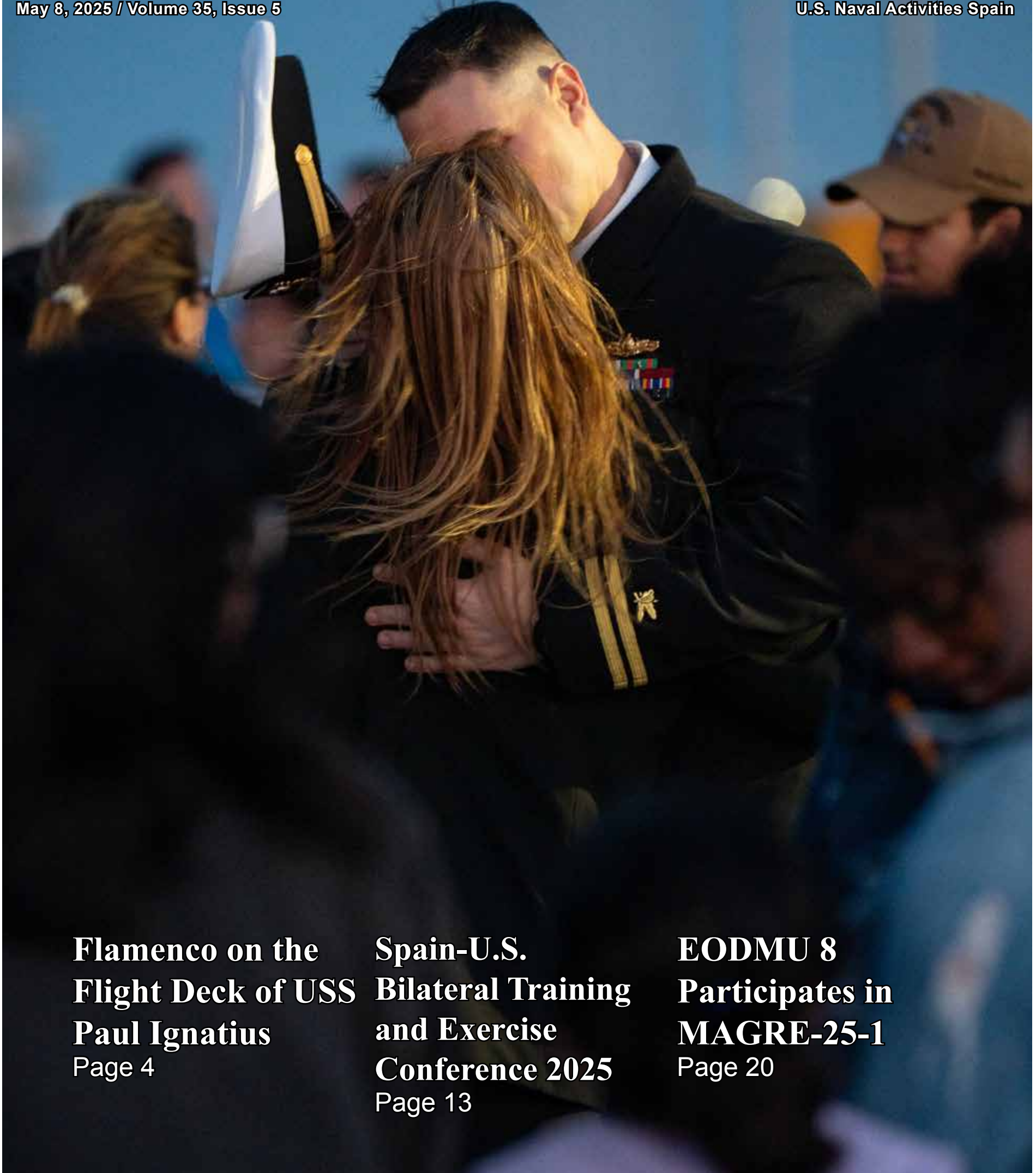


COASTLINE

May 8, 2025 / Volume 35, Issue 5

U.S. Naval Activities Spain



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Leadership Corner



Commanding Officer
NAVSTA Rota

FAIR WINDS AND FOLLOWING SEAS TEAM ROTA!

Hola desde Building 1!

Well this came quickly, it's my last note to you all in the Coastline! I won't spend too much time writing about everything we've had the chance to be a part of here in beautiful Andalucía, it would take up the entire paper! But this time of year does really highlight some of the most unique and wonderful

overhead, casting a shimmering glow to the whole affair. Summer is soon approaching, and it will feel like half of northern Europe will join us on the beaches and in the restaurants along the coast. While it does make finding a dinner reservation or a parking sport more challenging, I've found it a great reminder that we are getting a paycheck to live and work someplace that the rest of the world sees as a vacation spot! Wow. It has been an amazing three years. You all should be proud of everything you have accomplished here. Our forward deployed DDGs have made their presence known throughout the theater, defending our fleet and our allies; on the flightline you took care of dozens of C-17s flowing through to support the movement of troops and hundreds of pieces of equipment out of Africa; you opened new facilities, and began construction on others; you have fed, resupplied, and fueled nearly every strike group passing by; and you've conducted exercises across the peninsula and three continents. And you took care of every one of us on the base, ensuring our medical readiness and overall health; you gave our kids a safe place to learn, a safe place to play, and a safe place to learn life skills; you provided classes, weights, tracks, and pools along with a quiet place to talk to sustain our mind-body mental fitness; and you gave us a place to shop, to eat, to worship, and ideas to explore our community. You all did it as well as anyone in the Navy. I could not be more proud to be a part of the Finest Installation in the Fleet, and to have had the chance to support each of you as you grow as persons and as professionals. My family and I feel lucky that we had the chance to get to know this wonderful community. While we are excited for the next adventure, we are going to miss Naval Station Rota very much. As always, I hope you have the chance to enjoy where we are and what we're doing. And for just a few more weeks, I look forward to seeing you around the Installation!

