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GREETINGS AND SALUTATIONS SAN DIEGO - Family and friends await the arrival of Navy Expeditionary Medical Unit 10 Gulf (EMU-10G) Sailors at San Diego International Airport recently following a seven-month deployment to the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. The EMU provided critical Role 2 medical care in Baghdad, Iraq, including surgery, trauma resuscitation, and mental health support. U.S. Navy photo by Arsenio R. Cortez, Jr.

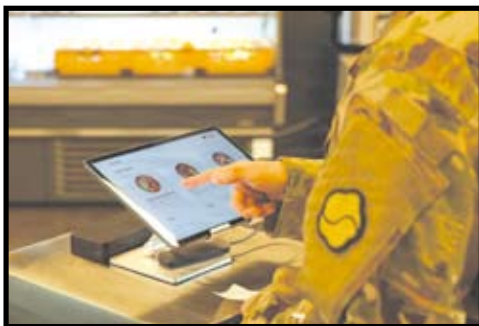
ARMY PILOTS FIRST AUTONOMOUS DINING FACILITY IN SOUTH KOREA

by Cpt. Anthony Corey and Sgt. Deziree Keay
CAMP WALKER, Republic of Korea - On Nov. 12, 2025 the 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command opened the Army's first autonomous dining facility in Korea to explore how automation can improve food service operations.

The pilot dining facility, called Market 19, combines automated

food preparation, cooking and serving with Soldier oversight.

"This pilot helps us evaluate how automated cooking systems



Inside Market 19 a Soldier orders a meal on Camp Walker, South Korea, Nov. 7. Photo by Republic of Korea Army Sgt. Minho Lee

can make Army dining operations more consistent, efficient, and resilient," said Chief Warrant Officer River Mitchell, food advisor, 19th ESC.

He emphasized that the effort is not about replacing people, but about strengthening the ability to feed Soldiers "anytime, anywhere."

"The pilot originated as a 19th ESC initiative," Mitchell said. Planning for the pilot facility began in early May of 2025 as an opportunity for 19th ESC to innovate upon the Army food program. "Market 19 represents successful and efficient collaboration between the U.S. Army, Republic of Korea, and industry

partners."

"It was formally approved under the Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimentation Capability program in coordination with U.S. Army Pacific." PMTEC is an Army Pacific initiative that tests and evaluates new technologies to enhance sustainment and readiness across the Indo-Pacific. The project supports PMTEC experimentation and uses funding from the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which advances deterrence and operational capability in the region.

"Our aim is to add capacity and consistency in feeding op-

see Dining, page 2

Army, university collaboration develops 3D-material to prevent electronics from overheating

from Army Research Laboratory Public Affairs

ADELPHI, Md. - Army and university researchers collaborated to develop a 3D-printable material using tiny particles that conduct heat and can be used to more efficiently cool military advanced electronics. The technology is ready for industry engagement and commercialization.

The advanced material, a research effort between Northeastern University and Army Combat Capabilities Development Command, or DEVCOM, Army Research Laboratory, has the potential to advance warfighter capabilities. Thermal management and packaging of high-power electronics in communication systems, radar, drones and electric vehicles are some of the technologies it could improve. These systems currently can suffer from degraded performance, or even shut down when they overheat, which is a growing challenge for the Army.

"This advanced material is a significant step forward for packaging of advanced electronics," said Dr. Eric Wetzel, mechanical engineer at DEVCOM ARL and the paper's co-author. "Its ability to efficiently manage heat while maintaining RF transparency, while also being 3D printable, enables new possibilities for military and industry applications."

Army and university researchers collaborated to develop a 3D printable nanocomposite material comprising hexagonal boron nitride (hBN) fillers embedded in a thermoplastic polymer that exhibits high thermal conductivity, low electrical conductivity...

Published in Advanced Materials, the research uses a nanocomposite material comprising inorganic, hexagonal boron nitride (hBN) fillers embedded in a thermoplastic polymer. By carefully combining additives, surface treatments and thermal post-processing, the team created a crystalline polymer structure that bridges the highly conductive fillers, significantly enhancing thermal conductivity.

The nanocomposite is first formed into continuous filament, which can then be fed into a desktop 3D printer to create complex structures such as heat sinks, thermal spreaders, mounting plates or panel covers. The 3D printing process further aligns the fillers, boosting the material's performance. Unlike metal packaging, this hBN nanocomposite is both RF transparent and electrically insulating, so it can be placed in close proximity to high-current and high-voltage electronics without blocking RF signals — critical to communications or radar systems — or risking an electrical short.

Army and university researchers collaborated to develop a 3D-printable material using tiny particles that conduct heat and can be used to more efficiently cool military advanced electronics.

Refer to <https://www.army.mil/article/289137/>.

Penny shortage hits the NEX: Get ready to round up (or down)

Navy Exchange locations in the continental United States will begin making cents of a new system by rounding up or down to the nearest five cent increment for change given to customers who make a purchase using cash.

This is due to the U.S. Mint stopping production of the penny in August 2025. The Navy Exchange Service Command enables warfighter readiness and strengthens the Navy's quality of life mission. Providing essential products, services, hospitality and outfitting Navy communities around the globe, NEXCOM is continuously evolving to meet the demands of today's military operational environment. **U.S. Navy photo**



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Dining

continued from page 1

erations without changing the current workforce,” Mitchell explained. “The autonomous kitchen uses robotic cooking modules programmed to prepare meals from fresh ingredients following standard Army recipes.” Soldiers and civilians can select menu items on a touchscreen interface and the system automatically portions, cooks, and plates each meal.

“Human oversight remains critical,” Mitchell added. “Our culinary specialists still handle food safety, ingredient prep and quality control.” All ingredients come from the Defense Logistics Agency Troop Support supply chain and the Army food catalog, ensuring the same nutrition and safety standards as traditional facilities.

Each meal display includes clear nutritional information, giving Soldiers better visibility into what they are eating. Menu options are performance-oriented and include Korean dishes such as bibimbap, kimchi fried rice, and budae jjigae.

“This system gives us a 24/7 feeding capability that supplements - not replaces - our existing dining operations,” Mitchell said. The pilot runs within the Camp Walker Dining

Facility with Soldiers and contracted staff jointly evaluating performance. Culinary specialists manage quality assurance and nutrition education. They also supplement meals with additional food options. The culinary specialists who prepare the meal recipes and ingredients for the machine have been trained extensively by both Army and local national chefs.

“The goal is to free our 92Gs (culinary specialists) to focus on readiness training and improving meal quality,” Mitchell added. “Automation is one way we can modernize without losing our human touch.”

He explained that integrating robotic technology into dining operations allows the Army to stay ready under any condition, from garrison to field environments, while preserving the expertise of its culinary specialists.

The pilot supports the Army’s ongoing modernization efforts and the “People First” initiative by improving operational flexibility and Soldier quality of life. It also aligns with the Holistic Health and Fitness program by giving Soldiers consistent access to balanced, nutritious meals that sustain performance and recovery.

Hegseth says designating Venezuelan cartel as terrorist org will bring ‘new options’ to administration

by Matthew Olay
Pentagon News

During a media interview at the Pentagon that spanned a handful of topics Nov. 21, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said plans to declare Venezuela’s state-embedded criminal network Cartel de los Soles a terrorist organization will bring “a whole bunch of new options” to how the U.S. deals with narco-terrorists in that region.

The cartel, whose name translates to “Cartel of the Suns” and is alleged to be headed by Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, is set to be designated as a terror organization by the State Department Nov. 24.

If the designation goes through, Cartel of the Suns will be the ninth such criminal network designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the Trump

administration’s Executive Order 14157 since February.

