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SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR NO. 15
OCTOBER 2026

FLYING HIGH AGAIN The U.S. Special Operations Command Para-Commandos conduct a parachute demonstration at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar Air Show in San Diego, Sept. 27, 2026. The Para-Commandos are the USSOCOM's premier aerial parachute demonstration team, performing at public events across the nation to inform the public about the USSOCOM. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Victoria Johnson

October military observances and events

Patriots and Paws 12th Annual Car & Motorcycle Show Saturday, October 3, 2026. Starts at 9am. Canyon RV Park, Anaheim, CA. A family-friendly, outdoor car and bike show benefiting Patriots and Paws, a local organization providing practical support and companion animals to veterans. <https://patriotsandpawscarshow.com>

AUSA Annual Meeting and Exposition: October 12-14, 2026 – Hosted by the Association of the United States Army in Washington, D.C., representing the largest land power exposition and professional development forum in North America.

U.S. Navy Birthday: October 13, 2026 – Marks the 251st anniversary of the U.S. Navy, established by the Continental Congress in 1775.

Military World Games occur every 4 years....next held in 2027

The 6th Annual San Diego Military Summit takes place on Friday, October 23, 2026, from 8am to 6pm. Produced by the San Diego Business Chamber and the San Diego Business Chamber Foundation. Connecting transitioning service members, veterans, active-duty personnel, and military families with employers, educators, and resource providers. The 2026 event introduces an AI Pitch Competition where finalists pitch defense-related AI solutions live on October 23 for AWS-funded development support (prizes include \$25,000 for 1st place). <https://sdbusinesschamber.com/foundation/san-diego-military-summit/>

Freedom of the Seas Awards Dinner Saturday, October 24, 2026 at 5pm. Battleship IOWA, San Pedro, CA. The National Museum of the Surface Navy hosts its prestigious 6th annual gala aboard the historic battleship to honor extraordinary service and leadership within the maritime community. <https://pacificbattleship.com/programs/fots/>

See October military observances page 2

★ Celebrating 25 Years Honoring the Men and Women of our Armed Forces ★



JOIN US FOR A FREE FAMILY CONCERT IN CHULA VISTA
Fleet Week Military & Veterans Appreciation Concert
 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m., 1 November 2026 | Bay Front Park, Chula Vista
FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Join us for an exciting afternoon of inspirational musical selections by the talented musicians of Navy Band Southwest as they perform in concert for the very first time at Chula Vista's Bay Front Park to honor those who serve and those that have served.

Enjoy pre-concert musical entertainment by one of San Diego's leading Radio DJ's

Contact us today!
 Call Maggie at (619) 858-1545 or email sponsorship@fleetweeksandiego.org
 San Diego Fleet Week Foundation 1639 Midway Dr., Suite 8429, San Diego, CA 92118
San Diego Fleet Week Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Founded in 2001, we are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All proceeds from the concert will be donated to the San Diego Fleet Week Foundation.

AMERICA 250

MODERN-DAY CALENDAR GIRLS HONOR VETERANS

by Scott Sutherland

Staff writer

Ida Lupino was one of many World War II pin-up models who boosted the moral of American troops with positive and encouraging entertainment. More than

just a pinup girl, Lupino served as a lieutenant in the Women's Ambulance and Defense Corps during World War II.

Her spirit remains today as former female servicemembers

model for calendars in vintage attire as part of the 'Pin-Ups for Vets' calendar project.

Now in its 21st year, the 2027 calendar features 13 female veterans posing as pin-ups. Gina Elise, founder of the organization, is featured alongside the veteran models, including:

-Lindsey Schmidt: A 9-year Army veteran and former Arabic linguist nicknamed Xena who accompanied Green Berets on missions in Iraq

-Amanda Wood: Miss July, an 8-year Army veteran deployed to Iraq at age 22.

-Santa Barbara Mediavilla: A 21-year Army veteran who served as an Apache helicopter pilot, mechanic, and chief warrant officer.

-Amy Jeanes: A West Point graduate and 5-year Army

veteran captain.

Inspiring women from the Air Force, Navy, and other branches are also featured.

"Proceeds from the calendar support hospitalized veterans and healthcare programs through volunteer visits and donations," said Elise.

The calendar project came to be in 2006 when Elise saw news reports about under-funded veteran's healthcare programs.

"Then, there were stories about older veterans who lay in bed day after day, never receiving any visitors, she said. "Reports started surfacing on TV about the severe injuries sustained by our troops fighting in Iraq."

see **Pin-Ups**, page 4



Gina Elise (left) and a pin-up model with a veteran on one of their visits. Courtesy photo

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UNITED STATES NAVY
OCTOBER 13

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USS Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier departs from San Diego

USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) departed Sept. 27 from San Diego to sail across the Pacific for what Navy officials expect to be an extended Middle East deployment.

Various news outlets reported that the carrier, the flagship of Carrier Strike Group 9, departed without the traditional pomp and circumstance – no Sailors were spotted manning the rails, according to ship spotter photos, reported USNI News. The carrier will embark with Carrier Air Wing 11. A defense official confirmed Theodore Roosevelt had begun its planned deployment.

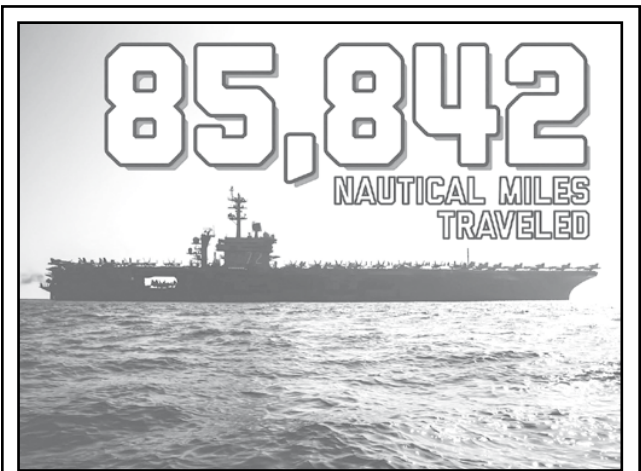
The Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group is expected to

move to Central Command to relieve George Washington aircraft carrier, which entered 5th Fleet last month. West Coast-based strike groups have been diverted from their traditional Indo-Pacific deployments to the Middle East in recent years amid tensions with Iran and the Yemen-based Houthis.

