

# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-THIRD YEAR NO. 46  
APRIL 23, 2024

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**FUNERAL ESCORT** Soldiers from the 3d U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) and the U.S. Army Band, Pershing's Own, conduct military funeral honors with funeral escort for U.S. Army Air Forces Sgt. Irving Newman in Section 4 of Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Apr. 11, 2024. U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser

## 1st Marine Division deploys to Philippines for Marine Exercise 2024

Marines from the Philippine Marine Corps and the U.S. Marine Corps are conducting the second iteration of the Philippine Marine Exercise from now through April 19 at Camp Iranun, Mindanao, Philippines.

MAREX PHL is a bilateral exercise led by the Philippine Marine Corps intended to promote military interoperability and maritime domain awareness capabilities, strengthen relationships and expand military capabilities among participating forces.

In 2022, the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit participated in the inaugural iteration of MAREX PHL. This year, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, will participate in the combined field training exercise with the Philippine Marine Corps focusing on maritime security operations, amphibious assault operations, counterterrorism, and special operations to include air and surface force insertion.

During this year's MAREX PHL approximately 40 U.S. Marines and 350 Filipino Marines will train together to enhance coastal defense, combined fires, amphibious assault operations, and small unmanned aerial system combined capabilities. Participants will also conduct cultural exchanges and community relations days to include a visit to the Siddique Elementary School in Barira, Mindanao, and subject matter expert exchanges to further our combined commitment to global security and regional cooperation.

"We must continue to conduct relevant trainings that will improve our individual and collective capabilities. MAREX is joined by our foreign counterpart and our major ally, the United States Marine Corps, that has long been training with us and sharing with us the duty to preserve regional peace and security," said Philippine Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Ariel R. Caculitan, 33rd Commandant of the Philippine Marine Corps.

<https://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/3739220/1st-marine-division-deploys-to-philippines-for-marine-exercise-2024/>

## MARINES TAKE AIM AT NAVY FOR FUMBLING FIREARM PHOTO ON SOCIAL MEDIA

by Alex Wilson, Stars and Stripes

The Marine Corps schooled the Navy over social media April 10 after the sea service uploaded a photo of an officer firing an improperly configured rifle.

The Navy posted to its official Instagram account a now-deleted photo of Cmdr. Cameron Yaste, skipper of destroyer USS *John S. McCain*, holding a rifle and looking through a scope that was

clearly mounted backward.

The weapon's foregrip was also mounted strangely, positioned closer to the gun's center than its barrel.

"From engaging in practice gun shoots, conducting maintenance, testing fuel purity and participating in sea and anchor details, the #USNavy is always ready to serve and protect," the post said.

Social media users quickly jumped at the chance to poke fun at the error.

"Dear U.S. Navy. The scope is on backwards," wrote X user @travisakers. "This is why we have Marines on ships."

The Marine Corps appeared to take its own dig at the Navy, sharing a photo on its social media accounts of a Marine firing a weapon aboard amphibious

assault ship *Boxer*. The caption read: "Clear Sight Picture."

On his official X account, Rep. Mike Collins, R-Ga., posted a picture of a pistol with its barrel and grip on backward. The caption read: "Navy's newly issued sidearm."

Others noted that even action movies rarely make such errors.

"Even Hollywood gets this right," wrote X user @matthewdmarsden. "We are doomed."

Though the Navy ultimately deleted the post, X users continue to share screenshots.

"Thank you for pointing out our rifle scope error in the previous post," the Navy later wrote on various social media accounts. "Picture has been removed until EMI [extra military] see **Photo, page 3**



The Navy removed a post on its official Instagram account Wednesday, April 10, 2024, showing a warship commander firing a rifle with a backward scope. Official U.S. Navy photo

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## U.S., Japan military-to-military relationship reaches 'new heights'

### DOD News

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III met at the White House with President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan earlier this month to participate in discussions related to strengthening the U.S. and Japan relationship.

"Our defense and security ties with Japan form the core of our alliances and are the cornerstone of regional peace and security in the Indo-Pacific," Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder said during a briefing today at the Pentagon.

"Recognizing that the alliance has reached new heights, we plan to further bolster our defense and security cooperation to allow for greater coordination and integration," he said.

As part of the effort to enhance U.S. and Japan security cooperation, both nations agreed to, for instance, an upgrading of alliance command and control. Doing so would enable better integration of operations and capabilities, plus allow for greater interoperability as well as planning between U.S. and Japanese forces in peacetime and during contingencies.

Also discussed were efforts at bolstering regional networked security. Both countries will cooperate on a networked air defense architecture, incorporating future capabilities with Aus-

tralia. That includes looking at enhanced cooperation in missile defense information sharing.

The U.S. and Japan also agreed to a deepening of defense industry cooperation, where both nations plan to leverage respective industrial bases to establish an alliance defense production

capacity to meet the demand for critical capabilities over the long term.

Ryder said there were dozens of deliverables that came out of the discussions but did not have a specific timeline to share. But he did say that the Defense Department stands ready to do

what's asked of it to help the U.S. strengthen the partnership with its long-time ally in the Pacific.

"We are working hard across all levels of the department to deliver on the agreements made by our national leaders and of course doing so in very close concert with our Japanese allies," he said.

## Veterans who recruited troops for \$65 million insurance fraud scheme sentenced to prison

by J.P. Lawrence  
Stars and Stripes

Two veterans convicted for their roles in bilking more than \$65 million from U.S. military health insurer Tricare have been sentenced and ordered to pay back millions of dollars, the Justice Department said April 12.

U.S. Marine veteran Joshua Morgan, 31, was sentenced to 21 months in federal prison and ordered to pay \$4.4 million in restitution, a federal judge in the Southern District of California said in an order filed in early April. Former U.S. Navy sailor Kyle Adams, 36, was sentenced to 15 months in prison and ordered to pay \$11.5 million, another court order filed in late March said.

Prosecutors say the pair recruited fellow service members to receive expensive medications they did not need or expect to receive in exchange for kickbacks. Meanwhile, other members of

the conspiracy wrote bogus prescriptions and faked paperwork to obtain millions in insurance reimbursements.

The fraud was one of many so-called compound medication schemes that put the survival of the health insurer Tricare at risk, prosecutors said.

"Today's sentencing closes the last chapter on this outrageous fraud scheme that almost put Tricare into bankruptcy," U.S. attorney Tara McGrath said in a statement April 12.

