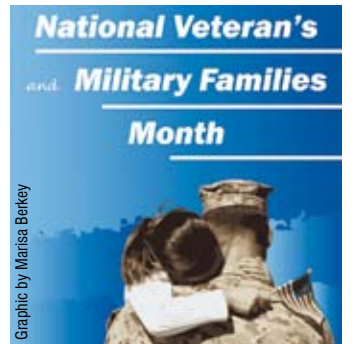


ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985
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NOVEMBER 8, 2025

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San Diego Veterans Day Parade

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Location: Harbor Drive (in front of the County Administration Building)

www.sdveterparade.org

U.S. drone observes aid truck looted by Hamas in Gaza

Courtesy story

U.S. Central Command Public Affairs

TAMPA, Fla. — On Oct. 31, the U.S.-led Civil-Military Coordination Center (CMCC) observed suspected Hamas operatives looting an aid truck traveling as part of a humanitarian convoy delivering needed assistance from international partners to Gazans in northern Khan Younis.

The coordination center was alerted through video surveillance from a U.S. MQ-9 aerial drone flying overhead to monitor implementation of the ceasefire between Hamas and Israel.

Operatives attacked the driver and stole the aid and truck after moving the driver to the road's median. The driver's current status is unknown.

Over the past weeks, international partners have delivered more than 600 trucks of commercial goods and aid into Gaza daily. This incident undermines these efforts.

Nearly 40 nations and international organizations represented at the CMCC are working together to help flow humanitarian, logistical and security assistance into Gaza. partners have delivered more than 600 trucks of commercial goods and aid into Gaza daily. This incident undermines these efforts.

Nearly 40 nations and international organizations represented at the CMCC are working together to help flow humanitarian, logistical and security assistance into Gaza.



Screenshot courtesy of DVIDS

VETERANS DAY EVENTS

Following are some of the local events planned in honor of Veterans Day 2025. Please check venue websites for confirmation. Be sure to check with your local VFW's and American Legion's to see what they have going on!

SeaWorld Red, White & Blue Salute November 8-10, SeaWorld San Diego will offer a variety of patriotic events, including nightly fireworks, a hero's salute at the Orca Encounter, and a hero mailbox for guests to write postcards to service members.

Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial Saturday, Nov. 8 at 11 a.m. Mt. Soledad honors all veterans and commemorates the 250th anniversaries of the Navy and Marine Corps. soledadmemorial.org

San Diego Veterans Day Parade 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Harbor Drive, between the County Administration Building and the USS Midway Museum. sdvetparade.org

• **North County Veterans Day Parade and VetFest:** Starts at 9:30 a.m. on Escondido Blvd. VetFest Celebration: Begins at 11 a.m. at American Legion Post 149, featuring lunch, a ceremony, and a band. Active duty Military receive a free lunch. escovetfest.org

• **Silver Strand Half Marathon:** This race will take place on Veterans Day. You can choose to run the half marathon, 10 Miler, 12K, or 5K. silverstrandhalf.com

USS Midway Museum Salute to Service event on the deck of USS Midway Museum. The museum will host events to honor veterans and will feature special exhibits and ceremonies. midway.org

Miramar National Cemetery Tuesday, Nov. 11, originally scheduled ceremony cancelled due to lapse in appropriations. Cemetery will be open to the public all day.

City of San Diego. On Tuesday, Nov. 11, City of San Diego administrative offices and other services will be closed for the Veterans Day holiday. Regular operations will resume on Wednesday, Nov. 12.

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Artist's rendering of future Columbia-class SSBN submarine. Navy image

ON TRACK: Navy Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine program

Nuclear ballistic missile submarine District of Columbia (SSBN-826) is more than halfway completed, with major modules due to arrive at General Dynamics Electric Boat by the end of the year, company officials said.

Congress report

The Navy's Columbia (SSBN-826) class ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) aims to design and build a class of 12 new SSBNs to replace the Navy's current force of 14 aging Ohio-class SSBNs.

Since 2013, the Navy has consistently identified the Columbia-class program as the Navy's top priority program. The Navy procured the first Columbia-class boat in FY2021 and the second in FY2024. The

Navy wants to procure the third boat in FY2026.

The first and second Columbia-class boats were funded with incremental funding, a funding approach in which the procurement cost of each boat is divided into multiple annual increments, with the first increment occurring in the year in which the boat was procured.

The first Columbia-class boat was funded with three-year incremental funding in FY2021-FY2023, and the second boat was funded with two-year incremental funding (also called split funding) in FY2024-FY2025. The Navy wants to use three-year incremental funding for procuring the third and subsequent boats in the program.

General Dynamics Electric Boat says the production rate on both the Virginia and Columbia-class submarine lines is improving due to Navy's and industry's focus on enhancing the submarine industrial supply chain, said CEO Phebe Novakovic.

"The first Columbia is about 60 percent complete. By the end of this year, we'll have all the major modules at Groton ready for assembly and test," she told USNI News. "We're working very hard to move that ship to the left, along with our customer and along with the supply chain."

