

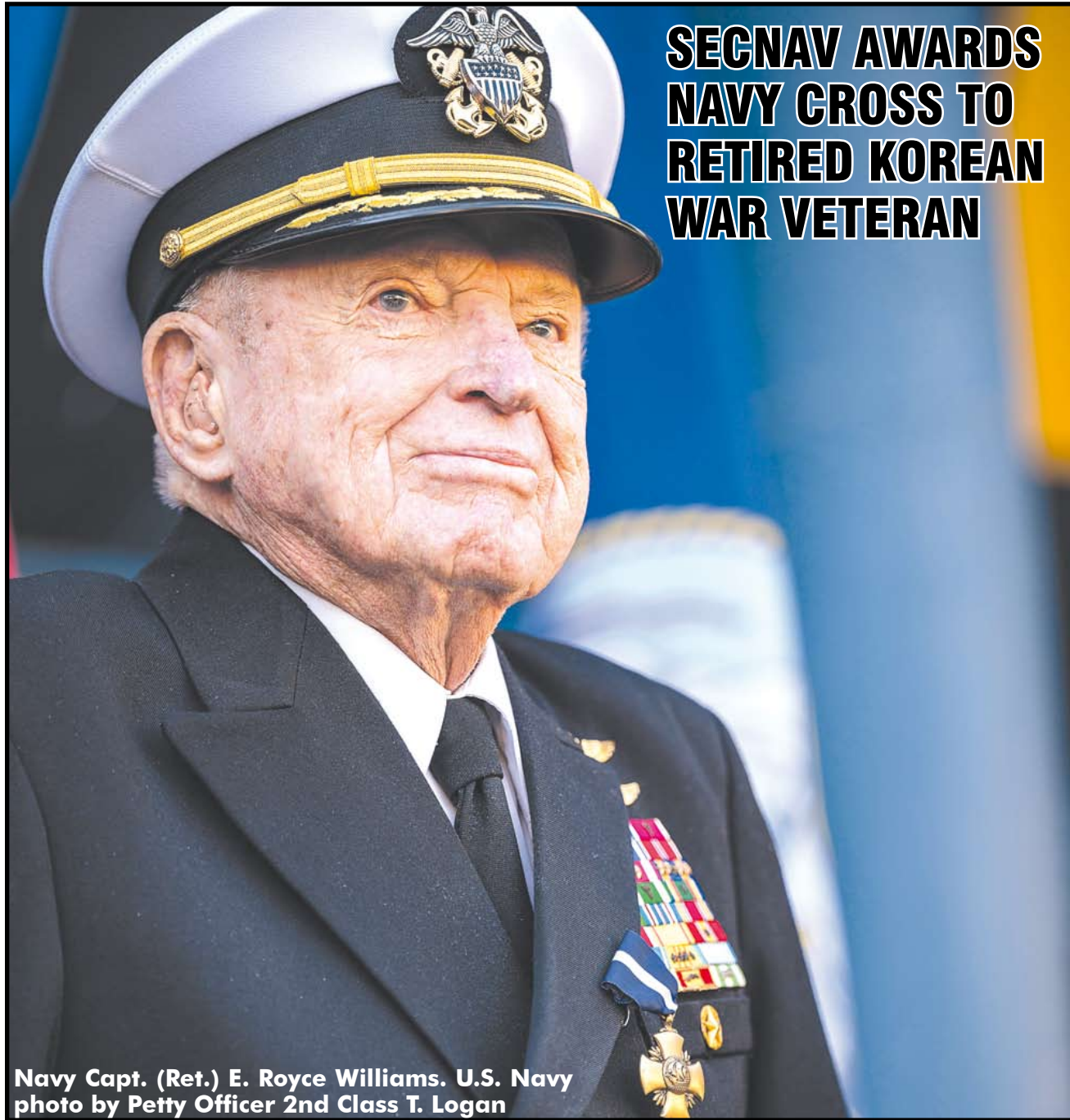
# ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



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SIXTY-THIRD YEAR NO. 32  
JANUARY 8, 2024

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## SECNAV AWARDS NAVY CROSS TO RETIRED KOREAN WAR VETERAN

Navy Capt. (Ret.) E. Royce Williams. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class T. Logan

by MC3 Aleksandr Freutel

SAN DIEGO - Navy Capt. (Ret.) E. Royce Williams receives a Navy Cross for his actions during the Korean War Jan. 20.

The Navy Cross is an upgrade of the Silver Star Medal previously awarded to then-Lt. Williams on May 7, 1953, while assigned to the "Pacemakers" of Fighter Squadron (VF) 781, for combat action against seven Soviet MiG 15 aircraft.

"Royce Williams was a Lieutenant in the United States Navy when he took the lead of an incredibly critical mission during the Korean War, resulting in the protection of Task Force 77 from enemy attack," said Secretary Del Toro. "His actions almost 70 years ago earned him recognition, and he was awarded the Silver Star Medal. However, as the Secretary of the Navy, I have the authority to consider proposals to upgrade awards. Among the many cases I have reviewed, Captain Williams' case stood

out. It was very clear to me that his actions were extraordinary, and more closely aligned with the criteria describing a higher award. . .and sir, what a tremendous honor it was to tell you in person, that after all these years, your courageous actions would finally get the recognition they deserve."

On Nov. 18, 1952, Williams was flying with two other members of VF-781 from Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Oriskany (CVA 34) when they encoun-

tered seven MiG-15 aircraft. Before they could engage, the team's flight leader had to return to Oriskany due to a fuel pump issue, leaving only Williams and his wingman. After Williams downed the first MiG, his wingman chased the falling aircraft, and Williams found himself alone in air-to-air combat with the remaining MiGs.

"In the moment I was a fighter pilot doing my job...I was only shooting what I had," said Williams, page 5

## Sexual assault now tried outside military chain of command

DOD News

The decision to prosecute sexual assault and several other serious crimes has moved from an accused service member's chain of command to new Offices of Special Trial Counsel, which have general or flag officer leaders who report directly to the secretaries of the military departments.

This military justice reform is an important step in restoring faith that the system is fair, just and equitable, said senior Defense Department and military officials, who emphasized that the offices will be staffed by specially trained, independent military attorneys uniquely qualified to address complex cases. The OSTCs will handle cases professionally, applying the best practices and procedures of civilian prosecution offices, a senior DOD official said.

The covered offenses that fall under the authority of the new OSTCs include: murder, manslaughter, kidnapping, domestic violence, stalking, child pornography and most sexual assault and sexual misconduct.

Sexual harassment will become a covered offense on Jan. 1, 2025, for crimes committed after that date where a formal complaint is made and substantiated.

In the case of sexual assault, the reform applies to unrestricted reports. A service member making an unrestricted report has decided to participate in a criminal investigation and support actions taken to hold the alleged offender appropriately accountable. Individualized, confidential help is available to understand these changes from special victims' counsel in the Army; victims' counsel in the Department of the Air Force; and victims' legal counsel in the Navy and Marine Corps. Sexual assault response coordinators can assist in contacting the attorneys and other assistance services.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3627107/News>

## New F-15EX Eagles arrive at Eglin AFB

EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - The Eagles have landed. The Air Force's two newest fighters, F-15EX Eagle IIs, known as EX3 and EX4 touched down here late last month, just minutes from each other. The new arrivals bring the Air Force's total F-15EXs to four, all located here. "The F-15EX has met every challenge we've thrown at it to date and the platform is on the cusp of being ready for the warfighter," said Lt. Col. Christopher Wee, Operational Flight Program Combined Test Force commander.

<https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3626415/>

## Army stands up Special Trial Counsel with independent authority for 13 UCMJ offenses

WASHINGTON - The Congressionally mandated Office of Special Trial Counsel became official Dec. 28 with independent prosecution and referral authority for 13 UCMJ offenses known as "covered offenses." "Today marks a historic day for the Army as the Office of Special Trial Counsel begins exercising its independent decision-making and prosecution authority for sexual assault, domestic violence and other serious offenses," said Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth.

<https://www.army.mil/article/272713/>

## World's largest aircraft carrier arrives in Souda Bay

SOUDA BAY, Crete - The Navy's newest aircraft carrier, USS Gerald R. Ford arrived here for a scheduled port visit Dec. 26. This port visit comes at the heels of Secretary of Defense Lloyd James Austin III's visit to Ford during which the secretary reiterated the importance of the GRFCSG's presence in the Eastern Mediterranean and its contribution to regional deterrence.

<https://www.defense.gov/Multimedia/Photos/igphoto/2003366180/>

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## Veterans News

Working-age disabled veterans earned less than their peers, report finds.

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# Navy veteran finds 'Heaven's Waiting Room' at CalVet's Lancaster Home

by Jeff Jardine  
CalVet News

Soon after Lawrence Jones moved into the Veterans Home of California-Lancaster in 2012, a fellow veteran told him he was now in "Heaven's waiting room."

