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QUANTICO HOSTS INAUGURAL PRESIDENTIAL FITNESS TEST FOR MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

Shaehmus Sawyer,
 Marine Corps Base Quantico
 Over 100 Crossroads Elementary School and Quantico Middle High School students

participated in MCB Quantico's Presidential Fitness Test at Butler Stadium, April 12.

"This was the kickoff [of the

Presidential Fitness Test]," said Steve Simmons, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of War for Military Community and Family Policy, following the PFT. "So, you kids are setting an example for your peers, the youth, and the rest of the Nation to follow."

Throughout the entire event, music filled the stadium, Marines and family members danced and played with kids, and food and refreshments were provided for all.

Every student, ages 6 to 17, competed to earn the Presidential Fitness Award. They ran through the gauntlet of the three components of the event:

- Core and Abdominal Strength: curl-ups or plank
- Upper Body Strength: push-ups or pullups
- Cardiorespiratory Fitness: 1-mile run or 20-meter beep test

Out of all the students present, 15 earned the Presidential Fitness Award, including an unsuspecting Crossroads Elementary student in the 6-9 age group. As the 40-pound, 44-inch-tall girl walked up, the crowd awed, cheered, and applauded as the rest of the names were called.

Each Presidential Award recipient exemplified the words of Simmons, which echoed the sentiment of President Donald Trump after he signed the executive order that reinstated the PFT on July 31, 2025, making the PFT mandatory for the 161 schools across military installations.

The new competitive test replaces the more recent wellness-focused programs, returning to the competitive model originally established in 1956.



A Marine Corps fitness instructor leads warm-up exercises with students from Marine Corps Base Quantico's DOW Education Activity schools prior to conducting the Presidential Fitness Test at Butler Stadium on MCB Quantico, Va., May 12. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Braydon Rogers

Hegseth welcomes Ford strike group home after record-breaking deployment

by Matthew Olay

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth was on hand with his wife, Jennifer, and numerous senior Navy leaders at Naval Station Norfolk, Va., May 15, to welcome home Sailors assigned to the USS *Gerald R. Ford* Carrier Strike Group after a record-setting, multi-month deployment.

The strike group returned to Norfolk after a 326-day deployment, the longest U.S. aircraft carrier deployment since the Vietnam War, surpassing the previous post-Vietnam mark set by aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln*'s roughly 295-day deployment in 2020.

"Extraordinary Sailors and crew of Strike Group 12: for nearly a year you have held the line for our nation. Your voyage took you to places never expected," Hegseth told *Ford*'s crew while greeting them over the ship's public address system.

He then recounted how the strike group set off on a routine deployment to the European theater in June 2025, only to be diverted to the Caribbean Sea shortly thereafter in support of the narco-terrorist drug interdiction mission Operation Southern Spear, as well as the operation that led to the Jan. 3 capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro.

Hegseth then pointed out that, following operations around Central and South America, the *Ford* Strike Group deployed to the Middle East in support of Operation Epic Fury, where the group was joined by destroyers USS *Bainbridge* and USS *Mahan*—both of which also returned to Norfolk as part of *Ford*'s record-setting deployment, and both of which Hegseth also welcomed home this morning.

"You showed resiliency; you fought through all the way to finish the latter part of your mission in Operation Epic Fury ... where you and others [sent] an unmistakable message to the world: no one can match USS *Ford*, and no one can match the United States military," Hegseth told the crew.

Hegseth then surprised the strike force by announcing that Carrier Strike Group 12 had been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the group's actions during their deployment.

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Challenge dropped to Air Force's fighter jet training operations in Eastern Oregon

by Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

Earlier this month, the Oregon Natural Desert Association voluntarily dismissed its suit that alleged that the Air Force was illegally discharging countermeasures — chaff and flares — into waterways as part of its fighter jet training operations over the Paradise North area of eastern Oregon.

The suit alleged that these releases from aircraft entered waterways and violated the Clean Water Act because the Air Force did not have a permit to do so. The Air Force denied that its operations required a permit in light of an April 20 determination by President Donald J. Trump to exempt for one year the Air Force's fighter jet training operations in Idaho, Oregon, and Nevada from federal, state, and local requirements respecting the control land abatement

of water pollution.

The dismissal will minimize any disruption of the Air Force's training program and save significant time and resources that the litigation would have required.

"Given how critical the Air Force's training operations are to the nation's military readiness and national defense, we are gratified to see this case dismissed," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Adam Gustafson of the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division (ENRD).

"Congress granted the President the authority to exempt certain military operations from Clean Water Act requirements, and doing so here ensures that our pilots continue to receive the best training in the world."

Military aircraft have been training in eastern Oregon since Mountain Home Army Air Field opened in August 1942. The Air Force currently conducts aerial fighter training for aircraft — primarily F-15E Strike Eagle aircraft — and

pilots stationed at the base.

This aerial flight training takes place within six Military Operation Areas, including the Paradise North desert lands in southeastern Oregon, as part of the Air Force's ongoing mis-

sion to train and equip America's elite cadre of fighter pilots.

The training occurs over an expansive area and may include fighter jets releasing chaff and flares into the atmosphere as practice for defending against

RADAR-guided weapons and heat-seeking missiles.

For several decades, the Air Force has, at times, used chaff and flares during aerial training at Mountain Home Air Force Base.

USS Cleveland (LCS 31) commissions in namesake city

by Lt.j.g. Rachael Jones and
Ensign Dylan Barron

CLEVELAND — The Navy commissioned its newest and last Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS *Cleveland* (LCS 31) in Cleveland May 16.

Acting Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao highlighted the significance of the crew's role in bringing the ship to life as it began its commissioned service. "Today we celebrate the Sailors who breathe life into this ship.

To the officers and crew of USS *Cleveland*, today is your day," said Cao.

LCS 31 is the fourth ship to be named in honor of the city of Cleveland. The first was a cruiser (C-19) commissioned in 1903 that served during World War I. The second was the lead ship of her class of light cruisers, USS *Cleveland* (CL-55), which earned 13 battle stars for its service during World War II. The third was Austin-class amphibious transport dock, USS *Cleveland* (LPD 7), which served from 1967 to 2011, providing critical support during the Vietnam War, Operation Desert Shield/Storm, and various humanitarian missions.

LCS 31 is the 16th and final Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) to be built and commissioned in the Navy.



Attendees salute while colors are paraded during the commissioning ceremony of the Navy's last Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS *Cleveland* (LCS 31) in Cleveland. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Kenneth Blair

Cleveland's skipper officer, Cmdr. Bruce Hallett, emphasized the significance of the crew's role in shaping the ship's legacy as it enters service.

endure long after all of us have left these decks," said Hallett.

The ship's sponsor, Robyn Modly, said "Every day we do something to support this ship and her sailors will be a glorious day. Today is just the first step toward the many glorious days that will follow."

