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SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR NO. 22
NOVEMBER 23, 2026



SAILOR, I DO! A Sailor assigned to Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS *Spruance* proposes to his significant other after the ship returns to its home port of Naval Base San Diego, Nov. 13, 2026, concluding a 12-month combat deployment across the U.S. 3rd, 7th, and 5th Fleet areas of operations. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Lordin Kelly

NAVY ATHLETICS, UNDER ARMOUR UNVEIL 2026 ARMY-NAVY UNIFORM HONORING NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE

ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Navy Athletics and Under Armour unveiled the 2026 Army-Navy football uniform, honoring the extraordinary history, heritage and sacrifice of the men and women of Naval Special Warfare who laid the foundation for modern NSW, including the SEALs, Special Warfare Combat Crewmen and the pioneering Underwater Demolition Teams.

The specially-designed uniform celebrates the elite warriors who operate in some of the world's most demanding environments, carrying out critical missions in defense of the United States. From the earliest Navy Frogmen of World War II to today's highly trained SEALs and SWCC operators, the uniform pays tribute to generations of service members whose courage, determination, innovation and sacrifice have helped define Naval Special Warfare.



The Midshipmen will wear the uniform for the 127th playing of the Army-Navy Game on Dec. 12, at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, N.J.

The uniform incorporates distinctive elements inspired by Naval Special Warfare's maritime heritage, including a tonal blue camouflage pattern, specialized stencil typography, the Navy SEAL Trident, the SWCC Master Warboat insignia and symbols honoring the legacy of the original Underwater Demolition Teams.

Every element of the uniform tells a story, from the helmet honoring the two primary warfare communities within Naval Special Warfare to the commemorative insignia and inscriptions recognizing the generations of warriors who have served and sacrificed for their country.

Refer to https://navysports.com/news/2026/11/12/football-navy-athletics-and-under-armour-unveil-2026-army-navy-uniform-honoring-naval-special-warfare.aspx.

Justice Department issues fact sheets about lease terminations for servicemembers and their dependents

The Justice Department announced earlier this month that it has issued two fact sheets to help servicemembers, including those who are returning to civilian life as veterans, avoid unnecessary rent payments and costly fees.

The first (*https://www.justice.gov/*) explains how servicemembers and their dependents can end a residential or business lease on receiving eligible military orders. And the second explains how they can end certain vehicle leases.

"The Civil Rights Division is deeply committed to ensuring that our military families are not saddled with excessive fees and payments as they heroically serve our country," said Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General Jesus A. Osete of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division. "These fact sheets are an important reminder for the military community, and to vehicle lenders and landlords, that servicemembers and their families have a legal right to end certain leases early when they transition to veteran status or are called to move on military orders."

Military families are often required to relocate through a process known as "Permanent Change of Station" (PCS) moves. Because of the frequency of these moves, servicemembers are likely to end up in leases that need to be terminated early. The Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA) allows servicemembers to cancel these leases so that they are not stuck paying for a residence or vehicle that they can no longer use solely because they are moving in service for our country.

The Department is issuing these fact sheets to draw attention to an important part of the lease termination right: retirement and separation orders are eligible military orders for lease termination. When a servicemember transitions into veteran status, they receive a retirement or separation order that shows they are leaving military service. Lease holders and landlords may not recognize that these orders are covered by the SCRA, since they are not the typical PCS orders. But military families often use retirement or separation to relocate, and not recognizing these orders would leave them paying for a residence or vehicle that they may no longer need.

Veterans face significant challenges when leaving military service. Recognizing these rights can spare these military families a large financial burden at a time of significant transition.

The Servicemembers and Veterans Initiative, housed in the Department's Civil Rights Division, works to ensure that the rights of the brave men and women of our nation's armed forces, and the veterans who have served in the past, are safeguarded from discrimination and unfair treatment.

Since 2011, the Department has obtained over $490 million in monetary relief for over 153,000 servicemembers through its enforcement of the SCRA. For more information about the Department's enforcement efforts under the SCRA and other laws that protect the rights of servicemembers and their families, visit *www.servicemembers.gov.*



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Army WCAP women wrestlers help Team USA capture world title

by Stephen Warns
Army World Class Athlete Program

Two women's freestyle wrestlers from the U.S. Army World Class Athlete Program embodied readiness and resiliency by helping Team USA secure its first world title since 1999 during the United World Wrestling Senior World Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan recently

Their performances allowed Team USA to edge powerhouse Japan, 137-135.

