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San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch

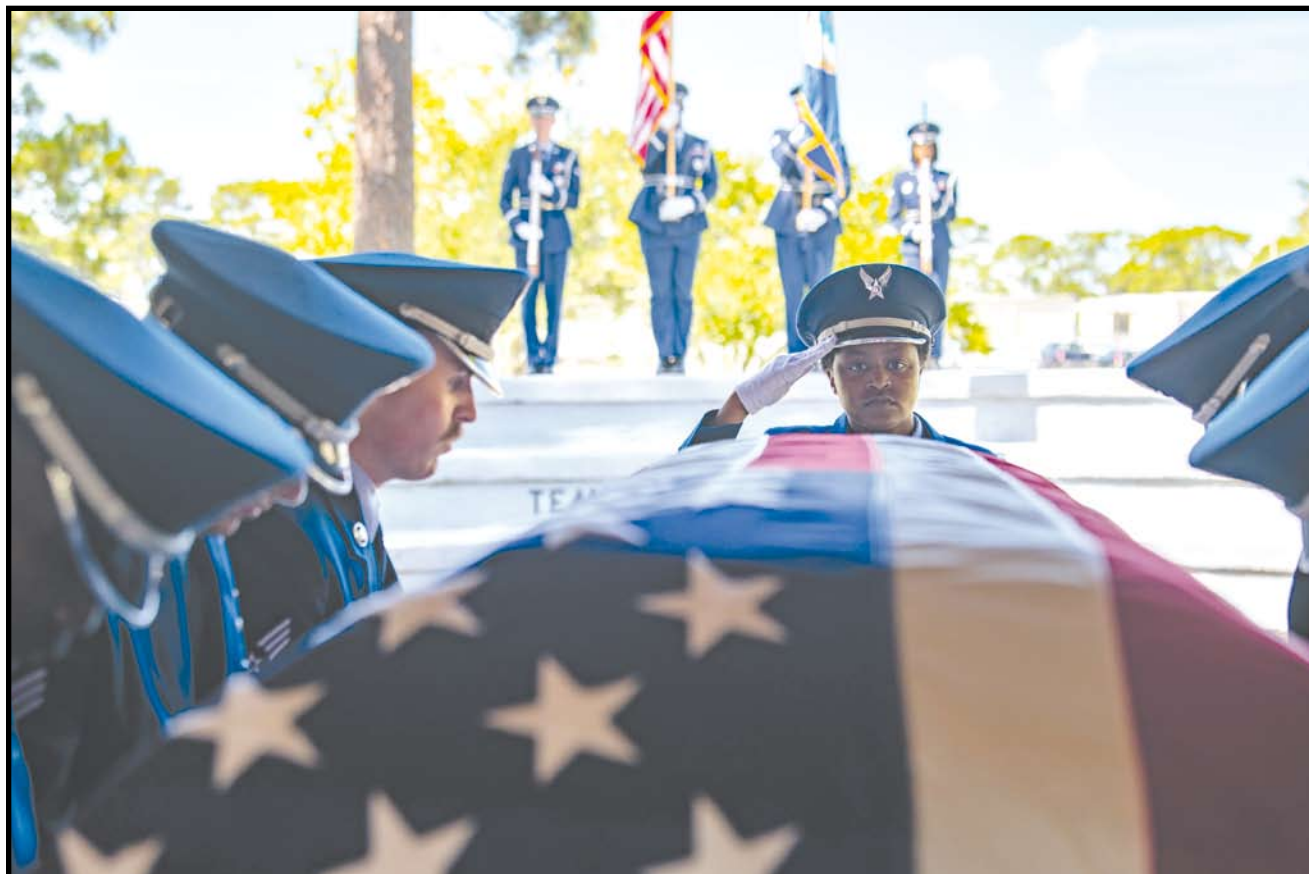
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MOUNTED GUARD Airman 1st Class Bobbie Mills, ceremonial guardsman, salutes during a Honor Guard graduation ceremony at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., July 26, 2024. During the ceremony, Airmen performed a flag detail, rifle volley, pallbearers and bugler in front of friends, family and unit commanders. U.S. Air Force photo by Michelle Gigante

Abraham Lincoln Sailors, en route to Middle East, stop in Guam for rest and relaxation

by Joseph Ditzler, Stars and Stripes

San Diego-based aircraft carrier USS *Abraham Lincoln* steamed into Naval Base Guam over the weekend for a port call ahead of its mission to the Middle East.

The carrier arrived Aug. 4, according to information posted on the Defense Visual Information Distribution System and Naval Base Guam's Facebook page.

"The carrier is making its first scheduled port visit for 2024 to Guam to provide the crew time to tour the island, get some rest and relaxation, and participate in several community service events," the Facebook post said.

Abraham Lincoln left San Diego on July 11 for the Pacific and the 7th Fleet area of operations, *USNI News* reported Aug. 2. The carrier was in the vicinity of Hawaii on July 29 and en route to Guam.

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin ordered *Abraham Lincoln* to the Middle East, where U.S. forces are assembling to forestall an attack against Israel, according to a Pentagon statement Aug. 2 from spokeswoman Sabrina Singh.

Iran and its allies Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthis in Yemen are expected to meet Aug. 8 in Tehran to confer on possible retaliation against Israel for the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, according to *Reuters* news agency on Aug. 2.

Haniyeh's killing and Iran's response have stoked fears of a wider war. Iran and Hamas hold Israel responsible, but Israel has not claimed responsibility for Haniyeh's death hours after he attended the inauguration of Iran's new president Wednesday, the agency reported.

"The Department of Defense continues to take steps to mitigate the possibility of regional escalation by Iran or Iran's partners and proxies," Singh said in the statement.