NHRC researchers seek to supplement the sun and raise Marine recruit Vitamin D levels

by Danielle Cazarez

Naval Health Research Center
SAN DIEGO - Researchers from Naval Health Research Center (NHRC) are investigating whether vitamin D-fortified Performance Readiness Bars can prevent broken bones and fatigue among U.S. Marine recruits.

Recent studies indicate that recruits arrive at boot camp with dangerously low levels of vitamin D. While many believe being outdoors in the sun is enough to maintain healthy vitamin D levels, experts say it is not enough to provide the boost needed for the intense physical demands of Marine training.

Without enough vitamin D, the body struggles to function. This can lead to health issues and injuries such as muscle weakness, increased fatigue, weakened immunity and bone fragility.

NHRC researchers are studying whether consuming vitamin D-enriched bars can "armor" the body from the inside out and stave off these health risks. They paired the bar distribution with Marine Corps Recruit Depot's San Diego, Performance

Nutrition Pack schedule. These performance bars were given to the recruits during physical training days.

They were also distributed during the crucible — the final and most physically demanding stage of training — along with five Meals Ready to Eat.

When recruits assigned to Delta Company first arrived at MCRD San Diego, researchers collected blood samples using an initial finger-prick test to test vitamin D levels in the new recruits. As boot camp graduation approached, trainees underwent a second round of vitamin D testing to evaluate their post-training vitamin D levels.

As the study continues, NHRC researchers are focusing on two main goals:

- * Monitoring if vitamin D levels are higher after boot camp.

- * Determining whether increased vitamin D levels from consistently eating the bars can lower the number of bone and muscle injuries.

"In this final phase we are testing for vitamin D levels in recruits pre- and post-boot camp," said Brenda Nieder-

berger, a research physiologist with NHRC.

"There are a total of four companies participating at MCRD San Diego, two winter cohorts and two summer cohorts. Within those four cohorts, one company received an intervention of a vitamin D fortified Performance Readiness Bar, while the other company received a non-vitamin D fortified bar (control)."

Scientists are still looking forward to confirming final results at this time, but the search for innovative ways to keep U.S. warfighters equipped and healthy with preventative treatments continues. If successful, these Performance Readiness Bars could become a standard part of every Marine recruit's gear, helping them stay prepared for the mission and reducing the risk of time lost from the mission.

NHRC supports Navy, Marine Corps and joint U.S. warfighter health readiness and lethality with research and development that delivers high-value, high-impact solutions to the health and readiness challenges the U.S. population faces on the battlefield, at-sea, home and abroad.



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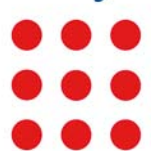


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Centcom Ccommander says Epic Fury crippled Iran, enhanced military partnerships in region

by C. Todd Lopez, Pentagon News

The U.S. launched Operation Epic Fury in late February, and since then, American military forces in the U.S. Central Command area of operations have crippled Iran's military and its ability to project power, according to War Department leaders. The operation also highlighted military partners in the region.

Navy Adm. Brad Cooper, Centcom commander, testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee May 14 in Washington as part of hearings related to force posture in the region and the command's portion of the fiscal year 2027 presidential budget request. The conversation on Capitol Hill focused largely on the successes of Operation Epic Fury.

"In less than 40 days, Centcom forces achieved our military objectives," Cooper said. "Most notably, we degraded Iran's ability to project power outside its borders and threaten the region and threaten our interests."

In April and October of last year, Iran rained hundreds of missiles down over Israel, Cooper reminded lawmakers. But Iran no longer has that ability after U.S. forces effectively eliminated its conventional missile capacity.

"Today, Iran can no longer attack with that mass and scale," he said. "And further, with 90% of its defense industrial base destroyed, Iran won't be able to reconstitute those weapons for years."

President Donald J. Trump and other administration officials have stated that the Iranians will never have a nuclear weapon. So, military objectives as part of Epic Fury were designed to support that, including degrading Iran's ballistic missile capability and its navy,

while also destroying the ability of the Iranian industrial base to reconstitute any of it. All of that has been achieved through Epic Fury, Cooper said.

"The defense industrial base for their drones and their missiles in their navy were degraded by 90 percent; they have about 10 percent left," he told lawmakers.



An Air Force KC-135 Stratotanker aircraft flies above an Air Force F-35A Lightning II aircraft during Operation Epic Fury in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, April 5, 2026. U.S. Air Force photo

ers. "My military assessment would be that the [Iranian] navy will not begin to rebuild for five to 10 years."

Iran has been a direct threat, but it's also been an indirect threat, acting as a patron for terrorist proxies that carried out violence benefiting Iranian interests. That threat has been diminished greatly, Cooper said.

We watched Iran spend decades and billions of dollars arming proxies, he said, adding that Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis have been cut off from Iran's weapons supply and support because of the operation.

"This result was not foreordained, nor was it brought by chance," he said. "It's the culmination of months of careful planning built upon decades of experience."

Cooper said that as of now, no resources or equipment are flowing from Iran to terrorist proxies. Centcom works with partners in the region regularly on shared security goals. The onset of Epic Fury revealed just how good some of those partners are, Cooper said, adding that the operation has been a benefit to those military relationships.

DOW releases Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena files

The Department of War recently announced the initial release of new, never-before-seen files on Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) as part of the Presidential Unsealing and Reporting System for UAP Encounters, or PURSUE.

This interagency effort includes The White House, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Department of Energy, the DOW's All-domain Anomaly Resolution Office, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and additional components of U.S. intelligence agencies. The collection will be housed on WAR.GOV/UFO and additional files will be released by the Department of War on a rolling basis.

This release follows the direction of President Donald J. Trump to begin the process of identifying and declassifying government files related to UAP in the interest of total transparency. No other President or administration in history

has followed through on this level of UAP transparency.

The American people can now access the federal government's declassified UAP files instantly. The latest UAP videos, photos, and original source documents from across the entire United States government are all in one place — no clearance required. While past administrations sought to discredit or dissuade the American people, President Trump is focused on providing maximum transparency to the public, who can ultimately make up their own minds about the information contained in these files.

The American people have asked for more transparency on these topics, and President Trump is delivering. While all of the files have been reviewed for security purposes, many of the materials have not yet been analyzed for resolution of any anomalies.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth

said "The Department of War is in lockstep with President Trump to bring unprecedented transparency regarding our government's understanding of Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena. These files, hidden behind classifications, have long fueled justified speculation — and it's time the American people see it for themselves. This release of declassified documents demonstrates the Trump Administration's earnest commitment to unprecedented transparency."

FBI Director Kash Patel: "The FBI is proud to stand alongside President Trump and our interagency partners in this landmark release of UAP records. For the first time in history, the American people have unfettered access to declassified government files on Unidentified Anomalous Phenomenon - a level of transparency that no prior administration has delivered. The FBI remains committed to supporting this rolling declassification effort with the same

rigor and integrity we bring to every national security matter. As these files continue to be reviewed and released, the American people can be confident that their security remains our highest priority."

NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman: "I applaud President Trump's whole-of-government effort to bring greater transparency to the American people on unidentified anomalous phenomena. At NASA, our job is to bring the brightest minds and most advanced scientific instruments to bear, follow the data, and share what we learn. We will remain candid about what we know to be true, what we have yet to understand, and all that remains to be discovered. Exploration and the pursuit of knowledge are core to NASA's mission as we endeavor to unlock the secrets of the universe."

WAR.GOV/UFO is a dedicated Department of War webpage to stay up to date with the latest UAP file releases.



Top 5

- Trump says Islamic State group leader was killed in a joint US-Nigerian mission
- Payments to disabled veterans, eligible family members to increase under inflation-fighting bill
- Senators introduce bill to abolish military draft agency
- U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division, 1st MDTF to merge as Multi-Domain Command-Pacific
- Congress clashes with Pentagon over civilian harm reduction program

Congress & Politics

- Lawmakers push for domestic shipbuilding fixes as US Navy explores overseas options

Pentagon

- DoD faces mounting pressure to pass clean audit for the first time
- Pentagon cancels planned deployment of long-range missile unit to Germany
- Hegseth memo calls for sweeping, open-ended review of Pentagon's legal system
- Pentagon pushes back on CBO's trillion-dollar Golden Dome estimate

Army

- Army leaders in hot seat over Poland deployment cancellation
- Soldiers at Ranger School will now fix bayonets in test of grit

Navy

- Navy admiral: Epic Fury could force tough cuts, personnel problems by July

Air Force

- USAF to buy thousands of new radios to help rescue downed pilots

Space Force

- Space Force considering fewer moves between bases for Guardians

Coast Guard

- Admirals to be scored first on Coast Guard's first-ever PT test
- Coast Guard catches three cocaine boats in a day off Cartagena

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- West-side Skid Row: Pests, crime, litigation plague plans for VA's Los Angeles campus
- VA security personnel aren't detecting knives or booze, according to a watchdog report assessing medical facility security

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- U.S. infantry's drone-warfare experiments are getting bigger

Defense Industry

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- Israel to extend F-35I range amid war with Iran
- Japan fires first-ever missiles from Philippine soil
- Norway cancels Kongsberg-Malaysian government contract for naval strike missiles, launchers

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Property management company to pay \$60K to Navy Sailor for false affidavit

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

The Justice Department announced earlier this month that Rental Marketing Solutions (RMS), a property management company based in St. Petersburg, Fla., will pay \$60,000 to resolve allegations that it violated the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) by obtaining an unlawful eviction judgment against an active duty Navy Sailor.

This is the largest amount the Department has ever obtained for a single servicemember in a case involving the filing of a false military service affidavit.

"It is unacceptable and illegal for a landlord or property management company to file a false affidavit stating that an active duty servicemember is not in military service," said Assistant Attorney General Harmeet K. Dhillon of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "This SCRA violation had significant consequences, as potential landlords refused to rent to a sailor once they learned of the eviction on his record. He became homeless and his wife was forced to move back in with her parents in another state. The Justice Department will continue to fight to protect the rights of military families."

The Department alleges that RMS named the Sailor as a defendant in an eviction action for a property he had not lived in for several years, filed a false affidavit stating he was not on active duty, and obtained an eviction judgment against him in a Florida county court while he was assigned to USS *Nimitz* at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Wash. Because the

eviction judgment showed up on his background reports, a dozen or more landlords refused to rent to him and his wife. For four months, he had to live separately from his wife and rotate among temporary accommodations, including sleeping on the berthed naval ship, which had no heat.

The SCRA requires a plaintiff in a case where a defendant does not make an appearance to file an affidavit stating whether the defendant is in military service, with necessary supporting facts. This allows the court to appoint an attorney to represent the servicemember and to postpone the proceedings if a defense cannot be presented without

him. RMS will also be required to pay a \$6,000 civil penalty and maintain SCRA policies and procedures to avoid committing future violations.

The Department's enforcement of the SCRA is conducted by the Civil Rights Division's Housing and Civil Enforcement Section in partnership with U.S. Attorneys' Offices throughout the country. Since 2011, the Department has obtained \$489 million in monetary relief

for 152,000 servicemembers through its enforcement of the SCRA. For more information about the Department's SCRA enforcement efforts, visit www.servicemembers.gov.

Servicemembers and their dependents who believe that their rights under the SCRA may have been violated should contact the nearest Armed Forces Legal Assistance Program Office. Office locations can be found at legalassistance.law.af.mil.

Luke AFB Airmen pioneer AI integration for daily operations

by Airman 1st Class
Rebecca Wagner
56th Fighter Wing

LUKE AIR FORCE BASE, Ariz. - Luke Air Force Base Airmen are shaping how the Air Force integrates artificial intelligence into daily operations, supporting faster decision-making and improved mission effectiveness across the force.

What began with a short-notice tasking quickly evolved into a focused effort as a small team of Airmen set to identify how AI could be applied across the installation, assess limitations and align emerging tools with mission needs.

"The question was simple: how do we integrate AI into everything, what are the exceptions and what are the constraints?" said Air Force Master Sgt. Curtis Wright, 944th Operations Group commander's support staff development and training noncommissioned officer in charge. "I didn't really know what I was getting into, but once we started digging into it, we realized how big this actually is."

The effort became the foundation of Luke's AI Task Force, a team built to explore how artificial intelligence could reshape daily operations, preserve institutional knowledge and give Airmen more time to focus on the human elements of the mission. With limited time and structure, the team gathered information, reviewed policy, studied use cases and examined how AI is already being applied across the Department of the Air Force and private industry.

A base-wide survey, which received over 170 responses, revealed a consistent theme: while many Airmen recognize AI's growing importance, many feel uncertain on how to use it effectively and within approved guidelines.

That gap highlighted a broader cultural challenge. Some Airmen are already using AI to draft emails, summarize information, analyze data and reduce repetitive administrative tasks, while others remain unsure what tools are authorized or how to apply them in a mission context.



MIRAMAR FAREWELL Marine Corps Lt. Col. Wilbur Oles, the operations officer at Marine Corps Station Miramar, embraces his wife during his retirement ceremony at the air station May 8, 2026. Oles retired after 22 years of honorable and dedicated service in the Corps. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Seferino Gamez



DADDY'S HOME Aircrew Survival Equipmentman 3rd Class Omar Mora, assigned to the world's largest aircraft carrier, USS *Gerald R. Ford*, meets his newborn child for the first time on the pier at Naval Station Norfolk, May 16, following a historic 11-month deployment. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Sophie Pinkham

"Culturally, people are not utilizing these products to their fullest," Wright said. "Everyone has this capability in their pocket right now. They just have to know how to unlock it."

Instead of just studying AI, the team decided to put it into practice. Members built tools, analyzed survey data and explored how emerging technology could support training, administration and decision-

making processes. The results reinforced a key takeaway: AI is not replacing Airmen but reducing the repetitive work that slows them down.

