

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985
 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR
 THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2023



CAVALRY CHARGE Soldiers assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division Horse Cavalry Detachment conduct a cavalry charge during an assumption of responsibility ceremony at Fort Cavazos, Texas, May 12, 2023. It has been over 70 years, February 1943, since the last mounted Troopers of the 1st Cavalry Division traded their horses for jeeps, trucks and tanks in preparation of their entrance into the Pacific Theater. US Army photo by Pfc. David Dumas

5th Fleet increasing patrols in Strait of Hormuz in response to Iranian seizures

MANAMA, Bahrain - U.S. 5th Fleet is working with regional allies and partners to increase the rotation of ships and aircraft patrolling in and around the Strait of Hormuz following Iran's recent unlawful merchant vessel seizures.

The increased force presence supports multinational efforts to deter threats to commercial shipping and reassure regional mariners. In addition to heightened patrols, U.S. 5th Fleet is bolstering international maritime security collaboration among the International Maritime Security Construct and European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz.



"Iran's unwarranted, irresponsible and unlawful seizure and harassment of merchant vessels must stop," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. "U.S. 5th Fleet and our partners are committed to protecting navigational rights in these critical waters."

Ensign Gordon Kitchener looks out from the bridge of destroyer USS Paul Hamilton May 9, 2023 in the Arabian Gulf. US Navy photo by MC2 Elliot Schaudt

Iran has harassed, attacked or interfered with the navigational rights of 15 internationally flagged merchant vessels over the past two years. This pattern of destabilizing behavior is contrary to international law and disruptive to regional security.

NATION MARKS 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF END OF VIETNAM WAR

by David Vergun
 DOD News

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration hosted "Welcome Home! A Nation Honors our Vietnam Veterans and their Families," on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., May 11.

The first of a three-day event on the Mall marks the 50th anniversary of when the last combat troops left South Vietnam in 1973.

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro recognized attendees from Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Korea and Thailand and thanked them for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. forces during the Vietnam War.

"I thank you for your presence," Del Toro said. "I'm grate-

ful both for the sacrifices made by your people during the Vietnam War, and for your steadfast support and our joint endeavors to this day.

"It is not only appropriate, but absolutely essential that we, as a nation, take time to focus on this period in our country's history, and especially, to thank these most deserving of our citizens, our Vietnam veterans," he said.

Del Toro noted that "these Vietnam veterans made their mark on who I am today, helping guide my own actions and decisions over the decades. I am indebted to them, for they helped shape my character, and helped me become a more proficient Navy officer, a better leader, and a better secretary of the Navy."

Many veterans live with the

wounds, visible or not, that were inflicted while serving their nation in a time of conflict. And many families live with the loss of their loved ones, the daily absence of a sailor, soldier, Marine or airman who never returned from the war, he said.

"There are no words that can do justice to the grief, for the sacrifices made by the service members and their survivors. No words. But we can look you in the eye and tell you sincerely that we stand with you today in solidarity. You have our thanks, our respect and our steadfast support," he said.

Former Army 1st Lt. Brian Miles Thacker, a Vietnam veteran and Medal of Honor recipient, was the guest speaker.

"One of the things you learn with this award is that it's not

a me award. It's an us award. And the choir is very large," he said, meaning reliance and recognition of fellow soldiers and support personnel associated with the valorous action.

Thacker noted that he was one of the fortunate ones to survive the war. He said he's met with Gold Star families of those who were killed in battle and the experience was solemn and sobering.

As a member of the 92nd Artillery, Thacker was in Kontum Province, South Vietnam, on March 31, 1971, when a numerically superior North Vietnamese Army force launched a well-planned dawn attack on the small, isolated, hilltop fire base, according to his medal citation.

Employing rockets, grenades, see **Vietnam, page 2**

ARMED FORCES DAY

OPERATION APPRECIATION

Oceanside, California

On Saturday, May 20, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Oceanside Chamber will bring the business community and area residents together to provide a day of recognition to all active-duty military stationed on Marine Corps Base Camp Joseph H. Pendleton and nearby military bases. Thousands of active duty military, their family and dependents are treated to a day of free food, entertainment and a fun zone for kids. Whether you're a civilian who wants to show your gratitude and enjoy a day of fun, or a member of the military family, this is a day for you to show your appreciation or to be appreciated!

The event will be held at the Oceanside Pier Amphitheater.

This event is open to the public, and food and fun zone tickets available for purchase. The fun begins at 11 o'clock and lasts until 4 p.m.. The day consists of activities including a children's fun zone with inflatable jumps, rock climbing wall, kid's crafts and face painting. All active duty military and their dependents must bring an active duty military ID card to get unlimited activities and a free lunch.

Your FREE weekly paper
 Take one!

Career Advice
 Marines once again face random alcohol screenings as COVID-19 emergency ends.
 See page 5

Base Movie Schedule
 See the latest movies - Renfield, Evil Dead Rise, The Covenant, and more - offered on the bases for free or reduced prices. Check our weekly schedule.
 See page 10

Defenders memorialized during police week, DAF expands Security Forces training

WASHINGTON - The names of three Department of the Air Force defenders were among the 556 fallen officers read aloud during the 35th Annual Candlelight vigil May 13 as part of the many events that take place across the country during National Police Week, May 14-19.

The three defenders honored during the vigil were Tech. Sgt. Jason Norton, Staff Sgt. Brian McElroy and Senior Airman Jason Nathan.

"It's important to honor their memories and celebrate the achievements they made to the defense of our nation," said Brig. Gen. Thomas Sherman, director of Security Forces. "National Police Week in general is a time to reflect on those we lost, as well as a time to come together as law enforcement professionals within the Security Forces career field."

At this year's vigil, Timothy Gerald, deputy director of Security Forces, attended the vigil to represent the Department of the Air Force defender family.



Tech. Sgt. Ryan Welch and Senior Airman Christian Montembeau, members of the 157th Security Forces Squadron, clear a training village March 20, 2023, at Center Strafford, N.H. US Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Victoria Nelson

"Our Department of the Air Force civilian police officers have worked alongside uniformed defenders for more than a decade. Together, our active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian defenders conducting law enforcement make us a stronger fighting force," said Gerald, who also serves as the senior Air Force civilian and functional manager overseeing all matters concerning the utilization, development and career field management of the 4,600-person

DAF civilian security and police force. "Thank you to our Total Force defender family for their dedicated service."

National Police Week is a time to reflect on the challenges that law enforcement officers face every day. The Security Forces Air Staff continues to support law enforcement officers by ensuring that they have adequate resources and training.

Law enforcement is an important aspect of Security Force's larger mission of base defense. Defenders protect Airmen, Guardians and their families; defend resources, equipment and capability; and assure that air and space missions supporting the DAF are carried out successfully and securely.

Law enforcement is not only important for the safety and

well-being of Airmen—it is also a key force-multiplying capability vested in base defense.

As the Air Staff recognizes law enforcement professionals during Police Week, it also reflects on the major efforts underway to support civilians within its law enforcement community.

In 2022, the Security Forces enterprise launched an effort to build the law enforcement specialty directly within the civilian career field. This required selecting a subset of the 43,000 Total Force Security Forces population to be uniquely identified as law enforcement practitioners.

Building on that effort, the Air Staff expanded the Police Officer Training and Standards Accredited Academy to accept military students. This enables the Security Forces enterprise to establish a foundation of base defense training, creating base defense-focused defenders within the basic courses while later selecting Airmen for specialized law enforcement training at the academy.