It didn't take Jones long to understand what the older vet meant.

A Navy veteran, Jones soon discovered his own, once-elusive bliss there at the Home. A quality of life, he said, that has been lifesaving. Friends and staff that are his family—now that his parents and brothers are all gone. A place, he said, that is home for holidays and every other day for the remainder of his life, which he believes will last longer by virtue of being there.

Heaven's waiting room, indeed.

"I remembered what he said," Jones said. "It's beautiful."

He adopted the mantra as his own, and wrote those words on a small white board next to the door to his room.

The Vietnam War veteran will eagerly profess to anyone within earshot his gratitude for the safety, security, and accommodations the Home provides. It represents a 180-degree turnaround from a

life of homelessness, alcohol and substance abuse he experienced before he moved in.

Jones' road to the Lancaster Home began in West Covina during the winter of 1968 when he and a friend received their draft notices. They decided to enlist so they could "control" their military futures.

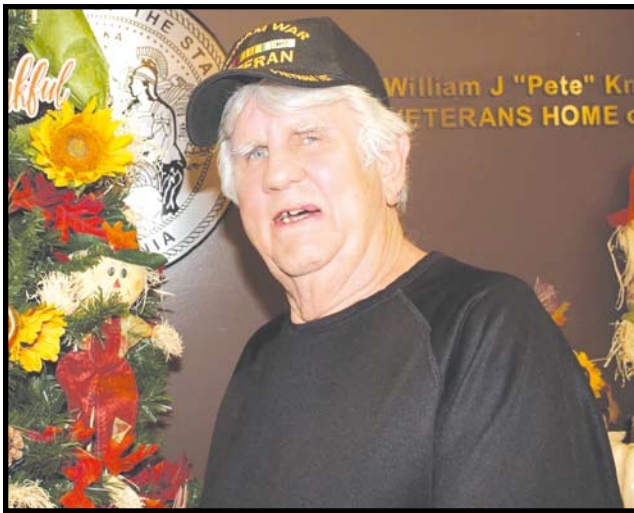
"He (his friend) said, 'I'll go to the Marines and kick ass!'" Jones said. "I wanted no part of that, so I went into the Navy. The funny thing is, he went to a ship and I ended up with land duty in Vietnam."

In fact, Jones soon found himself aboard USS Sacramento - a combined fleet oiler, ammunitions, and refrigerated goods transport ship - and later on USS Camden, also a Sacramento-Class support ship.

"Ships would pull up alongside, and we'd send over bombs for the Tet Offensive," Jones said.

Still only 18 years old, orders took him into Saigon, where he shared a hotel room with three South Korean soldiers (350,000 South Korean soldiers served in Vietnam) who spoke no English while he spoke no Korean.

"We never let that bother us," he said. "We became good friends."



Lawrence Jones at the Lancaster Veterans Home. Courtesy photo from CalVets

He then went to Da Nang, where the U.S. stockpiled the defoliant Agent Orange, and where he was exposed to it in a most mind-boggling way.

"There were cases of beer stored outside with this orange stuff on the tops of the cans," he said. "We never thought a thing about it. We drank it anyway."

Strangely, or not, he said the beer inside those cans and other substances he began using while in Vietnam have thus far had a greater impact upon him than the toxic defoliant. He's experienced no serious illnesses attributable to Agent Orange, though he received a 10 percent disability

rating due to exposure.

Jones left the Navy in 1974 after two years on active duty and four more in the Naval Reserve in a career that also took him to Guam, the Philippines, Japan, Hong Kong, Hawaii, and Wake Island. When he returned home to Southern California, Jones

Buttons and Red Skelton."

He also cared for Lewis Milestone, whose directorial credits included "All Quiet on the West Front" in 1930 and "Mutiny on the Bounty" in 1962 (the Marlon Brando remake).

Throughout all of this, Jones said he dealt with underlying alcohol and substance abuse issues and struggled to find help.

"I got into trouble with alcohol and drugs and was facing jail time," Jones said. He went to the federal Veterans Affairs, which got him into a retraining program and hired him to work in its decontamination program. He retired in 2010, but his issues continued and he found himself virtually homeless, living the next two years in a camper on his brother's property in Quartz Hill, just minutes from the Lancaster Home.

"I wasn't living like a guy should at my age," said Jones, now in his mid-70s. "I wasn't

me in and helped me out immensely," Jones said.

Living at the Home enables him to focus on his health and well-being.

"I'm healthier," Jones said. "We have a dietician here. We have a walk-in hot tub and a massage chair. I'm learning how to paint. There is no room for stress here. All of our needs are met. I feel like a million bucks, and I feel like this every day."

Lancaster Administrator Elvie Ancheta said Jones is a great cheerleader for the Home, inside and out.

"He's very grateful, and he's always talking about the good things about living here," Ancheta said. "He's on the resident council, and he lets others know how good they have it. I wish I could clone him and put one of him in every corner. And I'm proud of the way we have (helped) him from being nearly homeless to where he is today."

They've helped him in other ways, too. Jones' military records were among those destroyed when the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis burned in 1973. Joe DiBenedetto, the Lancaster Home's Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist, set upon rebuilding Jones' entire military personnel file including medical and dental records, and is working to replace his lost service medals.

Jones' appreciation extends to the Antelope Valley community, which is very supportive of the Home and the veterans who live there.

"During the holidays, people from all over the community bring tons of gifts and are so good to us," he said. "It's beautiful. To live like this in the last years of my life is a wonderful thing."

Heaven's waiting room, and words to live by.

<https://calvetconnect.blog/2023/12/27/heavenswaitingroom/>



The Lancaster Veterans Home. Courtesy photo from CalVets

became a caregiver at a nursing home, which led to an 11-year career as a private home health caregiver to clients that included some Hollywood celebrities.

living right. Then I got into it with my brother. I went to the VFW in Quartz Hill and they sent me down here."

"My first private-duty job was caring for Jimmy Durante," Jones said, referring to the legendary comedian and actor. "Different stars would come over to see him, including Red

"Here" being the Lancaster Home, where as a veteran facing homelessness he was fast-tracked into a room and a new life.

"Staff at the Home hurried

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by J.P. Lawrence  
Stars and Stripes

U.S. Navy helicopters on Dec. 31 sank three boats operated by Iranian-backed militants that were firing on a civilian cargo ship in the Red Sea, U.S. Central Command said.

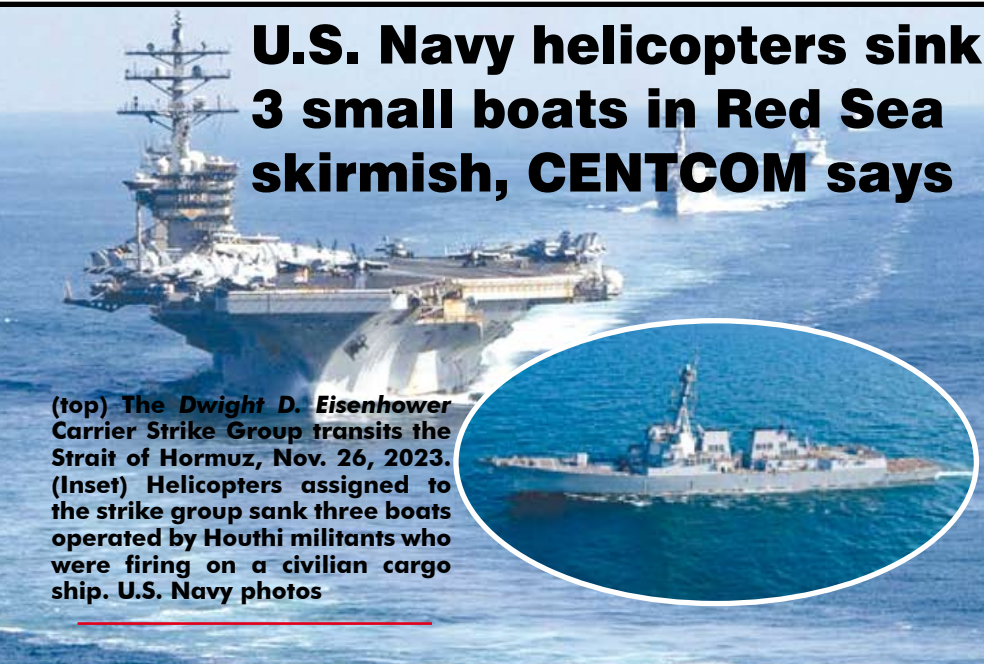
Four small boats belonging to the Houthis from Yemen fired small arms and crew-served weapons at the Maersk Hangzhou Sunday morning, local time, a CENTCOM statement said.