Almost two years ago, on October 15, 2024, Theodore Roosevelt returned to its homeport of San Diego after conducting operations in the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operation as part of a routine deployment in support of global maritime security operations, according to a press release from the Navy.

TRCSG is a multiplatform

team of ships, aircraft, and more than 6,000 Sailors, capable of carrying out a wide variety of missions around the globe. Deploying units of the strike group include DESRON 23, Carrier Air Wing CVW 11, and guided-missile cruisers and destroyers.



That's 3.97 trips around the Earth! And counting!

Since USS Abraham Lincoln left San Diego last November, they've sailed more than 85,000 nautical miles throughout U.S. Third Fleet, U.S. 7th Fleet, and U.S. Naval Forces Central Command / U.S. 5th Fleet AORs.

Aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) spent more than eight months in the Middle East without the relief of a port call. On their way home they had a five-day port visit in Thailand, Sept. 2-6, and a one-day stop in Guam. Welcome home to the Lincoln's officers and crew and Carrier Air Wing 9.

October military observances

Continued from page 1

National Day of the Deployed: October 26, 2026 – Honors active-duty service members currently deployed outside the United States and acknowledges the sacrifices of their families at home.

Navy Day, observed October 27, started in 1922 as a broader public recognition of naval service and was tied to Theodore Roosevelt's birthday

National Memorial & "Running Home" Monument Unveiling Tuesday, October 27, 2026 at noon at Heritage Park, Dana Point, CA. Hosted by the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment, this event features the national "Remembering Our Fallen" memorial alongside the official premiere unveiling of the new "Running Home" monument.

Military Flight Training USA Summit October 27–28, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas. Focus: Simulation, live-virtual-constructive environments, and pilot readiness. <https://www.idga.org/>

Man On The Street
Three things you do better than most people.



"I'm very observant. Family oriented. Peaceful soul."
FCC Perry Little
Rialto, Calif.



"Talk a lot. Smarter than most. Good hostess."
Janelle Golden
Imperial Beach



"Play guitar. Ballroom dancing. Deescalate a tense situation."
Brian Turner
Los Angeles



"Communication. Hand writing. Cooking."
Nguyen Le
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam



"Trivia. Video games like Civilization. Darts."
RPSA Ethan Mearles
Brockton, Mass.

See the Man On The Street column in our online edition. www.afdispatch.com

MCPON launches reading list focused on Sailor development

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John Perryman released "MCPON's Bookshelf" Sept. 23, a collection of Navy professional resources and recommended books designed to encourage Sailors to keep learning, sharpen their skills and invest in their development both professionally and personally.

"Great Sailors never stop learning," Perryman said. "You learn in the schoolhouse, on the deckplates and from the people around you, but you also have to take ownership of your own development.

The full MCPON's Bookshelf is available at: <https://www.navy.mil/leadership/master-chief-petty-officer-of-the-navy/mcpcon-department-exclusives/>.

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EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Top 4

- VA terminated \$1.1 billion in contracts after DOGE requests, watchdog finds
- Military personnel data exposed in breach, agency warns
- Inside the inaugural meeting of Trump's Military Spouse Commission (*see our page 5*)
- Report: CIA warned Europe of Russian drone attack from vessels in the Mediterranean focusing on the military and veterans.

Pentagon

- Pentagon probing how shipment of F-35 fighter jet parts was diverted

Army

- Top Army drill sergeant says basic training isn't just about being tough: 'We have to operate with empathy'

Navy

- These Navy ships have the most Sailor burnout, study finds
- Navy destroyer practices at-sea drone refueling

Air Force

- Nellis Air Force Base says goodbye to last A-10 Thunderbolt II

Veterans

- VA's contracting crackdown gave some staff hours to do hundreds of reviews

Defense Industry

- With Denmark, Saildrone logs first flag registration for naval surveillance drone
- French Army wants to keep adversaries guessing on see-through battlefield
- Italy taps state-owned firms to build two naval destroyers in \$4.2 billion deal

Department of War establishes Force Agility and Streamlining Team to cut bureaucracy, prioritize warfighters

by War.gov

The Department of War recently announced the establishment of the Force Agility and Streamlining Team (FAST) within the office of the Under Secretary of War (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, creating an enduring Department-wide mechanism to identify waste, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy, and ensure resources are aligned with the Department's highest warfighting priorities.

Established at the direction of Deputy Secretary of War Steve Feinberg and reporting to Under Secretary of War - Comptroller / Chief Financial Officer Jules W. Hurst III, FAST will lead efforts to identify duplicative programs, unnecessary administrative processes, inefficient spending, and organizational structures that no longer contribute to the Department's mission.

The team will work closely with the Military Departments, the Joint Staff, Defense Agencies and Field Activities, and other Department leaders to recommend opportunities to eliminate, realign, consolidate,

or modify programs and processes. FAST will also promote greater cost awareness across the defense enterprise and help institutionalize a more agile, accountable approach to managing taxpayer resources.

"Every dollar we spend should make our military stronger, more

ready, and more lethal, which is why good stewardship is not separate from warfighting. For too long, layers of bureaucracy and outdated processes have consumed time and resources that belong with our warfighters. Through FAST, the Department is establishing a disciplined mechanism to challenge the way

we do business, identify where taxpayer dollars are not producing sufficient value, and act on those findings," said Under Secretary of War - Comptroller / Chief Financial Officer Hurst.

"Under the Secretary of War's leadership, we will work tirelessly to reduce unnecessary overhead, improve accountability, and put resources where they matter most — building the force we need to deter our enemies and win our Nation's wars."

FAST will provide recommendations to Department leadership as part of the Department's continuing effort to strengthen fiscal accountability, modernize business practices, and ensure every taxpayer dollar contributes to a more ready and lethal force.

"Success will be measured by results, not by another layer of process," Hon. Hurst said. "If a program is duplicative, we should eliminate it. If a process can be streamlined, we should streamline it. And if resources can be put to better use supporting the warfighter, we have an obligation to make that happen."

