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CHINESE CARRIER SHANDONG TRANSITS TAIWAN STRAIT, AHEAD OF TAIWAN'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

by Ben Werner,
USNI News

China's new aircraft carrier Shandong sailed through the Taiwan Strait on Dec. 26, two weeks ahead of Taiwan's presidential election.

Shandong is China's second aircraft carrier and the first one built in China. The Taiwan Strait passage is the first for Shandong since it was commissioned earlier this month. Reuters first reported Shandong's passage.

Before its commissioning, Shandong had previously steamed through the narrow body of water separating Taiwan from mainland China as it prepared to formally join the fleet, according to several media accounts, including a report in the Taiwan News.

Shandong launched in 2017, according to China's Ministry of National Defense.

Shandong's route through the Taiwan Strait comes as Taiwan gears up for a presidential election on Jan. 11th. President Tsai Ing-wen is vying for re-election and her ruling Democratic Progressive Party is pro-independence.

However, Tsai has stated she intends to maintain the status quo with China. Yet Tsai and her party are clear about how they view Taiwan as being separated from China's leadership in Beijing.



China's first domestically-built aircraft carrier leaves the pier at the Dalian shipyard on May 13, 2018. Xinhua Photo

"The world cannot and will not forget Taiwan because Taiwan is an important country," says a campaign message on Tsai Ing-wen's Twitter account.

The U.S. relationship with Taiwan is complicated. Officially, since 1979, the U.S. has "recognized the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China, acknowledging the Chinese position that there is but one China and Taiwan is part of China," according to the U.S. State Department.

The U.S. does not support Taiwan independence, but the

U.S. government does maintain a strong "unofficial relations" with Taiwan, according to the State Department.

The U.S. Navy regularly sends ships through the Taiwan Strait but has not sent an aircraft carrier through the Taiwan Strait in more than a decade. Earlier this year, during a Pacific tour, former Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson did not rule out such a carrier transit in the future, according to a report by Reuters.

Following his trip, Richardson reaffirmed during a Pentagon briefing his views on whether

there are any restrictions on the type of ships the U.S. Navy could send through the Taiwan Strait.

"Those are international waters. So, any ship that can sail in international waters can sail through those waters," Richardson said on Jan. 31.

The aircraft carrier's design is largely based on China's first carrier Liaoning, which was itself built from the partially-complete hull of the Soviet Kuznetsov-class aircraft carrier Varyag. It retains the ski jump takeoff, which limits its air wing to helicopters and Shenyang

J-15 fighter jets, and the ship is powered by conventional oil-fired boilers driving eight steam turbines derived from the Soviet-designed examples installed on Liaoning.

It measures about 1,033 feet long, with a displacement of

about 70,000 loaded.

However, it carries modifications and upgrades compared to Liaoning. It has increased storage for ammunition and fuel, with a larger aircraft capacity of 44 aircraft, eight more than Liaoning.

Acting SECNAV names 2 subs for greatest-gen heroes of Pearl Harbor

WASHINGTON - The Navy will name its two newest Virginia-class (SSN 774) fast-attack nuclear submarines after the American heroes of the Greatest Generation who perished in the former USS Oklahoma (BB-37) and USS Arizona (BB-39), bringing those hallowed names back into active-duty service after more than three quarters of a century. Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly proclaimed his decision to name the next two submarines, SSN-802 and SSN-803, respectively, on Dec. 23. "It's my fondest wish that the citizens of the great states of Arizona and Oklahoma will understand and celebrate our Navy's desire to memorialize the 1,177 heroes who perished in USS Arizona and the 429 more in USS Oklahoma in Pearl Harbor, on Dec. 7, 1941," said Modly. Generations have visited the Pearl Harbor National Memorial in Oahu, Hawaii, comprising the USS Arizona, USS Oklahoma and USS Utah memorials, in addition to six officer bungalows, three mooring quays, and the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center

Cutter delivers huge seizure of cocaine to San Diego

SAN DIEGO (Dec. 27, 2019) - The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Bertholf (WMSL 750) offloaded more than 18,000 pounds of cocaine in San Diego estimated to be worth more than \$312 million. The drugs represented seven separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions and disruptions by five Coast Guard cutter crews patrolling international waters of the Eastern Pacific Ocean off the coasts of Mexico, Central and South America between mid-October and early December. Bertholf's crew was responsible for three interdictions, seizing 5,851 pounds of cocaine worth more than an estimated \$100 million. The national security cutter crew then returned home to Alameda Dec. 23 following an 82-day counter-narcotics patrol in the Eastern Pacific Ocean.



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25th anniversary of CARAT exercise closes with year's end

by MC1 Gregory Johnson

SINGAPORE - The close of 2019 marks the end of the 25th anniversary of the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise series, the U.S. Navy's oldest and longest running regional exercise in South and Southeast Asia. For 25 years, the U.S. and partner nations have used CARAT as a premier bilateral and multilateral training forum to address maritime security interests. Rear Adm. Joey Tynch, commander of Logistics Group Western Pacific/Task Force 73, who leads CARAT for the U.S. Navy, said the quarter-century milestone was an opportunity to reflect on the value of pairing long-standing partnerships with an adaptable exercise. "This is what enduring partnerships looking like," said Tynch. "CARAT may be our oldest exercise, but it has never been more relevant. Each year, we build on the shared mission and strong relationships built over decades, and, with our partners, tackle the tough challenges." ... Refer to <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/news.aspx/130542>.

Don't use home DNA kits, Pentagon warns service members

by Leada Gore

(Tribune News Service) - Military personnel shouldn't use at-home DNA kits such as 23andme or Ancestry, the Pentagon warned in a recent memo. The advisory, initially obtained by Yahoo News, said such kits could pose a security risk. It also warned military personnel are being targeted by the companies with discounts encouraging them to purchase the at-home kits. "Exposing sensitive genetic information to outside parties poses personal and operational risks to Services members," the memo noted. "These (direct-to-consumer) genetic tests are largely unregulated and could expose personal and genetic information, and potentially create unintended security consequences and increased risk to the joint force and mission." ... Refer to <https://www.stripes.com/news/us/don-t-use-home-dna-kits-pentagon-warns-service-members-1.612655>.

Pentagon proposal cuts an FFG(X) and an attack submarine out of the budget

by David B. Larter

LANSDALE, Pa. - A small but potentially significant change in the Pentagon's five-year budget projection slows down the buying profile for the Navy's new frigate, which is expected to be awarded in 2020, according to a memo from the White House's Office of Management and Budget to the Department of Defense obtained by Defense News. The Navy's 30-year shipbuilding plan submitted to Congress with the 2020 budget showed the Navy planned to buy one FFG(X) in 2020, then it had planned to buy two every year until 2030, when it would buy the last of the planned 20-ship program. That would mean the next future-year defense program, or FYDP, in the 2021 budget would be for 10 FFG(X). ... Refer to <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2019/12/25/pentagon-proposal-cuts-an-ffgx-and-an-attack-submarine-out-of-the-budget/>.

Climate change opens door to Arctic for competitors, DOD official says

by Terri Moon Cronk

The Arctic is a region where strategic trends are amplified by the effects of the changing climate and physical environment, a lead Defense Department official said on Capitol Hill, Dec. 10. Most notably, "the Arctic continues to grow more accessible as the sea ice diminishes," said Victorino Mercado, acting assistant defense secretary for strategy, plans and capabilities. That means the Arctic is becoming more navigable over greater periods of time, resulting in increased interest and activity in the region, he said. Countries are exploring the potential of Arctic shipping routes, and opportunities in natural resource development and tourism, he said. Mercado made his remarks before the House Armed Services Committee, subcommittee on intelligence, emerging threats and capabilities, in a hearing on climate change in the era of strategic competition. "The door is open to increase activity in the Arctic by the United States, our allies, partners, but also our strategic competitors," he said. ... Refer to <https://www.defense.gov/explore/story/Article/2040295/climate-change-opens-door-to-arctic-for-com>.

FIRE-STRICKEN USS IWO JIMA CONDUCTS SEA TRIALS

Investigation into cause, damage assessment ongoing

by Sam LaGrone,
USNI News

A month after a fire in a hazardous material space injured 11 Sailors, amphibious assault ship USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD-7) returned to sea two weeks ago after completing a maintenance availability at Naval Station Mayport, Fla., Navy officials confirmed to USNI News.

The damage from the fire that occurred in the bowels of the ship and burned for five hours "did not impact the ship's ability to get underway for sea trials," spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Amelia Umayam told USNI News.

"The four-day sea trials marks *Iwo Jima*'s first time underway since December 2018," read a statement from the ship. "The ship spent its last days in port completing a two-day 'fast cruise,' Dec. 9-11, making final preparations for its transition to fully operational within 4th Fleet's area of operations."

In a statement shortly after the fire, Expeditionary Strike Group 2 confirmed that the fire had been contained to a single space.

"Sailors on board reported smoke in a cargo hold and a subsequent damage control investigation identified the fire and confirmed the fire had not spread to surrounding spaces," read a statement from ESG 2.

"In total, 11 *Iwo Jima* Sailors reported minor injuries; they were treated at the scene and released."

The nearby Jacksonville Fire Department staged on *Iwo Jima*'s hangar to support the crew fighting the fire in the hazardous material storage space, but they were ultimately not needed, a department spokesman told USNI News.

The ship was nearing the end of a year-long maintenance availability when the fire occurred.

It is unclear if the damage has been repaired yet. Neither Naval Sea Systems Command nor ESG 2 would provide additional details on the damage to the ship before the three fire investigations conclude.

According to a source familiar with the incident, the fire did not cause structural damage to *Iwo Jima* but did damage electrical and ventilation systems and insulation on the amphib.

There is no clear determination yet as to how the fire started nor how much the repairs to the space will cost.

The fire aboard *Iwo Jima* follows two other ships that suffered fire damage during maintenance periods in shipyards.

On Nov. 10, an electrical fire broke out on USS *Oscar Austin* (DDG-79), which was nearing the end of what was supposed to be a year-long, \$41.6 million maintenance and upgrade period at the BAE Systems Norfolk Ship Repair yard. *Oscar Austin* suffered extensive damage to its electrical system as a result of the accident.

The fire was caused by hot work - welding or other repair work that uses a blow torch - aboard the ship.

In a May status report, Cmdr. Garrett Miller, the commanding officer of USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG-62), warned that poor safety practices at the Ingalls Shipbuilding yard in Pascagoula, Miss., were putting at risk the two-year, \$533-million effort to repair the destroyer that was heavily damaged in a fatal 2017 collision with a commercial ship.

Miller, in his report, wrote

Foggo: Navy needs unmanned ISR, tankers to counter Russia

by Megan Eckstein,
USNI News

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As Russia continues to increase its submarine activity in the Mediterranean, Arctic and Atlantic, the U.S. Navy has made organizational changes to be more responsive but should invest in unmanned systems to support forces in the European theater, the four-star admiral who leads Naval Forces Europe said.

"We're seeing a surge in undersea activity from the Russian Federation navy that we haven't seen in a long time. Russia has continued to put resources into their undersea domain; it's an asymmetric way of challenging the West and the NATO alliance, and actually they've done quite well," Adm. James Foggo, the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa and NATO's Allied Joint Force Command Naples, told reporters last week at a Defense Writers Group breakfast.

"We in the United States submarine force still enjoy the competitive edge, I think we're the best in the world and we need to stay that way."

Foggo added that to maintain that edge and position of strength, "we have to continue to do research and development, and we have to continue to be the best that we can be, particularly

that expanding the hot work area "caused damage to bulkhead lagging and electrical panel."

The following is the complete Dec. 17 release from Iwo Jima.

MAYPORT, Fla. - USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) is underway for sea trials, Dec. 15, following a year-long Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) availability maintenance period.

The four-day sea trials marks *Iwo Jima*'s first time underway since December 2018. The ship spent its last days in port completing a two-day "fast cruise," Dec. 9-11, making final preparations for its transition to fully operational within Fourth Fleet's area of operations.

