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BRING YOUR DOG TO WORK DAY Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) celebrates Bring Your Dog to Work Day with a dog parade June 19, 2025. The celebration consisted of a costume contest, parade, hot dog cook out, and is apart of NAVWAR's ongoing Wellness Initiative. NAVWAR photo by Keypher Strombeck

DOD LENDS AUTHENTICITY TO MILITARY ASPECTS OF DISNEY'S 'ELIO'

by Katie Lange, DOD News

For military children, making new friends every few years is part of the routine, but it's not always easy. While the resilience of these children has been

showcased on film before, a new animated movie is bringing some of their challenges to the big screen.

The Defense Department

often works with Hollywood to create movie magic and lend an air of authenticity to military life depicted on screen. It's not as often that DOD works with studios on animated films, but when it came to "Elio," Disney's new Pixar movie about a military child, the department's experts were called on to lend their support.

The film is about 11-year-old Elio, whose aunt and parental guardian is an Air Force major and an orbital analyst. Elio is obsessed with space, and since he doesn't have many friends, he hopes to get abducted by aliens to find some. He makes that dream happen and goes on a galactic adventure where he becomes friends with an alien.

Naturally, chaos ensues.

The movie explores themes

that many military kids can relate to, such as loneliness, being an outsider, finding one's place and the importance of friendship — no matter how different you are.

"I think the film does a really good job talking about relationships and showing what it could feel like as a military child who frequently deals with change and finding one's place in a new environment," said Develyn Watson, who helped support the movie as the deputy director of the Department of the Air Force Entertainment Liaison Office.

Pixar first contacted the department in early 2019 to see if Adrian Molina, the movie's cowriter/codirector, could get a tour of Beale Air Force Base in Yuba County, California. Molina was born at the base and had

see **Elio**, page 2



Chief Master Sgt. of the Space Force John F. Bentivegna speaks June 17 during a screening of the new film, "Elio." The event was hosted by the Motion Picture Association and the Walt Disney Company. Photo courtesy of Motion Picture Association

Hegseth, Caine laud success of U.S. strike on Iran nuke sites

by Matthew Olay, DOD News

During a press conference at the Pentagon June 22, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, lauded the success of the U.S. Central Command's overnight strike on three Iranian nuclear facilities.

Dubbed "Operation Midnight Hammer," Centcom deployed multiple combined assets to inflict significant damage at the sites of Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan.

"The order we received from our commander in chief was focused, it was powerful and it was clear. We devastated the Iranian nuclear program," Hegseth said at the outset of his remarks, also noting that the operation did not target Iranian troops or citizens.

"Initial battle damage assessments indicate that all three sites sustained extremely severe damage and destruction," Caine told the media.

After proceeding quietly and with minimal communication for 18 hours from the U.S. to the target area, the first of seven B-2 Spirit stealth bombers dropped two 30,000-pound GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator "bunker buster" bombs at the Fordo site June 21 at approximately 3:40 p.m. Pacific, Caine said.

The initial mission package also included several decoy aircraft that flew west over the Pacific Ocean as "a deception effort known only to an extremely small number of planners and key leaders here in Washington and [Centcom headquarters]," Caine said.

Such tactics were also used in support of the main strike package of aircraft.

"The U.S. employed several deception tactics — including decoys — as the fourth and fifth generation aircraft pushed out in front of the strike package at high altitude and high speed, sweeping in front of the package for enemy fighters and surface-to-air missile threats," Caine said.

Following the initial strike on Fordo, the remaining B-2s went on to deploy their ordnance, eventually totaling 14 MOPs hitting the targeted areas.

This was the first operational use of the GBU-57 MOP, Caine noted.

In addition to the MOPs, Caine said a U.S. submarine operating in Centcom's area of responsibility launched more than two dozen Tomahawk land attack cruise missiles at key infrastructure targets at the Isfahan site, bringing the overall total of precision-guided weapons employed during the operation to approximately 75.

Caine stated there was no detectable retaliation to the strikes.

"We are unaware of any shots fired at the package on the way out. Iran's fighters did not fly, and it appears that Iran's surface-to-air missile systems did not see us," he said, adding, "Throughout the mission, we maintained the element of surprise."

Jarrett assumes command of Navy Region Southwest

Welcome to San Diego's new "Navy Mayor" Rear Adm. Rich Jarrett who assumed command of Navy Region Southwest on June 18 from Rear Adm. Brad Rosen. Rear Adm. Jarrett is a native of Charleston, WV. He earned a commission from the Naval Academy in 1996. His sea duties include tours as Commanding Officer of LCS CREW 102 from 2013 to 2015, deploying in San Diego based ships *USS Freedom* (LCS 1) and *USS Fort Worth* (LCS 3) to the Indo Asia Pacific theater of operations. Ashore, Jarrett was assigned at Surface Warfare Officers School in Newport, RI, where he taught the Fleet's future department heads in the subject of tactics, administration, and leadership. He has also served in the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness; the U.S. Fleet Forces Command Liaison Officer in Washington, DC; as Commander, Fleet Activities Yokosuka, Japan; the Chief of Staff for Commander, Navy Installations Command. Jarrett is a graduate of the United States Naval War College and National War College.



Rear Adm. Rich Jarrett

From Adm. Rosen's LinkedIn: "As I turn over command of Navy Region Southwest to RDML Rich Jarrett, I would like to thank the San Diego community for their steadfast support over the past three years. It has been the highlight of my career to serve as the "Navy Mayor" in America's Finest City!

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Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial & The San Diego Nice Guys aid Murphy Canyon crash victims

SAN DIEGO - The Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial and the San Diego Nice Guys presented a \$50,000 donation to the Armed Services YMCA June 26 to aid the victims of the May 22 plane crash in the Murphy Canyon area.

The contribution is the culmination of a joint fundraising initiative where the donations are specifically earmarked to address one of the most pressing needs resulting from the crash - the replacement of damaged or destroyed vehicles.

For military families, a reliable vehicle is essential for daily life, including work, school, and maintaining independence. Its sudden loss creates immense financial and logistical challenges.

In the early hours of May 22, a tragic plane crash in San Diego's Tierrasanta neighborhood caused widespread destruction and profound distress for military families. In the immediate aftermath, the Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial and the San Diego Nice Guys partnered to raise crucial funds to support those affected.

The funds raised through this collaborative effort are specifically earmarked to address one of the most pressing needs resulting from the crash: the replacement of damaged or



destroyed vehicles. For military families, a reliable vehicle is essential for daily life, including work, school, and maintaining independence. Its sudden loss creates immense financial and logistical challenges.

"Our organization conveys our sincere gratitude for the sacrifices made daily by our military families in service to our nation," said Neil O'Connell, Executive Director of the Mt. Soledad Memorial Association.

"We understand the critical roles that our servicemen and women fill in their respective assignments and the impact of this catastrophic event will certainly disrupt their family routines, deployment readiness, and their quality of life. Our goal, in combining our resources with the Nice Guys, was to fill a critical gap by providing a method to replace their destroyed vehicles."