Army Spc. Adaugo Nwachukwu became the first WCAP soldier-athlete to win a world championship since 2005 in a 12-11 thriller at 62 kg against two-time world champion and 2024 Olympic bronze medalist Nonoka Ozaki of Japan, Oct. 29.

Army Sgt. Abby Nette dropped an 8-6 heartbreaker to India's Manisha Bhanwala to earn a silver medal at 59 kg. Nwachukwu and Nette are the first women's freestyle wrestlers in Army WCAP history to win medals in the same world championships.

"I have a saying: 'We're not here to take part. We're here to take over,'" said Bruce Robinson, Army WCAP women's freestyle coach who assisted Team USA. "I say it jokingly, but at the same time, I'm not joking because I know the potential these women have. When they come into this program and develop the mindset that comes with being part of the military, it adds another layer to what they're capable of doing."

The success of Nwachukwu and Nette during the event also spotlights the opportunities WCAP offers aspiring leaders who want to compete at the international and Olympic level.



Army Spc. Adaugo Nwachukwu flexes after beating Japan's Nonoka Ozaki 12-11 to win her first women's freestyle wrestling senior world title at 62 kg during the United World Wrestling Senior World Championships. U.S. Army photo by Stephen Warns

"The success has elevated the program," Robinson said. "Everybody's talking about WCAP now. I've gotten so many texts and messages from college coaches and wrestlers saying, 'WCAP is killing it. What are you all doing?' They see that WCAP produced two of the three finalists. Not everybody can say that. The entire year has been incredible, from having [the] Pan American champions to having six make the finals at the U.S. Open."

To cap off the incredible year, former WCAP stalwart Iris Smith will be inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

The championship culture fostered under Robinson and assistant coach Nate Engel isn't lost on Terry Steiner, head women's freestyle wrestling coach for Team USA.

"They really transformed the program, and I'm glad to have Army WCAP as part of Team USA," Steiner said. "I can't say enough about their leadership and what they have done."

While winning the world championship is gratifying and a huge accomplishment, it's not surprising, Nette said.

"This has been a long time coming, but at the same time, it just makes us hungry for more," she said. "This is the first team title in 27 years, but it won't be the last. Hopefully, next year we continue building on it and keep setting the standard."

Nwachukwu, the third seed, opened her tournament with two straight victories by technical superiority — a margin greater than 10 points — against Turkey's Sevim Akbas and Sweden's Sara Lindborg. Nwachukwu beat Bulgaria's Bilyana Dudova, ranked second in the world, 5-2 to punch her ticket to her first senior world final.

In the final, Nwachukwu stormed out to a 4-0 lead and led 9-4 at one point, but Ozaki scored seven straight points. Nwachukwu, who earned a silver medal earlier in October during the Under-23 World Championships in Las Vegas, overcame fatigue to score a takedown in the waning seconds.

The victory capped off a remarkable two weeks for her.

"I knew with U-23 worlds and senior worlds so close together that I had signed up for a challenge," she said. "Obviously, U-23s didn't go the way I wanted, but I had to leave that in the past. I knew I could win at that level, and I knew I was capable of winning senior worlds. I just kept telling myself to let go of the past and wrestle like it was my last opportunity."

Nette, seeded fifth, also had a remarkable run. She opened with a pin over Burundi's Gloria Niyonkuru, edged Russia's Svetlana Lipatova 7-6, and pinned Ukraine's Mariia Vynnyk, ranked No. 1 in the world, in the semifinals. In her final, she led 6-0, but a questionable call changed the match's momentum.

Nette said the shift underscored the importance of having the proper mindset.

"I had the match in the palm of my hand," she said. "Watching Adaugo compete this past year and seeing how locked-in she has been has shown me just how important that mental side is."

As long as Nette and Nwachukwu are part of the program, something special is always going to happen, Engel said.

"These two are perfect examples of serving their country, competing at the highest level and accomplishing great things," he added.

Both Nette and Nwachukwu stressed that it's a privilege to compete at the highest level while serving.