The Air Force Security Forces Center facilitated funding to increase course availability to 500 students per year. All graduates are credentialed and badged federal law enforcement officers. Finally, to sustain officer skills, the AFSFC will introduce a 40-hour annual recertification course and additional instruction for field training officers,

sergeant/supervisors and deputy directors.

USAF AF Air Force defenders Candlelight Vigil National Police Week Tech. Sgt. Jason

Norton Staff Sgt. Brian McElroy Senior Airman Jason Nathan in memory of Brig. Gen. Thomas Sherman Timothy Gerald honor security forces Law Enforcement police

Vietnam continued from page 1

flamethrowers and automatic weapons, the enemy forces penetrated the perimeter defenses and engaged the defenders in hand-to-hand combat, the citation states.

Throughout the morning and early afternoon, Thacker rallied and encouraged the U.S. and Republic of Vietnam soldiers in heroic efforts to repulse the enemy. He occupied a dangerously exposed observation position for a period of four hours while directing friendly air strikes and artillery fire against the assaulting enemy forces, the citation states.

"His personal bravery and inspired leadership enabled the outnumbered friendly forces to inflict a maximum of casualties on the attacking enemy forces and prevented the base from being overrun," the citation states.

By late afternoon, the situation had become untenable. Thacker organized and directed the withdrawal of the remaining friendly forces. With complete disregard for his personal safety, he remained



Brian Miles Thacker attends the 113th Army vs. Navy football game, Dec. 8, 2012, in Philadelphia, Pa. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Teddy Wade

inside the perimeter alone to provide covering fire with his M-16 rifle until all other friendly forces had escaped from the besieged fire base, the citation states.

Then, in an act of supreme courage, he called for friendly artillery fire on his own position to allow his comrades more time to withdraw safely from the area and, at the same time, inflict even greater casualties on the enemy forces. Although wounded and unable to escape from the area himself, he successfully eluded the enemy forces for eight days until friendly forces regained control of the fire base, the citation states.



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NATIONAL MALL, WASHINGTON (MAY 11, 2023) Medal of Honor recipient Melvin Morris attends the opening ceremony for the "Welcome Home! A Nation Honors our Vietnam Veterans and their Families," event on the. Vietnam veterans and their families were honored during the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War. Photo by Henry Villarama



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Austin says taking care of troops, families a high priority

by David Vergun
DOD News

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III met with paratroopers and family members of the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, N.C., May 12.

The secretary thanked the Soldiers for choosing to serve, particularly in a division that's ready to go into combat at a moment's notice.

"My number one priority is to defend this country. My second priority is to take care of people. I want to make sure that you have the resources that you need to be successful, that you're getting the right training, that you got the leaders that you need to be successful as well," he said.

Austin mentioned that he talks to President Joe Biden at least a couple of times every week and the president always asks: "Are we doing enough for our troops? And what more do they need? Are we taking care of their families?"

The secretary also mentioned that he and other leaders are committed to making sure families are being taken care of.

On another note, Austin said "Part of being ready is making sure that you're looking out for your wing-man and your wing-woman. Make sure you're paying

attention to your teammates who are having issues or problems. Be there for them. Talk to them. Help them get the help that they need. ... Don't be afraid to seek help. If you see somebody you think needs help, don't hesitate, put your arm around him and say, 'let me help you.'"

The 82nd legacy continues, Austin said. "Be proud of who you are; America's best, America's finest. We sent you a lot of places in the past. We're going to call on you again. And when we call you again, my expectation is that you'll be ready."

A senior defense official said that during Austin's conversation with family members, they expressed a number of concerns, particularly relating to the need for childcare, as spaces are often hard to come by, particularly at Fort Bragg.

The official said that the Defense Department has been in talks with installations that lack child care workers and is looking at ways to increase their numbers. Bumping up salaries for those workers is one option.

The official said the secretary is committed to helping families and that is the major focus of this trip.

During his commencement speech Saturday at Fayetteville State University, a historically Black university in Fayette-



Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and his wife, Charlene, visit with families from the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg May 12. Austin also visited Army Forces Command and Hampton Primary School, a child development center. DoD photo by Chad J. McNeeley

ville, N.C., Austin said, "Service deepens our democracy. Service brings us closer to the full promise of America's founding. Service builds on itself. Long after you graduate, I hope that you will carry forward the FSU legacy of service," he said.

Serving in uniform is a great way to do that, but so is volunteering in the local community, he said. "It is doing your part to make real our country's highest ideals of liberty and justice for all."

"Service means standing firm on the American principle that all people are created equal. Service means demanding equality of opportunity for all of our children.

And service means setting an example," he said.

Austin mentioned that one of his uncles served in the Vietnam War as a Green Beret.

"I still remember him coming home, wearing that green beret and those jump boots. And I saw him, and I thought to myself, 'You know, I've got to do that. I've just got to have some of that.' And so, his service led to my service," he said. "Now, I know that the road forward may seem steep. And I know that many of you see the distance between where America is and what America should be and what America can be. But to make America's promise real, our democracy needs you; each and every one of you."

Special ops civilian chief speaks of future of community

by Jim Garamone

Special operations forces are carefully, but quickly, adjusting their mission sets to account for the world of strategic competition, said Christopher Maier, assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low intensity conflict.

Maier, who spoke May 12 at the Special Operations Forces Week Conference in Tampa, Fla., is responsible for overseeing and advocating for special operations throughout DoD.

He also ensures special ops forces have the right capabilities, and that the forces are ready for their missions under the National Defense Strategy.

As such, Maier is sort of a cross between a policy advisor and a service secretary. When Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III speaks to the service secretaries, Maier is there.

Maier also advocates for special operations capabilities. "Even as we continue our well-established roles of counterterrorism and crisis response, we are increasingly challenged to show our value in integrated deterrence and campaigning," he said. "My team and I work

daily to ensure the value proposition of SOF against strategic competitors is accounted for and incorporated into the department's processes and planning and most importantly in decisions."

Maier works to ensure special operations capabilities are considered in everything from war games to budget decisions. The "value proposition" of special ops forces needs to be baked into the National Defense Strategy, he said. "It's very important that this community not only under-

stands that for themselves, but also that it is not exclusively this community that is advancing that value proposition," he said.

Part of the value proposition is special operations forces' extensive and deep relationships with partners and allies around the globe, Maier said. "These generational relationships enable SOF to expose vulnerabilities, identify opportunities and create enduring advantage over our competitors — many of whom have very few, if any, allies and partners," he said.

Included in this is the fact that special operations forces have access and influence generated

see **SpecOps**, page 4

Maier works to ensure special operations capabilities are considered in everything from war games to budget decisions.

Top 5

- Soldiers under 'enormous strain,' warns Army's top enlisted leader
- Air Guard considers cutting enlisted mental health specialists
- Army chief seeks closer security ties with Indonesia
- Sailors who sign up for 3-year journeyman sea tours to get bonus pay
- Marine vet charged in NYC subway death is freed pending trial



Army

- Halfway through base name changes, business as usual across the Army
- Helicopter involved in accident at Yakima Training Center
- Details emerge of Army Special Forces' battle with Russian mercenaries
- Army offers \$25,000 reward for information in death of ROTC student

Navy

- Chaplains taking frontline role in surface fleet mental health
- As US shifts its gaze, can anyone keep an eye on Iran in the Gulf?
- Carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* now underway ahead of spring patrol

Marine Corps

- Marines are hiring specialists to root out workplace gender bias
- Camp Pendleton Marine charged with selling short-barreled ghost rifles

Air Force

- Georgia base welcomes first 'BACN' communications relay plane
- B-2 operators not 'sitting on their hands' as safety pause continues
- Air Force scrambles to address Officer Training School instructor shortage

Coast Guard

- Coast Guard returned dozens of migrants to Cuba and the Bahamas over the past week
- Coast Guard ship seized \$110 million in drugs in three days

National Guard

- Two men stranded in snowy Pike National Forest rescued by National Guard
- National Guard holds off dozens of migrants attempting to cross Rio Grande

Veterans

- New Maryland laws to help vets with tax relief, health care benefits

Education & Transition

- Golf maintenance program aims to ace veteran employment

- Marine veteran turns side gig into security company

Military Culture & History

- HBO film based on NSA leaker "Reality Winner" slated for May 29 release

Defense Industry

- Sikorsky spins up to defend HH-60W combat rescue helicopter from planned cuts

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Milley says investments in military capabilities are paying off

by Jim Garamone
DOD News

The U.S. military is the most lethal and capable armed force in the world because previous administrations and Congresses made the investments needed, Army Gen. Mark A. Milley told the Senate Appropriations Defense Subcommittee May 11.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the panel that the military's purpose is simple: "to defend the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic."