Austin ordered *Abraham Lincoln* to the area to relieve the carrier *Theodore Roosevelt*. The USS *Wasp* Amphibious Ready Group, with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit embarked, is also deployed to the region.

https://www.stripes.com/theaters/asia_pacific/2024-08-04/carrier-abraham-lincoln-guam-middle-east-14742444.html

ARMY LIEUTENANT 'LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM' CROWNED MISS USA

by Jennifer H. Svan
Stars and Stripes

Officers in the American armed forces are taking the beauty pageant world by storm this year.

Alma Cooper, an Army 2nd lieutenant and Military Academy graduate, was crowned Miss USA on Aug. 4, beating 50 other contestants in the two-hour, nationally televised competition, which featured swimwear, evening gowns and on-the-spot interviews.

In April, Cooper became the first ac-

Alma Cooper, Miss USA, West Point grad.
Courtesy photo



tive-duty Army officer to compete in and win the Miss Michigan USA competition, according to West Point.

Her title comes on the heels of a January victory in the Miss America pageant by Air Force 2nd Lt. Madison Marsh, who is the first active-duty officer to win that crown.

Cooper, 22, graduated with honors in 2023 and majored in math. She's now working on a master's degree in statistics at Stanford University as a Knight-Hennessy scholar.

The scholarship program awards high-achieving students full funding to pursue any graduate degree at the university.

In Sunday's pageant, Cooper was one of five finalists remaining for the interview portion of the competition. Each contestant was asked: "How can we bridge the gap between different cultures and foster understanding and respect?"

Cooper highlighted her ethnicity, saying she's a "proud

Afro Latina woman," and humble beginnings as the daughter of a migrant worker.

"I'm living the American dream," she told the judges. "If there's anything that my life and my mother have taught me, it's that your circumstances never define your destiny. You can make success accessible through demanding excellence."

Cooper will compete in the Miss Universe contest in Mexico later this year.

The first member of the military to win the Miss USA crown was then-1st Lt. Deshauna Barber, an Army reservist who won in 2016, according to the service.

Several U.S. personnel injured in rocket attack at Iraq base housing troops

Several U.S. personnel were injured Aug. 5 in a rocket attack on a military base in Iraq, a defense official said. "We can confirm that there was a suspected rocket attack today against U.S. and coalition forces at al Asad Air Base, Iraq," said the official who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Initial indications are that several U.S. personnel were injured. Base personnel are conducting a post-attack damage assessment." Two Katyusha rockets were fired at the base in western Iraq, *Reuters* reported. The latest incident comes after Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin on Aug. 2 ordered additional warships and a fighter squadron to the Middle East to bolster defenses in the region. The decision to move U.S. forces came ahead of an anticipated Iranian attack in response to the assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last week.

U.S. to depart final base in Niger, nearly ending withdrawal

The U.S. recently departed from a second and final base in Niger, all but ending a monthslong withdrawal from what was once a vital partner in the fight against terrorism, two American defense officials confirmed. One of the officials stressed that this didn't mean America's exit was complete. But Air Base 201 was the final U.S. military site in the West African country after forces exited Air Base 101 in the capital of Niamey this July. Shortly after a group of U.S. officials visited in March, a spokesman for the Nigerien military announced in a televised address his government was ending its counterterrorism agreement with the U.S. The news came as a surprise in Washington, where officials tried to understand whether it was official policy.

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High quality medical care a top DoD readiness priority

by David Vergun, DOD News

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III's top priority is caring for service members and their families.

The Defense Department takes caring for people very seriously, said Dr. Lester Martinez-Lopez, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, who spoke July 30 at the Association of the United States Army.

Taking care of people is also an important part of ensuring the medical readiness of the force, he said.

Martinez-Lopez outlined how DOD is taking care of its people. In some austere locations, there's often a shortage of health care personnel and facilities. Martinez-Lopez said the department is trying to fill these gaps in care by hiring more civilian providers, using telemedicine and hoping to use circuit-rider doctors to visit these places regularly.

More than 100,000 people are working in the Defense Health Agency worldwide, he said, noting that more are needed, and the salary has to be competitive to what is being paid in civilian hospitals and facilities.

DHA is responsible for treating casualties, as well as training medical providers at military treatment facilities and large medical centers. Delivery of care to these many places must be seamless and systematic, he said.

"All parts of a system have to be ready to do their part to make sure your care is there," the doctor said.

Martinez-Lopez turned to the battlefields of Ukraine, mentioning that Ukrainian medical providers are receiving U.S. training outside of Ukraine that advises them of the best way to take care of their casualties. In turn, the Ukrainian medical providers are sharing lessons learned with the U.S. medical community, which may someday need to apply them to a major combatant, he said.

In such a future scenario where the U.S. might not have air superiority, evacuating the wounded would likely take longer than for more recent conflicts, he said. Additionally, troops could be widely dispersed on the battlefield, making logistics difficult for the distribution of available blood, drugs, equipment and personnel, he said.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3855695/high-quality-medical-care-a-top-dod-readiness-priority/>

\$7 million negligence claim filed against Navy in Sailor's 2022 overboard death

by Alison Bath
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy - The father of a Navy Sailor who died after falling into the Baltic Sea from a destroyer two years ago has filed a wrongful death claim for \$7 million against the service.

Lee Spearman of Huntingdon, Tenn., alleges that medical personnel and officials aboard USS *Arleigh Burke* knew that Seaman Recruit David "Dee" Spearman had a history of dangerous fainting spells but didn't take adequate measures to protect him.

The 19-year-old Sailor, who had been declared fit for duty, was working by himself when he fell into the dark waters of the sea around noon on Aug. 1, 2022. With that medical history and in the absence of a clear diagnosis, Dee Spearman should not have been allowed to work alone on the ship deck, especially without a personal flotation device, Lee Spearman recently told *Stars and Stripes*.