"The crew has worked hard throughout the year to make *Iwo Jima* even better than when she entered this CNO Availability period," said Capt. Darrell Canady, *Iwo Jima*'s commanding officer. "Their dedication and effort propelled us to this day. We are prepared to get this great ship ready for deployment and rejoin the fight to defend our great nation."

in the undersea domain. That means being out there operating."

On the research, development and acquisition side, he told USNI News that unmanned aviation could provide his vast theater many benefits.

"Knowing what's going on out there is extremely important. So for unmanned systems, [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] is probably one of our limitations and we could use more of it. Indications and warnings are important. If you could put an unmanned system up, then there's less of a risk, less of a threat," he told USNI News during the breakfast.

During sea trials, *Iwo Jima* crew will undergo multiple training scenarios and qualification evolutions to include engineering maneuvers designed to evaluate the performance of the ship after the extensive maintenance period.

"We will be testing several new systems and upgrades," said Canady, "We will also start preparing the crew for upcoming training events as we build their proficiency to fight casualties and respond to certain situations we may encounter while underway."

Iwo Jima is capable of carrying and delivering Sailors and Marines anywhere in the world for amphibious operations and humanitarian assistance.

"We are excited to rejoin the fleet and support our Navy and Marine Corps team when the Nation calls upon us," said Canady. "*Iwo Jima* Sailors are trained to do the job and do it well, with coordination, effectiveness and proficiency; we will ensure we are ready when called upon. That's the way *Iwo Jima* has and always will do business."

He also said he strongly supports the MQ-25A Stingray unmanned carrier-based tanker, which is being developed by Boeing and is set to reach initial operational capability by 2024 or sooner.

"It extends the range of the strike capability or the reconnaissance capability of that aircraft, but it also puts the carrier in a position where it can be more stealthy and it can remain in the fight," Foggo said.

Additionally, the admiral spoke of netted coastal defense systems and other anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) systems that the U.S. and its allies should be pursuing, in a similar manner that Russia has.

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U.S. strikes five facilities used Iran-backed militia in Iraq, Syria

by Chad Garland,
Stars and Stripes

IRBIL, Iraq (Dec. 29, 2019) - The U.S. military struck five facilities used by an Iran-backed militia in Iraq and Syria blamed for a rocket attack that killed an American contractor.

The Pentagon said Sunday the move was in response to a series of such rocket attacks on Iraqi bases where American troops are deployed as part of the anti-Islamic State coalition Operation Inherent Resolve.

"These locations included weapon storage facilities and command and control locations that [Shiite militia Kata'ib Hezbollah] uses to plan and execute attacks on OIR coalition forces," said Jonathan Hoffman, the chief Pentagon spokesman, in a statement.

The news comes two days after a barrage of 30 rockets struck the K1 base in Kirkuk, killing a U.S. civilian contractor and wounding four American service members and two Iraqi troops, as forces were preparing for an anti-ISIS operation.

Hoffman attributed that strike to Kata'ib Hezbollah, using the initials KH.

"KH has a strong linkage with Iran's Quds Force and has repeatedly received lethal aid and other support from Iran that it has used to attack OIR coalition forces," Hoffman said calling on



Iraqi security forces in Anbar province are pictured here at an undisclosed location on the morning of Sunday, Dec. 29, preparing for the eighth phase of the government's Will of Victory campaign. Troops in Anbar province were tasked with clearing operations in the western deserts of the Jazira region, as part of operations conducted throughout Anbar, Ninevah, Salahuddin, Kirkuk and Diyala provinces. Photo courtesy of Iraq's Defense Ministry

the group to cease its attacks or face further strikes.

U.S. officials began warning of heightened threat indications from Iran and its proxies this summer, as tensions between Washington and Tehran mounted. The threatened escalation followed harsh sanctions the Trump administration imposed after backing out of an Obama-era nuclear deal with the hard-line Iranian regime. Since then, the two sides have downed each other's drones and have traded blame over a series of attacks in the region.

others, the Iraqi government's security media cell said in a Facebook post.

Iran's Press TV reported that the death toll was up to 12 people.

On Twitter, Inherent Resolve spokesman Col. Myles Caggins III posted a copy of Hoffman's statement along with photos of F-15 Strike Eagle aircraft and pre-strike satellite images of compounds apparently along the Iraq-Syria border, suggesting the strike was carried out by the jets. Officials with Inherent Resolve

defeat of the terrorist group.

Thousands of ISIS fighters and loyalists also remain active in Iraq as part of sleeper cells in towns and villages or hide in expansive western deserts or rugged northern mountain ranges, U.S. officials with Operation Inherent Resolve said late last week.

Since the loss of its territorial control - in Iraq in December 2017 and in Syria in March 2019 - ISIS has turned to insurgent tactics, carrying out assassinations, ambushes and roadside bombings against security forces and civilians.

The latest operation spans parts of Anbar, Ninevah, Salahuddin, Kirkuk and Diyala provinces, Yarallah said. It's supported by Iraqi and coalition aircraft, local militias and other security and intelligence agencies, he said.

Throughout the day, Iraq's security media cell posted updates to Facebook, touting the discovery of tunnels used by the terrorists near Kirkuk, four "terrorist nests" with supplies in Salahuddin, and in Diyala a weapons cache with eight rocket launchers, 750 rounds of heavy-machine-gun ammunition and other weapons.

Also in Salahuddin, five militants were killed inside a tunnel, and as the rubble was being removed, a suicide bomber detonated himself, injuring four Iraqi troops, the media cell said.

U.S. forces continue to assist their Iraqi counterparts battling ISIS, but U.S. offensive strikes

are rare and must meet stringent requirements, said Capt. Brad Bynum, an operations officer at Qayara Airfield West, where Americans staff an operations center that supports government forces with intelligence, reconnaissance and defensive airstrikes.

It's unclear whether the strikes on the militia group's sites in Iraq were previously cleared with the government. The country's caretaker Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi called for an emergency meeting of the country's national security council, a Sky News reporter based in Baghdad reported.

Earlier this month, in a call with Abdul-Mahdi, who resigned amid anti-government demonstrations last month but continues to serve in the post, Defense Secretary Mark Esper had asked that the government do more to prevent the rocket attacks.

Abdul-Mahdi "warned that taking unilateral decisions will have negative reactions that are difficult to control and threaten the security, sovereignty, and independence of Iraq," said a summary of the call released by the prime minister's office.

U.S. troops are in the country at the request of the Iraqi government "to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS and provide advice and assistance" to security forces there, Hoffman said, and they respect the country's sovereignty and support its independence.

"The U.S., however, will not be deterred from exercising its right of self-defense," he said.

"These operations aim to search and clear areas, villages and open spaces, to track and arrest wanted persons, dry up the remnants of terrorism and maintain stability and security."
- Lt. Gen. Abdul Amir Rashid Yarallah, the Iraqi army's deputy commander of operations, in a statement posted to Facebook.

and at the Pentagon declined to provide operational details, referring questions to U.S. Central Command. CENTCOM did not immediately respond to a query seeking further information.

Meanwhile, U.S.-backed Iraqi security forces launched their latest large-scale operation to hunt down ISIS insurgents at dawn Sunday - the eighth iteration of a campaign dubbed "Will of Victory," focused on lasting

An Iraqi general told The Associated Press on Sunday that security had been beefed up around the sprawling al-Asad Air Base, which hosts U.S. troops in the western Anbar desert, following a series of such rocket attacks throughout Iraq, including one on that base earlier this month. The attacks remain under investigation, Maj. Gen. Raad Mahmoud told the AP.

The U.S. strikes hit three sites in Iraq and two in Syria, Hoffman said.

The strikes hit sites in western Anbar province near the Iraq-Syria border, killing four Shiite militia members, including a commander, and wounding 30



Places of Worship

<p>Bayview Church <i>Attract... Assimilate... Activate</i> 6134 Pastor Timothy J Winters St., San Diego 92114 (619) 262-8384 Sunday 6:45am, 8:30am, 11am Worship Service Studies in Christian Living (formerly known as Sunday School) Tuesday & Thursday 6pm, Wednesday 5:30pm & Saturday 9am www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org</p>	<p>First Baptist Church <i>"Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach the World"</i> Interim Pastor Jim Baize www.fbcoronado.com Sunday Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10 am Friday's Women's Bible Study 9:30-11:30am 445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588 ariel@fbcoronado.com FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado</p>	<p>Mesa View Baptist Church Dr. Darrow Perkins, Jr., Th.D. Pastor/Servant CW03, USMC (Ret.) <i>Seeking Sinners; Saving Souls, Strengthening Saints</i> Sunday Church School at 8:45am • Morning Worship at 10am Wednesday Night Bible Study 7pm 13230 Pomerado Rd., Poway CA 92064 www.mesaview.org (858) 485-6110</p>
<p>Canyon View Church of Christ <i>"Love God, Love People, Serve the World"</i> Sunday Bible Classes for all ages 9am Sunday Worship 10am, 6pm Wednesday nights 6pm Fellowship & Pizza! 6:30pm Bible Classes for all ages 4292 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 Email: cvoffice@canyonview.org (Near corner of Balboa Ave & Clairemont Dr) (858) 273-5140 www.canyonview.org @gotochrist facebook.com/cccsd</p>	<p>New military families are moving to San Diego every day. Invite them to worship with you in the Dispatch Church Directory. (619)280-2985</p>	
<p>Christ Community Church <i>Helping people love God and each other!</i> Saturdays at 6pm & Sundays at 8:45am & 10:30am Children's Ministries for All Kids! Small Groups for Teens & Adults of All Ages! 9535 Kearny Villa Rd., Mira Mesa 92126; Located just off Miramar Rd. & I-15 www.gotoChrist.com or (858) 549-2479</p>	<p>La Jolla Lutheran Church <i>"We Follow Jesus"</i> Sunday 9:30am Worship and Sunday School Wednesday 6:30pm Bible Study 7111 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037 (858) 454-6459 LaJollaLutheranChurch.com</p>	<p>Mt. Moriah Christian Church <i>"Purpose Driven" Gospel Church"</i> Multi-Cultural, Non-Denominational Services on Sunday at 9am and 11am Near Miramar Base L.J. Thomas - Sr. Pastor 7055 Carroll Rd., San Diego CA 92121 (858) 335-5795 www.mtmoriahcc.org</p>
<p>Extreme Gospel Center Eastlake Sunday: Sunday School 9am; Morning Worship Service 10am Wednesday: Bible Study 7pm Preschool Academy Ages 2-5; 6am to 6pm; M-F (619) 656-0131 10% Military Discount 880 Kuhn Dr., Chula Vista, CA 91914 (Directly Across from Kohl's) Website: http://www.extremegospelwc.org</p>	<p>Lakeside Community Presbyterian Church Worship Service Sunday at 9:30am Nursery, Sunday School for all ages Preschool offers discount for active military 9908 Channel Road, Lakeside, CA www.Lakesidepc.org (619) 443-1021</p>	<p>St. Luke's Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. <i>We thank you for your service!</i></p>

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Soldiers in Iraq recognized for role in fighting ISIS

by Chad Garland,
Stars and Stripes

MOSUL, Iraq - Some soldiers deployed to northern Iraq got more than stocking stuffers this week when senior leaders visited and recognized their contributions to the coalition battling the Islamic State.

Col. Matthew W. Brown, commander of the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division wished troops in Nineveh province happy holidays on Wednesday and Thursday and presented them with awards, handed out coins and gathered feedback.

The brigade has been in Iraq and Syria since August, supporting U.S. special operations units and advising, assisting and enabling Iraqi and Syrian partner forces' counter-ISIS missions.

Brown and his senior enlisted soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. Matthew E. Ladd, presented achievement or commendation medals to more than a dozen soldiers at Qayara Airfield West, an airbase near Mosul known as Q-West that was retaken from ISIS in 2016, and the Nineveh Operations Command, a small camp on the eastern bank of the Tigris River, inside Iraq's second-largest city. Several others received coins for what one official called "everyday badassery."