In this era, this means to deter great power war. "To do this, our No. 1 priority is readiness now and readiness in the future — and there is no other No. 1 priority," the general said.

The fiscal 2024 defense budget request accomplishes this, he said.

The international rules-based system that has kept great power peace since the end of World War II is under increasing stress, Milley said. "Both China and Russia have the means to threaten our interests and our way of life," he said. "But war with China or

Russia is neither imminent nor inevitable."

China is the United States' long-term geostrategic security challenge. "[China] has publicly stated that it intends to be the regional hegemon in Asia within the next 10 years and to exceed the United States' overall military capability by midcentury," the general said. "Chinese actions are moving it on a path toward potential confrontation with its neighbors or the United States. But, again, war with China is neither inevitable nor imminent."

Milley said Russia is an acute threat and remains very dangerous, especially under current conditions. U.S. officials have said Russia's war on neighboring Ukraine threatens European stability. "We're supporting Ukraine to protect its sovereignty and supporting NATO with a force presence in every single nation on NATO's eastern front," he said.

Iran continues to disturb the peace in the Middle East and beyond by its support of terrorists and proxy forces. "[Iranian

leaders] continue to improve their capability to produce a nuclear weapon," Milley said. The general said Iran could produce enough materiel to produce an atomic weapon quickly, and then it would only be a few months before a deliverable weapon was ready. "The United States policy remains the same, and the United States remains committed that Iran will not have a nuclear weapon," he said.

North Korea also continues testing missiles and nuclear weapons. "We stand with the Republic of Korea [South Korea] shoulder-to-shoulder to deter North Korean aggression as we have for 70 years," he said.

Add to those threats that of terror groups, and the U.S. military has its hands full. "We are currently standing watch on freedom's frontier," the chairman said. Forces must defend land, air, sea, space and cyber domains, and U.S. service members work with allies and partners to ensure their safety.

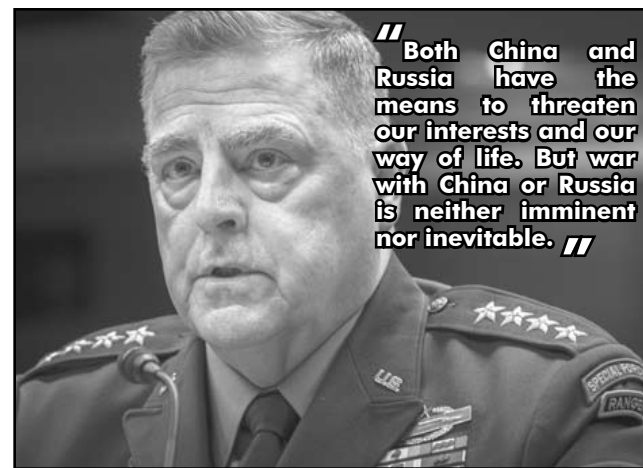
Three men, one in military uniform, sit at a long table. Other people are in the background.

Milley told the senators that investments in maintenance are paying off with operational readiness rates higher now than they've been in years. "Currently, 60 percent of our active force is at the highest states of readiness and could deploy to combat in less than 30 days," he said.

An example of that is when President Biden ordered the U.S. military to react to the unprovoked aggression by Russia. "We deployed one corps, two divisions, three brigade combat teams out of the Army [to Europe]," Milley said. "We doubled the amount of fighter squadrons, and we doubled the number of ships and submarines in the European theater of operations - and we did that in 35 days. That doesn't happen by accident."

He cited the operation to evacuate the U.S. diplomats in Khartoum, Sudan. That joint operation involved the Navy, Army, Air Force and Marine Corps, as well as National Guard in Djibouti put naval special ops forces on the ground delivered by Army special operations aircraft, with Air Force support above with fixed-wing fighter bombers, Army Rangers and a quick-reaction force the Marine Corps in reserve and five U.S. naval vessels off the coast and National Guard in Djibouti ready to go," he said. "All of that was planned, coordinated, synchronized and executed from a cold start. Our force can rapidly project flexible, responsive power anywhere around the globe, and no adversary should ever doubt that ... the U.S. military is ready."

The U.S. military is at an inflection point, the general said. "We must balance operations readiness and modernization," he said. "We must not allow ourselves to create the false trap that we can either modernize or focus only on today — we must do both."



"Both China and Russia have the means to threaten our interests and our way of life. But war with China or Russia is neither imminent nor inevitable."

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark A. Milley provides testimony on the fiscal 2024 defense budget at a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense hearing in Washington, May 11. DoD photo by Chad J. McNeeley

SpecOps continued from page 3

by long-term commitments to building partner capacity and improving interoperability. This provides "expanded low-cost options to gain awareness, shape the operating environment, and present adversaries with multiple dilemmas," Maier said. "We provide these options to policy makers across the spectrum of competition, often without needing to risk high profile U.S. military presence or major financial investments."

Finally, special operators have the multidomain skills and expertise needed to provide leaders with creative, tailorable and asymmetric options that can create dilemmas and alter decision making for adversaries, he said.

Looking to the future, Maier emphasized people, technologies and organizations. "These three dimensions will be part of a future operating concept that we have been developing jointly with that will detail our vision for SOF to operate alongside the joint force in the future and

guide force design considerations," he said.

People will always be the lead in any special operations consideration. "In the future, investing in our people is a cornerstone to ensure SOF is ready to take on our nation's toughest challenges because it is not a question of if, but when, the call will come," he said.

"We also continue to prioritize a diverse, capable force by removing barriers to participation in advancement in SOF — an operational imperative — if we are to succeed in an ever more complex geopolitical environment and remain the most lethal SOF enterprise the world has ever known," he continued.

On the tech side, all leaders must ensure special operators are at the cutting edge of what is possible, Maier said. His office and U.S. Special Operations Command jointly issued capabilities and programming guidance that forms the basis of procurement for the next five years. SOF also must be a leader in integrating data-driven technologies.



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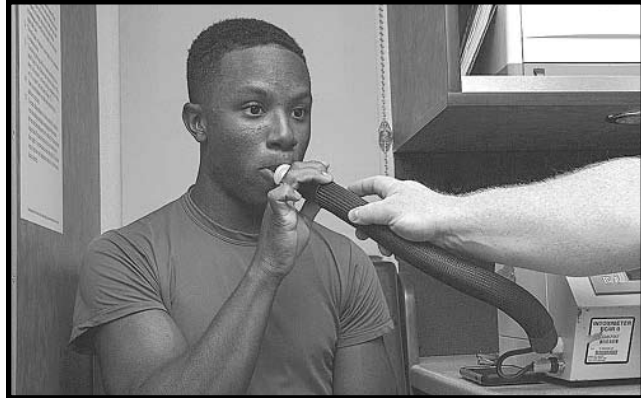
Marines once again face random alcohol screenings as COVID-19 emergency ends

by **Matthew M. Burke**
Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps is reviving random Breathalyzer and urinalysis testing across the force following a temporary pause brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Alcohol Screening Program, which requires 10 percent of Marines in each unit to take a Breathalyzer and undergo urinalysis every month, will resume no later than June 1, Lt. Gen. James Glynn, deputy commandant for manpower and Reserve affairs, wrote in a Marine Corps administrative message Monday.

