from 1947 until 2007. Today the Ranch House and other adobe buildings are preserved as a National Historic Site.

In addition to the new Monday schedule, the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores Docents, a 501(c)(3) organization supporting Camp Pendleton's History & Museum Division, also provide free private tours.

To schedule a tour, call (760) 725-5758 or email MCB-

CAMPEN_history@usmc.mil. Visitors without base access credentials must submit their request at a minimum of two weeks prior to their expected visit by calling (760) 725-5758 or emailing MCB-

CAMPEN_history@usmc.mil.

For more information on the historic sites aboard Camp Pendleton, visit: <https://www.pendleton.marines.mil/about/#tab/history>.

THINGS TO DO!

Carlsbad Spring Village Faire, May 3, 8am-4pm. 750+ unique vendors. kennedyfares.com/carlsbad
Cajon Cruise Nights, Wednesdays, May 6-July 22, 5-7:30pm, Main Street and Prescott Promenade. Live music, great food, and a welcoming community vibe. www.downtownelcajon.com/do/cajon-cruise
Gator by the Bay Zydeco, Blues & Crawfish Festival, May 7-10. Spirit of Louisiana comes to SD to fill your ears with swinging music and fill your bellies with pounds of crawfish. gatorbythebay.com
San Diego International Fringe Festival, May 12-24, Brings the beautiful, the bizarre and the unexpected. <https://sdfringe.org/>
79th Annual Ocean Beach Kite Festival, May 16, 10am-3pm. Perfect for kids from 0-102. Robb Athletic Field, 2525 Bacon St. San Diego.
Asian Cultural Festival May 16. asianculturalfestivalsd.com
Over the Line Beer Fest and OTL Tournament, May 16. <https://www.ombac.org/beerfestotl/>
Oceanside Armed Forces Day Operation Appreciation, May 16, 11am-4pm. Oceanside Pier Amphitheatre. Free to active duty military and dependents. Open to the public.
Island Vibe Music Festival, May 16. islandvibemusicfestival.com
Navy Bay Bridge Run, May 17, 8am, Hilton Bayfront Park. Sign up today. <https://www.navybaybridgerun.com/>
Escondido Street Festival, May 17, 10-6. Grand Avenue Festival, a cherished annual event for over 30 years, vendors, live music.
Valley Center Western Days, May 22-23. Parade, Stampede Rodeo & Festival, pancake breakfast, 5K fun run. "Celebrating America" Parade, May 23, Grand Marshal - American War Hero and local resident Captain E. Royce Williams, USN (ret). Join us as we honor Captain Williams and celebrate America's 250th birthday. <https://www.westerndays.org/>



The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

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