The Maersk Hangzhou issued a distress call as the Houthi vessels came within 20 yards and attempted to forcibly board the cargo ship, the statement said. Contractors aboard the container ship fired back at the Houthi fighters, CENTCOM said.

U.S. helicopters flew to the cargo ship's aid and issued verbal warnings to the

Houthi boats, which then opened fire on the helicopters, the statement said. The U.S. helicopters returned fire, sinking three boats and killing their crews, CENTCOM said.

The fourth boat fled the area,



**(top) The Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group transits the Strait of Hormuz, Nov. 26, 2023. (Inset) Helicopters assigned to the strike group sank three boats operated by Houthi militants who were firing on a civilian cargo ship. U.S. Navy photos**

according to the statement.

The helicopters are from aircraft carrier *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and destroyer *Gravelly*. Military officials said there was no damage to the aircraft or their crew.

The incident occurred northwest of Al Hudaydah, Yemen, the official account for United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations said Sunday morning in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter. The post said the or-

ganization also received reports of an attack by small boats on a merchant vessel, with U.S. warships responding.

The Houthis said 10 members of their naval forces were killed in the incident, via a statement on X.

The fight on Sunday was the second incident in the past 24 hours involving the cargo ship. USS *Gravelly* shot down two missiles fired from Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen after

responding with destroyer USS *Laboon* to an assistance call at 8:30 a.m. Saturday from the Maersk Hangzhou.

Maersk Hangzhou had reported being struck by a missile in what the U.S. military said was the 23rd attack on shipping by Houthi militants since Nov. 19.

The militant group, which controls much of Yemen and receives Iranian support, have said it wants to strike shipping in the Red Sea that supports Israel's conflict with Hamas in Gaza.

## U.S. Navy helicopters sink 3 small boats in Red Sea skirmish, CENTCOM says

### Army

- Snow, bears and a U.S. Army first in the mountains of Slovakia
- Army numbers smallest since WWII — what units face cuts in 2024?



- Army volunteers bring gifts, cheer to South Korean orphanage

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- Coming soon: Better Wi-Fi for sailors
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- Things don't last forever: College student documents demolition of U.S. Navy housing complex in Japan

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- Body found of Army vet, Florida fitness instructor who went missing while canoeing

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# Miss America field features Air Force officer who champions cancer research

by Jennifer H. Svan  
Stars and Stripes

Madison Marsh was shooting for the stars four years ago when she entered the Air Force Academy, as a cadet with a pilot's license and the dream of becoming an astronaut.

These days, Marsh is a second lieutenant pursuing graduate studies in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School through a special Air Force partnership program. Oh, and she's also a Miss America contestant.

After being named Miss Colorado in May on her third try, she became the first active-duty officer to vie for the Miss America crown, an Air Force Academy spokesman said. The competition will be held Jan. 6-14 at Walt Disney World in Orlando, Fla.

"I feel it's good nerves," she said. "I'm very excited. We've never had a member of the armed forces win before. I just think it's a tremendous opportunity."

As Miss Colorado, Marsh, 22, enjoys talking with young girls about military service and being a pilot, she said. It was during her first year of undergraduate school that Marsh followed in her cousin's footsteps and decided to compete in pageants.

Cadets struggle to find their identity in a new and challenging environment, she said, and she saw it as a chance to pursue an extracurricular activity that emphasized community service and public speaking.

Through the process, she became equally comfortable in a

flight suit or a glittery gown.

While juggling her coursework in physics and astronomy, Marsh prepared for competition by practicing mock interviews and honing her pageant walk and "talent."

She can't sing or dance, but a new option allows contestants to do a monologue.

Marsh created one about her first solo flight, at age 16. For 90 seconds, she goes through what it's like in the cockpit, from making radio calls to landing the plane, and talks about how the experience strengthened her leadership skills.

"I really try to captivate the audience by making them feel like they are in the cockpit with me," she said.

Pageant contestants also must use their platform to promote a community service project. Marsh is advocating for an issue that hits home: pancreatic cancer research and education.

On Nov. 1, 2018, a day after Marsh found out she would attend the academy, her mother, Whitney, died of the disease at the age of 41, just 10 months after her diagnosis.

A high school senior in Fort Smith, Ark., at the time, Marsh

didn't feel like doing much of anything in the weeks following her mother's death.

"I think I was sitting in the sauna when I started to have this idea: I need to use this bad energy and experience and try to turn it into something positive or I'm going to go crazy," she said. "And so I ended up doing a run."

Whitney Marsh was an avid runner. Even during chemotherapy, she would run 10 miles daily, her daughter said.

In 2019, the family started the Whitney Marsh Foundation to raise money and awareness, with the ultimate goal of finding a cure. The foundation also seeks to provide opportunities for early detection and screening for the disease, which was misdiagnosed for two years in Whitney Marsh's case.

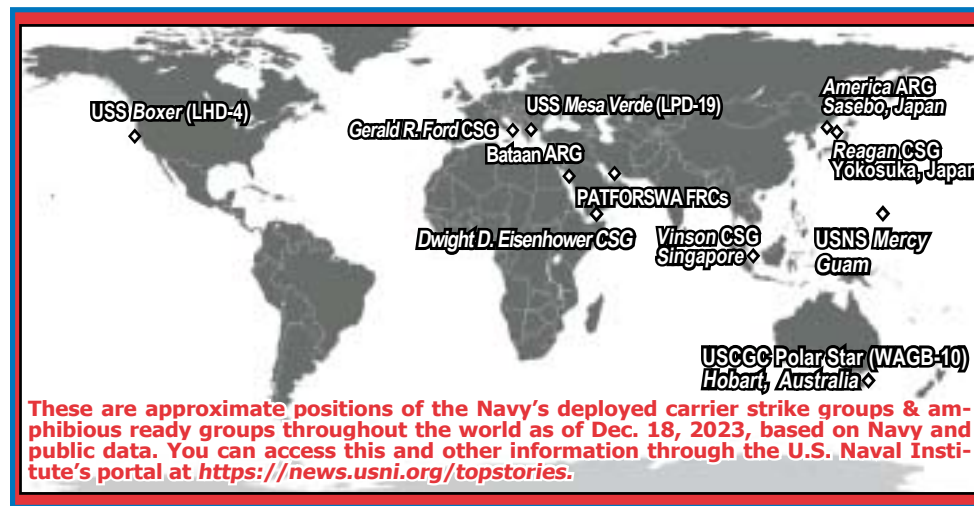
The foundation hosts an annual 5K and 10K race in Marsh's hometown and has raised more than \$250,000 to date.

The work also changed her career plans. After eight years of thinking she would get a doctorate in astrophysics with the goal of being an astronaut, Marsh switched gears.

continued on page 7

**AIR FORCE 2ND LT. MADISON MARSH IS ONE OF 51 CONTESTANTS WHO WILL VIE FOR THE MISS AMERICA CROWN IN JANUARY. MARSH IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST AIR FORCE CADET TO WIN A STATE PAGEANT IN THE COMPETITION, A TITLE SHE EARNED DAYS BEFORE GRADUATING FROM THE ACADEMY LAST SPRING. THE ARKANSAS NATIVE IS WORKING TOWARDS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN PUBLIC POLICY AT HARVARD. PHOTO COURTESY OF MADISON MARSH**

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## Working-age disabled veterans earned less than their peers, report finds

by Linda F. Hersey  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Salaries and wages of veterans who received monthly disability payments averaged 16 percent less than the earnings of their able-bodied peers, according to a new federal report that examined annual income levels for “working age” male veterans.

Veterans with military service-connected disability ratings from the Department of Veterans Affairs had annual earnings of \$52,200 on average, according to a Congressional Budget Of-

fice report issued this month.

But veterans without a disability determination from the VA averaged \$60,552, according to the report.

The Department of Veterans Affairs compensates qualifying veterans with monthly disability payments for injuries, illnesses and other health problems that occurred or worsened while on active military duty, the report noted.

The CBO’s findings were based on a study that looked at the earnings and income of

“working age” male veterans, 22 to 54 years old, from fiscal years 2017-2019, regardless of employment status.

Researchers compared earnings, personal income and household income of the disabled veterans with veterans who did not have a VA disability rating.

More than \$125 billion was paid out in tax-free disability compensation to all VA beneficiaries in fiscal year 2022, according to the report. An estimated 5.3 million veterans received some level of monthly disability payment.

Compensation levels are calculated as estimated earnings lost due to disability. Disability payments are calculated using a rating system that ranges from zero to 100 percent.

Amounts are based on a veteran’s disability rating and number of family members who are dependents, which may include a spouse, children and/or parents.

“Those payments are based on VA disability ratings that reflect, as much as practicable, the

severity of veterans’ service-connected conditions and the average earnings they would be expected to lose as a result of those conditions,” the report stated.