The screening program was suspended while the COVID-19 public health emergency — declared by the federal government in January 2020 — was in effect because a Breathalyzer test requires a subject to blow into the device, according to the message. COVID-19 is transmitted through tiny liquid particles from an infected person's mouth or nose, according to the World Health Organization.



A lance corporal takes a Breathalyzer test at Camp Lejeune, N.C., Sept. 29, 2017. US Marine Corps photo by Colton Brownlee

The Department of Health and Human Services ended the COVID-19 public health emergency on Thursday, a plan it announced in February.

The screening program “supports a commander’s efforts to ensure Marines arrive to work safely and fit for duty,” the Marine Corps message states. The policy applies to active-duty Marines, members of the Selected Marine Corps Reserve and Marines on active operational support orders.

Alcohol abuse has long been a problem in the Marine Corps and is sometimes glorified as part of its culture. A 2018 Defense Department health behaviors survey by the Rand Corp. found that 45 percent of Marine respondents reported binge drinking in the past 30 days, the highest rate reported by any service branch.

The secretary of the Navy established the screening program in January 2013. Testing began semi-annually to identify

at-risk service members and refer them for training, counseling or treatment.

Although the program was designed for deterrence and education, commanders were afforded leeway to pursue administrative action against offenders. Marines found to be in violation face a range of interventions from counseling to court-martial.

The policy directs leaders to counsel Marines whose tests showed a blood-alcohol content of 0.01 percent or greater and refer those with 0.04 percent or greater to military medical practitioners to determine their fitness for duty.

A service member incapacitated by drunkenness or with a blood-alcohol content of 0.08 percent while on duty is committing a criminal offense under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Offenders face punishments ranging from a bad conduct discharge, forfeiture of pay and allowances and confinement of anywhere from a couple of

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months to years depending on one's job and the severity of the offense, the UCMJ states.

Daniel Conway, a former Marine officer and Washington-based attorney who specializes in representing service members, said he doesn't believe the program will lead to an influx of fresh courts-martial. At the same time, he sees potential issues.

“Part of the problem is they're testing a really low percentage and they're doing so randomly and they're using a tool that can be unreliable,” he told Stars and Stripes by phone Thursday. “If the intent of the program is to help identify Marines who need substance abuse counseling, I think there's far better ways for leaders to get to know their Marines and make that determination.”

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Local Marines to support California Border Patrol agents as more migrants arrive



CAMP PENDLETON - As reported in various news sources this week, Marines from Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Division will be among 1,500 troops sent to the U.S.-Mexico border to aid Customs and Border Protection as pandemic restrictions expire and a surge of migrants arrive.

The Oceanside-based Marines will join around 350 Marines from the 2nd Division at Camp Lejeune, N.C., and will be assigned duties by Border Patrol Agents. The increased law enforcement presence at the border comes after a federal immigration control regulation ended May 11.

Title 42 of the U.S. Public Health Service Act was triggered in March 2020 by then-head of U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Robert Redfield, under the authority of former President Donald Trump, as a means of preventing propagation of COVID-19.

The order enabled federal authorities to send border crossers back into Mexico without formal asylum hearings based on efforts to mitigate the spread of coronavirus. The health order provided the means to expel 2.7 million individuals over the last three years, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The end of the regulation is expected to trigger a greater influx of border crossers into Southern California, placing "significant stress" on county resources, requiring decisive measure to stop abuse of the immigration system, local and federal officials said.

According to a May 2 report in *Military.com*, the Pentagon is sending 1,500 active-duty troops to the southwest border as federal immigration agencies and local communities brace for the expiration of pandemic-era restrictions used to quickly send migrants back to Mexico.



In this Nov. 25, 2018 file photo, Marines assist Customs and Border Protection suspending operations at the San Ysidro Port of Entry According to reports on May 12, 2023, about 200 Marines from Camp Pendleton will join about 350 Marines from Camp Lejeune, N.C., and will be assigned duties by the Border Patrol agents at the southern border. US Marine Corps photo by Gunnery Sgt. Rubin Tan

The troop deployment was authorized earlier this month by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin for 90 days. They'll work monitoring the area, doing data entry and manning warehouses amid an expected new influx of migrants and asylum seekers, even as the U.S. immigration system groans under record-high border crossings.

The service members will not be involved in law enforcement

activities, the Pentagon said, a responsibility that would raise a range of legal complications.

Military forces, composed mostly of National Guard troops, have been continuously deployed to states along the Mexico border since 2018 under an order from former President Trump. That's on top of a string of National Guard deployments that have been approved by governors, including a Texas mission that

faced repeated issues with troops getting paid on time and substance abuse.

About 2,500 National Guard troops on federal orders are already working at the border as the so-called Title 42 public health order that had allowed immigration agencies to immediately remove migrants from U.S. soil as of last Thursday.

"I think we'll see these troops arrive as early as May 10," Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder, the top Pentagon spokesman, said May 2 during a public briefing.

The 1,500 troops will come mostly from the Army and Marine Corps, and will support the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, under the Department of Homeland Security. But Ryder said the Pentagon may replace some of the active-duty forces with National Guard troops during the three-month deployment.

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Local views - from Camp Pendleton to San Diego Bay



WATERS OFF SAN DIEGO (May 14, 2023) Japan Coast Guard training vessel Kojima during Operation Sapphire, a perpetual operation between the U.S. and Japan Coast Guards to strengthen relationships. US Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray



MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT, SAN DIEGO (May 8, 2023) A Marine Corps drill instructor with Receiving Company, Support Battalion, instruct recruits with Alpha Company, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, to move faster during receiving. Receiving is the recruits first day here, where they were checked for contraband, given haircuts, made phone calls home, and issued gear. US Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Max J. Noel



PACIFIC OCEAN (May 11, 2023) Sailors apply shoring during a damage control training drill aboard destroyer USS John Finn. US Navy photo by MC2 Samantha Oblander

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND (May 11, 2023) Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) James Honea speaks to Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet leadership during their training symposium. The symposium provides a forum for commodores, commanders, and Surface Fleet leaders to receive updates on Fleet-wide initiatives, at the unit level, that generate combat ready ships and battle-minded crews. US Navy photo by MCCS Anastasia McCarroll



UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, Calif. (April 4, 2023) A West Coast-based Naval Special Warfare operator conducts low-light live-fire weapons training with a MK-18 M4 carbine rifle as part of land warfare training exercises. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's elite maritime special operations force. US Navy photo by MC1 Chelsea D. Meiller



***Sunday, May 21**

The Navy's 36th Annual Bay Bridge Run/Walk is hosted by the Navy Region Southwest Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Program. The unique 4-mile run/walk has a one-of-a-kind spectacular panoramic view as participants make their way to Coronado's beautiful Tidelands Park from downtown San Diego over the Coronado Bay Bridge. During the finish line celebration, runners receive a Finisher's medal, event T-shirt, and enjoy sponsor booths. Register at navy-baybridgerun.com.