"AI enables the human to do less clicking and more doing," Wright said. "It enables humans to do human things."

Refer to <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/4495022/>.



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Fleet Readiness Center Southwest personnel have played a vital role in sustaining the strength, readiness, and combat capability of Naval Aviation for more than 107 years. Photo provided by Michael A. Furlano

Fleet Readiness Center Southwest: 1919-Today

by **Michael A Furlano**
 Fleet Readiness Center Southwest personnel have played a vital role in sustaining the strength, readiness, and combat capability of Naval Aviation for more than 107 years.

unwavering commitment to the Navy and Marine Corps.

Building 94 stands today as both a historic landmark and a symbol of the command's enduring dedication to those who serve. More than a century later, FRC Southwest employ-

ees continues to carry forward its proud tradition of supporting the fleet and strengthening America's warfighting capability.

FRCSW employees are the Backbone of Military Readiness!

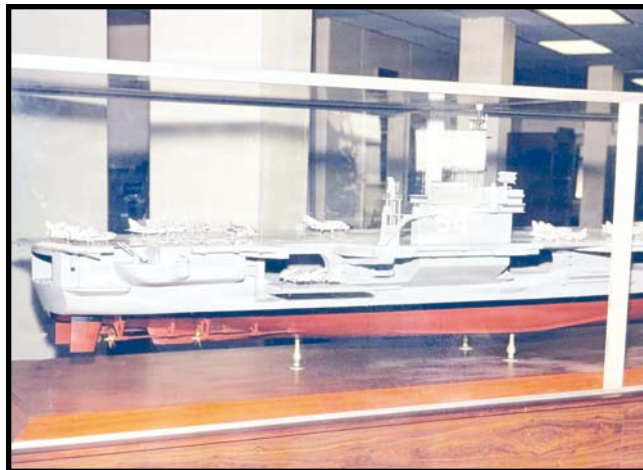
Images show the growth of the command's headquarters in building 94 from its inception in 1919 through today. They offer a glimpse into the remarkable history of a command that has supported the Navy and Marine Corps through every era of aviation, from the earliest days of flight to the fifth-generation aircraft of today.

Established during the infancy of naval aviation, the command grew alongside the fleet it supported. What began as maintenance and repair work on wooden biplanes and lighter than air aircraft, evolved into the sustainment of some of the most advanced and lethal machines in the world.

Across generations, the mission has remained constant: deliver safe, mission-ready aircraft to the warfighter so they can fight and win in any battle.

Inside Building 94, thousands of dedicated artisans, engineers, mechanics, logisticians, and support personnel have answered that call. Through times of war, technological transformation, and rapid modernization, the people of FRCSW have continuously adapted to meet the needs of the fleet.

Photographs not only capture the evolution of the facility and the aircraft that passed through it, but also the enduring legacy of the workforce behind them. Every aircraft repaired, every innovation implemented, and every mission supported reflects more than a century of craftsmanship, resilience, and



For more than three decades, a model of now-decommissioned USS Constellation (CV-64) has been on display at Fleet Readiness Center Southwest but this ship is more than just a model as it embodies the evolution of three U.S. Navy aircraft carriers and reflects the critical role FRCSW has played in their support.. Photo by Michael A Furlano

The state of special forces discussed on the Hill

by **Scott Sutherland**
 Staff writer

It was nearly a year ago when former and current warfighters from every era of American combat since the Vietnam War reunited in Coronado to celebrate a milestone – 50 years of Naval Special Warfare Group (NSWG) 1.

Recently, the military service's special operations leaders convened before the Senate Armed Services Committee to provide updates on the "state of SOF" in their respective branch.

Each branch's main Special Operations Forces are Army headquarters at Fort Liberty, N.C., primarily home of the Green Berets; Navy headquarters at NAB Coronado, primarily home of the SEALs & SWCC; Air Force Special Tactics (Pararescuemen/Combat Controllers) at Hurlburt Field, Fla.; and Marine Corps headquarters at Camp Lejeune, N.C., primarily home to MARSOC 'Marine Raiders.'

During the recent testimony by spec ops bosses, all praised the effectiveness and resiliency of their service's SOF components, specifically relating to events of the past five months. According to Pentagon News, on Jan. 3, SOF played a key role in the capture of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, following



Adm. (Ret.) William McRaven, former commander, Naval Special Warfare Group 1 (NSWG-1) speaks during NSWG-1's 50th anniversary ceremony on May 22, 2025. Navy photo by MC1 Alex Perlman

an overnight joint U.S. military extraction in Venezuela's capital of Caracas.

On April 3, SOF contributed to the rescue of one of two downed F-15E Strike Eagle crew members who had been conducting operations in support of Operation Epic Fury in Iran. Two days later, the second crewman was also safely recovered.

"Events over the past five months clearly demonstrate that, while special operations comprise a small percentage of our military, both in size and cost, we continue to play a key role in enabling our joint force partners and allies to deliver strategic effects for the nation," Army Special Operations Commander Lt. Gen. Lawrence G. Ferguson told the committee, according to the Pentagon News report.

During the May 22, 2025, anniversary event for Naval Special Warfare Group at Coronado, speakers talked about "building on a legacy" that began before 1962, a half-century of continuous adaptation and unwavering

commitment following President Kennedy's initial direction to establish the force.

"In the last 50 years, SEALs from NSWG-1 have fought in Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Yemen, and the Philippines, said retired admiral and former NSWG-1 Commander William McRaven. "While our weapons, boats, and teams have evolved, one constant remains: our people. The men and women of Group ONE are as professional, committed, and honorable today as they were in 1975."

Before the Senate Armed Services Committee this month, each branch's SOF boss testified about challenges the SOF community is facing, including perennial budgetary shortfalls and the need for additional materiel being chief among them. All of the senior leaders reassured the committee that, with Congress' continued financial support, the joint force SOF community stands at the ready to execute the mission.

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Marines to phase out F/A-18 Hornet for the F-35 Lightning II

Multiple news agencies reported earlier this month that the Marine Corps will complete a switch from the F/A-18 Hornet to the new fifth-generation F-35 Lightning II by 2030, according to official announcements from the Marine Corps.

Stars and Stripes reported that the Hornet will be retired from Marine service, and maintenance jobs tied to the F/A-18 Hornet fighter attack plane will be eliminated.

Variants of the Hornet have served in the Marine Corps since 1983. The service has

been planning to phase out the Hornet since it received its first Lightnings in January 2012.

This finalizes a major aviation restructuring, which includes retiring all remaining F/A-18 squadrons, such as at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort by August 2028 and MCAS Miramar by August 2029.

The plan is to phase out the F/A-18 from its squadrons over a two-year timeline: MCAS Beaufort, S.C., by Aug. 1, 2028; MCAS Miramar, by Aug. 1, 2029 and Naval Air

Station Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth, Texas, by Aug. 1, 2030.