"As I walked around and we talked to every single soldier that was recognized here ... there were some common themes," Brown told a formation in Mosul. "This individual was right out in the thick of things and extending what we do, this individual was taking care of our people, this individual was allowing us to operate."

The medals, which count toward promotion points, are an important way to recognize soldiers who perform beyond what's expected of them, said Maj. Adam Kirschling, executive officer of 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, a part of the brigade deployed mainly to Q-West.

Staff Sgts. Bobby Burbank and Robert Carlson of 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry in Mosul, received Army Commendation Medals for helping a team of Marine Raiders secure a Syrian oil field, and assisting a Green Beret and linguist to maintain good relations between U.S. forces and several Iraqi villages.

Lt. Col. Travis Tilman, com-

mander of the 70th Brigade Engineer Battalion within the brigade, used the trip to visit some of the far-flung members of his battalion, such as Lt. Eric Christiansen, who he said has been an "overall badass."

A former art teacher who became an Army medic before commissioning, Christiansen spent his first three months in Iraq leading operations to clear

improvised explosive devices from roads and surveying bridges in need of repair in the area surrounding al-Asad Air Base in western Anbar province.

Some of the roads spanned dozens of culverts, the 32-year-old said, and each one had to be checked.

"It just takes one," he said of the IED threat.

The brigade command team also gathered the troops for a series of closed-door "sensing sessions," where some soldiers asked about more opportunities for patrols or to train Iraqi forces, who they think need more help.

U.S. officials have curbed some off-base operations in the country due to increased threats from Iran-backed Shiite militias,

who in the past have targeted U.S. troops with IEDs and rockets, an official said.

Ladd assured the soldiers in Mosul that though they may not hear it enough their efforts matter.

"What you're doing up here is allowing them (the Iraqis) to get after fighting ISIS," he said.

CHP highlights new California laws now in effect for 2K20

Courtesy story

California Highway Patrol is urging motorists to be ready for a slate of new laws that took effect New Year's Day, laws that will impact road safety.

Bicyclists at turn lanes

Under Assembly Bill 1266, bicyclists will be permitted to travel straight through turn lanes - right and left - at intersections, so long as the traffic light indicates such movement is allowed.



LAX freeway traffic on the 405. Courtesy photo

Passengers prohibited from consuming cannabis

Assembly Bill 1820 ends an exemption that allowed passengers to consume marijuana while in a bus, limousine, taxi, pedicab, housecar or camper. While passengers in any of those vehicles will no longer be able to ingest cannabis, they will still be able to drink alcohol.

Wildlife salvage permits

Senate Bill 395 won't allow the general public to collect and eat animals fatally struck on California roads. But it does authorize the Fish and Game Commission, in conjunction with CHP, to start creating a pilot program that would allow people to apply for a permit to remove and recover deer, elk, pronghorn antelope and wild pigs that have been killed by a car - so long as the wild game meat is for human consumption.

Peace officer use of deadly force

Assembly Bill 392 limits when a law enforcement officer can use deadly force. It revises the standard under which homicide by peace officer is justified to when an officer "reasonably believes" it necessary. This includes when they're defending against the imminent threat of death, or serious injury to themselves or another individual.

Training for use of deadly force policies

As AB 392 takes effect, Senate Bill 230 mandates law enforcement agencies rewrite use of force policies and provide officers with mandatory training in order to comply with the new law.

2021 distracted driving law highlighted

CHP also highlighted one law that was passed this year but does not go into effect until July 1, 2021. That's Assembly Bill 47, which will further penalize distracted drivers by adding a point to their license for using a handheld device while behind the wheel. When the law goes into effect, drivers convicted of violating the state's hands-free law could receive a point on their record for the subsequent 36 months.



A group of F-16 Fighting Falcons from the 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron and the 40th Flight Test Squadron return to Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., after a successful test mission Dec. 19 This test demonstrated shooting down a small drone at low altitudes. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. John Raven

F-16 downs drone during cruise missile defense testing

by 1st Lt. Savannah Bray
EGLIN AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - The 85th Test and Evaluation Squadron shot down a subscale drone using an AGR-20A Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System laser-guided rocket Dec. 19, providing a proof of concept for using rockets queued from an F-16 Fighting Falcon targeting pod as viable munitions to perform cruise missile defense.

"The test was unprecedented and will shape the future of how the Air Force executes CMD," said Col. Ryan Messer, 53rd Wing commander. "This is a prime example of how the 53rd Wing is using resources readily available to establish innovative ways that enhance combat capabilities for our combat units."

Originally, the AGR-20A was developed as a low cost, low

collateral damage air-to-ground weapon for use in Afghanistan and Iraq; adapting the system for counter-air use is momentous. The AGR-20A is a fraction of the cost of the AIM-120 missile, commonly used for cruise missile defense. Additionally, the AGR-20A can be loaded faster than an AIM-120 and an aircraft can carry two-to-three times the number weapons.

This directly supports the National Defense Strategy priority of reform for greater performance and affordability.

Finding a more cost-efficient CMD weapon was second out of 76 tactics improvement proposals following the January 2019 Weapons and Tactics Conference known as WEP-TAC. The 85th TES planned and conducted the test with support across the Air Force and contract partners ensuring

efficacy and potential prior to execution.

"This proof of concept can have implications for homeland defense missions, combined defense of the Arabian Gulf and beyond," Messer said. "I am exceptionally proud of the efforts of the 85th TES and the units across the 53rd Wing that made this possible."

The 85th TES is part of the 53rd Wing, which is the primary operational test and evaluation wing for the U.S. Air Force. The wing provides tactical advantage to the warfighter at the speed of relevance. By testing new operational capabilities, evaluating fielded capabilities and optimizing electronic warfare capabilities, the 53rd Wing is bringing the future faster while answering the warfighter's demands for integrated, multi-domain capabilities.

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Great ways to honor native veterans

(StatePoint) Today, American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians (AIAN) serve in the U.S. military at one of the highest rates per capita of all population groups, according to the Smithsonian Institution. In fact, the AIAN veteran cohort served in the Pre-9/11 period of service in a higher percentage than veterans of other races (19.9 percent vs. 13.3 percent, respectively).

Here are a few ways to honor the legacy and service of Native American veterans of the U.S. military.

Learn the history

Native Americans have served in every major U.S. war, and the history of their service during World War II is particularly significant, as Navajo, Comanche, Sioux and Hopi servicemen developed and memorized special codes based on their languages to send critical messages from the frontlines of battlefields in the Pacific, Europe and North Africa. Known as Code Talkers, their work was instrumental to win battles and save lives.

Take steps to learn about the contributions of Native Americans in the military and find ways to honor their service. Courtesy photo



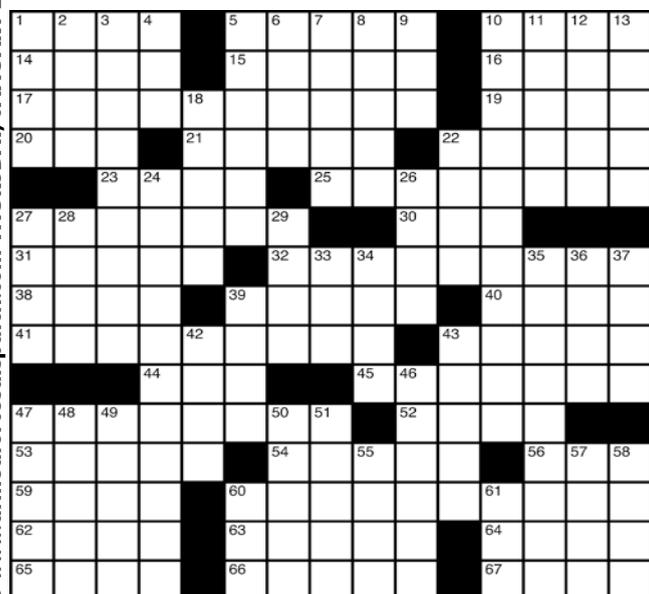
Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 1 New England NFLers
- 5 Workforce
- 10 ___ salad
- 14 Cornell who founded Cornell
- 15 Actress Tierney
- 16 Passionate god
- 17 Nerd's moniker
- 19 Unexciting
- 20 Actress Gabor
- 21 Blends
- 22 Destination for the last flight?
- 23 In the cellar
- 25 Detective's moniker
- 27 Speak to
- 30 Michelle who was the youngest female to play in a PGA Tour event
- 31 Bubbles up
- 32 Didn't like leaving
- 38 Ending for marion
- 39 Traitor's moniker
- 40 Gung-ho
- 41 Lawn-trimming tool
- 43 Anti-inflammatory brand
- 44 Sixth sense, initially
- 45 Coming to a point
- 47 Genius' moniker
- 52 Bonny one
- 53 Captain Kirk's "final frontier"
- 54 Young zebras
- 56 "Gross!"
- 59 ___ avail: fruitless
- 60 Old-timer's moniker
- 62 Skunk cabbage feature
- 63 More flimsy, as an excuse
- 64 Ballet move
- 65 Attention getter
- 66 Krispy ___
- 67 Man, but not woman

Down

- 1 First name in skunks
- 2 Sea of ___: Black Sea arm
- 3 Court calendar entry
- 4 ___ Diego
- 5 Silvery food fish
- 6 Airport waiter
- 7 Dealership lot array
- 8 At risk of being slapped
- 9 A long way
- 10 Rats
- 11 Former New York senator Al D' ___
- 12 Word with book or opera
- 13 "Clean Made Easy" vacuum brand
- 18 Pill amounts
- 22 Like Death Valley
- 24 Bodyguard, typically
- 26 Lambs' moms
- 27 Not many
- 28 Indulge, with "on"
- 29 Sealed tight
- 33 Summer cooler
- 34 Bakery offering
- 35 Presents too aggressively
- 36 Cave in
- 37 Piggied out (on), briefly
- 39 Taunting remark
- 42 Italian noble family
- 43 Take ___: decline to participate
- 46 Enticement
- 47 Prevent, in legalese
- 48 Apple players
- 49 Compact
- 48-Down
- 50 "My concern is ..."
- 51 "You've got the wrong person!"
- 55 Attention getter
- 57 Cry out loud
- 58 "Look ma, no hands!"
- 60 March on Washington monogram
- 61 Prefix with gram



Support initiatives

Organizations that promote appreciation and understanding of the identities and cultures of Indigenous Peoples, as well as honor the achievements and service of veterans, are helping shift the norm and serve as a model to others. Thankfully, many organizations and companies are already taking steps to honor Native American veterans in ways that tangibly improve lives and expand opportunities, such as through housing programs, educational scholarships and hiring initiatives.

One example is Operation Tiny Home, a non-profit which provides apprentice training workshops for Native Americans to build high-quality, sustainable housing.

Corporate action is also making an impact. In the case of Wells Fargo, initiatives include having dedicated team members focused on serving AIAN communities in the U.S. with products, services and financial education programs tailored to help tribal governments, tribal enterprises and tribal members succeed financially, as well as through hiring initiatives targeted at veterans through its Military Affairs Program. The

company offers apprenticeships, internships, transition services and leadership training to veterans, as well as employee resource groups, financial education, military leave benefits and other programming.

"Wells Fargo has been the most military friendly company I've ever worked for," said Shanitra Foster, a Wells Fargo personal banker who is Navajo and served in the Army National Guard as a military police officer. "My team really supported me when I take time off for my drill weekends."

Visit a new monument

A visit to the U.S. capital has long held opportunities for learning about U.S. military history, and soon, those who make the trip will have a dedicated site where they can honor AIAN veterans across generations. In November 2020, The National Native American Veterans Memorial will be unveiled in Washington, D.C. on the National Mall, representing the first time the country will recognize the distinguished service of Native Americans in every branch of the Armed Forces. Local historical sites and museums nationwide also pay tribute to military history and Native veterans.