"It's so blatantly negligent that I can't go to sleep without my son having some type of justice," he said. "It's not right."

Spearman gave a copy of the claim, including an investigation report by U.S. 6th Fleet, to *Stars and Stripes*. He made it using a Standard Form 95, which is typically used to file for dam-

ages against the U.S. under the Federal Tort Claims Act.

On July 31, the Navy declined to say whether it had received Spearman's claim, which he sent to the Judge Advocate General on July 26. The service said only that it doesn't comment on individual claims.

A Naval Criminal Investigative Service report found that Dee Spearman had lost consciousness at least four times in the weeks before his death and had repeatedly sought help from *Arleigh Burke*'s medical staff. Investigators did not offer a conclusion about what caused the young Sailor's death but seemed to suggest that he may have fainted or slipped while sanding the ship's forward bulkhead, according to a copy of the report obtained by *Stars and Stripes* through an information request.

No one saw Dee Spearman fall, and there wasn't any video, NCIS investigators found. A *Stars and Stripes* investigation into Dee Spearman's death found that while his fainting episodes were well-documented, little was done to keep him safe. The findings also revealed failures in communication and decision-making and lapses in how the Navy reports and studies man-overboard events.

In his declaration, Lee Spearman points to findings in the 6th Fleet investigation that he says support his assertion of negligence. For example, an unidentified investigating officer recommended that a policy be created to ensure that "no personnel should be permitted to work alone, unsupervised or without a life vest within three feet of the ship's lifelines," the command investigation states.

The recommendation would augment an existing Navy rule requiring Sailors to wear life preservers in certain circumstances, including where "the potential exists of falling, slipping, being thrown or carried into the water," according to the command investigation.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2024-07-31/negligence-claim-navy-sailor-overboard-14677217.html>

national military photos



PORTSMOUTH, N.H. (July 29, 2024) Coast Guard Academy Cadets man the helm of Coast Guard Cutter *Eagle* (WIX 327) as they depart from here. *Eagle* serves as a training ship for all cadets at the Academy, helping to build a love for the sea and its lore. U.S. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Matt Thieme



WAIMANALO, HAWAII (July 15, 2024) A U.S. Marine assigned to the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit launches an RQ-20B Puma small unmanned aerial system at Marine Corps Training Area here. The sensor training challenged the Marines to integrate multiple sensing systems into a singular interface, simplifying data collection for analysts. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Oliver Nisbet

SEATTLE, WASH. (July 31, 2024) Fireman Jaxon Moon, assigned to destroyer USS *Sampson*, celebrates after catching a fish at Pike Place Market here during Seattle Fleet Week. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jacob I. Allison



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BACK IN THE U.S.

Americans released from Russian custody arrive at Joint Base Andrews

by 2nd Lt. Jimmy Nguyen
316th Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. - Three Americans released from Russian custody were greeted by President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris and reunited with their family members upon arriving at Joint Base Andrews, Aug. 1.

Paul Whelan, Evan Gershkovich and Alsu Kurmasheva landed at approximately 11:40 p.m., EST., Aug. 1. Following the arrival, they spent time speaking with the president and vice president and reconnecting with family prior to departing for San Antonio, Texas.

After the success of the multi-national diplomatic negotiations early Aug. 1, Joint Base Andrews sprang into action. Members of the 89th Airlift Wing and 316th Wing coordinated logistics, security and support functions to



Alsu Kurmasheva hugs her daughters at Joint Base Andrews, Md., Aug. 1, 2024. Kurmasheva returned to the U.S. after being detained in Russia since October 2023. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Isaac March

prepare America's airfield for the arrival.

With less than a day's notice, Joint Base Andrews

ensured the success of this historic mission, underscoring the base's role in serving as a focal point for national and international missions. The

base's capability to rapidly mobilize resources and coordinate complex missions reinforces its readiness to respond anytime, anywhere.



POOL PATROL

Naval Special Warfare operators conduct dive training at Marine Corps Base Hawaii during Exercise Rim of the Pacific 2024, July 18, 2024. Twenty-nine nations and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC, which is the world's largest international maritime exercise. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Alex Perlman



Army

- *Army captain becomes first female nurse to graduate from the Army's elite Ranger Course
- *Army tests algorithms for classifying new signals for first time at annual experiment
- *Army researchers explore electrical pulses to improve Soldiers' sleep
- *Military couple sues South Carolina school district over home damage caused by suspended construction

Navy

- *Betrayal: Family of toddler abused at Navy day care launches claim that service negligently mishandled their case
- *Steady steps into commander job at Navy's Souda Bay base in Greece

Marine Corps

- *Okinawa adds checkpoints near Marine base to pinpoint source of PFAS found in wells
- *Paul Whelan, a former Marine, showed defiance throughout his detention
- *Marine base in Japan exterminated 460 venomous spiders over past 3 months

Air Force

- *Air Force sees spike in overseas weapon sales
- *Air Force rolls out 'Foundations' courses for enlisted development
- *Teen brother of Air Force airman who was killed by Florida deputy is shot to death near Atlanta
- *'No fail': Air Force officials spotlight cost jumps, delays for B-52 bomber modernization
- *Air Force identifies young Airman killed in fiery crash in northeastern Japan
- *Air Force risks defeat by neglecting information warfare: Think tank

Coast Guard

- *It's for every girl everywhere: Radio host campaigns for Coast Guard Barbie



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Everything you need to know about borrowing money for college

(StatePoint) College-related costs are at an all-time high, and while many parents harbor concerns about the expense, they value the education their child is receiving.

That's according to the April 2024 College Ave survey. The survey found that while 89 percent of parents of four-year college students believe a college degree is important for their child's future, 78 percent agree that paying for college is stressful.