To ensure every dollar directly benefits those in need, all funds collected will be entrusted to and distributed by the Armed Services

YMCA, located just feet from the disaster's epicenter. Their established infrastructure and deep, compassionate ties within the community guarantee an efficient, transparent, and heartfelt allocation of aid directly to the affected families, providing a direct path to healing.

"Upon hearing of the tragic crash at Murphy Canyon Military Housing, there was no doubt that the San Diego Nice Guys would step up and help our military community," said San Diego Nice Guys.

Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial stands high atop the coastal peak of Mt. Soledad in La Jolla. The Memorial's mission is to honor our nation's veterans and preserve their legacy. It is the only memorial that does so for both living and deceased veterans.

More than 6,600 beautifully engraved black granite plaques with more than 10,000 personalized tributes to their service and sacrifice are mounted on 16

curved walls encircling the base of the 29' cross at its center.

The Memorial is located at 6905 La Jolla Scenic Dr. South, La Jolla, CA 92037, and is open daily from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. For more information about Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial, visit www.soledad-memorial.org.

The San Diego Nice Guys,

established in 1979, are a non-profit organization of over 175 volunteers dedicated to helping San Diego families and individuals facing hardship. With no overhead or paid staff, they have donated over \$21 million to get people back on their feet and self-sufficient, driven solely by the pleasure of helping others. Learn more at sdniceguys.com.

The Armed Services YMCA

(ASYMCA) is the oldest military support organization in the U.S., dedicated to Strengthening Our Military Family since 1861. Serving active-duty junior enlisted service members and their families across all six branches, the ASYMCA provides vital programs and services at no or low cost. In San Diego, the ASYMCA has supported the military community for over 100 years.

Elio continued from page 1

been writing a story centered on how he felt growing up as a child in a military family.

In February 2021, the studio requested a tour of Vandenberg Air Force Base, California — shortly before it was renamed as a Space Force base — so animators, writers, producers and others involved in the film could make the optics realistic. They also wanted to learn more from military personnel and their families.

At the time, officials said the Space Force was being stood up, so the Air Force was still heavily involved in space operations. Because the movie was written based on the Air Force, reality was bent a bit to move the narrative forward.

"It's not like in a live [action

movie], where you can just switch out uniforms," Watson explained. "In animation, that could be several millions of dollars to change. The path was set for the Air Force, so that's how the character continued to be an Air Force person but has what is now a Space Force job."

Movie crew members also visited Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, California, to get a feel for what aircraft flightlines are like — something else pivotal to the film. Personnel at the bases offered uniform guidance and other feedback, especially from active-duty mothers.

Watson said one of the things the studio really tried to get right was the mathematical aspects of space flight.

"We had to get with our experts at Vandenberg to kind of work through ... how can we keep this as accurate as pos-

sible?" Watson said. "We know it's a kids' movie, but ... [the studio] also wanted to make sure that the adults could be like, 'You know what? They got that right!'"

"We think Disney and Pixar did a really good job," she added.

DOD entertainment officials said the department helped work on Disney's movie "Planes" about 15 years ago. Watson said the Air Force also helped with a lesser-known 2005 direct-to-video animated movie called "Tugger: The Jeep 4x4 Who Wanted to Fly."

Ahead of the movie's theatrical release, Disney/Pixar invited military families to special screenings across the country, including at an event hosted by the Motion Picture Association in Washington, June 17.

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Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group departs for deployment



from Commander
2nd Fleet Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. - Nearly 4,500 Sailors assigned to the *Gerald R. Ford* Carrier Strike Group departed Naval Station Norfolk and Naval Weapons Station Yorktown June 24 for a regularly-scheduled deployment to the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.

The strike group deployed as an integrated naval force in support of economic prosperity, national security, and national defense.

“Carrier Strike Group Twelve is the most capable, adaptable, and lethal naval mission package in the world,” said Rear Adm. Paul Lanzilotta, commander of Carrier Strike Group Twelve. “Our force stands prepared and ready to execute sustained, multi-domain op-

erations at sea, wherever and whenever tasked, in support of American security and economic prosperity.”

Deploying units include flagship *USS Gerald R. Ford*, commanded by Capt. Dave Skarosi; the nine squadrons of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8, commanded by Capt. David Dartez; Arleigh Burke-class destroyers within Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2, commanded by Capt. Mark Lawrence; and destroyer *USS Winston S. Churchill*, homeported at Naval Station Mayport and commanded by Capt. Judson Mallory.

“I am beyond proud of the work the warfighters on this ship have put in to prepare for this deployment, and thankful for the families and friends who continue to support them,” said Capt. Dave Skarosi, commander of *Gerald R. Ford*.

“I have no doubt that this ship and crew will face and overcome any challenges with overwhelming force and fortitude, showcasing the power and lethality of the Ford-class carrier to the world.”

U.S., Australia, and Japan strengthen ties during Southern Jackaroo 25

by 1st Lt. Samuel DeRoberti
Marine Rotational Force - Darwin
TOWNSVILLE, Australia - U.S. Marines and Sailors with the Marine Rotational Force - Darwin (MRF-D) 25.3 Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) recently trained here alongside the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) during Exercise Southern Jackaroo 25, a multi-lateral exercise held at the Townsville Field Training Area, Queensland, Australia.

This year marked the largest iteration of the exercise with over 3,000 total participants, to include more than 500 Marines and 300 Japanese soldiers. Additionally, for the first time, MRF-D brought the full capability of the MAGTF to include MV-22B Ospreys assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 363, the MAGTF aviation combat element (ACE).

The Marines arrived in Townsville and immediately maneuvered to the Townsville Field

Training Area where they began the force-on-force portion of the exercise, also known as the North Queensland Warfighter Exercise (NQWFX).

The Marines, organized as a task force, worked alongside the Australian 3rd Brigade and a task force of JGSDF soldiers to seize and clear key terrain within the bounds of a complex scenario. This portion tested the combined force’s ability to receive and execute constantly evolving mission sets and pro-

vide a unified response.

The MRF-D task force served as an air assault element, leveraging support from Ospreys to insert into an objective, secure it with Marines with the MAGTF ground combat element (GCE), and withdraw, setting conditions for the ADF and JGSDF to achieve their respective follow-on objectives. Everything in this evolution is dynamic, unscripted and challenges each country to tightly synchronize movements.

Secretary of defense general officer announcements for June 20, 2025

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced June 20 that the President has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Gen. Christopher J. Mahoney for reappointment to general, with assignment as vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Mahoney is currently the assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, Headquarters, Pentagon.

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Gregory L. Masiello for reappointment to lieutenant general,

with assignment as director, Joint Strike Fighter Program, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Pentagon. Masiello is currently the director, Defense Contract Management Agency, Fort Lee, Va.

Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Benjamin T. Watson for reappointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commandant, Training and Education Command, Quantico, Va. Watson is currently serving as the commanding general, Training and Education Command, Quantico.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Jay M. Barger for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Pentagon. Barger is currently the director, J-5, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Hawaii.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. William J. Bowers for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commandant for Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Quantico. Bowers is currently serving as commanding general, Marine Corps Recruiting Command, Quantico.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. Stephen E. Liszewski for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as director, Joint Force Development, J-7, Joint Staff, Pentagon. Liszewski is currently serving as vice director, Joint Staff, Pentagon.

