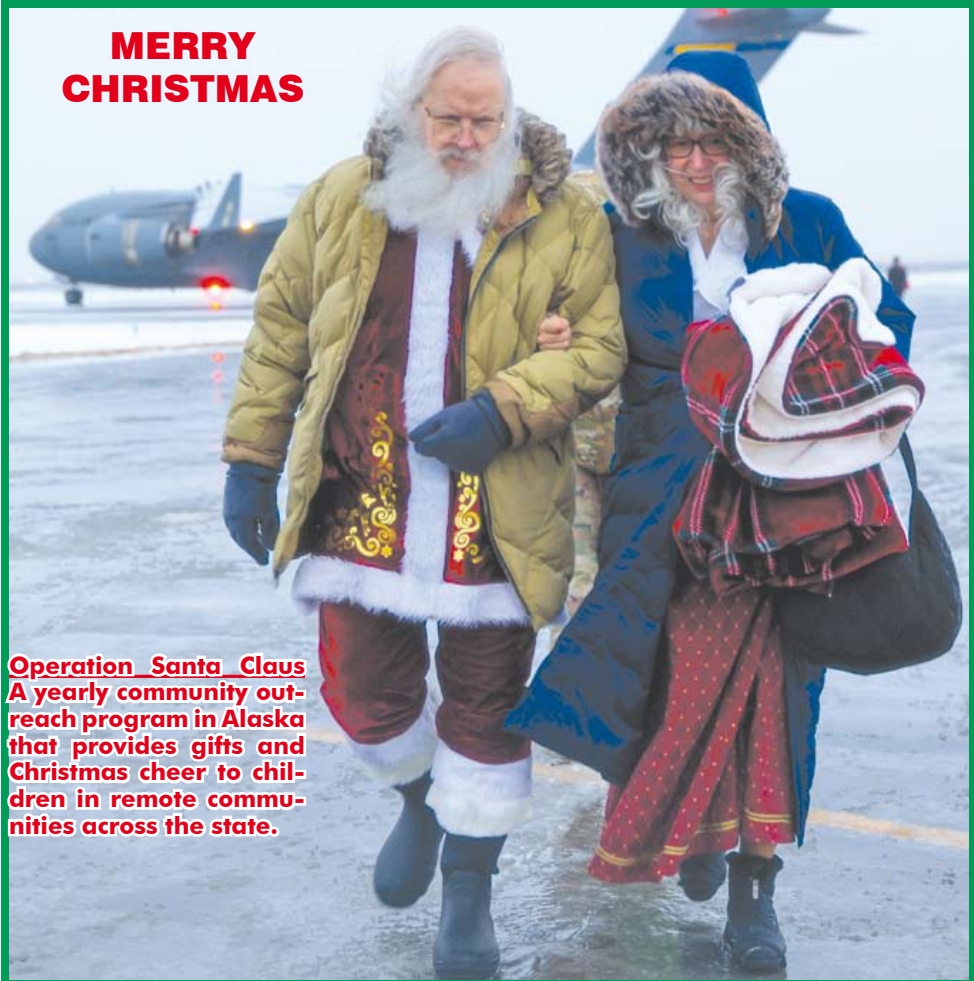


ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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MERRY CHRISTMAS
Operation Santa Claus
A yearly community outreach program in Alaska that provides gifts and Christmas cheer to children in remote communities across the state.

Santa and Mrs. Claus disembark from a C-17 Globemaster III towards an awaiting UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter in support of Operation Santa Claus at Bethel, Alaska, last year. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Marc Marmeto.

NEWBORN ARRIVES UNEXPECTEDLY AT NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER SAN DIEGO'S FLAG CIRCLE

Courtesy story
SAN DIEGO - What began as a hopeful trip to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) for labor turned into an unforgettable experience for Electronics Technician (Submarine) Navigation 1st Class Zachery Finley and his wife, Gabrielle Finley, when their baby boy Zachery, Jr., was born in the hospital's Flag Circle parking lot on Dec. 4.

Remarkably, this is the second unexpected delivery at NMCS D's Flag Circle since September 2023.

"It all started around 1:30 a.m. when I began having contractions every five to seven minutes," recalled Gabrielle Finley. "By 7:30 a.m., the contractions were every two minutes, so we decided it was time to head to the hospital."

The couple was initially admitted to triage at NMCS D, but after being informed they were in the early stages of labor, they decided to return home to allow Gabrielle to labor naturally, as planned. "The staff was very understanding of my birth plan and explained that labor could still take several hours since



Zachery Finley (R) and his wife, Gabrielle, with their baby boy, Zachery, Jr. who was born in the hospital's parking lot Dec. 4. Courtesy photo

Cyber command chief discusses challenges of getting intel to users

by Jim Garamone, DOD News
The United States has spent trillions of dollars on ensuring intelligence and the network that distributes that intelligence is the best on the planet, but more needs to be done, said Air Force Gen. Timothy D. Haugh, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, director, National Security Agency and chief, Central Security Service, in a discussion at the Reagan Defense Forum Dec. 7.

Intelligence is the lifeblood of defense strategy and a crucial aspect of deterrence. Haugh spoke during a panel hosted by New York Times reporter Julian Barnes. The panelists agreed that the U.S. does a good job of collecting intelligence and analyzing the intelligence but has shortcomings in ensuring that the people who need that information get it in a timely and effective form.

Competitors, of course, try to guard their intelligence and use all methods to find what the U.S. knows, Barnes stated to the general about Salt Typhoon - the Chinese government led hack aimed at North America and Southeast Asian targets. The hack - discovered by Microsoft - wasn't only aimed at companies, but high-level political figures.

Haugh said the hack - which some in the intelligence community called "mind-boggling" - is just one part of China's global cyber program. "So that is an area that we have to continue to be able to educate our allies, our partners and the American people of what the [Chinese] intent is, whether it be coming at our critical infrastructure or intending to do collection through a large-scale series of operations against our telecommunications industry," he said.

The National Security Agency is working with the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, the FBI and industry partners on the threat Salt Typhoon poses. The agency did send out cyber security advisories in 2022 "that laid out this exact series of things that we had observed overseas," the general said. His agency does not collect data in the U.S.

"Our question now is ... how do we bring the partnership together with industry so that we can together enhance early warning," he said. "How do we bring our strengths to bear that [and] allow us to think collectively on how we defend U.S. infrastructure. I think that partnership with industry is the component."