“[The terror designation] gives more tools to our [War] Department to give options to [President Donald J. Trump] to ultimately say our hemisphere will not be controlled by narco-terrorists, it will not be controlled by cartels, [and] it will not be controlled by what illegitimate regimes try to push toward the American people. So, it’s just about options, and we plan better than any organization in the world here,” Hegseth said.

No decisions related to countering Maduro’s cartel are “off the table,” he added, but “nothing is automatically on the table,” either.

U.S. Southern Command has conducted at least 20 lethal maritime strikes on intelligence-

confirmed narco-terrorists in the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific Ocean since September.

Hegseth said it would be inappropriate to discuss whether there are any plans underway to augment those strikes by engaging Venezuela on land.

“Again, we have a lot of options; we’ll make sure we have the authorities to do so, and we will protect the American people,” he said.

In addition to countering narco-terror at sea and addressing the threat posed by Cartel of the Suns, Hegseth also spoke on the Trump administration’s concerns about cartel activity in Mexico.

“We believe that Mexico should address that cartel problem and be really aggressive

about it, and they have done so in some quarters. But, in others, the poisoning of the American people still continues, and — as the president has said — we are going to stop this,” Hegseth said.

He also noted that in addition to all the options the U.S. has in its own hemisphere, it’s important to recognize how well the military has countered narco-terrorists for over 20 years during the war on terror.

“Our ability to range and reach narco-terrorists in, say, Iraq and Syria and Afghanistan for 20 years is about as well-honed as any machine — better than any machine in the world,” Hegseth said, adding that if applying that same pressure is necessary in our own hemisphere, no country would apply such pressure better than the U.S.

HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES FOR DECEMBER

Bingo’s Birthday Month
Car Donation Month
Colorectal Cancer
Education and Awareness
Decembeard
Exotic Fruits Month
Farm to Food Bank Month
Int’l AIDS Awareness
Nat’l Drunk and Drugged
Driving Prevention Month

Nat’l Egg Nog Month
Nat’l Fruit Cake Month
Nat’l Impaired Driving
Prevention Month
Nat’l Pear Month
Nat’l Sign Up For Summer
Camp Month
Nat’l Stress-Free Family
Holiday Month
Nat’l Tie Month

Nat’l Write a Business Plan
Operation Santa Paws
Quince and Watermelon
Read a New Book Month
Root Vegetables Month
Safe Toys and Celebration
Seasonal Depression
Awareness Month
Spiritual Literacy Month
Take a New Year’s

Resolution to Stop Smoking
Tropical Fruits Month
Universal Human
Rights Month
Winter Squash Month
World AIDS Month
Worldwide Food Service
Safety Month
Write a Friend Month

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USS *Wichita* takes over southern border mission

from Commander, 2nd Fleet

Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS *Wichita* departed Naval Station Mayport, Fla., to support U.S. Northern Command southern border operations, Nov. 14.

Wichita assumes duties previously executed by freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS *St. Louis*. The ship will conduct similar operations to those of *St. Louis* in support of Northcom's border security objectives. Northcom is working together with the Department of Homeland Security to augment U.S. Customs and Border Protection along the southern border with additional military forces.

Navy assets are deployed under Northcom's maritime homeland defense authorities with a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment embarked to enable maritime interdiction missions to prevent the flow of illegal drugs or other illegal activity.

Since entering the Gulf of America, *St. Louis* received support from the "Valkyries" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 50 Detachment 5 and embarked Coast Guard Law Enforcement Detachment 408.

"USS *Wichita* stands ready to relieve *St. Louis* as the leading edge for Northcom's homeland defense mission," said Navy Cmdr. Travis Snover, *Wichita*'s commanding officer. "We will carry on the dedication, impact



and hard work of our fellow shipmates and will live up to our motto as the 'Keeper of the Seas.'"

The littoral combat ship platform is a fast, agile, mission-focused warship designed to operate in near-shore environments to counter 21st-century threats. It is a class of small surface combatants armed with capabilities to defeat challenges in the world's littorals.

These ships can operate independently or in high-threat scenarios as part of a networked battle force that includes larger, multimission surface combatants such as cruisers and destroyers.

"*St. Louis*' deployment is a powerful example of how we're

prioritizing maritime homeland defense, which directly impacts national security," said Navy Vice Adm. Doug Perry, commander, U.S. 2nd Fleet. "I look forward to *Wichita* supporting Northcom in implementing our

Navy Recruiting Reserve Command exceeds FY25 goals, expands mission success

by Lt. j.g. Adelola Tinubu, Navy Recruiting Reserve Command
MILLINGTON, Tenn. — Navy Recruiting Reserve Command (NRRC) closed out fiscal year (FY) 2025 by surpassing both enlisted and officer recruiting goals and completing its first year integrating active component (AC) Sailors directly into the reserve component (RC).

With an enlisted target of 5,729 Sailors, NRRC recruiters exceeded expectations by bringing in 5,735 Sailors, marking another year of steady growth in Navy Reserve recruiting. The officer mission saw similar success, with an overall Navy Recruiting Command (NRC) total of 105 percent attainment across all regions.

Regional performance reflected exceptional effort across the command, with Reserve Talent Acquisition Group (RTAG) Southwest leading at 129.5 percent attainment of goal, followed by RTAG Southeast at 104.9 percent, RTAG Central at 104.6 percent, RTAG Northeast at 101.5 percent, and RTAG Northwest at 74.1 percent. Together, these results demonstrate the collective strength and dedication of recruiters nationwide in exceeding mission goals.

In addition to surpassing established goals, FY25 marked the command's first full year taking on the challenge of recruiting Sailors transitioning directly from active duty to the Navy Reserve. The AC-to-RC mission grew by 32 percent, jumping from 1,500 in FY24 to 1,986 in FY25, despite the initiative launching with only four months remaining in the fiscal year.

Rear Adm. James Waters, Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, praised the command's adaptability and dedication. "This was more than numbers. It was about the human-to-human connection our recruiters built with transitioning Sailors and showing them that their service and experience continue to matter in the Navy Reserve."

shared commitment to readiness, presence and collaboration with partners and allies."

Wichita is assigned to Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 2 and homeported at Naval Station Mayport.

Department of War name set in bronze at Pentagon entrances

by C. Todd Lopez, Pentagon News

At the Pentagon recently, facilities personnel took down outdated bronze plaques at two of the building's entrances and replaced them with recently minted plaques bearing the new name of the federal agency that leads America's fighting force: "Department of War." One of those new plaques was put up at the River Entrance, which faces the Potomac River and serves as the Pentagon's grand entrance. It's where Secretary of War Pete Hegseth greets counterparts from partner and allied nations, as well as other dignitaries and distinguished visitors. The Mall Entrance, which faces north toward the National Mall in Washington, also got a new sign. Outside that entrance are the Pentagon's helicopter landing pads. "We wanted to replace [the old signs] because we want everybody who comes through this door to know that we are deadly serious about the name change of this organization," Hegseth said. In early September, President Donald J. Trump signed an executive order changing the name of the Defense Department back to the War Department — a name the department held for more than 150 years, from 1789 to 1947.

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Navy athletics, Under Armour unveil the Army-Navy uniform honoring the 250th anniversary of the Navy

Navy athletics and Under Armour unveiled the 2025 Army-Navy game uniform to honor the 250th anniversary of the Navy on Dec. 13 at the 126th playing of the Army-Navy game at M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore, Md.

The goal of this year’s uniform was to tell a compelling story that seamlessly combines the history of the Navy, the six frigates and the Naval Academy.

The color, fonts, branding and detailing were all historically inspired.

USS Constitution

Located in Boston, *USS Constitution* is the only remaining frigate from the original six frigate fleet and is the world’s oldest commissioned warship still afloat.