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. David L. Odom for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as director for operations, J-3, Joint Staff, Pentagon. Odom is currently serving as the director, Joint Capabilities Integration Directorate, Headquarters, Marine Corps, Quantico.



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DOD will pass audit by 2028, comptroller confirms

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

The Marine Corps has already passed a financial audit, and the Defense Department has until 2028 to do the same, the department's comptroller said today during a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee in Washington.

"The first day we came in, [the audit] was one of the first topics the secretary and I discussed, and he actually just put out a memo with guidance for milestones each fiscal year that the department is going to [meet in order] to achieve the financial audit by 2028 or sooner — as he has challenged us to do," said Bryn Woollacott MacDonnell, who is currently performing the duties of the Defense Department comptroller.

MacDonnell noted that in addition to the Marine Corps, two other DOD components have passed an audit.

"Within the next three years, under the secretary's guidance, the remainder of the department will achieve the clean audit opinion," she said.

MacDonnell was joined on Capitol Hill today by Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman



Bryn Woollacott MacDonnell, performing the duties of the Defense Department comptroller, testifies during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on the Defense Department's fiscal year 2026 budget in Washington, June 18. DoD photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Alexander Kubitzka

of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The leaders testified regarding the department's fiscal year 2026 budget.

Earlier this month, the Office of Management and Budget released to Congress President Donald J. Trump's recommendations on FY26 discretionary funding levels.

While a full presidential budget recommendation has not yet been released, the proposal includes an increase in DOD's budget to approximately \$961.6 billion, about \$113.3 billion higher than the enacted budget

for the department in FY25.

"This budget makes historic investments in living conditions, in barracks, in base housing," Hegseth said. "This budget reforms the [permanent change of station] process to reduce the cost and stress of moves for families — we've already seen changes there — and we improve the quality of care provided by our defense health care system."

Hegseth told lawmakers that since January, the department had identified nearly \$30 billion in savings, which, along with the

FY2026 budget, will be used to focus the department on his top priorities: restoring the warrior ethos, rebuilding the military and reestablishing deterrence.

Included in the FY2026 budget is \$25 billion for the Golden Dome missile defense shield for the United States, \$62 billion to modernize and sustain America's nuclear forces and \$3.5 billion for the F-47 Next Generation Air Dominance aircraft.

The budget also places a significant focus on shipbuilding, with \$6 billion in funding to help revitalize the American shipbuilding industry and \$47 billion allocated for Navy ship construction.

"The budget significantly increases funds to buy next-generation technology, including autonomous systems, long-range drones, long-range fires and hypersonics," he said. "We will put these capabilities in the hands of our warfighters, ensuring we remain the most lethal force in the world for generations to come."

Caine told senators he believes one of the most important parts of the FY2026 budget is the support it provides to warfighters and their families.



Army

- *Army expanding 'Transformation in Contact' initiative to Army Guard
- *Army promises to deliver analysis on sweeping changes in 10 days
- *Two Soldiers die in non-combat incidents in Middle East
- *Fort Carson's museum slated for potential closure
- *Army secretary tells senators to expect more soon about the service's force restructuring
- *Army's push to build air defense fit for future is stuck in the old ways, GAO says
- *Colorado-based Stryker brigade takes over 9-month mission near North Korean border

Navy

- *NCIS finds Sailor nearly two weeks after disappearance
- *'Fat Leonard' argues in newly unsealed appeal that San Diego judge sentenced him too harshly
- *Navy reaches fiscal 2025 recruiting goal 3 months early
- *USS *Gerald Ford* to deploy to 6th Fleet, moving a 3rd carrier group closer to Israel-Iran conflict
- *Middle East aircraft carrier commitment keeps pressure on U.S. fleet, deployment data shows

Marine Corps

- *Marines and Sailors combat drone threats by digging trenches
- *'He never came back': Marine family helps add WWII medic's name to Okinawa memorial
- *Trump picks Marine to be next Joint Chiefs vice chairman

Air Force

- *Spain tapped as new Air Combat Command boss
- *House appropriators want more transparency for big-ticket Air Force buys

Space Force

- *Trump formally nominates Guetlein as Golden Dome czar

Coast Guard

- *Hawaii Coast Guard crew wraps up enforcement mission in Cook Islands
- *'Yesterday's facilities,' unstable workforce among base commanders' worries

National Guard

- *Another 2,000 National Guard troops ordered into LA to help subdue ongoing protests

Your Military

- *How much weekly running is advisable for military special operations training?

Veterans

- *White House taps nominees for VA's top benefits, technology roles
- *A veteran was detained by Marines. It highlights concerns over the military's growing ties to law enforcement.
- *VA changes discrimination policy for health care staff, denies doctors could withhold treatment
- *Firms led by U.S. military veterans deliver aid in Africa and Gaza, alarming humanitarian groups

A FEW MONTHLY OBSERVANCES FOR JULY

Alopecia Month for Women
Bereaved Parents Awareness
Bikini Month
Bioterrorism/Disaster Education & Awareness
Cell Phone Courtesy Month
Dry Eye Awareness Month
Eye Injury Prevention
Family Golf Month
Fireworks Safety Month
Fragile X Awareness Month
Fuel Safety Month
Get Ready For Kindergarten
Hemochromatosis
Screening Awareness
Herbal/Prescription
Interaction Awareness

Independent Retailer Month
Int'l Blondie and Deborah Harry Month
Nat'l Deli Sandwich Month
Int'l Group B Strep Awareness Month
Int'l Zine Month
Nat'l Anti-Boredom Month
Juvenile Arthritis Awareness Month
Nat'l Baked Beans Month
Nat'l Black Family Month
Nat'l Blueberries Month
Nat'l Child-Centered Divorce
Nat'l Cleft & Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention
Nat'l Contract Sewing

Nat'l Cord Blood Awareness
Nat'l Culinary Arts Month
Nat'l Deli Salad Month
Nat'l "Doghouse Repairs"
Nat'l Grilling Month
Nat'l HIV Awareness Month
Nat'l Horseradish Month
Nati'l Hot Dog Month
Nat'l Ice Cream Month
Nat'l Make A Difference to Children Month
Nat'l Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
Nati'l Parks & Recreation
Nati'l Picnic Month
Nat'l Roadside Traffic Safety Awareness Month

Nat'l Rodeo Month
Nat'l Vacation Rental
Nat'l Watermelon Month
Nat'l Wheelchair Beautification
Sandwich Generation
Sarcoma Awareness Month
Self Care Month
Smart Irrigation Month
Social Wellness Month
Vehicle Theft Prevention
Wheat Month
Women's Motorcycle
World Watercolor Month



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NCIS Major Case Response Team Basic Training Program earns FLETA Accreditation



NCIS personnel conduct a forensic dig. NCIS photo by Ed Buice

CAMP PENDLETON - The NCIS Major Case Response Team Basic Training Program, hosted by the Office of Forensic Support's Pacific Forensic Training Center, has officially earned accreditation from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Accreditation Board.