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3989774/>



Gen. Timothy D. Haugh poses for an official photo. U.S. Air Force photo

Congress to boost junior enlisted pay by thousands of dollars in 2025

MILITARY TIMES - Junior enlisted troops will see a 14.5 percent pay raise in 2025 under a deal negotiated by House and Senate leaders in this year's defense authorization bill, a move that adds between \$3,000 and \$6,000 to younger service members' basic pay next year. The plan also includes a 4.5 percent pay raise for other troops, more than \$2 billion in funding for new barracks and family housing, expanded bonuses and hiring incentives to boost the number of medical personnel in military health care facilities, and hikes child care workers' salaries to improve availability at military bases.

Destroyer Preble sails near contested, militarized islands in South China Sea

A Navy warship on Dec. 6 sailed close to disputed islands militarized by Beijing and other nations in the South China Sea, the service announced soon after the freedom-of-navigation operation. USS Preble steamed within 12 nautical miles of Swallow Reef in the Spratlys, according to Lt. Cmdr. Jamie Moroney, a spokesman for the U.S. 7th Fleet. The chain of about 100 islets and reefs is about 800 miles south of mainland China, 560 miles east of Vietnam and 206 miles west of the Palawan in the Philippines.

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Show Dates & Times

Saturday, December 28:	10am – 9pm
Sunday, December 29:	10am – 9pm
Monday, December 30:	10am – 9pm
Tuesday, December 31:	10am – 6pm
Wednesday, January 1:	10am – 6pm

Location

San Diego Convention Center
111 W Harbor Drive

Tickets

All tickets must be purchased online at SDautoshow.com.



International Auto Show roars into San Diego Dec. 28-Jan. 1

The San Diego International Auto Show (SDIAS), one of the most anticipated events for both new car buyers and enthusiasts, and – Where the Cars are the Stars – roars back into the San Diego Convention Center, Dec. 28, 2024 – Jan. 1, 2025.

“With so many new and exciting vehicles and technologies being introduced, we can’t wait to open the doors to the 2025 edition of the San Diego Auto Show,” said an enthusiastic Scott Webb, Director of Marketing & Operations, SDIAS. “Our show is truly a celebration of all things automotive, and once

new cars, trucks, SUVs, crossovers, EVs, hybrids and other vehicles in a convenient, non-selling environment. Among the vehicles on display will be a wide variety of all-new models not yet in showrooms, as well as a record number of electric vehicles. Both behind-the-wheel test drives and an expanded indoor EV Test Track experience will enable show-goers to experience the actual handling and performance of the hottest new vehicles.

“Test drives provide an exceptional opportunity for car-buyers to experience a variety of vehicles,

given the rapid growth of EV purchases in San Diego, which is now third in the nation for EV adoption. A variety of EVs from automakers will be on display in one central location, and experts will be available to guide consumers as they personally consider if the time is right to “go electric.”

Auto show tickets are on sale and tickets will only be available online at www.sdautoshow.com. Purchased tickets may be printed at home or shown and scanned on the smart phones of show patrons at the convention center.

Also, for the 10th year, Nissan returns as the Military Appreciation sponsor of the San Diego Auto Show. As part of that program free tickets to the Auto Show will be available at San Diego County Nissan dealers for active and retired military personnel beginning in mid-December (while supplies last).

Ticket prices are as follows:

Adult (ages 13-61): \$18
 Military (active duty w/ID): \$15 (one ticket per ID)
 Senior (ages 62+): \$15
 Child (ages 7-12): \$12
 Child (6 and under): Free
 Child (12 and under): Free on Family Day, Sun., Dec. 29 (when accompanied by a paid adult)
Show Hours:
 Saturday, Dec 28: 10am-9pm
 Sunday, Dec 29: 10am-9pm (Family Day)
 Monday, Dec 30: 10am-9pm
 Tuesday, Dec 31: 10am-6pm
 Wednesday, Jan 1: 10am-6pm

About the San Diego International Auto Show:

Owned, produced and presented by the New Car Dealers Association San Diego County, the San Diego International Auto Show remains the second largest auto show in California and one of the best attended public events at the San Diego Convention Center. Chosen as a global destination for manufacturers to showcase their products, the San Diego International Auto Show – Where the Cars are the Stars – is one of the primary means of stimulating automobile sales throughout the county.

Free tickets to the Auto Show will be available at San Diego County Nissan dealers for active and retired military personnel beginning in mid-December (while supplies last)

again we’ve been working closely with vehicle manufacturers and a variety of other exhibitors to create an event that will inspire, educate and entertain.”

The automotive industry continues to experience unprecedented change, including the rapid transition to electric vehicles, and there is no better place to experience this evolution than at the San Diego Auto Show – California’s second-largest auto show.

Webb said show-goers should look forward to getting up close and personal with hundreds of

and consumers may even find brands new to the show offering drives this year,” Webb said. “Our expanded EV Test Track provides consumers with a thrilling experience, as professional drivers demonstrate the impressive acceleration and handling of EVs from even more brands on a special course created inside the convention center.”

Other special displays and exhibits expected to return to the show include Electric Avenue, the Mobility Zone, Classic Cars and more. Electric Avenue will again be a focal point of this year’s show

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GOP senators urge rejection of military draft for women

by Svetlana Shkolnikova
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - A group of Republican senators is fighting against a legislative proposal long pushed by Democrats to force young women to register for the military draft.

The eight senators on Dec. 5 urged the chairmen of the Senate and House Armed Services committees to reject a provision that would require men and women to register automatically for the Selective Service System.

“America’s daughters, sisters, wives and mothers can decide to join the military themselves,” the Republican senators, led by Josh Hawley of Missouri, wrote in a letter to the committee leaders.

The senators — all men — said they strongly opposed a provision in the Senate Armed Services Committee’s draft of the 2025 National Defense Authorization Act to expand selective service registration to women, calling the proposal “a tool of liberal social policy.”

The House’s version of the must-pass legislation does not include the provision and negotiations between the two cham-

bers on a final bill are underway.

Men are required to register with the selective service system once they turn 18 years old in case of conscription while women have been exempted from registration even after they were allowed to serve in combat roles in 2015.

Hawley and other senators argue Congress should retain that long-standing tradition and defer to the agenda of President-elect Donald Trump as he returns to office.

“President Trump ran in part on a platform of avoiding World War III and ending the progressive policies infecting our military,” the senators wrote. “The American people gave him a resounding electoral mandate.”

Lawmakers, particularly



Female service members standing in formation. U.S. Air Force photo by Jaimee Freeman

Democrats, have considered making women eligible for the draft for years as the number of Americans who volunteer for military service declines. In 2020, a congressionally mandated commission said such a step would be “necessary and fair.”