NSA warns about potential malware hijacking CAC-enabled computers

A National Security Agency official said on Nov. 16 that malicious cyber actors have developed malware that targets personal computers when users have their common access cards installed in a card reader connected to the computer. To counter this threat and minimize the malware's access, the official said that users should limit which devices they use their CAC in as much as possible and remove their CAC every time they step away. While most employees use a government-issued computer with a CAC reader installed, many have one on their personal computers too. Typically, employees use those readers to access work email after hours or to log into CAC-enabled websites. The malware takes advantage of these personal computers when a CAC is left inserted in the reader. While the CAC is inserted in the reader, the malware has access to use the CAC's credentials, often giving bad actors access to anything the cardholder can normally access, the NSA spokesperson said.







EARLY BIRD BRIEF

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•How to steal a fighter jet and battle tank in GTA 6

•'If we save one veteran's life, it's worth it': VA faces questions over psychedelic treatments

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•Denmark ratifies Trump deal over Greenland, hoping to end conflict

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•Pentagon lacks 'overarching plan' for munitions production, watchdog warns

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•MBDA and German startup Atmos team up to study space-based strike weapons

Task force senior advisor promises service members clean, comfortable housing

by Douglas E. Jessmer

After three weeks of leading the Barracks Task Force and visiting several military bases, Dakota Meyer understands the housing challenges service members are facing.

"We have service members living in conditions they should have never spent one night in, much less months, and in some cases, years," said Meyer, Medal of Honor recipient and Barracks Task Force senior advisor. "That ends now."



Dakota Meyer, Barracks Task Force senior advisor, speaks to Marines while inspecting the barracks at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C., Oct. 29, 2026. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ayden Cassano

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth signed a memo Nov. 10 directing the services to ensure no service member is left in barracks without hot water, functioning climate control, secure doors, or where mold is present.

A Government Accountability Office investigation in 2023 revealed that service members were forced to live in barracks with sewage overflows, inoperable fire systems, dangerous gas leaks and rodent infestations.

"I've lived in old facilities, but those facilities were maintained to a level that was clean, safe and comfortable," Meyer said. "That's not what I'm seeing as I'm going around to military installations right now."

Hegseth's memorandum gave the military departments five days to validate compliance with an Oct. 6 memo issued by Assistant Secretary of War for Energy, Installations and Environment Dale Marks, the senior official responsible for barracks modernization.

Each department is required to ensure housing is either brought into compliance with the War Department's standards within 24 hours, without exception, or relocate affected service members until repairs are made. Those members would be temporarily moved to other housing or to hotel accommodations.

Hegseth's directive said that unit integrity, room availability, manpower shortages, maintenance delays, lack of funding or conflicting policies don't justify occupancy in unacceptable housing. Any barrier to rapid relocation will elevate through the military departments to the Barracks Task Force.

Meyer, who's also a sergeant in the Marine Corps Reserve, stressed that commanders are responsible for the welfare of their service members. "Inability to make repairs, lack of manpower, or delays in getting something fixed do not relieve commanders of their responsibility," he said. "If the room cannot be fixed, move the service member."

Within 10 days of the memorandum, the secretaries of the Army, Navy and Air Force will report to the Barracks Task Force the number of service members affected by emergency conditions, as well as the number of relocations completed, rooms vacated, corrective actions taken and projected timelines for returning affected housing.

Meyer said the responsibility to take care of members doesn't change because a solution becomes difficult. "Our service members deserve a place that is clean, safe and comfortable," he said. "They kept their promises. Now we're going to keep ours."

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Editor.....Scott Sutherland

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USS *Theodore Roosevelt* relieves USS *George Washington* in Middle East

U.S. Central Command announced Nov. 19 that the U.S. has deployed a San Diego-based aircraft carrier to the Middle East to relieve another aircraft carrier there to enforce a blackade of Iran.

CENTCOM deployed San Diego-based USS *Theodore Roosevelt* with its accompanying strike force. CENTCOM oversees military operations in the Middle East.

USS *George Washington* left the region in mid-November following the arrival of *Theodore Roosevelt.* That leaves *Roosevelt* and USS *George H.W. Bush* as the two remaining carriers in the Middle East. *Washington* is now conducting routine operations in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, the Navy said.