Qualifying for disability ben-

efits does not limit or restrict a veteran’s ability to participate in the workforce.

The report found that the annual household income for all veterans, regardless of dis-

ability status, was more than \$100,000, on average for the period studied.

Household income is defined as gross income for all occupants 15 years and older, according to the U.S. Census.

## 2024 rings in new laws benefiting California’s vets

by Jeff Jardine

New Year’s Day instituted several new state laws intended to benefit veterans.

State laws signed by California Gov. Gavin Newsom will streamline claims processes, demand improved data collection by agencies and organizations, and involve memorials and monuments at the State Capitol in Sacramento.

### Let’s take a look:

- Requires county assessors to accept electronically generated letters of service-connected disabilities for verifying eligibility for disabled veterans’ property tax exemptions.

- Includes a change in determining Plan B eligibility for the College Fee Waiver for Veterans Dependents benefit, which waives mandatory systemwide tuition and fees at

any state community college, California State University, or University of California campus. Plan B covers the child of a vet who has a service-connected disability, or had a service-connected disability at the time of death, or died of service-related causes. Eligibility factors include the student’s adjusted gross income from the previous year plus the value of any support received from parents, which will now be measured against the significantly higher state poverty threshold (\$20,913 in 2023). Previously, it was measured against the federal limit (\$15,225 in 2023). Learn more about the College Fee Waiver at <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/VetServices/Pages/College-Fee-Waiver.aspx>.

- Improves the availability of information about policies, resources, and services for

students who are veterans as well as members of the California State Guard and the California National Guard, along with their dependents.

- Requires the California Department of Public Health to compile data regarding drug overdoses involving veterans, and provide that information to the Legislature and CalVet by mid-March annually.

- Instructs CalVet and the state Department of Housing and Community Development to collaborate on creating a petition to be used in the tenant referral process for veterans housing. An approved petition would enable a property manager who cannot find a veteran at the lowest end of the income scale to allow instead a veteran who is over that income threshold into that unit.

- Call for the annual report on county veterans services offices to include the staff composition at each of the CVSOs statewide, along with the funding each county provides and information regarding workloads, claims, and other elements.

- Requires venture capital firms in California to disclose demographic information regarding their founding teams, including veterans and disabled veterans, LGBTQ, gender identity, and race.

- Creates an account to be managed by CalVet that will contain private-sector donations earmarked to pay for the maintenance and repairs of existing memorials in Sacramento’s Capitol Park. Other laws pave the way for groups to someday build monuments honoring veterans of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kuwait, and blind veterans.

For an overview of new California 2024 laws, please visit the website of California Governor Gavin Newsom at [www.gov.ca.gov/2023/12/29/new-laws-going-into-effect-on-january-1st/](http://www.gov.ca.gov/2023/12/29/new-laws-going-into-effect-on-january-1st/).

ally have the tools in my toolbox to make me more effective.

“We just have to have enough people who care about our Sailors to know that coaching can really transform us as an organization.”

That transformation can be a powerful tool to create 21st-century warfighters who are more effective. Coaching is a communication skill that creates conditions for growth for every member of the Navy.

“This is a powerful tool to help the mission, and support the fleet,” said Vallair. “We must always be ready to take on any tests and challenges whether they be personal or professional.”

MyNavy Coaching is focused on creating and sustaining a coaching culture which recognizes Sailors’ commitment to the Navy and their development.

“Coaching, introspection, learning, and growth are all positive contributors to readiness and retention,” said Rear Adm. Michael Schwerin, director of NPC’s TMCoe. “Our desire is to create a greater culture of intentional personal and professional growth where Sailors not only know what they need to focus on to be better, but spend time on the ‘why’ and ‘how’ to achieve more from themselves.”

Sailors to foster development, feedback, performance, accountability, and retention.

The instructors overviewed coaching’s benefits, taught coach-like behaviors, provided feedback on coaching skills, and instilled confidence in Sailors to embark on their journey as Navy coaches.

“Coaching creates a new element of passionate curiosity. I think people want to have a different level of connection to people that care for them, not just as an employee,” said Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 1st Class Jamal Vallair, aviation administrationman/aviation analyst, Fleet Readiness Center Southwest, certified coach and instructor for MyNavy Coaching. “When people understand that you care for them and make them feel seen, heard, and valued, they have a different buy-in for their personal goals.”

The MyNavy Coaching team delivers regular training on coach-like behaviors through workshops and continuous support to Navy coaches fleet-wide.

Command Master Chief Suxuan Oonyu, command master chief of USS *Halsey*, was highly encouraged by what she saw. “I can see myself using this on a daily basis, because now I actu-

### Williams

continued from page 1

Williams in a previous account of the fight. “They had me cold on maneuverability and acceleration – the MiG was vastly superior on those counts to the F9F. The only thing I could do was out-turn them.”

Out-manned and piloting what was considered an inferior aircraft to the MiG-15, Williams engaged the enemy for 35 minutes, shooting down four of them in the longest dogfight in U.S.

military history. Additionally, no other American fighter pilot has ever shot down four MiG-15s in one fight.

The Navy Cross is only awarded to service members who distinguish themselves for extraordinary heroism in combat with an armed enemy force, and is the U.S. Navy’s second-highest military decoration. Williams retired from the Navy in 1980, and his medals include the Navy Cross and two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

## Career and Education

### MyNavy Coaching team conducts 5-day coaching master course

by Petty Officer 1st Class  
Marcus Meredith

Navy Personnel Command

SAN DIEGO - The MyNavy Coaching team from the Navy Personnel Command’s Talent Management Center of Excellence, conducted a five-day coaching master course at the Naval Leadership and Ethics Center here last month.

NPC’s MyNavy Coaching team aims to facilitate a greater Navy culture of coaching, bi-directional feedback, and more rich developmental conversations for greater personal and professional growth. This training equips Sailors with coaching skills, and gives them the first steps to achieve a certified Navy Coach Navy Enlisted Classifica-



Master Chief Courtney Barber conducts a class as part of the coaching master course. U. S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Marcus Meredith

tion or Additional Qualification Designator.

Participants in the five-day course learned coach-like skills to enhance leadership abilities and interactions, communicating effectively, and building trust and rapport. The MyNavy Coaching initiative provides tools for Sailors to utilize key coaching skills such as asking powerful questions, employing empathy, and engaging in active listening.

MyNavy Coaching is a developmental, collaborative partnership between a coach and coaching partner. It is a communication tool to move the coaching partner forward to actionable steps to help them achieve their goals, personally and professionally. MyNavy Coaching seeks to increase engagement with



PUP U.S. Army Maj. Whitney Waldsmith PROCEDURE draws a blood sample from a dog to conduct blood analysis training with local providers and volunteers at Koror State and Government Animal Shelter and Clinic in Koror, Palau, during Pacific Partnership 2024-1 Dec. 27, 2023. The humanitarian efforts during Pacific Partnership provides multinational assistance and disaster relief preparedness in the Indo-Pacific. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Celia Martin



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## Navy's supercarrier strategy will go on after USS *Nimitz* is gone

by Gary Warner  
Stars and Stripes

USS *Nimitz* has been the template of American sea power for nearly a half-century.

Commissioned four days after the fall of Saigon ended the Vietnam War in 1975, the 100,000-ton supercarrier powered by two Westinghouse A4W nuclear reactors could set off at 30 knots to trouble spots around the world and catapult 80 attack jets at enemies.

"You don't have to ask anyone's permission to use their bases or provide fuel for your ship — you just go and stay for as long as you need," said Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel who is now a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

The Navy would add nine more *Nimitz*-class carriers to the fleet over the next 34 years. When the *Nimitz*-class carrier USS *George H.W. Bush* was commissioned in 2009, the Navy simultaneously retired its last non-nuclear carrier, USS *Kitty Hawk*.

USS *Nimitz* is in Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for several months of maintenance before it starts what's likely its final assignment: retirement. It will be followed in regular intervals by its older sister ships.

"Inactivation of *Nimitz* class aircraft carriers is currently scheduled to begin with USS *Nimitz* in 2026, subject to Congressional budget approval," said Alan Baribeau, a spokesman for the Office of Corporate Communications at Naval Sea Systems Command.

While *Nimitz* may disappear from the fleet, the idea it came to represent — the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier strike force — will live on.

The first ship of a new supercarrier class, USS *Gerald R. Ford*, is in the eastern Mediterranean as a sign of American support for Israel following the attack by Hamas militants from Gaza.

The Chief of Naval Operations Navigation Plan — the sea service's public playbook — says a carrier accompanied

by guided missile cruisers, anti-aircraft destroyers and attack submarines is America's top option for quick response to hot spots from the Red Sea to the Strait of Taiwan.

"Nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, which will remain the most survivable and versatile airfields in the world, provide long-range, persistent sea control, power projection and organic sensing in contested seas, as well as flexible options across the spectrum of conflict," the Navy's recently released shipbuilding plan says.

The sentiment isn't shared by all in the Pentagon and Congress.

Critics of the carriers' dominance over official debate and dollars include advocates pushing for an increased focus on

attack submarines, hypersonic missile boats and Unmanned Surface Vehicles — ships without any crew.

In the October 2023 issue of the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, retired Navy Vice Adm. David H. Lewis wrote



Aircraft carrier *Nimitz* transits the Puget Sound on the way to its homeport of Bremerton, Wash., July 2, 2023. U.S. Navy photo by Heather C. Wamsley

that *Nimitz* was a response to the world conflicts of 1975 — mainly the Soviet Union and its proxies worldwide.

"There was a clear adversary to beat," Lewis wrote. "The challenges were less about technology and more about how many, when and where to allocate resources."

Cancian says the debate over carriers splits naval strategists into two camps. To advocates, they are "90,000 tons of American sovereignty, deployable anywhere on the globe" while critics see them as soaking up too much of the defense budget for "increasingly vulnerable monuments to a naval age gone by."

Carriers are at their best when they stack the odds heavily in favor of the side Americans are on — a role they have played in Iran, Iraq, Syria and the current conflict with Iranian-backed Houthi rebels firing missiles at shipping in the Red Sea.

"I don't think the Houthi missiles can get past a carrier's defenses," Cancian said. "I'm not as sure about an attack by the Chinese."

American ships and weapons are likely technologically superior overall to what the Chinese can bring to a battle, Cancian said. But the gap isn't so great that the outcome of a swarm attack by Chinese missile boats and attack aircraft is assured.

According to a Reuters news agency report, China is in the midst of a major naval construction program, with 370 ships, up from 340 just over a year ago. China plans to have 435 ships by 2030.

The United States has 291 ships, but their total tonnage is twice the total of China's Navy.

New weapons require new defensive measures or strategies. Underwater drones like those used by Ukraine against Russian ships in the Black Sea can be launched far from the target. Russia says it is developing hypersonic cruise missiles that can evade the ship's anti-aircraft defenses.

The possibility of significant battle damage from could lead military commanders to restrict the exposure of a \$14 billion Ford-class carrier with over 4,000 Americans aboard, Cancian said.

While Navy policy backs the continued construction and use of large aircraft carriers, alternatives are part of the future mix. Five American USVs — unmanned surface vehicles — took part in the Integrated Battle Problem (IBP) exercise to develop crewless ships that would operate alongside manned ships in the future.

A Navy modernization report called for a 2050 goal of having more than a quarter of the fleet consist of unmanned vessels.

The use of the supercarrier in the mid-21st century will be a question for after *Nimitz* is gone. Its designation, "CVN-68," stands for the 68th aircraft carrier commissioned by the Navy since the USS *Langley* was converted from a coal-carrying transport into CV-1 in 1920.

While the Navy has made no official announcement, the federal SAM.gov contracting website has solicited possible subcontractors to work on "CVN 68 Inactivation, Defueling Accomplishment" to be completed by 2030.

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# I MEF announces Marine Rotational Force – Southeast Asia redeployment and NCR tour

CAMP PENDLETON - I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) announced that a delegation of distinguished Marine commanders, including Col. Tom Siverts, commanding officer, Marine Rotational Force – Southeast Asia (MRF-SEA), will be visiting the national Capital region to conduct briefings with Department of Defense, Congressional officials, among others, regarding the success of their recent deployments.

This past December, MRF-SEA concluded a highly successful operational campaign marked by a strategic deployment across critical locations in the Indo-Pacific region. During the deployment, the composite forces commanded and controlled by the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit Command Element, spent time in the U.S. 7th Fleet areas of operations and conducted training in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

“[MRF-SEA] is the inside force campaigning west of the International Date Line,” said Major Gen. Bradford Gering, the commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force. “I MEF is demonstrating, through MRF-SEA, the ability to transition from competition to crisis response.”

Composed of highly trained and forward-deployed Marines, MRF-SEA plays a crucial role in strengthening alliances and partnerships, enhancing regional security, and promoting stability in potentially contested environments.

The force’s dynamic presence was notably felt through its strategic rotations and joint exercises, fostering interoperability with partner nations. MRF-SEA conducted critical training initiatives in diverse environments, ranging from unmanned sensor employment in Malaysia and amphibious assault exercises in the Philippines to jungle warfare simulations in Indonesia. The force’s operations in critical maritime chokepoints, such as the Luzon Strait, show-

cased its commitment to ensuring the security and freedom of navigation in vital waterways. The force’s multi-faceted deployment strategy strengthened its operational capabilities and solidified its role as a reliable and indispensable partner in Southeast Asia’s security landscape.

This visit provides an excellent opportunity for the public to gain insights into the achievements,

## Nevada National Guard safeguards ‘America’s Party’

by Spc. Adrienne Lopez,  
LAS VEGAS – The Nevada National Guard completed its 24th year supporting first responders during Las Vegas’ annual New Year’s Eve celebration, “America’s Party,” which attracted over 300,000 people.

Approximately 200 Nevada Guard Soldiers and Airmen were on duty during the activation, ensuring safety, aiding in crowd control and providing medical support. Most of the Guardsmen collaborated with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department on the Strip and downtown for the New Year’s Eve celebration.

The commitment of National Guard Soldiers and Airmen to ensuring a secure New Year’s Eve in Las Vegas spans over two decades, starting with their first activation during the Y2K scare in 2000. This mission has persisted following the events of 9/11, showcasing their enduring dedication to the safety of the annual celebration.

Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, attended the mission planning and implementation during the New Year’s celebration.

“This is just one example of how the National Guard integrates seamlessly with federal, state and local agencies, whether law enforcement or medical first responders, as is the case here in Las Vegas every year,” said Hokanson, the 29th chief of the National Guard Bureau. “The National Guard is always ready, always there in defense of our nation, states and territories.”

challenges, and overall impact of the Marine Corps’ recent deployment efforts. The commanders will share firsthand accounts, strategic insights, and key outcomes of their mission, highlighting the critical role played by the Marine Corps in ensuring national security and promoting global stability.

The briefings will take place this month and in February. Topics of discussion include:

- Overview of their units’ mission and objectives during each deployment.
- Presentation on the successful execution of key missions and achievements.
- Discuss challenges faced during their deployments and how the Marines and Sailors adapted to overcome them.
- Insights into collaborative efforts with allied forces and the impact on mission success.

and on-site analytical analysis of suspicious substances.

The Nevada ANG’s 152nd Medical Group supported two hospitals with approximately 35 personnel for triage assistance in case they were needed.

• Overview of future initiatives, lessons learned, and the Marine Corps’ readiness for upcoming challenges.  
To see more of MRF-SEA

activities, visit: <https://www.imef.marines.mil/Units/Major-Subordinate-Commands/Marine-Rotational-Force-Southeast-Asia/>.

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continued from page 4

She hopes the master’s program in public policy will help teach her to advocate for better federal cancer legislation. She’s also working with the Dana Farber Cancer Institute on research into early detection of pancreatic cancer.

“There’s just so many thanks to give, whether or not I win, to kind of spread that message in the time that I have left in the organization,” she said.

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# Tripoli's grind through its Selected Restricted Availability

by MC2 Maci Sternod  
USS Tripoli

SAN DIEGO – Ever since amphibious assault carrier USS Tripoli began a Selected Restricted Availability (SRA) period last March, the ship's crew and civilian contractors have been working side by side to complete repairs and maintenance to ensure the ship is mission ready for future operational tasking.

"Maintenance periods like this are so important not only to repair the ship, but also to extend the ship's life expectancy," said Cmdr. James Holmes, Tripoli's chief engineer. "Everyone knows that if you take care of your car and make sure to get oil changes and tune ups on time that you'll have that car for a long time. SRA is the same idea, but large scale with thousands of people working to make sure our ship meets all underway operations."

Following Tripoli's maiden deployment, the crew shifted focus to ship preservation while contractors began working on the large-scale repairs and upgrades. Additionally, many Sailors were assigned to different teams for general preservation around the ship, making repairs to the deck, painting spaces, fixing lagging and other habitability jobs.

"It is our ship and our home," said Chief Aviation Electrician's Mate Ezekial Zacharias, the ship's force leading chief petty officer. "We spend so much time on the ship that the pride we take in completing jobs and correcting discrepancies has so much impact on Sailors' morale."

Since Tripoli entered SRA, the ship's galley was closed in order to upgrade outdated equipment. Having an extended in-port period provides a good opportunity to accomplish necessary upgrades such as new ovens and refinished floors.