But legislative efforts to codify the change into law have so far faltered, with lawmakers ultimately scrapping proposals during final bill negotiations. Sen. Jack Reed, D-R.I., has repeatedly championed gender parity in the draft as chairman

of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Hawley and other Republicans called on him on Thursday to drop the issue, noting “Americans rejected social progressivism in 2024” and negotiators of the NDAA “should take this lesson to heart.”

The senators did not mention another proposed change to conscription that negotiators are also weighing. That proposal, initiated by the House, would make registering for the draft automatic for men.



- Army**
- Soldier who pulled survivors from rubble after Tower 22 drone attack awarded Purple Heart
 - Fort Johnson Soldier, wife found dead in base housing
- Navy**
- Navy base in Japan is first to test backup power via congressionally mandated drill
 - Carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* leaves South China Sea
 - Russian surface action group visits China
- Marine Corps**
- Five Marine Corps families file lawsuits over child abuse at military base day care
 - Dire state of Navy amphibious fleet has cost Marines decades of lost training, deployment time
 - Marines on Okinawa activate anti-air battalion for littoral regiment
- Air Force**
- Former Air Force commander at Wright-Patterson charged with adultery, faces court-martial
 - ‘Place of healing’: Seaside memorial honors Osprey air-men lost in crash off Japan
 - To build a runway for the new stealth bomber, the Air Force is moving 17 B-1s to a new base
 - System update hits Air Force families with bogus charges for child, youth programs
 - Global Strike boss: CCAs may escort bombers after concept matures in fighter force
- Coast Guard**
- After Coast Guard stops boat with migrants, California mayor criticizes immigration policy
- Veterans**
- VA plans to expand caregiver benefits, postpone program discharges
 - Army veteran from humble beginnings wins \$44 million Powerball jackpot in California

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DECEMBER 16-31, 2024 www.armedforcesdispatch.com 3

Pilot program gives DOD civilians 4-month window to shop at 16 U.S. commissaries

by Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes
Defense Department civilian employees at more than a dozen locations in the United States can shop at their base commissary for about four months under a pilot program that began recently.

Sixteen stores in seven states, from Alaska to Virginia, opened their doors starting Dec. 5 to DOD appropriated-fund and nonappropriated-fund employ-

ees, the Defense Commissary Agency said in a statement the same day.
Family members of DOD civilian employees and former or retired DOD civilian employees aren't included in the pilot, according to the statement.
During the 120-day trial, DOD civilian employees won't be able to purchase tobacco or alcohol or use the commissary Click2Go online ordering service.

The agency is testing the feasibility of expanding commissary access to DOD civilians at all stateside stores. The change is expected to increase sales and allow the agency to pass on more savings to patrons worldwide, DECA said in the statement.
The Pentagon directed DECA to keep tabs on the effects of increased patronage and report those findings. Stores were selected based on several factors, including store size, capacity for

more patrons and demographic range.
The pilot program locations include two in California - Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake and Fort Irwin.
DECA operates 235 stores on military installations worldwide, serving about 8.3 million households in 13 countries and two U.S. territories, according to a report to Congress last month.
The agency strives to provide savings of over 25 percent

compared with civilian marketplaces, even while tacking on a 5 percent surcharge to pay for modernizing and maintaining its facilities, according to the congressional report.
In 2022, a government watchdog agency found that DECA couldn't assure customers that it was meeting its target savings rate, particularly in the conti-

nental U.S.
The Government Accountability Office also noted in the same report that DECA's sales of groceries and other goods have fallen by more than \$1 billion in the past the past six years.
Overseas commissary privileges are covered by agreements with host nations. Military exchange stores expanded shopping privileges to DOD and Coast Guard civilian employees in the United States and its territories and possessions in 2021.



WARRIOR SPIRIT Soldiers from across the XVIII Airborne Corps demonstrated their skills and warrior spirit during the inaugural Combatives Competition held at Fort Liberty, N.C. late last month. Units faced off in intense matches, showcasing tactical proficiency and physical resilience. Soldiers of 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) earned the most belts and took top honors. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Lunsford



HOLIDAY HOMECOMING Family members and friends welcome home 200 Army Soldiers with the 44th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, New Jersey Army National Guard, in time for the holidays at the National Guard Armory in Lawrenceville, N.J., Dec. 3, 2024. More than 1,500 44th IBCT Soldiers deployed to Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. This is the largest deployment of NJARNG Soldiers since 2008. New Jersey National Guard photo by Mark C. Olsen



CARE PACKAGING Volunteers decorate a box during the 73rd Operation Christmas Drop Box Build event at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, Dec. 6, 2024. OCD is the Department of Defense's longest running humanitarian airlift mission and this year over 50,000 pounds of donated gifts and supplies will be dropped to 60 islands supporting 22,000 islanders. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Samantha Jetzer



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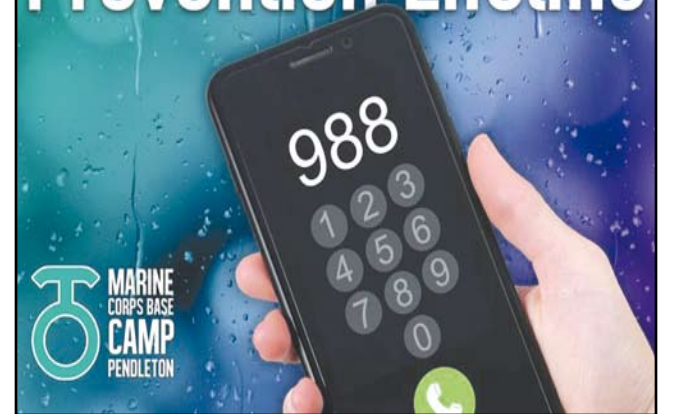
Enlisted Leader Development



On Dec. 1, 2024, new and revised Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Leader Development lesson plans and student guides were posted on the Share Point as well as MyNavyPortal. During December, download the new plans for personalization and get familiar with the changes (<https://www.netc.navy.mil/Commands/Naval-Leadership-and-Ethics-Center/Enlisted-Leader-Development/Courses/Article/3366726/>). The old plans will remain for use until Jan. 10, 2025, and then will be removed. After Jan. 10, only the new lesson plans are to be utilized. Stand by for the CPO guides at a later date. Please reach out to NELC if you have questions.