The administrative message says Marines with Military Occupational Specialties affected by the change include F/A-18 mechanics and specialists on power plants, airframe and safety equipment. Positions for technicians on navigation/radar systems and electrical systems are also being eliminated.

Marines in those specialties are encouraged in the memo to retrain for similar roles on the F-35.

Department of War contract for Northrop Grumman San Diego

Northrop Grumman Systems Corp., San Diego, was awarded a \$196,066,981 contract May 15 for technical and engineering support to ensure that the MQ-4C Triton air vehicle are mission-capable for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions in support of the Navy and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

The Triton is an advanced, high-altitude, long-endurance un-



Built for maritime surveillance, Triton carries all payloads for every flight without sacrificing endurance or altitude. Photo by Northrop Grumman

manned maritime surveillance aircraft. It's designed for continuous, wide-area intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR), tracking targets, and augmenting the manned Boeing P-8 Poseidon.

A majority of the work will be done in San Diego, and is expected to be completed in May 2027.



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NEXCOM unveils NEX-themed design with NASCAR driver Jesse Iwuji

Courtesy Story

Navy Exchange Service Command
The Navy Exchange Service Command (NEXCOM), alongside NASCAR driver and Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jesse Iwuji, unveiled his NEX-themed NASCAR driver uniform and vehicle on May 14.

Iwuji will race the DGM Racing x JIM No. 91 Chevrolet Camaro SS when NASCAR hosts its first race on an active military installation on June 20, on board Naval Base Coronado.

“We are thrilled to have Lt. Cmdr. Iwuji wear the NEX logo during this historic race,” said Rear Adm. (Ret.) Robert J. Bianchi, Chief Executive Officer of NEXCOM.

“We are proud to be an integral part of the Navy’s 250th birthday. This race will honor the Navy’s legacy and programs that strengthen quality of life across the fleet.”

The race will be broadcast live across the continental U.S. on local CW affiliates and some live TV streaming services. The event supports broader Navy engagement tied to its 250th birthday, using NASCAR’s national platform to highlight service and the Sailor experience.

Iwuji’s dual role as a Naval Reserve officer and professional driver reflects the importance of leadership for those in demanding and high-visibility environments.

“As a Naval Reserve officer and NASCAR driver, representing the Navy on this stage is about more than racing,” said Iwuji.

“It is an opportunity to show what service looks like in action and to inspire the next generation to see what is possible through discipline, com-

mitment and hard work.”

As part of the NASCAR event, three NEX sweepstakes



NASCAR driver and Navy Lt. Cmdr. Jesse Iwuji. U.S. Navy photo

winners will receive exclusive behind-the-scenes VIP access and a meet-and-greet with Iwuji to talk all things military and motorsports.

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Passage of the 2027 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs funding bill

The House of Representatives passed the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY2027 (MilConVA), which provides funding for military construction, family housing and veteran's programs.

One representative, Richard Hudson, Fort Bragg, N.C.'s congressman, said he was proud to deliver the critical funding announcement, "to protect our veteran's rights, and provide more resources for our warfighters and their families.

"Ensuring the brave men and women of our military, their families, and our vet-

erans have support in Washington is my top priority in Congress."

Key funding includes:
 •\$55 million for a Special Operations Forces (SOF) ammunition supply

•\$19.2 billion for military construction and family housing, including \$90 million in additional funding for design of barracks and child development centers;

•Protecting the 2nd Amendment rights of veterans, preventing the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) from sending information to the FBI about



veterans without a judge's consent;

•Full funding for the Community Care account, which empowers veterans to seek specialty care to meet their unique needs.

Other key provisions in H.R. 8469 include:

•Full funding for veterans' benefits programs, including strong funding levels for research, mental health

programs, and other veterans' programs. This includes funding veterans' medical care at \$138.2 billion, which is equal to the President's FY27 Budget Request;

•Prohibits the VA from purchasing resources directly or indirectly from the People's Republic of China;

•Upholds the Trump Administration's prohibition on taxpayer-funded abortion, DEI programs, or biological sex-rejecting procedures; and

•Enables continued investment in the Indo-Pacific region and infrastructure needed to support U.S. advanced weapons systems.

Dept. of the Navy releases Fiscal Year 2027 Shipbuilding Plan

WASHINGTON – The Department of the Navy released its Fiscal Year 2027 Shipbuilding Plan May 11, outlining the administration's long-term strategy to expand fleet capacity, strengthen the maritime industrial base, and deliver a more capable, ready, and lethal naval force.

"The United States is at a strategic inflection point, and rebuilding American maritime dominance requires urgency, accountability, and sustained commitment," said Acting Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao. "This Shipbuilding

Plan provides a roadmap for the Golden Fleet, to grow a larger, more capable Fleet while revitalizing the industrial base, strengthening our workforce, and ensuring our Sailors and Marines have the platforms they need to defeat any adversary for decades to come."

The Shipbuilding Plan reflects a shift toward disciplined execution, industrial base revitalization, and delivery of a more capable, ready, and lethal naval force. The plan prioritizes a balanced high-low mix of platforms and emerging capabilities, strengthens

workforce and shipyard capacity, and reinforces accountability to deliver ships on time.

The plan also reflects lessons learned from current operations, evolving global threats, and the need to rapidly adapt force design and acquisition approaches. Continued partnership with Congress remains essential to sustaining momentum and ensuring the Fleet of the Future meets the Nation's security needs.

The department noted that the plan includes adjustments to fu-

ture force structure priorities and select future platforms, informed by operational assessments, industrial base analysis, affordability considerations, and department-wide strategic planning. The department will continue refining future force structure and shipbuilding requirements in close consultation with Congress and stakeholders.

"The President's budget request for fiscal year 2027 makes a \$65.8 billion generational investment in U.S. Navy shipbuilding. This plan details these investments and the Administration's 30-year investment plan to expand our nation's Navy shipbuilding capacity and deliver the Golden Fleet," said Jason Potter, performing duties of Assistant SECNAV for Research, Development and Acquisition.

In a May 11 USNI report by Mallory Shelbourne, the new Trump-class battleship will be powered by a nuclear reactor and is not a successor to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers, the Navy revealed in its annual 30-year shipbuilding blueprint.

The full Fiscal Year 2027 Shipbuilding Plan is available at <https://media.defense.gov/2026/may/11/2003928909-1-1/1/navy%20shipbuilding%20plan%20may%202026.pdf>.

Man-on-the-Street

If you had a choice between 2 super powers - being invisible or flying - which would you choose?



