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FEBRUARY 1-15, 2026

HIGH SEAS TRAINING U.S. Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion, 1st Marine Division, operate an Amphibious Combat Vehicle on the well deck of amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island, during Quarterly Underway Amphibious Readiness Training 26.2, off the coast of California, Jan. 24, 2026. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Mary R. Jenni

AIR FORCE, NAVY AIRCRAFT TO FLY OVER SUPER BOWL LX

ARLINGTON, Va. - To commemorate America's 250th birthday at the 2026 Super Bowl, the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Navy are conducting a joint flyover during Super Bowl LX at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., Feb. 8, 2026.

The formation, featuring two Air Force B-1 Lancers, from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, and two F-15C Eagles, from Fresno Air National Guard Base, Calif., alongside a pair of Navy F/A-18E Super Hornets and two F-35C Lightning IIs, from Naval Air Station Lemoore, Calif.,

lif., is a symbol of the nation's journey and independence.

While this flyover features



This graphic represents the Air Force and the Navy's joint flyover during Super Bowl LX at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, Calif., Feb. 8, 2026, in commemoration of America's 250th birthday. Courtesy image

the Air Force and Navy, a powerful symbol of America's 250 years of airpower and maritime strength, it symbolizes the entire joint force — Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, and Coast Guard — working together across every domain to defend our nation, safeguarding 250 years of freedom to America.

A Military District of Washington Joint Armed Forces Color Guard will render military honors during the national anthem. This prestigious inter-service team from the Capitol's region combining members from the Navy, Air Force, Army, Marines, Coast Guard and Space Force provide unparalleled ceremonial precision and national representation.

The service members of the Air Force and Navy flyover will participate in community outreach events leading up to game day, including public displays of aircraft, search and rescue demonstration and backseat flights on the F/A-18F with community leaders.

As the nation celebrates Freedom 250 throughout 2026, our joint community outreach efforts throughout the week demonstrate our Joint Force's shared history and enduring commitment to defending freedom and supporting our nation's independence.

At one of the most-watched events in the world, the flyover at Super Bowl LX is a visible reminder that America's military remains united, ready, and dominant — 250 years strong.

Hegseth establishes Personal Property Activity to ensure successful PCS moves

by C. Todd Lopez

The War Department's Personal Property Activity will stand up this summer as a permanent fix of the myriad woes service members and their families have experienced during permanent change of station moves.

In a video released Jan. 23, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who made PCS moves while serving as a Soldier, explained how, in the past, the department's solution to move household goods has failed service members.

"A cabinet with its mirrors smashed, a dresser missing a leg, how about a treasured German-made clock shattered into pieces, a sofa that appeared as if it was dragged down the street, or a used toilet brush tucked in with the family's clothes," Hegseth listed as examples of how cherished family belongings were damaged or just ended up in disgusting situations as a result of PCS moves.

Last year, the department did two things to improve the movement of household goods for service members. In May, it established a PCS task force to investigate the problems service members experienced during moves. And then in June, the department canceled the existing mechanism for conducting PCS moves.

"We established a task force to assess the problems of the permanent change of station, or PCS moves," Hegseth said. "We listened to the concerns of our warriors. I fired the head of the failing program. All through the peak moving season and even through the government shutdown, our task force was, thankfully, a success."

Now, the PCS task force will transition into a War Department special activity called the Personal Property Activity.

"It will be a permanent solution for all service members who move," Hegseth said. "Its mission is to guarantee high-quality, reliable and efficient household goods and vehicle shipment services to the more than 300,000 warfighters worldwide who move somewhere every new year. Baggage and other household effects need to arrive on time, and they will."

The PCS task force stood up in May 2025, with Army Maj. Gen. Lance G. Curtis at the helm. Curtis will now take over as head of the new Personal Property Activity.

https://www.army.mil/article/290156/hegseth_establishes_personal_property_activity_to.ensure_successful_pcs_moves

Space Forces Southern activated at Davis-Monthan AFB

by Andrea Jenkins, Air Forces Southern

DAVIS-MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. - The U.S. Space Force and U.S. Southern Command officially marked the activation of Space Forces Southern during a ceremony at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Jan. 21, formalizing the command's role in integrating space capabilities across the Western Hemisphere. Although SPACEFOR-SOUTH became operational effective Dec. 1, 2025, the ceremony formally recognized the activation with the assumption of command by Col. Brandon P. Alford, and the digital unveiling of the Space Forces Southern emblem, symbolizing the command's mission and regional focus.

Navy relieves First Naval Construction Regiment commodore

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. - The commodore of First Naval Construction Regiment (1 NCR) was relieved Jan. 23 due to loss of confidence in his ability to command. Capt. Douglas Whimpey, a Navy reservist, was relieved by Capt. Angel Santiago, commander of Naval Construction Group (NCG) 1, which is headquartered in Port Hueneme. Navy leaders are expected to uphold the highest standards of responsibility, reliability, and leadership personally and professionally, and the Navy holds them accountable when they fall short of those standards.

Free Hiring Event

For San Diego's military service members, spouses and veterans recently separated. Thursday, February 12, noon-2pm at the San Diego Convention Center.

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A 'tail' of service: Famous military working dog retires

by Abigail Carey

Fort Meade Public Affairs

The beloved military working dog, known across the force for greeting users when they log in to military devices, is now retired from active service.

Affectionately called "Doggles," MWD Nick served eight years in the Army, seven of those at Fort Meade, Maryland. Nick specialized in explosives detection, helping technicians confront and defeat explosives around the world.

Some of the biggest assign-

Democratic National Convention, the Army's 250th anniversary celebration, state funerals and the United Nations General Assembly.

"My favorite assignment was the United Nations meeting in New York City," Peyton said. "We got to walk around the city, see sights and meet lots of people."

The famous photo came from Nick's nine-month deployment to Al Asad Air Base, with his previous handler, Army Spc. Joseph J. Lane. During the deploy-



Military working dog Nick poses with his forever family, Army Staff Sgt. Justin Peyton and his wife, Lauren, during his retirement ceremony at Fort Meade, Md., Jan 21. U.S. Army photo by Abigail Carey

and harsh weather," Lane said in a 2023 interview. "In that photo, Nick was wearing them at the range for familiarization. We were at the range for night fire and we flew in [UH-60] Black Hawks with night vision goggles."

Nick's photo was selected from among hundreds to be used by the War Department's global directory.

"When they saw Nick's photo, the creators knew that was the one they wanted," Peyton said.

Since becoming the face of the global directory, Nick garnered a cult following among service members and department civilians. A morale patch made by a small artist has been sold thousands of times.

"It has been nice to see lots of people take to him and fall in love with him," Peyton said.