Social Security Matters

Ask Rusty - About survivor benefits, my own benefits, and taxes

by Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I am 67 and still working full time but plan to retire after June of next year. Because of my income I have not been drawing my Social Security benefits; however, my income will not be a tax issue in 2020 with my planned retirement. If I begin drawing my SS when I'm 68 next June, can I draw it retroactively to the first of the year at that rate? Or, beginning January 1, 2020, can I draw on my deceased wife's SS and then switch to my higher rate upon my birthdate in June? Signed: Exploring My Options

Dear Exploring: Since you are eligible for both a survivor benefit from your wife and your own SS retirement benefit you have a choice of which one to choose and when to claim. You can choose the survivor benefit first and continue to delay your own SS benefit, thus allowing your own benefit to continue to earn delayed retirement credits. You can delay until you are 70 years old or, depending upon your financial needs, you can claim your own benefit at any time, including June of next year.



Your survivor benefit from your wife will be 100 percent of the benefit your wife was receiving (or entitled to receive) at her death. You could have started that benefit when your wife passed, but it would have been reduced if that was before you reached your full retirement age (66). Survivor benefits reach maximum at your full retirement age (FRA), and at FRA you get 100 percent of your deceased wife's SS benefit. You can restrict your application to your survivor benefit if you choose to do so, and you can request up to 6 months in retroactive survivor benefits if you wish. By doing that, you are delaying the claim for your own benefit so it continues to grow in value.

Since you have not yet claimed your own SS retirement benefit, you have already been earning Delayed Retirement Credits (DRCs) at a rate of 2/3rds of 1 percent per month past your FRA of 66. DRCs accumulate until you are 70 years old, when your monthly benefit would be 32 percent more than it would have been at your FRA and 16 percent more than it will be when you turn 68 in June 2020. If, instead of continuing to delay, you decide to claim your own SS benefit in June of next year, you can claim up to 6 months retroactive benefits, but doing so will move your effective claim date back 6 months and your monthly benefit amount will be permanently reduced by about 3.3 percent.

So, to answer your two specific questions: yes, you can claim your SS retirement benefit in June 2020 and get 6 months retroactive benefits but your benefit will be reduced as explained above. And yes, you can claim your survivor benefit from your deceased wife in January 2020 and then switch to your own SS retirement benefit in June. From a purely financial standpoint, the latter method would give you some extra money starting in January without reducing your own SS retirement benefit. And it would also give you the option of delaying your claim for your own benefits beyond June 2020 and continuing to earn DRCs until a later time, up to age 70 if you wish. Doing so would give you a substantially higher SS retirement benefit for the rest of your life.

But in either case, the SS benefits you collect will only become part of your taxable income if your "combined income" exceeds \$25,000 (assuming you file your income tax as "single"). Your "combined income" is your normal Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) for income tax purposes, plus 50 percent of the SS benefits you received for the tax year, plus any non-taxable interest you may have. If your combined income exceeds \$25,000 then up to 50 percent of the SS benefits you received in the tax year becomes part of your overall taxable income; if your combined income exceeds \$34,000 then up to 85 percent of your SS benefits becomes part of your taxable income.

Russell Gloor is a certified Social Security advisor with the Association of Mature American Citizens.

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Recruiter's Spotlight: Expanding horizons

by Petty Officer 1st Class
Meranda Keller

VISALIA, Calif. - Gabriel Alvarado comes from a little place in California known as Caruthers. It's the type of place where everyone knows everyone; the high school has only 500 students; and farming is most likely what you will do after graduating high school.

Alvarado started his senior year as an athlete in both football and wrestling. He knew he didn't want to go into farming. What did pique his interest, however, was the idea of playing sports in college and traveling.

Those interests he had at the beginning of his senior year changed as the year went on and his outlook matured.

"I wanted to push myself to the next level and excel in my life," said Alvarado.

He and two close friends decided to join the Navy. All three of them left together a week after they graduated.

Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Gabriel Alvarado has been in the Navy for six years now. He is currently assigned to Navy Recruiting Station (NRS) Visalia under Navy Recruiting District (NRD) San Francisco.

Alvarado was an aircraft maintainer in VFA-192. While aboard amphibious

assault ship USS *America* (LHA 6), he was a part of the reaction force, which allowed him to be around weapons and the combat aspect of things.

"I love weapons and felt like I would fit in the community," he said.

When it was time for Al-

"I'm confident that I can change people's lives. Sometimes people need a jump-start to be able to visualize where they could be and how I can help them get there. My strengths are motivation and my drive for success. I refuse to let me or my team fail."

- Navy Recruiter Gabriel Alvarado

varado to pick orders, his mentor told him he needed to become a recruiter.

Alvarado was hesitant and didn't want to be a recruiter, but he knew his mentor had always looked out for him and knew that he would excel.

Alvarado has been a recruiter for a little over a year at NRD San Francisco. Recruiting is arguably one of the hardest duties; it takes the shyest people out of their comfort zone and places them in front of a classroom full of students and forces you to become a public speaker.

Luckily for Alvarado, he doesn't have an issue

speaking in front of people. Regardless of if he were speaking to a sole stranger on the street or in front of thousands of people in a stadium, he would be just as calm, cool, and collected as he always is.

He's the type of person you want to be around. His confidence in all aspects of his life and his infectious personality inspire you to want to do more and be more. All of these traits of his make him the perfect recruiter.

"I'm confident that I can change people's lives," said Alvarado. "Sometimes people need a jump-start to be able to visualize where they could be and how I can help them get there."

"My strengths are motivation and my drive for success. I refuse to let me or my team fail."

Since working here, his accomplishments include two Navy Achievement Medal, Recruiter of the Month, Recruiter of the Quarter, and numerous other recruiting awards based on his job performance.

"The Navy has given me everything, and all of my achievements have come

directly from the Navy," he said.

Once his recruiting tour is over, Alvarado plans on returning to the fleet as an aviation ordnanceman. His long-term goal is to earn the position of a leading petty officer and eventually retire from the Navy.

Navy Recruiting District San Francisco has 10 divisions, which include 33 enlisted Navy Recruiting Stations, four Navy Reserve Recruiting Stations, two Navy Recruiting Processing Stations, and three Navy Officer Recruiting Stations.

Navy Recruiting Command consists of a command headquarters, three Navy Recruiting Regions, 18 Navy Recruiting Districts, and eight Navy Talent Acquisition Groups that serve more than 1,330 recruiting stations across the world.

Their combined goal is to attract the highest quality candidates to assure the ongoing success of America's Navy.



Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Gabriel Alvarado is highlighted in this week's "Recruiter Spotlight." Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Meranda Keller.



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Local Military

Military-grade drone to fly over San Diego

by Katy Stegall

SAN DIEGO (Tribune News Service) - The skies are clear for a local defense contractor planning to test fly large military drones over San Diego next year.



Poway-based defense contractor General Atomics Aeronautical Systems, Inc., in partnership with NASA, developed SkyGuardian drones, which it says are improved versions of the Predator, its military drones associated with the war on terror.

People involved in the demonstration next year say the SkyGuardian - a drone with a 79-foot wingspan and visual surveillance capabilities from more than 2,000 feet away - will be used for "mapping of critical infrastructure" in the San Diego region. The path and location of the flights weren't disclosed.

General Atomics' goal is to integrate SkyGuardian drones into American skies in a variety of ways in coming years. A test flight in San Diego will figure prominently in demonstrating the drones' civilian capabilities, the company said.

"Accomplishing this goal could open the skies to a multitude of missions that could be carried out using large (drones), including broader support for first responders contending with natural disasters such as floods and forest fires," a General Atomics spokesperson said in a statement.

Some city officials and tech experts say they were not aware of the initiative.

Two City Council members, Monica Montgomery and Chris Ward, said they didn't know about the initiative and wouldn't comment on it. The other seven members of the council directed the *San Diego Union-Tribune* to other city officials or chose not to comment.

The SkyGuardian (sometimes called the MQ-9B or Predator B) is a relatively new product by General Atomics. Small adjustments were made to the Predator design to make the drone compliant with regulations for American flight paths. General Atomics advertises its

unmanned aircraft as "civilian airspace compliant."

A General Atomics fact sheet says the drone can be used for firefighting, border patrol and humanitarian assistance by various government agencies. The fact sheet also says the SkyGuardian's intelligence-gathering, surveillance and reconnaissance abilities were developed to support a variety of homeland security and other nonmilitary roles.

"Predator B is closely associated with military missions, the air vehicle performance and sensor-carrying capabilities it offers make the airframe a natural choice for a wide spectrum of non-military uses," the fact sheet said.

While General Atomics' news release said the city supports the initiative, there is no city official overseeing the test flight, according to the city's public information officer. Instead, a branch within San Diego's Economic Development Corporation, a privately funded nonprofit focused on bringing jobs into the region, is helping support the drone initiative on behalf of the city.

The branch is the federal Integrations Pilot Program (IPP), which oversees the use of drones by agencies in San Diego County. It is supposed to connect General Atomics with potential clients who are interested in the "survey opportunities" the test flight will offer, officials said.

The IPP's project manager, Katelyn McCauley, said that while General Atomics is not an IPP partner, it supports the initiative because of the company's long history with drones.

The general intention, she said, is not to create mistrust with the public. The defense contractor does not intend to surveil people, she said, and there

An MQ-9B SkyGuardian flies beneath the clouds July 10, 2018, over Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D. Air Force photo by Elora J. Martinez

is no intention to sell military-grade drones to law enforcement agencies.

"They (the drones) do have some capabilities for law enforcement, but none of it is pertaining to surveilling," McCauley said. "It's a very strong, hard line here in San Diego, as well as in the country, that drones are not to be used for surveillance purposes. Just because the capability exists, (it does not) mean we are encouraging any of our partners to use that capability."

Some privacy experts are sounding alarms about the drones' capabilities, especially if it will fly in American skies.

Lucy Suchman, an expert in human-computer interactions, including drones, said in an interview that having a drone with the SkyGuardian's capabilities in urban skies like San Diego's is "bizarre."

Companies like General Atomics, she said, are selling surveillance technology to nonmilitary buyers by claiming the public should feel "tremendously insecure." She called that message dangerous.

"There are commercial interests who want to promote and expand these technologies and are very irresponsibly looking for areas of application where they can claim these technologies are solutions to (a) problem," said Suchman, a professor of anthropology science and technology at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, she said, an argument could be made for drones' use in emergency situations - like fires - when waiting for satellite imagery would not be practical.

Technologist Seth Hall, who organizes the local advocacy group TechLEAD San Diego, said the public was kept in the dark on other occasions when the region has implemented surveillance technology. He sees a similar pattern with the SkyGuardian.