It wasn't clear whether *Washington*'s escorts, including destroyer USS *Shoup*, also left the Middle East. The carrier's departure leaves at least 15 Navy warships in the Arabian Sea. All told, there are some 50,000 U.S. military personnel in the Middle East, according to *Stars and Stripes.*

The arrival of *Theodore Roosevelt* comes after President Donald Trump said on Nov. 12 that he "would not hesitate to act" if "something does not work out" in the ongoing conflict withbn Iran, which started in February.

USS *Spruance* returns following 12-month combat deployment

from Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet Public Affairs

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS S*pruance* (DDG 111), with embarked Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71 Detachment, returned to its home port of Naval Base San Diego in mid-November, concluding a 12-month deployment to the U.S. 3rd, 7th, and 5th Fleet areas of operations

Spruance deployed as part of the *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group (ABECSG) under Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 21, operating alongside flagship USS *Abraham Lincol*n (CVN 72), destroyers USS *Michael Murphy* (DDG 112) and USS *Frank E. Petersen Jr.* (DDG 121), and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 9.

During the deployment, *Spruance* steamed more than 88,000 nautical miles and played a pivotal role in sustained combat actions during Operation Epic Fury in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility. Serving as Surface Action Group Commander, *Spruance* spearheaded forward probing maneuvers near the Strait of Hormuz and enforced maritime blockade operations, including disabling the illicit cargo vessel M/V TOUSKA and ensuring maritime compliance across 15 vessels.

Operating under persistent threat from anti-ship cruise missiles and one-way attack drones, *Spruance* destroyed 12 unmanned aerial vehicles and four anti-ship cruise missiles. Between February and August 2026, the ship launched dozens of Tomahawk Land-Attack Cruise Missiles against Iranian military targets, degrading adversary capabilities threatening international shipping. *Spruance* also managed the force tactical datalink architecture across multiple strike groups and amphibious ready groups, maintaining real-time joint battlespace awareness.

While operating in C7F area of operations, *Spruance* executed high-precision navigational transits through the San Bernardino, Singapore, Malacca, Balabac, and Surigao Straits.

Over the 12-month deployment, *Spruance* sustained high-tempo combat readiness through 43 underway replenishments, transferring 8.6 million gallons of fuel, while supporting its HSM-71 detachment in flying over 190 sorties and 1,150 flight hours.

"Leading the ship and crew has been the honor of a lifetime," said Cmdr. Leigh R. Tate, commanding officer of *Spruance*. "*Spruance* Sailors made a difference. They represented their families, their ship and the United States Navy with distinction. It is also important that we recognize the extraordinary contributions of their families. Behind every Sailor is a someone back home standing their own watch."

Spruance and units of the *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation and Combat Action Ribbon in recognition of exceptional gallantry, unwavering determination, and superior combat performance in action against hostile forces during Operation Epic Fury and during months spent in a combat zone in the Central Command AOR.

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LOCAL: Most recent Marine Corps general and special court-martial dispositions

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Lance Cpl. J. F. Sanchez of violation of a lawful general order and carrying a concealed weapon. The judge sentenced the accused to 243 days of confinement, forfeiture of two-thirds pay per month for 243 days, and reduction to E-1.



At a general court-martial at MCAS Miramar, a military judge convicted Sgt. K. R. Jones of attempted sexual assault of a child. The judge sentenced the accused to a dishonorable discharge, 1,460 days of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Cpl. C. I. Flores of burglary with intent to commit certain offenses. The judge sentenced the accused to a bad conduct discharge and reduction to E-1.

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Lance Cpl. J. C. Jimenezdelcid of indecent recording. The judge sentenced the accused to a bad-conduct discharge, 60 days of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Staff Sgt. K. W. Swayzee of domestic violence – commission of a violent offense. The judge sentenced the accused to a bad-conduct discharge and 183 days of confinement.

Marine birthday brawl under investigation

In a report in *legion.org,* a brawl reportedly involving dozens of Marines at a barracks complex in Hawaii on the service's 251st birthday has prompted an investigation after videos of the altercation circulated widely on social media. The incident occurred Nov. 10 at a dorm on Marine Corps Base Hawaii, according to service officials. Footage of the fight was subsequently shared by the popular unofficial military social media accounts NotInRegz and NotInRegss. Military police are investigating the case, installation spokesperson 2nd Lt. Keagan Bolman said. A message accompanying the videos on social media said a large group of Marines assigned to the 3rd Littoral Combat Team went to another unit's barracks building and instigated the fight. Some commenters claiming knowledge of the incident identified the other unit as Marine Aircraft Group 24.