Morgan and Adams worked as recruiters for Jimmy and Ashley Collins, a husband-and-wife team based in Tennessee. Service members were paid \$300 a month to receive creams and erectile dysfunction pills as part of a "medical evaluation." The fraud ring would then receive millions in insurance reimbursements, a criminal complaint said.



**MONUMENTAL VIEW** (March 25, 2024) Army Capt. Chris Bissett and Warrant Officer Eric Mendoza, pilots, and Army Staff Sgt. Daniel Pechacek, crew chief, all assigned to Alpha Company, 12th Aviation Battalion, The Army Aviation Brigade, fly a VH-60M Black Hawk helicopter past the White House, Washington, D.C.. The 12th Aviation Battalion uses VH-60M "gold top" Black Hawks to conduct priority air transport in support of Department of the Army senior leadership and other senior Department of Defense officials. U.S. Air Force photo by Nicholas A. Priest

### PAWS OF WAR

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## CANADIAN-LED CTF 150 CONDUCTS THIRD DRUG INTERDICTION IN A WEEK

The Royal Navy's HMS Lancaster (F229), operating in support of the Canadian-led Combined Task Force (CTF) 150, carried out its second successful drug seizure in as many days, seizing 2,000 kg of hashish from a dhow in the Arabian Sea, April 11.

Lancaster, a Duke-class Type 23 frigate, seized the illicit drugs as part of Focused Operation Crimson Barracuda in an effort to counter illegal drug smuggling, who's profits



often goes to funding terrorist activity. In the two days they have participated in Crimson Barracuda, the crew has interdicted a total of 3,300 kg of illicit narcotics.

On April 10, Lancaster seized 800 kg of hashish, 390 kg of methamphetamines and 110 kg of heroin from another dhow in the Arabian Sea.

"For the second day in a row, CTF 150 and the crew of HMS Lancaster prevented harmful and illicit drugs from reaching their final destination," said Royal Canadian Navy Capt. Colin Matthews, Commander, Combined

Task Force 150. "Once again, we have prevented criminal and terrorist organizations from profiting off the sale of these drugs to fund their activities. I am incredibly proud of this team for all that they have accomplished in such a short window."

Crimson Barracuda counters terrorist and criminal organizations' use of the high seas to smuggle narcotics, weapons, and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman.

CTF 150 is one of five task forces under Combined Mari-

time Forces, the world's largest international naval partnership. CTF 150's mission is to deter and disrupt the ability of non-state actors to move weapons, drugs and other illicit substances in the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman.

Combined Maritime Forces is a 42-nation naval partnership upholding the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

### Photo continued from page 3

instruction] is completed." The Navy defines EMI as "instruction in a phase of military duty in which an individual is deficient, and is intended for and directed towards the correction of that deficiency." *John S. McCain* was operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet's operations area when the photo was taken. The command referred questions to the Navy's Chief Information Officer, who did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment April.

### Top 5

- U.S. forces help Israel repel Iranian drone, missile attack
- Air Force to get F-15E jet with fresh electronic warfare tech in summer
- Return of horse-drawn caissons to Arlington National Cemetery delayed
- Feds to make moving government jobs abroad easier for military spouses
- 20 years later, Abu Ghraib detainees get their day in US court

### Army

- 3rd ID Soldier's death at Lithuania weapons range leaves father grasping for answers
- Army enlists United Football League to tackle recruiting
- 'Catastrophic success' of credentialing program for Soldiers may lead to cuts
- Fort Gregg-Adams Soldiers return from 9 months in Middle East

### Navy

- Traditions vs. politics: The long and undisciplined history of Navy ship-naming
- Navy advances "Deep Sea Expeditionary" dive suit
- USS *John C. Stennis* leaves dry dock in Virginia; Overhaul 65% complete

### Marine Corps

- Marines' plans for barracks fixes, construction scrutinized by Congress
- Marine Corps deploys cyber personnel to Pacific for enduring defense mission

### Air Force

- Planting a seed: Air Force recruiters use live events, new policies to rebound from enlistment slump
- Kirtland AFB Huey: Old warrior won't hear of retirement

### National Guard

- On newly-quiet stretch of US-Mexico border, Louisiana soldiers sit around, watch and wait
- Alaska Air National Guard rescues 3 people in a 24-hour window



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# Israel, U.S., partners neutralize Iranian airborne attacks

by C. Todd Lopez  
DOD News

Last weekend, Iran and its proxy groups launched more than 300 airborne weapons at targets in Israel, but the U.S., Israeli and partner forces destroyed a significant portion of them before they reached their targets.

Among the weapons launched from locations in Iran, Syria and Yemen were over 110 medium-range ballistic missiles, more than 30 land-attack cruise missiles, and over 150 uncrewed aerial vehicles. The attack began in Israel late Saturday evening and ended early in the morning on April 14.

U.S. Central Command forces, supported by the Navy destroyers USS *Arleigh Burke* and USS

*Carney*, destroyed more than 80 one-way attack UAVs and at least six of the ballistic missiles, said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder during a briefing April 15.

"As our actions demonstrated, the U.S. support for the defense of Israel is robust," Ryder said. "It also demonstrates the long-standing security cooperation relationship that the United States has — not only with Israel, but with countries throughout the region — when it comes to addressing regional threats.

"Those kinds of things don't happen overnight. Those kinds of relationships and the ability to work together, to interoperate together all played out and saved many lives."

The general said that since

the attack ended, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III has discussed the situation with international partners, allies, Air Force Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr., senior Defense Department leaders and U.S. European Command and Centcom commanders.

The defense secretary has also

been in contact with his counterpart, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, Ryder said.

"During their most recent call ... [Sunday], the two leaders reviewed the successful combined operation by the United States, Israel and their partners to defend Israel from these unprecedented attacks by Iran and its proxies," Ryder said.

In a statement released following the attacks, Austin commended the efforts of U.S. forces and allies, condemned the attacks, and reiterated both the U.S. right to defend its forces in the Middle East and the U.S. commitment to Israel.

"I'm grateful for the professionalism and the skill of the brave U.S. troops who took part

in today's actions and who continue to stand guard to prevent further conflict or escalation," Austin said. "We condemn these reckless and unprecedented attacks by Iran and its proxies, and we call on Iran to immediately halt any further attacks and to deescalate tensions. We do not seek conflict with Iran, but we will not hesitate to act to protect our forces and support the defense of Israel."

## WSF-M successfully launches from Vandenberg SFB

VANDENBERG SPACE FORCE BASE - A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket was successfully launched April 11 from Space Launch Complex-4 East carrying U.S. Space Force's Weather System Follow-on Microwave, or WSF-M, into low Earth orbit.