Sailors aboard USS Tripoli still maintain skills while the ship's in a maintenance period. Photo courtesy of USS Tripoli Facebook

Since re-opening the mess decks, the daily routine of breakfast, lunch and dinner being served cultivates a familiar space for Sailors to congregate. This helps build camaraderie while enjoying a hot meal.

"Cooking for thousands of Sailors, three times a day, every day is a big job and it is hard on our equipment," said Senior Chief Culinary Specialist Patrick Parigi. "We're happy to have the new equipment because it makes us more efficient and in turn, we can make better food for our shipmates."

Everyone knows that if you take care of your car and make sure to get oil changes and tune ups on time that you'll have that car for a long time. SRA is the same idea, but large scale with thousands of people working to make sure our ship meets all underway operations.

In addition to the galley, the ship's CSI department installed new computer towers and monitors with an upgraded network. Within a time-constrained schedule, Sailors from the IT division worked extra hours to manage, distribute, install and test the new equipment, ensuring that the ship's network and assets met optimal performance requirements.

"This was much a much-needed update," said Chief Information Systems Technician Camellia Cameron. "Technology is always changing and this was the perfect time to make sure that Tripoli is ready for the next challenge."

Tripoli and its crew are expecting to wrap up the maintenance and transition into the basic phase of their operational status early next year.

"This crew has been hard at work these past nine months really shifting gears from a deployment into a maintenance phase, but they definitely didn't slow

down," said Capt. Gary Harrington, Tripoli's commanding officer. "I'm incredibly proud to have such a hard-working crew."

Tripoli is an America-class amphibious assault carrier homeported in San Diego. The ship is currently in its selected restricted maintenance availability.



NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER SAN DIEGO (Jan. 1, 2024) - This year's first baby here is Milan Macias, born 12:40 a.m., New Year's Day, to parents GM2 Michelle Menconi, Afloat Training Group San Diego, and IT1 Hamilton Macias, USS Stockdale. Photo courtesy of NMCS's Facebook page



PIPED ASHORE | Safety Officer Lt. Phillip Trainor, a native of Bentonville, Ark., returns the salutes of shipmates as he is piped ashore from USS Boxer. U.S. photo by MC1 Kelsey J. Eades



TAKE DOWN | Marine Corps recruits with Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, execute MCMAP techniques at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, Dec. 28, 2023. MCMAP aims to strengthen the mental and moral resiliency of recruits and Marines through realistic combat training, warrior ethos studies, and physical hardening. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Sarah M. Grawcock



GOOD RELATIONS | Navy Sailors compete in a basketball tournament with local Palauan residents during a host nation outreach event at the Palau National Olympic Committee in Koror, Palau, as part of Pacific Partnership 2024-1, Dec. 29, 2023. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jacob Woitzel



HEALTH PROMOTIONS | The Naval Health Clinic Lemoore health promotions and wellness department, the Coalition of Sailors Against Destructive Decisions and the Junior Enlisted Association hosted a Mario Kart, lunch and learn event to bring awareness to impaired driving. U.S. Navy photo by Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Cierra L. Meadows

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## AutoMatters & More: A very Happy New Year from SeaWorld San Diego!

SeaWorld San Diego is a great theme park where you can see and experience up-close and personal a large and diverse variety of marine life, thrilling new rides and seasonal special events all included in the price of admission, with additional bonuses for annual pass holders. SeaWorld is one of the largest marine animal rescue organizations in the World. Their care team consists of hundreds of professional animal behaviorists, aquarists, zoologists, veterinarians and dieticians

Lately I've been staying at home on New Year's Eve. I used to look forward to ringing in the New Year at that major theme park about 1-1/2 hours away, but all of their annual passes — even the top level (and very expensive) annual pass that I've had for years, no longer includes park admission from just before Christmas until after New Year's Day.

Early on New Year's Eve day I asked one of my neighbors if he and his family would be doing anything special for New Year's Eve. He said he was, and then asked me about my plans. I said that I was going to stay home, adding that I sometimes used to go to that major theme park to celebrate New Year's Eve, but that I stopped doing that when they started blocking out all levels of annual passes then. A single day, single park ticket for New Year's Day at that theme park costs close to \$200 — plus parking.

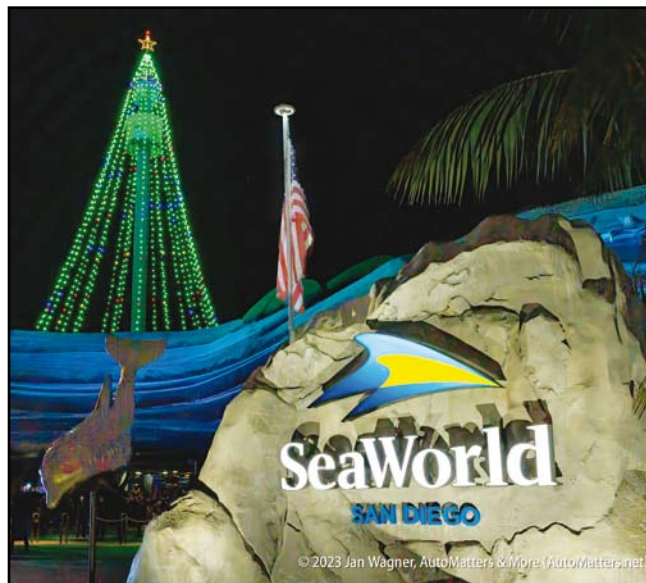
I then mentioned to him that for about the same price, last year — during their Fourth of July promotion, I bought a gold level ANNUAL pass to SeaWorld San Diego. That pass includes General Parking, four free guest tickets, generous discounts on in-park offerings, valuable

Member Rewards (more about that later) and NO BLOCKOUT DATES! I added that SeaWorld San Diego would be having fireworks that evening.

He encouraged me to go to SeaWorld, instead of staying home and watching other people ring in the New Year on TV. I decided to go. That's a big additional advan-

tage of living only about half an hour away. I can and do go often, and because I have an annual pass with parking, I do not feel like I need to spend the whole day there to get my money's worth. It is close enough that I can just about go there and back using electricity to power my Toyota RAV4 Prime — even if the free chargers are in use (the other theme park charges for theirs).

I set my DVR to record the ball drop at Times Square and arrived at SeaWorld San Diego at about 6 p.m., and stayed until after the fireworks. During that time (from a distance) I observed Santa Claus in his cottage, enjoyed the holiday decorations and lights, was captivated by the penguins as they



sometimes jumped clear out of the water as they sped along — in stark contrast to the California Moray Eels that barely moved, bought a discounted souvenir, watched the laser light show and joined a large crowd of revelers to watch the fireworks.

Earlier I mentioned valuable SeaWorld San Diego Member Rewards for annual passholders. Last year I redeemed several of their \$10 annual "SeaCoupons," which were good for a same-day \$10 discount on food and merchandise. Every year I look forward to trick-or-treating for a LOT of free candy on weekends leading up to Halloween (the only time of year where I treat myself

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

to too much candy). There's also a free, annual, SeaWorld Christmas ornament, and members get to skip the crowds when they first open a new ride.

Check out the annual passes, seasonal entertainment, marine animal presentations and everything else that SeaWorld San Diego has to offer at: <https://seaworld.com/>

To explore a wide variety of

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

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— Auto Matters & More #822



## Winter of discontent can't chill optimism for future

Despite the fact that I live in a coastal New England village where one expects snowy Currier and Ives scenery this time of year, the first weeks of winter have been drearily damp, foggy and muddy. But we maple-syrup swilling yankees weren't the only ones robbed of a white Christmas.

Most of the Northern Hemisphere has experienced warmer temperatures this season, affecting crops, exposure to allergens, and the winter sports season. Heck, even up at the Minnesota Ice Festival, where ice carvers were planning to unveil the world's largest ice maze on January 5th, the event was cancelled due to the danger of ice structures melting.

When I read all the pessimistic scientific reasearch about our warming globe, I find it hard to contemplate Earth's destiny. Perhaps out of fear, my brain short circuits, making it impossible for me to envision a future in which winters cease, ice caps disappear, and the Earth self-destructs. Instead, I prefer to believe that, somehow, Mother Nature or God or the Great Gazoo will save humankind, regardless of climate change or human foul-ups.

Consider, if you will, a winter thousands of years from now...

January, in the year 5024.

Despite several hundred World Wars, twelve Ice Ages, nine asteroid hits, three robot takeovers, seven alien invasions, and an unfortunate but brief worldwide prohibition on bacon; human beings have survived.

The Earth, along with its sister colonies on Mars and Venus, is experiencing her 177th recorded Period of Enlightenment — a time of flourishing advances in science, art, philosophy, culture, and, ever since the recent eradication of male pattern

baldness, cosmetology.