Trump, UFC president gift half-million dollars to Marine Corps Band

President Donald J. Trump was joined Nov. 20 by Dana White, the president of the mixed martial arts organization Ultimate Fighting Championship, on the new White House South Lawn helipad, where the two men presented the United States Marine Band with a $500,000 gift of their own combined, private funds in appreciation for — among other official state events — the band's performance during the June 14 UFC Freedom 250 event, also held on the South Lawn.



SAN DIEGO (Nov. 20, 2026) Sailors and civilians assigned to Navy Region Southwest pose for a group photo during the command's 5K Turkey Trot. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Christian Gino Arigo

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Adopt a Senior Pet Month
The joys of welcoming an older pet into your home

In honor of Adopt a Senior Pet Month this November, San Diego Humane Society is encouraging animal lovers to consider opening their hearts and homes to older pets who have so much love left to give.

While puppies and kittens often steal the spotlight, senior animals make equally wonderful companions. With established personalities, life experience and plenty of affection to share, older pets may be the perfect match for families looking to adopt.

Among the senior pets hoping for a new start are Mike Jack, a 12-year-old dog, and Ali, a 10-year-old cat. Both have been waiting patiently at San Diego Humane Society to find their people, and serve as reminders that a few gray whiskers shouldn't stand in the way of finding loving homes.

San Diego Humane Society shares four reasons to consider adopting a senior pet:

* What you see is what you get. Senior pets have established personalities, sizes and energy levels, making it easier for adopters to find a companion who fits their lifestyle.
* They may already know the ropes. Many older animals have lived in homes before and may be familiar with basic commands and household routines which can help ease their transition into a new family.
* They appreciate life's simple pleasures. While every pet is different, many seniors are content with leisurely walks, sunny spots for napping and quality time with their favorite people. They are wonderful companions for adopters seeking a more relaxed lifestyle.
* You're giving them a second chance. Senior pets often end up in shelters through no fault of their own, sometimes due to changes in their families' circumstances. Adopting an older animal gives them the opportunity to enjoy their golden years in a safe, loving home.

To find your perfect match, visit sdhumane.org/adopt.

Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. http://www.veteranmuseum.org/
Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free
Veterans/Seniors: $4 • Adults: $5 • Student ID: $2
2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300
Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not posses 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!

The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping movie review

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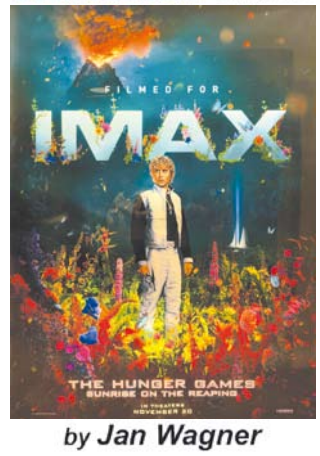

by Jan Wagner

There is a new Hunger Games movie and you are really going to like it. However, BEFORE you view the movie's "2016 Official Trailer 2 – Joseph Zada" (which is also really good, by the way), I'd like to strongly recommend to you that you do NOT watch this trailer until after you see the movie. It is full of short spoilers. Seeing the movie's official poster is more than enough. You should see this movie first, so that everything comes as a complete surprise.

If, however, you cannot bring yourself to wait, here is where you will find that trailer: *https://hungergames.movie/video/the-hunger-games-sunrise-on-the-reaping-2026-official-trailer-2-joseph-zada.*

The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping precedes the previous films in the timeline, thus it is familiar, yet different from what we have seen before. The movie's synopsis (which contains spoilers) tells us:

"From acclaimed director Francis Lawrence, THE HUNGER GAMES: SUNRISE ON THE REAPING follows sixteen-year-old Haymitch Abernathy (Joseph Zada) from District 12, beginning on the morning of the reaping for the 50th Annual Hunger Games, also known as the Second Quarter Quell, the biggest Games yet with twice as many tributes."