The launch is the result of a combined effort by the Guardians and Airmen of Space Launch Delta 30 and Space Systems

Command in Los Angeles in support of the U.S. Space Force and SSC's program executive office, Assured Access to Space, as well as SpaceX personnel.

"The launch of the WSF-M satellite represents a significant step forward in our mission to enhance our nation's space capabilities," said Col. Mark Shoemaker, Space Launch Delta 30 commander. "Our dedicated Guardians and Airmen at Van-



**Space Force mission carrying the first Weather System Follow-on Microwave satellite launches from Vandenberg SFB April 11. U.S. Space Force photo by Airman 1st Class Olga Houtsma**

denberg ensure assured access to space, standing ready to support critical national security space launches when our nation calls."

Once on orbit, the WSF-M satellite will provide U.S. and allied warfighters with essential weather data, including the

measurement of ocean surface wind speed and direction, ice thickness, snow depth, soil moisture, and local spacecraft energetic charged particle environment. The data gathered by WSF-M will be provided to meteorologists in support of the generation of a wide variety of weather products necessary to conduct mission planning and operations globally.

Vandenberg Space Force Base is the U.S. Space Force's west coast spaceport and test range. Vandenberg SFB is one of two high-capacity spaceports for the United States, providing strategic space access capabilities that deliver on-orbit systems for global space operations.

Guardians and Airmen have enabled more than 2,060 launches from the Vandenberg SFB spaceport to date.

### Armed Forces Dispatch

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## Marine who planned domestic terrorism attacks sentenced to 9 years in prison

by J.P. Lawrence  
Stars and Stripes

A Marine veteran who firebombed a Planned Parenthood clinic in California and plotted other acts of domestic terrorism while serving on active duty was sentenced to nine years in prison this week.

Chance Brannon, 24, was motivated by neo-Nazi ideology when he threw a Molotov cocktail at the clinic in 2022, according to documents filed in federal court for the Central District of California.

“This defendant’s deep-seated

hatred led him to commit a firebombing and plan many other acts of violence, including starting a race war,” U.S. Attorney Martin Estrada said in a statement April 15.

Brannon, who was stationed at Camp Pendleton at the time of the incident, pleaded guilty in November to four charges related to the attack, which shut down the clinic for a day but left no one injured.

The San Juan Capistrano resident described himself as a “domestic terroris[t],” a sentencing memorandum by U.S. District Judge Cormac Carney said.



At the time of his June 2023 arrest, Brannon was a Marine corporal who had joined in 2018, ABC News reported at the time.

Brannon joins other service members who have been convicted of acts of extremism while on active duty. This includes Ethan Melzer, an Army paratrooper sentenced to 45 years in prison for plotting with neo-Nazis to get other soldiers in his unit killed, and Micah Coomer, one of five active-duty troops arrested in connection to the Jan. 6 breach of the Capitol building.

Extremist groups often seek out people with military ties, and a Defense Department Inspector

**Tibet Ergul, left, and Chance Brannon, an active-duty Marine then stationed at Camp Pendleton, are seen on still images from surveillance footage, as identified in court documents provided by the Justice Department. Photo courtesy of Justice Department**

General report in August found military recruiters sometimes skipped steps to screen out enlistees affiliated with criminal gangs or extremist groups.

In his plea agreement, Brannon admitted he and two conspirators planned violent attacks across California.

Among these plots were a second firebombing, an attack on

the local electrical grid with the goal of starting a race war, planting a bomb at Dodger Stadium on a night celebrating LGBTQ+ pride and robbing Jewish residents in Hollywood Hills.

After Brannon was arrested, investigators said they found white supremacist literature, as well as photos showing him performing a Nazi salute. Brannon also possessed messages declaring an “unbelievable desire to murder journalists,” prosecutors said.

Brannon’s defense highlighted his struggles with mental health issues, including autism, and argued his actions were fueled by a combination of poor self-esteem and rigid thinking, a report April 16 by California’s City News Service said.

He was called a “very intelligent young man but socially immature” and driven by deeply religious beliefs by his father Michael Brannon, who wrote a letter to the court asking for leniency, according to the Orange County Register. Brannon was described as an atheist in high school who converted to Catholicism as an adult.

Brannon’s sentencing memorandum noted he grew up in an

upper-class neighborhood in Orange County with a supportive mother who was a clinical psychologist.

He served as a Farsi language analyst and graduated from the Defense Language Institute in 2020, the memo said. Brannon received awards and decorations that included a good conduct medal and various shooting badges.

But troubling signs could be seen at the time, said the sentencing memorandum written by Carney.

When Brannon felt the Marines had wasted five years of his life by not deploying him into combat, he placed calls to the Chinese and Russian embassies, as he was considering offering himself up as a “mole,” the memo said.

Brannon kept a thumb drive bearing the motto for the Marine Corps that contained a plan to destroy a power station.

The thumb drive was part of plots between Brannon and two friends, Tibet Ergul, 22, of Irvine, Calif.; and Xavier Batten, 21, of Brooksville, Fla.

see **Prison, page 7**

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# New Seal Beach ammunition pier opens for business

by Gregg Smith

Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach  
SEAL BEACH - A significant milestone was reached at Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach April 9 as destroyer USS *Paul Hamilton* (DDG 60) became the first ship to pull in to the installation's newly constructed ammunition pier.

"This project was well over a decade in the making," said base commanding officer Capt. Jessica O'Brien. "I'm incredibly proud of all the Navy and contractor personnel who took part in the design and construction of this great new pier, and I'm

especially proud and humbled to be here today and see it all come together."

The new pier replaced an older ammunition wharf originally built in 1954, and brings new and improved capabilities to the fleet.

"This new expanded pier facility provides destroyers and other fleet assets with expanded logistical capacity to arm faster and more efficiently," said O'Brien. "This shore infrastructure is vital for the warfighting readiness of the Surface Force and our Navy."

## Prison continued from page 6

He shared with Ergul a "WWII sabotage manual" and discussed how they could "case" Dodger Stadium to bomb it.

Brannon and Ergul were caught after they shared evidence of the Planned Parenthood clinic bombing via text messages.

Ergul had texted a woman he knew from high school a photo of his gloved hand holding the Molotov cocktail while in Brannon's Dodge Challenger, the criminal complaint against them said.

Brannon said he didn't dispute the facts of the case while in court Monday.

"All I can tell you was it was

stupid and out of control," the Los Angeles Daily News quoted Brannon as saying.