"This dog's career is a direct reflection of the high standards and operational lethality we demand from every team in our unit," said Army Capt. Patricio Quezada, 2nd Military Police Detachment commander, as he reflected on Nick and Peyton's time with the unit. "Their success was built on the relentless work of a dedicated handler who exercised patience and translated that into an unbreakable bond between dog and handler."

When adopting a military working dog after their service, handlers have priority. Nick will spend the rest of his years with Peyton and his family.

"Knowing that Nick kept Justin safe for so long, knowing that he protects my husband, has given me a lot of comfort," Lauren Peyton said. "We are looking forward to giving him a comfortable life in retirement."

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art gallery



ALL SMILES Soldiers and families of the 25th Infantry Division Artillery, 25th Infantry Division, participate in a Molly Pitcher event to foster community and honor spouses for their support during the Indo-Pacific Best Redleg Competition at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, Jan. 24, 2026. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Qishaunia Hawkins



CLOSE COMBAT Army 1st Lt. Joseph Williams attempts to choke Spc. Theodore Bostert during the XVIII Airborne Corps Combatives Invitational at Hercules Fitness Center at Fort Bragg, N.C., Jan. 22, 2026. U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Ashley Xie



ICE LIBERTY Coast Guard Polar Star crew members observe penguins during ice liberty in the Ross Sea, Antarctica, Jan. 12, 2026. Antarctica is the coldest, windiest, most inhospitable continent on the globe. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Christopher Bokum

IMPORTANT MILITARY HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

February

Four Chaplains Day	Feb. 3
USO Birthday	Feb. 4
National Salute to Veteran Patients	Feb. 8-14, 2026
Coast Guard Reserve Birthday	Feb. 19

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MH-139 Grey Wolf helicopters complete first operational ICBM convoy security mission

by John Turner

341st Missile Wing Public Affairs Office

MALMSTROM AIR FORCE BASE, Mont. - Two MH-139A Grey Wolf helicopters assigned to the 40th Helicopter Squadron conducted their first operational Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile convoy in early January, marking an important milestone in the modernization of Air Force Global Strike Command's nuclear security operations.

The MH-139s shepherded a column of missile maintenance and armored security vehicles to and from a launch facility located more than 100 miles east of Malmstrom Air Force Base

Pentagon to start measuring troops' body fat by waist-to-height ratio

According to a Jan. 13 *Military Times* report by Tanya Noury, the Pentagon issued a memo directing the U.S. military to evaluate the body fat of troops using a waist-to-height ratio, replacing traditional height-and-weight tables as the primary measure of physical standards. "The upper limit for allowable [waist-to-height-ratio] for Military Service body composition policies shall be less than 0.55," the memo declared. The new body fat expectations range from 18 percent to 26 percent for men and 26 percent to 36 percent for women, according to the memo. Personnel who surpass these thresholds will be enrolled in the military's remedial program, it stated, adding that failure to meet the standards "may result in the withholding of favorable personnel actions, including promotions."

without needing to refuel during the six-hour movement, demonstrating the superior capabilities of AFGSC's newest helicopter as the Air Force prepares to retire the UH-1N Huey after more than five decades of service.

"Executing our first convoy mission with two MH-139s marks a significant step forward in strengthening our missile security operations," said Maj. Gen. Stacy Huser, 20th Air Force commander. "The MH-139 allows us to continue supporting our ICBM enterprise for decades to come with increased speed, range and lift."

Speed and reach are demanded specifically due to the more

than 100 launch facilities dispersed across Malmstrom AFB's 13,800-square-mile area of responsibility that spans diverse topography of prairies, plains and mountain ranges.

Not only is the MH-139 approximately 50 percent faster than the UH-1N and can arrive on-site several minutes sooner – armed and with twice as many troops on board – it also has enhanced defensive systems and is built to support missile field security missions across vast and austere terrain.

The recent convoy escort mission gained valuable operational experience for AFGSC as 20th AF progresses toward initial operational capability of its Grey Wolf fleet.

"I am incredibly proud of our Airmen who made this success possible," said Col. Bryant Bevan, 582nd Helicopter Group commander. "This mission provided us a multitude of lessons learned, which we will utilize as we continue to work toward accomplishing IOC for the MH-139."

The MH-139's implementation into Air Force operations has been an ongoing program for the last several years.

Boeing delivered the first MH-139A to the United States Air Force on Dec. 19, 2019, at Duke Field, Florida. This began combined developmental testing for the UH-1N replacement program.

Malmstrom AFB then hosted a welcome ceremony for the MH-139A on March 9, 2024. The 550th Helicopter Squadron at Malmstrom AFB began MH-139 conversion training the following month.

The first Initial Operational Test and Evaluation flight in support of nuclear security operations was on Jan. 29, 2025.

The MH-139 doesn't just replace an airframe; it directly upgrades how quickly security forces can mass combat power where it's needed. It has been evaluated specifically for nuclear security tasks that mirror Malmstrom AFB's real-world demands. <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4379009/>



Top 5

• Pentagon to offer 'more limited' support to U.S. allies in defense strategy shift

• Select Marines who reenlist could be eligible for a \$50,000 bonus

• Why the U.S. Army must focus on winning the first battle of the next war

• Brown water afflicts residents of military housing in New Jersey

• Man killed by U.S. Border Patrol officer in Minneapolis was VA nurse

Army

• Country music star and Army Reserve Soldier gets promoted while working on music therapy initiative

Navy

• Navy bans Sailors from using kratom, other drugs

• Navy lieutenant dies in Djibouti in what service says was incident unrelated to combat

• Bahrain naval base begins \$15 million barracks renovation

Air Force

• Helicopter flew too close to crowd, with rotor wash causing a civilian's fatal fall, Air Force report finds

Space Force

• Space Force probably needs twice as many guardians, vice chief says

Coast Guard

• Ruling from Coast Guard appeals court opens door to new trial in infant's 2020 death

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

• China trains AI-controlled weapons with learning from hawks, coyotes

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U.S., Italy commemorate 82nd anniversary of Operation Shingle

by Army Capt. Katherine Sibilla,

Army Master Sgt. Joshua Van Horn walked through the curved rows of white marble crosses at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, his steps slowing as he searched for a familiar unit.

His eyes settled on the headstones of soldiers from the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment,

their sacrifice, but on his own service.

"Coming here gives you a sense of purpose," Van Horn said. "It reminds me why we do what we do."

Van Horn participated in the 82nd anniversary commemoration of Operation Shingle at the cemetery in Nettuno, Jan. 22. He led the 173rd Airborne

U.S. and Italian officials delivered remarks throughout the ceremony, including U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See Bryant Burch, Italian Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, and U.S. Army Maj. Gen. John L. Rafferty Jr., U.S. European Command chief of staff.