The Navy requires enlisted leaders who are flexible, innovative and confident. Senior enlisted leaders across the fleet have worked together to develop The Enlisted Leader Development (ELD) framework -- a "character focused" learning continuum for the enlisted force, based on foundational courses delivered throughout an enlisted Sailor's career, SAILOR 360, self-study, on the job training (OJT) and feedback received from coaches, mentors, and advocates. This training, which begins with foundational courses, places a premium on personal and professional growth through expert use of challenge, adversity, feedback and mentoring. The Enlisted Leader Development continuum will ultimately replace the indoctrination courses previously required when selected for advancement. Rather than being event driven, ELD integrates training throughout the Sailor's entire enlisted career. By investing in enlisted leaders continuously, the Navy drives each leader closer to his or her theoretical limits of performance.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline



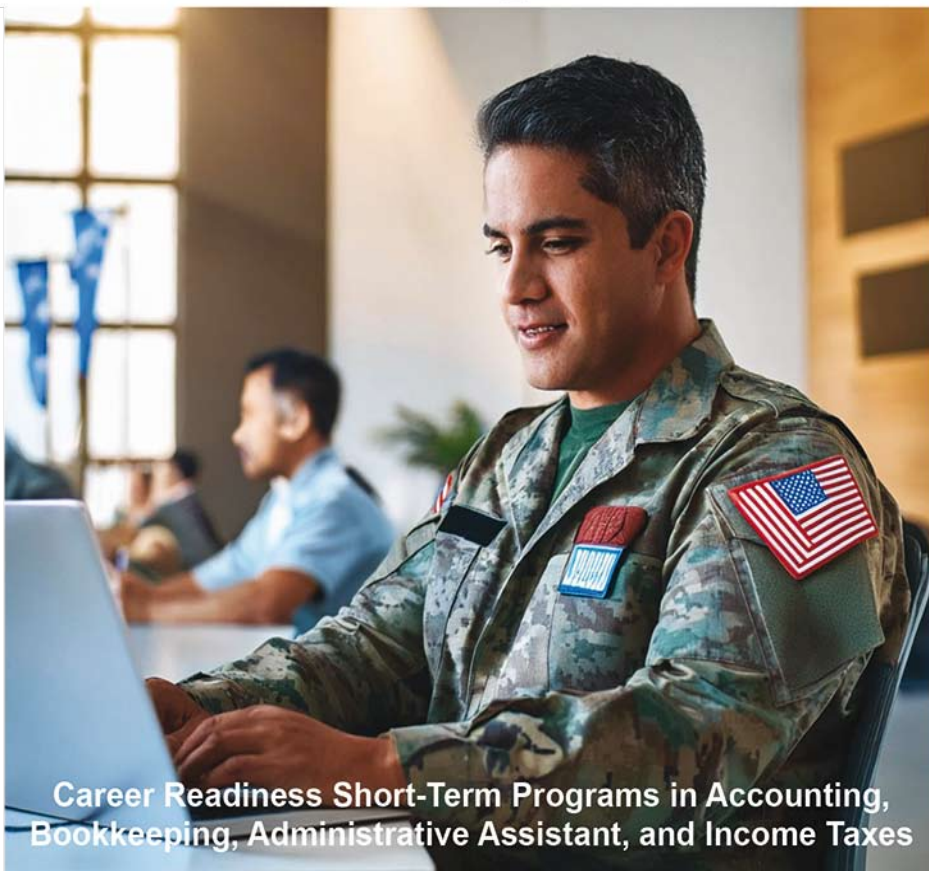
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Surface Navy celebrates opening of premier warfighting training facility

SAN DIEGO – For the first time since its establishment in 2015, the Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center (SMWDC) will bring all four Warfare Tactics Instructor courses under one roof at a state-of-the-art facility designed to enhance the tactical proficiency of the Surface Fleet.

The new Surface Advanced Warfighting School on Naval Base San Diego, will host courses in Anti-Submarine/Surface Warfare (ASW/SUW), Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD), Amphibious Warfare (AMW) and Mine Warfare (MIW).

These courses will be conducted in a single, centralized location, directly contributing to the Navy's Competitive Edge 2.0 initiative and enhancing the lethality and tactical proficiency of the Surface Force across all domains.

for SMWDC and for the entire Navy—the official opening of the Surface Advanced Warfighting School,” said Vice Adm. McLane, commander, Naval Surface Forces Pacific Fleet. “Now more than ever, we need intelligent organizations that will enhance our competitive edge and encourage prolific warfighting adaption throughout the force.”

The decision to co-locate the four WTI courses was driven by the reorganization of SMWDC in 2022, aimed at streamlining operations and fostering collaboration.

The initiative began in 2020, when Rear Adm. Scott Robertson, former commander, spearheaded efforts to bring the vision to life. SMWDC worked closely with SurfPac, Navy Region Southwest, NB San Diego; and NAVFAC to refurbish and transform an administrative building into a cutting-edge training center.

of teamwork and dedication,” said Commander, Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center, Rear Adm. Wilson Marks. “By co-locating courses, we’re not just improving how we train our surface elite warfighters, but also creating a center of excellence for experimentation and tactical development. It’s all foundational for achieving tactical warfighting improvements and increasing lethality of the Surface Fleet.”

The SAWS facility underscores SMWDC’s commitment to deliver tactical excellence by design. The centralized location will also integrate the Multi-Warfare Planning and Training System (MWPTS) in 2026, providing realistic combat systems training for platforms like Ship Self Defense System (SSDS), Aegis, and Surface Fires. This innovation will support the development and validation of tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs), a capability previously limited to live onboard testing.

to our competitive edge and SAWS furthers this strategic vision, centralizing Warfare Tactics Instructor courses and transforming our Sailors with the tools, training, and knowledge they need to win,” said McLane.

Located near the west coast controlled training facility, the new SAWS schoolhouse enhances collaboration, integration, and accessibility. It also ensures parity with training facilities available to aviation and submarine communities, demonstrating the Navy’s commitment to providing surface warfighters with the resources they need to excel.

“Our WTIs are leading the way in improving warfighting capabilities across the fleet,” said Marks. “This schoolhouse ensures they have the tools and environment to continue excelling in their mission and delivering combat-ready warfighters.”

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3989414/>

Fulford relinquishes command of 1st Marine Division to Savage

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Robert C. Fulford relinquished command of 1st Marine Division to Maj. Gen. Thomas B. Savage during a recent ceremony at Camp Pendleton.

After he relinquished command of the Blue Diamond to Savage, Fulford was promoted to the rank of lieutenant general in preparation for his next assignment as the deputy commander of U.S. European Command.

“When Gen. Fulford took command of this great division, he talked about the previous commanding generals that are on the wall...” said Lt. Gen. Michael S. Cederholm, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force. “They haunt him, in a good way. They make his commitment to this division, every day, real.”