"We've seen some improvements again [but] this next year will be pivotal," Novakovic added.

Last year, Novakovic announced that Electric Boat was slowing construction on 21,000-ton District of Columbia due to "late deliveries from major component suppliers."

Specifically the late delivery of turbines from Northrop Grumman and the bow of the boat from Columbia-class shipbuilding partner Newport News Shipbuilding were major barriers in the sequential assembly of the submarine, USNI News previously reported.

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Editor.....Scott Sutherland

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www.VeteranComp.com

Guard members, employees unite to aid colleagues facing food insecurity

by Joseph Siemandel
Washington National Guard

With more than 600 federal technicians at the Washington Military Department working without pay during the federal government shutdown, the agency – working in partnership with the National Guard Association of Washington – is collecting donations to help those facing

food insecurity.

“We have a number of folks affected in different ways during the shutdown, and we started looking around and asking, ‘What can we do to help our people?’” said Col. Angela Gentry, Joint Services Support.

Each year, JSS conducts two



Bags with food sit on a table at the Pierce County Readiness Center, Camp Murray, Wash., Oct. 30. U.S. National Guard photo by Joseph Siemandel

major food distribution events—a Thanksgiving turkey drop and a Holiday Magic event—providing meals and gifts to employees and service members in need. For those efforts, the team typically partners with nonprofits and businesses to secure donated items.

However, the shutdown prompted many within the organization to ask what they could do directly to support coworkers who may need some help.

“This started with a few members of our Military & Family Readiness team who simply

wanted to make resources more available to our soldiers and airmen as they navigate this shutdown,” Gentry said. “It is so representative of the heart of our organization to see how quickly our community mobilized through donations, volunteering, or even just calling to ask, ‘what can I do?’”

Donations began arriving on the morning of Oct. 31, and continued until just before noon. Senior leaders, state employees, and traditional Guardsmen all contributed, eager to support their full-time counterparts who are currently without pay.

“I am so proud. This is a true community supporting one another. It’s a blessing we can appreciate and be grateful for today, despite the circumstances,” Gentry said.

Support also came through the

National Guard Association of Washington’s Minuteman Fund, which typically provides scholarships or emergency assistance to Guard members but added food distribution as an option during the shutdown.

U.S. Indo-Pacific command statement on DPRK missile launches

from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Public Affairs

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command was aware of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’s recent multiple ballistic missile launches and are consulting closely with the Republic of Korea and Japan, as well as other regional allies and partners.

The United States condemns these actions and calls on the DPRK to refrain from further unlawful and destabilizing acts. While we have assessed that this event does not pose an immediate threat to U.S. personnel, or territory, or to our allies, we continue to monitor the situation. The U.S. commitments to the defense of the ROK and Japan remain ironclad.

North Korea test-fired two hypersonic missiles on Oct. 22, prompting protests from U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, which described the tests as unlawful and destabilizing.

State media Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Thursday reported North Korea’s Missile Administration launched two hypersonic missiles from Ryokpho District, Pyongyang Municipality, toward the northeast. The projectiles reportedly hit the target point on the tableland of Kwesang Peak in Orang County, North Hamgyong Province.

“The new weapon system was tested as part of the defense capability development program to enhance the sustainability and effectiveness of strategic deterrence against potential enemies,” KCNA reported.



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PHOTO GALLERY



NAVAL STATION GREAT LAKES (Nov. 3, 2025) — Fireman William Thompson, left, a native of Seale, Ala., and student at Surface Warfare Engineering Schools Command (SWESC) Great Lakes, shakes hands with Commanding Officer Cmdr. Quentin Cooper after receiving a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for his role in rescuing a man from a flame-engulfed vehicle Oct. 25. Thompson dove into action by breaking open a car’s window after noticing it had caught fire and filled with smoke on the upper level of a mall’s parking garage in Schaumburg, Ill. SWESC is responsible for providing technical training to every surface Navy engineer, quartermaster, boatswain and deck seaman. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Brian T. Glunt



NEW ORLEANS (Nov. 1, 2025) Ambassador Theodore Britton, left, oldest Marine, presents a slice of cake to the youngest Marine, Lance Cpl. Obrian A. Ortiz, right, a financial management resources analyst with Headquarters Battalion, Marine Forces Reserve, during the ceremony of the 250th Marine Corps Birthday Ball at Caesars Superdome here. The birthday ceremony honors the history, legacy and traditions passed down from generation to generation since the founding of the Corps on Nov. 10, 1775. The Marine Corps Birthday Ball in New Orleans is the largest ball in the Marine Corps with over 3,500 attendees this year. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Van Hoang



EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Army

- Soldiers take new mobile 81mm mortar system for test drive
- The next Abrams tank, built lighter and quieter, is due next year
- Ex-Army sergeant sentenced for trying to share military secrets with China
- Army 3-star general retires early from Pentagon role as shake-ups continue