Local students from Nettuno schools sang, read poetry and



Army Maj. Gen. John L. Rafferty Jr., U.S. European Command chief of staff, adjusts a wreath during the 82nd anniversary commemoration of Operation Shingle at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery in Nettuno, Italy, Jan. 22. U.S. Army photo by Capt. Katherine Sibilla

82nd Airborne Division, also known as the "devils in baggy pants," a name given to them by a German officer during World War II. Van Horn grazed his hand across the smooth marble and paused at the grave of Army Pvt. James Warren, the name etched permanently into the stone.

Van Horn once served in the 504th PIR, deploying with the unit to Afghanistan. Standing among the graves offered a moment to reflect not only on

Brigade honor guard during the ceremony, which honored the service and sacrifice of U.S. and Allied forces who fought during the World War II landings at Anzio, Italy, and Nettuno.

"This cemetery is a testament to what makes America great," Van Horn continued. "Eighty-two years later, these graves are still cared for. What other country does that? Honoring soldiers who died liberating others."

laid roses in remembrance of those buried at the cemetery, followed by a ceremonial wreath-laying. The ceremony also honored the life of Army 1st Lt. Carl Hood, the first service member buried at the cemetery.

Speakers echoed the message that the cemetery is not only a resting place for the fallen, but a space meant to guide the living. Burch and Rafferty also reflected on the upcoming 250th anniversary of the Declaration of

Paparo visits USS *Cincinnati* with Cambodian defense officials

REAM NAVAL BASE, Cambodia - Adm. Samuel Paparo, commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command visited ship USS *Cincinnati* (LCS 20), Jan. 26

Paparo hosted the Cambodian Minister of National Defence, General Tea Seiha, and Royal Cambodia Armed Forces Chief of Defense, General Vong Pisen, aboard *Cincinnati* for discussions on the U.S.-Cambodian defense relationship and other matters in the bilateral relationship.

This visit demonstrates the deepening cooperation and expanding friendship between the U.S. and Royal Cambodian navies. Cambodia and the United States work shoulder-to-shoulder to uphold a free and open Indo-Pacific.

As the U.S. marks the 250th anniversary of the founding of the country, "we reflect not only on our ideals, but also on the enduring role of diplomacy in shaping our nation's journey and



Adm. Samuel J. Paparo meets with Royal Cambodian Navy sailors at Ream Naval Base, Cambodia, Jan. 26. U.S. Air Force photo by Master Sgt. Dhruv Gopinath

global impact," he said.

December 2024.

This visit is a testament to our long-standing partnership with Cambodia and our shared vision for the future. *Cincinnati*'s visit also follows Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS *Savannah*'s (LCS 28) port visit to the Kingdom of Cambodia in

USINDOPACOM is committed to enhancing stability in the Indo-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression and, when necessary, prevailing in conflict.

Upcoming Artemis II space mission has multiple Yuma Proving Ground connections

by Mark Schauer

U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground YUMAPROVING GROUND, Ariz.-- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced the first crewed mission of the Artemis II will fly around the moon after

an opportune launch window sometime between early February and the end of April.

The mission will be capped by the deployment of the Orion space capsule's parachutes, rigorously evaluated at U.S. Army

Independence and its continued relevance.

"Two hundred and fifty years of dedication to a universal proposition, grounded in human dignity and fundamental rights, that we continue to strive to live up to," Burch said. "Marking this day during such a historic anniversary carries even greater significance."

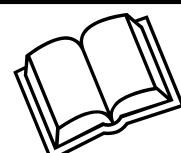
As the ceremony concluded, Van Horn and others moved quietly through the rows of marble crosses and Stars of David, reflecting on the cost of freedom.

These cemeteries are not only places of mourning, but also places of memory, meant to remind the living what service demands and what liberty costs.

Most people associate space travel with tremendous speed, but safe deceleration is just as important for the astronauts on board: Whereas a spacecraft has to travel at approximately

see Artemis, page 5

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A look back at decades of maintaining USS *Nimitz* at PSNS & IMF

by Max Maxfield
PSNS & IMF Public Affairs

First in its class aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) was commissioned May 3, 1975, before many of the workers at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility were born. *Nimitz* is currently the oldest American aircraft carrier in active service.

The ship changed homeport from Naval Station Norfolk, Va., to then-Naval Station Bremerton, Wash., in 1987. Since then, the ship's homeport moved from Bremerton to San Diego in 2001, and then to Everett, Wash., in 2012, before coming back to Bremerton in 2015. Throughout its 37 years as part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, PSNS & IMF workers have lead the effort to keep the warship combat ready.

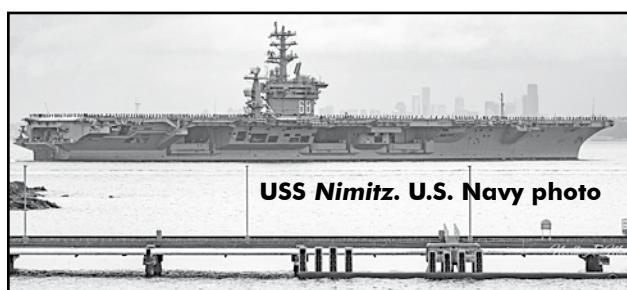
In all that time, thousands of PSNS & IMF workers, Ship's Force Sailors and civilian contractors have come together as part of the *Nimitz* Project Team. Team *Nimitz* has faced many challenges, completing major

technological upgrades, and working through challenging times such as the COVID 19 pandemic.

According to Steven Pugh, project superintendent, Code 300/312, who has supported *Nimitz* about 15 of his 22 years with PSNS & IMF, the importance of the work and the comradery with Ship's Force are what drove him and project team members throughout every maintenance availability.

Capt. Douglas Gruber, a former *Nimitz* commanding officer, once told me that the PSNS & IMF team was as integral to the *Nimitz* team as his Sailors," Pugh said. "The *Nimitz* motto is 'Teamwork, a Tradition,' and the culture of the Sailors reflected that. Every person who has worked on Team *Nimitz* directly contributed to national security. It is through their efforts we have the freedom and liberty that we enjoy today."

"It is through the quality work that PSNS & IMD did, that enabled the U.S. Navy to



USS *Nimitz*. U.S. Navy photo

issue a service life extension to *Nimitz* beyond its 50-year span," Pugh said.

According to Cmdr. Alan Young, who has served eight years aboard *Nimitz* through two separate tours, the strength and professionalism of Team *Nimitz* are the drivers of success.

"The teamwork is important across the many maintenance providers," Young explained. "Through teaming we can ensure the mission-ready assets are returned to the fleet ready to support the nation's needs. *Nimitz* would not have been able to support its mission without the tireless efforts of the combined maintenance team, which

includes PSNS & IMF, Ship's Force, and contractors."