"Families today are relying on a mix of sources to fund college, including scholarships, federal aid and grants, income and savings, and in some cases, private student loans," says Angela Colatriano, chief marketing officer, College Ave.

According to Colatriano, it's critical to understand the ins and outs of borrowing for college before taking out a loan. If you believe your family will take this

path, here's everything you need to know:

1. Exhaust other options. Many experts agree that private loans only make sense once



Photo courtesy of Getty Images

other financial aid options are exhausted. After filing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), you'll receive a financial aid package from each school, which may include scholarships, grants

and federal student loans. If your selected school is one of the 400 institutions that requires the CSS profile, submit that application, too to qualify for institutional aid. And of

course, don't forget to apply to private scholarships to access funds that don't need to be repaid.

2. Do the math. Federal student loans in the student's

name offer unique benefits, so if you do need to borrow, start there. If you decide that a private student loan or private parent loan is also right for your family, borrow only the minimum amount needed to save over the life of the loan. This is a good time to explore additional avenues for reducing your financing needs, such as renting textbooks, and buying groceries versus paying into the school meal plan.

3. Understand loan costs. Unlike federal loans, which have fixed interest rates for all borrowers, private student loans offer a choice of fixed or variable interest rates. Shop around for a lender that doesn't charge origination fees, and learn the difference between fixed and variable interest rates. Use CollegeAve.com's student loan calculator to get a sense of the overall cost of a given loan and its monthly loan payments.

4. Compare lender repayment options. Another factor to consider when shopping for a lender is repayment terms. Some lenders, like College Ave, let borrowers choose how long they want to repay their loan, and whether to start making payments immediately or defer until

after graduation. The important thing is to select a loan with budget-friendly terms and a monthly payment you can live with.

5. Apply with a cosigner. Private student loan lenders look at income and credit history to determine a student's ability to repay the loan. If approved, their credit history also impacts the interest rate they're offered. Many college students don't have an established credit history or sufficient income and may not get approved for a private loan

on their own. Your student can improve their chances of getting approved and securing a lower interest rate by adding a cosigner to their loan application. The cosigner should understand that they share equal responsibility for repayment if the student falls behind on payments.

Bottom line? Researching financial aid options, applying for scholarships and being a strategic borrower can help your family get on with what matters most: preparing for a bright future.




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Former *George Washington* Chaplain marries aboard ship

MC3 August Clawson

NAS NORTH ISLAND - Aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* welcomed former ship's chaplain Capt. (Ret.) Thomas R. Atkins and his bride Gayle Holmes for their wedding aboard the ship July 29.

Atkins started his extensive military career in the Army as a field artilleryman, serving in Vietnam and Germany. After serving in the Army, Atkins made a switch in career choices and pursued ministry, but he was far from finished with the military.

"After my ordination as a Presbyterian pastor, I was accepted into the Navy chaplaincy in 1979," said Atkins. "I served until my retirement in 2003."

During his career, Atkins fathered three daughters with his late wife Alice Atkins, and all three served as Department of Defense Education Activity teachers, serving the government as their

father did before them. After 50 years of marriage, Atkins was widowed.

In the years following, Gayle Holmes entered the picture. "I met Gayle Holmes, no kidding, on eHarmony," said Atkins. EHarmony is an online dating website.

What brought them together was their love for cruises.

"Cruising has been a favorite vacation venue for me for years, including the six cruises



Navy Capt. (Ret.) Thomas R. Atkins, places a wedding band on the hand of Gayle Holmes during their wedding in the chapel on board *George Washington*. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 August Y. Clawson

I embarked on in one year, after I retired," said Atkins. "In 2019, I noticed on Holmes' profile that she, too, loved cruises."

Atkins proposed to Holmes after five years of courtship.

"In the five years of being together, our love of cruising, family, and sports continued to enhance our relationship," said Atkins.

Atkins and Holmes have visited *George Washington* several times. They came aboard during a plank owner reunion in Norfolk, Virginia, and again when *George Washington* visited Mayport, Florida.

"The moment Tom read that *George Washington* was in Mayport, we scurried to hop in the truck and go visit," said Holmes. "The smile and the happiness that was reflected on his face while seeing *George Washington*, was beyond words. It was such a

USS *Preble* to forward deploy to Japan

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Destroyer USS *Preble* will move to Yokosuka, Japan, as part of a scheduled rotation of forces in the Pacific, the Navy announced recently. This move will be a permanent change of station for the crew and family members.

Preble will replace USS *Benfold*, which will depart Yokosuka and move to Everett, Wash.

The forward presence of *Preble* supports the United States' commitment to the defense of Japan, enhances the national security of the U.S. and improves its ability to protect strategic interests. *Preble* will directly support the Defense Strategic Guidance to posture the most capable units forward in the Indo-Pacific Region.

The United States values Japan's contributions to the peace, security and stability of the Indo-Pacific and its long-term commitment and hospitality in hosting U.S. forces forward deployed there.

fabulous trip.

"We are very excited to have our marriage ceremony onboard," said Holmes. "We are thankful for that great and meaningful privilege."

Atkins and his bride were bound in matrimony by Cdr. Marlin Williams, *George Washington*'s command chaplain.

"Witnessing their love was a beautiful expression of life and a reminder of the enduring power of love," said Williams. "It was a deeply touching and meaningful event for us all."

Atkins and Holmes currently reside in Jacksonville, Florida, and plan to move into the fleet landing community in that area.