In the late 1850s, with the Naval Academy running out of space, *Constitution* was converted into a floating classroom, housing and training area for midshipmen to practice sail handling and other practical naval skills.

Its nickname, Old Ironsides, came from a battle during the War of 1812 when cannonballs appeared to bounce off the ship’s thick wooden hull. *USS Constitution* is undefeated in battle, never having to lower its flag. The ship was heavily referenced for design details and inspiration for the uniform.

Color

Washed Navy: Derived from the original uniform instruction that was issued by the Naval Committee on Sept. 5, 1776. Represents the faded blue color of the coats worn by sailors.

Stone: Ties back to the color of the sails that propelled *USS Constitution* throughout its history.

Nautical Navy: Symbolic of “Old Ironsides” hull color.

Heritage Red: Represents the color of the cannon carriages lining the side of *USS Constitution*.

Copper

Copper Sheathing: *USS Constitution* and the five other frigates of the original U.S. Navy were each copper-clad before launching. It was found that copper extended the life of the ships by preventing mollusks from destroying the wooden hulls. When coppered in the summer of 1797, *Constitution’s* lower hull required 12,000 feet of sheet copper and thousands of copper nails.

USS Constitution Mast Coins: There is a long-standing tradition of placing coins under a mast as the mast is stepped in a vessel. The coins were thought to bring good luck to the vessel on all of its voyages. In recognition of the year of *Constitutions* launch, both fore and main masts each have a 1797 large one-cent coin in among the other coins, and the mizzen mast has a 1798 one-cent coin in its step.

1920’s Save “Old Ironsides” Campaign: In 1924, *USS Constitution* was in dire need of repair, however the government did not have the funds to restore it. In November of that year, a fundraising campaign was assembled to help save the historic ship. A central component of the Save “Old Ironsides” efforts was a pennies campaign that asked students throughout the country to collect and donate pennies to fund the restoration efforts. Students at more than 800 schools across the United States participated in the campaign, raising around \$154,000. The money raised by the penny campaign, the proceeds of sales of souvenirs and prints and additional funds authorized by Congress were all used to fund the extensive restoration of *Constitution* that began in 1927.

Uniform

Jersey: The Navy wordmark and number font are inspired by the

typography found throughout the “Act to Provide Naval Armament” document. This document authorized the construction of the original six frigates and marked a significant step in the development of the United States Navy and its transition towards becoming a maritime power.

- Embedded into the sleeves and collar of the jersey are six total ropes, which represent the original six frigates and mimic the ornate detailing found throughout *Constitution’s* bow. Within these ropes, there are exactly 250 knots to honor the 250th Anniversary of the United States Navy.

- Forged in metallic copper, the UA logo embodies the integral role copper played throughout the history of the six frigates and the Navy. From copper sheathing that protected their hulls, to mast coins that brought good luck on their voyages, to the penny campaign that helped save *USS Constitution*, copper has been there from the very beginning.

- Nautical Navy, the darker blue color found on the sleeves of the uniform, is symbolic of the “Old Ironsides” hull, where cannonballs bounced off during the War of 1812. The Heritage Red cuffs embody the color of the cannons lining the side of *Constitution*.

- Adorned on the upper back of the jersey, the eagle and six stars mimic the decoration of *Constitution’s* stern.

- The American flag is incorporated onto the wearer’s left sleeve to honor *Constitution’s* undefeated battle record, having never lowered its flag.

- The wearer’s right sleeve integrates a unique “USN” monogram that ties back to the shared history of the Naval Academy and *Constitution*.

- Embroidered on the interior back neck, “USN 250” honors the rich history of the Navy throughout its 250 years.

Pants: The stone pants are a subtle

nod to the uniform color orientation worn by sailors during that time period.

- There are six ropes, on each side of the pant, that represent the six frigates and a total of 126 knots to celebrate the 126th Army Navy game.

Helmet: The copper color represents the copper plated sheathing from the under hull of the boat.

- The facemask and chin strap colors are dark navy to tie back to *Constitution’s* hull.

- The left side of the helmet (if you are looking at the helmet straight on) USN is in monogram copper and outlined in dark navy, which is present in the rotunda of Bancroft Hall tying the Naval Academy back to the 250th Anniversary of the Navy.

- The right side of the helmet (if you are looking at the helmet straight on) is *Constitution* hand painted on stone colored parchment paper which represents both the color of the sails of “Old Ironsides” and the map color which they navigated on parchment paper.

- The center stripe dons a wooden plank similar to that on “Old Ironsides” in color and design with a nautical rope wrapping six times around the front and six times around the rear of the wood to represent the six original frigates of the Navy (*USS Chesapeake*, *USS Congress*, *Constellation*, *USS Constitution*, *USS President* and *USS United States*). The 63 rope knots on the front of the helmet and the 63 rope knots on the rear signify the 126th Army-Navy game. The number 63 also represents the 63 wins Navy has over Army (Navy leads the all-time series 63-55-7)

- The front bumper of the helmet spells out Navy in copper lettering in nautical navy.

- The rear bumper spells out USN 250 in copper lettering with stars on the watch side in nautical navy.

- The rear of the helmet has the player number in a font which is inspired by the depth numbers on the ship in nautical navy with white and copper outlines.

Nevada National Guard completes 3rd year of Formula 1 support in Las Vegas

by Sgt. Adrienne Lopez

17th Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs Section

LAS VEGAS - About 130 Soldiers and Airmen from the Nevada National Guard supported local first responders during the 2025 Formula 1 Las Vegas Grand Prix, held Nov. 20–22 across the Las Vegas Valley.

This year marked the third consecutive Grand Prix supported by the Nevada Guard, continuing a partnership with state and local agencies that began with the inaugural race in 2023.

Guard members provided security support, medical assistance, and hazard-response capabilities at key locations near the race-course and at two hospitals in the metropolitan area.

Participating units included B Company, 422nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion – Expeditionary (422nd ESB-E); the 92nd Civil Support Team; the Command and Control element (C2) of the Nevada Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and high-yield Explosive Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP); and the 152nd Medical Group from the Nevada Air National Guard.

Their work helped maintain a coordinated safety posture during the high-demand weekend.

“The deployment is a testament to the ongoing partnership between the Nevada National Guard and local emergency response agencies, showcasing their commitment to public safety and effective collaboration in times of need,” said Col. Kyle Cerfoglio, Nevada National Guard Joint Staff director.

The Formula 1 mission relied heavily on cooperation between state and local agencies.

“Our citizen Soldiers are our greatest strength,” said Sgt. Timothy Frederick, events planning sergeant for the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department and lieutenant colonel in the Nevada Army National Guard. “The liaison officers we work with during these major events help bridge both worlds. They understand the intent of the police and fire departments and also know the mission of the military.”

That shared understanding extended to Guardsmen who also serve full-time in law enforcement.


“It helps having Guardsmen who also work as police officers,” said Staff Sgt. Eddie Scott, a squad leader with 422nd ESB-E and a full-time LVMPD officer. “We understand both sides of the mission, which makes communication even stronger.”

Soldiers and Airmen worked alongside LVMPD officers, emergency managers, and medical staff throughout the event to help ensure a safe environment for residents and visitors.


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Career and Education

U.S.-Italian partnership supports USAF's future of undergraduate pilot training program

by **Bryanna Richards**

Air Education and Training Command

DECIMOMANNU AIR BASE, Italy -- U.S. Air Force student pilots conduct T-346A Master Jet Trainer simulation training during the undergraduate flying training program Small Group Tryout at the International Flight Training School here.

The U.S. Air Force and the Italian air force have partnered to execute an undergraduate flying training program Small Group Tryout at the International Flight Training School, Decimomannu Air Base, Italy.