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Giving season



MCAS MIRAMAR (Dec. 12, 2019) - Marines from MCAS Miramar participated in a Jingle Bell Jog during a Trees for Troops event. Trees for Troops is a program that provides free Christmas trees to U.S. armed forces members in all branches of the military and their families. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jose GuerreroDeleon

SOUTH CHINA SEA (Dec. 24, 2019) - Sailors assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 prepare an MQ-8B Fire Scout unmanned helicopter on the flight deck of USS Gabrielle Giffords during routine operations at sea. Navy photo by MC2 Damon Grosvenor



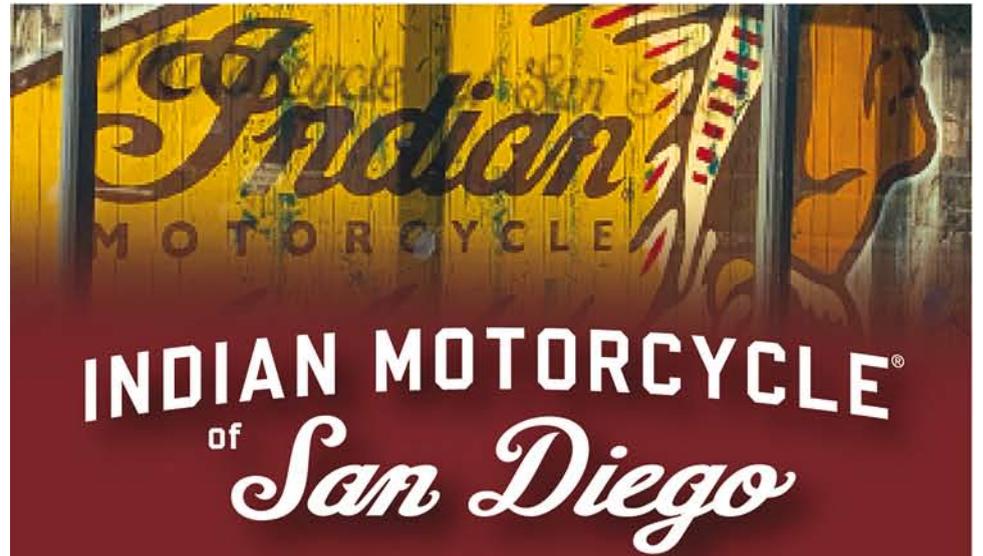
SAN DIEGO (Dec. 19, 2019) - Vice Adm. Scott D. Conn, commander, 3rd Fleet, gives remarks at the Diesel Electric Submarine Initiative (DESI) closing ceremony. The ceremony marked the conclusion of the 2019 program in which Peruvian submarine BAP Angamos (SS-31) participated. DESI training evolutions allows partner navies to work together to train and test under-sea warfare capabilities through engagement tactics, weapon system tests and close encounter operations enhancing interoperability of assets between the U.S. and South American navies. Navy photo by MC2 Natalie M. Byers



Princeton lights



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO (Dec. 13, 2019) - USS Princeton (shown here) was named Best of Show during this year's Holiday Lights Surface Ship Competition here. Other winners were: Best Navy Spirit: USS Cape St. George and Best Holiday Spirit: USS Scout (MCM 8). From Princeton's facebook page, "Princeton looks amazing on the waterfront and is the host ship for our visiting Republic of Korea Navy ships." Official Navy photo



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Camp Pendleton: A decade in review

by 2nd Lt. Charlotte Dennis

Camp Pendleton has long been a strategically significant base for the Marine Corps. Ever since World War II, it has been the West Coast's premier expeditionary training base with 17 miles of undeveloped coastline and some of the best training ranges in the world. With the new decade around the corner, it is important to reflect on all the major events and achievements that have taken place over the past decade.

In 2010, the Marines of 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines Regiment deployed for seven months to the Helmand Province in southern Afghanistan. These Marines would successfully complete the

clearing phase of the Battle of Sangin, located on what would



Marines provide watch security during an operation in Sangin Valley, Afghanistan, on Oct. 7, 2010. Courtesy photo

come to be known as the bloodiest battleground of Afghanistan, the Sangin district. The success of these Marines allowed for a successful holding phase of the

campaign, a strategic victory for the Marine Corps.

Marines with the I Marine Expeditionary Force in 2011 participated in a Maritime Preposition Force exercise entitled Pacific Horizon. The exercise was designed to train Marines and Sailors from Naval Base San Diego on Marine Air Ground Task Force operations, arrival and assembly operations, follow-on actions, crisis response, humanitarian assistance, and amassing combat power ashore from sea. Exercises such as this allow the Marine Corps and the Navy to operate together and ensure operational readiness domestically that can translate to operational readiness abroad.

2012 proved to be a pivotal year for Marine Corps Installations West and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton as they merged into a single command structure. The merge met the intent prescribed by Headquarters Marine Corps to realign installation commands, optimize support to Marine Corps operating forces and tenant commands, and implement more effective means for mission accomplishment. The merge was consistent with efficiency initiatives that are ongoing throughout the Marine Corps.

Marines with I Marine Expeditionary Force in 2013 conducted Dawn Blitz, a brigade-size, multi-national, amphibious training exercise, on Camp Pendleton. Dawn Blitz is designed to enhance Marines combat readiness across a broad continuum of military operations such as naval operations, amphibious landings, and advanced fire and maneuver procedures.

2014 marked the first full year of operation of Camp Pendleton's new naval hospital. The hospital was created to provide the best facilities to service members in and around Camp Pendleton.

Camp Pendleton hosted a regional command post exercise in 2015 entitled Semper Durus. This multi-scenario driven exercise was designed to improve regional command and control, enhance interagency coordination, improve installation capabilities to respond to and recover from a crisis event, as well as implement the installations mission assurance all-hazard plan.

Camp Pendleton hosted in 2016 the Wildland Firefighting Exercise for aviation and ground units as well as CALFIRE and the San Diego Sheriff's Department. The exercise provided an opportunity for these units to train together to combat wildland fires in the region through a cooperative effort to extinguish a simulated wildland fire. The exercise is a practice in the partnership between the military and surrounding fire departments that allows the base to stay safe in the event of wildfires.

The first Marine Corps Marine Information Group (MIG) was created in 2017 under I

Aviation leaders engage sustainment teams in West Coast 'Boots on Ground'

NAVAL AIR STATIONS LEMOORE AND NORTH ISLAND - The Naval Aviation Enterprise hosted a two-day "Boots on Ground" (BoG) event Dec. 17-18 to follow up on more than a year of implementing the Naval Sustainment System-Aviation (NSS-A).

A collaboration between military and industry leaders to remove barriers, accelerate actions and improve processes, NSS-A encourages the adoption of commercial best practices and empowers commands to make changes.

BoGs provide opportunities for senior Naval Aviation leadership to meet teams across the fleet in person, creating more visibility into activities or needs across the NAE. This particular event covered two locations to allow leaders to see and hear firsthand how the NSS-A has affected two of the facilities most involved in and affected by the initiative.

Through NSS-A, Naval Aviation reached its goal of 80 percent mission capable strike fighter aircraft in September and has since rededicated its focus on sustaining those gains while also using them as a foundation to increase the lethality and survivability of those aircraft and aircrew. Vice CNO Adm. Robert Burke joined the BoG at Lemoore and said that the successes in Naval Aviation can be applied and shared in other communities to improve readiness across the board.

"2019 was a year of success for aviation maintenance improvements and readiness, thanks to immense work by both Navy Sailors and civilians, as well as our contracting and industry partners," said Burke. "While naval aviation works to sustain record readiness levels, we continue to learn not just here, but everywhere."

From the beginning of NSS-A last year, changes were made in the processes in aviation maintenance that reaped many rewards, including centralizing the production control centers in squadrons and at maintenance depots and improving communication across the enterprise to remove barriers at all levels. - Refer to https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=111762.

Marine Expeditionary Force on Camp Pendleton. The MIG was created to synchronize our capabilities in the information environment, allowing for this command structure within the MEF to lead its own planning, integration, and execution of information warfare.

Camp Pendleton integrated male and female Marines in March of 2018 into one Marine Combat Training (MCT) company at the Marine Corps School of Infantry (SOI). Before March, the only option for female Marines attending MCT was on

Camp Lejeune. This integration marked the first time that males and females could train together in this course on the West Coast. This integration also provided the benefit of West Coast families having the opportunity to see their Marines graduate.

The first female graduated from the Marine Corps Basic Reconnaissance Course (BRC) in 2019 on Camp Pendleton. BRC is a 12-week course that equips Marines "with the basic knowledge of reconnaissance doctrine, concepts, and techniques with emphasis on amphibious entry, extraction, beach reconnaissance, Combat Rubber Reconnaissance Craft (CRRC) operator skills and ground reconnaissance patrolling skills," according to the Reconnaissance Training Company website.

The future of the Marine Corps sees a focus on installation maintenance. Camp Pendleton will have a focus on not only providing the best facilities possible for all service members, but in doing so with energy conservation in mind. Initiatives to create a better installation are a constant, and energy conservation initiatives are in the works to create an even better base for this next decade. The future of the Marine Corps will also see no desire to feel defined by any particular organizing construct. As per the Commandants planning guidance, the Marine Corps must be ready and able to organize itself in whatever way best fits the current times. From the creation of the MIG within I MEF to the integration of women into every schoolhouse, Camp Pendleton is no stranger to organizing itself to aid warfighters and the United States in the next fight for decades to come.

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by Jan Wagner

All-new, family-sized 2020 Toyota Highlander SUV



Cavernous cargo capacity of the Highlander.

Toyota previewed the all-new 2020 Highlander SUV in San Antonio, Texas, revealing across-the-board, major improvements to this already very popular mid-size SUV, now in its fourth generation.

Toyota introduced the Highlander in 2001. At a time when most mid-size SUVs were truck-based, families appreciated Highlander's car-like ride - enabled by its unibody structure and four-wheel independent suspension. By its third generation Highlander had grown, adding a third row of seats.

The exterior design of the fourth generation Highlander is bold and distinctive, accentuated by gracefully flowing curves. Its increased aerodynamic efficiency provides reduced wind noise and greater vehicle stability.

All of the increased length of the 2020 Highlander has extended its versatile cargo area. There is a minimum of 16.0 cu. ft. of cargo capacity behind the third row of seats, expandable to as much as 84.3 cu. ft., depending upon how the seatbacks are folded and positioned.

The Toyota New Global Architecture platform of the Highlander enables a stiffer unibody structure than before, yielding increased agility, a smaller turning circle and an even-more comfortable ride.

There are two powertrain choices - a V6 and a Hybrid, with three All-Wheel-Drive systems.

The smooth, refined, powerful 3.5-Liter V6 is mated to an 8-speed automatic transmission. It produces 295 hp and 263 lb.-ft. of torque, which provides plenty of power for merging onto freeways and passing traffic. The standard Stop-and-Start-Engine System and other advanced drivetrain technologies combine to yield up to an impressive, manufacturer-estimated, 24 MPG combined, with reduced emissions.

Available with the V6 is a 5,000-pound capacity towing package. Trailer Sway Control uses the Vehicle Stability Control to help control unwanted trailer movement.

The other powertrain will be in the soon-to-be available 2020 Highlander Hybrid. It is a new version of the Toyota Hybrid System.

Toyota has pioneered hybrid technology for more than 20 years. Having personally owned two Toyota hybrids - most recently a 2012 Prius Plug-in Hybrid, now with over 110,000 miles, I can attest to their incredible fuel

economy. Each generation has consistently achieved better fuel economy than the previous one. Next summer I intend to replace my 2012 Prius with the upcoming 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime plug-in hybrid compact SUV (see AutoMatters & More #618).

The mid-size Highlander Hybrid's powertrain combines electric motor propulsion with a high-efficiency, 2.5-liter Atkinson Cycle-capable gas engine. The battery pack is under the seats, so it does not take up any cargo or passenger space.

With its driver-selectable NORMAL, ECO, SPORT and EV modes, regenerative braking and Predictive Efficient Drive, the 2020 Highlander Hybrid is the most fuel-efficient Highlander ever, returning up to a manufacturer-estimated 36 MPG combined - a 24 percent improvement over the previous generation. Available in either Two-Wheel-Drive or All-Wheel-Drive, this powertrain is also powerful and responsive, providing a combined 243 net hp. However, it is somewhat less powerful and less quiet than the V6, in exchange for its significantly better fuel economy.

Depending upon powertrain choice, the 2020 Highlander is available in L, LE, XLE, Limited and Platinum grades. Highly advanced Dynamic Torque Vectoring All-Wheel-Drive with Drive Mode Select and Driveline Disconnect is available on the Limited and Platinum.

Enter the cabin and you will discover a comprehensive variety of amenities and cutting-edge technology, effective soundproofing and luxurious accommodations for up to eight people - with the second-row bench seat, or seven people with two second-row Captain's Chairs.

The seats in that second row slide further forward, to increase the distance between the second and third row seats.

Apple Car Play, Android Auto and an 8-inch touchscreen display are standard, with a new 12.3-inch display on the Platinum grade. Also available is a new, powerful, 1,200-watt JBL Premium Sound System.

Standard in all models is Toyota Safety Sense 2.0. This com-

prehensive safety suite includes Toyota's Pre-Collision System with Pedestrian Detection. In certain situations this provides automatic braking capability, in case the driver does not react quickly enough in a system-detected emergency.

Safety Sense 2.0 also includes Full-Speed Range Dynamic Radar Cruise Control, Lane Departure Alert with Steering Assist, Automatic High Beam, Lane Tracing Assist and Road Sign Assist.