Air Force special ops proves Havoc Spear precise, effective

from Air Force Special Operations Command Public Affairs

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. - Air Force Special Operations Command announced its small cruise missile, the AGM-190A Havoc Spear, has been evaluated in a test configuration and meets requirements to become an available weapon system for broader real-world use across a variety of special operations and conventional aircraft. Havoc Spear is a mission-adaptable, modular-design small cruise missile that can be rapidly produced at relatively low cost. During a combat evaluation in the spring of 2026, the new missile's capabilities proved to be accurate and effective when employed from an AFSOC platform in a test configuration, meeting AFSOC's requirement for a small cruise missile. "Havoc Spear's range and capabilities expands standoff options, giving commanders a versatile tool to neutralize threats without putting platforms or personnel in immediate danger," said Lt. Gen. Mike Conley, AFSOC commander. "It's also not lost on us the value of being able to test a new weapon system in combat — and prove its success on the battlefield early on in the process." AFSOC partnered with U.S. Africa Command to conduct the combat evaluation within the combatant command's area of responsibility. "We work every day to disrupt the networks that have made Africa the epicenter of global terrorism," said Gen. Dagvin Anderson, AFRICOM commander.

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CAPTURING THE MOMENT A Sailor poses for a photo with his family as destroyer USS Frank E. Petersen Jr., assigned to the Abraham Lincoln CSG, returns to its homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Sept. 28 following 10 months of operations in the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations. region. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Conor Minihan

Pin-Ups

continued from page 1

“The more I heard about up-

hill battles of our wounded warriors, the more I was convinced for the need to produce a project that would bring in funds to support all of our hospitalized Veterans”

To date, Pin-ups for Vets ambassadors have visited, or revisited, more than 130 vets at hospitals, veteran’s homes and medical clinics across America. Among those are the San Diego VA Hospital, Naval Medical Center San Diego and Cal-Vet Veteran’s Home in Chula Vista.

“The recreating of a nostalgic pin-up calendar serves three purposes,” said Elisa. “First,

they’re sold to raise funds for our hospitalized veterans. Secondly, calendars would be delivered as gifts to our ill and



Ida Lupino photo courtesy of <https://pearlharborwarbirds.com/vintage-wwii-pinup-poster-girls/>.

injured veterans. Lastly, they’ll be shipped to deployed troops to help boost morale.”

The organization has donated nearly \$140,000 to fund state-of-the-art rehab equipment for VA and military hospitals nationwide.

The World War II pin-ups would be proud that they’re legacy is alive.

A dream takes flight at Edwards AFB

by Laisa Leao,412th Test Wing

For most military members, civilians and contractors who pass through the gates of Edwards Air Force Base every day, the enthusiasm can easily become routine. The initial awe of shaping the future of American airpower is often pushed aside by tight deadlines, endless reports and daily tasks.



Maj. Michael Grimmer shows an F-16 Fighting Falcon to Hailey Macleod, an honorary pilot, at Edwards Air Force Base in early September. U.S. Air Force photo by Brandon Hernandez

Make-A-Wish Greater Los Angeles contacted the 412th Test Wing to make her wish come true.

But for those on the outside, access to this historic base is the opportunity of a lifetime.

For 18-year-old Hailey Macleod, it was the realization of a dream.

Born and raised in the Antelope Valley, Macleod grew up just in the shadow of the base, attending school in Lancaster. But her world was upended in 2025 when she was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer. Since then, her life has been a grueling cycle of medical treatments aimed at keeping the illness at bay.

Despite the physical toll, Macleod refused to let go of her ambition. She has been taking online classes through Arizona State University, working toward her goal of becoming a pilot.

Macleod wished she could experience a day in the life of a pilot. To make that dream a reality, Dr. Cynthia Bryan of

Macleod and her family arrived at Edwards AFB for a special mission to make her an honorary pilot.

The memorable day began with the presentation of a personalized flight suit decorated with unit patches from across the 412th Test Wing.

She tested her piloting skills inside a high-tech flight simulator, climbed into the cockpit of an actual F-16 Fighting Falcon, got promoted to the honorary rank of captain by Brig. Gen. Mark Massaro, Air Force Test Center commander, received a commander’s coin from Col. Daniel Fredberg, 412th Test Wing deputy commander, and explored some of Edwards’ most iconic landmarks.

The experience offered a powerful reminder to the base workforce. What some view as just another day at work is the very dream that inspires the next generation.

Mental health clinic owner convicted in \$26M scheme to defraud TRICARE

from Department of Justice,Office of Public Affairs

A federal jury in Fort Worth convicted a Texas licensed professional counselor Sept. 24 for his role in a \$26 million health care fraud, kickbacks, and money laundering scheme.

“The verdict makes clear that those who try to defraud the United States will be met with swift and decisive justice,” said Assistant Attorney General Colin M. McDonald of the Department of Justice’s National Fraud Enforcement Division. “This defendant, Kevin D. Curry, 64, of Frisco, Texas, exploited a critical health care program serving active-duty servicemembers and their families, diverting taxpayer dollars to bankroll personal luxuries ranging from hotel stays to a casino-themed party and even a gold-plated Tesla Cybertruck.”



Kevin Curry’s gold-plated Tesla Cybertruck, purchased with his fraudulent proceeds. Photo courtesy of DOJ

According to court documents and evidence presented at trial, Curry orchestrated a scheme to bill TRICARE for transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS) therapy that was medically unnecessary or not provided. Curry, the owner and operator of two purported mental health clinics in Texas and one purported mental health clinic in Florida, offered and paid over \$5.5 million in kickbacks to convince active-duty servicemembers, veterans, and their family members to consent to TMS therapy they did not qualify for and, in many instances, did not receive. Curry, who falsely held himself out to be a medical doctor, used actual doctors’ credentials without their knowledge and consent to bill TRICARE as part of the scheme.

In an effort to conceal his fraud, Curry directed employees to fabricate medical records that he submitted to TRICARE to justify his fraudulent billings. Acuity billed TRICARE over \$26 million in false, fraudulent, and kickback-tainted TMS claims, based on which TRICARE paid approximately \$17 million. Curry laundered some of the proceeds by spending his ill-gotten gains on hotels, a lavish casino-themed party, and a gold-plated Tesla Cybertruck worth over \$100,000.

