

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-FIFTH YEAR NO. 40
MARCH 16-31, 2026



DIRECTION DUTY A U.S. Air Force B-1B Lancer crew chief marshals a B-1 after returning from a CONUS-to-CONUS mission in support of Operation Epic Fury, March 4, 2026. The B-1B is a long-range, multi-role bomber that carries the largest payload of precision guided and unguided munitions in the Air Force inventory. U.S. Air Force photo

NAVY'S FINEST: NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO AWARDED TOP HONORS IN FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

by Lt. Drew Verbis
Naval Base San Diego

SAN DIEGO – Naval Base San Diego has been recognized with top honors as Large Fire Department of the Year for its Metro San Diego Fire & Emergency Services (F&ES) team.

The award was announced in late February by Commander, Navy Installations Command, recognizing the department's exceptional performance in protecting Navy personnel, infrastructure, and operational readiness across the fleet's largest homeport.

F&ES professionals are vital to installation readiness, providing a first line of defense against fires, medical emergencies, hazardous materials incidents, and other critical situations. Their rapid response capability and technical expertise help ensure Navy shore installations remain secure, resilient, and fully capable of supporting fleet operations around the clock.

"The unwavering dedication and professionalism of our Fire and Emergency Services personnel are fundamental to the resilience of our Shore Enterprise," said Vice Adm. Scott Gray, commander of CNIC. "These awards celebrate the best of the best — individuals and teams who run toward danger to ensure our installations remain safe, secure, and ready to support the mission. Their courage and commitment are an inspiration to us all."

NBSD was one of nine Navy recipients selected in the annual F&ES awards program and will advance to represent the Navy in the Department of War F&ES Awards competition. The recognition highlights sustained excellence in emergency response, training, prevention programs, and operational support across the installation.

"This recognition reflects the professionalism, readiness, and unwavering commitment of our Metro San Diego Fire & Emergency Services team," said Brian Bungay, commanding officer, NBSD. "Every day these firefighters stand ready to protect our Sailors, families, and critical infrastructure that supports the Fleet. Their dedication ensures NBSD remains a safe, resilient installation capable of sustaining the warfighter and supporting the Navy's global mission."



Naval Base San Diego's Fire & Emergency Services team on Feb. 26, 2026. U.S. Navy photo by Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Timothy Weber

Cutter *Munro* returns home after multimission patrol seizing more than 20,000 pounds of cocaine

by U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area

The crew of Coast Guard cutter *Munro* returned to their home port in Alameda March 8, following a historic 119-day multimission deployment spanning more than 26,000 miles from the Eastern Pacific Ocean to the Northern Atlantic.

Munro departed Alameda Nov. 3, 2025, to conduct training and participate in the War Department's Resolute Hunter exercise off-shore San Diego, before sailing into the Eastern Pacific to execute a counternarcotics patrol in support of the Coast Guard's Operation Pacific Viper.

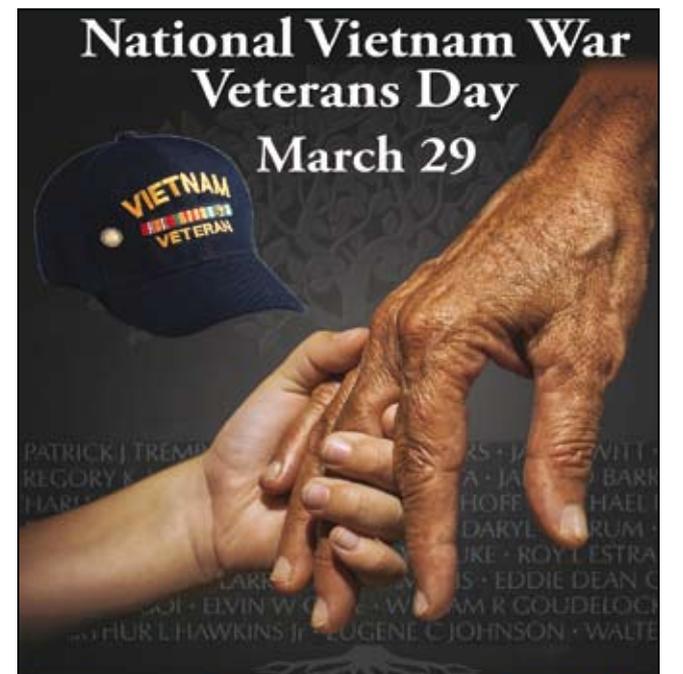
The ship was diverted to the Atlantic Ocean in support of Operation Southern Spear. While assisting U.S. Southern Command's Joint Interagency Task Force South and Coast Guard Southwest District, *Munro* detected and identified a heavily laden vessel transiting along a known smuggling route in the Eastern Pacific.

With the help of its two cutter pursuit boats, the Scan Eagle short-range unmanned aerial system, and an embarked MH-65 Dolphin aircraft from the Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, the *Munro* successfully found, tracked and interdicted the vessel using warning shots and disabling fire from the aircraft.

The cutter subsequently detained six suspected narco-terrorists and seized 22,052 pounds of cocaine — valued at over \$250 million — the single largest maritime drug seizure in 18 years, and the largest ever in the tactical squadron's history. This interdiction continued the Coast Guard's historic counter-drug operations through Operation Pacific Viper, including the seizure of over 200,000 pounds of cocaine along maritime smuggling routes from South and Central America since last August.

After transiting through the Panama Canal, *Munro* took station in the Caribbean Sea to conduct new tasking in support of Operation Southern Spear. The ship located and identified the dark fleet oil tanker *Bella 1*, a U.S.-sanctioned vessel, determined to be without nationality and subject to U.S. jurisdiction.

The ship's crew continuously pursued the noncompliant vessel across the North Atlantic Ocean for 18 days and over 4,900 miles. The pursuit culminated with the boarding of the tanker, where *Munro* worked in tandem with War Department assets to seize control of the 333-meter crude oil carrier for further transfer to the Justice Department and Department of Homeland Security for disposition.



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IN BRIEF: U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND'S TIMELINE LEADING UP TO THE ATTACK ON IRAN

In a compilation of news releases from U.S. Central Command since January 2026, the following is a timeline of actions leading up to the Feb. 28 air attacks against the Iranian regime by the United States and Israel.

January 21: U.S. Forces launch mission in Syria to transfer ISIS detainees to Iraq, to help ensure the terrorists remain in secure detention facilities.

February 4: Central Command conducted five strikes against multiple ISIS targets across Syria as partner forces continue to apply military pressure to ensure the enduring defeat of the terrorist network

February 7: The commander of CENTCOM visited USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), as it transited the Arabian Sea during a scheduled deployment. Adm. Brad Cooper visited crew members aboard the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier with U.S. Special Envoy for Peace Missions Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner. Cooper expressed his gratitude for their service.

February 12: CENTCOM completed the orderly de-

parture of U.S. forces from al-Tanf Garrison in Syria on Feb. 11 as part of a deliberate and conditions-based transition by Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR).

February 13: U.S. forces completes mission in northeastern Syria to transfer ISIS detainees to Iraq to help ensure ISIS detainees remain secure in detention facilities.

February 14: CENTCOM forces conducted 10 strikes against more than 30 ISIS targets in Syria Feb. 3 – 12 to sustain relentless military pressure on remnants from the terrorist network. U.S. forces struck ISIS infrastructure and weapons storage targets with precision munitions delivered by fixed-wing, rotary-wing, and unmanned aircraft.

February 28: U.S. forces commenced Operation Epic Fury at the direction of the President of the United States. U.S. and partner forces began striking targets at 10:15 p.m. PT to dismantle the Iranian regime's security apparatus, prioritizing locations that posed an imminent threat. Targets included Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps

command and control facilities, Iranian air defense capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and military airfields.