The 24-hour program, conducted over three days here, combined classroom instruction with hands-on crime scene scenarios, including mock death scenes and simulated evidence.

The training was designed to standardize crime scene response practices and equip NCIS personnel with foundational skills in notetaking, sketching, photography, human remains documentation, and crime scene report writing - each guided by NCIS policy and forensic procedures.

The program filled an increasingly critical opportunity for agents to gain field-ready investigative skills early in their careers. The program was strongly recommended for agents cur-

rently serving or seeking to serve on an MCRT. Completion of the program prepares agents to apply for certification through the International Association for Identification, a nationally recognized professional organization that certifies forensic professionals in crime scene analysis.

"Accreditation validates the rigor and professionalism of this program," said Assistant Special Agent in Charge Erin Michaels of the NCIS Office of Forensic Support. "It reflects the detailed

Air Force DASH pioneers human-machine teaming for faster battle management decisions

by Deb Henley

LAS VEGAS - The Department of the Air Force took a bold step toward future command and control capabilities with the successful completion of its first Decision Advantage Sprint for Human-Machine Teaming, or DASH, experiment, recently held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

"The DASH experiment showed how machine support can dramatically reduce decision time and improve decision quality for air battle managers working in complex operational environments," said Col. Christopher Cannon, Advanced Battle Management Cross-Functional Team lead. "Battle manage-

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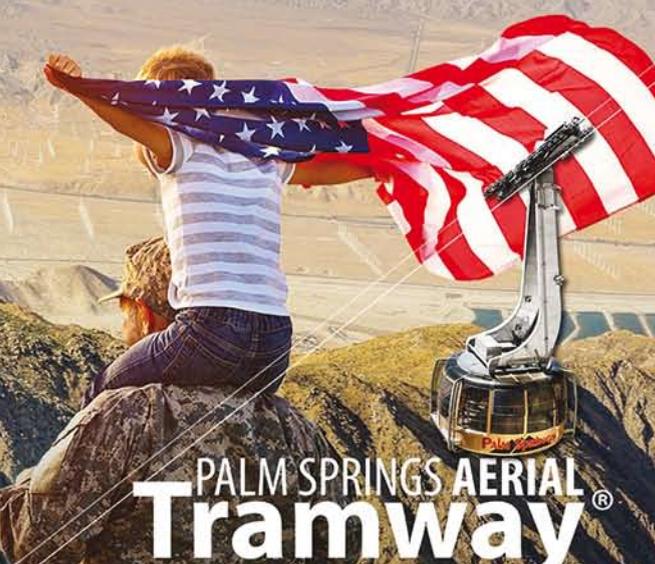
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Camp Pendleton wins major award for installation excellence

by Cpl. Noah Martinez, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON. – Former President Ronald Reagan instituted the first Commander in Chief’s Annual Award for Installation Excellence (CINC IEA) in 1985. This prestigious award was established to recognize and reward installations that demonstrate outstanding performance in management and maximizing resources.

This award evaluates the performance of installations across all U.S. military branches in numerous key areas, including mission support, infrastructure management, quality of life and health and safety. Only one installation per military branch is honored with this award.

Recipients of this award are presented with an Installation Excellence Flag, a trophy with the President’s seal, a congratulatory letter signed by the President and a monetary incentive on behalf of the Marines, Sailors, civilians and families of the installation.

This year, on May 16, the Department of Defense announced the winners in a press release which included Camp Pendleton

among four additional service installations representing the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force and a defense supply center in Richmond Va.

“Using ingenuity, innovation, and sheer determination, our world-class team skillfully supported the numerous missions aboard the installation, including improving and expanding training and operational capabilities of I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF), structuring and preparing for the next phase of Force Design, and improving the quality of life for our Marines, Sailors, and families,” said Brig. Gen. Nick I. Brown, commanding general, Marine Corps Installations West – Camp Pendleton.

Camp Pendleton applied modernization initiatives to sustain its workspaces across the installation while also accomplishing the DoD’s missions in the face of fiscal constraints and limited resources. Despite these challenges, the men and women of Camp Pendleton remained dedicated to meeting their mission and provided high-quality services to increase the quality of life across the installation.

“Winning this award means that Camp Pendleton has been recognized as one of the best-managed and most effective military installations in the United States,” said Chris Weber, the business performance manager at Camp Pendleton.

“It signifies that the installation team of Marines, Sailors, civilians and contractors are providing exceptional support to the Marine Corps mission.”

The CINC IEA evaluates installations on how well they achieve the Department’s objectives in several areas of installation management, including mission support, quality of life and unit morale, real property

management, safety, health and security, communications, and public relations.

What set MCB Camp Pendleton apart was not only its ability to meet the expectations of the criteria but also to deliver realistic training environments across a wide range of combat operations while leading the way in energy efficiently, environmental stewardship, and quality of life initiatives.

Notably, Operation Clean Sweep highlighted Camp Pendleton’s commitment to improving living conditions by addressing a backlog of barracks maintenance. Through teamwork and collaborations between enlisted Marines and Sailors, commissioned officers and leadership, over 4,500 self-help projects were completed. Additionally, 446 previously unoccupied rooms were restored, setting the foundational groundwork for the Barracks 2023 initiative, saving over \$3 million in contract labor costs.

Refer to <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/501381/camp-pendleton-wins-commander-chiefs-award-installation-excellence>.

FROM SAN DIEGO TO SASEBO: Tripoli ends journey

by Lt. Nicholas Spaleny

SASEBO, Japan - America-class amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli (LHA 7) arrived in Sasebo, Japan, June 23, as part of a scheduled rotation of forces in the Indo-Pacific.

Tripoli’s forward-deployment ensures that the most capable surface ships and superior technology is best positioned to honor the United States’ security commitment with their Japanese allies.

“Tripoli is proud to join the long history of committed partnership in the region,” said Capt. Eddie Park, Tripoli’s commanding officer. “Our Sailors and Marines are ready to join the capable team of Forward Deployed Naval Forces and contribute to the security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region.”

The forward presence of Tripoli supports the United States’ commitment to the defense of Japan, enhances the national security of the United States and improves its ability to protect strategic interests.

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific requires the most capable ships to enable rapid response times for maritime and joint forces.

“Today is only the first day of what will be a positive and longstanding relationship between USS Tripoli and the people of Sasebo, Japan,” said Park. “We are all looking forward to becoming a welcome and active part of the Sasebo community.”

Tripoli departed San Diego on May 19, and is the second America-class amphibious assault ship to be forward deployed to Japan. Tripoli was commissioned July 15, 2020, and is the second America-class amphibious assault ship built for the Navy. The ship is named after the Marine Corps victory against Tripoli at the Battle of Derna during the First Barbary War in 1805.

U.S. 7th Fleet, the Navy’s largest forward-deployed numbered fleet, which routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

For more news from USS Tripoli, visit <https://www.surfpac.navy.mil/lha7/>.