The jury convicted Curry of three counts of health care fraud, three counts of offering and paying illegal health care kickbacks, and three counts of engaging in monetary transactions in criminal derived property. He is scheduled to be sentenced at a later date.



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Career and Education

Military Spouse Commission holds first meeting, identifies top issues

by Matthew Olay
Pentagon News

The Military Spouse Commission held its first meeting Sept. 21 at the White House.

The commission, which President Donald J. Trump established via executive order Aug. 3, is tasked with advising and assisting the president on policies that affect military spouses and families.

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth, who attended the meeting as a guest, spoke briefly to the roughly 20 attendees.

"A lot of things that need to happen in our department happen with the stroke of a pen from either your husbands, at [their] level, and if not, up at the office of secretary of war level; and we are prepared to wield that pen," Hegseth told the commission, which comprises the spouses of the War Department's most senior

military leaders.

His wife, Jennifer Hegseth, chairs the commission and spoke about its establishment.

"We're here to help President Trump improve the lives of America's nearly 1 million military spouses, which you all are a part of. And as you know firsthand, military spouses make a sacrifice for our nation together with the sacrifice of your warrior," she said.

She said that the commission will work to tackle big issues like employment, housing, education and healthcare, as well as micro issues that also need addressing. "Many of those solutions will be new, but some already exist and have gotten stuck in the bureaucracy — and we'll find those too."

Jennifer Hegseth noted that some of those issues will need to be revived from past efforts to fix them,

and that some solutions will require Congressional legislation.

"We will work to find solutions to all of them, so thank you all again for being willing to serve," she said.

Each commission member then introduced themselves and spoke about the issues that they prioritize the most. As the meeting continued, it became clear that the three most referenced issues were: healthcare, employment and housing.

Donna Caudle, the wife of the chief of naval operations, said that as a licensed healthcare professional, she has seen firsthand and heard from countless Navy families about the challenges they face when accessing healthcare.

"I look forward to working with the commission to help President Trump improve continuity of care and capacity, reduce appointment



President Donald J. Trump, senior War Department leaders and members of the President's Military Spouse Commission pose for a photo following the president signing the group into existence via executive order at the White House, Aug. 3. White House photo

wait times, and close the gaps in specialty care and mental health services for our military families," she added.

Debbie Schiess, the wife of the chief of space operations for the Space Force, said she would love

to see legislation that allows spouses who are licensed in any state to practice on federal installations.

"This would tackle two issues at once: aiding in spouse employment and increasing our mental health providers," she said.

Regarding employment, Angie Perryman — who's married to Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy John Perryman — said that spousal employment is near and dear to her.

"I've been a full-time federal employee with the Department of War for almost 20 years as a licensed clinical social worker, and I know firsthand that military spouse employment is not simply about finding a job; it's about preserving a career," Angie Perryman said.

She said the importance of allowing spouses to maintain their jobs despite frequent changes of location. "My goal is to help make military-directed moves as close to career-neutral as possible through portable work, remote work, meaningful license, portability, and employment policies that allow spouses to build careers that move with their families," she said

Department of the Air Force pilot program expands to help more military spouses

by Jennifer Gonzalez

Air Force Personnel Center

JOINT BASE SAN ANTONIO-RANDOLPH, Texas - A professional in her own right, Kayla Amie holds a master's degree in organizational leadership and a Bachelor of Science in education, and has worked steadily since she was legally old enough to hold a job. But when she married a U.S. Air Force

Airman, that professional background no longer guaranteed a career and steady income.

"Every four years you are starting from scratch. I am ok with pivoting but it's going from the fact that you worked so hard—being a professional—and having it taken away with each move and it not being your choice," said Amie.

Like many military spouses, Amie faced another military-directed move, better known as a permanent change of station, which meant leaving her job to face uncertain employment or splitting up her family. It is a difficult decision the Air Force hopes to make easier through the Global Military Spouse Connection program.

"PCSing and moving are stress-

ful and take a financial toll on our military families," said Air Force Personnel Center GMSC Program Manager Enrique Jones. "It is our hope that this program will help military spouses move more confidently knowing someone is working on barriers to their employment."

Still a pilot program, the GMSC Program is currently

available only to active-duty military spouses PCSing to select locations, including Ramstein Air Base in Ramstein-Miesenbach, Germany, where Amie now lives.

"I was losing hope. I thought unemployment was going to be forever, that this was my new reality," said Amie. "GMSC got my resume in front of a hiring

manager who could critically see my skills versus something like an algorithm on USAJOBS. So now I had a chance to prove I can do this," she added.

Qualified spouses can enroll at any time into the GMSC Program using the Air Force Civilian Service website <https://afciviliancareers.com/military-spouses/>.

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Marine Corps Air Station Miramar's wildfire mitigation strategy

by 1st Lt. Blake Starbuck
Marine Corps Air Station Miramar

Marine Corps Air Station Miramar is leaning into an unconventional, deeply historical and highly effective tool for mitigating fire risk: goats.

The installation is releasing herds of grazing animals in a targeted effort to reduce dry brush and invasive grasses, a nature-based solution to protect military infrastructure and the neighboring civilian communities.

The Operation Goat Rope pilot program is the first of its kind on a U.S. military installation and a critical component of MCASM's broader fire prevention strategy. It includes 471 goats and a team of dedicated herders from a local prescribed grazing company in Southern California.

Base officials are executing a highly coordinated attack on the dense desert shrubs and non-native vegetation that act as tinder during the region's notorious dry seasons. This targeted grazing



service is not merely about clearing land; it is a calculated effort to restore landscape resilience.

By selectively thinning overgrown areas, the goats help create strategic fuel breaks.

"When wildfire sparks in Southern California, defensible space is our greatest asset," said

Makin Island ready group deploys

It's a busy time for the Navy in San Diego.

On the heels of aircraft carrier USS *Theodore Roosevelt*'s deployment, and the much-anticipated homecoming of USS *Abraham Lincoln*, the Navy announced that the *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group began a scheduled deployment from San Diego Sept. 28.

Joshua Allen, Marine Corps Air Station Miramar fire chief.