Navy

- We fly aboard the M-346 that could become the Navy’s next jet trainer
- Civilian leading office of Naval Research, former commander Rothenhaus reasigned
- PacFleet is rushing to create new capabilities, operating concepts
- Navy replaces admiral leading naval research with former DOGE staffer

Marine Corps

- Marine arrested and accused of kidnapping girl with intent to sexually assault her, FBI says

Air Force

- Airmen and Space Force guardians will be extended for 60 days due to shutdown
- Senate confirms Wilsbach as Air Force chief of staff

Space Force

- Pentagon turns to ‘government-owned, commercially-operated’ satellites amid conflict risks

Veterans

- Disability fraud is a ‘tiny fraction’ of VA claims, advocates say
- In reversal, DOD says troops can wear uniforms at Veterans Day events

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- ‘Where is our data?’ Indo-Pacific theater needs to prepare for AI implementation
- DHS offering grants to states, local governments for counter-drone tech ahead of major national events
- Golden Dome hype meets information vacuum as industry awaits Pentagon direction
- NATO eyes robots as first boots on ground against Russian attack

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Special Warfare Training Wing launches first-ever Zulu Course

by 1st Lt. Casen Salitore
Special Warfare Training Wing

CHAPMAN TRAINING ANNEX, Texas - The Special Warfare Training Wing (SWTW) marked a historic milestone today as it launched the first-ever Zulu Course, a groundbreaking common skills training program uniting Air Force Special Warfare (AFSPEWAR) career fields under one standardized curriculum.

The Zulu Course is aimed at aligning common training standards across Combat Control, Pararescue, Tactical Air Control Party, Special Reconnaissance, and their respective officer careers.

By consolidating critical early-stage training, the course strengthens interoperability among AFSPEWAR Airmen and enhances mission readiness for global operations.

"This course is the result of deliberate data-driven analysis and a shared commitment to producing the world's most capable operators," said Lt. Col. Benjamin Schmidt, Director of Plans and Policy for the SWTW.

"The Zulu Course establishes a shared foundation for our operators from day one, ensuring graduates leave here with the same core skills, knowledge base, and mindset."

Held at the Chapman Training Annex in San Antonio, the Zulu Course brings together skillsets that were previously taught at multiple locations into a single, cohesive program that's focused on the basic skills of shoot, move, communicate, casualty care, weapons, advanced insertion/extraction skills, individual skills, and small team operations.

The course is taught by instructors with operational experience across the AFSPEWAR enterprise, combining expertise from multiple career fields to deliver holistic training.

The name "Zulu" was chosen as based off the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) system. Zulu is the phonetic alphabet code that denotes an AFSPEWAR Airmen, with the enlisted code being 1Z and the officer code being 19Z.

"This is a defining moment not just for the Wing, but for the future of Air Force



Special Warfare," said Col. Kaveri Crum, commander of the SWTW.

"A tremendous amount of time and effort has gone into making the Zulu Course a reality. I could not be prouder of this team."

The inaugural class will

spend 16 weeks mastering the common skills curriculum before moving on to their respective advanced training courses. The lessons learned from this first iteration will help refine future courses to better deliver the skills that the

operational field requires.

With the launch of the Zulu Course, the Special Warfare Training Wing continues to assess, select, and train, now with an even stronger and more unified foundation.



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Medicare-eligible patients back to military treatment facilities

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION - The Defense Health Agency (DHA) has announced a new initiative aimed at bringing Medicare-eligible Tricare for Life (TFL) beneficiaries back to military treatment facilities (MTFs), according to the acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

Speaking at a Military Officers Association of America conference on October 28, Dr. Stephen Ferrara emphasized that 21 MTFs have been selected for this pilot effort based on their specialist availability and overall capacity. The move seeks to strengthen continuity of care for retirees and their dependents while enhancing medical readiness across the force.

present complex conditions that also help providers maintain and improve their clinical expertise. By treating a broader spectrum of cases, MTFs can offer robust training environments for military physicians and staff, an essential element of operational readiness.

The FRA welcomed the announcement, noting that ex-

panded access to MTFs benefits both retirees and the military health system. The association emphasized that allowing TFL members to once again receive care at MTFs not only provides a trusted setting for high-quality services but also ensures military doctors continue to gain valuable hands-on experience treating diverse patient populations.

Next cost-of-living adjustment set at 2.8%

Ferrara, a retired Navy surgeon with more than 30 years of experience, acknowledged the challenges TFL patients have faced as access to MTFs has fluctuated over time. "It's frustrating for the patients," he said, noting that older patients often

The Social Security Administration announced a 2.8 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2026, affecting Social Security recipients, veterans receiving disability compensation, and military retirees. For vets rated at 100 percent



disability with no dependents, the increase will add about \$107 per month. The adjustment becomes effective December 1, 2025, with the first payment reflecting the increase arriving December 31. Veterans and retirees do not need to apply, as the increase will be applied automatically. While the COLA helps benefits keep pace with inflation, critics note that the increase remains modest compared to rising costs for housing, healthcare, and everyday goods.