experiences of living in Spain. A few weeks ago we saw the processions of Semana Santa wandering through southern Spain; lines of colorfully adorned people, the ringing of music off the alleyways, the scent of incense on the breeze, and the massive floats ringed by candles as tall as some of the people carrying them. And the crowds of people thrumming with anticipation as they hear the procession just around the corner. As this goes to publication, we will be in the midst of Feria season; horses sauntering along the grounds, the crowds of impeccably dressed ladies in the flowing dresses, accompanied by gentlemen dressed up (though they can never quite match their partner's beauty), the unending beat of Sevillanas spilling out of the casetas, where you are almost guaranteed to run into the smiles of people you know, and the incredible lights

COASTLINE STAFF

- Commanding Officer
Capt. Teague J. Suarez
- Executive Officer
Cmdr. Justin Jennings
- Command Master Chief
CMDCM Donald Alvarado
- Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Daniel Ehrlich
daniel.b.ehrlich2.mil@us.navy.mil
DSN 727-1680
- Editor/Writer/Layout
MC2 Drace Wilson
drace.a.wilson.mil@us.navy.mil
DSN 727-1021
- Production Specialist
IC2 Marlin Dominguez
marlin.i.dominguez.mil@us.navy.mil
DSN 727-1021
- Production Specialist
MC2 Jett Morgan
jett.m.morgan.mil@us.navy.mil
DSN 727-1021
- Community Relations Advisor
Alejandra Tirapu Lucero
alejandra.tirapulucero.ln@us.navy.mil
DSN 727-3786 / 956-82-3786
- Contact The Coastline Editorial Staff:
Telephone: DSN 727-1021 / 956-82-1021
Email: coastline@eu.navy.mil
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On The Front Cover



A Sailor assigned to the Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) embraces his significant other during the ship's return to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, following a routine deployment, April 29, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Drace Wilson)

Do You Like to Write or Take Photos?

The Coastline is always looking for guest writers and story ideas. Are you traveling some place fun, attending a sporting event, participating in a workshop or cooking class or leading special training in your office or community? If so, we want to hear from you! Please send story and photo submissions or story ideas to The Coastline at rotacoastline@gmail.com.

Publication is subject to approval.

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COMREL - Sailors Volunteer at Women's Shelter

By Logistics Specialist 1st Class Dustin Hayes
Fleet Logistics Center Sigonella - Site Rota

In the heart of Puerto Real, Spain, APERFOSA Women's Shelter is an establishment supporting women and their children who are victims of sex trafficking, abuse, and forced marriage. This sanctuary provides refuge and the vital resources and support needed to help these women and children rebuild their lives. Recognizing the profound impact of this organization, a group of 23 Sailors and civilians from NAVSUP

Fleet Logistics Center Sigonella (FLCSI) - Site Rota stepped forward on April 17 to offer their support. These individuals dedicated their time and energy to revitalizing the shelter's facilities. They tackled a variety of maintenance tasks, including painting, gardening, cleaning, laying down fresh grass, and more. Their efforts represent a tangible demonstration of community engagement and a commitment to enriching their surroundings wherever they go.



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USS Paul Ignatius Sailors Embrace Feria Spirit with Flamenco on the Flight Deck

By Christina Brewer

NAVSTA Rota MWR Liberty Center

When the 1MC aboard USS Paul Ignatius (DDG-117) lit up with the unexpected call—“Flamenco lessons will be held on the flight deck.”—Sailors paused mid-step, eyebrows raised, and shoes ready. In a fun fusion of cultures, Sailors found themselves wielding their steel-toe boots into the world of Sevillanas, the iconic Flamenco dance of southern Spain.

“I have a couple of Spanish friends who’ve tried to teach me, but this really helped me focus on the steps and finer details. This is my first Feria, and I’ll be dancing La Primera every chance I get,” said Damage Controlman Second Class Jose Ramirez Perez, a Sailor assigned to the Paul Ignatius.

Springtime in Rota brings with it a crescendo of color, cuisine, and culture known as Feria, an Andalusian celebration

bursting with traditional music, swirling dresses, carnival rides, and the infectious rhythm of Sevillanas. To help Sailors dive into the festivities and bring the classes to them, Rota MWR’s Deployed Forces Support (DFS) program has partnered with the Paul Ignatius to host a Sevillanas crash course for the crew.

“This is a unique opportunity for me. All of the students were able to learn the first Sevillanas. It’s amazing to be part of something that brings our two cultures together,” said Yvonne Trigo, an MWR-contracted Ballet and Flamenco instructor who led the onboard lessons.

Sailors rotated through the elegant footwork, graceful arm arcs, and rhythmic clapping under the guidance of Trigo, mastering La Primera, the first part of the Sevillanas. While many had never danced Flamenco—or danced at all—enthusiasm soared.

“I’ve never been to a Feria before, but now I feel ready. I’m excited, and I’m going to tear up the dance floor!” said Ensign Maeve Swick, after her first attempt at the choreography.

For Sailors like Ensign Virendra Ghate, the lesson was more than just about the dance; it was about being present:

“It was trickier than I expected, but I’m excited to keep learning. It’s my first and last Feria here. I was underway last year, so I’m going to go out with a bang.”

The initiative was part of a broader effort by Rota’s Deployed Forces Support (DFS) program to enrich life aboard ship through cultural engagement and morale-boosting experiences.

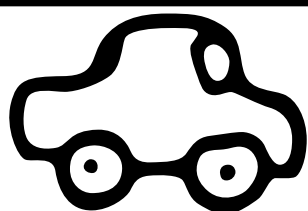
“Whether we’re on the pier or out at sea, our mission is to deliver meaningful programs that directly improve both the quality of life and quality of service for our Sailors,” said Eric Flagg, Rota MWR’s DFS

& Liberty Manager. “Opportunities like Flamenco lessons aren’t just about fun; they’re about connection, appreciation, and the kind of personal growth that stays with you far beyond deployment.” Auxiliadora Carmona, Rota MWR’s Community Classes Coordinator, echoed that sentiment:

“Living here is an incredible opportunity to experience another culture. Sevillanas is a unique dance from southern Spain that you won’t find quite like this anywhere else in the world.”