"The strategic fuel breaks created by this targeted grazing program slow a fire's advance and lowers the energy released. This gives our firefighting crews the critical time and tactical advantage they need to suppress a blaze safely and effectively before it escalates."



Navy file photo of USS Makin Island

ary Unit, and another approximately 2,000 Sailors across the three amphibious ships.

Navy Capt. Ryan P. Conole is the commanding officer of *Makin Island*. The current commanding officer of the 15th MEU is Col. Robb T. McDonald.

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Sgt. Maj. Alejandro Garcia Jr., sergeant major of MCAS Miramar, directs goats to the grazing area during Operation Goat Rope at Miramar Sept. 15. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Seferino Gamez



Amphibious transport dock ships USS *Anchorage* (LPD-23) and USS *John P. Murtha* (LPD-26) accompanied *Makin Island* out to sea.

The amphibious ready group typically includes about 2,200 Marines and Sailors that are part of the 15th Marine Expedition-

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USS *Germantown* decommissions after 40 years service

by Lt.j.g. Caylee Botos

Commander, Naval Surface Force
U.S. Pacific Fleet

SAN DIEGO - Whidbey Island-class dock landing ship USS *Germantown* (LSD 42) was honored at Naval Base San Diego, its original homeport, for more than 40 years of naval service during a decommissioning ceremony on Sept. 24.

Guest speaker Brig. Gen. Samuel L. Meyer, director, expeditionary warfare, paid tribute to the ship's enduring legacy and to the generations of Sailors, Marines and families whose devotion, sacrifice and steadfast service gave life to *Germantown*'s proud history.

"Because of what this crew has done, they are setting the example of what defending the nation in the future looks like," Meyer said. "I am going to thank you for your support for enabling the Soldiers from the sea known as the United States Marine Corps, because there is no soldier from the sea without the Navy."

Cmdr. Benjamin C. Pearlsig, final commanding officer of *Germantown*, reflected on the commitment of the current and previous crews who manned the vessel during four decades of operations, deployments and service to the nation.

"To the current and former crews, you are the heart and soul of this ship," Pearlsig said. "A warship is nothing without the warfighters who walk their decks, that stand the watch and answer the call."

Built by Lockheed Shipbuilding in Seattle, *Germantown* was christened June 29, 1984, and sponsored by Barbara Kelly, wife of Gen. Paul X. Kelly, the 28th commandant of the Marine Corps. The ship was commissioned Feb. 8, 1986, becoming the second Navy ship to bear the name.

Named for the Battle of *Germantown*, fought Oct. 4, 1777, during the American Revolutionary War, the ship carried forward a name rooted in courage, perseverance and American military heritage. Though the battle ended in a British victory, it reflected the determination and growing strength of the Continental Army and helped sustain the spirit and resolve that would shape the nation's fight for independence.

From its original homeport of San Diego to its years forward-deployed in Sasebo, Japan, *Germantown* served as a vital amphibious warfare asset for the Pacific Fleet and forward-deployed naval forces.

As the first dock landing ship to conduct Landing Craft Air Cushion amphibious operations, *Germantown* was at the forefront of a new era of amphibious capability for the Navy-Marine Corps team. It served during major operations including Desert Shield, Desert Storm, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Beyond warfighting, *Germantown* also carried out humanitarian missions in times of crisis. The crew supported disaster response efforts following the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines, the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan as part of Operation Tomodachi.

Throughout decades of service, *Germantown* participated alongside multiple partners and allies in joint operational rehearsals including Cobra Gold, Exercise Blue Chromite, Talisman Sabre and Rim of the Pacific, strengthening interoperability, reinforcing alliances and advancing maritime security across the Indo-Pacific region.

The success of USS *Germantown* is owed to its Sailors; over four decades of professionalism, resilience and dedication and steadfast support from their families. In recognition of that



The final Officer of the Deck watch stander departs dock landing ship USS *Germantown* (LSD 42) during the ship's decommissioning ceremony, Sept. 24. Commissioned on Feb. 8, 1986 in Seattle, *Germantown* completes its service after more than 40 years of service. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Nate Jordan

service, *Germantown* earned two Navy Unit Commendations, three Navy Meritorious Unit Commendations and six Battle "E" awards.

Germantown maintained a crew of 22 officers, 391 enlisted Sailors, and had the capacity to embark a Marine detachment of 402, with space for an additional

102 personnel during surge operations.

"What you'll take from the *Germantown* will build on you personally, in your career in the Navy, and where you go from then on," said retired Cmdr. Terrance McKearney, the ship's first executive officer, speaking to the final crew.

The decommissioning of *Germantown* marks the end of a distinguished chapter in naval history. As the U.S. Navy continues to upgrade its warfighting capabilities to maintain its competitive edge, the legacy of *Germantown* will endure in the service, sacrifice and accomplishments of all who served aboard it.

USS *Lake Erie*, crew honored at decommissioning



U.S. Navy photos by MC2 Kassandra Alanis



(top photo) Sailors assigned to guided missile cruiser USS *Lake Erie* observe the ship's decommissioning ceremony Sept. 25. (above) Sideboys render honors to Rear Adm. (Ret.) Randy Hendrickson during the decommissioning.

NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO - Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS *Lake Erie* (CG 70) and the crews who have manned it, were recognized during a decommissioning ceremony, celebrating 33 years of faithful service here Sept. 25.

Capt. Drew Borovics, *Lake Erie*'s final commanding officer, reflected on the occasion. "Today, we gather not simply to mark the end of a ship's active service, but to honor the generations of Sailors who have served aboard *Lake Erie*, the families who have supported them and the many commands, communities and friends who have stood alongside the ship throughout her distinguished career," said Borovics.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/575745/>



The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

I sat on a tiled ledge at the YMCA indoor pool inhaling chlorinated steam, a yellow legal pad perched on my lap and beads of sweat clinging to my upper lip. Despite the echo of sloshing water and the splashing of my three children in their swim lessons, my mind was far away.

By the end of that winter session, my yellow legal pad was dog-eared and covered in scribbles: to-do lists, doodles, and three personal essays. Writing had become my lifeline during a hectic time in our Navy family life when my active-duty husband, Francis, was deployed for over a year.