"Set in the world of Panem 24 years before the events of The Hunger Games, the story follows Haymitch into the arena, where he forms an unlikely alliance with fellow tribute Maysilee Donner (Mckenna Grace) and joins a coalition determined to challenge the Capitol's control under President Snow (Ralph Fiennes). As the competition unfolds, Haymitch risks everything to take down the Games from within the arena — setting in motion the rebellion that will change Panem forever."

The stakes are high — life and death. Children (the Tributes) will die. That is the nature of the Hunger Games. The games are cruel, but Haymitch is determined to stop them at all costs. However, since we now know that because this movie precedes the other films in the timeline, the Hunger Games will continue into the future. The Tributes have no choice but to fight and try to emerge victorious. The cruel challenges that the adults who administer The Hunger Games they face, led by President Snow; and the inevitable, cringeworthy fights to the death will keep you on the edge of your seats.

The acting portrayals are authentic; the special effects seem real. I cannot think of anything to criticize in The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping. It is excellent. I could not recommend it more.

"Based on Suzanne Collin' best-selling novel, THE HUNGER GAMES: SUNRISE ON THE REAPING also stars Jesse Plemons, Glenn Close, Kieran Culkin, Elle Fanning, Maya Hawke, Whitney Peak, and Kelvin Harrison Jr. Produced by Nina Jacobson, Brad Simpson and Francis Lawrence. Screenplay by Billy Ray and Michael Lesslie."

See The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping in theaters beginning on Friday, November 20.

For more information, visit the website for "The Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping" at *https://hungergames.movie.*

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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How World War I advanced United States military medicine

From blood transfusions to specialized aviator healthcare, wartime innovated care for service members

The United States participated in World War I for 19 months of the four-year conflict, yet its military medical advancements revolutionized trauma care on and off the battlefield.

U.S. Congress formally declared war on Germany, April 6, 1917, bringing the U.S. into the global conflict that began on July 28, 1914. Throughout the war, American medical teams turned wartime lessons into lasting medical innovations, enhancing combat care from frontline surgery and blood storage to mental healthcare and physical rehabilitation. The conflict also accelerated breakthroughs in military-civilian partnerships, aviator healthcare, and other wartime medical advances — reshaping military medicine and trauma care into a highly coordinated, lifesaving system.

Forward surgical units brought care closer to the front

During World War I, the U.S. rapidly deployed mobile hospitals near the front lines to care for the wounded and sick.

"Everyone learned that forward surgery reduced infection rates, sped up recovery, and saved some lives," according to Sanders Marble, senior historian, Army Medical Department Center of History & Heritage.

Forward surgical units "were not just to save lives, but to benefit the military by returning more patients to duty and reducing the size of the hospital system through fewer infections and shorter hospital stays," he said.

These forward surgical units paved the path for mobile surgical hospitals introduced in later U.S. conflicts.

Blood innovations led to increased readiness

As surgery moved closer to the front lines, the need for transportable, long-lasting blood storage became critical.

French and British military medical teams moved from a system of "direct donor-recipient transfusion — connected by tubing stitched into the limb — to indirect transfusion using syringe-loads or bottled blood for a quicker transfusion period," according to Marble.

This new method, along with advances in preservatives and storing blood on ice, provided modest stockpiles of blood ahead of military operations, he noted.

Oswald Hope Robertson, a U.S. Army doctor attached to a British hospital, brought these advancements "together to push an early blood bank forward," Marble said. Using Type O blood donors, Robertson created the first mobile blood banks for wounded service members.

Recovery became a wartime mission

World War I saw an "increased number of wounded, including those with limb amputations, neurological conditions, and facial injuries," leading to an increased need "for reconstructive efforts to support the warfighter after surgery," said Trenton Streck-Havill, assistant archivist, National Museum of Health and Medicine.

Physical and occupational therapists served as reconstruction aides in stateside and French hospitals, helping patients regain movement, practice daily tasks, and prepare for work after service. Streck-Havill called the integration of these fields "among the most revolutionary changes of the war."

Marble said the U.S. Army saw the need for aides "to provide full patient care through to rehabilitation" during World War I. He said patient-care outcomes showed that "early intervention both improved patient outcomes and shortened the rehabilitation process."

Alan Hawk, historical collections manager, National Museum of Health and Medicine, called reconstruction aides the "founding mothers" of modern physical and occupational therapy, laying the foundation for the U.S. Army's rehabilitation program in 1918.