Sailors’ Sevillanas skills will be put to the test in the coming week as several local towns and cities celebrate their annual feria dates.

For those hooked on the rhythm? Yvonne’s Flamenco classes are open to all! Interested Sailors can visit the Liberty Center (Bldg. 48) or call DSN 727-2527 / +34 956 82 25 27 to keep the beat going!



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USS Arleigh Burke Beach Clean-up

By Ensign Susanna Gaither
USS Arleigh Burke Public Affairs Officer

On April 19, 2025, Officers and crew of USS Arleigh Burke (DDG51) coordinated with U.S. Naval Hospital Rota for a cleanup of Admiral's Beach, on Naval Station Rota. The cleanup contributed to maintaining the natural beauty of the beach for the Naval Station Rota community, and strengthened cooperation between base tenant commands.

"I am immensely grateful to have had this opportunity to build partnerships with other on-base entities and the base as a whole," said Operations Specialist First Class Marcel Nesmith, who coordinated the cleanup along with US Navy Chaplain Lt. Adewale Giwa-Alaka. "As guests of

Spain, it was great to be able to give back to our host nation."

For Cmdr. Ethan Reber, Commanding Officer of the Arleigh Burke, the beach cleanup is part of a bigger picture of keeping the ship fully integrated with the Rota community. "We are continuously looking for opportunities to give back to the wider base and Rota community," said Cmdr. Reber. "From partnership events with our sister ship, ESPS Santa Maria, to community outreach with our tenant command peers, Team 51 strives for excellence afloat and ashore."

The Arleigh Burke is currently in port Rota, Spain preparing for her sixth Forward Deployed Patrol.



NAVAL STATION ROTA (Apr. 19, 2025) Sailors from USS Arleigh Burke and Naval Hospital Rota pose for a photo after a cleanup of Admiral's Beach.

USS Roosevelt Returns to Homeport

The Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) returns to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, following a routine deployment, April 29, 2025.



Photos by MC2 Drace Wilson

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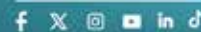
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PUBLISHER’S CORNER

El Chorrillo Promenade and the Playa de El Rompidillo

Playa de El Rompidillo in Rota is a beautiful golden beach of fine sand with calm, protected seas. The Chorrillo promenade runs alongside it and has a wide variety of tapas bars and restaurants. This is the best beach in Rota to practice water wind sports such as windsurfing, kitesurfing or sailing. In 2016 this town beach was awarded a Blue Flag and the “Q” of Tourism Quality.

Restaurante La Palma is an authentic Neapolitan pizzeria and overlooks the Bay of Cadiz and the Playa de El Rompidillo. The restaurant is conveniently located in front of the El Chorrillo promenade. They offer an authentic Neapolitan pizza made with quality ingredients, most of which are imported from Italy, as well as traditional Italian pasta dishes, grilled meats and fish. The atmosphere is pleasant and family oriented. The restaurant has received numerous positive reviews with Google.

The owner, an authentic Neapolitan, with great experience for more than 35 years as a pizzaiolo, aims to make Neapolitan gastronomy known in town. Authentic Italian beers and wines are available to accompany their dishes, as well as tasty Neapolitan desserts. They have home delivery through Uber Eats or directly with the restaurant at determined times. Events or celebrations, talked about in advance, are welcome here with a special agreed upon menu possible.

The restaurant won the Pizzeria Di Qualita 2024 award from UPIM, an international

Pizza association. Please see their ad in the paper for more information.



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SCAN TO ORDER

Rota Golf League Swings into Action at NAVSTA Rota

By Chief Mass Communications Specialist Justin Stumberg

Naval Station Rota has a new reason for golf enthusiasts to get excited with the launch of the Rota Golf League (RGL), a community-driven effort aimed at uniting players of all skill levels for friendly competition and camaraderie.

Whether you're newly arrived or a long-time resident of Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, the league welcomes all who are interested in the game. Organizers say the goal is to create an inclusive and enjoyable space where golfers can connect, compete, and enjoy good times both on and off the course.

"Working at the course, I kept hearing the same thing that people loved the tournaments, but wanted something more consistent to look forward to," said R.J. Mattes, the league coordinator. "That's when it clicked. There was a real demand for a league with regular competition, nothing too serious, something where you can play and have a good time."

A highlight of the league is its weekly 9-hole tournament, known as the "Blitz", which takes place every Wednesday at 5 p.m. at the base's golf course.

"The RGL grew from those conversations as something built by the community, for the community," said Mattes.

The format offers a relaxed but competitive environment, ideal for players looking to improve their game or simply unwind midweek with fellow golfers. Handicaps are included in scoring.

"There's something special about competing every week in a format that's all about your own score," said Tanner Tutt, a regular league participant. "Even though I like the regular scramble formats, the league is just you and your game against a wide range of handicaps. It adds a whole new level of energy and motivates me to practice and improve."

Tutt said that after two weeks of the league, the RGL is shaping up to be one of his favorite fixtures on base.

"For anyone looking to tee off with new friends and embrace the spirit of the game, this is a league worth joining," said Tutt.

While the league uses the base golf course for its weekly events, it operates independently and is not affiliated with Naval Station Rota MWR or the golf course staff. The league is fully volunteer-run and driven by community interest.



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Firefighters from Morón Air Base Fire Department fight an aircraft fire with support from Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Fire Emergency Services for an Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) evolution onboard NAVSTA Rota, Spain, April 23, 2025.



Photos by MC2 Jett Morgan



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Health Promotions: Physical Fitness for Life

By Devin Evans

Naval Hospital Rotam, Health Promotions Department



More and more Americans have become highly sedentary. 40% of working Americans report that they have a sedentary job and do not engage in any leisure-time physical activity. It is vital to our health to practice regular physical activity, but how much exactly?

Before trying to answer how much physical activity is enough, we need to understand what physical fitness is. Fitness is synonymous with health and our physical condition. Physical fitness is a major factor in influencing our ability to complete tasks that are required for our

vocation as well as meeting our health objectives.