When Francis returned, I read him the essays. He laughed—not at me, but with me. My stories captured the relatable humor of parenting, marriage, and military life. He encouraged me to publish them. But after years as a stay-at-home spouse whose finest skills involved a toilet brush and a meatloaf recipe, I was reluctant to put my ego on the line.

For months, I honed the drafts, reading them to neighbors to test for authentic laughter. When a neighbor pointed out a “guest columnist contest” in our local newspaper, The Virginian-Pilot, I fired my essays off to the editor.

A rejection email arrived two weeks later. “You are certainly a good writer,” the editor wrote, calling the pieces witty but “too wordy.” It was a “good rejection”—a rare critique that taught

The last serving of Meat & Potatoes

me my first real lesson in editing.

Soon, we moved overseas. From a computer in our fourth-floor apartment on Patch Barracks in Germany, I kept submitting. One day, my uncle called long-distance: “Lisa, I think I’m reading your essay in today’s Washington Post!” Sure enough, there it was on January 24, 2010.

Naively, I assumed this breakthrough meant I was the next Erma Bombeck. I joined a columnists’ society, launched a blog, and set about self-syndicating a weekly column called “The Meat & Potatoes of Life.” I waited for major syndicates to call and make me a household name.

They didn’t. By the end of our next tour at NAS Mayport, Florida, I’d only convinced a few newspapers to carry my work, often fighting to get paid. Thank God for Francis’ Navy income, or we’d have lived in a cardboard box under an overpass on my meager earnings.

Yet, I’d found my passion. Writing funny stories became my therapy. It allowed me to sort through the chaos of military life for readers, distilling it down to what mattered, and more importantly, what didn’t.

Finally, in 2016, *Stars and Stripes* and military base newspapers took a chance on me. Every week for the last ten years, rain or shine, I’ve experienced, expressed, and expelled 700 words of military family reality on these pages. It’s been the honor of my life to contribute to the newspapers for the U.S. Armed Forces.

Which brings us to today. After a decade, it’s time for me to step away from the keyboard. Military

life teaches us how to pack out a household, say goodbye to friends, and move to unfamiliar territory. But saying goodbye to you, my readers, is the hardest PCS move I’ve ever had to execute. There are no packers who can wrap up ten years of weekly memories without breaking them.

I may be hanging up my Stripes, but I’ll never put down my pen. Life will undoubtedly keep serving up heaping helpings of chaos, and I’ll still need to sort through the leftovers. Over the years, this column has been my way of separating the “meat and potatoes” of life—the core things that truly matter, like family, faith, and love—from the rest of the plate. I’ve realized that most of our daily stressors are just the lukewarm gravy, a shaky Jell-O side dish, or a limp parsley garnish. They aren’t worth ruining the meal over, but they’re absolutely worth laughing at.

So next week, when the household appliances inevitably revolt or our adult children start pushing my buttons, I won’t have a deadline. But I’ll still be looking for the punchline in the parsley. Thank you for reading, for laughing along with me, and for letting me share the meat and potatoes of this crazy life with you.

www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com

Editors note: Lisa Molinari will be concentrating her efforts on running Orion Military Scholars, a national nonprofit she helped cofound. The program offers mentoring, application and enrollment assistance and a combination of merit scholarships and financial aid funding to U.S. independent, boarding-based high schools to provide stable educational opportunities to deserving military families. www.orionmilitary.org

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Taking place September 18-20, right next to the beach on San Diego’s beautiful Mission Bay, the sounds of screaming powerboats filled the air during San Diego Bayfair — a major event that the whole family enjoys. Each time the next race was about to begin, workers on quads drove up and down the beach urging swimmers to get out of the water. They, and the many people watching from their lawn chairs on the shoreline, were then thrilled by the next round of exciting racing.

Organizers expected nearly 100,000 people over the three-day event, but it never felt crowded because they were spread out across Mission Bay’s East Vacation Island, Crown Point and Fiesta Island, providing plenty of space for everyone to spread out and enjoy the event. The more than 500 volunteers, without whom this event could not be held, did a great job helping to put on this annual event and making sure that the spectators had a great time. Furthermore, the San Diego Tourism Marketing District was a major backer. Visitors to San Diego could stay right next to Mission Bay in San Diego Bayfair’s partner hotels or in RVs.

“San Diego Bayfair is part of a rich motorsports history in San Diego,” said Bob Davies, Bayfair’s race director. “You get families who’ve been coming for 40-plus years standing right next to families attending for the

Powerboat racing at San Diego Bayfair 2026

first time. It’s a great event for the family.”

“Founded in 1964, Mission Bay Park was built to host hydroplane races. From the oval course to the banked shores to dissipate boat wakes, the 2.5-mile course is the longest and fastest on the H1 Unlimited circuit.”

The Bill Muncy Cup, which was displayed prominently at the front of the stage during the event’s award ceremonies, is named for Bill Muncy, the legendary hydroplane racer who, according to hydroplane historian Dan Cowie (thank you Wikipedia!), was “without question, the greatest hydroplane racer in history.” “Muncy was nicknamed ‘Mr. Unlimited’ and won 62 races, which was the most races in the history of the sport until Dave Villwock broke his record in 2011” (thank you Wikipedia!).

The weather for this year’s event was absolutely gorgeous. Unlike other motorsports events where spectators sit in bleachers on assigned seats, spectators at San Diego Bayfair can and do walk around, free to choose great vantage points to view the racing action, as well as check out the vendor village and the pits, where boats were between racing heats, lifted high out of the water by towering cranes. One of the race fans told us of a great vantage point from which to photograph the racing action, and they were right! We shot photos of much of the racing from that very location.

I was particularly intrigued by the U.S. Coast Guard’s demonstration, during which they

used one of their helicopters to demonstrate how they rescue people from the water.

Depending upon the class of powerboats that is racing, the courses are different. The feature H1 Unlimited Hydroplanes race on the 2.5-mile Bill Muncy racecourse. Heading into the three-day event, Jimmy Shane, driving the U-27 Miss Apollo, held a 180-point lead over Andrew Tate in the U-1 BWR Racing hydroplane, in their ongoing competition for the H1 National High Points Champion title. According to Darrell Strong, co-owner of H1 Unlimited, “San Diego has flipped championships before, and everybody in the pits knows it.”