"Flying, because I go to Mexico often, and that would save time."
 Marco De Los Cobos
 NAB Coronado
 Recreational Specialist



"Invisible, so I can get away with {stuff} and get out of duty."
 AM2 Michale Fox
 FRCSW



"Flying. Commercial flights are expensive, and I'd do it for the adrenaline rush."
 RS3 Rosario Garciapena
 NAB Coronado 1st Lieutenant



"Invisible. Nobody will bug me, and I'll be on my own."
 Charlie Ratcliff
 NAS North Island
 Recreational Aid



"Invisible. I can walk into places where I've never been, or experienced."
 Annette Saculla
 Navy Inn Front Desk
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Sat., May 23, 7pm	NAZ Wranglers at San Diego Strike Force*
Fri., June 19, 7pm	Vegas Knight Hawks at San Diego Strike Force*
Mon., July 6, 6pm	Arizona Rattlers at San Diego Strike Force*
Sat., July 18, 8pm	New Mexico Chupacabras at San Diego Strike Force*
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My war on gravity - am I losing ground?

If beauty is only skin deep, then why are there electric power tools in my makeup drawer and why do I moisturize my face with chemicals like alpha hydroxy and hyaluronic acids? With each passing year, I add more drastic and costly steps to my beauty routine, only to watch my eyelids fold over themselves, my neck droop, and my knees sag. When is the right time to stop this madness?

I turn sixty next month. I celebrated decades of birthdays as a military spouse, and was never bothered about my age. But this one feels different. Somewhere along the way, forty became the new thirty, and fifty became the new forty. But sixty? Isn't that milestone what it's always been and ever shall be — over the hill?

As I teeter on this precipice, I wonder, are my beauty routines futile because it's all downhill from here? Should I throw in the exfoliating niacinamide make up wipes and embrace my baggy eyes? Delete the Face Yoga app and learn to love my neck waddle? Stop scrubbing my age spots and start playing connect the dots?

Or, should I resist the inevitable for as long as possible, guzzling collagen concoctions, puncturing my face with micro needles, and zapping discolorations with the questionable imported gadgets advertised on Instagram Reels?

I remember when my beauty routine was washing my face with Ivory soap before catching the bus to high school. There was no need for make up, but it was the eighties. So, I wore purple frosted eyeshadow and Bonnie Bell lip gloss, and took

my youthful skin for granted.

Now, post-menopause, I sit in front of my vanity mirror as if I'm about to perform complex surgery on a patient with a grim prognosis.

Most days, I forget the various serums and gadgets I paid too much for and swore I'd use every day and

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

night — silicone under eye patches, jade rollers, infrared light wands, sonic face scrubbers and derma blades — because they're tedious. Instead, I take the easy way out and hide my imperfections with makeup.

I start with "24-hour" foundation, slathered on like I'm seasoning a roast. When my dark circles refuse to cooperate, I blob on concealer like I'm spackling drywall. To avoid looking like an undercooked pancake, I dab on a trendy cheek balm I bought from an Instagram ad featuring glowing women over 50 with glossy hair and impossibly white teeth.

Lipstick is applied strategically to enhance my lips, which seem to be slowly collapsing into my face.

Voila! I head out to face my day convinced I've camouflaged my

imperfections — until I catch a glimpse of my reflection. Inevitably, the concealer has settled into fine lines, enhancing every wrinkle. The \$45 cheek balm is so greasy my hair is stuck to my face like Sasquatch. Any lipstick that didn't come off on my coffee cup has migrated into the tiny creases around my mouth that look like cactus needles, and my foundation now lives primarily on my shirt collar.

Not exactly the look I was going for.

At this point, my beauty routine feels like a military operation — expensive, overcomplicated, and with mixed results. Serums deploy at 0600, concealer attempts damage control at 0800, but by 1400, my makeup has gone AWOL.

And Instagram? Those Reels have me believing I'm a \$65 Nuzzy Pen or a \$99 Honeylove brazier away from turning back time — right before I remember I'm shopping on a military retiree budget and realize that bras don't come in 38 Long. The truth is, after a lifetime of PCS moves, multiple deployments, hours of Tricare hold music, and three Navy brats raised into adulthood, a few wrinkles don't feel like failure — they feel like earned like stripes.

So I'll keep it simple: a little moisturizer, a dab of lipstick, and as much concealer as I damned well please. The goal isn't to look younger — it's to look like myself, just a little less exhausted.

Besides, when everything starts to sag, at least I know it's not just me. Gravity has been coming for all of us since basic training — and unlike my beauty products, it has never once failed to deliver

25-year Fast & Furious Legacy celebrated at the Petersen Automotive Museum LA

The Fast and the Furious opened in theaters in 2001. What has become an 11-movie, blockbuster franchise, shot at locations around the world with thrilling chase scenes and extreme stunts, began as a movie about LA car culture and the import car scene, highly modified cars and racing through the streets of Los Angeles.

In advance of this summer's opening of the Fast & Furious: Hollywood Drift roller coaster, at Universal Studios Hollywood, 23 iconic cars from the Fast & Furious films are on display throughout the Petersen Automotive Museum in Los Angeles, in coordination with Universal Pictures. Named A Fast & Furious Legacy: 25 Years of Automotive Icons, this collection of screen-used vehicles and production prototypes is the most comprehensive Fast & Furious exhibit in history.

Recently, AutoMatters & More was given an exclusive guided tour of this exhibit by a member of the Petersen Automotive Museum's staff. The quantity and quality of her knowledge that she shared, all from memory, about the cars and their place in the movies, was absolutely incredible.

Did you know that the filmmakers licensed the title for The Fast and the Furious from a 1954 racing "B" movie called The Fast & the Furious? They bought it from the father and son who produced the movie, but they did not license its storyline.

The first vehicle that visitors typically see when they visit the museum is the 1970 Plymouth AAR Hemi Cuda that was screen-used in Furious 7. It is from the personal collection of Vin Diesel. It was driven in the film by both his Dominic Toretto character, and also by Letty. It is not a true

AAR Cuda, but rather a car that was built for filming.

Even though Dom would become associated with the 1970 Charger, he first drove a JDM vehicle: a red 1993 Mazda RX7. On display is one of the stunt cars. It was also displayed at the SEMA Show in Las Vegas.

The red 1996 Acura Integra GSR.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

This is the hero number one car from the first street race.

At the end of The Fast and the Furious, during the final chase sequence between the Supra and the semi, there is a single shot of the rear of the Supra where the Toyota emblem is upside-down. That was done on purpose, as a little joke to see if audience would notice. Did you?

The Kawasaki Green-inspired 1995 Mitsubishi Eclipse, driven by Brian O'Conno, was the very first car that audiences would see Brian O'Connor drive in the parking lot of Dodger Stadium. It is also the first car that Brian races against Dom, and the first car in which Brian loses to Dom.

It has an amusing backstory. When its owner rented the car to Production for the film, he said that they asked him if they could repaint it in a different color. He said sure, but anything but

green! When you rent your car to Universal Pictures, the production takes over, the Art Department takes over, and they design it for the film. Paired up in a race with Dom's red RX7, it looks amazing on-screen, which is why they chose it.

Only one of the cars was not screen-used: the Mitsubishi Evo 9, which was the production prototype. The others, which they got from Mitsubishi, all had to be destroyed after the production. Why? They had been sitting in a parking lot in Louisiana when Hurricane Katrina hit. They were flood-damaged, Salvage Title cars and could not be sold.