Those serving our country have physical requirements that are measured and tested throughout the entirety of their career. Service members are highly encouraged to partake in daily physical training to support optimal physical fitness and wellness.

Our modernized society has greatly reduced tasks and activities that were once required for survival which has negatively impacted our health and physical condition. Ultimately, for most people who do not have a vocation that requires daily movement and expenditure of energy through physical tasks, putting in extra work is required.

So, back to our original question: How much physical activity do I need to be physically fit? Guideline recommendations are at least 150 minutes of moderate intensity exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity exercise per week. The recommendation for resistance training is 2 or more days per week with exercises that incorporate all major muscle groups.

It is important to recognize that the phrase "at least" is the minimal recommendation for baseline fitness, with more benefits being realized by incorporating longer and more vigorous physical activity. It is important to identify your physical capability at the start before beginning your chosen activity level. If you are someone who has a history of being

sedentary, starting at a lower duration of minutes and gradually increasing that amount as you become more physically fit is a safe and realistic approach.

After doing the math, participating in 30 minutes of moderate physical activity daily over a 5-day period will meet the introductory physical activity recommendation. Remember that recommendations can be met in many ways, such as breaking the daily 30 minutes into 3 ten-minute sessions, or any other way that works realistically with your schedule and time availability.

Lastly, don't discount the importance of non-exercise activities such as proper posture standing, walking during your day, using stairs, and moving from sitting to standing positions. These unstructured

physical activities can help you meet your physical fitness goals by being more active rather than sedentary which will improve your overall health and wellness.

Explore and discover what physical activity works for you and brings you enjoyment. Remember, physical fitness is a lifelong venture that should be fun!



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Spain-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercise Conference 2025

By Lt. Daniel Ehrlich

Naval Station Rota, Spain Public Affairs

The U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) Spain hosted the annual Bilateral Training and Exercise Conference (BTEC) alongside the Spanish military joint staff, Estado Mayor de la Defensa, at El Centro Superior de Estudios de la Defensa Nacional (CESEDEN), April 8-9, 2025. BTEC 2025 brought together more than 80 military professionals from the United States Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps and Spanish Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Military Emergencies Unit (UME) to work side-by-side in planning combined training events for the upcoming year, which increases interoperability between the two allies.

"The purpose of BTEC is to get approval from the Spanish Joint Staff to conduct bilateral engagements in Spain," said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Romeo Cubas, U.S. Spain Permanent Committee operations officer and chief organizer for the U.S. contingent at BTEC 2025. "It expedites the execution of the events with the individual components and their Spanish counterparts."

U.S. Navy Capt. Karsten Spies, chief of ODC Spain, and Spanish Marine Corps Col. Jose Ignacio Yaniz Lopez officially commenced BTEC 2025 by welcoming participants and with opening remarks. From there, attendees split into working groups, known as syndicates, that focused on a specific operational component, including air, land, maritime, special operations, and support (emergency, medical, and cyber).

This year's conference yielded 114 combined training and exercise events scheduled for 2026 with 16 of those being

newly proposed this year. The trainings proposed during the conference are finalized at the end of the conference during a plenary session and subsequently forwarded to the Spanish Ministry of Defense for approval to execute them.

"Combined training plays a crucial role in increasing the readiness and deterrence power of U.S. forces in Spain and elements of those stationed elsewhere in Europe and enhances interoperability with our Spanish allies," said Spies.

BTEC is an opportunity for military units from both nations to compare training calendars and find overlap. Often, the overlap provides a chance for these units to combine their training events, which can serve the purpose of both increasing interoperability for U.S. units operating in Spain to work alongside their hosts to solve problems together and to fulfill U.S. theater strategic plans to maximize readiness and preparedness for any conflict.

"Our training tends to focus at the unit-level, so here we are able to build partnerships at the small unit-level with our counterparts," said U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Michael Guzman, company commander for Fleet Anti-terrorism Security Team Company, Europe, who sat in on the land syndicate. "BTEC allows us to build good relationships with our partners and allows me to keep my Marines ready and trained for all their future missions."

The conference didn't just include military representatives from operational units, but also representatives from the U.S. installations hosted on several Spanish bases. The U.S. Navy has five ships homeported out of Naval Station

Rota, which is a U.S. installation hosted by the Spanish Armada at Rota Naval Base. The installation also has 45 other commands present from four U.S. military branches that fulfill a variety of operational missions. In addition, U.S. forces are hosted at Morón Air Base, Torrejon Air Base, and Military Base Betera. With such a significant forward-deployed capability, personnel representing these installations, including U.S. Navy Cmdr. Henry Morgan, operations officer for U.S. Naval Station Rota, emphasized the coordination of U.S. assets at these installations with their Spanish hosts.

"The big events we've been talking about involve our forward-deployed naval force ships and giving them opportunities to train alongside the Spanish," said Morgan. "Making sure the Spanish know what to expect and the fleet assets know what they have available to them is important to keep mutually moving forward."

While much of the discussion revolved around training and exercises to improve interoperability and the capabilities of the two forces, it also focused on setting up opportunities to practice and prepare for emergencies and disasters. One of the key emergency management and response components of the Spanish armed forces present at BTEC, UME, led the charge in discussing key emergency preparation exercises.

"We will work together, which will involve greater understanding of our militaries, our capabilities," said Capt. Sergio Nunez, an officer with the contingent representing UME at BTEC 2025. "And, of course, greater understanding of training to respond to whatever the future may hold."

For decades, BTEC has been an

annual staple in the U.S.-Spain military relationship. This year's BTEC 2025 venue, CESEDEN, was an example of the amount of planning and the value of this annual meeting between both the allies' military contingents.

"The planning process takes almost a year," said Spanish Army Comandante Francisco Teijido Lopez, chief organizer for the Spanish contingent at BTEC 2025. "This year, the event was held at a historic building in Madrid whose facilities host the most important joint courses of the Spanish armed forces."