"The *Nimitz* Project Team has set the standard for mission readiness and teaming throughout *Nimitz*'s time in the Pacific Northwest," he said.

Chris Krueger, topside assistant production superintendent, *Nimitz* Project Team, whose father served aboard *Nimitz* in the late 1980s, has been helping maintain, repair and modernize *Nimitz* since 2006. He said it's important to think about what the vessel and its crew accomplish while on patrol to fully appreciate how the *Nimitz* team members' work contributes to U.S. Navy's mission.

"It's difficult to see the fruits of your labor when the ship is undergoing maintenance," Krueger said. "The sense of duty during maintenance periods is completely focused on executing your task with first-time quality, without always having the time to think about why you are doing the job."

"When you see videos of the ship during deployment, or have the privilege to board the ship while it is out to sea, you gain a new perspective as to why *Nimitz* team members are an integral part of combat preparedness," he continued. "Then you understand the importance of each person on the maintenance team how the jobs they do matter to keeping *Nimitz* in the fight."

While every Drydocking Planned Incremental Availability, Planned Incremental Availability and pier-side upkeep period is unique, they each bring challenges the team must overcome through planning and innovative thinking.

"You've got to stay ahead as much as possible during DPAs, PIAs and upkeeps," Krueger said. "You always have to maximize repair efforts as to not compound problems as the ship ages, and to maximize efforts to utilize new technology and processes to maximize throughput on maintenance."

Brian Fazio, now-retired *Nimitz* project superintendent from 2014 to 2021, who supported work on *Nimitz* for 11 years of his career, said he was inspired by how the team met the challenges throughout every availability and maintenance period.

"Engineering propulsion plant inspections; hull and underwater body inspections; routine periodical maintenance; tank and void inspections; preservation-related work; routine and planned shafting and rudder overhauls — each item certainly carries risk," Fazio said. "Each item may or may not end up determining the length of an availability. Each item could determine the amount of time in dock. Each item requires extremely detailed planning regarding material procurement, manpower needs, tooling needs, temporary service needs, anticipated growth and corrective maintenance considerations, etc."

"Few things on a project are more humbling or inspiring," Fazio added. "Watching teams within a project assemble to accomplish these work items, build plans and strategies to accomplish, execute the assembled plans and strategies, and then complete the work items as a team."

Pugh recalled some recent availabilities that challenged the *Nimitz* Project Team.

"The Fiscal Year 2014 Extended Planned Incremental Availability had a very challenging work package," Pugh said. "*Nimitz* was undergoing a Continuous Maintenance Availability when COVID hit. We were forced to work through the challenges with a reduced workforce, all while figuring out COVID restrictions. During the Fiscal Year 2024 Planned Incremental Availability, we performed a main engine replacement. That was a huge endeavor."

According to Young, the end of every availability proves challenging as all the systems are brought back online and tested. No matter how well the work was performed, there are always issues the *Nimitz* Project Team must overcome, he said.

"*Nimitz* was commissioned in 1975 and is the cornerstone for first-in-class maintenance, corrective maintenance and modernization," Fazio said. "PSNS & IMF has accomplished a significant amount of first-time and first-in-class maintenance aboard *Nimitz*. PSNS & IMF has shared the results of this long-standing, high-velocity learning across Naval Sea Systems Command. Further, the 'ownership' that PSNS & IMF has fostered, specifically with *Nimitz*, is best summed up as, '*Nimitz* is our ship too.'"

After years of working on *Nimitz*, team members are deeply invested in the ship and its legacy.

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Camp Pendleton opens vet clinic with ribbon cutting

by Gunnery Sgt.
Victoria Duran
Camp Pendleton

CAMP PENDLETON - Camp Pendleton, in coordination with the U.S. Army, hosted the grand opening of the Camp Pendleton Army Veterinary Services and

Veterinary Treatment Facility on Jan. 22.

The newly constructed Camp Pendleton Army Veterinary Services and Treatment Facility marks a significant investment in the health and welfare of military

working animals, privately owned animals, and our military community. This new state-of-the-art facility is triple the size of the previous clinic and provides enhanced care for military working dogs (MWD) ensuring their health and operational readiness.

This larger facility allows the Veterinary Care Team to deliver more efficient, high-quality care for the privately owned pets of service members and retirees. The Veterinary Care Team also provides facility support to the MWD Kennel, Domestic Animal Control, and Stepp Stables. The new Veterinary Treatment Facility continues to offer a wide range of services including preventive care, diagnostic testing, health certificates for travel, and select surgical procedures.

Beyond animal care, the new Veterinary Services Facility houses a dedicated space for the Veterinary Food Protection Team. This team plays a critical role in food safety and defense, ensuring the quality and safety of more than \$250 million worth of food annually across 150 support facilities on two installations.

"This state-of-the-art facility represents our dedication to the health and well-being of not only our military working dogs and the beloved pets of our service members and their families, but also to providing food safety and defense to ensure safe food is available for our military community locally and while deployed," said Capt. Amy Compton, Camp Pendleton branch chief, Veterinary Readiness Activity.



U.S. servicemembers cut a ribbon to mark the grand opening of the Camp Pendleton Army Veterinary Services and Veterinary Treatment Facility Jan. 22. The new state-of-the-art facility is three times larger than the previous clinic and enhances care for Military Working Dogs and privately owned animals, ensuring their health and operational readiness. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Madisyn Paschal

CHINA LAKE: Paying it forward: Estevez named 2025 Mentor of the Year

by Michael Smith

Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division

Dr. Joseph Estevez tells new researchers the truth he needed early in his career.

"Research works 1 percent of the time," Estevez said. "The other 99 percent of the time, you're figuring something out." At Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division China Lake, that mindset helps scientists push through setbacks and deliver results that matter. Their ideas turn into funded projects that support weapons and electronic warfare needs for the fleet.

Naval Air Systems Command selected Estevez as the 2025 Mentor

of the Year for China Lake for how he builds that path for others. The selection came during NAVAIR's most competitive Mentor of the Year cycle to date, drawing 154 nominations from across the enterprise.

Estevez leads the Advanced Materials Branch in the Chemistry Division. He mentors about 10 people. They range from entry-level scientists to postdoctoral researchers and senior scientists.

His mentoring approach mirrors how he learned. He asks questions, listens hard and tracks down people who can close gaps.

Estevez joined NAVCWD 10 years ago as an entry-level scientist. He walked into offices with one question: What do I need to do to get where you are?

Mentors in the Chemistry Division helped him navigate technical roadblocks and career milestones. Estevez carried those lessons forward when he became a supervisor. He decided to share what he knew, not guard it. When he heard about a problem in a meeting, he looked for the person who could solve it and made the connection.

"Joey's always making connections," said Dr. Stephen Fallis, head of the Chemistry Division. "He hears about a problem and immediately knows who can solve it."