March 1: At 8:03 p.m. PT, three U.S. F-15E Strike Eagles flying in support of Operation Epic Fury went down over Kuwait due to an apparent friendly fire incident. During active combat—that

U.S. forces issue safety warning to civilians in Iran

from USCENTCOM
TAMPA, Fla. – U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) is issuing a safety warning to civilians in Iran, March 8, as Iran's terrorist regime blatantly disregards the safety of innocent people.

The Iranian regime is using heavily populated civilian areas to conduct military operations, including launching one-way attack drones and ballistic missiles. This dangerous decision risks the lives of all civilians in Iran since locations used for military purposes lose protected status and could become legitimate military targets under international law.

Iranian forces are using crowded areas surrounded by civilians in cities such as Dezful, Esfahan and Shiraz to

included attacks from Iranian aircraft, ballistic missiles, and drones — the U.S. Air Force fighter jets were mistakenly shot down by Kuwaiti air defenses. All six aircrew ejected safely, have been safely recovered, and are in stable condition. Kuwait has acknowledged this incident, and we are grateful for the efforts of the Kuwaiti defense forces and

launch attack drones and ballistic missiles.

U.S. forces strongly urge civilians in Iran to stay at home. The Iranian regime is knowingly endangering innocent lives. Additionally, Iranian forces are jeopardizing the safety of innocent people throughout the Middle East by deliberately and indiscriminately targeting civilian airports, hotels, and residential neighborhoods.

"Iran's terrorist regime is blatantly disregarding civilian lives by attacking Gulf partners while compromising the safety of their own people," said Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of CENTCOM.

Iran has launched hundreds of ballistic missiles and thousands of one-way attack drones

their support in this ongoing operation. The cause of the incident is under investigation.

March 8: In a CENTCOM update, a U.S. National Guard Soldier died in a health-related incident in Kuwait on March 6 during a medical emergency. The exact cause of death is under review. In a March 8

Operation Epic Fury update, a U.S. service member passed away from injuries received during the Iranian regime's initial attacks across the theater. The service member was seriously wounded at the scene of an attack on U.S. troops in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on March 1. This is the seventh service member killed in action during Operation Epic Fury. Major combat operations continue.

since Feb 28. However, launch rates have drastically declined as U.S. and partner forces decimate Iran's military capabilities.

The U.S. military takes every feasible precaution to minimize

USS Nimitz deploys to Southern Command

BREMERTON, Wash. - USS *Nimitz* departed March 6 for military exercises in the Southern Command area, according to the *Stars and Stripes*.

"*Nimitz* is deploying to the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility this spring as part of U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. 4th Fleet's Southern Seas 2026 deployment," Lt. Cmdr. Peter Pagano, spokesman for the carrier, said in an e-mail to *Stars and Stripes* from aboard the ship.

The Navy's oldest carrier, commissioned in 1975, had been scheduled to depart its homeport at Naval Base Kitsap near Seattle to arrive in mid-April to begin decommissioning.

It arrived at Kitsap, Wash., in December from Asia and the Middle East at the end of what the Navy said was its final deployment. Pagano said details of the new deployment are still under development. The Navy has not yet announced plans for South Seas 2026.



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Armed Forces Dispatch
published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
619-280-2985 • E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com
Editor.....Scott Sutherland

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SERVICE LEADERS AT THE SENATE ARMED FORCES COMMITTEE HEARING

Marine Corps improving amphibious warfare ship availability, says defense leader

by David Vergun
Pentagon News

The Marine Corps is the nation's global response force, said Marine Corps Gen. Bradford J. Gering, assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, who, along with other service leaders, testified March 4 at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in Washington on joint force readiness.

The Marine Corps' traditional role as a crisis response force is embodied by the amphibious ready group and Marine expeditionary unit, he said.

"This sea-based capability provides our nation with decision space and options, changes the behavior of bad actors and delivers swift and decisive action when required," Gering said.

These forces deploy from the East and West Coasts, along

with one based in Japan.

"These forward deployed forces provide a continuous presence, enable the joint force and contribute to deterrence with allies and part-



ners," he added, noting that in partnership with the Navy, the Marine Corps is working to improve the availability of amphibious warfare ships, and significant progress has been made with the procurement of medium landing ships.

"We need to continue to move forward with a sense of urgency in ... amphibious warship readiness availability and littoral mobility. Despite these challenges, your Marines are ready," the general said.

Once again, the Marine Corps met its recruiting mission last fiscal year and is on track to meet it again this year.

Taking care of Marines and their families is a warfighting necessity that directly impacts readiness and retention, Gering said, noting that new barracks are under construction and child care incentives are underway.

"Finally, I'm proud to report to you that for a third consecutive year, your Marine Corps has earned a clean audit opinion," he said. "This is a direct reflection [of] our commitment to fiscal stewardship and demonstrates our accountability for every taxpayer dollar."

While improving quality of life, Navy remains ready to fight

by David Vergun
Pentagon News

The Navy is participating in exercises and operations worldwide, said Navy Adm. James W. Kilby, vice chief of naval operations, who, along with other service leaders, testified at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing in Washington on joint force readiness.

Last year in the Middle East, the Navy executed strikes against adversaries during Operations Rough Rider and Midnight Hammer, while defending regional allies and partners.

This year, the Navy participated in Operation Absolute Resolve in the Atlantic, while sailors operate every day to deter China and build partner-

ships in the Pacific, Kilby said.

Currently, the Navy is supporting Operation Epic Fury. On March 3, a Navy fast attack submarine sank an Iranian combatant ship with the Mark 48 torpedo.

The Navy's primary weapon system is its sailors, the admiral said, noting that the service exceeded its recruiting goals last year and is successfully working to increase retention.

To further support sailors, the Navy is focused on improving quality of life through a new initiative that provides permanent shore-based housing so that no sailor is required to live aboard a ship while on shore duty, he said. Efforts also include expanding child care, improving

fitness facilities and expanding meal selections with healthy options.

Always looking for ways to improve, the service is increasing platform readiness by reducing maintenance delays, investing in shipyard infrastructure optimization and developing the civilian workforce. Advanced technologies such as conditions-based maintenance and advanced additive manufacturing are being used to optimize systems.

"The Navy continues to drive toward our goal of 80% combat surge-ready ships, aircraft and submarines with urgency and accountability," Kilby said, adding that he's concerned with the material condition of amphibious ships and is working to improve that.

Air Force, Space Force ready for all warfighting challenges

by David Vergun

The Air Force's lethality depends on the professionalism of airmen and the capability of their equipment, said Air Force Gen. John D. Lamontagne, Air Force vice chief of staff, who testified at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on joint force readiness in Washington.

"Airmen are our most precious resource. The active-duty, Air National Guard, reserve and civilian workforce are why the United States Air Force is ef-

fective at a moment's notice," Lamontagne said.

The Air Force updated its fitness policy to push airmen to new levels and ensure they are ready to stand shoulder to shoulder with its joint partners on the toughest battlefields, the general said.

The service is improving airmen's quality of life by updating dormitories and child development care centers.