Additionally, available safety features include Blind Spot Monitor with Rear Cross Traffic Alert, Parking Support Braking, Intelligent Clearance Sonar and a Bird's Eye View Camera.

Learn more about the all-new '20 Highlander and the upcoming Highlander Hybrid at Toyota.com.

To see additional photos, visit www.drivetribe.com, click on the magnifying glass, select "POSTS" and enter "AutoMatters & More #623 in their search bar. Please send your comments to AutoMatters@gmail.com. Copyright © 2019 by Jan Wagner - AutoMatters & More #623

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

I had taken the part-time library job out of desperation. After interviewing and being rejected for three other positions because I "didn't have enough experience" (a common problem for military spouses, by the way), I accepted the offer to work weekend nightshifts at the boarding school school library.

Although I was grateful to be employed, the job branded me with a permanent feeling of defeat. I had been working as a freelance writer for more than a decade and was a licensed attorney, but the ten-hour-a-week library job represented my first outside employment since the nineties when I quit my legal job to stay home with the kids.

The decision to look for outside employment had been a tough one after so many years. But I had mustered the courage, telling myself that, although I had gaps in my resume, employers would understand the challenges of military life, and would see me as a capable candidate.

Three tough rejections later, I had to come to terms with the brutal fact that no one would interpret my status as a military spouse as "work experience" — I would need to prove myself before an employer would believe in me. Not an easy task, because I didn't always believe.

"You're stupid. You talk too much. You're fat. You're boring." These were the subcon-

'You Are Amazing': The power of positive self-talk

scious insults I had hurled at myself since adolescence. During periods of insecurity and stress, I unknowingly turned on myself, engaging in an inner dialogue that was self-defeating and counterproductive.

Having grown up in arguably the last generation of hard knocks, before millennials made narcissism and entitlement acceptable, I hid my insecurities and got on with the business of life. Despite my secret lack of confidence, or perhaps because of it, I pushed myself to earn degrees, seek relationships, pursue a career, succeed in marriage, commit to parenting, and create a healthy household for our military family.

But those insecurities were there all those years, constantly threatening to derail me.

It wasn't until my teenage daughter began battling her own inner naysayer that I became cognizant that "negative self-talk" was a thing. Like many adolescents and teenagers, and like me when I was her age, my daughter had begun to hate herself without truly understanding why. Although the reasons are complex, negative self-talk can develop when a teenager becomes aware of social hierarchies, her physical appearance, and her place in the world. This competitive environment, made worse by social media and parental expectations, can lead to feelings of inadequacy and negative coping mechanisms.

Research has shown that those who engage in negative self-talk are more anxious, depressed, and socially maladjusted. Therapy often involves training oneself

to use positive inner dialogue to avoid the downward spiral of negativity. Essentially, words matter, and can have a powerful impact on one's mental well-being.

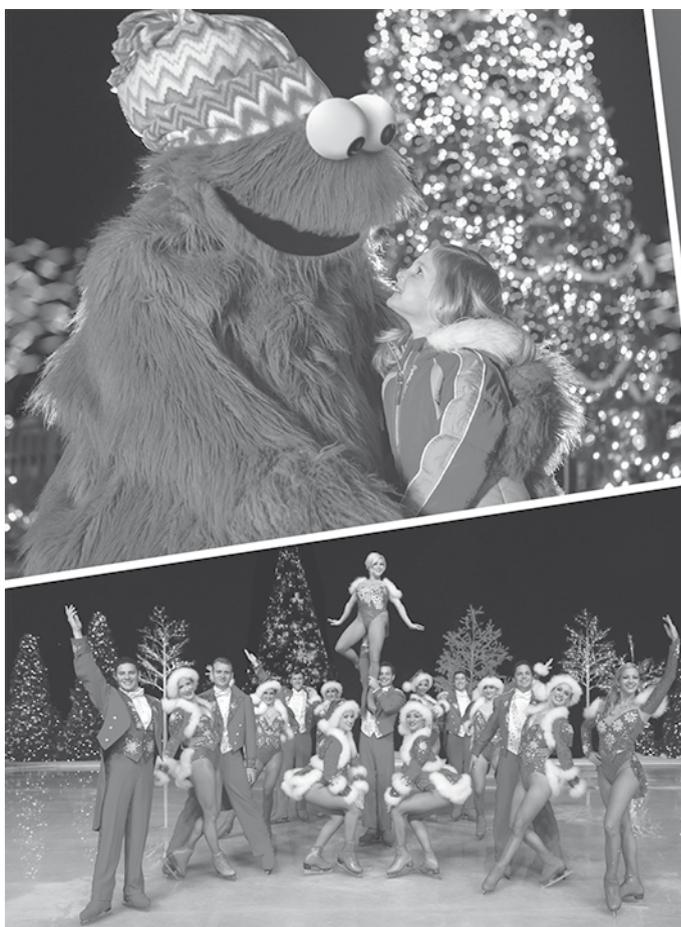
Two months into my library job, I was behind the circulation desk, hiding away from the scrutiny of the students and faculty, who surely thought I was an idiot. The east door opened, and a resident faculty member entered with her three young daughters. They often came in at this time, to return books and check out more. I saw the soft brown curls of the eldest, who couldn't have been more than five or six, bobbing by the desk at her mother's side. "Go ahead, you can put it there," her mother whispered.

While her sisters fought over who would drop books into the return slot, the one with brown curls reached an arm up over the desk and slapped something pink onto the wood surface. I turned back to my computer, and the three sisters toddled off to the children's section.

A few minutes later, I was scanning their newly selected books and printing due date slips. It was so sweet, I thought, that a book about a cartoon rabbit was such cause for excitement.

And then I saw it. The pink note stuck to the desk. Peeling it away, I deciphered the words scrawled in pencil.

"You Are Amazing," it read. I felt the power of those three simple words, and for that moment, I believed.



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Lowry Theater - NASNI, 619-545-8479, Bldg. 650

Thursday, January 2
4:30pm Knives Out
7pm 21 Bridges
Friday, January 3
5:30pm Dark Waters
7:50pm Queen & Slim
Saturday, January 4
12:50pm Frozen II
2:50pm Ford v. Ferrari
5:40pm Dark Waters
Sunday, January 5
12:50pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
2:50pm Knives Out
5:20pm Queen & Slim
Monday, January 6
5:50pm Charlie's Angels
8pm 21 Bridges
Tuesday, January 7
5:50pm Frozen II
7:50pm Ford v. Ferrari
Wednesday, January 8
5:40pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood pg 108 min
7:40pm Knives Out
Thursday, January 9
5:40pm Dark Waters
8pm Queen & Slim

Naval Base Theater - NBSD, 619-556-5568, Bldg. 71

Thursday, January 2
5:40pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
8pm 21 Bridges
Friday, January 3
5:50pm Dark Waters
8:30pm Queen & Slim
Saturday, January 4
12:50pm Frozen II
3pm Dark Waters
6pm Frozen II
8:20pm Queen & Slim
Sunday, January 5
1:30pm Frozen II
4pm Dark Waters
6:40pm Queen & Slim
Monday, January 6
5:50pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
8pm Dark Waters
Tuesday, January 7
5:40pm Frozen II
7:50pm Queen & Slim
Wednesday, January 8
5:40pm 21 Bridges
7:50pm Dark Waters
Thursday, January 9
5:50pm Frozen II
8pm 21 Bridges

NAB Theater - NAB, Q-Zone 619-437-5487, Bldg. 337

Thursday, January 2
11am Dumbo (2019)
5pm Yesterday
Friday, January 3
5pm Joker
Saturday, January 4
2pm Ad Astra 5pm Rambo: Last Blood
Sunday, January 5
5pm Battleship
Monday, January 6
5pm The Dead Don't Die
Tuesday, January 7
11am The Jungle Book (1967)
5pm Overcomer
Wednesday, January 8
5pm Us
Thursday, January 9
11am Dumbo (2019)
5pm The Goldfinch

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143
Miramar Bldg 2242
* indicates last showing

Thursday, January 2
THEATER CLOSED
Friday - January 3
6:30pm Queen & Slim
9:10pm Dark Waters
Saturday, January 4
3pm Frozen II pg104 min
6:30pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
9pm Knives Out
Sunday, January 5
1pm 21 Bridges
6:30pm Ford v. Ferrari
Wednesday, January 8
6:30pm Charlie's Angels
Thursday, January 9
6:30pm Ford v. Ferrari
Friday, January 10
6:30pm Richard Jewell
9:10pm Queen & Slim

Community Rec Center
NBPL, Main Base, Bldg. 546
619-553-9138

Call 619-553-9138 to see what's playing today or reserve the theater and YOU pick the movie!
Holiday Gift Bags for Wounded Warriors and for Sailors standing watch on Christmas and Wounded Sailors. Please only request per command. Pick up: Dec. 19-20, 8am-4pm. REGISTER NOW for your Holiday Bags by Dec. 13! Info call 619-553-9138!

Pendleton Movie Theatre
Building 1330 Vandegrift Blvd
(760) 725-9217

Active Duty adults \$4/3D-\$5
Kids (6-11) \$2/3D-\$3
5/under free/3D \$1 for glasses
Thursday, January 2, 2020
CLOSED
Friday, January 3
6pm Knives Out
9pm 21 Bridges
Saturday, January 4
1pm SENSORY FRIENDLY Frozen 2
3:45pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
6:30pm 21 Bridges
Sunday, January 5
1pm A Beautiful Day In The Neighborhood
3:45pm Frozen 2
6:30pm Knives Out

MWR THIS WEEK

Outdoor Adventure Challenge Jan 1-March 31. \$10 one time entry package fee. New Year...New Challenge! Discover San Diego's local outdoor landmarks at your own pace, on your own time, and win prizes with MWR. Here's how it works: Stop by the North Island OAC to purchase your Outdoor Adventure Challenge (OAC) pennant flag and approved outdoor landmark location list. Visit great San Diego sites and post pictures to Instagram showing your OAC pennant. Be sure to tag us @NavyLifeNBC and use #OACChallenge to log checkpoints. Prizes range from MWR/OAC apparel to weekend gear rental packages! North Island Outdoor Adventure, Bldg. 825, 619-545-2632.
Outdoor Adventure Challenge Kickoff Hike ~ Cowles Mountain. Sat, Jan 4, 9am, (\$10 if you have not paid the package fee, FREE, if package has been paid.) Meeting location: Trail Head: Navajo Rd & Golfcrest Dr. Join our staff in kick starting our Outdoor Adventure



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TRANSMISSION REBUILD 10% OFF

Labor costs. Offer expires 1/31/20

CLUTCH REPLACEMENT \$150 Labor

Some RWD small cars. Call for specials on imports, RWD, & on all trucks. Fluid extra. Offer expires 1/31/20

TRANSMISSION TUNE-UP \$69.99

Labor only - Parts extra Offer expires 1/31/20

Se Habla Espanol



2	8	9	9	1	4	7	6	8
1	7	6	8	9	8	2	7	9
8	9	7	6	2	7	8	1	9
9	7	2	9	7	8	1	8	6
8	8	7	1	7	6	9	9	2
9	6	1	8	9	2	7	8	7
6	2	9	7	8	9	8	7	1
7	4	1	8	7	6	9	9	2
7	9	8	2	8	1	6	9	4

Sudoku

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

Sleeping with artificial light linked to obesity

Sleep is important for your physical and mental health. A lack of quality sleep increases your risk for certain health conditions, including obesity. A recent study found that sleeping with an artificial light on may also raise your risk of weight gain and obesity.



Your body uses light to control your sleep cycle. The natural light pattern from the sun helps you stay awake during the day and sleep at night. But you can also be exposed to light at night in many ways, such as a room light, streetlight, television, or mobile device. That may disrupt your sleep.

Researchers asked over 43,000 women, ages 35–74, whether they slept with no light, a small nightlight, light outside the room, or a light or television on in the room. The women also gave their height, weight, body

What are circadian rhythms?