Ten U.S. students who first attended civilian flight school-led Initial Pilot Training are now enrolled at the International Flight Training School to complete a 133-day Basic Jet Training course in the T-346A Master Jet Trainer. Upon graduation, they will earn their Air Force pilot wings.

"This initiative is expected to provide valuable data for optimizing pilot training methods as we prepare to ramp up the T-7A," said Col. Corey Hogue, Capability Requirements Division chief, Air Education and Training Command. "Not only will we gather data on the effectiveness of our proposed syl-



Air Force student pilots conduct T-346A Master Jet Trainer simulation training during the undergraduate flying training program Small Group Tryout at the International Flight Training School. Courtesy photo

labus, but we can also validate the feasibility of sending trainees directly from IPT to train in a modern training aircraft, like the T-7A Redhawk."

"Sending these 10 students to Italy is the closest way we have to test the syllabus we have designed," said Brig. Gen. Matthew Leard, director of Plans, Programs, Requirements and International Affairs. "After receiving some data and seeing how well the students are performing, I'm pretty excited."

After completion of the Basic

Jet Training course, some students will be selected to complete advanced training at Decimomannu Air Base as fighter pilot candidates. These students will undergo an additional 135-day T-346 course before progressing to U.S. fighter formal training units. The remaining students will train stateside in mobility, special operations, or command and control platforms.

This marks the first instance of students progressing directly from civilian-instruction IPT to fast-jet training using a single military trainer. The exchange

provides an opportunity to assess the future of the service's undergraduate pilot training program, which aims to produce 1,500 new pilots annually by streamlining the pipeline for combat aircraft from the current 528 days to approximately 364.

The effort will also help define potential roles for the T-7A in future pilot training pipelines, including assessing performance metrics for optimization, comparing training outcomes across platforms, and evaluating advanced simulation capabilities for integration into real-world training scenarios.

This initiative, combined with coordination with Formal Training Units, is designed to increase the throughput of pilots advancing to their operational platforms while enhancing the overall quality and readiness of Airmen entering the force.

The program will conclude in June 2026, providing AETC with valuable lessons to refine the pilot training pipeline and fully leverage the capabilities of the T-7A.

The first T-7A aircraft is set to arrive at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph in early December.



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A \$600K quality-of-life boost for Fleet Logistics Center SD

by Frank Valdez
NAVSUP FLC San Diego

NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO - A five-year effort to modernize the Navy Food Management Team galley at Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center here is complete, culminating in a fully refurbished training space.

The project began as an idea in early 2020, when then-Master Chief Culinary Specialist Jade Metz checked in to the NFMT as an instructor and immediately saw outdated equipment and deteriorating spaces that hindered training for sailors across the fleet.

"I checked in January 2020, and within a very short time-frame, I realized the equipment was degraded and the space just wasn't up to the standard our warfighters deserved," Metz said. "If instructors are taking shortcuts because the galley can't support advanced techniques, then we're doing our

students a disservice."

COVID-19 restrictions initially prevented NFMT from holding in-person seminars, but when training resumed in early 2021, Metz said the problems became unavoidable. "My instructors are the best in the fleet," he said. "But they were being asked to train future culinary specialists using some of the worst equipment. That's when we knew something had to change."

Metz and his team conducted walkthroughs, drafted designs, and assembled cost estimates between 2021 and 2022. But as he approached retirement in late 2022, the project sat in the middle of the Command's priority list and carried a price tag high enough that he believed the plan might fade away. "I kind of lost faith that it would ever happen," he said.

After retiring from active duty, Metz worked as a food service analyst for Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet, but returned

to NAVSUP FLC San Diego six months later as a civilian employee. Once settled in, he began revisiting unfinished business.

"The galley was the first thing I asked about," Metz said. "I found the old drawings on a shared drive and started ringing the bell again."

Metz credits several leaders for reviving the project, including Jim Harris, NAVSUP FLC San Diego facilities manager, who championed the renovation, and Ken Lee, who had supported smaller refresh efforts over the years to keep the galley functional.

By late 2023, the Command approved funding and contracting followed in early 2024, with construction beginning in the third week of January 2025. Although initially scheduled to finish in April, unexpected issues — including updates required by external equipment owners and newly discovered sanitation requirements — added delays.

Even so, the renovation finished ahead of typical timelines for similar military projects. The final cost came in at around \$600,000, Metz said.

One of the significant upgrades was a new drainage system and additional sinks to meet sanitation standards after the removal of the galley's single-tank sanitizing dishwasher. Metz called the oversight "humbling," but said it underscored how outdated the previous design had been.

Other improvements include updated flooring, modernized equipment, and an open-concept layout featuring a pony wall that separates student training areas from spaces used by civilians and active-duty personnel for daily meals. The open design preserves visibility and safety while keeping the galley accessible and functional.

The new layout also allows NFMT to conduct classroom instruction and hands-on train-



NAVSUP FLC San Diego Galley, post-renovation, will be able to better train Sailors from across the region, improving quality support to the warfighter. U.S. Navy photo by Frank Valdez

ing in a single integrated space, eliminating the need for students to transition between rooms.

"Students learn better when they're in the environment," Metz said. "Now they can sit in class and take three steps to begin practical application."

Metz emphasized the project's

collaborative nature, praising active-duty staff, civilian teammates, and Command leadership for keeping the momentum alive.

"When folks point at me and say I got it done, it's never about me," he said. "If no decision gets made, nothing moves forward — but this was absolutely a team effort."



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Marines, Sailors train for urban operations

The 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit conducted realistic urban training across Arizona and Southern California, Nov. 3-13. The exercise, involving the entire Marine air-ground task force and elements from Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 122, assessed 11th MEU's ability to respond to a range of contingency operations.



Story by Lance Cpl. Nicole Stuart
11 MEU

Sailors assess a simulated casualty during Realistic Urban Training Nov. 10. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Oliver Nisbet

As 11th MEU's first large-scale exercise as a composited air-ground task force, the urban training tested the capabilities of 1,200 Marines across a spectrum of scenario-driven missions built to mirror the pressure of real operations. The exercise included various rapid-response missions, such as expeditionary strikes, tactical recoveries of aircraft and personnel, limited-scale raids and the establishment of an expeditionary advanced base.

The unit is (1) ground combat, (2) landing team, (3) logistics combat and (4) aviation combat.

"The MEU's objective for this training is to deploy as a Marine air-ground task force and then work together in pursuit of a

common goal," said Maj. Jordan Vargas, assistant ops officer of the 11th MEU. "This is the first time that the elements of our [air-ground task force] came together and synergized through planning, execution, briefing and debriefing."

This training gives the 11th MEU's Marines and Sailors the opportunity to prove their readiness, lethality and innovation in a controlled but demanding environment overseen by Expeditionary Operations Training Group, I MEF.

"[Realistic urban training] makes us more lethal by bringing together all of the assets that the Corps has," said Sgt. Jackson Intlekofer, a squad leader with

a battalion landing team. "For us at the squad level, we get to integrate with the supporting elements of the [task force] who enable us to go into an objective, kick the door in and do our thing. This makes us much more lethal as a battalion landing team."

Urban training helps 11th MEU to refine its cohesion as a fully integrated air-ground task force. By navigating the exercise, MEU demonstrated a commitment to warfighting readiness, mission accomplishment and teamwork. The lessons learned during the exercise will enhance the MEU's performance in future operations, ensuring its continued effectiveness as a versatile expeditionary force.



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TEST SQUADRONS PROVE ATAWS READY FOR LEGACY HORNET PILOTS

by Michael Smith
Naval Air Warfare Center
An F/A-18 Hornet raced low across the China Lake desert during a simulated terrain collision. Seconds later, the jet pulled up and climbed to safety. The recovery proved the Automatic Terrain Awareness and Warning System could take over when a pilot no longer has time to respond.