Secretary of defense flag officer announcement

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth announced June 18 that the President has made the following nominations:

Navy Rear Adm. Elizabeth S. Okano for appointment to the grade of vice admiral, with assignment as principal military deputy assistant secretary of the Navy (Research, Development and Acquisition), Pentagon, Washington, D.C. Okano is currently serving as Commander, Naval Information Warfare Systems Command, San Diego.

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Into the fire: Miramar's very own wins the U.S.M.C. Military Firefighter of the Year award

by 2nd Lt. Blake Starbuck

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar
MIRAMAR - Marine Corps Sgt. Gaven Skyles, an aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, MCAS Miramar, was recently named the 2024 USMC Military Firefighter of the Year, standing out among more than 700 active-duty Marine Corps firefighters.

Earning the title of USMC Military Firefighter of the Year shows that Skyles' not only excelled in his firefighting duties but also demonstrated superior leadership, technical skill and commitment.

"Sgt. Skyles is one of the most dedicated and hardworking NCOs I have had the privilege of working with," says Chief Warrant Officer Eric Cox, Skyles' Officer-in-Charge, "He has shown unwavering commitment to personal and professional development, consistently striving to improve both himself and those around him in his role as an aircraft rescue firefighter.

"His contributions extend beyond the Marine Corps, serving as a valuable asset to both the Miramar fire department and the San Diego fire community. Sgt. Skyles dedication to his craft is evident through his voluntary service as an emergency medi-

cal technician during liberty periods, consistently supporting both San Diego and Miramar fire operations. His leadership and work ethic make him an ideal candidate for any position, and it has been an honor to collaborate with him."

A native of Snohomish, Wash., known as the "antique capital of the Northwest," Skyles grew up in a historic district on Avenue D. Growing up, he felt a strong calling and wanted to be just like his father, who was also a Marine. Bringing the phrase "like father, like son" to life, Skyles enlisted in the Marine Corps and eventually served in Iwakuni, Japan from 2021-2024 in the same unit his father had served, just over 20 years apart.

In addition to his dad, Skyles credits his entire family with shaping him to become the selfless leader and dedicated Marine he is today.

His uncle PJ always reminded him, "Good enough is never good enough." This was a constant reminder to Skyles to never become stagnant in life and to look for opportunities to lead and make a difference within his community. He adds, "My late grandmother, Tammy Cox, taught me that the Lord put us here to help, care, give, and be charitable to one another. I hope

to always give far more than I take, just as she did during her life."

Eager to explain what he enjoys doing as an aircraft rescue and firefighting specialist, Skyles says that aircraft salvage operations are the most rewarding and unique part of his military occupational specialty. During these operations, he carefully recovers parts of crashed aircraft for repurpose and investigation boards.

When there is an aircraft recovery, his knowledge of aircrafts, the capabilities of rescue equipment, and the skillset of his Marines are put to the test and utilizes his training and preparation in real life scenarios.

Beyond firefighting, the most rewarding part of being a Marine to Skyles is the impact he has with communities across the globe. During his time in service, he has been able to support communities by volunteering with Toys for Tots, raising money for the CAL Fire Foundation by running the LA marathon in full firefighting gear, and assisting a non-profit organization to raise money to gift Japanese orphans Christmas presents.

His hard work and dedication positively impact both the Marine Corps and communities globally.



Sgt. Gaven Skyles, a lead firefighter crew chief with Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, poses for a photo June 16. Skyles received the USMC Military Firefighter of the Year award as part of the 2024 Marine Corps Fire and Emergency Services Awards, setting the standards for others to emulate through his resourcefulness, initiative, and selfless dedication to duty. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Seferino Gamez

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NEW SKIPPER'S CORNER



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- (1) Capt. Cathy Eyrych assumes command of Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Southwest. Official U.S. Navy photo
 (2) Cmdr. Anthony Ardito relieved Cmdr. Jeffrey Ransom as commander of fast-attack submarine USS *Scranton*. Official U.S. Navy photo
 (3) Capt. Kellie McMullen becomes new skipper at Naval Health Research Center. Official U.S. Navy photo
 (4) Capt. Daniel J. Keeler (right), relieves Capt. Peter J. Riebe as CO of aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*. Official U.S. Navy photo
 (5) Brig. Gen. Omar J. Randall, (left), assumes command of 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, from Brig. Gen. Andrew M. Niebel. Official U.S. Marine Corps photo

USO CENTER OPENS ABOARD THEODORE ROOSEVELT ... Command leadership aboard aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and USO representatives held a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the opening of the newest USO center last month. "As *Theodore Roosevelt* looks ahead to concluding our planned maintenance phase and preparing for upcoming workups and future deployments, we remain focused on mission readiness," said the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Brian Schrum Schrum. "This new USO center will provide further support to our Sailors who are charged with the responsibility of upholding our nation's values and the American way of life." The center features amenities such as televisions, gaming consoles, board games, privacy phone booths and snacks.

USS SAN DIEGO, USS RUSHMORE JOIN USS AMERICA IN SYDNEY ... Amphibious transport dock ship USS *San Diego*, amphibious dock landing ship USS *Rushmore*, and embarked elements from the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit recently completed a port visit in Sydney, Australia, using the liberty after conducting operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. The ships joined their flagship, amphibious assault ship USS *America*, in a visit centered on strengthening the U.S.-Australia alliance and deepening the two nations' bilateral defense ties. "I want to thank the city of Sydney for their hospitality and the warm welcome of the *America* Amphibious Ready Group, said Capt. John Baggett, commodore of Amphibious Squadron 11, which oversees the *America* ARG.

Veterans Legacy Golf Classic



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I am a huge, long-time fan of motorsports in general and F1 auto racing in particular. As a member of the Press, I've also covered various auto racing series, including a few F1 races (see my November 2012 review of the first Formula 1 race at the Circuit of the Americas, complete with several of my race photos, here: <https://automatters.net/formula-1-returns-to-the-united-states/>). I also competed for decades in grassroots motorsports — mostly autocross and some rallying, behind the wheels of cars.

Most movies about auto racing have disappointed me — some more so than others. Most have not come close to conveying what auto racing is really like.

A particularly cringe-worthy example was "Days of Thunder" (1990). At least "Talladega Nights: The Ballad of Ricky Bobby" was meant to be a comedic spoof of NASCAR stock car racing.

I understand that even movies about auto racing need to be commercially successful and thus provide a reasonable return on investment. Widely distributed movies must be entertaining. They need to appeal to a broad audience, not just to far more limited audiences of F1 purists. "F1® THE MOVIE" fulfills that necessary goal by combining a well-written, engaging story with believable acting performances.

Advising "F1® THE MOVIE" was Lewis Hamilton, seven-time

Review of "F1® THE MOVIE"

Formula 1 World Champion. He played an important role in assuring the movie's realism and authenticity. It was shot on location at actual Formula 1 race tracks around the world, during actual F1 race weekends, thanks to unprecedented access to the filmmakers given by them by the FIA — the governing body of Formula 1. Formula 1 racers participated on-camera, as did team principals, track workers and the rest of the people it takes to conduct Formula 1 races.