Department of War releases Fiscal Year 2025 Military Intelligence Program budget

On Nov. 3, the Department of War released the Military Intelligence Program (MIP) appropriated top line budget for fiscal year 2025. The total was \$27.8 billion, includes supplemental funding, and is aligned to support the Interim National Defense Strategic Guidance.

The Department determined that releasing this top line figure does not jeopardize any classified activities within the MIP. No other MIP budget figures or program details will be released, as they remain classified for national security reasons.

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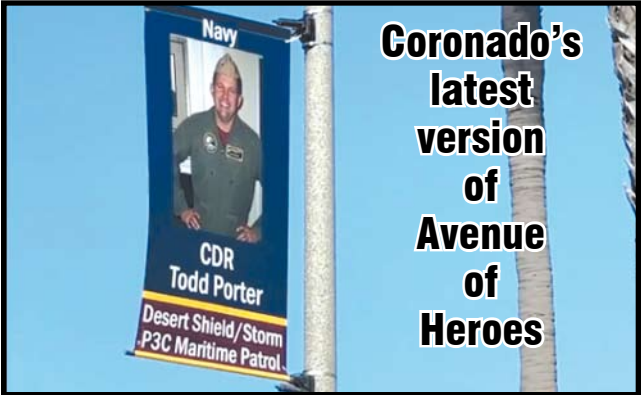
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Local Military



Coronado's latest version of Avenue of Heroes

The City of Coronado and the Avenue of Heroes Committee held a special ceremony November 1 honoring the 21st group of “hometown heroes” at the Coronado High School Performing Arts Center.

This newest iteration will commemorate 14 veterans and active-duty service members as part of Group XXI of the Avenue of Heroes program. Each honoree currently lives in, has lived in, or has served in Coronado.

Their names and service details will be featured on commemorative banners along Third and Fourth Streets, from Orange Avenue to Naval Air Station North Island, where they will remain on display from November 2025 through May 2026.

The Avenue of Heroes is a military service recognition pro-

Video grab from project-coronado.org.

gram sponsored by the city and the Avenue of Heroes Committee. It was created to honor the many men and women who have lived in Coronado during their military service. The program was established in 2014 through a partnership between the City, VFW Post 2422, the Third and Fourth Streets Neighborhood Association, and the Coronado Historical Association.

November 2025 Group XXI honorees: Stanley Antrim, Thomas Ashworth Jr., Paul B. Austin, Louis E. Burke Jr., Fred Eckert, Thomas R. Edison, Michael William Emerson, William “Bill” Hiscock, William “Bill” McClure, Paul Anthony Pensabene, Edward S. Pietrzak Jr., Fred E. Rose, Donald F. Steuer, and John “Jack” Kendall Winston



Return To Ice: Seabees support Operation Deep Freeze

by Petty Officer 1st Class Austin Ingram

Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 PORT HUENEME – Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 3 is currently deployed to Antarctica as of, in support of Operation Deep Freeze, continuing their crucial support for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

This deployment advances the multi-phased construction of a new, longer-term loading and offloading infrastructure solution at McMurdo Station, offering a more reliable alternative to the previously weather-dependent “ice pier”.

The ongoing project ensures the safe and efficient delivery of essential supplies to McMurdo,

the primary logistics hub for the U.S. Antarctic Program and a vital base supporting scientific research across the continent. Building upon previous deployments focused on initial site surveys, foundational work, and extensive custom welding requiring specialized training between Seabees and civilian specialists, this phase concentrates on installing piles for the support system and preparing for the installation of the bridge and walkway sections.

This project employs a military-contractor delivery model, with Seabees collaborating with civilian contractors. The Seabees’ expertise in specialized construction tasks and proven ability to operate in harsh conditions are essential for successfully completing each phase.

An overview of the ongoing construction of a new, permanent loading and offloading infrastructure solution by Seabees with NMCB-3. U.S. Navy photo by Lt.j.g. Karena Garcia

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NASCAR SAN DIEGO UNVEILS NAS NORTH ISLAND STREET COURSE

Sixteen turn, 3.4-mile circuit awaits competitors in all three NASCAR national series in 2026

by NASCAR staff report

SAN DIEGO – On Oct. 21, NASCAR declassified renderings of the street course it will use for next year’s NASCAR San Diego Weekend presented by Anduril.

Digital renderings and maps reveal a challenging 16-turn, 3.4-mile street circuit at Naval Base Coronado that mix high-speed action with breathtaking views. The street course will also provide a star-spangled backdrop to celebrate the 250th

anniversary of the Navy, June 19-21, 2026.

“It’s so exciting to finally share the street course layout and provide this first look for our long-time and new fans,” said NASCAR San Diego President Amy Lupo. “Anticipation for this event is already high, and we know this course layout will raise that level of excitement even higher. We can’t wait to see how the best drivers in the world meet this challenge, while celebrating America’s Navy.”