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Trackin' Makin



Sailors and Marines sort packages during a replenishment-at-sea evolution aboard USS Makin Island. RAS evolutions allow ships to receive mission essential supplies and care packages while underway or in port. Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific (COMLOG WESTPAC)/Task Force 73 logistically resupplies deployed units in the Indo-Pacific along with regional Allies and partners. Official Navy photo

Makin Island ARG departs Guam

U.S. NAVAL BASE GUAM – The *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) departed Guam following a routine port visit, May 15.

While in port Guam, the *Makin Island* ARG, comprised of Makin Island amphibious assault ship, and *Anchorage* and *John P. Murtha* amphibious transport docks, refueled and took on pallets, and had the chance to explore the local area.

“One of the most rewarding aspects of a deployment is allowing the crew time to explore unique areas of the world,” said Capt. Andria Slough, commanding officer of *Makin Island*. “Guam is tremendously rich in culture and we were excited



A Sailor aboard Makin Island maintains equipment in the hangar bay. Official Navy photo

to experience the island’s heritage.”

In addition, the crew participated in shipboard preservation, an operation required to maintain the integrity of the ship’s structure and the ship’s overall appearance. The embarked 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) also participated in the command-wide maintenance, cleaning the ship and sorting inventory.

“Deployed ships withstand a variety of hurdles while out to sea,” said Chief Boatswain’s Mate Jordan Magdalenski. “Preservation makes it possible to continue operating at peak performance.”

The Makin Island ARG is operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations with the embarked 13th MEU to enhance interoperability with Allies and partners and serve as a ready-response force to defend peace and maintain stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Complementary education: How the USNCC cybersecurity degree enhances warfighting capability

by Chief Petty Officer Alexander Gamble

U.S. Naval Community College
SAN DIEGO - On the bone-in ribeye shape that makes up Coronado, Naval Amphibious Base Coronado rests just below where the bone meets the meat. Assault Craft Unit 1 has a view of the bottom of the steak in an unassuming gray box building on the waterfront.

“I wear many hats here,” said Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Robert LeMonds, of San Antonio, on his experience at the command. He said this has led to many opportunities to work above his paygrade in a variety of aspects to support the command’s mission.

LeMonds was excited to start his educational journey, but since he had been in the Navy about two years at the time, he was not yet eligible for tuition assistance. He found out about United States Naval Community College when NAVADMIN 222/21 was released announcing the start of the school’s second pilot program. “I’m a bit of a nerd,” he said. “I like to read message traffic.” It was through reddit that he found out USNCC offered the competency-based education version of a cybersecurity degree.

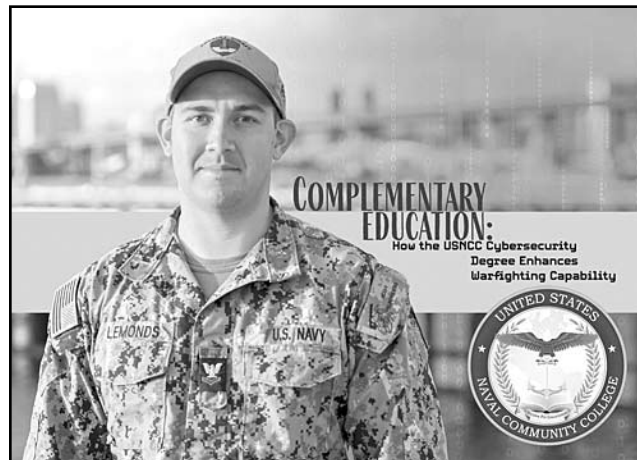
The CBE model lets students work at their own pace to complete an education. Instead of a time-based model where students meet weekly requirements and advance upon completion of an eight-week course – the average course length of most of USNCC’s degree programs – CBE lets students like LeMonds complete their education as quickly or slowly as they can learn the material.

It took LeMonds 15 days to complete his first course “partially because I had the prior background and knowledge.” The other reason he completed the course so fast is because he was “going at it every night.” He said he wanted to be aggressive with it.

LeMonds has completed three courses with Western Governors University – the cybersecurity CBE partner institution for USNCC. While he was able to lean on his knowledge and experience for the first two courses, the third course was a bit more challenging for him.

“This was not my strong suit, and I knew that going into the class,” said LeMonds about his scripting and programming class. He thought he had failed the final exam, but when he got an A, he said, “I thought it was really cool that all that knowledge got retained.” He said the course made it much easier to understand the material than he expected.

There were 178 Sailors, Ma-



Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Robert LeMonds has completed three courses with Western Governors University – the cybersecurity CBE partner institution for the U.S. Naval Community College. NCC. US Navy graphic illustration by MCC Xander Gamble

rines, and Coast Guardsmen that signed up to be among the first USNCC students to start the CBE program.

This program includes six built-in CompTIA certificates. Students that complete the Associate of Science in Cybersecurity and Information Assurance walk away with certificates in A+, Network+, Security+, CySA+, Secure Infrastructure Specialist, and Security Analytics Professional.

“We designed this course with

NASNI comptroller team receives financial management awards

by Janina Lamoglia

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest
NAVAL AIR STATION
NORTH ISLAND - Year after year, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) proves that the command is the best maintenance, repair, and overhaul facility in the Department of Defense.

FRCSW provides the men and women of the Navy and Marine Corps with the lethal aviation assets necessary to fight and win. In FY22, FRCSW delivered 151 fixed-wing and rotor-wing aircraft, as well as more than 25,000 aircraft components.

This is a tribute to all of the employees of FRCSW. Without the stellar financial stewardship of the comptroller team, these successes wouldn’t have been possible. Caroline Thomas, FRCSW Deputy Comptroller, describes the culture shift that was created by the team as being a “financial prudence driven mindset” that changed the financial approach throughout the command and drove the success of the comptroller’s “Get Well Plan.”

The success of this plan was brought to the attention of Navy leadership and this eventually led to the team winning both the Department of the Navy Financial Management Award and the Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) Calendar Year 2022 Financial Management Award.

Since 1993, the FM Award

the student in mind,” said Chuck Cushman, the dean of academic programs at USNCC. “These certifications help set them up for success as a professional both while in the service and after their time in uniform. It’s about the holistic service member.”

After he completed his first three cybersecurity courses, LeMonds started the first of five courses in the Naval Studies Certificate. This five-course, 15-credit certificate program is embedded in each degree program at USNCC. The first

Program recognizes significant contributions of individuals or teams to the FM community. In demonstrating innovation in taxpayer dollar optimization, FRCSW developed a financial, “Get Well Plan.” That was designed to guide the command in addressing the negative AOR trend that had developed over the previous few years. The GWP resulted in a \$0 AOR balance by the end of FY22, a major success for the team and command.

At the same time the comptroller team was enacting their GWP, they were also in the midst of a large Navy-wide systems conversion dubbed Navy-Enterprise Resource Planning, or N-ERP. N-ERP is a software-based resource management system used to align and integrate crucial business functions. It modernizes and standardizes Navy business operations, provides unprecedented management visibility across the enterprise, increases effectiveness and efficiency, provides the flexibility to accommodate different reporting strategies and supports sound management decision making at all levels.

During this financial system conversion and throughout the implementation of the “Get Well Plan,” the command’s efforts in surpassing their goals proved just how resilient the FRCSW Comptroller team is in the face of adversity and aggressive timelines. Ji Kim, the FRCSW comptroller, led collaborative efforts across all departments

course focuses on naval ethics and leadership, and LeMonds said that this course has challenged his preconceptions on what that looks like. If LeMonds stays on the anticipated pathway for the degree, he will alternate back and forth between taking three courses with WGU and one naval studies course until he meets all degree requirements.