The featured race team is called APX. We see the APX cars on actual race grids, racing wheel-to-wheel, and during pit stops, along with other, actual Formula 1 cars, drivers and teams on actual race weekends. Actual F1 drivers and team principals have speaking roles.

JP has serious skills as a racing driver, but he lacks experience and comes across as a know-it-all. That attitude gets him into trouble.

Sonny is a much older driver than JP. He, too, also has great skills as a racing driver, but he benefits from his many years of experience. Together, he and JP are the primary APX drivers.

The tracks, the crowds of people and the events are from real Formula 1 race weekends. The APX team's technical equipment and on-track facilities are just like what actual Formula 1 race teams have and use. The team's garage area is equipped just like a typical F1 team garage, as does the rest of their equipment, down to the smallest details. An exception is the APX race cars. They were purpose built to look and drive like actual F1 racecars, while meeting the production needs of the movie.

Formula 1 racing is a team sport. We see in the movie that the in-

dividual drivers, team principals, crew members, engineers and many others — including a team's financial backers (fielding a Formula 1 team is insanely expensive), all play necessary roles in their team's successes — and failures. The teams develop and implement ever-evolving strategies that include car setup and tire strategies: which tires to use (soft, medium, hard, intermediate or full wet), when, why and for which cars — broadly identified in the film by Plan A, Plan B or Plan C, as you will see. The team's choices of these plans have race-determining implications. It should be noted, however, that significant liberties were taken with regards to what would and would not be tolerated in actual F1 racing.

The big screen, in-theater experience provides a reasonably good representation of the multi-dimensional, sensory spectacle that is Formula 1 racing — the sounds of the racing, the crews working, the cheering fans, the podium ceremonies, the drivers lining up for the national anthem and so much more.

A success on multiple levels, "F1® THE MOVIE" will likely attract new fans to F1 racing, like Netflix has done with its ongoing documentary series "Formula 1: Drive to Survive."

To see an official Warner Brothers trailer for "F1® THE MOVIE," visit https://youtu.be/CT2_P2DZBR0?si=qomgZu8iSlg71WF.

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

During morning rush hour, cars creep forward in a queasy gas-break rhythm toward Gate 1. I'm old enough to remember the days when guards only checked for windshield stickers, and some gatehouses even stood unguarded. But ever since 9/11, new threat levels prompted heightened security on U.S. military bases worldwide.

For 24 years, gate guards have been ever-present.

For twelve of the 28 years of my husband's active duty Navy career, we lived on U.S. Navy bases and Army posts. I'd make school drop offs then join the security line to get back to our house.

With nothing else to do but wait, I'd flop down the visor and grab a flosser from my purse. Every few seconds, I'd peek under the mirror and inch the minivan toward the back bumper of the car ahead of me. In the space of two or three minutes, I'd manage to floss my teeth, pluck stray eyebrow hairs with the tweezers I kept in the center console, and dust the pollen off the dashboard with my sleeve.

With the gate finally in sight, I'd feel for my military ID card. I'd use the pad of my thumb to grip the edge of my laminated ID card, tugging it from its slot. Every once in a while, it wouldn't be there, and I'd feel that nervous burn

The guard that never smiles

in the pit of my stomach. "Did I lose my military ID?" But after a few panicked seconds, I'd find it rattling around in the bottom of my purse with gum wrappers and stray coins.

Usually, my ID was just where it was supposed to be, and I'd slide it out between my thumb and forefinger in one fell swoop.

During our last tour of duty at Newport Navy Base in Rhode Island, I saw one particular guard often. "Oh no ... not that guard," I'd mumble to myself with dread. "Will he ever crack a smile?"

I'd known many gate guards in my years as a Navy spouse in Rhode Island, Germany, Florida and California.

Some military folks form personal relationships with their gate guards, who often check our military IDs multiple times each day. Over time, we recognize the guards and their distinct personalities.

I recall the chipper young military guards willing to exchange "thank-yous" and "have-a-nice-days" while fulfilling their duties. The Department of Defense police guards were a more eclectic mix. Some reflected local social mores — southern hospitality, west coast mellowness, midwest sincerity, northern reserve. In Florida, I enjoyed banter with guards who had slow-cooked southern drawls, and here in New England, I'd perk up when I'd see the one who chats with an amusing Nor'eastern accent, complete with dropped "r"s that turn up on the end of other random words.

Even if I had some jovial banter with the gate guards, there was always a serious moment when he or she would swipe my ID through the hand-held card reader, apparently revealing everything in my past, including that day I got grounded for digging worms up in the neighbor's back yard. I have no criminal record, but I'd always feel like I was in trouble.

What a relief it was when the guard looked up from his little machine of secrets, handed me my ID and said with a smile, "Have a nice day, ma'am." Whew!

But I'll never forget that one guard who was different.

After checking the ID of the driver ahead of me, the stoic guard would order that car to proceed with a flick of his finger, as if jettisoning a bug from his shirt-sleeve. I'd sheepishly approach the guardhouse, handing over my ID. "Should I kill him with kindness? Drip with sarcasm? Or hit him head-on with, 'Hey mister, this ain't no Buckingham Palace - lighten up!'"

However, I'd always loose my nerve and simply offer a weak "thank you" after being summarily dismissed.

Driving away, I'd realize, as much as I'd feel more comfortable if he would've let his guard down and smile, he was obviously more comfortable keeping his guard up.

Besides, as long as the guards keep us safe, I'll always be comfortable with that.

Veterans News

What to do during times of economic uncertainty

(StatePoint) From layoffs in the federal government to a growing number of companies handing tasks off to artificial intelligence, today's rapidly shifting job market is rightfully stoking concerns for many Americans. On top of that, the overall economic climate has lately been affected by market volatility, tariffs and inflation.

According to financial planning professionals, you can face times of economic insecurity head-on with a plan.

Job insecurity

If you have recently lost your job, or are concerned you might, here are steps you can take now:

Get the picture: Take an inventory of your full financial picture, including income, average monthly expenses and assets.

Understanding how much it costs you to live, minus discretionary spending, can give you an idea of how long you can survive on your liquid assets. This is also a good time to consider what spending you can cut back

on and, if possible, how to build your emergency fund.

Act wisely: Whether you're a federal employee with a Thrift Savings Plan or you work in the private sector and have an employer-sponsored retirement plan, it's important to act with caution, not fear.

If you lose your job and take a full distribution from your retirement account, that full distribution can come with tax penalties and leave you ill-prepared for the future. Instead, if you suffer a job loss, consider leaving your retirement accounts untouched or rolling them over into an IRA.

Federal employees should also reach out to the Office of Personnel Management or their specific agency to learn what benefits they're eligible for.

Plan for health insurance: During a job transition, determine whether you will opt for COBRA coverage of your exist-

ing health plan or join a spouse or domestic partner's plan. Keep in mind that COBRA coverage is temporary and often more expensive. You could also look for coverage in the Health Insurance Marketplace at [HealthCare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

Get help: Affordable help may be available to you. Financial volunteers offer no-cost or reduced-rate services to federal government employees. Visit <https://www.cfp.net/fedworkers> to find help near you.