Circadian rhythms are physical, mental, and behavioral changes that follow a daily cycle. They respond primarily to light and darkness in an organism's environment.

Sleeping at night and being awake during the day is an example of a light-related circadian rhythm. Circadian rhythms are found in most living things, including animals, plants, and many tiny microbes. The study of circadian rhythms is called chronobiology.

Opinion

Prioritize chronic disease prevention to slash health insurance costs

by Kenneth E. Thorpe

Private health insurance spending surged \$101 billion between 2016 and 2018. Hospital care and emergency services accounted for the largest share of that increase – 42 percent.

Spending on hospital and emergency care is rapidly rising because our nation's epidemic of chronic disease is growing worse. Patients with even one chronic condition require more visits to hospitals and emergency rooms than do healthy Americans.

Sixty percent of adults have at least one chronic disease, like heart disease, cancer, or diabetes. Forty percent live with multiple such diseases. And 90 cents of every dollar spent on health care goes towards treating someone with a chronic condition.

Those numbers are going up. By 2030, 80 percent of the population will be battling at least one chronic disease.

Nearly one in five emergency room visits by chronic disease patients in 2017 were “potentially preventable,” according to one study. These avoidable trips cost \$8.3 billion and accounted for 60 percent of all emergency visits at the 750 hospitals analyzed by the study.

The most effective way to slow the growth of chronic disease and health insurance spending is to help patients

better manage, or even prevent, chronic conditions.

Prioritizing preventative care is crucial. Less than 10 percent of adults receive preventative services like regular blood pressure and cholesterol screenings or obesity counseling.

Sadly, many patients avoid seeking preventative care – such as regular doctor visits and taking medicines as prescribed – because they can't afford the out-of-pocket costs required. Four in 10 Americans reported skipping doctors' visits due to cost in 2017.

High-deductible plans have exacerbated the problem. These plans require individuals to cover thousands of dollars in health costs up front before insurance kicks in. They can be extremely expensive for patients with chronic disease, who visit upwards of 13 health care providers and fill 50 prescriptions each year.

Separately, Americans also struggle to afford their prescriptions at the pharmacy counter. Americans with chronic diseases regularly require more medicines than do healthy Americans to manage their conditions.

Multiple trips to the pharmacy counter add up. Nearly one in four Americans struggles to afford their prescriptions. And those with three or more chronic conditions face out-of-pocket prescription costs that are

10 times higher than patients without any such conditions.

Failure to take medicines as prescribed can have severe health consequences. One in 10 hospital patients winds up in the hospital because they deviate from their prescription regimen. Those visits set our healthcare system back \$289 billion annually.

Fortunately, there are several ways to make preventive care and prescription drugs more affordable.

For starters, policymakers could spread cost-sharing requirements more evenly throughout the year. Patients would have an easier time paying for their medications or routine visits to the doctor if they didn't have to cover thousands of dollars in deductibles up front.

Lawmakers could also explore capping annual out-of-pocket drug costs for America's sickest patients. Limiting cost-sharing would no doubt give patients financial relief, boost medication adherence, and improve health outcomes.

To get a hold on our nation's health spending, we'll have to get a hold on chronic disease. To do so, we'll need to make it easier and more affordable for patients to manage, or even prevent, such diseases.

Kenneth E. Thorpe is a professor of health policy at Emory University and chairman of the Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease.

mass index, and waist and hip sizes. After about five and a half years, scientists gathered the women's new measurements.

Women who slept with a light or television on were 17% more likely to have gained about 11 pounds or more during the study.

Light from outside the room had less of an impact. Women who slept with a small nightlight

... you can also be exposed to light at night in many ways, such as a room light, streetlight, television, or mobile device. That may disrupt your sleep.

or no light had no difference in weight gain.

Other factors may have also contributed to the weight gain, but the researchers took any known factors into account.

“Unhealthy, high-calorie diets and sedentary behaviors have been the most commonly cited factors to explain the continuing rise in obesity,” says NIH researcher Dr. Yong-Moon (Mark) Park.

Is your puppy making you sick?

The CDC and public health officials in several states are investigating a multistate outbreak of multidrug-resistant *Campylobacter jejuni* infections linked to puppies purchased from pet stores.

Latest outbreak information

- 30 people infected with the outbreak strain of *Campylobacter jejuni* have been reported from 13 states.

- 4 hospitalizations have been reported. No deaths have been reported.

- Contact with puppies, especially those at pet stores, is the likely source of this outbreak.



Symptoms of *Campylobacter jejuni*

- Diarrhea (often bloody), fever, and abdominal cramps. The diarrhea may be accompanied by nausea and vomiting. These symptoms usually start within 2 to 5 days after exposure and last about a week. Some infected people do not have any symptoms.

Treatment

Most people with *Campylobacter* infection recover without specific treatment. Patients should drink extra fluids as long as diarrhea lasts. Antibiotics are needed only for patients who are very ill.

Advice to pet owners and pet store workers

- Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water after touching your puppy or dog, after handling their food and after cleaning up after them.
- Don't let dogs lick around your mouth and face.
- Don't let dogs lick your open wound or areas with broken skin.



Source: CDC
Graphic: Staff, TNS

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Go out and play

LA Clippers vs. Detroit Pistons, Thur, Jan 2, Staples Center. www.nba.com/clippers

LA Lakers vs. New Orleans Pelicans, Fri, Jan 3, 7:30pm. Staples Center. www.nba.com/lakers

SD Gulls vs. Bakersfield Condors, Fri-Sat, Jan 3 & 4, 7pm. Pechanga Arena SD. www.sandiegogulls.com

Star Brews Festival, Fri-Sat, Jan 3-4, 7-10pm. Star Wars themed beer festival. Enjoy an intergalactic playground with tastings of over twenty stellar craft beers. San Diego Air & Space Museum.

View the Winter Skies, Fri, Jan 3 & Sat, Jan 11, 5-8pm. Free. Come to MTRP to observe the January skies. High-powered telescopes will be set up by Trail Guide, George Varga and members of the San Diego Astronomy Association. Come view the beautiful nighttime sky in this low-light area with knowledgeable star gazers to help identify the stars and planets. Bring your own telescope if you like. Meet at the Kumeyaay Campground Day Use Parking Lot & park away from the viewing area. Cloudy skies and/or rain cancels the event. Kumeyaay Lake Campground, Two Father Junipero Serra Trail, Santee.

San Diego Bachata Expo, Fri-Sun, Jan 3-5, 10am-4pm. Bachata enthusiasts from all over the world meet for dance workshops, dance shows, concerts and social dancing. Hilton SD, Mission Valley. www.sdbachataexpo.com

Guided Hike, Sat, Jan 4, 10am-2pm. Free. Join the San Diego River Park Foundation for a guided hike along the Eagle Peak Trail via Three Sisters Falls Trail. We will meet at Boulder Creek Preserve and then caravan to the Three Sisters Falls Trail which will take us to the Eagle Peak Trail. After our hike, we will return to Boulder Creek Preserve for a site tour of this pristine open space and check up on some recently planted oak trees. Trail: Eagle Peak Trail via Three Sisters Falls Trail • Length (roundtrip): 4.2 • Elevation Change: 931 ft. • Difficulty: Moderate-Difficult • Landscape: Chaparral How to Prepare: • Bring at least 2 liters of water. • Wear sturdy hiking shoes and sun protection to keep yourself comfortable. • Poison oak is present, so long pants are recommended. • Pack a sack lunch or snack. • Dogs are not allowed. • This hike is not kid-friendly. • Please arrive by 9:45am to check in because we will caravan to the trail head shortly after 10am. RSVP is required. To be added to the RSVP list and to receive detailed directions, please email volunteer@sandiegoriver.org or call (619) 297-7380. Boulder Creek Preserve, 14652 Boulder Creek Rd, Descanso. https://sandiegoriver.org/volunteer_event_calendar.html

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Huxley the Hawk, Sundays, Jan 5, Feb 2, March 1, April 5, May 3, June 7, 9am-noon. Free. Stop by the Visitor Center to meet local falconer, Bob Gordon, and his feathered friend, "Huxley" the Harris Hawk. Get up close and personal with this majestic bird of prey, while learning all about what makes him so special. A unique opportunity. Kids will especially enjoy this encounter. Mission Trails Regional Park, One Father Junipero Serra Trail, San Carlos.

SD Sockers vs. Ontario Fury, Sun, Jan 5, 5:05pm. Pechanga Arena

San Diego. www.sdssockers.com

LA Lakers vs. Detroit Pistons, Sun, Jan 5, 7pm. at Staples Center, LA. www.nba.com/lakers

San Diego International Auto Show, through Sun, Jan 5. SD Convention Center, 111 W. Harbor Dr, downtown SD.

Jungle Bells at San Diego Zoo, through Jan 5. www.sandiegozoo.org

Holidays at Legoland California Resort, through Jan 5. www.legoland.com

Christmas Celebration at SeaWorld San Diego, through Jan 5. www.seaworldsandiego.com

Rady Children's Ice Rink, Daily 10am-10pm. Through Sun, Jan 5. \$10-\$50. Enjoy some holiday fun at this incredible outdoor ice rink! Admission \$15/adults, \$13/kids, \$10/military with valid I.D. Arts District Liberty Station, Central Promenade, 2875 Dewey Rd, Point Loma.

LA Lakers vs. New York Knicks, Tues, Jan 7, 7:30pm. Staples Center, LA. www.nba.com/lakers

Journeys to the Past: Jacqué Nunez, Wed, Jan 8. California Center for the Arts, Escondido. www.artcenter.org

SD Gulls vs. Iowa Wild, Wed, Jan 8, 7pm. Pechanga Arena San Diego. www.sandiegogulls.com

Bloomsday, Wed, Jan 8-Feb 2. North Coast Repertory Theatre, Solana Beach. www.northcoastrep.org

The Humans, presented by SD Repertory Theatre, Thur, Jan 9-Feb 2. at Lyceum Theatre. www.sdrp.org

SD Gulls vs. Iowa Wild, Fri, Jan 10, 7pm. Pechanga Arena San Diego. www.sandiegogulls.com

LA Clippers vs. Golden State Warriors, Fri, Jan 10, 7:30pm. Staples Center, LA. www.nba.com/clippers

Winter Festival, Fri-Sat, Jan 10-11, Poway Community Park. www.poway.org

Del Mar Gem Faire, Fri-Sun, Jan 10-12 (Fri noon-6; Sat-Sun noon-5pm). \$7. Fine jewelry, precious & semi-precious gemstones, millions of beads, crystals, gold & silver, minerals & much more at manufacturer's prices. Over 50 exhibitors from around the world. Jewelry repair & cleaning while you shop. Free hourly door prizes. Del Mar Fairgrounds, 2260 Jimmy Durante Blvd, Del Mar. <https://gemfaire.com/>

San Diego Spring Home Show, Fri-Sun, Jan 10-12, San Diego Convention Center, downtown SD. www.homeshowsandiego.com

Totally Tidepools, Sat, Jan 11, 10-11am. Free. Registration required. The San Dieguito River Valley Conservancy and Living Coast Discovery Center present Totally Tidepools, a family-fun interactive presentation of the tough life animals have in the tidepools. Children will discover the amazing adaptations that help animals survive through animal encounters, a discovery table, and movement activities. This free program is generously funded by the City of Solana Beach and limited to 50 persons. Participants should arrive early for parking and finding a seat. Registration is required. Questions: email Ana Lutz-Johnson, ana@sdrvc.org, or call 858 755 6956. La Colonia Community Center, 715 Valley Ave, Solana Beach. <https://sdrvc.org/>

San Diego International Auto Show, through Jan. 5 • Free-\$15

The San Diego International Auto Show is one of Southern California's premier automotive events, featuring more than 400 new-model vehicles that are on sale or about to go on sale. It includes the newest full range of cars and trucks, electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids, exotics, crossovers and SUVs, which fill the San Diego Convention Center in an engaging non-sales environment through January 5. The show runs from 10am-9pm through Jan. 4 and from 10am-7pm on Jan. 5.