Carney's explanation for the sentence indicated that Brannon had shown remorse but was unlikely to change his beliefs.

"Candidly, there is no convincing evidence that Mr. Brannon will stop engaging in wrongdoing that he believes to be 'morally justified,'" Carney wrote.

Brannon's co-conspirator, Ergul, pleaded guilty earlier this year to similar charges and has a sentencing hearing scheduled for May 30.

The other conspirator, Batten, also pleaded guilty and is expected to be sentenced May 15.

The previous ammunition wharf was only able to support one destroyer-sized ship at a time. The new pier will allow dual ship operations, along with the ability to support much larger vessels such as general purpose amphibious assault ships (LHDs and LHAs) nearly three football fields long.

"Our new LHD and LHA capabilities will be significant," said Roosevelt Simmons, Executive Director of Navy Munitions Command Pacific, CONUS West Division Unit Seal Beach. "We should see an increase in the volume of ships coming in, and we will also see an improved flexibility to support the fleet."

"The planning process for

## USS Boxer makes U-turn for repairs on long-delayed, short-lived Indo-Pacific tour

According to media reports, USS *Boxer* has returned to San Diego after experiencing a new equipment problem during its first deployment in five years. The amphibious assault ship carrying elements of the Camp Pendleton-based 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit had left April 1 but is now docked at North Island. The U.S. Naval Institute, a nonprofit military association, said the latest problem is with the ship's rudder and repairs will take two to three weeks. "USS *Boxer* is returning to San Diego to undergo additional maintenance in support of its deployment in the Indo-Pacific region," according to a statement obtained by USNI. "USS *Boxer* will resume its deployment in the near future." Two other ships in the *Boxer* Ready Group, amphibious transport dock USS *Somerseset* and dock landing ship USS *Harpers Ferry*, are already deployed. *Boxer* last deployed in 2019 and then entered dry dock in 2020 for a \$250 million overhaul. However, the warship was plagued by a series of equipment problems after the overhaul.

<https://news.usni.org/2024/04/11/uss-boxer-headed-to-san-diego-for-repairs-pacific-deployment-stalled>

this project started back in 2011, with construction starting at the end of 2019," said Jazmin Atencia, station Plans, Programs & Readiness Integrator. "All construction should be completed by this summer. We still have a little bit of work to do, including some final pile driving and support building construction."

*Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach is the primary munitions installation for the Navy's Pacific Fleet surface ships. Its primary role is to store and maintain Navy and Marine Corps munitions and load and unload Navy ships and larger Coast Guard vessels with the weapons they need to conduct their missions.*

## Former 3rd Fleet commander takes Pacific Fleet's helm

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii - A naval aviator and former commander of 3rd Fleet assumed command of U.S. Pacific Fleet during an April 4 ceremony in Hawaii. Adm. Stephen Koehler replaces Adm. Samuel Paparo, who is slated to take the reins of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command next month. Paparo will replace Adm. John Aquilino, who has headed Indo-Pacific Command since April 2021. During remarks at the pier-side ceremony, Aquilino was effusive in his praise for Paparo and Koehler, describing them as "the world's greatest warfighters."

Pacific Fleet's area of operation encompasses roughly 100 million square miles, spanning from the Arctic in the north to Antarctica in the south. The fleet consists of about 200 ships, 1,500 aircraft and 150,000 uniformed and civilian personnel.

## Expedited naturalization returns to MCRD San Diego

Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego and Western Recruiting Region, in collaboration with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, have reinstated the expedited naturalization program in order to provide qualified recruits the opportunity to become naturalized U.S. citizens upon completion of recruit training. "It's an opportunity for us to bring in non-U.S. citizens that have I-551 Green Cards that are going through the typical naturalization process," said CWO3 Matthew Alderman, the enlisted operations officer for 12th MCD. "April 1 is going to be the first week we turned this program back on in several years." According to Alderman, the district's goal was to get at least half of the qualified shippers leaving for recruit training on April 1 to submit for the program. Ultimately, the district had eight eligible shippers and all eight elected to participate. "I think it's awesome," said Alderman. "It's an excellent sign of what's to come and I hope they keep applying. There's really no draw back here." Since 2002, more than 148,000 service members have been naturalized, and many were assisted in the process through the DoD and USCIS partnerships such as the "Naturalization at Basic Training Initiative."



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**Fraud**  
continued from page 2

up to receive free money," said Morgan, according to a sentencing document.

He said service members knew the scheme was dubious. Many of his recruits signed up because they desperately needed the extra \$300 a month, Morgan said. As to why Morgan took part in the scheme, he said it was due to his status as a Marine at the bottom of the pay scale, with a large car payment, and that he badly needed the extra money, the document said.

The Marine used his cut of the proceeds on nightclubs and top-shelf alcohol. He bought two luxury cars, which were seized by the government, the sentencing document said.

Adams, another recruiter, conceded he "just went with it" and "turned a blind eye" to the illegality of the scheme due to how much money was coming in, his sentencing document said.

Two doctors, Carl Lindblad and Susan Vergot, and a nurse practitioner, Candace Craven, also took part in the scheme by writing fraudulent prescriptions, the Justice Department said.

A pharmacy that filled the fraudulent prescriptions, CFK, Inc., pleaded guilty in 2019 to a conspiracy to submit false claims.



**Local flag officer assignments ...**

The secretary of the Navy and chief of naval operations announced recently the following assignments:

Rear Adm. (lower half) **Michael B. Devore** will be assigned as senior military official, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Apra, Guam. Devore is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Surface Forces/Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

Capt. **Timothy A. Brown**, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as director, Supply, Ordnance and Logistics Operations Division, N4L, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Washington, D.C. Brown is currently serving as assistant chief of staff for Force Logistics, Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

Capt. **Craig C. Sicola**, selected for promotion to rear admiral (lower half), will be assigned as deputy director, Strategy, Plans and Policy (DJ5), U.S. Central Command, MacDill AFB, Fla. Sicola is currently serving as assistant chief of staff for Education, Training, and Planning, Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

Jimmy and Ashley Collins, the ringleaders of the scheme, were sentenced in January to a 10-year prison term and 18 months in home confinement, respectively. The couple was also ordered to pay \$65 million.

The couple targeted a Tricare billing change that led to inflated

costs for compound medications, a practice in which a pharmacist creates a personalized blend of drugs. These bespoke medications cannot be evaluated like mass-produced drugs, are more expensive and reimbursed at a far higher rate by insurance companies, a statement by the Justice Department said in October.