The recovery was part of a joint test program by the “Dust Devils” of Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 31 at Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, in partnership with the “Salty Dogs” of VX-23 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland.

Controlled Flight Into Terrain has long been one of tactical aviation’s most unforgiving hazards. It occurs when a fully func-

tional aircraft is unintentionally flown into the ground.

Between 2010 and 2016, the Navy and Marine Corps lost several F/A-18 Hornets in training and operational mishaps. Each loss reinforced the need for an automatic safeguard that could save aircrew and aircraft when human limits are reached.

The Marine Corps recognized that need after seeing the Air Force’s Automatic Ground Collision Avoidance System save multiple F-16 pilots. Marine aviators and flight test teams pushed for a similar capability in the F/A-18A-D, launching development under the Navy’s program office for the aircraft, PMA-265, to protect pilots and extend the life of a platform no longer in production.

“The Marine Corps F/A-



A Growler flies over the Point Mugu Sea Range during a photo exercise. U.S. Navy photo by Katie Archibald

18A-D legacy Hornet community was the driving force behind ATAWS,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Burchett, commanding officer of VX-31. “Every Hornet saved means one more aircraft and aviator available for combat.”

How ATAWS works ATAWS builds upon the Hornet’s existing Terrain Awareness Warning System. It continuously predicts the aircraft’s flight path relative to the earth’s surface, using terrain

data, altitude, speed and attitude to calculate when a collision is certain without pilot action.

When a crash is nearly imminent, the system issues visual and audible warnings. If the pilot fails to respond, ATAWS levels the wings automatically. It then instructs a rapid pull-up to clear the terrain. Control is returned to the pilot once the aircraft is at a safe altitude.

Since legacy Hornets use manual throttles, ATAWS intervenes through flight control inputs only. The system engages only after a pilot has missed all visual and auditory cues, providing automatic recovery when there’s no longer time for a human response.

“Any time a system is designed to intentionally take control of the aircraft away from the pilot, extreme diligence is required,” Burchett said. “We had to be absolutely certain it would not interfere with a mission or take action when it shouldn’t.”

Testing the system at China Lake From 2023 to 2025, VX-31 partnered with VX-23. They conducted a joint test campaign to ensure ATAWS operated safely and predictably in various flight conditions. The team executed three phases.

VX-23 completed 32 flights evaluating system logic responses to different dives and recoveries. VX-31 flew 16 flights focused on nuisance testing over flat desert and mountainous terrain to make sure the system would not trigger false warnings or recoveries. The final phase combined both squadrons at China Lake for 16 full-performance flights over seven consecutive weeks.

“The team executed 177 test points that challenged and stressed the system,” said David Pineda, a VX-31 flight test engineer. “Those test points validated that ATAWS met or exceeded the modeled performance.” Maj. Brian “Wedge” Walpole, VX-31 Legacy Hornet department head, said the system’s consistency between simulator and actual performance confirmed its readiness.

“Regardless of terrain or flight profiles, the system flew like the simulator, and we verified the model through flight test,” Walpole said.

Throughout those weeks, pilots did high-G maneuvers and low-angle strafing runs. Flight test engineers in the test bay watched telemetry. Meanwhile, chase plane crews provided visual backup to ensure safety and effectiveness. The team observed only minor anomalies, none requiring design changes.

PHOTO GALLERY



COMMS CHECK Marine Corps Cpls. Abad Evan and Mena Mathew conduct a radio check during hasty command-and-control center training at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., Nov. 18, 2025. The training allows Marines to strengthen their skills and teamwork in establishing communications in degraded environments. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Gregory Hudson



MAKING A CONNECTION USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, left, and USS *Carl M. Levin* prepare for a refueling in the Pacific Ocean, Nov. 16, 2025. *Theodore Roosevelt*, flagship of Carrier Strike Group 9, is conducting exercises to bolster readiness and capability in the 3rd Fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Aaron Haro Gonzalez



SHOTEX Sailors assigned to Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet (C3F) receive seasonal influenza vaccines during a shot exercise at C3F headquarters, Nov. 18. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Maria G. Llanos



IN THE SURF Sailors assigned to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 paddle a rigid-hulled inflatable boat while conducting surf passage training at Naval Air Station North Island Nov. 17, 2025. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class August Clawson

USS *Pierre* commissions ‘under the bright Florida sky’

by Lt. Brinn Hebron
Pacific Fleet Public Affairs
PANAMA CITY, Fla. – The Navy commissioned its newest ship, Independence-variant littoral combat ship USS *Pierre* (LCS 38) in a ceremony held here Nov. 15.

Guest speaker John Phelan, 79th Secretary of the Navy, recognized the innovation of the Independence-variant littoral combat ship and thanked the leadership and crew of USS *Pierre* as they brought the ship to life and began her commissioned service.

“What an extraordinary day to stand beside our newest warship under the bright Florida sky, surrounded by those who built her, those who will sail her, and those whose spirit she carries forward,” said Phelan. “It’s an honor to be here in Panama City, and for me to place USS *Pierre*, the 19th and final Independence-variant littoral combat ship into commission.”

Larissa Thune Hargens, *Pierre*’s sponsor and the daughter of South Dakota Sen. John Thune, gave the crew the order to, “man our ship and bring her to life,” after which the Sailors of *Pierre* responded, “aye, aye, ma’am” and ran aboard the ship.

“Today marks a moment of pride, purpose and profound connection between the ship, her crew, her namesake city of Pierre and our great nation. As the ship sponsor, I again commit my support and appreciation to each of you and each crew who follows in your wake,” said Hargens.

“My connection to the Navy began long before this day with my grandfather. He was a Navy fighter pilot during World War II, flying missions over the

Pacific. He was brave, determined, and deeply devoted to his country. Just as my grandfather once took to the skies to defend our freedom, you will take to the seas to protect it with the same bravery, discipline, and devotion to duty that have defined the Navy for generations.”

In the week leading up to the commissioning ceremony, the *Pierre* crew spent time around Panama City, hosted tours onboard for local organizations and built ties with the city hosting their ship’s commissioning ceremony.

“Many of you have traveled thousands of miles to celebrate this moment with us. To commission a ship that represents our nation’s free and independent spirit, the strength of our constitutional republic, and our willingness to fight for what’s right around the world,” said Cmdr. Justin Guernsey, commander of *Pierre*.

“To my coyotes, these past few months you’ve had the opportunity to become intimately familiar with the performance and capabilities of the Navy’s newest fighting ship. Carry our colors high as we bring this ship to life and forward into what action forward into what action may await.”

Other platform guests at the commissioning ceremony were Sen. John Thune, Sen. Ashley Moody, Rep. (Fla.) Neal Dunn, Rear Adm. Jeff Jurgemeyer, deputy director, Joint Interagency Task Force South, Pierre, S.D. Mayor Steve Harding, Mayor of Panama City, Allan Branch and President of Austal USA, Michelle Kruger.

The master of ceremonies was Lt. Cmdr. Audrey Munji, ship’s executive officer

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The Army-Navy game: 15 historical facts you probably don’t know

by Carrie McLeroy
Defense Media Activity
Updated by Dispatch staff
On Dec. 13, the U.S. Military Academy at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy will meet on the gridiron for the 126th time, this year in Baltimore, Md. A game that steeped in tradition is bound to have some interesting details associated with it. Here are a few you may not know.

1. The Army and Navy have faced off a total of 125 times. To date, Navy has 63 wins, Army has 55. There have been seven ties.