Fulford recalled his time at 1st Marine Division, emphasizing the close ties and connections the Blue Diamond has to offer, as well as those who came before him. He also thanked the service members and families who came to support him during his transition from the division to EUCOM.

USS Charleston changes leadership

SAN DIEGO - Cmdr. Nellie Wang was relieved by Cmdr. Meghan Gray as CO of Littoral Combat Ship USS *Charleston* (LCS 18) at Naval Base San Diego recent14. Capt. Douglas Meagher, commodore, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1, was the presiding officer and guest speaker at the ceremony.

Wang assumed command of *Charleston* in April 2023 after serving as the ship’s executive officer. She oversaw the combining of both Blue and Gold crews into a single crew on April 1. *Charleston* was the first crew to do so under the 2024’s strategic lay down plan.

“I could not be more proud of the opportunity to serve as the commanding officer of USS *Charleston*,” said Wang. “The past three years as XO and CO of *Charleston* have been some of the most rewarding of my life. The tour has been successful, and it’s because of the crew’s dedication to each other and to the ship.”

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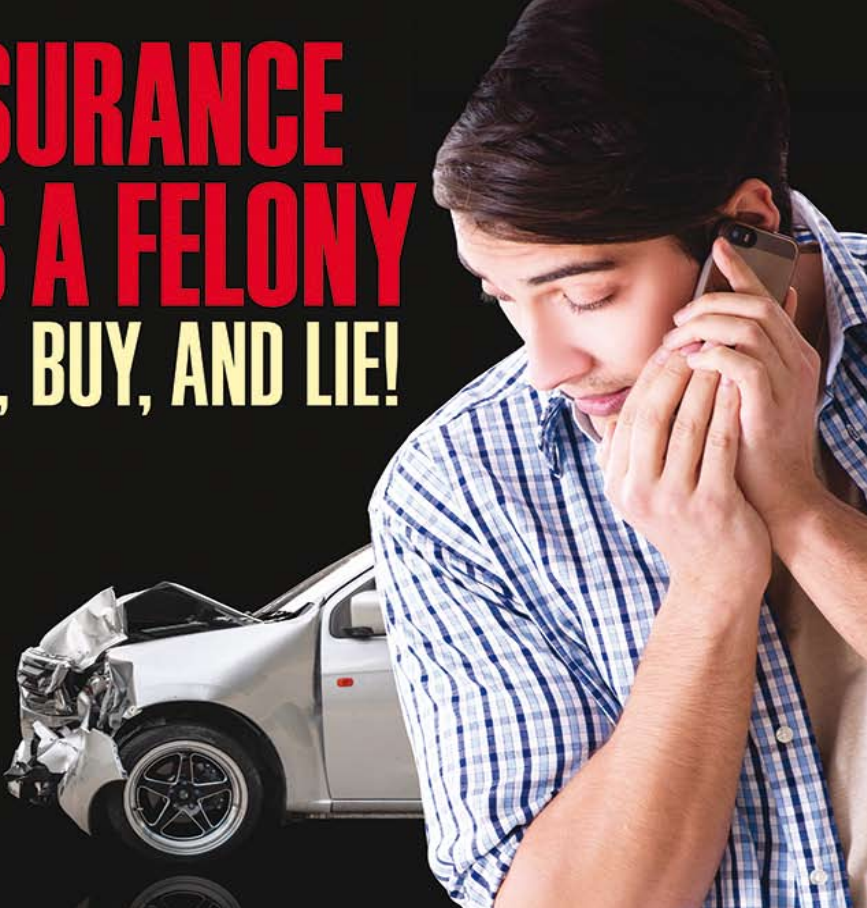
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WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND: USS *Green Bay* arrives in San Diego after a decade in Japan

SAN DIEGO - San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS *Green Bay* (LPD 20) arrived Dec. 9 to its new homeport here from Sasebo, Japan. This homeport shift will be a permanent change of station for the crew and family members. This shift complies with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), requiring that Navy ships not be permanently forward deployed to Japan for more than 10 years.

"USS *Green Bay* has been the workhorse of Sasebo and the 7th Fleet for nearly a decade," said Capt. Aaron DeMyer, commanding officer of *Green Bay*. "We are super proud of our reputation as the most ready well deck in the area of operations, and looking forward to continuing a tradition of excellence in our new home port of San Diego."



Green Bay served as part of the *America* Amphibious Ready Group, operating in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. With a crew of 400 and the ability to embark 700 Marines, *Green Bay's* mission is to transport and launch amphibious craft in support of amphibious warfare and humanitarian operations.

"We have a good crew that understands what needs to be done when it needs to be done. The team has been worked hard in Seventh Fleet and I'm proud of my time serving abroad but I am overjoyed to be heading home to see my wife and kids after a year away," said Electronics Technician 1st Class Blake Cross.

"While in Seventh Fleet, the *Green Bay* crew became my family while I was away from my own. With multiple forward deployed patrols together, I am thankful for my fellow Sailors. I am excited to go back to the states to see my family and for them to meet my Navy family too," said Operations Specialist 2nd Class Juana Cerriteno.

While forward-deployed, *Green Bay's* operational schedule included Exercise Talisman Sabre between with Australia; Exercise Keen Sword 25 to strengthen Japan's alliance; Exercise Iron Fist, featuring the U.S. Navy/Marine Corps

Amphibious transport dock ship USS *Green Bay* approaches the Coronado Bay Bridge Dec. 9, on its way to permanent pierside after nearly a decade forward-deployed to Sasebo, Japan, as part of the *America* Amphibious Ready Group operating in the Navy's 7th Fleet AOR. The homeport shift complies with the National Defense Authorization Act, requiring that U.S. Navy ships not be permanently forward deployed to Japan for more than 10 years. U.S. Navy photo MCC Mark D. Faram

team; and Exercise Cobra Gold 2020 with Thailand.

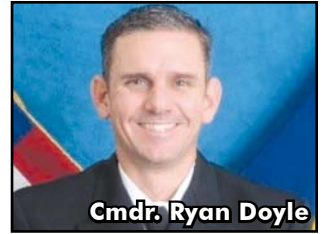
USS *Green Bay* was commissioned Jan. 24, 2009. The ship is named in honor of Green Bay, Wisc., and serves to conduct prompt and sustained amphibious operations to support national defense and theater security cooperation.