George Washington, *Ronald Reagan* conduct hull swap

NAS NORTH ISLAND - Aircraft carriers USS *George Washington* and *Ronald Reagan* conducted a hull swap on here that will send *Ronald Reagan* to Bremerton, Wash., and returns *George Washington* to Yokosuka, Japan, as the Navy's only Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Japan aircraft carrier effective Aug. 1. The hull swap was planned in coordination with the government of Japan, and as a part of the 50-year lifespan of the U.S. Navy's Nimitz-class aircraft carriers. "USS *Ronald Reagan* has served exceptionally as America's forward deployed aircraft carrier for nearly a decade, projecting credible combat power while sailing and flying where international law allows and doing so with allies and partners throughout the Indo-Pacific," said Rear Adm. Greg Newkirk, commander of Task Force 70 and Carrier Strike Group 5. "*Reagan*'s crew and those who have served aboard over the past several years should be tremendously proud of what they accomplished." *George Washington* relieving *Ronald Reagan* marks the second time the ship will serve as the FDNF-J aircraft carrier. In 2008, *George Washington* became the first nuclear powered aircraft carrier to serve as FDNF-J and was relieved by *Ronald Reagan* seven years later after a historic tri-carrier hull swap.

Navy's Old Town Campus revitalization moves forward

The Navy's proposal to revitalize the 70.3-acre Naval Base Point Loma Old Town Campus to provide new facilities for Naval Information Warfare Systems Command continues to move forward. The Navy is working closely with selected developer Manchester Financial Group/Edgemoor Infrastructure & Real Estate (Manchester/Edgemoor) to potentially revitalize the Navy's Old Town Campus in San Diego. The Navy is currently in the environmental review process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to assess potential environmental impacts of revitalizing the site. The Navy began a competitive solicitation process in November 2022 and in January 2024 identified a potential master developer, Manchester/Edgemoor, to work with the Navy to develop site-specific details before a final alternative is selected. Now in an exclusive negotiation period, Manchester/Edgemoor may pursue local approvals such as permitting, any necessary environmental documentation, secure financing, and negotiate a potential lease with the Navy. "The Navy's enduring partnerships with the City of San Diego and surrounding communities are essential to this successful initiative moving forward," said Rear Admiral Brad Rosen, Commander of Navy Region Southwest.

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-----IMPAC ends summer-long run that featured sinking of 2 former warships-----

by Wyatt Olson
Stars and Stripes

FORT SHAFTER, Hawaii — The biennial Rim of the Pacific maritime exercise ended its six-week run Aug. 1 in Hawaii, a span that included the sinking of two decommissioned warships by numerous weapons systems wielded by a multinational force.

The exercise, which began in late June in waters off Hawaii, is touted as the world's largest international series of naval drills. Twenty-nine nations par-

ticipated this year's RIMPAC, which included 40 ships, 150 aircraft, three submarines, 14 land-based armed forces and 25,000 personnel. The sinking of two warship "hulks" is twice the number sunk in previous RIMPAC exercises.

Decommissioned USS Dubuque, an amphibious transport dock, was sunk July 11. A week later, 820-foot-long former USS Tarawa, an amphibious assault ship the size of a small aircraft carrier, was sunk July 19. The ships went down in waters

15,000 feet deep about 50 nautical miles off the northern coast of Kauai, the westernmost island in the Hawaiian chain.

"Using advanced weapons and seeing the professionalism of our teams during these drills shows our commitment to keeping the Indo-Pacific region safe and open." Vice Adm. John Wade, commander of the exercise's Combined Task Force and of 3rd Fleet, said in a July 23 news release.

The release makes no mention of China in describing the

"long-planned" sinking exercises, but that nation's growing military might is regarded by the Pentagon as America's "pacing challenge." One aspect of the sinking exercise demonstrated that warships anywhere in the world could be vulnerable to a quick and devastating attack by U.S. forces in the event of a conflict.

In a test dubbed Quicksink, an Air Force B-2 stealth bomber delivered a guided bomb on Tarawa, which displaced 38,900 tons. The demonstration proved

that the B-2 provides a "low-cost, air-delivered method for defeating surface vessels," the Navy said in its release.

The official China Military Online took note in a July 24 article by Yang Zhen, the deputy director of the Northeast Asia Research Center, Shanghai University of Political Science and Law. Zhang wrote that this year's RIMPAC clearly aimed to demonstrate the joint forces' ability to target Chinese assets.

China's Type 075 amphibious

assault ship has a displacement similar to Tarawa, and some countries participating in the exercise "didn't bother to conceal the fact that RIMPAC 2024 is highly targeted at China, which has surprised many," Zhang wrote.

Quicksink was funded by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering and aimed "to provide options to neutralize surface maritime threats while demonstrating the inherent flexibility of the joint force."



CAMP PENDLETON (Aug. 1, 2024) Marine Corps Sgt. Maj. Tricia M. Smith-Leavey, incoming sergeant major of MCAS Camp Pendleton, gives remarks during a relief and appointment here. During the ceremony, Sgt. Maj. Curtis A. Rice relinquished his duties to Smith-Leavey. The historical post and relief ceremony is a time-honored tradition within the Marine Corps. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Mhecaela J. Watts



USS GRIDLEY, AT SEA (July 18, 2024) Sailors watch as Petty Officer 2nd Class Wyatt Morrissey fires a 25mm machine gun system from a remote operator console on the bridge of destroyer *Gridley* during live-fire gun training as part of Exercise Rim of the Pacific. Twenty-nine nations and 25,000 personnel are participating in RIMPAC, which is the world's largest international maritime exercise. Official U.S. Navy photo



Sonar Technician 3rd Class Josiah Kirchofer, left, and Sonar Technician 2nd Class Pierre Ducasse, hoist an Mark 54 lightweight torpedo onto the aft missile bay from the flight deck of destroyer USS Spruance. Spruance is underway as part of the Abraham Lincoln CSG. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Joey Sitter

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Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands relieves Rear Adm. Keith B. Davids, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command. U.S. Navy photo by MC1Keypher Strombeck

Sands comes aboard as commander of Naval Special Warfare Command

by Petty Officer 1st Class Destiny Cheek

Naval Special Warfare Command
SAN DIEGO – Rear Adm. Milton J. Sands III relieved Rear Adm. Keith B. Davids as commander, Naval Special Warfare Command during a change of command ceremony at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, Aug. 2.

Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Lisa Franchetti attended the ceremony and provided welcoming remarks by thanking Davids for his innovative leadership in ensuring Naval Special Warfare (NSW) provides access and capabilities to the warfighter.

"You provided options to our nation's decision makers every single day, keeping our most elite warriors--our naval commandos--at the forefront of the changing character of war, finding, testing, and using new technologies and innovating to ensure that we would be postured and ready to respond to any threat anytime and anywhere," said Franchetti. "Keith, you will leave behind an

incredible legacy through those that you have trained, mentored, and led, but you will also be known for your laser focus on prioritizing and reinvigorating the connection between the Fleet and Naval Special Warfare. This is a game changer for our Nation."

Gen. Bryan P. Fenton, commander, U.S. Special Operations Command, was the presiding officer and guest speaker. In his remarks, Fenton praised Davids' leadership. He highlighted his commitment to preparing NSW for increased challenges and risks. Fenton emphasized the importance of Davids' transformative changes to ensure NSW's relevance to the Joint Force and Fleet, its survivability, and lethality in defense of the Nation.

"During his watch, Davids ensured that the next generation of our naval commandos is prepared for the volatile, uncertain, and complex world at our doorstep. Our commandos continuously push the bounds of what is possible and achieve what others

deem impossible," said Fenton. "Across the globe, our naval commandos provide new options and opportunities for our joint force, creating a range of dilemmas for our adversaries should they choose the path of crisis or conflict."

Davids assumed command of Naval Special Warfare Command in August 2022. During his tenure, he strengthened NSW's integration with Fleet, Joint, and Coalition partners and ensured NSW's ability to respond to global threats anytime, anywhere.

"As we speak, our teammates are conducting sensitive maritime missions in multiple theaters around the globe," Davids said. "They are closing gaps in national intelligence, strengthening strategic partnerships, helping friends and allies build their resilience, and fielding new capabilities that make the naval commando force extremely valuable to both the Joint Force and the Navy. This force is invaluable in peacetime, in crisis, and, should deterrence fail, in conflict as well."

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

Our first child, Hayden, attended three middle schools and three high schools. His younger sisters had slightly better luck — Anna attended two middle schools and two high schools. Lilly, three middle schools and one high school. Such are the lives of Navy brats.

We always believed that, through it all, our children would build strength, character, worldliness and resilience, and for the most part, they did. What we didn't know was that all that instability during adolescence would leave our son and daughters with some unwanted baggage as young adults.

When each of our three children were separately diagnosed with anxiety in their late teen years, my husband and I wondered, "Are we rotten parents?" And, we sometimes blamed each other for passing down "anxiety genes."

However, a 2024 study involving one million people tells a surprisingly different story.

Scientists looked at the entire population of Denmark born between 1982 and 2003, analyzing them for evidence of two variables: poverty level and residential moves prior to the age of fifteen. Then, the scientists followed the one million 15-year-olds to see how their lives turned out.

The data showed that people who moved during childhood had a significantly higher risk (61 percent for those who moved more than once) of developing adult depression than those who did not move, regardless of whether they had experienced poverty as children. The study suggested that "a settled home environment in childhood may have a

New Study: Stability during adolescence is 'very, very important'

protective association against depression."

Furthermore, in a related 2016 study of 1.5 million Danes, scientists found a clear association between childhood residential mobility and adult incidents of attempted suicide, violent criminality, psychiatric illness, substance misuse, and unnatural deaths, "with elevation in risk being particularly marked if frequent residential change occurs during early/mid-adolescence."

Although these studies didn't address why moving during childhood increased the incidents of adult depression and other negative outcomes, study author Dr. Clive Sabel thought moving might disrupt "children's social networks, requiring them to replace their friend groups, athletic teams and religious communities."

Essentially, stability in childhood "is really, really important," Dr. Sabel told The New York Times. but, what does this mean for military families, who can't avoid moving without defying military orders?

In the National Military Family Association's Military Teen Experience survey, one teen recently reported, "For some, moving is a fresh start. But for me, it feels like I'm forced to press the reset button every time I start to feel comfortable in my new environment. It's as if life is slapping me across the face every time I start to smile."

However, NMFA's CEO, Besa Pinchotti, recommends that transitioning military families take advantage of NMFA programs such as Bloom: Empowering the Military Teen, a youth leadership organization begun by two teens who had trouble coping after PCS moves. Bloom's all-teen staff wrote a "Field Guide for Military Teens" to support military teenagers experiencing moves.

For younger kids, Besa recommends Sesame Street's resources.

"[B]oth Elmo and Rosita are military kids," she says. "Younger military kids can feel safe in their moves as they go through the process with beloved characters they trust."

Also, NMFA's Operation Purple Camp free weekly online challenges and new Rosie Riveter STEM programs "help kids build stress tolerance and learn it's okay for things to be hard first," Besa says. "You wouldn't think that we're preparing kids for a military-mandated move when we have them figure out how to build a lava lamp, but that's actually our goal. The first time they try, they'll get it wrong. They'll reach out to their friends at other tables, learn from them about what's working, try again."

For children who need more help, Besa suggests Military OneSource, Military Family Life Counselors, Cohen Veteran Network, and BetterMynd to find counseling and other services aimed at helping kids work through PCS moves.

Besa's most important message is to local communities: "Wherever you are, military families are there too. As they PCS with a parent to your town, please welcome them in your schools, your sports teams, your social gatherings. They need to know they're in a community that cares about them, and we need your help to achieve that."