Estevez does not wait for a formal program to assign him a mentee. About half come from his branch. Others find him through word of mouth.

"People I was mentoring started talking to others who needed help," Estevez said. "The next thing you

know, someone would reach out and say, 'Can I talk to you?' It just built from there."

The request usually starts with uncertainty. A researcher wants to shift fields. Someone needs a path to funding. A postdoctoral

scientist needs publications to stay competitive. Estevez starts with the same basics.

Refer to <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/556761/paying-forward-estevez-named-2025-mentor-of-the-year>.



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CNATT UNIT NORTH ISLAND ACCEPTS STRICKEN MH-60S HELICOPTER TO ENHANCE TRAINING CAPABILITY

by Chief Petty Officer
Jack Waldo

CORONADO - The Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit (CNATTU) North Island staff accepted a stricken MH-60S helicopter from the Helicopter Sea Combat Wing at Naval Air Station North Island earlier this month, marking a significant enhancement to the command's hands-on training capabilities.



Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit North Island staff are excited after receiving a stricken MH-60 helicopter from the Helicopter Sea Combat Wing there earlier this month to use for training purposes. U.S. Navy photo by Chief Petty Officer Jack Waldo

The aircraft, which has been declared to never fly again, will be used as a full-scale instructional platform to support aviation maintenance training across multiple ratings and pipelines at CNATTU North Island.

The movement of the aircraft from the flight line to CNATTU North Island's main facility was carefully coordinated to ensure safety and efficiency. Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class

AM1 Christopher Massey, CNATTU North Island MH-60 instructor, orchestrated the evolution, which was executed by personnel from Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 3 with assistance from base secu-

rity to safely manage roadways during the transport.

Once positioned outside the hangar bay, Massey and fellow Instructor AM1 Irish Doblan adjusted the aircraft's tail struts

to ensure proper clearance for entry.

Following alignment, a team of CNATTU North Island's own H-60 Instructors, led by Instructor Aviation Electrician's Mate First Class Uarian Langerston, pushed the aircraft into the hangar bay, completing the evolution without incident.

The teamwork demonstrated throughout the move highlighted the coordination and professionalism of all personnel involved.

"This new addition to our training systems demonstrates our ongoing commitment to excellence in aviation training and ensures that our sailors and marines are equipped with the skills they need to perform at the highest level when they return to the fleet," Cmdr. Robert Kersey, CNATTU North Island commanding officer, said.



USS BOXER (Jan. 21, 2026) U.S. Marines and Sailors prepare to unload vehicles from a U.S. Navy landing craft, air cushion attached to Assault Craft Unit 5 in the well deck of Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LHD 4) during ship to shore operations in the Pacific Ocean. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Oliver Nisbet



USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (Jan. 23, 2026) Navy Capt. Daniel Keeler, commanding officer of aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln, prepares to fly an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, attached to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Daniel Kimmelman



USS TRIPOLI (Jan. 22, 2026) Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Elias Brown changes a 'hot' barrel on a 50-caliber machine gun during a Small Craft Action Team (SCAT) drill aboard Tripoli. Tripoli is conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Paul LeClair

McKenzie.

The Open House will showcase military displays from past and present, WWII re-enactors, live entertainment, fireworks and more. Event information is available on the installation's website: <https://home.army.mil/liggett/index.php>.

Maj. General Shane Buzzia, the 63rd Readiness Division Commander, was also on hand to provide insight into why FHL is important to him. "I have a bit of a love-hate relationship with Fort Hunter Liggett," Buzzia shared, reflecting on his first experience as a young lieutenant. He recounted being part of a light infantry unit, dropped off on Nacimiento Road near Highway 1, and instructed to 'go find the Mission.' "At the time, we didn't even know Fort Hunter Liggett had buildings!" he added with a laugh.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/556833/fort-hunter-liggett-85th-anniversary-kick-off-honoring-history-and-supporting-troop-readiness>

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Volunteers are our greatest asset and the backbone of the USO. Whether helping a soldier with a connecting flight, distributing a Care Package, serving snacks with a smile, providing local information, or "welcoming home" 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 <https://volunteers.uso.org/>

Once you navigate to the web page, scroll down to and look at the right side of the page to find information about volunteering.

Camp Pendleton USO Programs Include:

USO Transitions: <https://www.uso.org/programs/uso-pathfinder-transition-program>

Want to be better prepared for future success before transitioning from the military? Are you a military spouse looking for new opportunities? The USO Pathfinder® Transition Program extends the USO experience to active duty, Reserve, National Guard and military spouses by offering professional development services throughout the duration of military service as well as in preparation for life post-military.

MilSpouse Connect: Monthly events bringing military spouses together to connect and thrive.

Craft & Coffee: USO Camp Pendleton provides creative outlets for adults and children to create fun, whimsical or serious works of art through a variety of mediums. Signs up happen online and are usually advertised through the USO Camp Pendleton Facebook page.

Command Support: USO is here to support! We often help support command events across Camp Pendleton such as Family days and Morale Days. Commands can request support in a number of different ways, from outdoor games, a kids craft, or even our mobile photo booth. We also can help provide small refreshments. To request support, please email our Center Operations and Programs Manager, Crystal Gates at cgates@uso.org. All requests must be submitted within 30 days and although we try our best, not all requests can be granted.

<https://california.uso.org/>

Review of Mercy — in theaters now

Mercy, a new film starring Chris Pratt as Detective Chris Raven — the accused, and Rebecca Ferguson — who masterfully portrays the objective, no-nonsense AI Judge Maddox, before ruling on the trial's life or death outcome, is 90-minutes' worth of the most heart-pounding, on the edge of your seat, masterfully executed, suspenseful action films that I have ever seen. It is also one of the best science fiction films that I have seen in a very long time.

Often movies are sequels. Some are better than others at presenting a new story within a situation that we already were familiar with, but some are disappointing because of their similarity to what has been seen before. For example, despite its high budget and state-of-the-art special effects, the new Avatar movie falls squarely into that unfortunate sub-category comprised of 'already been there, done that' films.

It was especially refreshing to watch Mercy — a movie that masterfully breaks new ground with its original story, combined with well-cast characters and just enough special effects to pull it all off. Just when I thought that I knew where it was heading, I was repeatedly caught off-guard by its clever plot twists.

The basic plotline of Mercy, as stated in its official press kit, is: "In the near future, a detective (Chris Pratt) stands on trial accused of murdering his wife. He has 90 minutes to prove his innocence to the advanced A.I. Judge (Rebecca Ferguson) he once championed, before it determines his fate."