Doyle assumes command of USS *Omaha* Blue Crew

by Petty Officer 1st Class Vance Hand
Commander, Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1

USS MIDWAY MUSEUM, SAN DIEGO - The executive officer of littoral combat ship *Omaha* Blue Crew has stepped into the skipper's chair after relieving Cmdr. Christopher Caraway during a change of command ceremony here recently

Cmdr. Ryan Doyle has mainly been a West Coast Sailor in his naval career. The Boca Raton, Fla., native previously served afloat as strike officer and first lieutenant aboard USS *Cowpens*; executive officer and operations officer for Patrol Craft Crew FOXTROT; weapons officer and combat systems officer on USS *Stockdale*; and as the combat systems officer for Destroyer Squadron 21.



Caraway's parting gifts were a Meritorious Service Medal, and fresh orders to Commander, Naval Air Forces, Pacific Fleet, for his next tour of duty.

He remarked to his time as *Omaha's* skipper, summing it up by thanking the Blue Crew, saying, "I'm extremely proud of you and all that you have accomplished. You have proven yourselves time and time again to be resilient, adaptable and capable of achieving success. You are what makes *Omaha* exceptional, and it has been a privilege to serve alongside you all."

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Birth continued from page 1

how close we were.”

As they arrived at NMCS D, the couple’s doula, Marissa, was already waiting at the patient drop-off area in Flag Circle. Gabrielle was helped out of the car, but the moment she stood up, the baby’s arrival was imminent.

“One of the nurses, who happened to see us, ran inside and called a ‘Code Purple,’” Zachery explained. “And within moments, it was like a movie—staff came running from every direction with equipment and support.”

Gabrielle vividly recalled the teamwork and professionalism. “It was incredible. Everyone identified themselves and stayed calm. I delivered standing up with two nurses holding my legs, my doula supporting my back, and a team ready to care for me and my baby,” she said.

Despite the unexpected setting, the Finley’s felt supported throughout the entire experience. “The staff’s responsiveness was beyond anything we could have imagined,” Zachery said. “They were calm, professional, and so compassionate. It felt like the entire hospital had come to our rescue.”

Gabrielle described the emotions of the moment as overwhelming but exhilarating. “I was nervous about delivering outside, but the fresh air and the support of everyone around me

made it memorable in the best way,” she said. “The delayed cord clamping was something I really wanted, and the staff made sure it happened, even in those circumstances. That meant so much to me.”

After Zachery Jr.’s birth, Gabrielle and her baby were taken inside for further care. Although the journey to the delivery room was unconventional, Gabrielle expressed deep gratitude. “The staff at NMCS D went above and beyond. From the nurses to the postpartum team, every single person made me feel supported, respected, and cared for,” she said.

Zachery added, “This was our first baby, and while we couldn’t have anticipated this, we wouldn’t change a thing. NMCS D proved to be the best place to bring our boy into the world.”

The Finley’s also praised their doula for being an invaluable part of the experience. “Marissa was with us every step of the way,” Gabrielle said. “She provided guidance and comfort, especially in those critical moments outside the hospital.”

Reflecting on the experience, Gabrielle said, “I’d do it 110 times over again. I can’t recommend NMCS D enough. It’s a place where families can trust they’ll receive the best care, even in the most unexpected situations.”



MCAS MIRAMAR (Dec. 6, 2024) A Marine with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 352, Marine Aircraft Group 11, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, embraces a family member during a deployment homecoming here. Marines supporting Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, during deployment. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jennifer Sanchez



SAN DIEGO (Dec. 5, 2024) Alissa Kamens Marshall, USNS Thurgood Marshall ship sponsor, participates in the keel laying/certification by welding her initials into the keel plate of the new ship. U.S. Navy photo by Sarah Cannon

ABOARD USS TRIPOLI (Dec. 4, 2024) - Aviation Ordnanceman

2nd Class Derian Barnett replaces the barrel of an .50-caliber machine gun during weapons qualification aboard Tripoli in the Pacific Ocean. Tripoli is underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area. U.S. Navy photo by MC2



Military pauses Osprey flights again after more metal failures found in near-crash in November

STARS AND STRIPES - The Pentagon is temporarily pausing flights again of its fleet of V-22 Ospreys after weakened metal components possibly played a role in another near crash, the

latest setback for an embattled aircraft whose safety problems have grown.

The pause was recommended recently “out of an abundance of caution” by Vice Adm. Carl Chebi, the head of Naval Air Systems Command, which runs the Osprey program for the military, said command spokeswoman Marcia Hart.

The Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force are adhering to the recommended pause, each said in a statement to *The Associated Press*. The Marines said its pause began Dec. 6 and would run at least through Dec. 9. The other services are expected to maintain their pauses longer as they look at the cause of the metal failures.

An in-depth investigation into the Osprey by The AP published last month found that safety issues have increased in the past five years, parts are wearing out

faster than expected and that the design of the aircraft itself is directly contributing to many of the accidents. The Osprey can fly both like a helicopter and an airplane.

Following that report, lawmakers sent a letter to Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin asking him to reground the Osprey fleet until solutions can be put in place to address safety and design issues identified by the AP.

The latest near crash, at Cannon Air Force Base in New Mexico on Nov. 20, had similarities to a crash off the coast of Japan in November of last year that killed eight Air Force Special Operations Command service members.

In the Japan crash, inclusions — or weakened spots — in the metal used for critical gears inside the Osprey’s transmission led to the gearing falling

apart inflight and a cascading catastrophic failure of the aircraft. At the time the crew did not realize the seriousness of the failure and did not immediately land.

Lessons from that fatal Japan crash may have saved lives in the latest emergency. While the investigation is not complete, the crew in the Cannon flight received similar warnings shortly after takeoff and lost an engine but was able to quickly put the Osprey back on the ground and survive.

An initial review of the part that broke apart at Cannon has found that similar metal weaknesses may have played a role, but in a different part than what failed in the Japan crash.

Continue reading at <https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2024-12-09/pentagon-military-pauses-osprey-flights-16110188.html> weakness.

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December Nights 2024 in Balboa Park - holiday celebration & open house

It is billed as “the City of San Diego’s largest free holiday festival in beautiful Balboa Park.” Every year, on the first Friday and Saturday nights in December, hundreds of thousands of people gather in Balboa Park. This “family friendly event brings San Diegans together to enjoy the lights, the sounds, the attractions and of course, the amazing food.” There is so much to see and do that you cannot possibly do it all, but each year I try.

It is a colossal open house. Many of Balboa Parks museums open their doors free of charge to the public, to check out the exhibits and enjoy some holiday cheer.

The San Diego History Center had a breathtaking photo op in front of a spectacular 15-foot live poinsettia tree.

The San Diego Automotive Museum included a photo op with Santa seated in their 1909 Harvester, “all decked out for the holidays.”