**PHOTO GALLERY**

**SAN DIEGO (April 6, 2024)** Volunteers fold U.S. flags to honor fallen Naval Special Warfare comrades at Miramar National Cemetery. Naval Special Warfare is the nation's premiere maritime special operations force. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kyle Fiori



**NAS NORTH ISLAND (April 11, 2024)** Aviation Ordnanceman Airman Charles Dennis, left, and Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Bobby Hopkins, prepare to shift colors on the flight deck of aircraft carrier *Abraham Lincoln*. *Abraham Lincoln* is currently moored pier-side here. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Nathaly Cruz

**PORT HUENEME (April 10, 2024)** Alma Rubalcava (left) and Joyceanne Sim (center), mechanical engineers at Naval Surface Warfare Center here, are joined by Paige Barylky (right), a general engineer with Naval Facilities Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center here, in a panel discussion featuring Navy women engineers. U.S. Navy photo by Jeric Gambon



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# The grass is always greener, except over the berm

As a Navy "intel wife," I often lamented that we didn't have as many social opportunities as couples in other military communities such as surface, aviation, submarines, and special ops. Don't get me wrong. I don't wish to disparage my husband's 28-year dedication to his chosen field. To the contrary, I have nothing but respect for the incredibly bright military service men and women who specialize in information dominance.

However, I must tell you: The intelligence community isn't known for its parties

Two years into our marriage, my husband, Francis, and I were hanging out with Chuck and Karen, another "intel couple" with whom we often engaged in husbands-vs-wives banter. It was Saturday night, and we were playing Monopoly in Chuck and Karen's base house on Fort Ord, California. Karen and I were both pregnant at the time, so while the guys drank cheap beer, we sipped mugs of hot cocoa topped with Cool Whip.

"It's not fair," I said, licking Cool Whip from my thumb. "Aviators' wives get to wear necklaces with little wing charms, but what do we get? Bupkis." "Yeah," Karen chuckled. "We married intel geeks, so we're screwed." "Your turn," Francis said to Chuck, completely ignoring us. Chuck rolled a seven, landing his miniature silver shoe on Oriental Avenue. "Read it and weep," I smirked playfully across the table to Chuck. "The rent for that slum? Chump change," Chuck bantered back, counting \$24 in yellow, pink and white bills into my outstretched hand. "We should get necklaces for being intel wives," I declared while rolling the dice. "But what would the pendant look

like?" Karen pondered. "Easy," Francis offered, "a magnifying glass." Karen and I wrinkled our noses. "I moved my tiny iron nine spaces to Chance. "Pay poor tax of \$15, damnit!" "I know!" Karen piped up, giggling. "The intel wife pendant could be a gold pair of glasses with tape around the nose piece." "Ha! Or a little gold pocket protector!" I added. Karen and I threw our heads back, laughing hysterically. "Very funny," Chuck snapped, tossing the dice to his wife. He and Francis were not amused.

## The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

During Francis' next tour of duty at an all-intelligence command in rural England, my gripes about the social challenges of the intel community persisted. Francis worked at Joint Analysis Center, Molesworth, inside clandestine, windowless, grass-covered, WWII berm buildings. Spouses weren't allowed access or information, making it difficult to get to know coworkers and their families.

Although we formed a small cadre of good friends during that tour, the command's social scene was abysmal. In fact, the annual holiday parties had been so poorly attended, the base commander made them mandatory. Furthermore, without the presence of

fleets, the organizational hierarchies among the various intelligence divisions within the command were too tangled to run like teams or squadrons. Therefore, hails, farewells, dining ins or outs, and squadron parties were almost non-existent.

After moving to Norfolk, Virginia, I looked up a fellow intel wife, Natalie, whom I hadn't seen in years. Her husband was assigned to an airwing staff aboard a deployed carrier.

"Hey Lisa," Natalie asked, "meet up with me and the squadron wives tonight." "Finally! I'm gonna have some fun!" I thought, while nervously searching for something to wear.

At the designated trendy bar, it was immediately apparent that my outfit was all wrong. The other women wore body-hugging velvet dresses with platform mules (all the rage at the time), while I donned LL Bean khakis and an androgynous denim shirt as if I was only there to sell them State Farm Car Insurance.

That night, I realized two things. First, living in rural England for three years had obliterated my sense of fashion. Second, by connecting with spouses from other communities, I could find the camaraderie which was lacking in intel circles. During the years and tours that followed, I successfully hitched my wagon up to army, navy, air force and marine wives in all sorts of communities when I wanted friendship and social connection.

No matter what military community one is in, there's no reason to miss out. With patience, perseverance and a little parasitic ingenuity, even intel spouses can have more fun.

# WonderCon 2024

WonderCon, celebrated annually at the Anaheim Convention Center, is run by and similar to San Diego Comic-Con, but without much of the participation by the movie, TV and streaming production studios, with their incredible off-site activations (interactive scenes, complete with sets, props and costumed talent). WonderCon is significantly smaller, which makes it more intimate and accessible. Whereas San Diego Comic-Con badges sell out quickly every year, badges for WonderCon still could be purchased on the weekend of the event. That meant that anyone who wanted to enjoy many of the entertaining and informative program panels; shop for comics and at the many other vendors in the huge marketplace; choose from over 100 different games to play with likeminded competitors (including in tournaments); watch Children's Film Festival screenings from around the world; marvel at the craftsmanship and creativity at the WonderCon Masquerade on Saturday evening, and revel in the high energy moves of The Corps Dance Crew and The Saber Guild at intermission while the votes were being tallied; visit with artists (literally from A to Z) in Artists' Alley, and the Small Press, WonderCon and Fan Tables; and, of course, people-watch, perhaps while wearing a costume that you created. It is a photographer's dreams come true!

The full schedule of panels each day covered a wide variety of topics, described in the WonderCon app and listed on several pages in the WonderCon Program Book. "WonderCon's Program Schedule is always full of returning favorites and unexpected surprises," and this year was no exception, "with panels including comics publisher discussions, movie and television events, animation showcases, comics and costuming workshops, interactive presentations, and much more."

Cosplay was everywhere, with large gatherings of popular and less well known characters, too, for photos on the terraced steps of the iconic fountain in front of the Anaheim Convention Center.

Fan Tables offered memberships in groups celebrating cultural icons from STAR TREK to STAR WARS. There was even a collection of life-sized, custom-made droids, with people there that were ready, willing and able to help you make your very own!

## AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

The fun did not end when the exhibit halls closed on Friday and Saturday. As was previewed in the WonderCon Program Book & Complete Schedule, programs and special events continued until 10:00 pm and included some of your favorite podcasts, nerdy trivia, geeky debates, and deep dives into the topics you hold near and dear. You might have met your next creative partner at one of the networking events, sought help with your cosplay questions, and gained valuable insight into how to become the next Avatar or how to write like a pro. You could do all that and more during WonderCon After Dark.

Next up is San Diego Comic-Con — the largest of its kind, and famous worldwide. Do not be discouraged if you were unable to secure a coveted San Diego Comic-Con Badge, be-

cause one huge difference between WonderCon and San Diego Comic-Con is that it is enormous — so much so that it is far too big to just be held within the walls of the San Diego Convention Center. Outside there are free activations, pop culture giveaways, food, cosplay, mammoth movie and TV show themed wraps covering the outside of big buildings, and so much more to see and do — all on the streets and in the storefronts and buildings that radiate outwards in all directions from the San Diego Convention Center. In fact, despite my having a Press Credential, each year I eagerly look forward to spending much of my time checking out as much as I can outside the Convention Center, where a San Diego Comic-Con credential is not usually a requirement. Everyone can enjoy San Diego Comic-Con!

The dates for San Diego Comic-Con 2024 are Thursday, July 25th through Sunday, July 28th, plus Preview Night on Wednesday. For more information, visit <https://www.comic-con.org>.

Do yourself a huge favor and avoid parking downtown. Instead, save yourself the expense and the hassle, and use public transportation. The San Diego Trolley is convenient, runs often and offers reduced multi-day tickets during Comic-Con, and has free parking available at a variety of station locations.

In the meantime, check out the San Diego Comic-Con Museum in Balboa Park and at <https://www.comic-con.org/museum/>.

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

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### Friends don't make friends wait in hot cars!

When the sun is shining and the outside temp is 75° your car heats up to 94° in 15 minutes and 109° in 30 minutes.

@cocotheadventurepup

### ROY'S SUDOKU

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## MOVIES AT THE BASES

SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE. CHECK FOR UPDATES ON LINE AT:  
<https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/> select movies from dropdown menu on left  
<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>  
<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

### Lowry Theater - NASNI, 619-545-8479 Bldg. 650

**Thursday - April 18**  
6:00 PM The American Society of Magical Negroes pg13  
**Friday - April 19**  
6:00 PM The American Society of Magical Negroes pg13  
**Saturday - April 20**  
1:00 PM Arthur the King pg13  
3:00 PM Kung Fu Panda 4 pg  
5:00 PM Immaculate r  
**Sunday - April 21**  
1:00 PM Arthur the King pg13  
3:00 PM The American Society of Magical Negroes pg13  
5:00 PM Late Night with the Devil r

### Naval Base Theater - NBSD, 619-556-5568, Bldg. 71 3465 Senn Rd.

**Wednesday - April 17**  
6:00 PM Arthur the King pg13  
**Thursday - April 18**  
6pm American Society of Magical Negroes pg13  
8:20 PM Imaginary pg13  
For updates check <https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/movies/>



### Bob Hope Theater 577-4143 MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

**Friday, April 12**  
6:00 PM – Arthur the King (PG-13)  
**Saturday, April 13**  
3:00 PM – The American Society of Magical Negroes (PG-13)  
6:30 PM – Dune: Part Two (PG-13)  
**Sunday, April 14**  
12pm – Wonka ( G ) - Free Showing  
3pm – Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire

### Pendleton Theater and Training Center Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across from Mainside Center)

**Saturday, April 13**  
1:30pm Dune: Part 2 (PG13)  
**Saturday, April 20**  
1:30pm\*Kung Fu Panda 4 (PG) \*SEN-SORY FRIENDLY\*  
4:00pm Imaginary (PG13)

### Armed Forces Dispatch

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Editor.....Scott Sutherland

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## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

**Across**  
1 Distressed cry  
5 Capture, in Westerns  
10 Pond film  
14 Singer Brickell  
15 Rap sheet entry  
16 \_\_ Linda, Calif.  
17 Noble fish?  
19 Arthur Ashe Courage Award, e.g.  
20 Radio tuning shortcut  
21 Longtime "American Top 40" host  
23 They're sold in bars  
26 Force out  
29 Goes along with  
32 Come again?  
33 Oldest Musketeer  
34 Keyboard goofs  
36 Campaigned  
37 Flute feature  
38 Management opening  
39 Protest, in a way  
40 Argentine aunt  
41 Calf \_\_: chocolate-flavored drink  
42 Reach via jet  
43 Oliver Twist, for one  
45 Not farmed out  
47 Spruce up the lawn  
48 Jim of "Wide World of Sports"  
49 Buddy  
51 Much more than a mere fan  
56 Word of lament  
58 Elastic fish?  
61 Singer with The Black-hearts  
62 Typical  
63 Caffeine-rich seed  
64 Graph lines  
65 Chaps  
66 Kind of folder

**Down**  
1 Online site whose reviews are reviewed  
2 Fragrance  
3 Certain partner  
4 Frees, with "out"  
5 Common carry-on item  
6 Pub order  
7 What Marcie calls Peppermint Patty  
8 Fires  
9 Fed. workplace monitor  
10 Short item on many a tee  
11 Massive fish?  
12 Diamond authority  
13 Possibly will  
18 Many RSVP responses, hopefully  
22 Notices  
24 Top story  
25 Medium  
27 Pure  
28 Scout rider  
29 What you have on  
30 Stingy fish?  
31 Dot follower, at times  
32 Piglet's pal  
33 Tycoon who is an Oregon city namesake  
35 Play a joke on  
38 Day named for a satellite: Abbr.  
39 Winter bug  
41 Anti-DUI org.  
42 Entrance area  
44 Raises  
46 Variable eye colors  
48 Touchpad alternative  
50 Pharmacy item  
52 Sets as a price  
53 Circuit  
54 Earthenware pot  
55 Bears or Lions  
56 1977 Steely Dan album  
57 Latin law  
59 Dog holder  
60 Diamond tool

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				N	O	S	O	S	S	V	T	T	M	O	A			

**USS Midway Museum.** The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal. FREE-Children 5 & under, Active Duty military including reservists (w/ valid ID). Adult \$34 (ages 13+). Youth \$24 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$24\*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

**The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton.** Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN\_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: [www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/](http://www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/) for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm



## Melatonin use in children: Is a sleep aid supplement safe?

Mayo Clinic

Melatonin is a hormone naturally produced in the brain that's linked to your body's sleep and wake cycle. The natural release of melatonin is stimulated by darkness and suppressed by daylight. It's also available as a supplement that you can take as a pill or chewable gummy.