The U.S.-Spain relationship dates back much further than the arrival of U.S. forces in 1953, and BTEC is just a small example of the extended partnership between the two allies. Throughout BTEC, participants talked, laughed, and socialized through the halls of CESEDEN, passing portraits highlighting shared moments of Spanish-American military partnership.

"Long before we became treaty allies, Spain was one of our oldest military partners, helping us gain our independence in the Revolutionary War so that we can now celebrate our 250th birthday as a Navy and as a nation," said Spies, "We are honored to continue building readiness and operating together with the Spanish forces."

The Spain-U.S. Bilateral Training and Exercise Conference (BTEC) is a co-hosted, collaborative meeting between units from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) and the Spanish Ministry of Defense (MoD) with the chief goal of building joint force interoperability and readiness, while fostering the long-enduring defense partnership between Spain and the United States.



NMRTC Rota Holds Change of Command Ceremony

By Lt. Cmdr. Alicia Sacks
U.S. Naval Hospital Rota

Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Rota marked a significant milestone with a Change of Command Ceremony on April 11, 2025. Following a time-honored tradition and protocol, Capt. William Scouten concluded his two-year tenure by relinquishing command to Capt. Michael Mercado.

Rear Adm. Kevin Brown, Commander, Naval Medical Forces Atlantic and Director, Defense Health Network Atlantic, presided over the ceremony. Brown thanked Scouten for his leadership during several unprecedented moments for Navy Medicine and NMRTC Rota, and expressed his confidence in the new commander, highlighting “his commitment to readiness, people, and purpose.”

Honored guest speaker, Brig. Gen. Roger Giraud, Director, Defense Health Network Europe, spoke highly of Scouten who is also the Director of Naval Hospital Rota, co-located with the NMRTC, both of which “remained the cornerstone of health care excellence and operational readiness during Capt. Scouten’s tenure,” he said.

Scouten shared his reflections on the many historical firsts and highlights of the team, “It’s my humble honor to speak to you today for the last time as Commanding Officer,” he said expressing his appreciation and emphasized that every member of the team made a difference with increasing strength,

capability, and preparedness to face any challenge. Scouten closed his remarks expressing excitement for Mercado and his family as they prepare to take on his next journey.

Mercado most recently served as Executive Officer, U.S. Naval Hospital Sigonella. According to Brown, under his leadership, the command consistently ranked among the top in the region for medical and dental readiness, access to care, and patient safety, while earning accolades in leapfrog hospital safety grades and the prestigious Sicilian Chimera D’Argento Award for community impact.

In his first address as Commanding Officer, Mercado shared that he was “abundantly grateful” — a phrase he said best captured the moment. “This is an opportunity to give back, to pay it forward,” he said, reflecting on a career shaped by the mentorship and support of others.

NMRTC Rota serves as a force multiplier in Navy Medicine’s strategic global medical support mission throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East while also supporting operational readiness and maintaining a strategic repository of expertise at the Naval Hospital Rota Military Training Facility within the Iberian Peninsula.

Navy Medicine is represented by more than 44,000 highly-trained military and civilian health care professionals – providing enduring expeditionary medical support to the warfighter on, below, and above the sea, and ashore.



Photos by Everett Lopez



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Mind-Body Mental Fitness Team's Kraken Games

The second annual Kraken Games was held at the Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota gym on April 24. Hosted by the Mind-Body Mental Fitness Team, teams participated in a variety of exercises aimed at cooperation and learned different techniques to monitor and manage the stressors of everyday life.



Photos by Amber Courtney-Duncan



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NEX



YN2 Trevor Wilson

U.S. Navy Yeoman 2nd Class Trevor Wilson, from Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., is the lead Command Pay and Personnel Administrator (CPPA) for Navy Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center (FLCSI) Site Rota.

"I manage, track, and draft all routine correspondence and all pay related matters for sailors at the NAVSUP FLCSI enterprise," said Wilson. "Taking care of sailors is my #1 priority!"

Wilson stated what he enjoys most about his job is the ability to network with Sailors and provide administrative support to them and their families. Aside from his primary job, Wilson also has collateral duties which include being the Assistant Command Fitness Leader (ACFL) and the Treasurer for NAVSTA Rota's Second

Class Petty Officer Association. On his free time from work, Wilson mentioned some of his hobbies consist of reading, bike riding, traveling, and trying new recipes.

Prior to arriving to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, Wilson was assigned to the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) from November 2019 to December 2023. While many people enjoy living in Spain, Wilson stated that his favorite thing about being stationed in this beautiful country is the ability to travel to different regions of Spain and learn about the Spanish culture and history. "I like traveling! Please feel free to recommend some of your favorite countries!"





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American Dama, Olivia Bussey, Participates in Rota Feria 2025 Opening Ceremony



Photos by Everett Lopez

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Spring in Andalusia: Where the Sun Shines, the Flowers Bloom, and Feria Reigns

The contributors are co-founders of a seasoned agency committed to assisting expatriates with navigating Spanish culture and lifestyle. With extensive experience in translation, interpretation, and cultural coaching, they equip expats with the tools and knowledge necessary for a seamless integration into Spanish society.



By Ellie McDonald and Brenda Navarro
Contributing Community Members

If you've stepped outside lately and felt the sunshine warm your face without the threat of summer's full heatstroke, congratulations—you've officially survived winter in southern Spain. Spring is here, and in Andalusia, that means three things: stunning flowers, unpredictable Levante winds, and feria season in full bloom.

For our Coastline readers—especially those stationed at Rota Naval Base—this might be your first spring in Spain. Trust us when we say: it's one of the most beautiful and lively times to be here.

It Smells Like Spring... Literally

Andalusia in spring is a masterclass in color and scent. City streets are lined with orange trees—many still bearing fruit—and their blossoms, known as azahar, give off a sweet perfume that hangs in the air like a natural room spray. Add to that the wild burst of color from buganvilla (bougainvillea) climbing whitewashed walls and geranios spilling over balconies



in red and pink, and you've got yourself a photo-worthy backdrop on every corner.