Market volatility

Market volatility can be nerve-racking for investors, but CFP® professionals say these tips can help you weather periods of uncertainty:

Understand the history: Historic events such as Black Monday in 1987 and the COVID-19 crash in 2020 bear a consistent pattern. After a period of downturn, markets generally have rebounded with resilience.

So, when the market declines, stay the course and give investments a chance to recover. A good rule of thumb is to only make significant changes to your financial strategy when your situation changes, not when the world does.

While this can be easier said than done, avoiding sensational financial news and social media chatter can reduce anxiety. If you have concerns, lean on reputable sources for guidance, such as your CFP® professional.

Diversify: A diversified portfolio is more durable during tough financial times. Make sure your assets include a balance of investments that works well in different market environments.

Seek expert guidance: A recent professional-led webinar "The Power of a Plan: Navigating Market Uncertainty With Confidence," which delved into the current state of the markets and provided general educational tools for investors, is available to all online.

For tailored financial guidance, visit www.LetsMakeAPlan.org.

NEWS BRIEF VA life insurance premium cuts

As of July 1, service members, their spouses, and veterans enrolled in VA life insurance programs will benefit from reduced monthly premiums - a move that underscores the VA's dedication to affordable financial protection. This change affects Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI), and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), offering significant savings.

For SGLI, active duty, National Guard, and Reserve members will see their premium drop from \$0.06 to \$0.05 per \$1,000 of coverage, reducing the cost for the maximum \$500,000 policy to \$25, plus \$1 for Traumatic Injury Protection (TSGLI). Eligibility is automatic, with no action required, as deductions adjust seamlessly from pay.

Find your rate change at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/INSURANCE/spring2025discount.asp>.

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5	9	6	2	1	8	9	7	4
2	6	7	8	3	4	5	9	1
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8	2	6	7	5	9	4	1	3
7	5	4	3	1	6	9	2	8

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IMPERIAL BEACH - 2BR/1BA 600 sq ft. \$2500/mo. Washer/dryer hkup. Off street prkg. All new inside. Tenant pays gas, electric, trash disposal. 912 Florence. 619-575-1855. 8/1

RENTALS HOUSE

FALLBROOK - 1BR/1BA. 1/2 mi from East Gate. Garage, W/D. \$2250 + \$250 utl. Avail Aug 1. See Zillow photos. Text RENTAL 760-468-1272. 7/1

IMPERIAL BEACH - 3BR/2BA, 2 car garage, 4 blks to beach, appliances available. No smoking. Water & trash paid. Avail 8/1. \$3800/mo. 619-403-2146 8/16

IMPERIAL BEACH - Studio Unit. All new construction. Modern, custom design. Private driveway, entry, yard. 400sqft. Close to beach and estuary. In-unit w/d. Storage shed. Mo-to-Mo lease. No pets. \$2500/mo. Text 619-301-8137 or jamie.tuckey@compas.com for more info. 7/1

A	I	S	V	N	N	B	E	B	D	H	V	A
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RENTALS ROOM

IMPERIAL BEACH - Furnished room male only, near ocean, separate bath. TV & small fridge in room. Use of kitchen & laundry. Parking in driveway. \$1200/mo. 619-424-6133 8/16

SO SAN DIEGO - Fully furnished 2-bedroom suite in 3BR/2BA family home w/private bath, queen + bunk rooms. Shared kitchen, dining, living, Indry, bckyard, wi-fi, driveway prkg. All utlis incl. Pet-friendly. Ideal for long-term stay. 3 miles to beach/fwy. Avail July 15. Call or text Laura Twitchell at (816) 824-1902. 9/1

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<https://sandiego.navylifsw.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

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- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.
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 - G - General audiences ALL ages admitted.
 - PG - Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.
 - PG-13 - Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
 - R - Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.
 - NC-17 - No one 17 or under admitted.



ROY'S SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- Poets
- Ocean breaker
- Former Iranian ruler
- From another planet
- Golfer's club selection
- Golfer's target
- What the star gets on a marquee
- Express checkout lane unit
- "__ Haw"
- Contemptuous manner, in slang
- "Pet" annoyance
- Dejected
- Wrap tightly, as in bandages
- Poker holding
- Charged atoms
- Madame of physics
- Guy's partner
- Level of optimal accomplishment
- Bygone jet, briefly
- Act with passion
- Caution
- Song at the Met
- Like most peanuts
- Meeting of world leaders
- Name on rented trailers
- Lane with a nose for news
- Pasta suffix
- Dirt road grooves

- Honorable ... and like the starts of 17-, 23-, 37- and 47-Across
- Emancipated
- Pigmented eye layer
- Watchdog warning
- Part of NIMBY
- Swiss capital
- Foul, weather-wise

Down

- It's drawn in a tub
- Natural skin soother
- Unlike green tomatoes
- Star of the ball
- Tattletale
- Witty Oscar
- Astrological Ram
- Maria __ Trapp
- Subj. with grammar
- Handheld riot gear
- Marriott facility
- Advil competitor
- Macho guys
- Tempt
- "The Hunger Games" nation
- Severe pang
- Carnival
- Drinks that make a drink last
- Troubles
- Vet sch. course
- Disdainful clik
- Zagreb native
- N.Y.-based educators' union
- Insect in a dusk swarm
- Realtor's lot unit
- Allow to borrow
- Danger
- Give out
- Tapered tool
- Tickled
- Less than 1%?
- Give, as homework
- Like the beach during a storm
- "Star Trek" lieutenant
- Alma __
- Rags-to-riches author Horatio
- Lindsay who played Liz in "Liz & Dick"
- Wedding promises
- Mature eft
- Relaxed way to sit by
- O'Hare, for United Airlines
- __ been thinking ... "
- Org. promoting hunter safety

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Medical robots to the rescue: New technologies to help our health

NIH News In Health

What do you think of when you hear the word robot? Is it a human-like assistant with a friendly face, or a large and menacing foe? Generally, a robot is a machine that has been built to perform specific tasks.

“When most people hear the term ‘robot,’ they think of things made of solid metal and electronics,” says Dr. Ryan Sochol, a mechanical engineer at the University of Maryland. But medical robots can come in many shapes and sizes.

Sochol and his colleagues are creating tiny flexible robots to improve surgical techniques. Other

scientists are developing wearable robots to enhance mobility. And others are creating and testing human-like social robots. These may be able to provide information and improve well-being.

Most of these robotic devices are still in the research and development phase. They’re not yet ready for general use. But some may become available within the next five to ten years.