With public interest in ancient history on an upswing, more and more young scholars have chosen to study Archaeology, a science which had been somewhat neglected in recent centuries. One aspiring graduate student, Fizeq, is the Principal Investigator of an archeological excavation that has captured the world's attention. Mr. Fizeq's Data Recovery site is located at Sector

### The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

52b, formerly known as the Balfour Beatty military housing complex at Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma.

Ever since the Great Ocean receded to prehistoric levels, evidence of complex ancient civilizations has been exposed, dating back as early as the 21st Century. Although most artifacts have eroded, a curious substance known as "plastic" is conspicuously present in the strata of Mr. Fizeq's survey, shedding light on the ethnography of this ancient society.

Shortly after breaking ground, the archeological team uncovers an assemblage of brightly-colored plastic artifacts. A fleet of tiny red cars, several hundred whimsically pastel-colored houses, countless itty-bitty kitchenettes, and numerous ensy-weensy tool benches are unearthed, all bearing the mark of the manufacturer, "Little Tikes." Naturally, Mr. Fizeq concludes that the humanoid of this era, or at least the Air Force families, were no taller

than three feet.

Perplexing is the presence of thousands of bottles of purified water, contradicting evidence that 21st Century people had plenty of fresh water to drink. Even more puzzling is the discovery of a multitude of knotted plastic bags, containing petrified canine fecal matter, more commonly known as, "Doggie Doo Doo." Mr. Fizeq wonders why this tiny ancient culture felt the need to bag up a naturally prolific substance.

After all, everyone poops.

Other items found preserved in copious amounts include strange footwear labeled "Crocs," beverage implements known as K-cups, Ikea furniture, Tupperware containers, defunct television remotes, and molded plastic lawn furniture. But the most amazing discovery is found just beneath the excavation's datum point. Deep in the ancient strata of the Tinker AFB quarters lay the well-preserved remains of an ancient tool of communication, known as an "iPhone." By extracting its data, Fizeq believes he will reveal a complete chronology of 21st century humans that'll blow the top off the archaeological world.

However, exhaustive laboratory testing produces nothing except a curious language of colloquial terms including "idk" "lol" "srsly" and "rofl." And several dozen digital videos bearing the common tag "twerk."

Despite this disappointment, Mr. Fizeq goes on to successfully publish his doctoral thesis, appropriately entitled, "The Plastic Age: An archeological analysis of the strange little humans of the 21st Century." However, he is forced to cut his lucrative speaking tour short, after breaking his leg in a winter skiing accident.

[www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com)

### San Diego Outreach

Neil Ash Airport Center  
San Diego MEPS Center  
Camp Pendleton



### Become a USO Volunteer

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 [www.USOVolunteer.org](http://www.USOVolunteer.org). Once you navigate to the webpage, click on "Volunteer at a USO Center," then click "Continental United States." Next select "California" and then the USO San Diego center nearest to you!

### Camp Pendleton USO Programs Include:

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**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](mailto:cgates@uso.org). All requests must be submitted within 30 days and although we try our best, not all requests can be granted.

<https://sandiego.uso.org>

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Must be able to access military base, minimum 3-5 years military sales experience, ability to meet monthly targets, must be enthusiastic and passionate about selling, ability to multi-task and coordinate several projects while maintaining a focus on sales priorities and targets.  
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## Are all calories created equal?

*DEAR MAYO CLINIC: I've heard "a calorie is a calorie" when it comes to weight loss, but can that really be true? With the number of diets out there (keto, intermittent fasting, Mediterranean), I'm completely overwhelmed with what I'm meant to be doing.*

**ANSWER:** Yes and no. (Isn't that always the answer to nutrition inquiries?) While a calorie may be a calorie when it comes to the mathematical equation of weight loss, there's more to it. Calories are a unit of energy. The total calories a food or beverage provides depend on the number of grams of carbohydrates, protein, fat and/or alcohol contained. The number of calories, though, does not predict how we'll feel afterward.

For example, a 200-calorie snack of an apple with peanut butter is going to help you feel fuller and more satisfied than a 200-calorie snack of chips. The difference is in not only the food composition but food volume as well. The apple and peanut butter snack will provide fiber, fat, water and some protein. The majority of these attributes are lacking when it comes to the chips. Think volume too — the apple snack will stretch the stomach more due to its larger size, sending that fullness signal to the brain. The 200 calories worth of chips also are going to be digested and leave the stomach faster than the apple because there's not much breakdown that needs to happen. We also can't talk about this topic without referencing health outcomes. It is well known that the composition of one's diet, or dietary pattern, is significant. A plant-based diet containing whole grains, fruits, vegetables, unsaturated fats and lean proteins provides the body with balanced nutrition that can decrease the risk of chronic conditions.

There are multiple ways to do this healthfully. Diet styles such as Mediterranean, DASH and the Mayo Clinic Diet are examples of eating patterns that focus on high nutrient density and have been shown to promote positive health outcomes. This also can be done through a well-planned vegetarian diet. Take both your food preferences and health goals into account.

So what about weight loss? Here's where calories are crucial. For example, even a Mediterranean diet does not guarantee weight loss if a calorie deficit is not present. Olive oil and nuts are excellent sources of healthy fat, but when eaten without one's total calorie intake in mind, it could, technically, cause weight gain. Using the style of eating that is best for you, consider working toward a 250-750 calorie per day deficit. Swap your mid-afternoon snack for a piece of fruit or skip your usual sweetened coffee or alcoholic beverage.

The body needs to burn more than it's consuming to produce weight loss. While exercise is always going to be recommended, it's important to remember that exercise alone is not likely to get most people into that roughly 500-calorie deficit. The majority of us will be most successful with weight loss through dietary changes.

Most diets work because adapting your baseline eating habits to fit a specific diet's protocol will likely cause you to eat fewer calories. Good news, right? Possibly. This is only going to benefit someone who can stay on said diet long term. Diets that endorse or require drastic and unrealistic changes (such as the cabbage soup diet) aren't sustainable. And when a diet is not sustainable, the weight loss won't be either.

So, start here:

- Choose a healthful diet that fits your eating and health preferences.
- Work toward a gradual calorie deficit, ideally limiting excess (more than you need) and empty (non-nutrition-providing) calories.
- Remember that a slow, steady and sustainable approach is most likely to help you achieve a healthy weight.

— Tara Schmidt, Registered Dietitian, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, MN

## MOVIES AT THE BASES

Schedules subject to change. Check for updates on line at: <https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/> select movies from dropdown menu on left <https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies> <https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

### Lowry Theater - NASNI,

619-545-8479  
Bldg. 650

Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted. Debit/credit cards only.

**Thursday - January 11**

6:00 PM Napoleon r

**Friday - January 12**

6:00 PM Wonka pg

**Saturday - January 13**

1:00 PM Wonka pg

3:30 PM Wish pg

6:00 PM Anyone But You r

**Sunday - January 14**

1:00 PM Wonka pg

3:30 PM Silent Night r

**Thursday - January 18**

6:00 PM Anyone But You r

8:10 PM Silent Night r

Updates: [navylifefsw.com](http://navylifefsw.com)

### Naval Base Theater - NBSB,

619-556-5568, Bldg. 71  
3465 Senn Rd.

**Friday, January 12**

6:00 PM Wonka pg

**Saturday - January 13**

12:50 PM Wonka pg

3pm 'LAST SHOWING' Napoleon r

6:00 PM Anyone But You r

**Sunday - January 14**

1:00 PM 'LAST SHOWING' Wish pg

3:00 PM Wonka pg

**Friday - January 19**

6pm Aquaman/Lost Kingdom pg13

**Saturday - January 20**

1:00 PM Migration pg

3:00 PM Anyone But You r

6pm Aquaman/Lost Kingdom pg13

**Sunday - January 21**

1:00 PM Migration pg

3pm Aquaman/Lost Kingdom pg13

For updates check <https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/movies/>



### Bob Hope Theater 577-4143

MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

**Friday, January 12**

6:00 PM - Wonka ( PG )

**Saturday, January 13**

3:00 PM - Wish ( PG )

6:30 PM - Wonka ( PG )

**Sunday, January 14**

12:00 PM - Wonka ( PG )

3:00 PM - Anyone But You ( R )

**Friday, January 19**

6:00 PM - Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom ( PG-13 )

**Saturday, January 20**

3:00 PM - Migration ( PG )

6:30PM Aquaman/Lost Kingdom (PG-13)

**Sunday, January 21**

12:00 PM - Migration ( PG )

3:00 PM - Wonka ( PG )

## SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

### Are spousal benefits always a factor?

*Dear Rusty: Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives. When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each, or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated - based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire? Signed: Looking Ahead*

**Dear Looking:** Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation. The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings (AIME) - essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount - is first determined. Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount (PIA) is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained (as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms).