2. Cadets and midshipmen played the first Army-Navy football game Nov. 29, 1890 on “The Plain” at West Point. Navy had been playing organized football since 1879 and defeated the newly established Army team, 24-0.

3. The 271 members of the Corps of Cadets each contributed 52 cents to pay half of the Navy’s traveling costs for the 1890 game.

4. Although today we know the game as an annual tradition (and it has been such since 1930), there have been 10 times when the Army-Navy game was not played.

It’s said that the longest interruption, which lasted from 1894 to 1898, came about after an argument between an Army general and a Navy admiral almost resulted in a duel following the 1893 game.

The game also wasn’t played in 1909. That year, Army canceled its remaining games after Cadet Eugene Byrne died from an injury sustained in an October game against Harvard.

Twice during World War I, in 1917 and 1918, games were canceled on orders from the War Department. And in 1928 and 1929, the

academies could not reconcile player eligibility standards.

5. On Nov. 27, 1926, the game was held in Chicago for the formal dedication of Soldier Field in honor of the American servicemen who had fought in World War I.

6. Going into both the 1944 and 1945 games, Army and Navy were ranked No. 1 and No. 2, respectively. Army won both games.

7. The tradition of mules as mascots for Army dates back to 1899, when a quartermaster officer decided the team needed a mascot to counter the Navy goat and chose a white mule used to pull an ice wagon.

However, the first “official” mule was a former U.S. Army pack mule named “Mr. Jackson” that arrived at West Point in 1936. Since Mr. Jackson, there have been 17 “official” Army mules.

“Buckshot,” the only female of the bunch, arrived at West Point in 1964, a gift from the Air Force Academy. Today, three mules serve as Army mascots: Raider, Ranger II and General Scott.

8. Instant replay made its American debut in the 1963 Army-Navy game.

9. A 1973 episode of “M*A*S*H” referenced a fictional Army-Navy game that ended 42-36 Navy. To this day, no Army-Navy game has ended with that score. The radio announcer in the episode says the game is the 53rd Army-Navy game. That game was played in 1952; Navy won, 7-0.

10. The Rose Bowl is the only site west of the Mississippi River to host the Army-Navy game -- it did so in 1983.

11. Only six Army-Navy games have been held on the campus

of either academy. Two of those games were during World War II, one in 1942 and the other in 1943.

12. On December 10, 2016, Army defeated Navy for the first time since 2001 with a 21–17 victory, snapping its 14-game losing streak against Navy.

13. In 2022, Army defeated Navy by a score of 20–17 in double overtime in the first overtime game in the series’ history.

14. Through the 2023 meeting, 90 of the 124 games in the series have been contested in Philadelphia, including every game from 1932 to 1982 except three games that were relocated due to World War II travel restrictions. The 2024 game was played at FedExField in Landover, Maryland.

New York’s Polo Grounds holds the record for the most games hosted outside of Philadelphia, although the last game played there was in the 1920s.

15. Following each game, players sing both teams’ alma maters. The winning team joins the losing team and sings facing the losing team’s students. Then the losing team joins the victors on their side of the field and sings the winner’s alma mater to its students. This act is a show of mutual respect and solidarity.

Since the winning team’s alma mater is always played last, the phrase “sing second” has become synonymous with winning the rivalry game.

Information for this article came from various Army Heritage and Education Center documents, West Point Athletics, and the articles "When Army and Navy meet, there is no other game with deeper foundations or greater prestige" and "The First Army-Navy Game."

Searching for gratitude in family’s attitude

Our Lab, Gilligan, follows me down the stairs, waiting patiently while I stop to peer at the thermostat. Four jabs at the button kicks the furnace on to reduce the chill in our drafty old house. I don’t like waking at 6:30 am on holidays, but there’s a lot to do on Thanksgiving Day.

After making his morning deposits in the grass, Gilligan sprints back to the house as if his life depends on it. For Labs, meals are the highlights of every day. In the laundry room, Gilligan inhales his breakfast kibble, guzzles water, then joins me in the kitchen with a look on his dripping muzzle that says, “Is it lunchtime yet?”

The Kuerig gurgles coffee into my waiting cup, and I sip it carefully like medicine meant to revive me from near death. While I wait for caffeine to work its magic, I glance at the notepad upon which I’d written my task list.

“Cook and crumble sausage; dice six onions; dice eight ribs of celery; steam green beans; cook whole sweet potatoes; bake cornbread; remove turkey innards....” the list goes on. “Put turkey innards, veg, and water in saucepan; heat on low,” I read aloud and move around the kitchen in my robe, grabbing the necessary items. Simmering the gravy starter first thing Thanksgiving morning is my secret strategy to fill the house with the cozy scent of cooking turkey.

“Cube cornbread; saute onions; chop apple; simmer cranberries . . .” the list goes on, and on, and on.

“Mom, where is everybody?” my 30-year-old son’s presence startles me as I wrestle the turkey

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

out of the cooler where it brined overnight. “The Macy’s Parade is starting,” he says matter-of-factly. I’m so engrossed in my work, I have no inkling that hours have passed.

“Honey?!” Holding my raw-turkey-tainted hands in the air, I yell upstairs to my husband and twenty-something daughters, “Anna? Lilly? Are you up?! Hayden’s here!”

“Happy Thanksgiving, buddy!” Francis appears, freshly showered, doused in cologne and dressed in festive corduroys embroidered with pheasants. Father and son exchange back-slapping hugs. Commandeering three feet of my precious countertop, Francis makes Bloody Marys before he and Hayden escape to the family room to watch the televised parade.

With melted butter splattered on my robe and hair in my eyes, I prepare the stuffing, season the turkey, mash the sweet potatoes, and assemble the green bean casserole.

Anna shows up an hour later, hungry for breakfast and moves my pots to cook eggs. As soon as her toast pops up, she departs for the family room, leaving crumbs, a dirty frying pan, and smears of avocado in her wake.

While I’m peeling potatoes,

Francis returns to refresh his drink and says, “Hey Hon, c’mon out in the family room. We’ve got a nice fire going and the football game’s about to start.” My eye begins to twitch. Francis leaves the kitchen in a cloud of cologne with a fresh pair of Bloody Marys. I realize I haven’t brushed my teeth yet.

Alone in the kitchen, my resentment builds. I decide to order Anna and Lilly to come help me mash the potatoes, when I see the girls out the kitchen window in our yard, dolled up, taking photos of each other to post on social media.

“Hon?” Francis yells into the kitchen, “What’s the ETA on the turkey? Hayden and I are getting hungry. Should we eat a snack?”

The pot of potatoes boils over, and I hear the hiss and crackle of water hitting the flame.

When everything is almost done, I take the turkey out of the oven to rest. I ask the girls to set the table so I can take a shower before we eat, which sets off an argument about Hayden never having to do anything.

An hour later, my family has finished the meal that took me all day alone in the kitchen to cook.

To their credit, our three adult children wash all the dishes, albeit while arguing. Francis serves me a glass of bubbly and a kiss, offering, “Go put your feet up for a while, you deserve it ... besides, we won’t need pie for at least another hour.”

www.
themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

California Department of Veterans Affairs offers variety of programs, services

California is home to nearly 1.6 million veterans. They range in age from World War II veterans in their 90’s to “Millennials” from the current conflicts. Each generation has a different need and interest and each has a different way to learn about those services and benefits, but the one common element for all of you (and your family) is you stood up, put on the uniform and served in the U.S. Military. You are a veteran and because of that distinction you have earned benefits and services that will help you transition back to civilian life, or help you when you are finished with your civilian career and are now looking at retirement.