Surely the most unique of the cars is the six-wheeled Flip Car 2.0 (four wheels at the front!) built for Fast X and inspired by the radical Tyrrell P34 Formula 1 car from the 1970s.

There is also a collection of original posters from every film in the Fast & Furious franchise, sourced from around the world.

While you're visiting The Petersen, do not miss The Vault — a huge underground garage that is filled with 250 amazing vehicles: sports cars, antiques, Formula 1 racecars, Ferraris, limousines and much more.

For more information about Fast & Furious Legacy visit <https://www.petersen.org>.

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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Veterans News

Lawmakers introduce legislation to lower prescription drug costs for veterans, others

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representatives recently introduced legislation to lower prescription drug costs for service members, military families, and veterans while saving taxpayers billions.

Eugene Vindman (Va.-07) and Pat Ryan (N.Y.-18), both retired Army veterans and members of the House Armed Services Committee, are advancing a bill they dubbed the MISSION RX Act.

Building on the success of the Inflation Reduction Act's drug price negotiation program, the MISSION Rx Act would require TRICARE and the Department of Veterans Affairs to pay either the CMS-negotiated price or the program's original price for prescription drugs, whichever is lower.

"After serving 25 years in uniform, I know firsthand the sacrifices our service members, veterans, and military families make every single day. The last thing any of them should have to worry about is whether they can afford the prescription drugs they need," said Vindman. "The veterans and service members I

represent in Virginia's Seventh District have earned every benefit this nation can give them. That's why I'm leading this commonsense effort to reduce the crushing cost of prescription drugs for those who have served and sacrificed."

"Military families have sacrificed so much for our country — it's absolutely unacceptable that they're being forced to pay more than other Americans for the same medication," said Ryan. "Our bill corrects this egregious oversight by ensuring that military families have access to the same lower drug prices that others do. Especially amid rising healthcare costs nationwide, leaving military families to bear the burden is simply un-American. They've stepped up and sacrificed for us — now we need to do right by them."

The MISSION Rx Act is also sponsored by Representatives Chrissy Houlahan (Pa.-06) and Maggie Goodlander (N.H.-02), top name a few.

"As healthcare costs continue to rise across the country,

the MISSION RX Act is a straightforward approach to reduce prescription drug costs," said Houlahan. "As the Centers for Medicaid Services negoti-



ate reduced prices for citizens on Medicare and Medicaid, it only makes sense to pass those same lower prices to the people who sacrificed the most for our nation: our veterans and military families."

"Our bill will lower costs for America's veterans, service-members, and military families by ensuring they pay the lowest price the federal government has already negotiated for prescription drugs," said

Goodlander. "No gimmicks, no new bureaucracy — just common sense and a promise kept to the patriots who served our country."

By paying the lowest available government-negotiated price, TRICARE and the VA would reduce spending on prescription drugs for service-members and their families while saving taxpayers billions. CMS estimates this policy could save up to \$6 billion annually.

As CMS expands its drug price negotiations, the bill is designed to grow alongside the program, applying to any additional drugs subject to negotiated pricing in the future.

The MISSION Rx Act is supported by Veterans of Foreign Wars, the Marine Corps League, the Fleet Reserve Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, and Commissioned Officers Association Public Health Service.

"The Marine Corps League endorses the MISSION Rx

Act for its intent to provide fairness and affordability for our military and veterans," said Bob Borka of the Marine Corps League. "Lifesaving medication should be equally available to all Americans receiving federal benefits, including our military families and veterans. Ensuring access to affordable medication aligns with our Nation's promise to those who have served."

According to Theodosius Lawson, Director of Legislative Programs, Fleet Reserve Association, "FRA supports the goals of this legislation to reduce prescription drug costs for TRICARE and VA beneficiaries by ensuring access to the lowest available federal prices," said "This approach aligns with FRA's longstanding advocacy on behalf of sea service veterans, retirees, and their families."

"The Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service is very proud to support the MISSION Rx Act. This legislation takes a commonsense approach to lowering prescription drug

costs for TRICARE and VA beneficiaries by ensuring they have access to the lowest available federal price for prescriptions," said Jasmine Stuart, Director of External and Legislative Affairs. "Access to affordable medications is critical for those who serve and have served our nation. We appreciate the leadership behind this effort and its focus on improving affordability and access for our uniformed services and veteran communities."

Military Times reported that the proposal is designed to allow Tricare beneficiaries and Department of Veterans Affairs patients to pay for prescription drugs at whichever is the lower of two prices: the rate negotiated by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, or CMS, or the cost offered through their existing coverage.

Refer to <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2026/05/07/lawmakers-introduce-bill-to-lower-drug-costs-for-service-members-veterans/>.

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SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

About Social Security's 'First Year Rule' and withdrawing from SS

Dear Rusty: I am 63 years old, and about to apply for my Social Security benefits. I am self-employed but only working part time. I know about Social Security's annual earnings limit but recently I learned I must also be concerned about a monthly earnings limit of \$2,040. My questions are:

- 1) How do I find out if I will be subject to a monthly earning limit of \$2,040 per month? I thought it was only evaluated annually.
- 2) If I choose to cancel Social Security within the first year or after, what are the penalties? Would I have to pay them back for the whole amount for the whole time that they paid me? Which makes no sense, since I have been paid into SS since I was 13 years old.

Can you help me understand this? Signed: Claiming Early and Still Working

Dear Claiming Early: It can get tricky if you are still working after claiming your Social Security before your SS full retirement age (FRA), especially during your first year collecting. I'm happy to answer your specific questions:

1. There is a special rule which applies during your first year collecting early Social Security benefits (e.g., before your full retirement age or "FRA," which for you is age 67). What will happen is this: when the IRS provides SSA with your 2026 earnings (in 2027), SSA will review to see if your total 2026 net earnings from self-employment exceeded the 2026 annual limit of \$24,480. If not, no further action is necessary. But if you did exceed the full year 2026 earnings limit, SSA will contact you and ask you to provide them with details about your monthly 2026 net earnings. If you have exceeded the monthly limit in any 2026 month after your SS benefit started, you will not be entitled to SS benefits for that month. Essentially, if you have exceeded the annual limit, you cannot exceed the monthly earnings limit in any remaining month during your first year of collecting. If you exceeded the annual limit, and also any monthly limit, SSA will send you an overpayment notice saying you must repay them for the benefits you were not entitled to receive because you exceeded the monthly earnings limit.

2. You can, within 12 months of applying for Social Security, ask SSA to withdraw your application for SS retirement benefits. They will do that for you, but you will also be required to repay them all SS benefits that they have already paid to (or for) you. This essentially would "wipe the slate clean" and enable your SS benefit to continue growing, allowing you to apply for a larger monthly benefit later. But if you wait longer than 12 months after you first apply for SS benefits, you can no longer withdraw your application for Social Security. Thereafter, you would be subject to the annual earnings limit (the monthly earnings limit would no longer apply).