As a supplement, a small dose can trigger your body to produce melatonin that makes you feel sleepy and helps you fall asleep.

More people are asking their healthcare team about melatonin and report using it, including parents giving it to children. Here's what you need to know about melatonin use in children and how to improve sleep hygiene without a sleep aid.

### Research on melatonin

In the U.S., melatonin is available over the counter as a dietary supplement. This differs from other countries, such as the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia, where melatonin is regulated as a prescription medication.

Research has shown that melatonin is generally safe for short-term use in adults and adolescents. Fewer studies have been done to evaluate the effects of its long-term use and safety. It's also unclear whether melatonin supplements are safe for children.

### Melatonin use/side effects

While melatonin can help children fall asleep, it doesn't keep them asleep. Difficulty falling or staying asleep can be a sign of an issue in the body, including:

- Iron deficiency can cause rest-

lessness during sleep.

- Enlarged tonsils or adenoids can lead to snoring or obstructive sleep apnea.

- In children who have nightmares, melatonin may make dreams more vivid, which can worsen sleep.

That's why it's crucial to consult with your child's healthcare team to find and treat issues causing sleep disturbances.

Melatonin may be recommended for children with neurological conditions like autism spectrum disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and managed with routine evaluation and follow-up by their healthcare team.

In gummy form, melatonin supplements can be enticing for children, leading to a risk of overconsumption. Taking a large dose of melatonin can cause gastrointestinal issues or irritability. A large dose also can keep your child's body from naturally producing melatonin to make them sleepy.

### Evaluate sleep hygiene

Melatonin use is intended as a short-term aid. When sleep issues are a long-term problem for children, evaluating sleep habits and the environment can identify the causes of those issues. Here are some things to consider when striving for good sleep hygiene:

- Screen use. Looking at a back-light screen tells the brain it's time to be awake and engaged.
- Have a routine.
- Create a sleep-friendly space. A dark, quiet room is ideal for sleep.

Lights should be kept low or dim.

## Vaping linked to 19% higher risk of heart failure, study finds

The study notes that vaping specifically increases the risk of a form of heart failure known as heart failure with preserved ejection fraction.

by Scripps News Staff

People who use vapes have a higher risk of heart failure compared to those who have never used e-cigarettes.

According to a new study published by the American College of Cardiology, researchers analyzed data from a larger study that examined the link between e-cigarette use and new cases of heart failure, and found that among 175,667 participants,

those who had used e-cigarettes were 19% more likely to develop heart failure.

"More and more studies are linking e-cigarettes to harmful effects and finding that it might not be as safe as previously thought," said the study's lead author, Dr. Yakubu Bene-Alhasan. "The difference we saw was substantial. It's worth considering the consequences to your health, especially with

regard to heart health."

When researchers looked at different types of heart failure, the study notes that they found that using e-cigarettes specifically increased the risk of one type of heart failure called HFpEF, or heart failure with preserved ejection fraction, in which the heart muscle gets stiff and doesn't fill with blood properly between contractions. The latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

shows that in the U.S., 4.5% of adults over the age of 18 use e-cigarettes. Meanwhile, 25.2% of middle and high school students who used e-cigarettes reported using them daily, with a striking 89.4% reporting the use of flavored e-cigarettes.

The CDC also notes that most of these cigarettes contain nicotine, which is highly addictive and also harms brain development in younger people.

## What to know about the rise of colorectal cancer in younger adults

Rates of colorectal cancer have been rising consistently in younger adults — a trend that concerns surgeons and other medical professionals at the forefront of treating the disease.

"We've been noticing an alarming rise in colorectal cancer in adults under the age of 50. In fact, people born in the 1990s are two times more likely than people born in the 1950s to develop colorectal cancer," said James T. McCormick, DO, FACS, FASCRS, a colorectal surgeon and American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) State Chair of the Pennsylvania chapter. "And that's remarkably striking. We're not quite sure why that's happening or how to screen for it at such a young age. That's the conundrum."

### How much is colorectal cancer increasing in younger adults?

Researchers have noted a 15% increase in colon cancer diagnoses in people aged 18-50 since 2004, according to hospital-based data from the National Cancer Database (NCDB). By comparison, there was only a 3% increase in colon cancer diagnoses in adults aged 45-55 during the same period.

The NCDB, a clinical oncology database jointly operated by the CoC and the American Cancer Society, captures approximately 74% of all newly diagnosed can-

cers in the U.S.

Colorectal cancer is also killing more young adults. According to the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer is now the leading cause of cancer deaths in men younger than 50 and the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women of the same age group.

### Why is colorectal cancer increasing among young people?

The exact causes behind the increase of colorectal cancer in younger people are not fully understood. However, most experts believe that the rise results from multiple factors, including environmental changes, potential exposure to toxins, genetic factors that may increase a person's risk of developing the disease earlier in life, and lifestyle factors such as high consumption of ultra-processed foods. Research is ongoing.

### What can people do to prevent colorectal cancer?

Despite the unknown, there are several steps everyone can take to reduce their risk. First and foremost, ACS experts recommend that people of all ages remain vigilant and report any changes in bowel habits, including bleeding and persistent changes such as constipation or diarrhea, to their primary care physician. Be persistent, and don't be afraid to

ask questions.

"I think a lot of prevention starts with awareness," said Paula Denoya, MD. "We've all seen patients who had rectal bleeding that was dismissed as hemorrhoids or IBS symptoms for a while before they were found to have colorectal cancer. Knowing your family history is also critically important."

Starting at age 45, all people should be screened for colorectal cancer annually. Screening may need to start earlier for people with a family history of the disease or for people considered high-risk for the disease due to other health factors.

The gold standard of colorectal cancer screening is with a colonoscopy, which can help physicians detect colorectal cancer at

its earliest stage, when it's more treatable, and even prevent colorectal cancer through the detection and removal of precancerous growths called polyps. Screening with colonoscopy may be one factor of many that has resulted in nearly 16,000 fewer colon cancer diagnoses among older adults per year, according to hospital-based data from the NCDB. Still, approximately 1 in 4 adults of screening age are not up to date with colorectal cancer screening recommendations, according to national data estimates.

Finally, exercising regularly to maintain a healthy body weight and eating a balanced diet high in lean meat, fiber, whole grains, vegetables, and fruits may also help reduce risk.