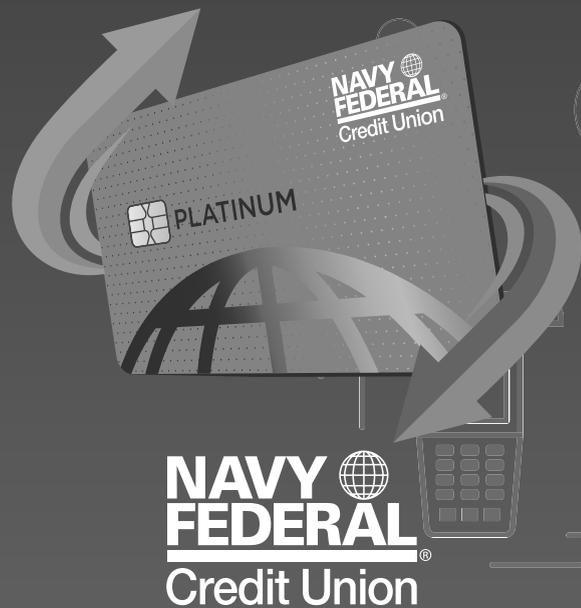
"We strive to make the Air Force an unmatched place to

serve," Lamontagne said, adding that recruiting goals are being met and retention numbers are strong.

The Air Force is increasing aircraft availability, which allows aviators to get the repetitions they need to build competence. The service is also recapitalizing its ground-based strategic deterrent, fighter, bomber and tanker aircraft, as well as the command-and-control architectures that bring them together, the general said.

see **Air Force**, page 4

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Massachusetts man arrested and charged with falsely impersonating U.S. Army veteran for over 30 years

Defendant allegedly used stolen identity to live in transitional housing intended for military veterans and receive VA medical care

from U.S. Attorney's Office
District of Massachusetts

BOSTON – A Pittsfield, Mass. man has been arrested and charged with falsely impersonating a United States Army veteran for over 30 years to obtain medical care at Veterans Affairs medical centers and other benefits.

James D. Sommers, whose age is unknown, has been charged with one count of false statements. Sommers was arrested yesterday in Pittsfield, Mass., where he was staying under the guise of a victim's identity at Soldier On, a facility that provides transitional housing to United States military veterans. Sommers remains in federal custody and was scheduled to appear in federal court on March 9.

According to the charging documents, beginning as early as 1994, Sommers has falsely impersonated a United States Army veteran who served honorably from 1979 to 1982. It is

alleged that Sommers used the victim's stolen identity to obtain thousands of dollars in Social Security benefits and nearly \$30,000 in medical care and medications from VA medical centers. Most recently, Sommers falsely impersonated the victim on Feb. 20 to obtain medical care at the VA Medical Center in Northampton, Mass.

It is further alleged that Sommers has numerous prior convictions in New York State in 1994, 1997, 2001 and 2011 all under the victim's name, for offenses including: criminal possession of stolen property; intent to obtain transportation without paying; sale of a controlled substance; possession of a forged instrument; attempted grand larceny; grand larceny; and forgery.

The charge of false statements provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release, and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are imposed by a federal district court

additional systems will increase domain awareness.

Regarding readiness, Bratton said guardians must be ready at any time for any threat across the entire spectrum of conflict. They participated in a variety of exercises designed to ensure space superiority, and officer training courses now include training in space, cyber, intelligence and acquisitions.

"We will need to double in size in the coming years to meet identified operational needs, as well as significantly increase our training facilities. Even as we prepare for current warfighting challenges, we are aggressively looking ahead at capability requirements for the future force," he said.

judge based upon the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and statutes which govern the determination of a sentence in a criminal case.

U.S. Attorney Leah B. Foley and Christopher Algeri, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Inspector General, Northeast Field Office made

Hegseth says U.S. attacks intensify under Epic Fury, while Iranian responses slow

by C. Todd Lopez, Pentagon News

The U.S. launched strikes on Iran last week to stop the terrorist-run state from its continued and ill-advised pursuit of nuclear weapons it hopes to use to threaten the American homeland.

Nearly 11 days into Operation Epic Fury, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth says the U.S. attacks continue to be strong while Iranian responses wane.

"Today will be, yet again, our most intense day of strikes inside Iran," Hegseth said during a press briefing March 10 at the Pentagon. "The most fighters, the most bombers, the most strikes; intelligence more refined and better than ever. So, that's on one hand. On the other hand, the last 24 hours have seen Iran fire the lowest number of missiles they've been capable of firing yet."

The secretary told journalists that much of what the Iranians are doing is lobbing missiles at their neighbors in the Middle East, making enemies of what may have once been bystanders, and launching those missiles from near their own schools and hospitals, putting innocent civilians at risk from retaliatory strikes.

"The [Iranians] are desperate and scrambling. Like the terrorist cowards they are, they fire missiles from schools and hospitals ... deliberately targeting innocents ... because they know their military is being systematically degraded and annihilated," Hegseth said. "Iran's neighbors and in some cases former allies in the [Persian] Gulf — they've abandoned them."

Iranian proxy groups like Hezbollah, the Houthis and Hamas are also broken, ineffective, or on the sidelines now, Hegseth said.

"Iran stands alone, and they are badly losing," the secretary said. "On day 10 of Operation Epic Fury, we are winning with an overwhelming and unrelenting focus on our objectives."

The secretary said that, surprisingly, Iran's response after the initial U.S. assault was to attack its neighbors. The result of that, he said, has not been good for Iran.

"The big mistake by the Iranian regime was to start targeting its neighbors," Hegseth said. "I think it was a demonstration of the desperation of that regime ... that they still think their pathway out is to try to alienate their Arab partners even more."

Those neighbors, Hegseth said, have decided instead to side with the U.S. "[They have] instead decided to come to us and have been willing to go on the offense, have been giving us access, basing and overflight in a new partnership that will continue to remake the region," Hegseth said. <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4429836/>

the announcement. Assistant U.S. Attorney Steven H. Breslow of the Springfield Branch Office is prosecuting the case.

The details contained in the charging document are allegations. The defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in the court of law.



EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Top 5

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 - A son of Iran's late supreme leader is chosen to replace his father as war rages
 - First U.S. casualties of Operation Epic Fury return as Trump vows escalation
 - U.S., Ecuador strike suspected drug trafficking camp near Colombian border
 - U.S. to send anti-drone system to Mideast after successful use in Ukraine, officials say
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- Using technology, Army moves combat engineers from the breach to save lives
 - New science on heat is changing the future of soldiering
- Navy**
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- 8 rescued after boat capsizes at Marine runway construction site on Okinawa
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Air Force

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At the tactical level, airmen are practicing agile combat employment and preparing to fight in exercises like Bamboo Eagle. Last summer, the Air Force deployed more than 400 aircraft and 15,000 personnel across 50 locations in the Pacific region, Lamontagne said.

Space Force Gen. Shawn N. Bratton, vice chief of space operations, said his service, along with commercial partners, executed 170 launches this year.

A new radar has upgraded optical surveillance systems to track adversarial activity on orbit better, he said, noting that



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Career and Education

Career ready: Helping Marine Corps spouses thrive

Military spouses are resourceful and vital to the Marine Corps mission, yet frequent moves, deployments, and unpredictable schedules can make maintaining a fulfilling career challenging.

The Marine Corps is committed to empowering spouses with the tools, resources, and mentorship needed to thrive professionally, no matter where duty calls.

The importance of career readiness Career readiness goes beyond finding a job—it builds confidence, purpose, and long-term stability. Meaningful employment supports financial security, personal fulfillment, and family resilience, ultimately benefiting the entire Marine Corps community.

Family Member Employment Assistance Program At the center of this effort is the Family Member Employment Assistance Program (FMEAP), available at Marine Corps installations worldwide.

FMEAP offers personalized career coaching, resume and



interview support, and guidance navigating federal and civilian employment systems. Whether reentering the workforce, changing industries, or seeking remote work, FMEAP tailors support to each spouse's goals.