FYI, after you reach your FRA, there is no limit on your earnings, and you could choose to suspend your benefit payments and earn Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) to get a higher monthly benefit. Also at your FRA, if SSA withheld any of your benefits because you exceeded the earnings limit before reaching your FRA, you would get time credit for the number of months your benefits were withheld. Essentially, they would advance your benefit-start month by the number of months your benefits were withheld, yielding a slightly higher monthly amount after your FRA.

Finally, it's important to know that the contributions you made to Social Security from payroll taxes (FICA/SECA) over your lifetime are not what determines your monthly SS benefit amount. Your monthly SS benefit is based on two main factors: a) your average monthly earnings (indexed for inflation) for the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime as reported to the IRS, and b) the age at which you claim your SS benefits. Your contributions to Social Security while working only provide you with eligibility to collect SS benefits; the contributions aren't put into a separate account for you and are not used to calculate your monthly SS benefit.

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Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. <http://www.veteranmuseum.org/>
Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free
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2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300
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MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5; • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal. FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult \$39 (ages 13+). Youth \$26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open Mondays 10am-2pm

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

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Navy Medicine Enterprise: Forging the future of Navy Medicine

by PO2 Sasha Ambrose
U.S. Navy Bureau of
Medicine and Surgery

The U.S. Navy provides the combat credibility and persistent global presence that secures U.S. vital interests in contested environments around the globe. The health and readiness of every Sailor and Marine have become more critical than ever. Ensuring that our warfighters are medically prepared for the future isn't just a supporting task; it's a strategic imperative for the fleet.

In response to this urgent need, the Navy established the Navy Medicine Enterprise (NME) on Aug. 14, 2025. This transformative initiative represents stakeholders across the Navy to break down barriers and unify efforts. By providing a forum for senior fleet leaders to address and prioritize health services requirements, the NME provides the care to deliver a more lethal, efficient naval force to meet operational objectives.

Since 2016, there have been so many advances made in medicine and technology, that the character of war and what warfare will look like in the fu-

ture, has changed accordingly," said Lt. Cmdr. Luke Richmond, a plans, operations, and medical intelligence officer serving as the campaign order lead at U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED). "In order to adapt to this and get ahead, we've changed the way that we solve problems, knowing that providing battlefield medical care in a resource-constrained environment will require more flexibility and reallocation of people and supplies than we've ever dealt with before."

Over the last year and a half, the NME has established strategic priorities and built an operational framework, positioning the enterprise to shift its focus toward execution. The true measure of success now lies in turning decisions voted and approved by the NME Board of Directors into tangible improvements for Sailors across the fleet. Whether enhancing the limited duty and recovery process manning gaps, the NME is delivering real-world solutions for some of Navy's most persistent health services challenges.

To support this transformation, the NME is focused on five



Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Nya Jobs (right), respiratory therapist, Lt. j.g. Mark Gregg (left), trauma nurse, Capt. David Samaha (middle), general surgeon, and Lt. j.g. Melissa Sullivant (back), trauma nurse, all assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Jacksonville, transport a casualty from an ambulance into their mission support site during an Expeditionary Resuscitative Surgical System (ERSS) course conducted by Naval Expeditionary Medicine Warfighter Development Center (NEMWDC) Oct. 21, 2025. Despite being brought together shortly before the drill, the group maintained clear communication and coordinated movement throughout the scenario. (U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Kwame Obengyeboah)

THINGS TO DO!

Fiesta del Sol, Fletcher Cove, Solana Beach, May 30-31. Free 2-day music festival. Beer Garden, kids rides, vendors, food. www.fiestadelosol.net
Giro di San Diego GranFondo June 6, 7:15am-4pm. Celebrate cycling, food, and San Diego's North Inland region. Challenging, picturesque routes, ride support, food both on & off the course, post-ride party! Ryan Park, Escondido. 858-668-1739. www.giroadisandiego.com
Sam Hinton Folk Festival. June 6, 10am-5pm / Old Poway Park. Free outdoor event features musical performances, storytelling and family/ contra dancing. Variety of folk music including cajun, zydeco, jazz, bluegrass, country, and punkgrass. 858-668-4576. poway.org
2025 USA Surfing Championships. June 7-12. Includes Para Surf, Longboard, Adult Divisions Shortboard, SUP Surf, SUP, Prone Distance, Tech & Age Group Races. Oceanside Harbor North Jetty. www.usasurfing.org
San Diego County Fair. June 10-July 5, Del Mar Fairgrounds. "ONCE UPON A FAIR" in a land not-so-far-away, the story of your San Diego summer begins. Food, fun, friends, family, laughter, tradition, music. See website for schedule www.sdfair.com
Annual Switchfoot BRO-AM June 11 & 13. Thursday, 6-10pm @ Viasat, Carlsbad. Saturday, 7am-5pm @ Moonlight Beach, Encinitas. 15,000+ beach lovers for a free, all ages, family friendly, community giving event to enjoy a whole day of surf contests, live concerts on the beach with Grammy award-winning rock band Switchfoot, food and drinks, vendor booths, green initiatives, and more. Benefit Party on the 11th and Beach Fest on the 13th. www.broam.org

primary Lines of Efforts (LOEs) summarized below:

- Force Readiness: Delivering agile, scalable medical units to provide sustained support to the fleet and joint forces.
- Medical Readiness: Ensuring personnel have timely access to health and wellness services, streamlining return-to-duty timelines.
- Quality and Safety: Striving for a healthcare environment with zero preventable harm through stringent quality standards.
- Talent Management: Achieving and sustaining staffing across all medical specialties to ensure robust operational support.
- Future Design: Building adaptable medical forces capable of deploying and sustaining

healthcare over vast distances.

Cmdr. Jason Fuchs, former NME Business Office director and current BUMED operations director, said, "We take the input from each of our LOE leads, and we're able to design initiatives for the fleet based off their interests and guidance. From there, we can shape and track that information with data and analytics in order to bring tangible changes to Navy healthcare."

The NME is moving beyond theory and into practice, delivering changes that are improving access to care and ensuring that the right medical personnel are in the right place at the right time, improving the well-being and readiness of the Navy and Marine Corps.

"The most important part of our En-Route Care Systems [ERCS] is that we need qualify corpsmen as EMTs [Emergency Medical Technician]," Fuchs explained. "Between the NME and the campaign order team, we broke down all of the different components and barriers. 'How do we encourage corpsmen to obtain their EMT qualification? And then, how do we get them qualified as paramedics and make sure, they're aligned to these platforms?'"

In the high-stakes environ-

ment of modern naval warfare, medical readiness is mission readiness. Every member of the medical team, from the newest corpsman to the most senior officer, is critical to the success of the NME. The readiness of the Navy and the Marine Corps is being built right now – in clinics, on ships, with technological innovations, and through the efforts of every Sailor. By optimizing our most vital asset, the warfighter, the NME is ensuring that the Navy will not only be ready for the future fight but will win it.



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