The film's press kit expands on this, asking us to "imagine you awaken to find yourself strapped into a chair, face to face with a judge who informs you that you've been accused of murder — and unless you can exonerate yourself in 90 minutes, you'll be executed instantly. You have access to every bit of camera footage on the web to prove your case, and you can use that to convince the judge of your innocence. Yet all of that private and public surveillance footage could put

you closer to a guilty verdict. It's a nightmare scenario. And in the exciting, revolutionary, visually dynamic action thriller MERCY, it takes on future-world overtones as Artificial Intelligence serves as judge, jury and executioner."

The year is 2029 — not too far into the future, yet within its vision of what might lie in store for us in

AutoMatters™ & More
by Jan Wagner



our future, our legal system is turned upside down. Whereas in our legal system, those on trial are presumed innocent unless proven guilty, and appeals are possible, in Mercy Detective Raven has only 90 minutes to exonerate himself, or face immediate execution.

AI Judge Maddox (Rebecca Ferguson) has been assigned to adjudicate the case. Despite her being an artificial intelligence, the film arguably reveals to be the most multi-faceted character that we meet. As part of her considerable efforts to uncover the facts of the case — she guides and encourages Detective Raven towards focusing his attention and his very limited available time to help her do that. This made her seem not only to be objective, but also compassionate.

The acting was true to character and Officer Jacqueline "JAQ" Diallo's flying motorcycle of the future looked like it would be so much fun to ride above traffic on — and off-road, too (unfortunately for us, at least according to the results from my Google search, "the flying motorcycle featured in the movie Mercy is a fictional, special-effects vehicle used for the film and does not truly fly in real life. It is a prop used for the character Jaq (played by Kali Reis) to zip around a futuristic Los Angeles." That's too bad. Aside from being super cool, it could solve so many of our traffic problems).

While the flying motorcycle scenes seemed real, the one area where Mercy somewhat fell short was nevertheless its special effects. Nevertheless, Mercy's fresh plot, well-performed acting and surprising plot twists were sufficient to overcome this one weakness.

I enthusiastically endorse and recommend Mercy. To see a trailer and to get tickets, visit: <https://www.amazon.com/salp/mercy?hhf=/>.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue years' boxes and browse. Copyright © 2025 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #914

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

After 11 moves, our PCS days are over. My Navy-retired husband and I bought a drafty old money-pit of a house on a speck of land in Rhode Island. We're staying here forever.

Or, at least until we're so ancient that our children move us into assisted living.

My own father reached that threshold recently. Last week, I flew to his newly-sold home in North Carolina to oversee his move to an assisted living facility. I'd expected a civilian move to be similar to a military PCS move, but it was very, very different.

While my father was in post-surgery rehab last week, I managed three phases of his "PCS" to Brookdale Senior Living Facility. First, I identified the items to be transported to my father's apartment at Brookdale. Then, I marked the items to be sent to storage. Lastly, I hired a junk hauler to empty the house for the new owners.

"I want my treadmill, that thing is worth some money," my father said.

"Dad, you can barely walk. You don't need the treadmill — Brookdale has a nice physical therapy center," I reasoned.

"You mean that place you're sending me to, where my friends won't visit me," he moped.

"I want my gun cabinet put beside my —," he started, referring to his collection of rifles, shotguns

Unboxing new appreciation for military movers

and handguns.

"— Dad! You can't bring guns to assisted living!"

"They don't need to know," he growled.

On the morning scheduled for packing, I expected a fleet of friendly women to show up to efficiently wrap and pack while chatting. But instead, only one woman arrived with a scowl on her weathered face, clearly annoyed.

"Well, uh, hello!" I stuttered, intimidated. "Help yourself to bottled waters and —." Before I finished talking, she put in EarPods and turned away.

Other than her smoker's cough, the packer lurked around silently. When I encountered her in hallways, I laughed nervously and apologized for no reason. "He he, I'm sorry you're waiting for me to get out of your way," I spluttered.

"I don't wait for anyone," she said without blinking.

After two days of packing, a young foreman and two crew arrived. The skinny crewman smelled of hard liquor from the previous night, and a chubby guy had the jacked-up teeth of a meth addict.

Despite my fears, the crew was quite convivial. In fact, they were so friendly, they frequently stopped to chat with anyone about anything and everything.

"Looky, one of them old fashioned school desks," the chubby guy smiled. "Take a guess how this works," he quizzed his boss, who accepted the

challenge. They stood discussing the mechanics of my father's antique desk, while I calculated the exorbitant hourly rate the mover was charging.

"Sorry this isn't much," I said when the job was done, handing over a meager cash tip.

"Don't be sorry. Nobody tips us. This'll pay for drinks!" the skinny one grinned.

The junk hauler's name was Nick, and I knew right away — Nick was shady. He came with a two crew, one of which was sometimes accompanied by his nine-year-old son. Nick frequently left, saying he'd be back in twenty minutes, only to be absent for hours. I was usually left with Gary, the crew member who, due to physical deformities that rendered one leg longer than the other and his neck unable to move, couldn't lift anything over 20 pounds. Needless to say, the job Nick said would take less than one day, took three.

When the last trailer of junk left the premises, and I paid Nick via Zelle because he "needed the money right away," I'd gained newfound respect for the military movers to whom we entrusted our worldly possessions over 23 years of marriage.

As I stood in my father's empty house, exhausted and lighter in ways I hadn't expected, it dawned on me that military movers hadn't just transported our furniture — they'd carried us through entire chapters of life with a level of competency I'd taken for granted. It's a system that, for all its flaws, worked. After one civilian move, I'll never complain about our military PCS moves again. Some lessons, like some moves, take a lifetime to unpack.

Veterans News



Here's how to see attorney and agent fees paid by VA

by Cat Trombley

Veterans Benefits Administration

Beginning this month, the Department of Veterans Affairs websites and social media channels will show the amount of money it is legally obligated to send to VA-accredited attorneys and claim agents who have assisted veterans with their disability claims.

While paying attorneys for their services out of the money owed to the Veteran when a claim is granted is nothing new, sharing the data with the public is. And it's quite striking.

Veterans and survivors have a choice when filing a claim with

VA: They can hire a VA-accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO), an attorney, or a claims agent who is authorized by VA to represent them, and their family, in matters related to VA benefits. Attorneys and claims agents receive payment for their assistance.

While VA-accredited VSOs assist with preparing and submitting claims for free, some VA-accredited attorneys and claim agents provide services for free on initial claims only (it's important to note that they may not, by law, charge a fee for initial claims). But most VA-accredited attorneys and claim agents provide their services

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION: Frontline fraud roundtable

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION - On Jan. 21, the House Veterans Affairs Committee minority staff convened a roundtable to examine the growing threat of fraud targeting veterans, active duty service members, and their families.

Ranking Member Mark Takano opened the discussion by highlighting how access to earned benefits, combined with trust in institutions, can make the military community particularly vulnerable to bad actors.