Mentorship and networking Mentorship is a key driver of career growth. FMEAP connects spouses with experienced professionals for guidance, encouragement, and networking.

Partnerships with local employers, educational institutions, and national organizations create pathways to internships, certifications, and

career opportunities suited to military family life.

Looking ahead As we enter the new year, initiatives include expansion of remote work options, portable credentials, and mentorship networks across installations. Career-ready spouses are mission-ready partners, and through FMEAP, Marine Corps families can not only adapt to military life but thrive in it.

Chief of Staff, Air Force, letter to the force

from Secretary of the Air Force Public Affairs

ARLINGTON, Va. -- Airmen,

Over the past few days, Operation Epic Fury has shown the world exactly what Airmen are capable of. When the nation calls, you deliver. This major combat operation demonstrates the unmatched reach, capacity, and lethality of the United States Air Force.

Right now, Airmen are taking the fight straight to the adversary. We are unleashing American airpower as an overwhelming force, destroying any and all enemy targets.

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Adversaries are finding out the hard way what happens when they challenge us. They see disciplined teams operating at the highest level. They see a force that seized the advantage and continues to punish its enemy from the skies. They see an unrelenting Air Force never slowing the pace of attack. They see Airmen that will never stop short of victory.

Airmen are our most important and powerful weapon, and

we need you ready to fight. Physical, mental, spiritual and unit readiness are imperative. Stay vigilant and prepared. Take care of yourselves and your Wingmen. We are grateful for our families, who bear a unique and demanding role yet continually demonstrate uncommon resilience and strength.

I am proud of our Commanders and the incredible, devoted Airmen who are enabling the joint team to fight and win. We have more work to do - stay sharp. Fight's On!

Kenneth S. Wilsbach
KENNETH S. WILSBACH
General, USAF
Chief of Staff



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USS Midway MUSEUM

USS Midway Museum docent classes to begin June 2026

The USS Midway Museum is recruiting volunteer docents (museum tour guides).

This is a great way to give back to your community and to meet interesting people. Free

training classes for men and women are scheduled to begin Monday, June 1, 2026 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on board the ship in downtown San Diego.

Midway Museum, or call (619) 398-8289. E-mail volunteer-ing@midway.org.

The USS Midway Museum opened in June 2004 and has become one of San Diego's most popular visitor attractions with on million guests coming aboard each year. The ship was commissioned in September 1945 and served for 47 years including the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm in the Persian Gulf. Nearly 250,000 men served their country aboard the Midway before it was retired in 1992.



training classes for men and women are scheduled to begin Monday, June 1, 2026 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on board the ship in downtown San Diego.

Training is eight weeks long and includes personalized on-the-job mentoring. Applications must be submitted and screened in advance.

Prior customer service and public speaking experience preferred. No military experience is required. Women and civilians are encouraged to apply. Six month commitment required.

For application and further information

Volunteer Opportunities | USS Midway Museum - USS

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RETIREEES WELCOME

USS Midway MUSEUM

The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
<https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/>

CAREER DIRECTORY

Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS)

Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) is looking for the best and brightest to join the Team! MCCS is a comprehensive program that supports and enhances the quality of life for Marines, their families, and others in the Marine Corps Community. MCCS offers federal civilian employment opportunities, working in a team-oriented environment comprised of military personnel, civilian employees, contractors and volunteers who keep the organization functioning smoothly and effectively. As a service-oriented organization focused on serving those who serve, MCCS never wavers in their commitment to the Corps. MCCS has a wide variety of worldwide career paths for individuals from all backgrounds and experiences. Ready to Search and Apply?

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<https://careers.usmc-mccs.org/>

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<https://www.navylifsw.com/fleet-family/ffsc-careers>



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HOME GAMES AT FRONTWAVE ARENA

Mon., March 23, 6pm	NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., April 17, 5pm	Quad City Steamwheelers at San Diego Strike Force
Sun., April 26, 4:30pm	Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*
Sat., May 23, 7pm	NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., June 19, 7pm	Vegas Knight Hawks at San Diego Strike Force*
Mon., July 6, 6pm	Arizona Rattlers at San Diego Strike Force*
Sat., July 18, 8pm	New Mexico Chupacabras at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., July 24, 6pm	Tucson Sugar Skulls at San Diego Strike Force*

*Conference

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Local Military

Machine learning workshop draws crowds to San Diego

by Jaime Ciciora

SAN DIEGO - Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific, in partnership with AFCEA International San Diego, hosted the Naval Applications of Machine Learning workshop in San Diego from March 2-5.

Nearly 800 experts gathered at NAML 2026 to advance machine learning in support of warfighter capability and to address naval technology priorities.

Nicole Isoda, a NIWC Pacific NAML 2026 co-chair, highlighted the workshop's significance. "Our agenda represents what is important to our warfighters

with over 200 talks, posters, tutorials, and demonstrations in applications such as robotic and autonomous systems, human-machine teaming, and trust in and assurance of artificial intelligence systems.

"NAML provides a venue for collaboration and engagement across the government, academia, and industry research community with end users, stakeholders, and policymakers enabling effective application of machine learning and artificial intelligence to naval operations."

"Autonomous and robotic systems are redefining the modern

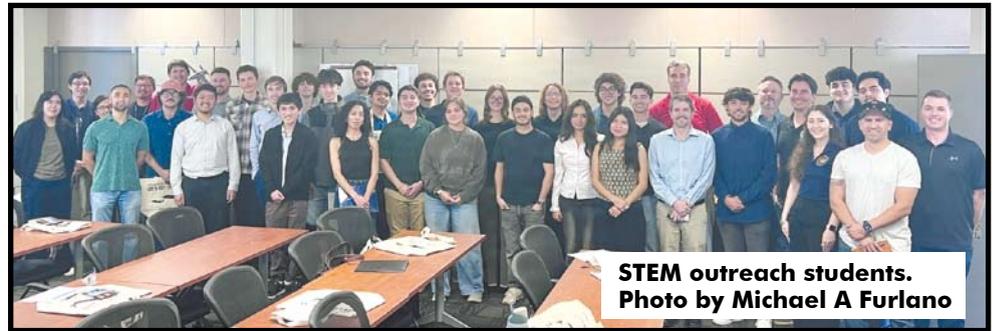
battlespace, and machine learning is the engine that powers them," said Navy Capt. Andrew Privette, the Navy's Portfolio Acquisition Executive for Robotic and Autonomous Systems chief technology officer.

"Events like NAML ensure we are not just advancing algorithms, but rapidly integrating trusted, mission-ready AI into fielded systems. Our responsibility as acquisition leaders is to remove barriers, align resources and deliver capability to the fleet at operational speed."

Established in 2016 by NIWC Pacific, NAML has grown into a four-day defense artificial intelligence forum, bringing together mission-focused collaboration across government, industry and academia.

NIWC Pacific leads the technical program of classified and unclassified exchanges focused on artificial intelligence for low-data, low-power, and safety-critical environments. Through NAML and related partnerships, NIWC Pacific accelerates innovation to sustain the Navy's information warfare advantage.

For more information, visit <https://naml2026.org/>.



STEM outreach students. Photo by Michael A Furlano

FRCSW STEM outreach

by Michael A Furlano

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest (FRCSW) hosted students from San Diego State University (SDSU) and the University of California at San Diego (UCSD).

These individuals, represented their respective student chapters of the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) and were given a tour of FRCSW operations during an engineering-focused visit.

The group of 26 aerospace engineering students observed firsthand the advanced engineering, maintenance and sustainment efforts that keep Navy and Marine Corps aircraft mission-ready.