For those with allergies, spring can also bring the sneezes. Local tip: find raw, local honey. Many locals swear by it to build up immunity to local pollens. And when the Levante wind kicks up? Stay indoors. That dry, sandy wind from the east can turn the air into a swirling soup of dust and pollen. (We'll explain Levante vs. Poniente another time—trust us, it's a thing.)

Let's Talk Feria: Andalusia's Springtime Queen

Once Holy Week (Semana Santa) has passed, Andalusia doesn't skip a beat. Towns across the region begin celebrating feria—a weeklong fair that is equal parts cultural tradition and joyful chaos. If you were lucky enough to enjoy Rota's Feria this month, you've already had a taste. But don't worry if you missed it—there are dozens more coming up, including some of the biggest ones in El Puerto, Jerez, and Seville.

Historically, feria began as a livestock market and has evolved into a celebration of Andalusian identity, complete with traditional music, food, and flamenco fashion.

Feria 101: What You Need to Know Before You Go

Dress Code? Think Festive Formal.

Women typically wear trajes de flamenca (ruffled flamenco dresses), but you'll also see party dresses and chic casual looks. If you're accompanying someone dressed to the nines, try to match the energy—even if you're not in ruffles.

Men do not need to wear suits, unless they want to. Slacks and a nice shirt work just fine. You'll spot everything from polished looks to laid-back styles. Feria is about participation, not perfection.

Footwear Matters.

Albero—the golden sand that covers the feria fairgrounds—is both beautiful and



tricky. Heels will sink. Open-toed shoes? Not ideal. The go-to solution: esparto wedges (or espartinas). These woven-sole shoes are stylish, comfortable, and dance-ready. Bonus: you'll look like a local.

The Flower Debate.

Yes, you need one. A flower in your hair is almost mandatory—and fake is better. Real blooms wilt fast in the sun. One big flower on top of your head is the traditional look, but a small bunch to the side is just as fabulous. Wear whatever makes you feel confident, joyful, and ready to twirl.



Timing Is Everything.

Feria usually kicks off around noon, gets lively after lunch (2–3 p.m.), and reaches full party mode well into the night. Many locals go home around 7 p.m. for a quick break—maybe a nap or a change of outfit—and come back recharged. Pacing is key.

What's That Drink Everyone's Holding?

Rebujito—a dangerously refreshing mix of manzanilla sherry and lemon soda—is the feria drink of choice. Light, fizzy, and festive, it goes down easy... so go slow, especially before dancing or trying the rides.

More Feria Tips From the Field

Don't drive to the feria grounds. Parking is a nightmare. Walk, bus, or grab a cab.

Bring cash. Not every caseta (tent) takes cards.

Don't be shy—join the dancing. You don't need to know sevillanas perfectly. Clapping on beat gets you halfway there.

Eat something before and during. Between dancing and rebujitos, you'll need fuel.

A Final Word on Spring in Spain

Whether you're soaking up the scents of azahar, dodging pollen with a spoonful of local honey, or clapping your hands to sevillanas in a crowded caseta, spring in Andalusia is unlike anything else. It's part celebration, part sensory overload, and all heart.

So, dust off your dancing shoes, clip in that flower, and join in. This is the season Spain comes alive.

And remember: if you're still wearing stilettos after three rebujitos, you've missed the point—but at least you'll look great doing it.



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Spouse Talk - Therapy Sessions

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Writer

We come across many different people during our various changes of duty station, some of whom we like and others we would rather avoid. One thing that is a common thread amongst our spouse society is how we self-indulge our inner feelings to complete strangers. Call it a nervous energy or just wanting to make a friend, literally any friend, we do it.

You're out walking your dog when you come across another person walking their dog. You do the awkward dance of "So, is their dog friendly?" and "My dog wants to play with their dog, but is it alright with them or not?" dance. You take your headphones out and say something to the effect of "My dog is friendly, is yours friendly?" That's when the magic happens.

You introduce yourself to a total stranger. Then the usual questionnaire happens:

"What does your spouse do?"

"Where was your last base?"

"Do you have kids?"

Yada yada.

At some point, the conversation turns into a therapy session. One spouse spews out all their thoughts and feelings about their life, what's going on with their kids, household goods, and even relationship issues. Sometimes you don't mind the conversation, but other times you're just trying to let your dog make a friend, not be a personal counselor.

I've been in physical therapy (PT) for over a year now. Over that time, I've become pretty invested in the lives of the therapist. From relationship issues, grammar on paperwork, flying pets into Spain, security questions and so much

more. The time I spend in my physical therapy sessions end up turning into personal therapy sessions. For example, one physical therapist, who we'll call "TX," and I have had many PT sessions together, during which we've talked about relationships with the opposite gender, why Texas may or may not be considered a southern state, and making rash purchases. Another physical therapist, who we'll call "D Cubed," and I talk about our dogs. (As a side note, the physical therapists asked if they could be included in an article.)

The encounters we have are all pieces to the puzzle of our time as spouses. Every duty station we arrive at gives us another opportunity to help and be kind to those we live and work with. Sometimes it's hard for us to not push our opinions onto others. I've known people who like to just tell everyone what is wrong with this or that, or how to live their lives. Let's be real,



those people are annoying. Most likely, it seems that we all just want someone to listen to us. Another person who has been through what we have is ideal when asking for advice or help. There is a sense of compassion to want to help others who are in our same type of military boat. Let's be kind and listen. Author Roy T. Bennet once quoted, "Sometimes all a person wants is an empathetic ear; All he or she needs is to talk it out."

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 8 completes Exercise MAGRE 25-1

By Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Alyssa Sperle
Navy Public Affairs Support Element East, Detachment Europe

Naval Station Rota hosted Exercise MAGRE 25-1 with Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Mobile Unit 8 (EODMU8) detachment Europe and Spanish Armada underwater mine countermeasure units from Cadiz and Cartagena, March 24-28, 2025.

Exercise MAGRE is a semi-annual bilateral counter improvised explosive device (IED) exercise consisting of unexploded ordnance disposal procedures, weapons drills and explosive device drills.