Grandstand seating and hospitality will be available throughout the circuit, the longest course on NASCAR’s 2026 schedule.



Screenshot image provided by NASCAR San Diego Communications Office.

It features a quick right-hand turn after the Ellyson Start/Finish Line, before two quick 90-degree left handers launch competitors on a high-octane journey around the San Diego Bay and one of the world’s foremost military installations, Naval Base Coronado.

Course highlights include:

*The Ellyson Start/Finish Line: Named in honor of Commander Theodore Ellyson, Naval Aviator Number One. His training at North Island laid the foundation for its commissioning as a naval air station in 1917 and eventual recognition as the “Birthplace of Naval Aviation.”

* Turn 5, Carrier Corner: This sharp left-hand turn is located between the docking location of two aircraft carriers.

* Turn 8, Coronado Chicane: This begins a series of turns that will provide drivers with a steep challenge as they speed toward the interior of the base.

* Turn 14, Runway Road: Aptly named, given it is located near the north end of Runway 18/36 at Halsey Field.

NASCAR San Diego Weekend presented by Anduril begins with Navy Community Day on Friday, June 19, 2026, with plans to honor the military forthcoming.

Friday access will be open exclusively to members of the Navy at Naval Base Coronado and a limited amount of Coronado residents and then culminate with the NASCAR CRAFTSMAN Truck Series race.

Ticket holders from the general public will be welcome aboard June 20-21, 2026. The NASCAR O’Reilly Auto Parts Series will take center stage on Saturday, June 20, and the stars of the NASCAR Cup Series will compete in the Anduril 250 Race the Base on Sunday, June 21.

Two Navy aircraft go down 30 minutes apart in South China Sea

In several national news reports Oct. 27, the Pacific Fleet confirmed that all crew members survived separate crashes 30 minutes apart on Oct. 26 of a F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter and a Sea Hawk helicopter in the South China Sea. Both were operating from *Nimitz* aircraft carrier, according to the fleet.

Pacific Fleet posted the following on X: “At approximately 2:45 p.m., local time, a MH-60R Sea Hawk helicopter, assigned to the ‘Battle Cats’ of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 73 went down in the waters of the South China Sea while conducting routine operations from aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz*.

The post continued with “search and rescue assets assigned to Carrier Strike Group 11 safely recovered all three crew members.”

Thirty minutes later, a Super Hornet assigned to the ‘Fighting Redcocks’ of Strike Fighter Squadron 22 also went down in the South China Sea during routine operations from *Nimitz*, the fleet posted. “Both crew members were ejected and were safely recovered by a SAR team assigned to CSG 11.”

“We are here in the South China Sea to build proficiency while showcasing the carrier strike group’s ability to maintain warfighting advantage and execute flight operations supporting the full spectrum of operations,” said Rear Adm. Fred Goldhammer, commander, Carrier Strike Group 11, in a general comment in June 2025. - Information compiled by staff writer Scott Sutherland

Call for operational changes: Naval hospitals remain open in San Diego, Camp Pendleton

The most recent appropriations for the Department of War expired at 11:59 p.m. EST on September 30, 2025. Military personnel will continue in a normal duty status without pay until such time as a continuing resolution or appropriations are passed by Congress and signed into law. Civilian personnel not engaged in excepted activities will be placed in a non-work, non-pay status.

At Naval Medical Center San Diego call (619) 532-6400 or visit <https://sandiego.tricare.mil> to learn about changes to their office hours or services during the government lapse in appropriations.

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton is open, and they continue to schedule appointments. Call (760) 725-1288 to reach the NHCP quarterdeck or visit <https://camp-pendleton.tricare.mil/> to learn about changes to office hours or services during the government lapse in appropriations. This site will only provide critical updates on patient access to routine, urgent, and emergent healthcare.

For information about TRICARE coverage during the lapse in appropriations period, visit www.tricare.mil/shutdown.

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by Jan Wagner

Experienced, proficient photographers and videographers know the importance of good lighting for their images. Cell-phones, in particular, have very small sensors so they do not capture a lot of light.

To increase brightness in particularly low light, cell-phones and other cameras exposing images automatically may compensate by increasing their ISO and using slower shutter speeds and frame rates — the results of which, in the extreme, may be grainy, blurry images that lack fine details and accurate color reproduction. The use of good lighting can mitigate this.

I cannot tell you how many times I've been at a theme park at night, inside at some dimly lit event, or elsewhere in a low-light situation and observe people posing for photography and videography, to remember the day, but without using sufficient or, worse yet, any lighting. Most of us have done this, including myself when I take selfies at night.

The results can be especially bad if there is bright light behind the intended subject, which produces a silhouette effect. Editing after-the-fact might help a little, but it is not a substitute for properly lit photos.

ShiftCam, a globally award-winning company, sells a wide variety of cellphone-oriented lights, grips, lenses and accessories. The ShiftCam ProLEDs Bi-Color Panel light is a light-weight, easily-portable accessory LED light that will elevate your nighttime, indoor low-light, and daytime-backlit photography to a higher level.