Command personnel, engineers, artisans and support specialists, are essential to naval aviation readiness, ensuring the safety, reliability and combat effectiveness of the fleet through precision work that, in many cases, quite literally IS rocket science.

Students expressed strong interest and appreciation for the technical complexity, discipline and innovation required to sustain military aircraft, leaving impressed by both the scale of the mission and the expertise of the workforce dedicated to supporting national defense.

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics is a professional society for the field of aerospace engineering. Formed in 1963 through the

merger of the two great aerospace engineering societies of the day, the American Rocket Society (ARS) and the Institute of the Aeronautical Sciences, (IAS), both established in 1932, the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) is the nation's preeminent, and the world's largest technical organization representing the aerospace community.

As a member of the AIAA SDSU student branch, students have the opportunity to network with Aerospace Engineering professionals at networking events and speaker presentations.

Additionally, students may partake in industry tours, resume workshops, and museum tours.

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Registration for the ticket entry beginning on March 11, 2026. Tickets required for day of entry. Active-duty status and a valid military ID are mandatory. Winners must present their active-duty military ID in person at NASNI ITT on their assigned date/time for ticket redemption. Tickets are non-transferable, non-resalable, and have no cash value. Lost or unused tickets cannot be replaced or exchanged. Limited tickets available for this event.

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THE BEST OF GREETINGS
Families greet their sailors upon the return of Independence-variant littoral combat ship **USS Cincinnati** to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego after eight months of sustained operations in the U.S. 3rd and 7th Fleet areas of operations **March 4, 2026. U.S. Navy photo by Aja Bleu Campbell**



USS Santa Barbara uses LUCAS drone in combat in attack against Iran

An unmanned “suicide” drone that was initially tested by a San Diego warship in December was used in combat for the first time Feb. 28 during the U.S.-Israel attack on Iran, according to the *San Diego Union Tribune*.

In the story by Gary Robbins, littoral combat ship *Santa Barbara* test flew the Low Cost Unmanned Combat Attack System (LUCAS) one-way drone while on deployment in the Persian Gulf, where the vessel is still operating. Central Command did not say how many of the \$35,000 drones were used, or which ship or ships launched them. But it indicated that the drones were used to strike command and control facilities in Iran. The attack represented a moment of irony; the LUCAS drones were reversed engineered from Iran’s Shahed-136 drones.

The assault also highlights the Navy’s rapid push to develop a variety of unmanned systems, including the unmanned surface vessel ships it has begun to station in San Diego.



MOVE THE MISSILE Sailors load a laser-guided AGM-114 missile onto an MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter aboard **USS John Finn** in support of Operation Epic Fury in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, **March 3, 2026. U.S. Navy photo**



MARCH 3, 2026 - Flight operations aboard **USS Abraham Lincoln** during Operation Epic Fury **U.S. Navy photo**

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USS SANTA FE KICKS OFF OPERATION ICE CAMP 2026 IN THE ARCTIC OCEAN

BARENTS SEA - San Diego-based submarine USS *Santa Fe* (SSN 763 is here as the Navy kicked off Operation Ice Camp (ICE CAMP) Boarfish in the Arctic Ocean March 7.

A second fast attack submarine, east coast-based USS *Delaware* (SSN 791) is also participating.

ICE CAMP Boarfish is a three-week operation designed to research, test, and evaluate operational capabilities in the Arctic region. In addition to Navy, Marine Corps, and Air National Guard participation, personnel from the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, Royal Canadian Air Force, French Navy, Royal United Kingdom Navy, Norwegian Defence Research Institute, and the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology are also taking part.

This operation, held biennially, partners with the Arctic Submarine Laboratory and was elevated from an exercise to an operation to better reflect the Navy's strategic priorities in the Arctic. ICE CAMP provides the necessary training to maintain a working knowledge of a constantly changing region.

"The Arctic is a critical region for national security and global stability. Our commitment to a sustained presence and operational readiness here is unwavering," said Vice Adm. Richard Seif, Commander, Submarine Forces. "ICE CAMP Boarfish allows us to test and refine our capabilities, deepen our interoperability with key allies, and ensure our Submarine

Force can project power and defend our nation's interests in any environment, at any time. Our strength in the Arctic is a testament to the skill and resilience of our sailors and partners."

The Navy's Arctic Submarine Laboratory, a detachment of the Undersea Warfighting Development Center, is the lead organization for planning and executing the operation. ASL serves as the "Center of Excellence" for Arctic matters for the U.S. Submarine Force. The Arctic is experiencing a trend of diminishing sea ice, which increases the likelihood of maritime activity in the region, including trans-oceanic shipping and resource extraction.

The camp, named Ice Camp Boarfish, serves as a command center for conducting operations and research. Established on a drifting ice floe, the camp consists of shelters, a command center, and the necessary infrastructure to safely house and support the multi-national contingent of personnel throughout the operation.

"Leading this multinational team in such a demanding environment is a privilege," said Capt. David Nichols, Officer in Tactical Control of this year's ICE CAMP.

"The complexity of establishing a fully functional base on a moving sheet of ice cannot be overstated. The professionalism and dedication of every service member and civilian here is what makes this vital mission possible. We are focused on executing our objectives safely and effectively, further enhanc-

ing our collective readiness for Arctic operations."

The camp gets its namesake from the USS *Boarfish* (SS 327), a Balao-class submarine commissioned on September 23, 1944. During her service in World War II, *Boarfish* earned a battle star for sinking two Japanese vessels in the South China Sea.

In 1947, *Boarfish* served as the flagship for Operation Blue Nose, the first-ever exploration under the polar ice cap, where she tested new under-ice sonar technology.

This historic mission demonstrated that extended under-ice navigation was practical and paved the way for future submarine operations in the Arctic.

Submarines have conducted under-ice operations in the Arctic for more than 60 years. USS *Nautilus* (SSN 571) made the first transit in 1958, and USS *Skate* (SSN 578) was the first U.S. submarine to surface through Arctic ice at the North Pole in March 1959. Since those initial voyages, the U.S. Submarine Force has completed 99 such evolutions, with ICE CAMP Boarfish being the 100th.

U.S. Submarine Forces execute the Department of the Navy's mission in and from the undersea domain. In addition to lending added capacity to naval forces, Submarine Forces are expected to leverage those special advantages that come with undersea concealment to permit operational, deterrent, and combat effects that the Navy and the Nation could not otherwise achieve.



BANDING TOGETHER Sailors band a torpedo aboard USS *Spruance* in support of Operation Epic Fury in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, March 6, 2026. U. S. Navy photo

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Celebrate America's 250th birthday in Oceanside

The Oceanside Chamber of Commerce announces the Oceanside USA 250 Festival—a community celebration honoring America's 250th birthday. This event will bring together residents and visitors for a festive afternoon recognizing our nation's history while celebrating the pride and spirit of the Oceanside community.

The festival will bring the community together in downtown Oceanside for live music, local food and beverage vendors, family-friendly activities, and engaging community exhibits.

Oceanside USA 250 Festival | June 27 | 12-6 p.m.
Junior Seau Pier Amphitheatre | Oceanside, CA 92054
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Playing arcade claw machines for fun and prizes — what you should know

Claw machines filled with colorful stuffed animals have long been a popular form of entertainment. You'll probably find them just about everywhere that arcade games are played, but have you tried to win a prize in one recently? Are they games of skill or something more than that? Can and are claw machines adjusted so that they may not be strong enough to hold on to the prizes all the way to the prize drop chute?