In addition to the H1 Unlimited Hydroplanes, other classes of powerboats included Grand Prix America Hydroplanes and sportsman classes from the Southern California Speedboat Club and RPM Racing. 1-Liter, Crackerbox, SA-105, Pro Stock, SE and flatbottom were represented.

San Diego Bayfair will be returning to San Diego’s Mission Bay on September 17-19, 2027. To keep up with the latest information, visit <https://sandiegobayfair.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. Copyright © 2026 by Jan Wagner – AutoMatters & More #946

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.

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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 (CaITAP)

California Transition Assistance Program (CaITAP) 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.

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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.

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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

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

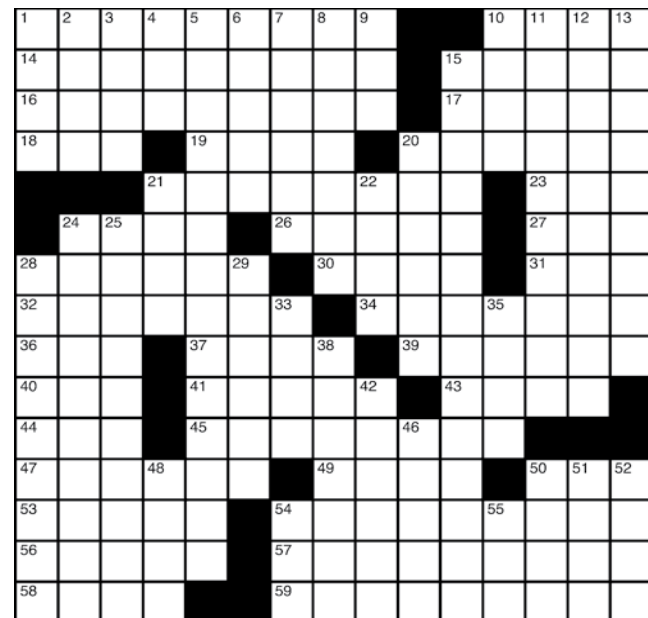
1 Heard but not seen, as
sound effects
10 Disconcerts
14 In a fog
15 Shore seen on TV
16 Tests
17 Film composer Morricone
18 ___ Caps
19 Stand up
20 ___ Waters, most senior
Black woman in Congress
21 Reached the nadir, with
"out"
23 Waffle center?
24 ___ spot
26 Court figures
27 Bluffer's objective
28 Casual Fridays attire,
perhaps
30 Account
31 ___ Valley: Tucson suburb
32 Begrudges
34 Breville product
36 "___ luck?"
37 Five carats
39 Tswana for "fly"
40 Bridge action
41 Sight seen by seers,
maybe
43 Throw
44 Doce meses
45 Valiant
47 Abstract
49 Plant with corms

50 Greek letter used in the
Shrdinger equation
53 Put forward
54 Black Sabbath devotee,
say
56 Hirsch of "Once Upon a
Time in Hollywood"
57 Fair-haired
58 Estonian neighbor
59 Reels

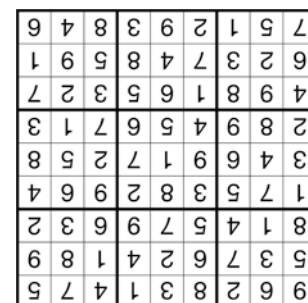
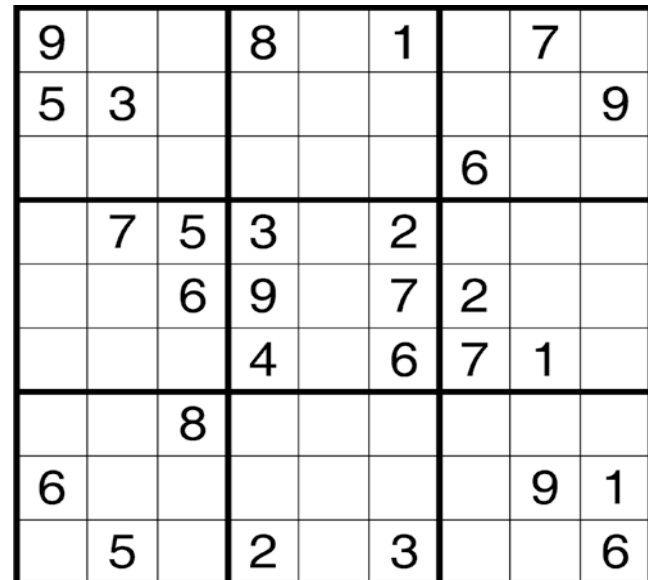
Down

1 Decides
2 Flowerless plant
3 Texas river named for its
chilly waters
4 Busy pro around this time
5 "Seriously ..."
6 Distinction
7 Celebrates big-time
8 Let
9 They're seen in some
wars
10 Spell
11 She plays Sheldon's
grandma (Meemaw) on
"Young Sheldon"
12 Much of Vancouver
Island
13 Skechers milieu
15 The Israel Museum
display
20 Wine denigrated in
"Sideways"
21 Make madeleines, e.g.

22 Heart
24 Conformist's phrase
25 "Not too much"
28 Fourth-grade teacher
in Springfield Elementary
School
29 Automotive suspension
components
33 First name in desserts
35 See 55-Down
38 Blue- or gray-furred cat
42 Wrap snugly
46 Small-muzzled horses
48 TD Garden NBAer
50 Four-time Gold Glove
winner Tony
51 ___ City: Baghdad suburb
52 Ancient midpoint marker,
more or less
54 Family figures
55 With 35-Down, precarious
place



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

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

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

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

THANKS FOR READING THE DISPATCH!

Health & Fitness

National Resource Directory connects service members, veterans, and families to vetted support

by **Andrew Ortuzar, MHS**
Comprehensive directory offers up-to-date resources for military families

For service members transitioning from active duty to recovery and rehabilitation healthcare, accurate information and resources are essential. The National Resource Directory, or NRD, is a federal government website serving as a trusted guide to meet these needs.

“The NRD connects wounded warriors, service members, families, caregivers, and veterans of any era with vetted resources to support their recovery, rehabilitation, and either reintegration to service or transition to their next chapter,” said Jonathan Morris, program manager for the

NRD and the deputy director of the Warrior Care Recovery Coordination Program at the Defense Health Agency.