Nearly every make and model sold by San Diego dealerships is on display and open for visitors to explore and compare. Automakers will provide interactive experiences to entertain visitors. There is a Cadillac retrospective, museum cars, and a variety of vendors, selling everything from die cast cars to automotive products. Inside the convention center, visitors can experience the climbing thrills of Camp Jeep. Outside, ticketed attendees have the opportunity to drive the newest vehicles from Chevrolet, Chrysler, Nissan, Subaru, and Toyota. The SDG&E Electric Vehicle Day on January 2 features exclusive rides in the newest EVs as well.

Tickets are \$15 general admission; \$12 seniors ages 62 and older, \$11 for children ages 7 to 12; and free for children ages 6 and under with paid adult. San Diego Convention Center is located at 111 W. Harbor Drive, San Diego. Call (858) 550-0080 or visit www.sdautoshow.com.

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New Year's resolution: Microchip your pet!

San Diego Humane Society is reminding pet parents to protect your pet this year with a microchip, and ensure existing microchips are up-to-date with current contact information. Sadly, one out of every three pets gets lost during her lifetime, and only one in 10 lost pets are found. Microchipping your pet could make the difference of a lifetime. San Diego Humane Society offers microchips for \$15 at vaccination clinics at the following times and locations:



• **Escondido Campus: 3500 Burnet Dr, Escondido, 92027**

Every Saturday from 8-10am

• **Oceanside Campus: 572 Airport Rd, Oceanside, 92058**

Every Wednesday from 8:30-10:30am

• **San Diego Campus: 5500 Gaines St, San Diego, 92110**

Every Thursday from 8-10am

City of San Diego residents offered Christmas tree recycling options

Each year, the City of San Diego Environmental Services Department hosts its Annual Christmas Tree Recycling Program beginning the day after Christmas, Dec. 26 until Jan. 23. The program features 17 drop-off locations available to City residents only.

Where can I recycle a Christmas tree?

The Miramar Greenery accepts trees throughout the year.

I Love a Clean San Diego and the County of San Diego have a website at www.WasteFreeSD.org to help San Diego residents find the nearest tree recycling drop-off site in San Diego County.

Curbside collection (For residents with yard waste collection only)

Manual container customers using their own bins should place trees on the curb for collection on your regular greenery recycling pickup day. Trees over four feet in length should be cut in half.

Automated container customers using the large, green 96-gallon bin provided by the city should cut their trees to fit into the automated container for pickup on collection day.

Drop-off Locations

- Carmel Valley - Carmel Valley Recreation Center, 3777 Townsgate Dr. (lower parking lot)
- Encanto - Cielo Drive at Woodman Street
- Golden Hill - Golden Hill Recreation Center, 2600 Golf Course Dr.
- La Jolla - Kate Sessions Memorial Park, corner of Mt. Soledad Road and Loring Street
- Logan Heights - Memorial Recreation Center, 2902 Marcy Ave.
- Miramar - The Greenery at the Miramar Landfill, 5180 Convoy St. (north of state Route 52)
- Mission Bay - Seaworld Drive at Pacific Highway
- Mountain View - Ocean View Blvd. @ 40th St. (north side)
- Oak Park - Chollas Lake, 6350 College Grove Drive (in Gloria's Mesa parking lot)
- Ocean Beach - Robb Field Recreation Center, 2525 Bacon St.
- Otay Mesa/Nestor - Montgomery Waller Community Park (lower parking lot on the southeast corner of Palm Avenue and Beyer Boulevard)
- Rancho Bernardo - Rancho Bernardo Recreation Center, 18448 W. Bernardo Dr.
- Rancho Penasquitos - Canyonside Recreation Center, 12350 Black Mountain Rd.
- San Diego State University - Parking Lot 17C off of Alvarado Rd.
- Scripps Ranch - Scripps Ranch Recreation Center, 11454 Blue Cypress Dr.
- Tierrasanta - De Portola Middle School, 11010 Clairemont Mesa Blvd.
- University City - Swanson Pool, 3585 Governor Drive

What kinds of trees are accepted for recycling?

Both green and flocked trees (fake snow) are accepted. For Greenery, curbside, and drop-off sites, all tree stands, bags, netting, lights, ornaments, tinsel, and other tree decorations must be removed. No artificial trees. Please do not illegally dump any other items at the drop-off locations.



10am-4pm. Bachata enthusiasts from all over the world meet for dance workshops, dance shows, concerts and social dancing. Hilton SD, Mission Valley. www.sdbachataexpo.com

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- Improved security
- Weather protection
- Low profile design
- Smooth, clean lines

- High-strength honeycombed reinforced
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suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Concerts



Boyz II Men. Sat, Jan 18, 8pm. Agua Caliente Resort Casino

Please confirm concerts before attending. NOTE: Some venues are age 21+ only.

January

Willie Nelson and Family. Fri, Jan 3, 7pm. Balboa Theatre, 868 Fourth Ave. (619) 570-1100.

10th Annual Beat Farmers Hootenanny. Country/rock/rockabilly. Sat, Jan 4, 8pm. Age limit 21+. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

Art Garfunkel. Thurs, Jan 9, 7pm. Folk/pop. The Magnolia Performing Arts Center, 210 East Main St., El Cajon. (619) 440-2277.

Kane Brown. Thurs, Jan 9, 8pm. (rescheduled from 10/18/19). Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles. staplescenter.com

Tool. Fri, Jan 10 & Sun, Jan 12, 7:30pm. Rock. Viejas Arena at SDSU, 5500 Canyon Crest Dr., San Diego. (619) 594-6947.

Snoop Dogg with Warren G. I Wanna Thank Me Tour, Sat, Jan 11, 8pm. The Show at Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa, 32-250 Bob Hope Dr, Rancho Mirage. AguaCalienteCasinos.com

Brian McKnight. Fri, Jan 10, 8pm. The Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E Katella Ave, Anaheim. (714) 712-2750. citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

Calibash. Sat-Sun, Jan 11-12, 8pm. Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles. staplescenter.com

Styx. Tues, Jan 14, 8pm. The Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E Katella Ave, Anaheim. (714) 712-2750. www.citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

Chance the Rapper. Wed, Jan 15, 7:30pm. Hip-hop/rap. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

Blue Oyster Cult. Thurs, Jan 16, 8pm. Rock. Sycuan Live & Up Close Theatre, 5469 Casino Way, El Cajon.

Eric Johnson-Classics Past & Present. Fri, Jan 17, 8pm. The Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, Orange County. citynationalgroveofanaheim.com

Boyz II Men. Sat, Jan 18, 8pm. The Show at Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa, 32-250 Bob Hope Dr, Rancho Mirage. (800) 514-3849. www.AguaCalienteCasinos.com

Boomshaka Music Festival. Sat, Jan 18. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

Concert of Hope: Los Lobos. Sat, Jan 18, 8pm. Folk/latin/rock. Spreckels Theatre, 121 Broadway, San Diego. (619) 235-9500.

Close to You: The Music of the Carpenters. Covers. Sun, Jan 26, 2-4pm. Balboa Theatre, 868 Fourth Ave. (619) 570-1100.

John Mayall. Tues, Jan 28, 8pm. Age 21+. Blues/rock. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

Tower of Power. Wed, Jan 29, 8pm. Age 21+. Blues/funk. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

SuperM. Thurs, Jan 30, 7:30pm. K-Pop/World. Viejas Arena at SDSU, 5500 Canyon Crest Dr. San Diego. (619) 594-6947.

Sergio Mendes. Thurs, Jan 30, 8pm. Age 21+. Latin. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Mon, Feb 10, 8pm. Age 21+. Gospel/world. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. bellyup.com

Sinead O'Connor. Tues, Feb 11, 8pm. Age 21+. Rock. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

Banda MS. Fri-Sat, Feb 14-15, 8pm. Staples Center, 1111 S.

Figueroa St., Los Angeles. staplescenter.com

Jason Mraz: Shine. Feb 15 & 16, 7pm. Acoustic. Spreckels Theatre, 121 Broadway, SD. (619)235-9500.

Miranda Lambert. Thur, Feb 20, 7pm. Honda Center, 2695 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim. (714) 704-2400. hondacenter.com

Miranda Lambert and Lanco. Fri, Feb 21, 7:30pm. Country. Viejas Arena, 5500 Canyon Crest Dr, San Diego.

Leo Kottke. Tues, Feb 25, 8pm. Age 21+. Folk. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

JD Souther. Thur, Feb 27, 8pm. Age 21+. Country/rock. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave., Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140. www.bellyup.com

March
KISS. Wed, March 4, 7:30pm. (Rescheduled from 9/20/19) Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St., Los Angeles. staplescenter.com

Blake Shelton and the Belamy Brothers. Fri, March 6, 7pm. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

The Music of Cream. Sun, March 8, 7:30pm. Covers. Balboa Theatre, 868 Fourth Ave. (619) 570-1100.

Tame Impala. Mon, March 9, 7:30pm. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

Karla Bonoff. Fri, March 13, 7:30pm. Acoustic. AMSDconcerts Bonita, 5305 Sweetwater Rd (Sweetwater Community Church), Bonita. (619) 201-0520.

Delta Spirit. Sat, March 14. Belly Up Tavern, 143 South Cedros Ave, Solana Beach. (858) 481-8140.

Celine Dion. Tues, March 31, 7:30pm. Pop. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

Future
Celine Dion. Thurs-Fri, April 2-3, 7:30pm. Staples Center, 1111 S. Figueroa St. staplescenter.com

Eagles 'Hotel California' Tour. Fri-Sat, April 17-18. Fabulous Forum, 3900 W. Manchester Blvd, Inglewood msg.com/the-forum
Five Finger Death Punch. Sun, April 19, 6pm. Viejas Arena at SDSU, 5500 Canyon Crest Dr.,

San Diego. (619) 594-6947.

Lauren Daigle. Tues, April 21, 7pm. Pechanga Arena, 3500 Sports Arena Bl. (619) 224-4171.

Shinedown. Sat, May 16, 7:30pm. Rock. Harrah's Resort SoCal, 777 Harrah's Rincón Way, Valley Center. (760) 751-3100.

NF. Mon, May 18, 7pm. Hip-hop/rap. Petco Park, 100 Park Blvd, San Diego. (619) 795-5000.

Adam Ant. Sun, May 17, 7:30pm. Rock. Spreckels Theatre, 121 Broadway, SD. (619) 235-9500.

Foals and Cherry Glazerr. Tues, May 19. Soma. 3350 Sports Arena Blvd, SD (619) 226-7662.

Journey and the Pretenders. Sun, May 24. North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre, 2050 Enter-

tainment Cir., Chula Vista. (619) 671-3600.

Maroon 5 and Meghan Trainor. Sat, May 30, 7pm. North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre, 2050 Entertainment Cir., Chula Vista. (619) 671-3600.

Motley Crue and Def Leppard. Thur, July 23, 5pm. Petco Park, 100 Park Blvd, San Diego. (619) 795-5000.

Green day, Weezer, Fall Out Boy. Fri, July 24, 7pm. Petco Park, 100 Park Blvd, San Diego. (619) 795-5000.

Ozzy Osbourne. Mon, July 27, 7:30. Hollywood Bowl, 2301 N. Highland Ave, Los Angeles.

Ozzy Osbourne and Marilyn Manson. Wed, July 29. North

Island Credit Union Amphitheatre, 2050 Entertainment Cir., Chula Vista. (619) 671-3600.

David Gray. Sun, Aug 2. Open Air Theatre at SDSU, 5500 Campanile Dr., San Diego. (619) 594-6947.

Camila Cabello. Tues, Aug 11, 8pm. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

Harry Styles. Sun, Aug 30. Pechanga Arena (SD Sports Arena), 3500 Sports Arena Blvd. (619) 224-4171.

The Doobie Brothers 50th Anniversary Tour. Thur, Sept 17, 7:30pm. North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre, 2050 Entertainment Cir., Chula Vista. (619) 671-3600.

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