These machines are fun. In some form or another they have been around for decades. While winning from the earlier machines did require some basic skills, they seemed pretty consistent in their operation. You'd guide the open claw along a grid, position it over your intended prize and then release the slowly spinning claw so that it would descend all the way down to the prizes, where it would hopefully close around your intended prize. If grabbed, the chances were good that it would lift the prize up and carry it over to the prize chute, where the claw would automatically release it.

Most of the challenge was to find an easy to grab prize, accurately line up the claw, wait until it stopped swaying and release it, so that it would surround the intended prize. Once I got the hang of it, I usually was able to win some stuffed animals for my kids without spending too much money.

These days, some arcades are even more-filled with enticing, brightly lit and colorful electronic claw machines. Prizes may range from tiny stuffed animals, small plastic toys and candies; to huge stuffed animals and expensive consumer electronics devices. Especially for

the larger, heavier prizes, some machines give players the opportunity to try to grab bands that represent varying numbers of tickets, which may be exchanged for prizes.

While playing claw machines, have you ever been oh-so frustrated

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



by how you could skillfully and successfully grab a prize and even lift it up, only to have it drop the prize on the way to the prize chute?

To make the machines more consistently profitable, modern claw machines are adjustable for variable claw strength over several parameters, to make winning difficult — if not impossible — most of the time. For example, they can be programmed to initially grab on to a prize firmly, hold on to it firmly — or not — as it is raised up, and then weaken their grip on their way over to the prize drop chute, intentionally dropping your prize before it gets there. This is done by varying the voltage to the claw motor.

Furthermore, they can be programmed to automatically increase their claw strength to full every certain number of plays, to make it easier to win sometimes. Seeing some people win encourages other people to try their 'luck.' Does this remind you of how slot machines pay out in Las Vegas?

Here are some strategies to increase your likelihood of winning. First, observe other players using the same machine first. If the claws seem to always drop the prizes at some point, find another claw machine.

Aim carefully, looking from both the front and the side, to make sure the claw is lined up and steady (not swinging) before dropping it. Your odds of winning are greater for less valuable prizes. Make sure there is sufficient clear space around the target prize for the claw to surround it. Avoid machines where the prizes are tightly packed together.

Look for lighter prizes with loosely-filled, fluffy stuffing. Aim for prizes that are closer to the drop chute, so they have less far to travel. Choose older, more mechanical machines where it may be less likely that the claw grip strength may be programmed for variability. Consider sacrificing one or more plays to try dragging the desired prize to a more open, easier to grab position. Consider where the claw machines are located. Are they at for-profit businesses or at parties and social functions for the guests' entertainment.

For more information, here is a good link from claw machine manufacturer YPFuns: <https://www.ypfuns.com/article/claw-machine-tips-and-tricks-how-to-win-every-time.html>

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 © 2026 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #920r1

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

"Ah-venture awaits!" our daughter, Anna, mispronounced to her little sister Lilly on the night before our overseas move to Stuttgart, Germany. Everything they'd known was about to change, and having an active imagination was Anna's way of coping.

Our household goods had already been packed into cartons and hauled away. We'd eaten pizza for dinner in our empty kitchen, sitting in our neighbor's folding soccer chairs. We slept that night in sleeping bags on borrowed air mattresses.

Somewhere in the shuffle, Lilly had lost "Pink Bunny" — a worn plush bunny head attached to a security blanket that she'd had since she was born. She was getting too old for it, but this was definitely not a good time for Lilly to part with her comforting constant companion.

As for my husband and I, we were excited for this move. Germany would be a grand adventure (or "ah-venture" according to Anna) for our whole family. Our oldest child, Hayden, was a bit apprehensive, but he'd been bullied during his sixth grade year, so the move represented a fresh start at a new school with potential new friends.

But for Anna and Lilly, our move to a foreign country was scary. Anna had moved to Virginia Beach

New book depicts military moves from child's eyes

as a baby, and Lilly was born there. Our Dutch colonial on a cul de sac near their elementary school was all they ever knew.

To familiarize them with the beauty and culture of Germany, I made a big mistake playing "The Sound of Music" movie for our family one night. The next day, when I asked Lilly what she and her friend had done on their playdate, Lilly reported, "First we played Polly Pockets, then we had a snack, then we played 'The Nazis are coming! The Nazis are coming!', then we..."

I wish I'd know back in 2008 about United Through Reading (UTR), a national nonprofit that helps military families through challenges like deployments and PCS moves through story-telling. Recently, UTR selected the new picture book, Home Moves With Me (2026) by Kathy Feedham Raggio, as 2026 Book for the Military Child. UTR, working with publisher Elva Resa, will distribute 14,000 copies of the book to U.S. military families worldwide in both English and Spanish ("Mi hogar se muda conmigo") versions.

Home Moves With Me is a story that uses the sweet simplicity of a child's perspective to depict a military family's PCS move. It contains many relatable details in the lightly rhyming text and illustrations — boxes, sleeping bags, empty rooms, long drives, moving stickers, pizza, crinkled paper, eating "dry cereal out of little boxes," tears, and laughter. I could immediately imagine Anna as the main character, taking the stairs of

a new home "two at a time" and yelling, "Ah-venture awaits!"

Also, the book lends itself to repeated readings because the illustrations offer a sort of "I spy" element where readers search each page for the family dog who is always in the background, up to no good. Or, the hidden references to the main character's favorite imaginary theme — dragons.

Author Raggio grew up as an Army brat and became an Air Force spouse who moved eight times with three children of her own. "Since I have lived a life of multiple moves, I also wrote this story to explore what home means to me. For me, home was never the building we lived in. It was my family, memories we made, and traditions that went with us from one place to another, those things that made us feel like we were home, no matter the dwelling place or place in the world," she said.

UTR will begin distributing the Home Moves with Me in all 50 states and on U.S. military installations worldwide during April, the Month of the Military Child. The book will be available for purchase through retail outlets beginning June 9.

In the end, Home Moves With Me is a fun book that imparts an important message: Home is not simply a place, it's also a feeling that moves with you and your family. I'd advise military families facing moves with small children to get the book and skip "The Sound of Music."

Veterans News

The many weapons used during the Revolutionary War

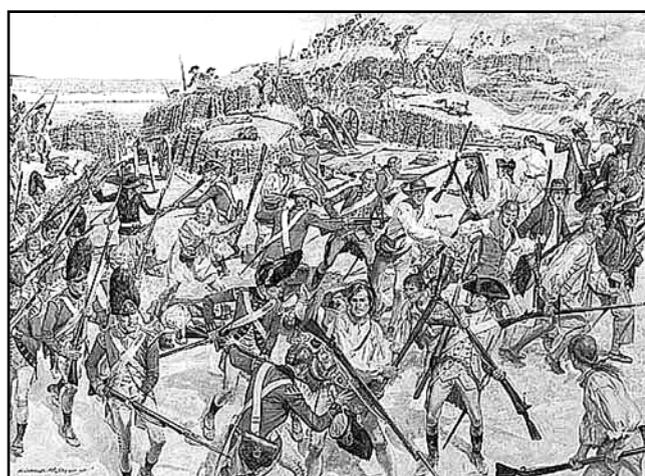
by David Vergun, Pentagon News

This year marks the nation's 250th birthday. To commemorate this milestone, it is fitting to look back at the weapons that won the American Revolutionary War.

The "Brown Bess" muzzle-loading smoothbore musket was the most common weapon used by both the British and Americans forces during the war.

With an effective range of 100 yards, the Brown Bess was slow to load, limiting its rate of fire to about three rounds per minute. As a result, much of the fighting involved bayonet charges.

In addition to the Brown Bess, other muskets were produced locally by gunsmiths or were imported from France.