The program ensures wounded, ill, and injured service members receive tailored support during periods of change, and manages the directory with current, safe, and secure resources from:

- Federal, state, and local government agencies
- Military and veterans service organizations
- Nonprofit, faith-based, and community organizations
- Academic institutions
- Professional associations serving military and veteran communities

Morris said the program’s team

works with service members who planned on a full military career but must transition, “whether it is combat-related, a health issue like cancer, or behavioral health struggles, they are suddenly facing a medical board and transition out of the military within 180 days to a year.”

The program supports warfighters and families through this “massive shift during a tight window” by providing a reliable place to seek help. The directory serves active duty personnel, National Guard and Reserve members, veterans, caregivers, and family members — demonstrating an enduring commitment wherever they are in their military journey.

“From inception into the military service, to any time after the service

member has retired and the family still needs support, we will help them,” Morris noted. “It doesn’t matter when you served, how you served, or when you left.”

He said his office’s dedicated inbox receives many emails from extended family members seeking to help a loved one but who may not be familiar with the military support system. The NRD quickly connects them to the resources they need.

“The NRD and our dedicated inbox are always available,” Morris said. When responding to emails, his office does not collect personal data but may ask for a service branch and general location to help connect users with the appropriate resources specific to their location.

- Employment
- Family and caregiver support
 - Health
 - Homeless assistance
 - Housing
 - Military adaptive sports
 - Military children and youth
 - Transportation and travel
 - Other services and resources

The directory covers subjects ranging from military and veterans’ benefits, healthcare, educational opportunities, employment, homelessness assistance, and behavioral health resources, including posttraumatic stress disorder information. Combining a category with a location enables users to identify services available in their communities.

Morris said the team intentionally connects users with programs suited to their branch of service to maintain cultural continuity: “Marines want to talk to Marines and Soldiers want to talk to Soldiers.”

Comprehensive vetting leads to trusted support

In an online landscape where predatory scams or outdated information can be common, NRD resources are subject to extensive security and quality controls. The directory is listed in the Federal Register as an authoritative source for vetting federal resources.

“Our uniqueness is threefold,” Morris stated. “One is every resource goes through a 10-step vetting process when they are considered.

Second, the National Resource Directory is listed on the Federal Register as an authoritative source. The third is the National Resource Directory doesn’t just vet resources when they’re onboarded, we re-vet on a yearly basis.”

In addition to annual re-vetting, the directory’s content management team conducts daily reviews and monitors broken-link reports.

“If a web address returns an error, our team immediately validates it, corrects the web address if possible, or archives the resource from public access if the organization has shut down,” Morris said.

This persistent monitoring ensures resources remain reliable and up to date, making the directory both impactful and trustworthy to users.

“We work with wounded warriors, families, and caregivers who face time-sensitive challenges,” he said, adding the NRD helps with “the urgent questions: ‘How do I keep a roof over my head, a car in my driveway, and food on the table?’”

In providing resources to help the military with any challenge, every second counts, Morris said. “We’re working with wounded warriors, service members, veterans, families, and caregivers. We understand they have challenges, and one of those challenges is time.”

“The clock is ticking, and we must be there to support them immediately.”



NMRTC San Diego welcomes newest Chief Petty Officers

On Sept. 16, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command San Diego proudly welcomed its newest Chief Petty Officers during a time-honored Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony at Naval Medical Center San Diego. Join us in congratulating our newest chiefs: HMC Rhomnick Casila, HMC Marcus Jackson, HMC Juan Wongpicot, HMC Kyle Tillman, RSC Terrance Jackson, HMC Corey Holmes, HMC Derek Stanway. After years of dedicated service, leadership and sacrifice, these Sailors have earned the right to wear the fouled anchor and join the ranks of the Navy’s Chief Petty Officer Mess. Your leadership, expertise and commitment to our Sailors, patients, and mission will help strengthen the force and keep our warfighters ready. Welcome to the Mess!



NMRTC Camp Pendleton holds CPO pinning ceremony

Gunnery Sgt. Estevan Hernandez from Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton, Chief Petty Officer Shaunte Merrell from Expeditionary Medical Facility 150 Alpha, Chief Petty Officer Reid Weathersby from Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command Camp Pendleton, and Chief Petty Officer Larry Carter also from NMRTC Camp Pendleton, stand at parade rest while Capt. Virginia Damin, NMRTC Camp Pendleton commander, provides remarks during the 2026 Chief Petty Officer pinning ceremony held aboard Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton on Sept. 16, 2026. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the three newly minted Chief Petty Officers and one Marine were accepted into the NMRTC Camp Pendleton Chief’s Mess. Photo by Curtis Hill.

A convenient, streamlined way to find support

A key purpose of the NRD is to make relevant resources easy to find. Users can access the directory from a mobile device or computer without registering or creating a profile, Morris said.

“People in crisis need help immediately and they don’t have time for exhaustive searches,” he said, “We built the platform to get them there quickly.”

Visitors can search by city, state, or ZIP code, or filter results by categories including:

- American Red Cross
- Benefits and compensation
- Education and training

Ombudsmen recognized at appreciation breakfast



Naval Base San Diego Ombudsman April Vasquez receives award during the 5th Annual Ombudsman Appreciation Breakfast held at Admiral Baker Golf Clubhouse, Sep. 4, 2026. Ombudsmen play a vital role in facilitating communication between commands and families, offering information and referral services that are essential to family readiness. Established in 1922, NBSD is the largest West coast naval installation and principal homeport of the Pacific Fleet, supporting more than 60 combatant and auxiliary surface ships and more than 250 shore commands.



U.S. Navy Capt. Brian Bungay, commanding officer, Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), left, NBSD Command Master Chief Jessica Morales, right, and Sailors pose for photo during the 5th Annual Ombudsman Appreciation Breakfast held at Admiral Baker Golf Clubhouse, Sep. 4, 2026. Ombudsmen play a vital role in facilitating communication between commands and families, offering information and referral services that are essential to family readiness. U.S. Navy photos by Interior Communications Electrician 2nd Class Ulrika Mendiola.



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