CalVet offers a variety of services to honorably discharged veterans from residency in one of our state Veterans Homes to helping you purchase a home through our Home Loan program. This department also advocates for veterans, providing information and representation before the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. There are many services, benefits and preferences provided to you by

the people of California as a way to honor your service...explore <https://www.calvet.ca.gov/calvet-programs> and find out what you may have been missing.

CSAAVE

Eligible service members, veterans and dependents can receive GI Bill® benefits when attending college education and job training programs approved and monitored by the California State Approving Agency for Veterans Education (CSAAVE).

CalVet Home Loans

If you are a veteran and want a great home loan, then you need a CalVet Home Loan. You’ll find the CalVet Loan will save you money and provide protection for your home and investment.

CalVet Veteran Homes

The Veterans Homes of California range in size from 60 residents on 20+ acre campuses to over 1,000 residents on a 500 acre campus. Each home offers a unique environment, levels of care, and a range of social activities.

CalVet Veterans Services

The Division of Veterans Services is responsible for administering a

number of special programs, benefits and services for California veterans and their families.

Calif. Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP)

California Transition Assistance Program (CalTAP) is a program designed to inform and connect veterans of all eras to their earned federal and state benefits as well as provide continued support and assistance as their needs change over time.

Calif. Veterans Registry

The California Veterans Registry is a permanent record of all California Veterans, past and present, who have served our nation since statehood was established in 1850. Each California veteran is entitled to the basic information.

Cemeteries and Burials

The Department of Veterans Affairs has adopted Sections 460 and 461 of Title 12 of the California Code of Regulations. These regulations establish the eligibility requirements for interment in a

state veterans cemetery

Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise Program

The Office of Small Business and DVBE assists small and disabled veteran businesses by providing certification assistance, participating in outreach events, and supporting businesses through advocacy.

Incarcerated Veterans

It is important justice-involved Veterans are familiar with what happens to VA benefits and benefits they are receiving, if they become incarcerated.

Jobs

State and federal employment assistance program, veterans preference programs, How-to-Get-a-State-Job tutorials, veteran-specific job sites, local job fairs and more.

LGBTQ Veterans

CalVet is committed to ensuring all Veterans have access to and receive the benefits they have earned without regard to sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability.

ListServ

CalVet has divided California into eight regions each region is associated with its own email database. These databases are used to send out information pertaining to veteran events and programs in your local communities.

Minority Veterans

Minority Veterans Division promotes the use of VA benefits, programs, and services by minority and LGBT veterans. We advocate on behalf of minority and LGBT veterans by identifying gaps in services and making recommendations to improve services.

Veterans Benefit Enhancement Program (VBE)

The Veterans Benefit Enhancement program educates, counsels, and assists qualified veterans receiving Medi-Cal on the benefits of United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) health care enrollment.

Women Veterans

California is home to 185,269 women veterans. With California’s women leading the nation in military service, it is imperative to acknowledge and address the needs of this growing demographic.

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USSMidwayMuseum is recruiting volunteers for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety https://www.midway.org/give-join/volunteers/volunteer-opportunities/

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SD Humane Society offers a Community Veterinary Program

For pet families with limited financial resources, the San Diego Humane Society's Community Veterinary Program provides affordable, compassionate and exceptional veterinary care to help keep pets out of shelters and with the people who love them. Clinic services are available at our San Diego Campus by appointment only, Tuesday through Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We also offer mobile clinic services twice a month, bringing veterinary services directly into the communities that need them most.

Please note: The Community Veterinary Program does not provide emergency or urgent care services. Eligibility requirements for our services include: Household income under \$70k/year and/or proof of enrollment in SSI, SNAP card, SSDI, WIC, pay stub, other federal/state assistance or unemployment benefits.

https://www.sdhumane.org/programs/community-veterinary-program/

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

MOVIES AT THE BASES

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

https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/ select movies at drop-down menu on left

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

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

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• Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.

Movie Rating System

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PG – Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.

PG-13 – Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

R – Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

NC-17 – No one 17 or under admitted.

ROY'S SUDOKU

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

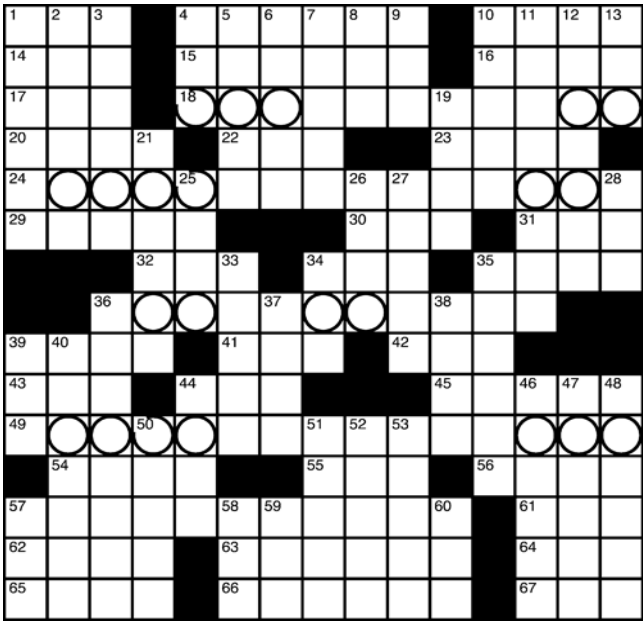
1 Playground game
4 Theatrical backdrops
10 Academic pds.
14 4-Down may be added to it
15 Tour
16 Prose-fixing job
17 Expert
18 Settlement for prisoners
20 Iberian river
22 Countless years
23 One with cinco dedos
24 Place to display tchotchkes
29 Die down, as a storm
30 Type
31 "What was ___ think?"
32 High-level H.S. classes
34 Prefix with cycle
35 Linseed oil source
36 She voices Elsa in "Frozen" films
39 PC connections
41 Little rascal
42 "MASH" milieu: Abbr.
43 Slippery swimmer
44 Pre-1868 Tokyo
45 Like Stout's Nero Wolfe
49 Approximately 247 acres
54 Govt. agency with an Informed Delivery service
55 Cry from a crib
56 Distant relative of the emu

57 Pocket money ... and what's in the puzzle's circles?
61 Supergirl's symbol
62 Wheel cover
63 "That's unnecessary"
64 GPS indication
65 Soap since 1965, familiarly
66 Like plans yet to be finalized
67 Grass in a roll

Down

1 Capital east of Denver
2 Site with many home pages?
3 Name spelled out in a Van Morrison song
4 "The Racer's Edge"
5 Golf course hazard
6 Used as fuel
7 Donald Jr.'s mom
8 Many-voiced Blanc
9 Capital WNW of Denver
10 Psalm instruction
11 Three-time "Modern Family" Emmy nominee
12 Company that merged with Konica
13 Oinker's digs

19 Siberian city
21 Eightsomes
25 French military cap
26 French film
27 "Hogan's Heroes" colonel
28 Sly critter
33 Derogatory
34 Decision maker at home
35 "Show Boat" author
36 Apparent
37 Wild way to run
38 New way for many to meet
39 ___ Moines
40 Giant redwood
44 Scots Gaelic
46 Old anesthetics
47 Makes sure of
48 Took off the board
50 Altar areas
51 Start of a demand
52 Bowling sites
53 "Well, shucks!"
57 Bygone Ford
58 Current events TV channel
59 "Woo-___!"
60 Savannah summer hrs.



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Maxillofacial program at NMCSO restores form, function, and readiness

by Regena Kowitz, Defense Health Network Pacific Rim
SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Behind the doors of an operating room at Naval Medical Center San Diego, a team of medical and dental professionals are redefining what's possible in the treatment and restoration of patients with life-altering head and neck injuries.

The Maxillofacial Restoration Program team at NMCSO is meticulously rebuilding faces and jaws destroyed by trauma, disease, or congenital defects. And what they are doing is more than reconstructing physical form and function—they are restoring patients' lives and putting warfighters back in the fight.