'Shell shock' and wartime focus on mental health

The U.S. Army developed a more organized approach to studying and treating soldiers' mental health during the war. Streck-Havill noted that terms such as "shell shock" and "war neuroses" started to become standard clinical language describing a range of psychological and nervous symptoms associated with combat.

Marble said the U.S. Army discovered that treating mental health on the front lines for the first time, "sped up recovery and reduced the severity of responses."

According to the U.S. Army Medical Command Center of History and Heritage, the U.S. Army Neurological Hospital No. 1 in Benoite Vaux, France, was opened as a facility primarily for patients experiencing mental health challenges, staffed by neurologists and psychiatrists.

The general treatment of war neuroses at the time consisted of "rest, persuasion, suggestion, work, and psychological reeducation," according to the U.S. Army, with "one of the most valuable assets in the treatment of the neuroses was the creation of a ward atmosphere of cure."

The war also saw the study of mental health and combat, leading to the first publication on the "topic of war-related psychological distress," according to Streck-Havill.

Military-civilian partnerships increased medical care and readiness

As U.S. Army medical services were relatively small at the time, partnerships with civilian medical personnel and hospitals were vital to treating the large numbers of war casualties.

American physicians who volunteered in European hospitals saw the scale of modern battlefield injuries and urged U.S. military leaders to prepare before entering the conflict, according to the journal article, Professional Doctors but Amateur Soldiers: The US Army's Affiliated Hospitals Program, 1915-1955, authored by Marble.

In October 1915, Dr. George Crile, an American doctor who served with the British Expeditionary Force, proposed major civilian hospitals organize "base hospitals" that could enter military service when needed. In 1916, the American Red Cross took responsibility for coordinating these units. By the time the U.S. declared war, 33 base hospitals were ready for service, according to Marble. Some of these hospitals also supplied surgeons and nurses for forward-surgical teams.



Soldiers pose with a modified Curtiss JN-4 "Jenny" biplane, an early aeromedical evacuation vehicle, in 1917 during in World War I. Medical innovations during war transformed combat care, leading to breakthroughs that paved the path for high-quality warfighter care today. Photo ID: Reeve 17633 Courtesy of the National Museum of Health and Medicine

Marble noted these partnerships were vital to the war effort, with the U.S. Army limited medical personnel, equipment, and hospital capacity.

As the first U.S. Army units operational in Europe, "base hospitals had mobilized quickly, served where needed, and provided a large supply of experienced and talented doctors who could be moved from affiliated units to where needed most," said Marble.

Partnerships with educational institutions also trained medical personnel by offering courses in orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery, neurosurgery, X-ray training, and war surgery, according to Marble. Institutions including Yale University, Cornell University, and the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research provided crucial training to civilian students — with many joining the Army Medical Corps as officers.

Specialized aviator medicine introduced

World War I transformed aviation into a major tool of warfare, creating new demands for pilot health, fitness, and readiness — establishing aviation medicine as a military specialty, according to the U.S. Air Force Medical Service. Aviation medicine supported readiness in three ways: selecting pilots, keeping pilots effective, and protecting trained personnel.

In 1918, the U.S. Army established the Medical Research Laboratory at Hazelhurst Field in Mineola, New York, to study how flight affected the human body. The lab began an aviation medicine education program for physicians, helping to establish specialized medical support for aircrews and laying the groundwork for today's aerospace medicine as the U.S. Air Force School of Aerospace Medicine.

When the United States entered World War I, its military medical system had to innovate under fire. U.S. medics rapidly adopted and tested allied techniques on the battlefield, forging a new framework that ultimately evolved into today's Military Health System.

Streck-Havill said, "Many of the foundational, structural elements of the modern U.S. Army and Navy Medical Corps, as well as those implemented by the Defense Health Agency, have their roots in WWI restructuring of military medical deployment."



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Caitlin B.
BS, Legal Studies
U.S. Army Veteran

This Veterans Day, we at University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) wish to express our gratitude to our student veterans and all those who have worn the uniforms of the U.S. military. It is your hard work and dedication that have kept America free and safe. As you continue to exemplify the spirit of service in civilian life, UMGC is honored to serve your education needs.

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