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

As I sit at my desk writing this today, I am enjoying a very juicy, lemonade-flavored, See's Candies lollypop. These were offered to everyone in the audience to enjoy at one of the seminars at Tiki Oasis 2024.

On the official event website (<https://www.tikioasis.com>), Tiki Oasis is billed as "a five-night, four-day live music event, including pool lounging, fashion shows, swanky suites, sunset dinners, disc jockeys, art exhibits, educational seminars, a bustling Tiki Marketplace, wedding options, tropical cocktails curated by top mixologists, and more! Now in its 24th year, Tiki Oasis is the original and largest Tiki event in the entire world." Offering something for everyone, young and old alike, and everyone in-between, Tiki Oasis is really is all this and more, including a scaled-down (from years past) car show at the curb of the resort's circular driveway.

This year's theme was "Tiki Oasis WAY OUT WEST - where the sun meets the sea." Derek Yaniger, Tiki Oasis illustrator, performed a masterful job combining the West, the sea and happy, Tiki apparel-clad attendees having fun and enjoying the Tiki Oasis experience.

One of the first stops people in-

Tiki Oasis 2024 — A feast for the senses

the-know make on Thursday morning is at the annual Art and Lamp Show. People were already lined up as sales began at 10 AM. The works are fantastic, each is unique and the prices are reasonable. Someone beat me to purchase the piece that I especially liked, and would have considered buying.

Throughout Tiki Oasis were many audio/visual seminars plus alcoholic beverage tasting sessions (over 21). The first seminar that I attended was "Confessions of a Fire Eating Mermaid" with MeduSirena. She has lived her fascinating, varied life to the fullest — from growing up in Puerto Rico and learning to skin dive at age three, to working at the iconic Mai-Kai, to telling her story to this audience at Tiki Oasis. As her bio on the website tells us, she is a Polynesian dancer, aquatic dance reconstructor, founder of the modern career Mermaid Movement, Aqua-Burlesque creator, Taiko drummer, fitness ambassador, photographer, wingwalker, fledgling bassist and all around 'Middle Aged Menace'."

Other seminars I attended were "Walt Disney's Enchanted Tiki Room" with Ken Bruce, Before the Birds Sang Words"; "Skipper Josh's South Seas Adventures," "Disney Legend: The Great Rolly Crump Presents his Magic" with Christopher Crump & Chris Nichols, "Delights of the Desert" with Chuntikis, "Legendary Tiki Bars Reborn" with Justin Peterson, Tom Allsmiller and Marie King, "Made in California: Food that Changed America" with George Geary, and "The Opulent Grandeur of Los Angeles Architecture" with Domenic Priore.

To the delight of all in attendance, Charles Phoenix (I know!) returned

to Tiki Oasis on Sunday to entertain us with another great presentation. This one was entitled "Knotts Berry Farmland."

Musical entertainment included disc jockeys, The Satin Dolz — a wonderful song and dance group that I saw perform at Tiki Oasis 2018, Deke & The Whippersnappers, and much more.

Favorite traditions that were celebrated again at Tiki Oasis 2024 were the Aloha Cافتan Society's Cافتan Stroll around the (very crowded!) pool, the Mx (not a typo!) Tiki Oasis contest, hosted by El Vez and Miss Tiki Oasis 2023 CoCo DeSoto, and the Tiki Oasis Costume Contest.

Late night entertainment included hosted Suite Soirees — some with live bands, and the "Tease-O-Rama After Hours" (formerly called the Burlesque show).

Of course, this would not have been Tiki Oasis if there were not tastings — and there were many such sessions. The last of these was the ever popular, tenth annual, Tiki Oasis San Diego Bartender Battle.

I'll leave you with this tip that you probably will not find on any of the official literature. Every day search for hidden treasures on the unofficial Tiki Oasis scavenger hunt. It is called TikiSeeki.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse. Copyright © 2024 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #849

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Health & Fitness

DHA veterinary services explains updated CDC dog importation guidelines

by Douglas Holl,

DHA-Public Health Public Affairs

Service members and their families returning to the United States from overseas duty assignments must comply with updated dog importation requirements effective Aug. 1.

“Most of our family members are stationed in low-risk or rabies-free countries,” said U.S. Army Maj. Chelsi Blume, a veterinary public health officer at the Defense Health Agency in Falls Church, Va. “There should be minimal impact to their moves. The policy was changed to prevent the reintroduction of the canine rabies variant into the U.S. It will ensure dogs arriving stateside from a high-risk rabies country are properly vaccinated against rabies and will deter falsified documents.”

The canine rabies variant was eliminated in the U.S. in 2007, but dog rabies is not controlled in over 100 countries and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wants to prevent the re-introduction of the canine rabies variant, said Blume.

The CDCopens CDC.gov has updated their requirements to protect the health of U.S. communities and animals and prevent the re-introduction of dog rabies to the United States. Blume said these new, specific requirements align with World

Organisation of Animal Health standards. The requirements also address recent challenges, such as falsified documents seen with international dog importations. There are no new requirements or changes for cat importation.

New CDC Dog Importation Vaccination Requirements

All dogs arriving into the U.S. must be healthy, at least six months of age, have a microchip that is detected with a universal scanner, and have a completed CDC Dog Import formopens workflowcloud.com. Dogs will require additional documentation for proof of rabies vaccination if they are traveling from high-risk rabies countriesopens CDC.gov.

“These rules apply to all dogs, including puppies, service animals, military working dogs, government working dogs, as well as dogs that left the United States and are returning,” said Blume. “They also apply whether you are a U.S. citizen, legal U.S. resident, or foreign national.”

All dogs entering or returning to the United States from an overseas location must adhere to requirements based on the location of the animal six months prior to entering the U.S. and where the canine received their rabies vaccinations, said Blume. U.S. canine importation requirements and timelines can be found on the CDC websiteopens CDC.gov.