“Not only is LeMonds becoming a better technician,” said Sgt. Maj. Mike Hensley, USNCC’s command senior enlisted leader, “he is becoming a better leader and warfighter. He is gaining industry knowledge and bringing it inside the engagement zone, and providing training to his peers and those he leads along the way.”

“When you’re more knowledgeable, they seek you out more,” said LeMonds. “It makes you better because you’re able to teach them and you’re able to transfer that knowledge down. It just makes everybody in the shop better.”

The United States Naval Community College is the official community college for the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard. To learn more about the cybersecurity program, go to www.usncc.edu.

and ensured the command was fiscally informed throughout the N-ERP conversion. Kim’s team developed a tailored, user friendly training curriculum, embarked on critical data cleansing and feeder system reconciliations, implemented necessary governance and business rules around financial data, and developed financial reporting strategies to meet the unique business needs of a working capital fund entity.

As they embraced new technological operations and seamlessly transitioned the command to N-ERP while at the same time implanting their own GWP, FRCSW was brought back to financial wholeness.

Continue reading this story via the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/444766/>.

Ships Underway Total Battle Force

297
(USS 239, USNS 58)
Deployed
107
(USS 73, USNS 34)
Underway
77
(55 Deployed, 22 Local)

San Diego Auto Museum Military Salute

This Saturday, May 20, at 8:30 am, the San Diego Automotive Museum will be holding a celebration for military service members as they open their newest exhibit, *Salute to San Diego’s Troops*. Attendees will enjoy a variety of guest speakers, a light breakfast, and a private viewing of the exhibit. The exhibit will feature military vehicles, interactive displays honoring service members, and more.

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'Nothing like that will happen again:' Dogs might be forgotten heroes of Vietnam, but not by their handlers

by **Matthew Adams**
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Army veteran Ed Reeves knows his name could be on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial if it hadn't been for his German shepherd Prince.

It was Feb. 14, 1971 — Valentine's Day — Reeves and Prince were a scout team scoping out a trail in Phu Bai, Vietnam, as a group of U.S. soldiers followed behind. A small tree had fallen on the path, but Prince went around it instead of jumping over it. Reeves tried to get the dog to come back but Prince kept circling around the area. Reeves said he could not figure out what the dog was doing so he tried to walk over the tree. Prince came underneath him and put his nose to the ground to indicate something was there.

"I took a step back and he looked at me like, 'There you go, stupid,'" said Reeves, 72. The dog had discovered a mine was hidden at the spot.

More than 4,000 dogs were trained for scouting, tracking, sentry duty, mine/tunnel detection and water patrols during the Vietnam War. The dogs are believed to have prevented about 10,000 service members from dying, according

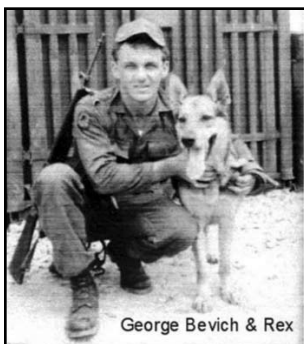
to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, the nonprofit organization that built the wall.

But to the military, the efforts of the dogs were not a factor when it was time to come home. Some service members tried to get their dogs back to the U.S., but only 204 dogs returned from Vietnam — 2,000 were euthanized.

Few people attending a three-day "Welcome Home" commemoration in the nation's capital to honor Vietnam veterans and mark the 50th anniversary of the war's end knew about the dogs that served in Vietnam. Many of them at the event who passed by a tent set up by the Vietnam Veterans Dog Handler Association made similar comments: "I had no idea about dogs in Vietnam" and "Did we really leave dogs there?"

Joe Gilleran was a sentry and a dog handler in the Army in Ban Me Thuot, Vietnam, in 1970-71. As a sentry, he monitored areas that contained ammunition and fuel, and he conducted perimeter sweeps and base security.

Gilleran volunteered for the service in Scranton, Pa., in 1970 after a couple of guys from his block were drafted and died.



Approximately 4,000 dogs served in the Vietnam War leading patrols with their handlers. These dogs are credited with saving more than 10,000 lives. Air Force A2C George M Beovich, Jr., and his dog, Rex, were killed defending their base on Dec. 4, 1966. Courtesy photo

"I didn't think it was right that some people had to go while others did not," he said.

It took him a while to find the right job in the Army, but Gilleran was happy when he became a dog handler. He said his German shepherd, Rex, was the best-looking dog in Vietnam, but doesn't know what happened to the dog after the war. Gilleran, 72, said he assumes the worst.

He also said there could be a few reasons why the military did not bring dogs home from the war.

"It was Uncle Sam being Uncle Sam. Sorry, honey, we don't have the money," Gilleran said, referring to it being a cost-saving measure.

The military also thought dogs were carrying diseases that could be transported back to the United States and they were treated like excess equipment if there was not room on a plane or places were not lined up for the dogs to live in America, he said.

Reeves said when he left Vietnam on July 2, 1971, he was not allowed to have contact with Prince. As he was driving off in a jeep, Prince chased him down and he stopped to say goodbye.

"It was the happiest day of my life, but also the saddest day leaving him behind," Reeves said.

He arrived back in the U.S. on July 4, 1971, and Reeves said he thought about Prince and what happened to him. But 36 years later, Reeves learned Prince was one of the 204 dogs who made it home. Prince worked for four years as a drug-sniffing dog for

U.S. Customs and Border Protection in San Diego. He retired to a kennel in that city and died of natural causes in 1983.

In 2000, Robby's Law was passed by Congress and signed by President Bill Clinton requiring all military working dogs suitable for adoption be available for placement after their service.

"There is nothing that can be done to fix the past," Reeves said. "But at least we know nothing like that will happen again."

The dogs who served in Vietnam are now receiving recognition. A memorial was unveiled Sept. 28, 2019, at the Motts Military Museum in Groveport, Ohio, called The Vietnam War Dog Team Memorial to honor the 4,225 dogs who served Vietnam. Deputy Director Lori Motts said she was not aware of what dogs did during the Vietnam War, and she was upset about what happened to them.

"I said people have to know what happened. I said we have to create a memorial, we have to do something to keep these dog's memories alive and let people know what they did," she said.

Motts said it took three years to raise \$113,000 for the memorial

and complete the research and work of the memorial to ensure every dog's name and serial number were listed on the wall. The granite stone for the dog memorial came from the same quarry in India that was used for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"In my mind, that's the vision I had," Mott said. "I wanted a wall similar to that wall with every dog's name and numbers in alphabetical order so their handlers could come and find them."

The wall also includes the names of 297 dog handlers, one veterinary and two veterinary technicians who died in the war. In front of the wall, there's a statue of a dog and his handler. The statue is based on a photo of Reeves and Prince from 1971. Reeves is a volunteer at the museum who worked with Motts throughout the process with finding records and information. She said it took some convincing for Reeves and Prince to be the model for the statue.

"[Reeves] doesn't feel like he really did anything other than what anybody else did at the time," Motts said. "I told him, 'That's the point. You guys were the grunts on the ground taking all the heat. You guys need to be out front — you and Prince walking point.'"

Pain in the neck: Reflections on my husband's driving

The Meat & Potatoes
of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

"Gaeton, can I get you a cold soda?" my mother-in-law asked her husband, seated in the driver's seat next to her. My in-laws were Gaetano and Alice, of Italian and Irish Catholic heritage, respectively. Both born and raised in northern New Jersey, they were real characters. From my vantage point in the backseat with my infant son, I observed their comical banter.