The roundtable followed earlier discussions on toxic exposures, healthcare practices, and data privacy, continuing a broader effort to strengthen oversight and consumer protections.

FRA appreciated the opportunity

to hear directly from lawmakers, advocates, and subject matter experts who outlined common fraud schemes, including impostors posing as VA officials, pension poaching, romance scams, and unaccredited claims consultants charging excessive fees for basic assistance.

Participants discussed how emerging technologies and online platforms have expanded scammers' reach into the military community.

Witnesses emphasized that enforcement challenges and gaps in coordination among federal agencies continue to complicate efforts to deter fraud. While prosecutions remain important, speakers stressed that prevention, education, and timely reporting

backpay after withholdings is not enough to cover the entire attorney/agent fee amount, the difference is paid to the attorney from VA funds.

Every month, VA will post the amount of money it has paid to attorneys and agents during the last 12 months, the monthly average over the last 12 months, and the amount paid during two

previous months. Our goal is to show veterans where this money goes, why VA pays it and the amount we pay.

• In the last 12 months: \$394.7 million.
• Monthly average over the last 12 Months: \$32 million.
• November 2025: \$29.4 million
• December 2025: \$35.3 million

sonal relationships, enabling multi factor authentication on financial accounts, and approaching unsolicited job or cryptocurrency offers with skepticism.

In cases of suspected fraud, timely reporting was underscored as essential. Individuals should contact the VA Office of Inspector General hotline at 1 800 488 8244, submit a report to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov, file a complaint with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at ic3.gov, and notify state attorneys general when appropriate. FRA welcomed the focus on education and reporting, and reiterated its support for legislative efforts such as the GUARD Act to strengthen accountability and protect veterans' earned benefits.

While VA is posting data starting today, and soon it will break down by calendar year, state and congressional district.

The VA believes making this information available to the public is an important step in ensuring veterans have the tools and information they need to make the best decisions regarding their claims.

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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 for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10am-5pm. [https://www.midway.org/](http://www.midway.org/)

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

Marine Corps Mechanized Museum Camp Pendleton. Managed under the auspices of Camp Pendleton's Museum Division Office, the collection of over 50 vehicles ranges from World War I to the first Gulf War. It includes Patton tanks, armored wheeled and tracked vehicles, trucks, jeeps and amphibious vehicles. When coming aboard Camp Pendleton, please ensure that you have a valid photo ID for every vehicle occupant along with current registration and proof of insurance.
[https://www.themech.org/](http://www.themech.org/) 24194 Vandegrift Blvd, Oceanside, CA 92058. (760) 725-5758. Mon-Thur 8am-4pm, Fri 8am-1pm, Closed Saturday & Sunday



**Veterans
Crisis Line**
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

MOVIES AT THE BASES

MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO
PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF

<https://sandiego.navylifesw.com/> select recreation from top tab and drop down to movies

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

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



NAS NI Lowry Theater Policy

- Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
- These Theaters are cashless facilities. Debit and credit cards accepted only.

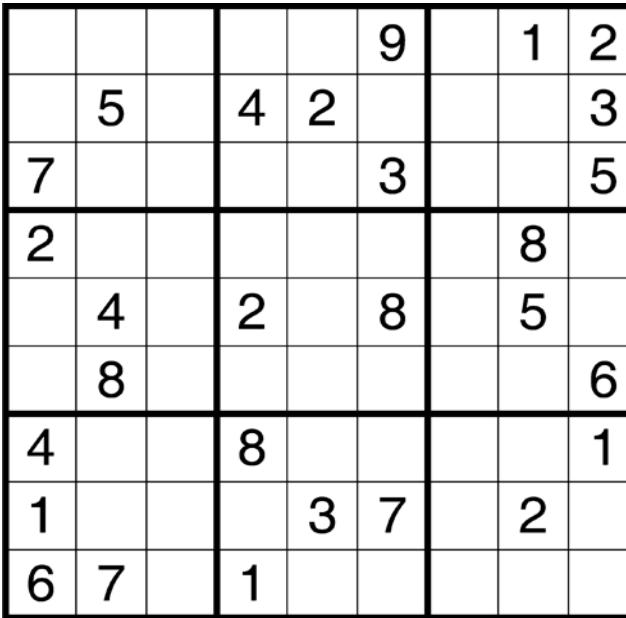
Premium Offerings

- Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.

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

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

ROY'S SUDOKU



Community invited to safely recycle used electronics to provide technology to local students

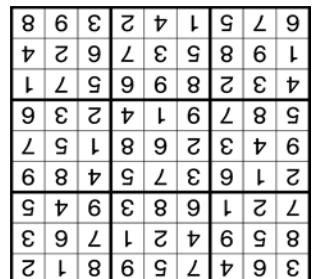
San Diego – Lines of cars carrying old laptops, monitors, tablets, and other electronics are expected to wind through Snapdragon Stadium this Saturday as community members take part in Tech the Halls, a drive-through eWaste Recycling Event hosted by Computers 2 Kids (C2K) and presented by Cox Communications. The event will take place Saturday, January 31, from 9a.m. to 1p.m.

Individuals and businesses are encouraged to safely recycle used electronics—working or not—while helping provide technology to low-income students and families across San Diego County. All donated devices are securely wiped following Department of Defense data destruction protocols and either refurbished for reuse or responsibly recycled.

"Too many students are still trying to succeed in school without reliable access to technology," said Cheri Pierre, CEO of C2K. "Tech the Halls gives our community a simple, secure way to recycle old electronics while directly supporting students and families who need these tools to learn and thrive."

The event will operate as a drive-through collection, allowing attendees to remain in their vehicles while C2K staff and volunteers unload donated electronics. No appointment is required.

Accepted items include laptops, desktops, monitors, tablets, mobile devices, keyboards, mice, cables, accessories, and other small electronic equipment. A complete list of accepted items is available at C2K.org.



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

1 Morse code component
5 John Wick, for one
11 Wedding reception VIPs
14 Puerto Rico, por ejemplo
15 Blueprint
16 Legendary bird of prey
17 'Carpe diem'
19 Rap sheet letters
20 "Zip your lip!"
21 Lust or greed
22 "And how!"
23 "Be the first to begin
27 Hug
29 Mom's mom
30 Extended pd. away
from work
31 Notable period
33 Commercial charge
37 U.K. network
38 "Party gifts container
41 Coffee dispenser
42 Invite for
44 Aggregate
45 Container cover
46 Escape clauses
49 Letters in alphabet soup
52 "Act in desperation
56 Retinal cells
57 Fannie or Ginnie follower
58 Silently understood
61 Dismissal metaphor,
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Logistics Dept. earns Commander's Cup for behind-the-scenes work essential to patient care

Courtesy story

The Medical Logistics (MEDLOG) department at Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSD) has been awarded the Commander's Cup in recognition of its critical support services role in executing the hospital's mission of optimizing health and enhancing readiness.