"During my time at Walter Reed from 2011 to 2017, head and neck injuries—facial injuries—were the second most common injury in Iraq and Afghanistan," said Cmdr. Daniel Hammer, program director and maxillofacial surgeon at NMCSO. "If you look at the current landscape with drone warfare and top-down trauma, head and neck injuries are only going to become more prevalent."

The work being done by Hammer and his team at NMCSO is doing more than providing innovative care to patients; they are building a medical force that's ready for the conflicts of tomorrow. They are ensuring that when our warfighters go into harm's way, the team in San Diego will be standing by to provide the specialized care and treatment necessary to restore troops with head and neck injuries to full health and readiness.

By combining clinical expertise, 3D modeling, and virtual surgical planning, the team performs what is called "jaw-in-a-day" reconstruction—rebuilding a jaw by transplanting a segment of the patient's own leg bone (fibula) after placing dental implants into the bone and attaching prosthetic teeth in a single operation. Traditionally, the process of reconstructing a patient's jaw would take approximately two years and multiple procedures—a timeline not conducive with military readiness.

Do you find yourself grinding your teeth?

newsinhealth.com

Do you often find that you're clenching your jaw or rubbing your teeth together? Do you tend to wake up with a sore jaw, ear pain, or headache? If so, you may have a condition called bruxism. That's the medical term for clenching your jaw or teeth or grinding your teeth.

Mild or occasional tooth grinding or clenching may not cause problems. But frequent or severe bruxism can lead to jaw pain, fatigue, and headaches. It can damage your teeth and make them crack, loosen, or even fall out.

Bruxism is more common



SAN DIEGO (Aug. 19, 2025) — Cmdr. Daniel Hammer, maxillofacial surgeon and director of the Maxillofacial Restoration Program, oversees the surgical team during a complex jaw-in-a-day procedure at Naval Medical Center San Diego. The multidisciplinary team works in close coordination to remove a diseased segment of a patient's jaw segment and reconstruct it with part of a bone from the lower leg. DoW photo by Regena Kowitz.

The results speak for themselves. Since November 2020, the program has treated more than 60 patients with a 94% return-to-duty rate for active-duty service members. Patients experience hospital stays of less than seven days, which is nearly half the national average of 12-13 days, and 100% are discharged without feeding tubes and walking unassisted within six weeks of surgery.

These outcomes are possible because of the program's integrated approach. The team is made up of highly skilled professionals from across nine clinical care pathways, including dental and maxillofacial prosthodontics, mental health and well-being, speech and language pathology, and anesthesia and pain

management, working together seamlessly.

"Teamwork is really important in complex reconstruction," said Cmdr. Samuel Frasier, department chair for ear, nose, and throat. "There's good data showing that teamed approaches improve patient outcomes, improve surgeon well-being, and decrease burnout. One of the advantages of working in the military system is that we have a structure that encourages collaboration in a way that's easier than in the civilian world."

This tightly coordinated team collaborates across sixteen services and specialties from the earliest stages of a patient's care plan, putting the patient at the

center of everything they do. "We built this team with the absolute focus on readiness and patient outcomes, and our program has done what few others in the world have done," said Hammer. "Having somebody stand up and walk without a walker one day after surgery. Having somebody take a sip of water two days after having their face completely transplanted. Having this accelerated track with patients getting their final teeth four months after surgery. We can innovate without the silos that often slow progress in the civilian sector, and that collaboration allows us to move faster and achieve better outcomes for our patients."

For patients, that means fewer surgeries, shorter recovery times, and, for warfighters, earlier return to duty. For the Defense Health Agency (DHA), it represents a model of how high-reliability practices, patient-centered care, and cross-service collaboration drive both improved outcomes and force readiness, which is part of DHA's strategic vision for military medicine.

Lt. Col. Christopher Chang, an oral maxillofacial surgeon at Evans Army Community Hospital at Fort

The Maxillofacial Restoration Program team at NMCSO is meticulously rebuilding faces and jaws destroyed by trauma, disease, or congenital defects.

Carson, Colorado, said the DHA's structure allows military surgeons across the services to learn from and contribute to one another. "Something like this—where an Army surgeon and a Navy surgeon are able to work together across the services—that's all part of the Defense Health Agency," Chang said. "It's good for us as surgeons and doctors to be able to take care of patients together."

This cross-service collaboration exemplifies DHA's commitment to meeting evolving healthcare challenges while ensuring readiness for future conflicts. "Programs like this show how the DHA is transforming military medicine," said Rear Adm. Kevin Brown, director of Defense Health Network Pacific Rim, which has oversight of NMCSO. "They demonstrate that readiness and patient-centered care aren't competing priorities—

they're complementary enablers of a shared mission. We are investing in warfighting readiness through innovative processes to accelerate a patient's recovery while also investing in critical skill sustainment of our medical force. This restores the health of our fighting force and ensures we are ready to save lives on the battlefield when we are needed most."

In an era where warfare is rapidly evolving and injuries are becoming more complex, the Maxillofacial Restoration Program demonstrates that one of military medicine's greatest strengths is its ability to unite diverse expertise around a single mission to achieve success.

By breaking down traditional medical silos and fostering collaboration across specialties and services, this program doesn't just rebuild faces; it transforms lives, restoring hope and readiness. For every warfighter who walks out of NMCSO ready to fight again and every patient who can face the world, military medicine is delivering on its promise to make extraordinary experiences ordinary and exceptional outcomes routine.

Art and healing take center stage at Help Heal Veterans' open house

Veterans, families, and community members came together at Help Heal Veterans' headquarters in Winchester, Ca. for Creativity Heals: Veterans Day Open House, a special event celebrating the role of art and creativity in recovery and resilience.

Hosted by Help Heal Veterans (Heal Vets), the nation's leader in therapeutic craft kits for veterans and active-duty service members, the event featured the unveiling of a new art installation titled "The Healing Journey." The exhibit visually captures a service member's path from duty and struggle to healing, highlighting how creativity can transform the process of recovery.

Guests toured Heal Vets' craft kit manufacturing facilities, joined hands-on art workshops, and enjoyed live music from the American Patriot Music Project. Throughout the day, visitors observed how creative expression supports veterans living with traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and other wounds of war.

"As we honor those who have served in our armed forces this Veterans Day, we want to raise awareness of how creativity can heal the visible and invisible wounds of war," said Capt. Joe McClain, USN (Ret.), CEO of Help Heal Veterans. "We welcomed community members to experience firsthand how Crea-



Help Heal Veterans held a Veterans Day open house.

tivity Heals through craft therapy, as we celebrate both the healing power of art and the community that stands behind our veterans."

Veteran participants also shared how "The Healing Journal Wall" resonated with them.

"Without the info from the artist, I immediately went to the monster painting indicating the haunting that is present daily, and it made me tear up," said James White, USN (Ret.). "The sadness that lives in me (us) is scary. I took a breath and counted to 10. Then I was thankful for the painting for speaking for me."

Now in its 54th year, Help Heal Veterans continues to make a lasting difference in the lives of America's service members. Founded during the Vietnam War,

the nonprofit has distributed millions of free craft therapy kits nationwide, many of which are used as part of treatment plans in VA and military hospitals.

Representatives from local veteran service organizations, including Thundar & Lightning & Peace, Semper Utilis, American Patriot Music Project, The Vet Center, American Legion, and Wellness for Veterans; members of NAMTA (the International Art Materials Association); and sponsors, including Southwest Airlines and Starbucks also participated, offering prizes and sharing ways to support veterans.

For more information or to support Heal Vets' mission, visit HealVets.org.

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