A painting, by H. Charles McBarron Jr., depicts fighting on Breed's Hill in Boston, June 17, 1775. Courtesy of Army Heritage and Education Center

Besides muskets, rifles were also used by snipers, with a maximum effective range of 300 yards. Like muskets, they also had a low rate of fire because of the lengthy loading process.

Similar, flintlock pistols were standard issue for officers, cavalry and sailors. Their effective range was 30

yards. Officers also carried swords or sabers.

Beyond handheld weapons, cannons, mortars and howitzers were the three types of artillery used by the Americans, French and British on land and at sea.

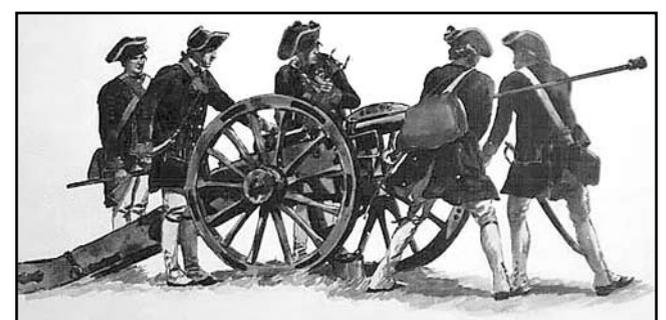
Cannons could fire solid shot, chain shot, grapeshot

and canisters, which could tear large holes in the infantry ranks or destroy fortifications. Their maximum effective range was about 1,000 yards.

Mortars fired an exploding shell, called a bomb, in a high trajectory. The bombs flew over embankments and exploded while still airborne, raining shrapnel over the enemy. The maximum effective range was about 750 yards.

Howitzers blended features of cannons and mortars. Mounted on field carriages, they could fire both bombs and cannonballs at a flat or high trajectory, offering versatility on the battlefield. The maximum effective range was about 750 yards.

The size of the mortar, cannon or howitzer was designated by the width of the bore in inches. The sizes used



A watercolor painting, by Don Troiani, depicts five men cleaning, loading and preparing to fire a 3-pounder cannon. Courtesy Image

1-A mortar is on display at the Yorktown Battlefield in Yorktown, Va., July 20, 2025. The site is part of the Colonial National Historical Park. Courtesy of National Park Service



included 3-, 6-, 8-, 10-, 12-, 13-, 16- and 24-pounders.

Tomahawks and knives

were the favorite weapons of Native Americans during the war, with tribes fighting for both sides.

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1062 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach 619-424-8600

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SDSU AREA - 2BR/1BA, A+ complex, nr trolley, carport & open spots. Granite counters/flrs, new appls, big walk-in closet, home office. \$2150/mo. Pool & jacuzzi. 619-891-0607.

RENTALS HOMES

CHULA VISTA - 4BR/3BA SingleSailor groups welcome-bring yr crew. Attached gar+priv drwy. Safe, quiet close to 32nd St, NAB, NI. Trash incl. Reduced deposit. No pets. \$4,400/mo, avail mid-Apr/May 1. (619)227-4061, text John

IMPERIAL BEACH - 3BR/1BA 3 parking spots + large RV spot w/hookups. Near beach, small dog allowed. \$2600/mo. 619-891-0607.

RENTALS ROOMS

CORONADO - Nice furn. room for \$1500 in owner-occupied condo. No pets, drugs, smoke. Ez access to base/bridge. Kitchen/Indry use. suzanne92118@gmail.com

RENTALS STUDIOS

SAN DIEGO - Stainless steel appls, laminate floors, priv entrance, utilities incl \$1950/mo. 2 people max. ADRIANA 619-921-1010.

MOVIES AT THE BASES

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

<https://sandiego.navylifew.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!

Humane Society Pet Pantry offers help to pet parents in need

San Diego Humane Society is supporting families and their pets who need a little extra help. Through the Community Pet Pantry, anyone can visit our campus locations in El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego from 10am-6pm, Tuesday through Sunday, to pick up a bag of dog or cat food as well as other supplies as available. No appointment is needed. Tuesday-Sunday | 10am-6pm

San Diego Humane Society Campus Locations

El Cajon Campus
1373 N. Marshall Ave.
El Cajon, CA 92020

Oceanside Campus
572 Airport Road
Oceanside, CA 92058

Escondido Campus
3500 Burnet Drive
Escondido, CA 92027

San Diego Campus
5480 Gaines Street
San Diego, CA 92110

ROY'S SUDOKU

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- 1 It may break and crash
- 5 It has an eye on TV
- 8 Slightly open
- 12 Sea that's a victim of irrigation projects
- 13 Water park feature
- 15 Heavyweight fight?
- 16 Capital founded by Pizarro
- 17 They may draft briefs
- 18 Saloon door's lack
- 19 Civil War topper
- 20 Tattoo joint?
- 21 Folklore monster
- 22 Move furtively
- 24 "Breaking Bad" org.
- 25 Verne who created Nemo
- 26 Dodger rival of shortstop Rizzuto
- 28 Bucket of bolts
- 30 "Evita" narrator
- 32 Gummy bear ingredient
- 34 YouTube clip, for short
- 37 Prefix with call
- 39 Meek
- 40 Tubes on the table
- 41 Sonicare rival
- 43 Get into a stew?
- 44 One who digs hard rock
- 45 Wedding reception hiree

Down

- 47 Pressing
- 49 Catch a bug, say
- 50 Energy unit
- 51 Loitering ... or how 3-, 5-, 7- and 9-Down might be seen?
- 58 Magic prop
- 59 Tech company that became a verb
- 60 Source
- 62 Harper's Bazaar designer
- 63 Absurd
- 64 Swear to be true
- 65 Tap serving
- 66 California's Point ___ National Seashore
- 67 Cook Islands export
- 1 Constitutional events
- 2 Disney mermaid
- 3 Blood-drinking mammal
- 4 "Seinfeld" regular
- 5 High light
- 6 Delta of "Designing Women"
- 7 Spelunking sight
- 8 Try to date
- 9 Support for Tarzan
- 10 Love, to Luigi
- 11 Judicial attire
- 13 One working on bks.

- 14 Linguistic suffix
- 23 It may be tapped
- 25 Fifth of 12, alphabetically: Abbr.
- 27 Place for shooting stars?
- 29 Free (of)
- 30 Shoe that's full of holes
- 31 Dance that may involve a chair
- 33 Reddit Q&A session
- 35 Cal.-to-Fla. highway
- 36 Gossip
- 38 Poisonous flowering shrub
- 40 Terraced structure of ancient Mesopotamia
- 42 Naval lookout
- 44 Surrealist Joan
- 46 Magical potion
- 48 Persian king
- 51 "___ Trigger": Bugs Bunny cartoon
- 52 Stud fee, maybe
- 53 Hawaiian goose
- 54 Anatomy book author Henry
- 55 Five-star
- 56 Smoked salmon
- 57 Cuckoo clock feature
- 58 Baseball glove part
- 61 Vegas snake eyes

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Visit our military museums

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

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

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>

Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.

1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.

FREE 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 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ 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/> 24194 Vandegrift Blvd, Oceanside, CA 92058. (760) 725-5758. Mon-Thur 8am-4pm, Fri 8am-1pm, Closed Saturday & Sunday

Armed Forces Dispatch • (619) 280-2985

Published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com

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MARINE CORPS LEAGUE

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760-271-7369
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Veterans Association of North County
1617 Mission Ave. Oceanside 92058

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Oceanside, CA 92054
760-439-9019

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<https://volunteers.uso.org>



U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chad Laughrey, a chaplain at Naval Medical Center San Diego, displays his board certification from the National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains, surrounded by NMCSO Director Capt. Elizabeth Adriano and members of the religious programs team at NMCSO. U.S. Navy courtesy photo.