We were rolling down I-95 at a good clip, in the 1980s Lincoln Continental my father-in-law had recently inherited from his aunt, on our way to the beach.

Aunt Millie Medunio had been a feisty four-foot-ten Italian widow who lived in a brick bungalow, with a one-car garage outfitted with a tennis ball hanging from the ceiling. After Aunt Millie's daily routine — mass followed by lunch at Roy Rodgers where she'd pilfer stacks of napkins and bundles of condiment packets — she'd pull her Lincoln into her tiny garage until the tennis ball touched the windshield, which left just enough room to close the garage door.

Millie's late husband, Uncle Eddie, had set this up for her, "God bless him."

Gaetano ignored his wife, so she asked, "How 'bout some crackers?"

She pulled a sleeve of crumbling Ritz from the enormous handbag at her feet, which also contained a two-liter bottle of ginger ale, plastic cups, and a few pieces of bruised fruit.

"Jesus Christ, Midge!" my father-in-law bellowed using her nickname, indicating that she'd better not bother him while he was negotiating traffic. He was a nervous driver, alternating between jabbing the brake and gunning the gas. In the vastness of the Lincoln, motions were magnified, and I was soon queasy.

Mercifully, my son was asleep, oblivious to his grandfather's jerky driving. I on the other hand, was burping up bile.

To make matters worse, my father-in-law searched AM radio stations for a traffic report. When he couldn't figure out how to get sound through the front speakers, he turned the rear volume up full blast. I sat between those rear speakers, covering the baby's ears and fighting my gag reflex. I was so relieved when we finally reached the beach, I couldn't see the trip for what it really was — a warning sign for my life to come.

I ignored another red flag during the years we were stationed in the English countryside, when my husband, Francis, drove our growing family around on the winding roads and roundabouts. Mysteriously, I'd developed neck pains and nausea. I blamed my second pregnancy, even though my symptoms generally appeared when Francis was driving.

Years later, while stationed in Germany with our three kids, I ignored yet another warning sign. Within days of PCSing, our middle

child threw up during a sightseeing drive. Over the course of the next three years of touring Europe in our minivan, our family became so accustomed to the kids vomiting during car trips, the minivan was supplied with "barf bags," "up-chuck buckets," and wet wipes for that inevitable purpose.

By the time we left Europe, our children had vomited in over a dozen foreign countries, and I began wonder, "Does Francis drive like his father?"

I noticed his repeating pattern: Francis guns the gas until the vehicle he is driving is a few car lengths away from a stop sign or obstacle. Then, BAM! He hits the brake with a quick punch. The sudden deceleration pins the passenger's torso against the seatbelt, while catapulting her head forward, snapping it like a whip. Rather than easing his foot off the break, Francis jerks his foot upward, causing an equally violent reaction when the passenger's torso is thrown backward against the seat and her head ricochets violently against the headrest.

On any given roadtrip, Francis' passenger may be thrown forward and backward multiple times, causing her stomach to twist, and her neck bones to heave like an old fashioned squeeze accordion.

Our three adult children no longer mince words. "Geeze, Dad! What's up with the gas-break driving!" I only wish I'd seen the warning signs earlier in our marriage. It may not have changed Francis' driving, but at least I would've known to always bring along ginger ale and crackers.

Review of Fast X: X-treme gratuitous violence & sf-X

For more than 20 years, the Fast and Furious franchise has been entertaining audiences worldwide. It evolved from its action-packed focus on street racing to also include heists and espionage, all while maintaining the central themes of fast cars, thrilling action sequences and family.

I, like so many of you, have enjoyed these films and was eagerly awaiting the release of Fast X — the tenth (not the final) film in the franchise. I watched the ambitious final trailer and it blew me away. I really wanted to like this movie, and I went into the advance screening with that mindset.

The Fast and Furious franchise is well known for its great action car sequences and incredible special effects. However, it also has had lots of heart. We cheered the recurring protagonists, especially Dom (Vin Diesel) and Letty (Michelle Rodriguez), as we grew to know them over the years.

The premise for Fast X had its origins in 2011's Fast Five, where "Dom and his crew took out nefarious Brazilian drug kingpin Hernan Reyes and decimated his empire on a bridge in Rio De Janeiro. What they didn't know was that Reyes' son, Dante (Aquaman's Jason Momoa), witnessed it all and has spent the last 12 years masterminding a plan to make Dom pay the ultimate price."

Fast Forward to the present day. Dante has returned to extract his revenge in an epic, spectacular explosion-filled and brutal way.

FAST X features a large cast, many of whose members will be familiar to followers of the Fast and Furious franchise. The cast expands

to include Oscar winner Brie Larson (Captain Marvel, Room) as Tess, a rogue representative from the Agency; Alan Richtson (Reacher, Titans) as Aimes, the new head of the Agency who doesn't hold the

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by Jan Wagner



same fondness for Dom's crew as his predecessor, Mr. Nobody; Daniela Melchior (The Suicide Squad, Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 3) as Isabel, a Brazilian street racer with a powerful tie to Dom's past; and legendary Oscar winner Rita Moreno as Dom and Mia's Abuelita Toretto.

Fast X takes place around the world, in Los Angeles, Rome, Brazil, London, Portugal and Antarctica.

Unfortunately, Fast X — the latest installment in the Fast and Furious franchise — seems to have lost its way. This movie is almost non-stop extreme, gratuitous violence — some of which does not even particularly make sense in the context of the story.

Its special effects are so over-the-top as to sometimes (often?) come across as ridiculous. Dom's car seems to be almost indestructible. To make matters even worse, the sound volume in the theater was way, way too loud — to the point of it being so distorted that I could not clearly hear what was being said. I remem-

ber wishing that I had brought earplugs, so as to more clearly hear the dialog.

The underlying story, while compelling on a macro level, is hard to follow in its details; and the ending — well, I just did not understand or enjoy it. It certainly did not resolve important story lines. In fairness however, Fast X is not supposed to be the final movie of the Fast and Furious franchise. This is just one of the final chapters. According to Wikipedia, a sequel to Fast X is expected to be released in 2025, followed by a twelfth and final film that is under development.

Hopefully the Fast and Furious franchise will be redeemed. I certainly hope so. I just wish that Fast X had given us at least a little bit more to feel good about. It looks like we will have to wait for the promised sequels for that and to try to make better sense of it.

I'm disappointed with Fast X. However, my opinion could well be in the minority. To avoid the possibility of having my reviews changed by the opinions of other reviewers, I did not read anyone else's opinions before writing this review. Instead, my opinions presented here are just that — my opinions, and mine alone. Fast X might be wildly popular. Time will certainly tell.

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From farm to hospital: Former Chief of U.S. Army Nurse Corps driven by life's challenges

by Christopher Hurd
Army News Service

WASHINGTON—As a young Army nurse at her first duty station in the intensive care unit on Fort Dix, New Jersey, then 2nd Lt. Clara Leach would go home each day and think about ways to improve her job performance. She was struggling at the time to get her work done and didn't understand why.

"I absolutely loved my work, but we had some rules in nursing at that time that were a little bit bothersome in terms of getting your job done well," she said.

One rule was nurses had to stand up whenever a physician entered the room, no matter what they were doing. She thought about that and realized it was slowing down her performance.

She made up her mind that day, she would not stand up unless she was needed.

As luck would have it, the next physician to walk into the room was the chief of the surgery department. It was now or never. She remained seated as he walked to her desk and cleared his throat.

"May I help you, sir?" she asked.

He looked down and said, "You can help me, lieutenant, by getting

out of that chair."

She held her ground and calmly made her case. She explained she would gladly get up if he needed something, but if not, she wanted to remain seated organizing the inventory books, which would allow her the time to take care of patients that evening.