"Sharing of tactics, techniques and procedures and helping each other out with improving our skills as EOD technicians is the primary goal of these exercises," said Lt. j.g. Jonathan Chapman, officer in charge, EODMU 8 det. Europe. "It ensures that all of our units are a lethal force when we go down range and that we're ready to take care of any kind of IEDs or surface ordnance responses."

The exercise is designed to increase interoperability and interchangeability between naval mine warfare and mine countermeasure forces between U.S. and NATO Allies and partner forces in the region.

"The realization of this type of bilateral

exercise between the United States and Spain is very beneficial because it offers us the opportunity to learn lessons from the personnel of our United States colleagues in their combat zone of operations," said 2nd Lt. José Luis Sánchez Caucín, assigned to La Unión in Cádiz. "It is a continuous learning process to always maintain the high level of readiness required."

Commander, Task Group 68.1 (EODMU 8) is part of the forward deployed Navy Expeditionary Combat Force Europe-Africa/Commander, Task Force (CTF) 68.

CTF 68 is responsible for providing explosive ordnance disposal operations, naval construction, expeditionary security and theater security efforts to U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR)-U.S. Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF) and U.S. 6th Fleet.

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Headquartered in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR-NAVAF operates U.S. naval forces in the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) areas of responsibility.



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NAVAL STATION ROTA COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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AA on base: "Rota 213" meets Tuesday and Thursday, 1900-2000 (7-8pm) in person in the NAVSTA Rota Chapel Library (in the back). For meeting information, please contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Dean at +34 674 38 77 55.

AA off base on Zoom: "Rota Drydockers." Every Saturday, 1600 (4 pm) on Zoom only. For information on how to join the Zoom session, contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Joe G. via WhatsApp at: +34 603 84 15 59.

AA in Rota in English: "Rota to Recovery." Every Saturday, 1900-2000 (7-8pm) in person, Calle Bachiller, 11, Rota; parking is available near the marina. For information, please contact Cynthia at +34 661 47 95 20 or Dean at +34 674 38 77 55.

AL-ANON MEETINGS

Have you been affected by another person's drinking? If so, please join us every Wednesday at 1600 (4 p.m.) at the base chapel nursery for an Al-Anon meeting. The only requirement for Al-Anon membership is that there be a problem of alcoholism in a relative or friend. For info on meetings, please contact Naydene at +34 669 09 7149.

AMERICAN RED CROSS

Mon - Fri, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to stop by the office and CPR courses are now being offered. Days and times of the courses will be posted on our FB page. For more information, call us during business hours at DSN 727-2333 or commercial, +34 956-82-2333, or visit our Facebook page, @RedCrossRota.

AMERICAN RED CROSS EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS SERVICE

Red Cross Emergency Messages services operate 24/7. If you have a family emergency during business hours, call us immediately at DSN (314) 727-2333 or +34 956-82-2333. After hours or on weekends, our national call center can be reached at +1 (877) 272-7337. Messages can also be initiated online, at <https://www.redcross.org/military-emergency-communication.html>

ROTA EDUCATION CENTER

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and University of Maryland Global Campus offices are open and able to assist you in reaching your education goals. The Rota Education Center is located on the first floor of the Community Services Building (Bldg. 3293).

NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY (NMCRS)

When you are having trouble meeting urgent financial needs, NMCRS may be able to provide an interest-free loan or grant. Through financial counseling, we will also help you plan for better financial stability. Our services are completely confidential. If you are approved for a

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NMCRS Casework and Classes

Casework Appointment: For active duty Navy, Marines, retirees, and dependents, the NMCRS can help you with financial relief. This can be used for emergency travel, basic living expenses (BLE), pet OCONUS, auto, household set up, and more.

Budget for Baby Class: Are you a new or prospective parent? Join us in-person to learn important budgeting skills for your new addition! Parents will learn about military pay fluctuations, baby expenses, consumer pressures targeting new parents, and entitlements available through government and private sources. This class is now open to both active duty and government civilian families. All participants will receive a layette and a handmade baby blanket. Families will also receive a \$50 Amazon gift card. To register, visit <http://linktr.ee/nmcrsrota> and select the desired class and date.

Command Classes: We offer financial classes for groups and commands. Our caseworkers can come to you, or we can hold the classes in our classroom. Call or email our office to schedule one of these classes.

UPCOMING NMCRS AND HOSPITAL MATERNAL PROGRAMS AND CLASSES:

The Visiting Nurse program includes home and virtual visits, classes, and community support groups for active duty, retirees, and their families. The Visiting Nurse provides health education, resource referral, and support for prenatal and postpartum, newborn care, breastfeeding, pediatric, adult, and geriatric health concerns.

NMCRS: VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Are you interested in volunteering in the NMCRS office or Thrift Shop? We have several opportunities to grow your resume while contributing to our community! We also reimburse for childcare and mileage. Apply to volunteer online at <http://linktr.ee/nmcrsrota> and join

us for a monthly volunteer orientation. NMCRS Rota is looking for blanket makers and Thrift Shop volunteers.

PRESCHOOL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Child Find for children three to five years of age is an ongoing outreach program that locates and identifies children who may have developmental delays or educational disabilities and need special services. If you have concerns regarding your child's development, please contact DSN 727-4185/4435 or commercial, +34 956-82-4185/4435.

RETIRED ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO)

Fleet and Family Support Center, Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., by appointment only.

RAO serves as a link between the military retired community and other government agencies, such as Federal benefits Unit for Social Security and Defense Finance and Accounting Service, Veterans Administration (VA), and Office of Personal Management (OPM). RAO provides assistance to survivors regarding pensions and benefits and is a source for information about retiring and living in Spain.

USO ROTA

The mission of the USO is to strengthen the well-being of America's military service members and their families. At USO Rota, we are dedicated to this mission by offering a variety of events and services—all free for active duty service members and their families.

Our center is conveniently located inside the Air Terminal and is open Monday through Friday, from 0830 to 1630. We invite you to join us for any of our events or stop by for a visit!