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA - the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed. The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost" from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if claiming before FRA, marital status, and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

## SD Humane Society Community 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 between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m., 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 | 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

### 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



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

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

@cocotheadventurepup



# Mayo Clinic Q and A: Myths about minority organ donation

**DEAR MAYO CLINIC:** A co-worker was diagnosed with kidney disease last year. He is now on dialysis three times a week as he waits for a kidney transplant. He shared his hope to get a living donor, explaining that he will have a longer wait since there are not as many diverse people signed up as organ donors. Can you explain why this is and what can I do to help?

**ANSWER:**

More than 103,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for an organ transplant, according to the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network. Nearly 60% of people on transplant waiting lists come from minority communities.

Higher rates of heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes are present in minority communities, contributing to more kidney failure. Almost 89,000 people are waiting for a kidney transplant.

Though organs are not matched based on race and ethnicity, certain criteria, including blood type and specific antibodies, must be matched to find a compatible organ. People from various ethnic groups will have a better outcome with a donor organ from someone of a similar background.

In general, wait times in the U.S. to receive a deceased donor kidney vary based on region, but can be anywhere from three years up to 10 years. Only about 30% of donor organs are from people of color, so diverse organs are less available.

So, unfortunately, your colleague is correct in that he would likely have a longer wait time for a transplant if waiting on a deceased donor. Finding a living kidney donor is often a faster route to transplant.

Kidney donation is the most common type of living-donor transplant. Donors give one of their two healthy kidneys to the recipient. People only need one kidney to live a healthy, active life. In 2022, more than 6,400 lives were saved thanks to the generosity of living donors,

according to Donate Life America.

However, there is a long-standing distrust of the healthcare community in certain minority groups, and many myths have been propagated about the process around organ donation, which has resulted in people being less likely to become organ donors.

**Some of the common things I hear from patients include:**

**Myth: If I agree to donate my organs upon death, the hospital staff won't work as hard to save my life.**

**Fact:** People who are organ donors will be cared for if they are in the hospital as any other person. When you go to the hospital for treatment, the healthcare team will focus on providing care for you to save your life until your injury or condition is determined to be non-recoverable. A transplant team will not become involved before your condition is deemed as unsurvivable.

**Myth: People who donate organs or tissues can't have an open-casket funeral.**

**Fact:** Donors' bodies are treated with care and respect. And they're dressed for burial. No one can see that they donated organs or tissues.

**Myth: I'm too old to donate. Nobody would want my organs.**

**Fact:** There's no defined cutoff age for donating organs. The decision to use your organs is based on strict medical criteria, not age. Don't prematurely disqualify yourself. Let the doctors decide at the time of your death whether your organs and tissues are suitable for transplantation.

**Myth: My family will be charged if I donate my organs after death.**

**Fact:** The organ donor's family never pays for their donation. The donor family pays for all the medical care once you are determined to be a possible donor. Sometimes, families think those costs are for organ donation. But the person who gets the organs for transplant pays

the costs for removing the organs.

**Myth: Becoming a living donor is a lengthy and costly process.**

**Fact:** Anyone interested in becoming a living donor will have to undergo online screening and an in-depth physical and psychological evaluation process to ensure they are a good candidate for donation. The recipient's insurance always covers the cost. However, there are some programs available to compensate potential donors for time lost from work or school or to help with travel or dependent care expenses. Once a donor is approved, the timeframe is up to the donor, recipient and the respective care teams.

**Myth: Being a living donor will shorten my life span.**

**Fact:** Most healthy people can live with only one kidney. We expect a person to live a full and normal life following their donation. At Mayo Clinic, we have living donors who have gone on to do incredible athletic feats, including climbing Kilimanjaro, running marathons and having children.

**Myth: As a living donor, I must be on medication for the rest of my life.**

**Fact:** Living donors do not have any long-term medication requirements after donation.

**Myth: I can only be a living donor if I'm a match for someone.**

**Fact:** Even if someone wants to be a donor for a relative or friend but is found to be incompatible, they can still donate as part of a paired kidney donation chain. This process allows two or more donors to be matched with appropriate recipients in an exchange.

You can help your colleague by sharing information about organ donation and encouraging others – particularly those with diverse backgrounds – to consider becoming donors. It truly is a gift of life. Go to the Donate Life America website to learn more about signing up to be an organ donor.

—Dr. Shennen Mao, Transplant Center, Mayo Clinic, Jacksonville, Florida

**CAMP ARIFJAN, KUWAIT -- Maj. Remy Ngwanyam, radiologist, 528th Hospital Center, demonstrates using the new 128-slide Computed Tomography scan at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait. The upgraded CT scan will greatly improve patient care with its reliability and advanced features. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brina Jenkins.**



## New 3d MED CT scanner provides reliability, self-sufficiency for deployed CENTCOM troops

by Staff Sgt. brina jenkins  
1st Theater Sustainment Command  
CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait – The only military treatment facility with military hospitalization and surgical capabilities in Kuwait upgraded to a new, state-of-the-art Computed Tomography scanner recently.

The 528th Hospital Center, 3rd Medical Command, replaced the Army's last 16-slide CT scanner with a new, 128-slide CT scanner, because it was passed its lifecycle and unpredictable, according to Maj. Remy Ngwanyam, radiologist, 528th HC. The old scanner was unreliable and overheated

easily, rendering it often unusable and resulting in patients being referred to host country hospitals to obtain needed CT scans, added Ngwanyam.

The CT scanner takes 3-dimensional images, helping providers quickly and efficiently detect injuries and disease, using multiple X-ray beams from different angles to acquire the high-quality, 3-D images.

Ngwanyam further explained how acquiring the new CT scanner will save the Army time and money, because they'll no longer have to refer patients to hospitals

in Kuwait. "It would take up to six hours for patients to make the entire trip to obtain a CT scan," he said.

As the only surgical center in country, the ability to use CT to guide surgical repair in emergency situations and conserve the limited two operating room beds is indispensable.

Col. Tracy Ostrom, commander, 528th HC, appreciates the upgraded technology and how it will help them manage emergency care, and she is thankful to everyone who helped them acquire the equipment and install it.

## THE ARMED SERVICES YMCA CAMP PENDLETON



### OUR MISSION:

For the past 79 years, the Armed Services YMCA Camp Pendleton has enhanced the lives of military members and their families in spirit, mind, and body through programs relevant to the unique challenges of military life.

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- Summer Camp
- Operation Kid Comfort: Personalized Quilts
- Project Liberty Call: Giveaways
- TEAP (Temporary Emergency Assistance Program)
- School of Infantry Recreation Center: Single Marine Support
- Volunteer Opportunities

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

- Father Daughter and Mother Son Dances
- Ball Gown Giveaway
- Santa's Workshop and Secret SANTA
- Neighborhood Exchange - Food and Diaper Distribution



### PENDLETON PANTRY:

Thank you for your interest in donating to our food pantry! Below is a list of items we are looking for:

- Laundry Detergent
- Feminine Hygiene Products
- Household Disinfectant
- Baby wipes
- Baby formula: Enfamil or Similac, 12 oz
- Glass Jar Pasta Sauce
- Apple Juice
- Condiments
- Cereal
- Spices
- Rice
- Canned tuna
- Jelly
- Chicken Broth
- Soup



The Pendleton Pantry ensures military families have everything they need to make ends meet and have homes running smoothly.

Questions? Email Lisi Carranza at [ecarranza@asymca.org](mailto:ecarranza@asymca.org)

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"Come Pitch with Us!"







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\$2,000 Chase VA Loan Purchase Closing Cost Benefit  
\$2,500 or \$5,000 with the Chase Homebuyer Grant

[Learn more at chase.com/VA-loan](https://chase.com/VA-loan)



The Chase VA Loan Purchase Closing Cost Benefit will be applied at closing first to points on the loan, if any, then to fees. The benefit may not be used for the down payment and any remaining funds will be applied as a principal reduction. The benefit is available only on primary residence purchase loans and is not available for any refinance loans. The benefit may be considered miscellaneous income and may be reportable to you and the IRS. Please consult with a personal tax advisor about the impact to personal income tax returns. Veterans, Servicemembers, and members of the National Guard or Reserve may be eligible for a loan guaranteed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). A Certificate of Eligibility (COE) from the VA is required to document eligibility. Restrictions and limitations apply. The Chase Homebuyer Grant is available on primary residence purchases only, on select products and subject to eligibility. Other limitations and restrictions apply. To learn more about the Homebuyer Grant, visit [chase.com/AffordableLending](https://chase.com/AffordableLending). All home lending products except IRRRL are subject to credit and property approval. Rates, program terms and conditions are subject to change without notice. Not all products are available in all states or for all amounts. Other restrictions and limitations apply. Home lending products provided by JPMorgan Chase Bank, N.A. Member FDIC ©2023 JPMorgan Chase & Co.