He quietly turned around and walked away. She went back to work and thought to herself, "Oh, Clara you won that round."

The rule was changed, not long after.

This wasn't the first challenge Leach had to take on in her life, and as she learned earlier, the challenge was what drove her.

Growing up on a tobacco farm in North Carolina, there was no shortage of challenges. She and her nine siblings would often work in the fields from dawn to dusk while also having chores to finish before the day was over.

One day while she was milking the cow, she noticed it was skittish after being bit by a fly and was not producing the milk she needed. She knew she couldn't go inside empty handed, so she kept at it. The cow had other plans and began to move around before ultimately stepping in the bucket and spilling all the milk.

She did the only thing she could, scream at the top of her lungs. Her father rushed out to see what happened. After understanding the situation, he comforted her and taught her how to handle it.

"I learned a lot on that farm about how to deal with animals and how to deal with my brother and sisters," she said. "It was hard work, but I still say today that it got me ready for the work world in general, especially the world of nursing."

Her parents wanted to instill in them a sense of pride in what they did and to teach them they could do anything they wanted if they were willing to work hard and never give up. They also placed a big emphasis on education.

That served her well as she graduated high school at 16, second in her class, and then went on to nursing school at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University.

Her family wasn't rich, and her father had to borrow money from a local grocer for her to attend. Her father told her she would have to work for any extra money she needed.

Her hectic schedule didn't allow much free time. As she walked through the student union one day, she saw a sign that said, "The Army



Retired Brig. Gen. Clara Leach Adams-Ender poses for a photo at her home in Lake Ridge, Virginia, Oct. 31, 2021. She spent 34 years as an Army nurse overcoming all the challenges that came her way. (Courtesy photo by Michael A. McCoy)

Nurse Corp needs you."

She looked at it and thought, "I bet they got money."

Sure enough, they did. She signed up, and the Army paid for the last two years of school, while also giving her a monthly stipend.

"I was one of the richest kids on campus," she said laughing. She even had enough money to send some home to her family.

While she was at school, she learned more about herself and her hunger to overcome adversity.

"I found nursing to be quite a challenge," she explained. "The business of taking care of people when they are ill is not only a challenge for the people who are having the problem and their loved ones, but also for the people who have to take care of them."

Once she understood that, she was all in. She commissioned in 1961 and set out to overcome the daily challenges of being an Army nurse.

At her first few hospitals, she worked in the intensive care units. These allowed her to gain valuable experience in a wide variety of tasks. It was tough work, but that was what she wanted.

Some nurses would complain about the daily grind. She would just look at them and say, "Let me tell you about them tobacco fields in North Carolina."

It wasn't just the daily grind at work she had to manage as she went overseas to South Korea. Here, she had to make sure she was taking care of herself as well as those around her.

"Some days are better than others, but the thing that you do as an Army nurse is that you get ready

and find it for them because I knew if I didn't, things were not going to be well for the home team," she said with a chuckle.

She wouldn't let that happen. She met this problem head on like so many others and found ways to utilize what she had to advance the practice.

Following her tour in Germany, she returned to the United States and became the first Nurse Corps student to graduate from the U.S. Army War College. Then in 1987, she was promoted to brigadier general and served as the chief of the U.S. Army Nurse Corps until 1991.

During that time, she faced many challenges, but none greater than getting nurses increased wages for their hard work.

"Without nurses nothing functions well, because we really are the heartbeat of what goes on in the health care system," she explained.

She was also able to set up the Army Medical Department Enlisted Commissioning Program, allowing service members to get paid while they finished their last two years of nursing school before commissioning.

Throughout her 34 years in service, retired Brig. Gen. Clara Leach Adams-Ender, never lost focus on the important things.

"I don't let anything, or anyone stand in the way of me being able to provide care to people with excellence," she said.

In 2019, she was inducted into the Army Women's Hall of

Fame. She now lives in Lake Ridge, Virginia, where she keeps up with her nursing

practice and continues to find ways to challenge herself while helping others.

"I learned [to help others] very early in my lifetime," she said. "When you have nine brothers and sisters there is always an opportunity to do something to help somebody."

May is National Nurses Month, where Americans come together to show appreciation for everything nurses do. When asked about this yearly celebration, Adams-Ender said people should recognize nurses now and throughout the year.

"[Nurses] stand in the gap every day to try and make sure that they are able to save lives and to help people," she said. "Thank a nurse today because they are truly special people."

Happy 115th birthday to the Navy Nurse Corps!

NMCS D hosted a Nurses Week Ceremony at the hospital in celebration of the 115th Navy Nurse Corps Birthday on May 13. RN Megan Davis, one of the hospital's Diseases Attacking the Immune System (DAISY) coordinators, recognized our many nurses, corpsmen and leaders with DAISY awards for the extraordinary compassionate and skillful care they provide every day to their patients. DAISY award recipients received a certificate and DAISY gifts of appreciation to include an "Ask Me About the DAISY Award" pin and a sculpture which depicts the embracing relationship nurses have with their patients. BravoZulu to the following awardees and team members:

Individual Nurse DAISY Award

RN Crystal Agana, Plastic Surgery Clinic

Individual Corpsman DAISY Award

HM3 Cassandra Ludwig, Inpatient Pediatrics

5 East Team led by Lt. Molly Clark

RN Christine Tadler, RN Pamela Calpito, HM3 Juan Rubio Chaidéz, HN Alexander Perez

Cardiology Cath Lab

Dr. Luke Oakley, Dr. William Bennett, Dr. Matthew Russel, Dr. Anthony Choi, Dr. Gregory Czaja, RN Chanel Barcenás, Lt.j.g. Justine Brady, Hector Inguito, Amelia Ibrahim, Regina White, HM1 Neal Mendoza, HM1 Andres Aquino, HM1 Shayden Muse, HM1 Ramoune Scarlett, HM2 Kane



Capt. Jeffery Johnson and Ens. Sara Buttolph open the Nurses Week Celebration festivities with a cake cutting ceremony as laughter, cake and cinnamon rolls were then dished out to attendees.

Nelson, HM2 Carlo Foles
DAISY Nurse Leader Award
RN Christine Tadler
Lifetime Achievement Daisy Award
Capt. Jeffery Johnson

The ceremony continued with remarks from keynote speaker Capt. Jeffery Johnson, Lt. Nicolas Filio, and birthday messages from the Director of Nurse Corps Rear Adm. Cynthia Kuehner, read by Ens. Sara Buttolph; Defense Health Agency Chief Nursing Officer Brigadier General Katherine

Simonson, read by Lt. Chaquel Giraldo; and Acting Navy Surgeon General Rear Adm. Darin Via, read by Lt. Lizamarie Ducusin.

Thank you to Megan Davis, Lt. Alagaban, Lt. Giraldo HM2 Baeza, and the Nurses Association for making this event possible. A big thank you to all our nurses, corpsmen and team members who continuously #TakeTheHelm and treat our patients with utmost care and respect each and every day!

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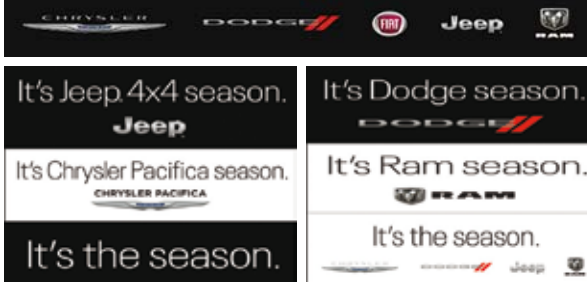
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