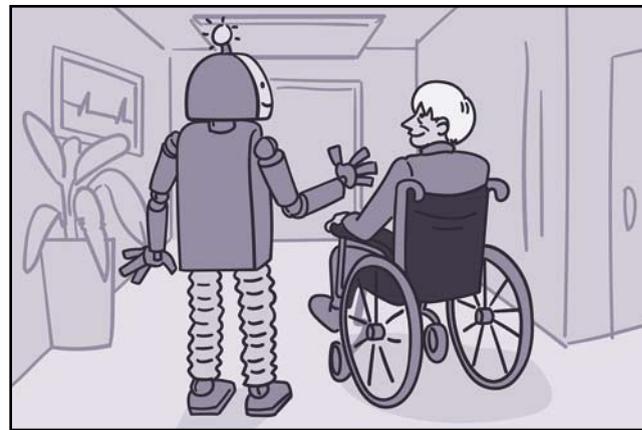
Robots usually have three key features. They have a sensor that can detect things—like light, motion, heat, or sound. They have an “actuator” that converts energy into movement. And they have a control

system or computer program that directs the robot’s activities. Many robots today also depend on artificial intelligence (AI) to assess large amounts of data.

“Robots are everywhere. Even many cars now have robots,” says Dr. Xiaopeng Zhao, a biomedical engineer at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. These systems can help drivers with parking, staying within lanes, or cruise control. “And with the support of AI technology, robots will become more useful and more powerful.”

Social Robots Help Out

Zhao and others are studying how human-like, interactive robots



could help people with dementia and their caregivers. As the U.S. population ages, there’s a growing need for caregivers. Family caregivers often provide countless hours of support. That can lead to a lot of stress.

Zhao and his team interviewed patients and caregivers at assisted living facilities, senior centers, and memory clinics. They asked about their needs and challenges. They then customized a four-foot tall, human-like robot. It has a touch screen on its chest. These AI-powered robots can listen, talk, move, play videos, and dance. They can also encourage people to reminisce about earlier experiences.

“Patients with Alzheimer’s can have short-term memory loss,” Zhao says. “But they may be able to recall what happened 20 or 30 years ago.”

The robots can play old songs, discuss sports, or ask questions to trigger memories.

“Reminiscing may not restore memory, but it can improve emotional well-being and quality of life,” Zhao says. Robots can patiently listen to the same stories over and over.

Zhao’s group is also developing robots that can assist caregivers by providing evidence-based information about dementia. The robots can give tips to help caregivers reduce their own stress and stay healthy.

Robots for Surgery

Other researchers have been developing tiny robotic tools to help surgeons and physicians. Robotic surgery can lead to less pain and blood loss, smaller scars, and quicker recovery. It can have fewer complications compared to traditional surgery.

Robotic surgeries usually involve making little openings through the skin and then inserting small 3D cameras and surgical tools. Sochol’s team is developing miniature tools and robotic techniques to assist with complex surgeries. They’re creating soft robotic devices, made of flexible or compliant materials. These flexible gadgets are helping to improve a type of brain surgery for weakened and bulging blood vessels, called aneurysms.

Minimally invasive aneurysm surgery typically involves threading a thin plastic tube, or mi-

crocatheter, through the body to reach the brain. The weakened blood vessel can then be repaired or sealed. But the microcatheter has to make many twists and turns along the way, and it can be hard to maneuver. If the catheter can’t reach the aneurysm, the surgery must be canceled.

Sochol and his team used 3D printing to create microcatheters that surgeons can steer to reach these tricky parts of the brain. “We created a soft robotic microcatheter that can bend on demand during the procedure to help surgeons reach those hard-to-access areas,” he says.

Other NIH-supported scientists are developing soft robotic techniques to improve heart surgery, bowel surgery, and lung biopsies. These soft robotic tools are still considered experimental.

Wearable Robotics

NIH also funds studies to develop artificial limbs, or prosthetic devices, to replace lost or damaged body parts. Some of these robotic devices connect to the brain and let people control movement of artificial hands, legs, and other limbs.

Other researchers are developing battery-powered exoskeletons to help move existing limbs. “Exoskeletons are robots that you wear on your body. They can fit on top of your limbs, kind of like clothing. You can put them on and take them off, like boots or pants,” says Dr. Gregory Sawicki, a biomedical engineer at the Georgia Institute of Technology. “They can work in synch with your muscles, so your muscles don’t have to do all the work.”

Sawicki and his colleagues have been studying how exoskeletons might help improve mobility and prevent falls as people age. Falls can lead to fractures, hospitalization, and disability in older adults. “A primary reason why people fall is that their body can’t react fast enough,” Sawicki says. Robots have the potential to respond more quickly to balance problems than the human body can. Researchers are working to develop more comfortable and lightweight exoskeletons that seem more like clothing.

Survey reinforces commitment to continuous improvement at NMCS D

from Naval Medical Center San Diego

SAN DIEGO – Naval Medical Center San Diego concluded its triennial Joint Commission survey on June 6, marking another significant step in its ongoing commitment to delivering safe, high-quality, and patient-centered care to warfighters, their families, and all beneficiaries.

The survey, conducted by a team of Joint Commission healthcare experts, involved a comprehensive evaluation of more than 1,000 Elements of Performance spanning patient care, safety, infection control, medication management, and leadership standards.

Capt. Elizabeth Adriano, NMCS D’s Director, expressed her pride in the team’s performance throughout the intense, multi-day survey.

“We’ve had a productive week,” said Adriano. “The message we heard from the surveyor team described a strong showing—and that is a testament to each of you. I want to extend my appreciation and admiration to all who stepped up, stepped out, and supported this survey. The surveyors were impressed with our transparency, our people, and our processes.”

Adriano emphasized that the command is well-positioned to tackle the few findings that were identified; “to ensure solid processes underlie the excellent patient care we provide.” She

added, “I have every confidence that we’ll assess, address, and improve upon these areas quickly and deliberately. That’s who we are. That’s what high-reliability organizations do.”

Cmdr. Angela Viers, NMCS D’s chief medical officer, echoed the command’s proactive mindset and commitment to continuous improvement.

“A Joint Commission survey is not just an inspection—it’s an opportunity to validate what we do well and sharpen areas where we can do even better,” said Viers. “This experience reinforced that our clinical teams are resilient, knowledgeable, and fully aligned in providing safe, high-reliability care. We’re proud of how our staff performed, and we’re already leaning into the next steps.”

The Joint Commission is an independent, nonprofit organization that accredits and certifies nearly 24,000 healthcare organizations and programs in the United States. Accreditation is recognized nationwide as a

symbol of quality and reflects an organization’s commitment to meeting rigorous performance standards.

NMCS D leadership expects to receive the notice of accreditation in the coming weeks. Until then, the command will continue addressing recommendations in accordance with its mission of operational readiness and superior healthcare delivery.

NMCS D provides a superior experience for our patients, staff, and warfighters. NMCS D employs more than 5,000 active-duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to deliver exceptional care afloat and ashore.



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“To live long happy lives, we’ve got to be mobile for as long as possible. Mobility helps us have social connections, which are incredibly important as we age,” Sawicki says. “These kinds of mobility assistive technologies can help us move farther on less energy and to interact with people.”

Robots can make life easier or better in many ways. But they’re no substitute for human interactions.

“It’s clear that many tasks can be done by robots. They’re especially helpful with repetitive or tedious tasks,” Zhao adds. “But when we’re talking about love, empathy, and bonding between humans, these qualities remain uniquely human.”



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