New from ShiftCam - ProLEDs Bi-Color Panel light

What differentiates this light from a basic light source is that it is adjustable for color temperature — from 2500k to 6500k, and brightness, so your subject will look natural and the light will be sufficient, but not overpowering.

Depending upon the brightness/power output you choose, run-time of the 3100mAh battery ranges from two to fifteen hours. To recharge the battery, use the supplied USB-C cable connected to a power source.

A display screen on the back of the light displays the color temperature, as well as brightness and battery charge level expressed as percentages.

There are two 1/4-inch tripod sockets, and a cold shoe slot.

In addition to the USB-C cable are a cold shoe mount adaptor, and what ShiftCam describes as a “universal mount,” for mounting the light to the device. I tried but was unable to get this “universal mount” to satisfactorily attach to my iPhone. It blocked some of the iPhone's screen; due to it pressing against the touchscreen, my touches on the touchscreen no longer had any effect; and I was uncomfortable with having to screw down the admittedly soft-tipped inner foot of the mount onto the fragile glass of my iPhone.

Fortunately, I have a ShiftCam ProGrip, which integrates an excellent cold shoe (see “AutoMatters & More” # 898 entitled “Review: ShiftCam ProGrip & Accessories, Travel-Pod Pro & ProMic Shotgun.”

I also found a very inexpensive way to attach the LED light directly to my cellphone, using my simple, spring-loaded “Ulanzi ST-07 Phone Tripod Mount with Cold Shoe Mount” (currently only \$7.96 from Amazon.com).

It easily and securely clamps onto my iPhone, and connects

to the supplied cold shoe mount adapter. That, in turn, connects to the ShiftCam LED light.

The Ulanzi mount is so quick, easy to use and inexpensive, that I ordered a second one to install a second cold shoe on my iPhone, so that I could attach the light and an external microphone at the same time.

The ShiftCam ProLEDs Bi-Color Panel light is not just compatible with smartphones, but also with DSLR, mirrorless and action cameras; tablets and even laptops for videoconferencing. You can further improve the lighting by mounting several of these on tripods for key, back and fill lighting.

The ShiftCam ProLEDs Bi-Color Panel light is currently \$89.99 on *Amazon.com*.

ShiftCam also sent me review samples of their Pro Camera Neck Strap and a ShiftCam 20W USB-C wall charger, which I used to recharge the LED light.

This cotton neck strap (\$29.99 on Amazon.com) is both strong and comfortably padded. It can attach to cellphone cases that include an attachment point for a short, looped lanyard.

For more information, visit ShiftCam at <https://www.shiftcam.com> where they are currently offering 15 percent off for text message subscribers.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit “AutoMatters & More” at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue ‘years’ boxes and browse.

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

“She told me to take a left, but there’s an empty lot there!” my husband, Francis, barked from the driver’s seat.

“Just ignore her and follow signs to the autobahn!” I snapped back.

The “she” that was causing our marital discord was the other woman in the minivan, our GPS. Although her aristocratic British accent implied a top-notch education, she had no flipping idea how to get us out of Berlin.

The weekend was over, and we were tired and cranky. Three days of dragging our three kids from monument to museum, and every filthy public bathroom in between, had taken its toll.

Traveling with the kids while we were stationed overseas definitely had its difficulties. After moving to Stuttgart, Germany, we made elaborate plans to “educate” our three children through travel. We wanted them to experience history, architecture, music, art and nature first-hand.

Our first major trip was to Venice and Verona, and on the twelve-hour drive to Italy, we listened to Italian language tapes and I read our guidebooks aloud in the car. I couldn’t wait to hear the kids say their first “Prego” and watch their eyes light up at the sight of the cerulean Adriatic Sea.

However, a few hours later, we peered over the bridge leading to fog-covered Venice, watching a Pepsi can and cigarette butts float past a rusty 55-gallon drum. “No-a boat-a today — workers on-a strike-a,” the man behind the ticket counter replied when we tried to buy the water taxi tickets necessary to avoid the garbage-strewn walk into Venice.

We persevered. We fed pigeons. We ate pizza. We rode in a gondola. We bought Murano glass souvenirs. Despite the fog, trash, and touristy kitsch, we exposed our kids to all the underlying beauty that is Venice.

The next day in Verona, I made the mistake of trying out an automatic toilet on the edge of a quaint city park. The door opened like magic after I inserted the required coins, so my daughter and I entered.

Once inside, the door slid shut behind us, and fluorescent lights blinked on. We glanced around,

Culture or torture? Thoughts on traveling with kids

horrified. Despite the contraption’s self-cleaning mechanism, the stall was clogged, dripping, and reeking of a heinous stench. Gripping each other, we squealed and attempted to pry open the automatic door. After several terrifying minutes listening to Francis giggle at us from outside, the door finally gave way.

We tried to keep this traumatic event from tainting our experience in Verona. Again, we persevered. We climbed the pink marble steps. We ate pasta. We stood under the whale-bone. We bought more souvenirs.