I love visiting the San Diego Model Railroad Museum — especially its massive Toy Train Gallery layout, which was also decked out for the holidays.

The community really goes above and beyond when it comes to performers and free entertainment at “December Nights.” The complete list is far too long to list here, but to give you an idea of the number and variety of performers on the various stages throughout Balboa Park, participants included Impact Dance Company, Flamenco Arana, Jam Diego, School of Rock San Diego, The Blennies, Honeytones, Musicians Club of San Diego, San Diego Taiko, Christi’s Advanced Dance, Makana Kai, Ballet Institute of San Diego, San Diego Cooperative Charter School, SeaWorld, eKlectic Dance Company, The Dancehouse, The Microphone

Doctors, Lady J & the Soulful Knights, Super Tonic, San Diego Civic Dance Company, Raylin Cloggers, Mariea Antoinette, WorldBeat African Drum & Dance Ensemble, San Diego Korean Pungmul Institute, Bonita Vista High School’s The Music Machine & Sound Unlimited, Higher Authority, Back Pocket Whiskey Fellas, San Diego Christian Suzuki Strings, Heart of Praise, Flamenco Sur Dance Co., Ballet Folkorico El Tapatio de San Dieguito, Lets Dance for fun, Naruwan Taiko, Legendary Lion Dance Associa-

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



tion, Belles, Sax Diego, Brendan Prout Band, Bonnevill 7 with Rip Carson, Peninsula Singers, The Association of Professionals and Student Master Chorale, Raul Prieto Ramirez — San Diego Civic Organist, Marine Band San Diego, Martin Luther King Jr. Community Choir San Diego, San Diego Gay Men’s Chorus, Christmas Story Tree San Diego, San Diego Women’s Chorus, San Diego City Guard Band, The San Diego Chorus of Sweet Adelines International, House of Scotland Pipe Band, San Diego Junior Theater, Mariachi International San Diego, San Diego Humane Society, Don’t Try This at Home Show and San Diego Public Library Story Time.

This year’s “December Nights” was extra special for the historic, iconic Botanical Building, which reopened to the public on Friday, after being closed since January 2022 for a major renovation project.

As we learned from https://

www.sandiego.gov/cip/projectinfo/BotanicalBuilding, “The Balboa Park Botanical Building was built in 1915 as part of the Panama-California Exposition and is one of only four structures that were designed to remain as permanent features in the park. Recognized as one of the largest wood lath structures in the world, the building was designed to showcase the importance of horticulture and is home to hundreds of plants, including rare, tropical and indigenous fauna.

A steady stream of visitors toured the building, admiring the beautiful redwood on the walls and the amazing collection of plants.

After all that walking around, you’d surely be hungry. There was an incredible variety of food vendors all over Balboa Park, plus several of the International Houses (a group of 33 nations and cultural groups) prepared some of their nations’ ethnic cuisine — as well as presenting “traditional song, dance and instrumental performances.” For me, “December Nights” just would not be complete without delicious paella from the House of Spain.

For more information about “December Nights,” visit https://www.sandiego.gov/december-nights, and be sure to mark your calendar the first Friday and Saturday in December for next year’s “December Nights” in Balboa Park.

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

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

“I have bad news,” my 29-year-old son, Hayden, said sullenly during a recent conversation, “the owners are putting the house back on the market.” Ever since graduating from college in 2018, Hayden has lived in an apartment in a Victorian house. When the owners, a group of adult sisters who inherited the house, told Hayden they might try to sell it, he was terrified.

The first time the sisters put the house on the market, they allowed Hayden to continue to rent month-to-month. This uncertainty was a constant worry Hayden was unable to shake, and our assurances that everything would be fine fell on deaf ears. That first attempt to sell failed, much to Hayden’s relief. But only a few months later, the sisters decided to try again. When Hayden gave us the bad news, my husband and I could hear fear in his voice again.

“They said I could stay until spring, but then I’ll have to move out,” he said as if moving was a dire fate. “I’m not sure what to do,” he repeated. “If things go wrong, could I stay here temporarily and pay you rent?”

“Of course you can, and you don’t have to pay! But you’ll be able to find a new place. Maybe even better than your apartment now!” we assured him. From the look on his face, we could see that it would take a lot more to convince our son that moving was not the end of the world.

Why, we wondered, would our son, a brilliant, independent, responsible software engineer with a great career and bright future, be so scared of moving? The answer was obvious: Hayden was a military brat. Our Navy family moved frequently during his vulnerable adolescent years, when he attended three different high schools.

Despite his gifted intelligence,

Fear of change is hard to change

his Eagle Scout status, and our family’s constant emotional support, Hayden was impacted by those military moves during his teen years. While we’ve never had him psychoanalyzed for evidence of metothesiaphobia (fear of change), it doesn’t take a Ph.D. to see that the mere thought of moving causes our son an irrational amount of stress. Over the years, we’ve seen signs that our smart and successful adult son might be overly anxious, or possibly, depressed.

Military children are resilient, but how much of their resilience is forced? They don’t have a choice. They aren’t in control. They must move when their service member parents receive orders to move. They must hide their fear. They must change schools. They must make new friends. They must be the new kids, again and again.

So, when the child becomes an independent adult, with the power to control his own life, will he react differently when facing fear? Will he remember the stress of those childhood moves and do everything in his power to avoid experiencing it again now that he can?

Can military child resilience turn into adult avoidance?

The National Military Family Association (NMFA) and Bloom Military Teens recently released the results of their annual Military Teen Experience Survey (MTES). The 2024 results showed “that only

8 percent of military teens report high mental well-being, while a staggering 35 percent are struggling with low well-being.”

Like Hayden did, many military teens internalize their stress. The MTES results “uncovered an alarming trend in self-harm behavior among military teens,” revealing that “half of respondents (45 percent) reported engaging in self-harm,” far exceeding the global rate of adolescent self-harm of 18 percent. The MTES researchers describe self-harm as a maladaptive coping mechanism that is “an attempt to externalize the emotional pain they feel from the instability in their lives.”

“[T]his year’s MTES paints a picture of adolescents under tremendous emotional strain,” the survey concluded. The MTES results, coupled with a study released in August concluding that childhood moving is associated with the likelihood of developing adult depression, indicate that resilient military children may not always become resilient adults.

“I might buy a house,” Hayden called to announce yesterday. Our recent talks about moving and a few emails listing apartments for rent had paid off. It took a little extra time and thought, but Hayden eventually realized that by embracing change, he controls his own destiny.