NMCSO chaplain receives VA board certification

by Seaman Jason Afable
Naval Medical Center SD

Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCSO) Director, U.S. Navy Capt. Elizabeth Adriano, recently presented U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Chad Laughrey, chaplain at NMCSO, with his board certification from the National Association of Veterans Affairs Chaplains at NMCSO.

Board certification is a distinguished professional achievement in the field of spiritual care. Board-certified chaplains complete rigorous training in both the classroom and the clinical setting to meet professional standards of clinical chaplaincy. As a board-certified chaplain, Laughrey now enhances NMCSO with his expertise as a member of the pastoral care services department. He serves as the department's senior clinician and as the pastoral care residency program manager.

"Chaplain Laughrey is the epitome of professional naval chaplaincy, and a vital member

of the team here at NMCSO," said U.S. Navy Cmdr. Joshua Sherwin, fellow chaplain at NMCSO. "His patience and compassion inspire everyone around us, and his pastoral care is unmatched. He is the pastor's pastor, and positively impacts the mission of our hospital, the Navy, and the Department of War."

"As the senior clinician and pastoral care residency manager, he is a true shepherd-scholar, skillfully modeling clinical excellence, theological depth, and outstanding spiritual care," said U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Abraham Jiregna, another of Laughrey's fellow chaplains at NMCSO. "He consistently embodies the Navy core values and sets the standard for what 'right' looks like in both ministry and military service."

The U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps is a staff corps of commissioned naval officers whose principal mission is to promote the spiritual, religious, moral, and personal

well-being of Sailors, Marines, Coast Guardsmen and their families. They provide religious ministry for their own faith groups, facilitate religious opportunities for all service members, care for all personnel and their families regardless of faith, and advise commanders on morale, ethics, and spiritual well-being. Navy chaplains contribute directly to warfighter readiness by building the spiritual resilience necessary for service members to accomplish their mission with honor.

The Chaplain Corps has had an integral relationship with Navy Medicine dating back to 1775 when surgeons and chaplains were the first two staff corps officers authorized by the Continental Congress. This partnership continues today, as chaplains serve alongside medical providers on ships, in expeditionary medical units, and within military treatment facilities, ensuring a holistic approach to the healing and recovery process by caring for both body

Understanding the TRICARE Dental Program: Network vs. non-network dentists

by TRICARE Communications

FALLS CHURCH, Va. — Do you get dental care through the TRICARE Dental Program? If so, you should know the difference between network and non-network dentists and how they affect your costs. Knowing how the TDP works and understanding the difference between network and non-network dentists can help you get care more easily while managing out-of-pocket costs.

"Understanding the difference between network and non-network dentists helps you make informed decisions about your dental care," said Douglas Elsesser, a program analyst with the Dental Program Branch of the TRICARE Health Plan at the Defense Health Agency. "Using network providers whenever possible can make it easier to get care and avoid higher costs."

Network vs. non-network dentists

Choosing between a network and non-network dentist affects your costs and the handling of your claims.

Network dentists

TDP network dentists follow the TRICARE dental contractor, United Concordia's, negotiated rates. When you see a network dentist:

- You typically have lower out-of-pocket costs.
- The dentist files your claims.
- You're protected from costs beyond your cost-share, also known as balance billing.
- Care is simpler and more

predictable.

Using a network dentist is the easiest and most cost-effective option for most families.

Non-network dentists

You can choose to see a dentist who isn't part of the TDP network. However, costs and responsibilities may increase. When you see a non-network dentist:

- You may pay higher cost-shares.
- You may need to pay upfront and file your own claim.
- You may need to pay for charges above the TDP allowable amount.
- Claims processing can take longer.

Getting dental care

You can schedule care once you're enrolled, as detailed in the TRICARE Dental Program Handbook. Before your appointment:

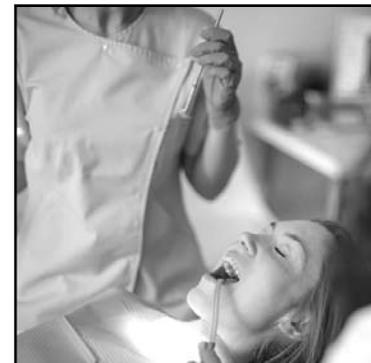
- Confirm the dentist accepts the TDP and whether they're a network dentist.
- Ask if any services require pre-authorization.
- Review your plan's cost-shares and annual maximums.

Taking these steps can help ensure smooth claims processing.

How to find a dentist

Finding a TDP dentist is simple. You can:

- Use United Concordia's Find a Dentist Tool to search for network dentists by location. This tool lets you filter results by specialty.



Choosing between a network and non-network dentist affects your costs and the handling of your claims. TRICARE courtesy photo.

- Call United Concordia's customer service:
- CONUS: 844-653-4061
- OCONUS (toll-free): 844-653-4060
- OCONUS (toll): +1-717-888-7400

Learn more

For more information:

- Visit the TRICARE Dental Program to review TDP eligibility and covered services.
- Use the Find a Dentist Tool.
- Call United Concordia customer service.

By understanding how the TDP benefit works and using available tools to find care, you can make informed decisions about your dental health.

For more information and links to help please visit <https://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/Dental/TDP>

NHCP staff recognized for performance



Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton Chief Medical Officer Navy Capt. James Chung (left), and NHCP Director Capt. Virginia Damin (right) flank members of the hospital staff who were recognized during the hospital's monthly Culture of Safety, Innovation and Process Improvement, Navigating Standards, and Quality Outcomes (CINC) meeting on Feb. 25, 2026, for their outstanding performance during the recent survey conducted by The Joint Commission. According to their website, the mission of The Joint Commission is, "to enable and affirm the highest standards of healthcare quality and patient safety for all." Courtesy photo.

NHCP Director of Mental Health receives accreditation certificate

Navy Capt. Virginia Damin, director of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, presented Cmdr. Ashley Penn, NHCP director for mental health, the accreditation certificate from The Joint

Commission for the hospital's Behavioral Health Care and Human Services Accreditation Program during the hospital's monthly Culture of Safety, Innovation and Process Improve-



Capt. Virginia Damin, left, presents certificate to Cmdr. Ashley Penn.

ment, Navigating Standards, and Quality Outcomes (CINC) meeting last month. Penn's program achieved zero findings or requirements for improvement (RFIs) during the on-site survey. According to their website, the mission of The Joint Commission is, "to enable and affirm the highest standards of healthcare quality and patient safety for all."

HEALTH BRIEFS

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton offers same day walk-in birth control clinic

Did you know? NHCP still offers a same day walk-in birth control clinic. Open to ALL female TRICARE beneficiaries.

Every Tuesday & Friday 7:30-11 a.m., and 12:30-3 p.m.
Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, 2nd Floor, South Side OB/GYN. (760) 725-4015.

First come first serve. Wait times may vary, timeslots fill up very quickly, and the clinic could reach capacity at any time.

Branch Health Clinic Temecula now open for enrollment for some beneficiaries

Attention Temecula area beneficiaries! Branch Health Clinic Temecula is now open for enrollment for the following categories of beneficiaries: Active-Duty Family Members; TRICARE Prime Retirees; and TRICARE Prime Retiree Family Members. Enrollment is not open to TRICARE Plus or TRICARE for Life.

To change your enrollment from Camp Pendleton to Temecula, please call TRIWEST at 888-874-9378. If you are outside of the 30 minute drive time requirement for primary care enrollment, and TRIWEST cannot change your enrollment, please call the NHCP Patient Relations Department at 760-725-4357.

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