On a trip just north of Barcelona, we waited out record-breaking April storms in the “Land of Sun.” To quell our disappointment in the cold, rainy weather, we applied the principle that “Food = Happiness” and treated ourselves to an expensive Spanish restaurant. Although we felt out of our league at the white linen-sheathed table, the food was delicious and eased our pain.

Wiping sangria from his chin, Francis leaned over the table and whispered, “Hey kids, this is the nicest place I’ve ever had to tell you to shut up in.” It was hard work, but we completed another family trip. Check in the box.

We persevered through more holidays in France, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Austria, Holland and Belgium. In each locale, unexpected variables threatened to spoil our experience, but we dug our heels in and pushed through.

Prior to our excursion to Berlin, the inevitable annoyances, rip offs and bad weather were ignored lest they spoil our vacations. But in Berlin, forced family fun somehow authenticated our historical understanding of the German people’s past struggle under communist rule.

At Checkpoint Charlie, among dreary communist architecture, we stood in frigid long lines as if we were waiting for rations, to buy tiny fragments of questionably authentic fragments of the Berlin wall from a man clad in a bearskin hat and a permanent scowl.

After experiencing some semblance of the famed fight for freedom, we sought refuge in a Starbucks across the street from Checkpoint Charlie. Overpriced hot bebies in hand, we trudged on, determined to overcome all family vacation adversity and appreciate the wonderful diversity of culture.



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R – Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

NC-17 – No one 17 or under admitted.

Cleveland National Forest to begin prescribed fires

Favorable weather conditions in place for hazardous fuels reduction work

SAN DIEGO, Calif., Oct. 30, 2025 — The Cleveland National Forest is planning prescribed fire operations this Fall, pending all required approvals. Work will continue through the spring as weather conditions allow. We use prescribed fires to help reduce overgrown vegetation to help protect local communities, infrastructure and natural resources from wildfires. All Cleveland forest health treatment projects can be found on our InciWeb page.

Prescribed fires planned for the area include:

Descanso Ranger District

• San Diego County: In and around the communities of Alpine, Descanso, Pine Valley, Guatay, Lake Morena, Mount Laguna, I-8, Sunrise Highway, Buckman Springs, Old Highway 80 travel corridors

Palomar Ranger District

San Diego County: In and around the communities of Ramona, Palomar Mountain, Aguanga, Oak Grove, Highway 78, Pamo Road, Highway 79, Puerta La Cruz Truck Trail, Palomar Divide Road, East Grade Road (S7), Canfield Road (S6)

Trabuco Ranger District

Sierra Peak: 58 acres; Pleasants Peak: 74 acres;
Bedford Motorway: 64 acres; South Main Divide Road: 255 acres; Rancho Capistrano Community: 93 acres; Rancho Carrilto Community: 31 acres

Anza-Borrego Desert Photo Contest celebrates 20 years

For two decades, through the Anza-Borrego Desert Photo Contest, photographers have helped tell the story of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, revealing what the eyes might miss, but the lens captures. The 20th Annual Anza-Borrego Desert Photo Contest is now open for submissions through December 10, 2025, inviting photographers of all ages and skill levels to share their unique visions of the desert.

Spanning 650,000 acres, Anza-Borrego Desert State Park is too vast, too hidden, and too seasonal for any one person to fully know. But through quiet focus, patience, and a photographer's eye, moments that are rarely witnessed come to life: a sidewinder rattlesnake vanishing into the sand, thunderclouds splitting over desert mountaintops, or a burst of desert lilies that last only a few days.

"For most visitors, a good majority of the Park will remain unseen," said Bri Fordem, ABF's executive director. "These photographs open a window, helping people connect to the Park's biodiversity and beauty, deepening understanding, and inspiring protection for generations to come."

The 20th Annual Anza-Borrego Desert Photo Contest is sponsored by the Borrego Art Institute, which will host the Photo Contest Exhibit and Opening Reception at their gallery in Borrego Springs in February 2026.

Proceeds from the contest support Anza-Borrego Foundation's education program, which provides immersive educational experiences in the desert for youth and adults alike.

Photographers can submit their entries from now through December 10, 2025. Winning photographs will be announced in early 2026 and displayed at the Borrego Art Institute Gallery.

Why Photography Matters in Conservation

- 65% of people are visual learners, and photography speaks in their language.
- Visuals increase engagement by 94%, sparking curiosity and action.
- Images are processed 60,000 times faster than text, conveying complex stories in a single frame.

2026 Contest Details

Submission Period: November 1 - Dec. 10, 2025

Online Voting (People's Choice): Dec. 11, 2025 -Jan. 10, 2026

Gallery Exhibition: Feb. 1-22, 2026 at the Borrego Art Institute

Opening Reception: Jan. 31, 2026

Categories:

- People Enjoying the Park
 - Animals of Anza-Borrego Desert
 - Black & White
 - Landscapes of Anza-Borrego Desert
 - Nightscapes of Anza-Borrego Desert
 - Plants of Anza-Borrego Desert
 - NEW: Youth Category (High school age and younger)
- Cell phone photos are welcome in any category.