While frontline caregivers are often in the spotlight, the MEDLOG department operates as the command's silent backbone. Their precise orchestration of supplies, contracts, and equipment ensures that every clinical success is possible. This award highlights the foundational work that enables NMCSD's clinical teams to deliver exceptional patient care without interruption.

"The medical logistics team is the bedrock of our daily operations," said Cmdr. Temitope Ayen, director for administration. "Their dedication ensures that our providers have the tools they need, when they need them, to care for our service members, their families, and our retirees. This award is a well-deserved tribute to the unsung heroes whose meticulous work makes our mission of compassionate care a reality."

Severe blood shortage at American Red Cross ... please donate today!

The American Red Cross is facing a severe blood shortage and donors are needed right now to make sure lifesaving care isn't delayed for accident victims, surgery patients and those facing critical treatments for cancer and chronic blood disorders. The Red Cross blood supply has dropped about 35% in recent weeks — there's no time to wait. Make an appointment today to give blood by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting red-cross-blood-dot-org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS to schedule your donation. Take action and help save lives!

NMCSD's laboratory now offers Saturday appointments

To better serve our patients and optimize the efficiency of our services, NMCSD's Laboratory Department is pleased to announce outpatient hours on Saturdays, effective 6 Dec. Specimen collection services will be available by appointment only, from 08:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Please note that only standard blood draws and urine collections will be performed during Saturday

appointments.

This initiative aims at ensuring a more convenient experience for you and eliminate unnecessary waiting.

Schedule your appointment today by visiting the Digital Appointment Portal (DAP) at:

<https://informatics-stage.health.mil/DAP/>

Lt. Cmdr. Donald Skelton, chief of medical logistics, expressed pride in his team's achievements. "I am incredibly proud of every member of the MEDLOG team," said Skelton. "They tackle immense logistical challenges daily with a level of precision and dedication that is truly inspiring. They understand that every item they process, every contract they manage, and every piece of equipment they maintain is a critical link in the chain of patient care."

The department's impact was demonstrated across multiple divisions in the fourth quarter alone. The acquisition support team processed over \$48,000 in command training transactions, directly bolstering the Graduate Medical Education program and securing vital accreditations that enhance provider expertise.

Simultaneously, the Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support team managed the flow of critical resources by processing 35,000 line items valued at more than \$66 million. Their system administrators also prevented supply chain breakdowns by resolving nearly 1,000 failed orders, safeguarding \$1.9 million in essential supplies.

The operational tempo of the hospital was sustained by the warehouse delivery and receiving section, which handled 7,920 packages of medical supplies worth \$17.7 million with perfect accountability. The linen division also played a vital role, distributing over 7,500 pounds of clean linen and managing the distribution of scrubs to 234 staff members, upholding hygiene standards across 86 divisions and 12 wards. Lastly, postal/mail cage operations securely delivered over 2,500 mail pieces and developed new procedures that improved sorting efficiency by 15%, reducing wait times and indirectly supporting administrative tasks that free up staff for patient-focused duties.

Financial stewardship and resource management were also key contributors. The Contracting Officer's Representative team validated requirements for a contract consolidation valued at over \$420 million, standardizing services across the command. They also de-obligated \$16.9 million by closing out old contracts and recouped funds from underperforming ones, redirecting \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2025 alone to other critical command needs.

By managing the millions in resources and countless hours of unseen labor, the MEDLOG department's achievements are direct enablers of NMCSD's success. Their work allows the command's

clinical staff to focus on what matters most: providing respectful, supportive, and compassionate care to every beneficiary.

The mission of NMCSD is to provide a superior experience for

our patients, staff, and warfighters. NMCSD employs more than 5,000 active-duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in southern California to deliver exceptional care afloat and ashore.

Naval Health Research Center leads study aboard USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72)

Courtesy Story

SANDIEGO-A multidisciplinary research team from the Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) successfully completed the Monitoring Analysis and Research in Nautical Environmental Risks (MARINER) study aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) as the ship completed a period of carrier qualifications underway in fall 2025.

The study is a first-of-its-kind feasibility analysis of occupational and environmental exposures. It marks the first operationally embedded effort to evaluate potentially toxic exposures such as fuels and solvents in a shipboard environment.

"One of the main target goals of MARINER type projects in the future will be to evaluate aircrews and ground crews during flight operations," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Diego Vicente, Principal Investigator of the MARINER study at NHRC. "Conducting this study during a carrier qualification period allows for the establishing blood collection of shipboard personnel, both for toxin evaluation and downstream potential controls."

In partnership with the ship's leadership and medical department, the team enrolled 50 Sailors across ship's company and air wing work centers, collecting more than 195 blood samples and survey datasets under rigorous Department of War-approved research protocols.

"I am grateful to the crew of Abraham Lincoln and Naval Health Research Center for supporting this vital study," Vicente said. "Through this process, we will safeguard the health and operational readiness of U.S. military personnel."

The study represents a model of



U.S. Navy Hospitalman Daimell O'Donnell, left, takes vitals on U.S. Navy Operations Specialist Seaman Mitch Tan aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) on Jan. 1, 2026. The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group is underway conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. Units assigned to 7th Fleet conduct regular Indo-Pacific patrols to deter aggression, strengthen alliances and partnerships, and advance peace through strength. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Angel Campbell.

cooperation between the fleet and the research community, supported by the Murtha Cancer Center Research Program (MCCRP) at Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USUHS), Windber Research Institute, and the Project for Military Exposures and Toxin History Evaluation in U.S. Service Members (PROMETHEUS). After collection aboard Abraham Lincoln, blood samples and survey data were transferred securely for storage at the biobank at Windber Research Institute as well as secondary use protocols with research collaborators.

As the de-identified database and biobank build a repository of low exposure and high exposure risk groups, analysis of the data and samples will potentially enable development of occupational toxic exposures limits as well as inform service members of their long-term health impacts.

"The MARINER project is a

cornerstone of the PROMETHEUS initiative, as it bridges the critical gap in understanding how occupational and environmental exposures impact the health of our service members," said Dr. Craig Shriver, director of the Murtha Cancer Center. "By integrating advanced biomarker discovery with operational data, this study empowers us to develop actionable strategies to protect and enhance the well-being of those who serve."

The study's success was made possible through the close collaboration between U.S. Navy Cmdr. Jeffery Rice, Abraham Lincoln's Senior Medical Officer, and Vicente, whose coordination ensured seamless execution of complex sampling and data collection during underway operations.

Building on the success of this mission, the team plans a longitudinal follow-up phase later on in 2026 to assess biomarkers and exposure trends over time.

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