Interested in giving back? The USO is a fantastic organization for volunteering. To get started, fill out your volunteer profile at VOLUNTEERS.USO.ORG.

For all USO Rota events and more, follow "USO Rota" on Facebook at www.facebook.com/USORota.

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NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



The Navy Family Ombudsman Program is designed to provide better and faster communication between Navy families and Navy leadership. Navy commands and all deploying units, including the reserves have an Ombudsman, typically a spouse of one of the command's active duty members. Ombudsmen are official, appointed, liaisons between commanding officers and families. They can expedite communication between the command and families. In addition, Ombudsmen provide information on services, upcoming events, and/or help in crisis situations. Air Force Key Spouses & Family Readiness Assistants are similar to Ombudsmen, support service members, their families, and command leadership. Contact your command's representative to be added to their distribution list.

Ombudsman Coordinator Monica Gonzalez 727-3232 (Monica.gonzalez26.naf@us.navy.mil)

NAVSTA ROTA Assembly Chair	Lisa Eckard	+34 642-657-050	rotaombudsman@navy.mil
NAVSTA Rota	Shaunte Branson	+1 619 508 2833 Via WhatsApp	navastationrotaombudsman@gmail.com
725*AMS 521*AMOG (Air Force Key Spouses) CTG 68.3/Group Six	Vacant		
CTF 65 / DESRON 60	Lindsay Cowen	+34 624-340-699	Ctf68.3ombudsman@gmail.com
CTF68	Vacant		6065ombudsman@gmail.com
CWG-6 DET DIGBY	Kayla Morgan-Goerbig	+34 690 194-105	Ctf68.rotaombudsman@gmail.com
EODMUS / EOD DET	Dana Smilko	+44 5946 617938	cwg6detdigbyombudsman@gmail.com
FDRMC	Kelli Wise	+34 649-960-848	eodmu8omb@gmail.com
Naval Munition Command	Mae Kirkconnell	+34 683-522-567	fdrmcumbudsman.rota@gmail.com
NCTAMS	Vacant	+34 604 806 204	Nmcombudsman1@gmail.com
NEPMU-7	Tricia DeBaum	+34 624-285-909	Nctamsrotaombudsman@gmail.com
HSM-79	Diana Doucette	+34 956-822-550	NEPMU7ombudsman@gmail.com
NAVSUP FLT LOG	Katie Shannon Carrie Nanning	+34 643-062-302	rota.hsm79ombudsman@gmail.com
PWD	LSI McGhee	+34 661-107-529	navsuprotaombuds@gmail.com
STRIKEFORNATO (Lisbon)	Vacant		ombudsman.navfacurafcent.nsp@gmail.com
USN Hospital	Vacant		Lisbonombudsman@gmail.com
USS Arleigh Burke (DDG51)	Lisa Eckard Katie Kopp	+34 690-957-100	nmrtcrotaombudsman@gmail.com
USS Bulkeley (DDG84)	Miosotis Sigurenza Piloya Otermat	+34 681-324-752	ombudsmanddg51@gmail.com
USS Paul Ignatius (DDG117)	Jessica Sanchez	+1 619-554-2346	ussbulkeleyombudsman@gmail.com
USS Oscar Austin (DDG79)	LeAnn Olsen	+34 629 815 569	ddg117ombudsman@gmail.com
USS Roosevelt (DDG89)	Megan Kyle Shirley Wigdorski	+1 207-479-9523 Via WhatsApp	OscarAustinOmbuds@yahoo.com
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Let's Eat!

By Pilar Ruiz

A Taste of Cádiz in Every Bite

This time, we're bringing you a hearty, flavorful, and healthy stew that's perfect for the season: **Marmitako**, a traditional Spanish tuna stew.

Right now, we're in the tuna season in the bay of Cádiz, where the waters of Barbate, Zahara de los Atunes, and Tarifa are known for their almadraba tuna fishing, a practice that has been passed down through generations. Now is the perfect time to enjoy the freshest tuna and make the most of this incredible local delicacy!

Originating from the Basque Country and Cantabria, Marmitako is a traditional fisherman's dish, often made with potatoes, onions, peppers, tomatoes, and, of course, tuna. In Spain, tuna is one of the most consumed blue fish, and we're sure you'll find this dish simple to prepare and full of local flavors.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 1/8 lbs (1/2 kg) tuna loin, cut into cubes
- 2 1/4 lbs (1 kg) potatoes
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 2 grated tomatoes or 4 tablespoons of crushed tomato
- 2 dried red peppers (ñoras, if possible), chopped
- 2 "Piquillo" sweet peppers, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
- 1/2 cup (100 ml) mild olive oil
- 1/2 cup (100 ml) white wine, we use local sherry wine from Bodegas "El Gato"
- A splash of "Brandy of Jerez"
- 2 glasses of water (or enough to cover the stew)
- 1 fish stock bouillon cube



PREPARATION:

1. Begin by peeling and breaking the potatoes into chunks, and then place them in a bowl of water (breaking them is easy – just insert a knife slightly into the potato and twist the blade to break off small pieces).
2. In a large pot with hot olive oil, sauté the diced onion (brunoise style). Once it's softened, add the chopped garlic. When the garlic turns golden brown, stir in the chopped green pepper and "piquillo" peppers.
3. Add the drained potato chunks to the pot and toss them to coat in the flavorful vegetable mixture.
4. Stir in the grated tomato and sweet paprika, mixing everything well.
5. Pour in the white wine and splash of cognac. Let it cook for a few minutes until the alcohol evaporates.
6. Add enough water to just cover the potatoes, and dissolve the fish stock cube in a small amount of warm water before adding it to the pot.
7. Let the stew simmer on low heat for about 1 hour, until the potatoes are tender.
8. Five minutes before the stew is ready, season the tuna chunks with salt and pepper, and gently add them to the pot. Cook for another 5 minutes.



Have any comments or questions? We'd love to hear from you! You can email us as pilaraprendiendoacocinar@gmail.com.

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