The new import regulations will impact Department of Defense service members making a permanent change of station, or PCS, move with dogs back to the U.S., said Blume. Service members should first determine whether any of the countries their dog has been in over the last six months are designated as rabies-free, low-rabies risk, or high-rabies risk countries by the CDCopens CDC.gov, as this will determine what new requirements must be met for travel. Families with pet dogs who will be traveling to the U.S. from low-rabies risk or rabies-free countries, will need only one new additional document, the CDC Dog Import formopens workflowcloud.com, which owners fill out.

For service members stationed in high-risk rabies countries, Blume outlines some of the new changes and requirements in the updated CDC importation regulations:

Requirement for All Dogs

****CDC Dog Importopens workflowcloud.com form:** This document can be filled out online by the owner and will not require a veterinarian signature.

Requirement for Dogs Returning from High-Risk Rabies Countries

****Certification of U.S.-Issued Rabies Vaccineopens CDC.gov or Certification of Foreign Rabies Vaccination and Microchip**

CDC DOG IMPORTATION REQUIREMENTS

All dogs arriving into the U.S. must:

- ▶ be healthy
- ▶ be at least 6 months old
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DHA Public Health

Service members and their families returning to the United States from overseas duty assignments must comply with updated dog importation requirements effective Aug. 1. Defense Health Agency veterinary experts say preventing infected dogs from entering the United States is a public health priority. Graphic by Joyce Kopatch

[formdownload](#) or [view the PDF in a new window](#): The document will be required for dogs

entering from high-risk rabies countries. U.S. military veterinary hospitals or clinics—stateside and overseas—count as “U.S.-administered rabies”, said Blume, and therefore, the first form can be used for service members overseas who use a military veterinary clinic. If this option doesn’t exist, a foreign national veterinarian must use the second form.

****If dogs enter from a high-risk rabies country, they must enter the U.S. at a CDC registered animal care facilityopens CDC.gov, or ACF. The service member must make a reservation with the ACF. The dog must**

also have a rabies titer test, or FAVN, taken at least 30 days after the valid rabies booster was administered and at least 28 days before entry. This titer test must have been submitted to a CDC-approved laboratory or the dog will undergo a 28-day quarantine at an ACF upon arrival.

Blume noted that only two high-risk countries identified by the CDC - Turkey and Cuba - have vet treatment facilities. Service members stationed in other high-risk rabies countries will need to seek services through a local national veterinarian to meet importation requirements.

“Service members in high-risk countries will need to start their checklist process early. Try to

locate your original health certificate documents and rabies certificate that got you into the country,” said Blume. “If unable to find these documents, get with your military veterinarian. If neither of these options exist, get with your local national veterinarian as soon as possible to meet importation requirements.”

The CDC recommends service members who have foreign-vaccinated dogs from high-risk countries begin their checklist-process CDC.gov process 60-90 days before travel.

https://www.army.mil/article/278466/dha_veterinary_services_explains_updated_cdc_dog_importation_guidelines

Veterans News

FRA Newsbytes: TRICARE contract, burn pit registry, COVID study

New TRICARE contract for 2025

The Defense Health Agency provides health services to approximately 9.6 million beneficiaries, including uniformed service members, military retirees, and their families.

The DHA operates the TRICARE Health Plan and manages a global network of more than 700 military hospitals, clinics, and dental facilities. After resolving litigation, TRICARE beneficiaries are set to start receiving care under a new provider contract, nicknamed “T-5,” on Jan. 1, 2025. Some of the changes are as follows:

-The new contract will not affect TRICARE For Life beneficiaries, TRICARE Overseas users, or U.S. Family Health Plan members.

-Humana Military will continue to be the TRICARE East Region contractor under the new setup.

-TriWest takes over the TRICARE West Region from Health Net Federal Services. TriWest previously held the West Region contract.

DHA officials have asked beneficiaries to confirm their Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) information is up to date. This will ensure beneficiaries receive the correct updates. Up-to-date DEERS records are critical to accessing your TRICARE benefits. It’s important for beneficiaries to keep their DEERS information up to date so they and their families can use TRICARE.

DHA wants beneficiaries to know that appointments scheduled under current providers for after the T-5 changeover will be honored. Humana Military and TriWest will distribute provider directories in November, which will allow beneficiaries to find in-network care for 2025.

For more information about transitioning to the new contract, go to: TRICARE Contract Transition FAQ.

VA launches updated Burn Pit Registry

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced the launch of

the redesigned Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry. The Burn Pit Registry is a database that combines veteran and service member data to help the VA better understand, research, and ultimately improve treatment for the health challenges facing veterans exposed to airborne hazards and burn pits during their military service.

Addressing the health issues associated with military-related toxic exposure is a priority for the VA, and this announcement marks an important milestone in that effort.

The registry is an important research tool that enables the VA to identify and study health challenges spanning the veteran and service member populations.

The registry is providing veterans and service members an opportunity to help improve the care and benefits of veterans and service members in generations to come.

For more information, go to: Burn Pit Registry.

VA study of Long COVID impact on vets

In a paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the VA presents findings from a study of over five million veterans that substantiate the important protective role COVID-19 vaccination plays in preventing a health condition called Long COVID. Long COVID is defined as a chronic condition lasting at least three months following SARS-CoV-2 infection.

This VA study is the largest yet to look at the role vaccination plays in preventing Long COVID, as well as trends in the prevalence of Long COVID among veterans over time.

This study followed vets who received VA health care across the country between March 1, 2020, and January 31, 2022, for one year, ultimately comparing 441,583 veterans who had SARS-CoV-2 infection to 4,748,504 veterans who did not.

https://www.fra.org/fra/Web/News_Publications/News_Bytes/



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