Awards & Prizes

- Best in Show: Ribbon, a two-night stay at La Casa del Zorro, dinner for two at Rams Hill, and a gift certificate for two to attend an ABF program (restrictions apply).
- First, Second & Third Place (per category): Ribbons and a one-year ABF membership.
- Honorable Mention: Ribbon awarded in each category.
- Online People's Choice: Ribbon and inclusion in the gallery exhibit.

How to Enter

1. Upload your JPEG photos (max 5 MB) between November 1 and December 10, 2025, at www.theABF.org/PhotoContest.
2. Submit up to 10 photos per person—images from any year are welcome.
3. Selected entries will move to Round 2, where printed submissions and a small fee apply.
4. All online entries are automatically eligible for the People's Choice Award.
5. Finalists will be displayed at the Borrego Art Institute Gallery from Feb. 1-22, 2026.
6. Enter the contest: www.theABF.org/PhotoContest

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Southern California Horseshoe Pitchers Association (SCHPA), a charter of the National Horseshoe Pitchers Association (NHPA), has clubs all over the southern half of California. These clubs all have first class horseshoe courts built to official specifications.

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Tick Tock: Your body clocks -- understanding your daily rhythms

Did you know that your body has its own internal network of clocks? These biological clocks help you feel alert during the day, hungry at mealtimes, and sleepy at night. Keeping your body's daily cycles, or circadian rhythms, in sync is important for your health.

"Circadian rhythms are big influencers in the body," explains NIH's Dr. Michael Sesma, an expert in circadian biology. "They affect almost every part of your physiology in one way or another. Learning how the rhythm is generated is critical for understanding health."

Our natural daily rhythms are synchronized with the sun. A "master clock" in the brain receives direct input from the eyes and coordinates all the biological clocks in the body. During the day, it sends signals to other brain regions to make hormones that will help keep you awake, boost your heart rate, and give you energy. In the evening, when less light enters your eyes, it triggers production of a hormone called melatonin. Melatonin makes you feel drowsy and helps you stay asleep.

"Many of your body's functions and normal daily activities—like sleeping, waking, eating, and going to the bathroom—are patterned around this 24-hour cycle," Sesma



explains.

Your biological clock's "settings" are determined by specific genes. These settings can affect body temperature, blood pressure, activity level, inflammation (your body's protective response to injury or infection), fertility, mood, and brain functions. Even the timing of health-related events can be related to your biological clocks. For instance, heart attacks are more likely to occur early in the morning, when the level of a hormone called cortisol starts its daily rise.

Circadian rhythms can influence eating habits, digestion, and metabolism (how our body uses and stores energy), too. Researchers have found that eating later in

the day, closer to when melatonin is released, can disrupt the body's natural rhythms. This can lead to increased body fat and weight gain, which are often associated with obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.

Time of day has also been shown to impact the effectiveness and side effects of certain medications, including those used to treat cancer.

Be mindful about how you may be altering your circadian rhythms. "Our around-the-clock society creates challenges for our internal clocks," Sesma says. "There are lots of modern situations that can disrupt our rhythms, and some may contribute to health problems."

For instance, shift workers who must be on the job after the sun goes down are at odds with their biological clocks. They may be tired at work and have trouble falling or staying asleep during daylight hours after work. Studies show that shift workers have increased risk for heart disease, digestive disturbances, cancer, depression, and other health problems.

Traveling across time zones can also disrupt your circadian rhythms. The brain has trouble adjusting when the time of day

suddenly changes. The result is jet lag.

"Researchers are considering time of day and how to sync up with the body's clocks in all aspects of health, even the best time to have surgery on specific parts of the body," Sesma says. These studies may lead to new insights for a range of clock-related disorders, from insomnia and jet lag to diabetes.

Barrett's Esophagus affects about 5% of adults in the US; What is it?

A condition called Barrett's esophagus affects about 5% of adults nationwide. It causes the lining of the esophagus, the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach, to change. This raises the risk for getting cancer of the esophagus.

Doctors don't yet know what causes Barrett's esophagus. But some people are at increased risk. The condition is more common in the U.S. than in other countries. People are more likely to have it if they are age 50 or older. Tobacco use raises the risk. So does excess weight around the waist.

Barrett's esophagus itself has

Keep your inner clocks on track

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule every day of the week.
- Sleep in a dark, quiet, and comfortable place.
- Avoid heavy meals two to three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and alcohol late in the day.
- Exercise daily, but not within two hours of bedtime.
- Limit the use of electronics with bright screens before bedtime.



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- Chess, checkers, and other strategy games
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- Socks and underwear (men's and women's)
- Hygiene items: shampoo, conditioner, body wash/soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, chapstick, razors, deodorant, shaving cream, combs/brushes, feminine hygiene products
- Pillows
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