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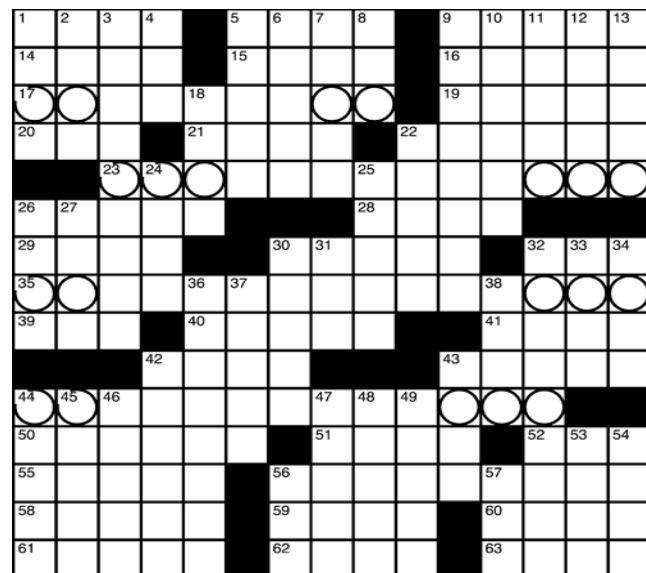
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58 Tolerate
59 Not worth ____
60 LAX info
61 Rogues
62 Trees used to make bows

Down

1 Fowl
2 Facetious target of a series of guides
3 Talk of the town?
4 *Metaphor suggesting suspense
5 Spain and Portugal, mostly
6 Unavailable
7 See 57-Across
8 Ed.'s stack
9 Word with lemon or orange
10 Pot starter
11 Jury member
14 English
15 *Is a fifty-fifty proposition
20 Extends, as a building
21 Building extension
23 Jigsaw bit
25 "No clue"
27 Start over
28 Over
29 No ____: surprisingly
30 Possess
31 Tel ____
32 Fill with freight
33 Casual pants
34 React to fightin' words, maybe
39 Hebrides native
43 Wedding destinations, often
45 Like 55-Down
46 Inspiration for the 2004 film "Troy"
47 Part of some V's
48 Lit up
49 Kind of position used for meditation
50 "Ditto"
51 Pack it in
52 ____ Major
53 Triangle calculation
55 See 45-Down



MOVIES AT THE BASES

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

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

NBSD and Lowry Theater Policy

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



Movie Rating System

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

Miramar: Bob Hope Theater

Sun, 12/15 noon – Venom: The Last Dance (pg13)
3pm Red One (pg13)
Fri, 12/20 6pm Wicked (pg)
Sat, 12/21 1:30pm Wicked (pg)
6:30 PM Gladiator II (r)
Sun, 12/22 noon Wicked (pg)
4pm Gladiator II (r)
NBSD Movie Theater
Sun, 12/15 1pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever (pg)
3:10pm Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin. (pg13)

Thur, 12/19 6pm Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin. (pg13)

NASNI Lowry Theater

Sun, 12/15 1pm The Best Christmas Pageant Ever pg
3:10pm Red One pg13
Thur, 12/19 6pm Bonhoeffer: Pastor. Spy. Assassin. pg13
Fri, 12/20 6pm Wicked pg
Sat, 12/21 12:50pm Wicked pg
4pm Best Christmas Pageant pg
6pm Gladiator II (r)
Sun, 12/22 12:50pm Wicked (pg)
4pm Bonhoeffer (pg13)

Visit our military museums

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

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

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.
FREE-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: MCBCAM-PEN_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/ for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

ROY'S SUDOKU

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2	6	1	8	9	5	7	2	9
9	2	6	5	2	7	8	9	1
5	2	8	9	2	1	6	9	7
1	7	9	6	8	9	2	3	5
6	5	2	9	1	8	9	7	2
9	1	7	2	5	6	9	8	2
2	8	9	2	7	9	1	5	6

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On Wednesday, Dec. 4, NMRTC Camp Pendleton and EMF 150 Alpha conducted a combined frocking ceremony for the Sailors who were recently selected for promotion to the ranks of 1st Class Petty Officer and 2nd Class Petty Officer. Congratulations to our newly promoted Petty Officers.

Director of Medical Service Corps visits NMCS



SAN DIEGO (Dec. 3, 2024) Rear Adm. Matthew Case, Director of the Medical Service Corps (MSC), visited Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS) for an Admiral's Call, providing mentorship and guidance to MSC officers, Dec. 3, 2024. During the visit, Case met with medical professionals and staff from various departments, emphasizing the vital role NMCS plays in delivering world-class healthcare to service members, veterans, and their families. In this photo, Case gathers with MSC officers who attended his Admiral's Call. NMCS's mission is to prepare service members for deployment, deliver comprehensive health services, and advance military medicine through education, training, and research. Employing over 5,000 personnel across Southern California, NMCS is committed to delivering world-class patient care while upholding the highest standards of healthcare excellence. Photo By Marcelo Calero

SAFETY ALERT: MCB Camp Pendleton posts new regulations for E-Bikes

MCB Camp Pendleton has new regulations regarding E-Bikes. These regulations include policy for age and usage restrictions aboard the installation. Please see Safety E-Bike Quick Card Below for more pertinent info. The actual Base Order can be downloaded at <https://www.pendleton.marines.mil/MainMenu/Staff-Agencies/Safety/ELECTRIC-BICYCLES/>




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Beacon of hope and strength

Naval Medical Center San Diego -- Congratulations to Lt. Cmdr. Aaron Walling who has earned National Board Certification through the National Association of VA Chaplains. This prestigious achievement reflects Lt. Cmdr. Walling's dedication to providing compassionate care, spiritual guidance, and unwavering support to our service members, veterans, and their families. Your commitment to excellence continues to inspire us all. Thank you for being a beacon of hope and strength within our Navy community.





SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER
AWARENESS MONTH

Are you feeling down during the colder months? You might be experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Learn how to cope using mental health resources from the @MilitaryHealth System. www.health.mil/MentalHealth



Your Local USO Wants You!

Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a Sailor or Marine with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" ships and troops from deployment, volunteers are vital to the success of the USO's mission.

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

Ready to apply to be a USO San Diego volunteer?
Visit www.volunteers.uso.org.

- On the right side see "Interested in volunteering?"
- Click red "Register Here" button
- Navigate to your area
- Finally, select the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

Positions may be available around San Diego county at:

Neil Ash Airport Center
Camp Pendleton USO Center
San Diego MEPS Center
Special Events Outreach



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a new
beginning
for the
new year?*

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