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**ARMED SERVICES YMCA CAMP PENDLETON**  
STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILY™

**WHO WE ARE**  
The mission of the Armed Services YMCA Camp Pendleton is to enhance the lives of military members and their families in spirit, mind, and body through programs relevant to unique challenges of military life. For the past 60 years, our goal has been to strengthen military families who work or reside on Camp Pendleton.

**OUR IMPACT**

<b>QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE CHILD CARE</b> Helped create high levels of military spouse unemployment by providing military families with 50+ hours of childcare in 2023.	<b>ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS</b> Enriched the military children's academic and social-emotional support to overcome the unique challenges of their parent's military service.
<b>FOOD, DIAPER, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE</b> Distributed 50k+ lbs of food to 14 BC military families in 2023, supported 3.8k+ individuals with commissary cards, and gifts during the holidays.	<b>SINGLE MARINE SUPPORT</b> Supported 12.2k School of Infantry Marines with recreation and meals on the weekends.

**OUR CORE PROGRAMS**

<b>FISHER CHILDREN'S CENTER</b> Offers academic enrichment, quality and affordable childcare for young children to help prepare them for future success.	<b>OPERATION LITTLE LEARNERS</b> An interactive game and child education program that offers parents and their preschoolers an opportunity to learn and grow.	<b>OPERATION HERO</b> A one-of-a-kind program designed to help military brn who may be struggling with change get back on track at home and in school.
<b>CAMP HERO</b> Encourages healthy living and provides outdoor activities and social bonding opportunities for military children.	<b>OPERATION KID COMFORT</b> Custom, hand-made quilts to help children cope with the separation of a parent's deployment.	<b>SERVICE EVENTS</b> Support military families through banquets, giveaways, and community events.
<b>HOLIDAY SUPPORT</b> Too generous and financial assistance for active duty service members and their families during the holidays.	<b>SOI RECREATION CENTER</b> Open on the weekends, this recreation space provides a place for school of infantry students to relax and recharge.	<b>FOOD DISTRIBUTION &amp; FINANCIAL SUPPORT</b> Assistance with food, diapers, gas, and other necessities through monthly distributions, a food pantry, and emergency commissary and gas cards.

STRENGTHENING OUR MILITARY FAMILY | <https://camppendleton.aymca.org>

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While the duties of a volunteer may vary, the goal is always the same — to improve the quality of life of service members, boost their morale, and serve as the link between service members and the American people.

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Visit [www.volunteers.uso.org](http://www.volunteers.uso.org).

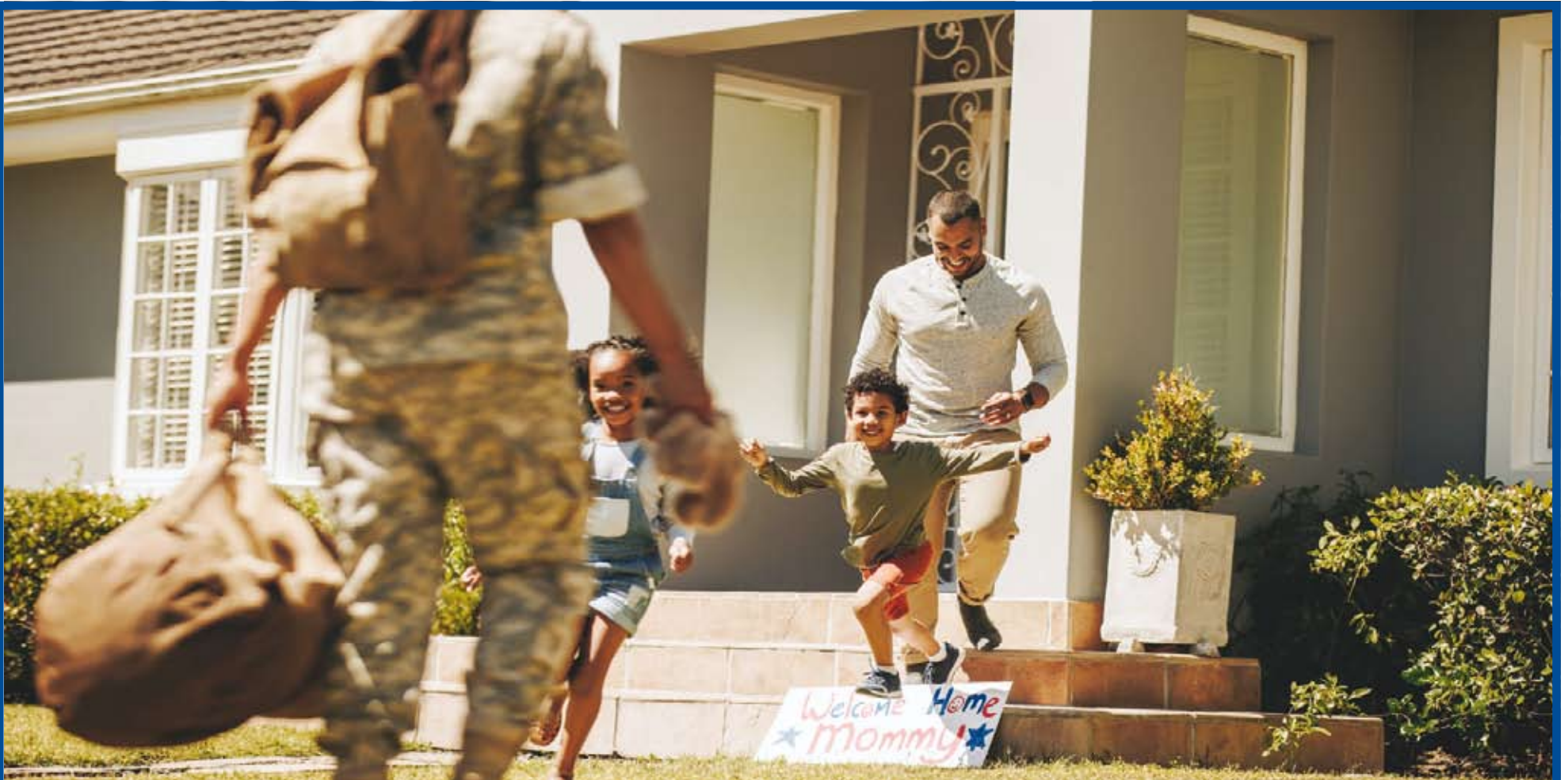
- Navigate to the webpage and click on "Volunteer at a USO Center"
- Next click "Continental United States."
- Then select "California"
- Finally, select the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

Positions may be available around San Diego county at:

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**Camp Pendleton USO Center**  
**San Diego MEPS Center**  
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