



COASTLINE

July 10, 2025 / Volume 35, Issue 7

U.S. Naval Activities Spain

**NAVSTA Rota
Change of
Command**
Page 10

**Annual
Independence
Day Flag Raising
Ceremony**
Pages 11-13

**From the Stage
- 4th of July
Independence Fest**
Pages 17 and 18

Leadership Corner



Commanding Officer, Naval Station Rota
Capt. Charles Chmielak

Hola, Team Rota! It is a tremendous honor to be your new commanding officer here at U.S. Naval Station Rota. I am grateful to live alongside our Spanish allies in this beautiful part of the world and humbled by this opportunity to lead and to work with you as we serve our fleet, fighters, and families. I have been on board one month and I am truly impressed by all the amazing people I have had the pleasure to meet. This is the best installation in the world thanks to the hard work done every day by our service members, local nationals, Allies, and families. We are part of an amazing community that extends beyond the fenceline and into the many cities that surround us and I am proud to be a part of it. The strong bonds were evident at the Independence Fest where we came together in celebration of our Nation's 249th year. This event is more special here in Rota for the opportunity to highlight and recognize Spanish support to

Be Ready, Steadfast, and Professional

our young nation during the American Revolutionary War. The Spanish government provided funds, supplies, and manpower while Spanish leaders, like Bernardo de Gálvez and Luis de Córdova led campaigns and other efforts critical to the overall strategy leading to victory and our independence. MWR did an amazing job putting this incredible event together! A big thank you to MWR and all those who worked, volunteered, provided security, support or safety during the fest. The care and detail in planning, executing, and cleaning up after showcased why NAVSTA Rota is the place to be! My family and I look forward to celebrating both U.S. and Spanish traditions and experiencing the many cultures around us. I am mindful this is only possible because we are here to execute our mission in service to our nation and its high ideals of freedom and democracy. To stay oriented in service it is imperative we remain ready, steadfast, and professional in all we do. We must be ready each day to accomplish operational tasking, crisis response, and the steady state demands of daily operations. We must be steadfast in our efforts. We will strive to keep a positive attitude and remain committed to the daily mission while keeping an eye on the big picture. We will look out for each other to cultivate resilience through mind-body and mental fitness. We must be professional in how we conduct ourselves at all times and in all places. We are guests of Spain and we represent our nation. This is our home and we share the responsibility to work together to keep it great! We must train with honesty and work with transparency to improve each day. Thank you all for the warm welcome! I am truly honored to be part of this community and I look forward to seeing and meeting you around the installation!

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On The Front Cover



Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota holds a fireworks display during the annual Independence Day "Independence Fest," July 4, 2025. (Photo by Everett Lopez)

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.

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USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) Completes Patrol with Combat Action Ribbon

By U.S. Sixth Fleet Public Affairs

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) returned to Naval Station Rota, Spain on June 10, 2025 with a Unit Combat Action Ribbon following completion of her first Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) patrol in the U.S. Sixth Fleet and Fifth Fleet areas of operations.

Oscar Austin departed for Patrol One on Dec. 11, 2024, during which she sailed over 37,900 nautical miles supporting U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa. She operated as an independently deployed destroyer in the Mediterranean and in the Red Sea conducting combat operations with the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group.

"I'm honored to have assumed command of Oscar Austin during her first patrol as a forward deployed warship," said Cmdr. David Nicolas, who took Command in May. "Having served previously as the ship's executive officer, I feel immense pride in witnessing the growth and development of the crew in their preparation for and completion of Patrol One."

Oscar Austin welcomed the New Year in the East Mediterranean by sailing alongside the Republic of Cyprus National Guard. Oscar Austin and the Republic of Cyprus offshore patrol vessel Commodore Andreas Ioannides (P61) completed events involving advanced signaling and maneuvering. The exercises reinforced partnerships with regional partners, highlighting the strategic importance in fostering multinational cooperation.

In April, Oscar Austin transited the Suez Canal into the U.S. Fifth Fleet area of operations with the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group. The ship



provided air and missile defense, joining fellow Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Jason Dunham (DDG 109) and USS Stout (DDG 55), and the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Gettysburg (CG 64).

In the Red Sea, Oscar Austin and the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group came under fire from various airborne threats. Sailors onboard Oscar Austin acted swiftly and professionally to defend the strike group, upholding freedom of navigation in the Red Sea.

Capt. Alexander Mamikonian, Commodore of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60, presented Nicolas and the Oscar Austin crew the distinguished award when they returned home.

"This was Oscar Austin's maiden patrol as a Rota-based FDNF-E destroyer and her team performed exceptionally," Mamikonian said. "As their Commodore, I was impressed by their professionalism, proficiency and self-sufficiency on a daily basis. It was a pleasure watching them perform on patrol, but we're glad they're back home in Rota reunited with their loved ones."

Sailors wear the ribbon proudly around the ship: exclusive to units in the Department of the Navy demonstrating satisfactory performance under enemy fire.

Nicolas praised the crew for their skilled and courageous efforts during the patrol.

"Executing multiple missions across two theaters, Oscar Austin displayed the immense versatility of the Arleigh Burke class destroyer: from conducting ballistic missile defense in the eastern

Mediterranean Sea to seamlessly integrating with the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group in the Red Sea. But overall, it was the crew's grit and resiliency that fueled the ship's success throughout the patrol."

After her time in the Red Sea, in May, Oscar Austin returned to the Eastern Mediterranean, postured to support America's commitment to NATO, defending Allies and working together to deter malign actors from escalating the war in Israel.

Beyond crew-wide accomplishments, the Sailors onboard Oscar Austin also fulfilled numerous individual milestones, including six naval officers who earned their Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) pins, 78 enlisted personnel who acquired their Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) pins, and 54 promotions of rank. While underway, Oscar Austin also saw 17 Sailors raise their right hands to reenlist in the Navy, reaffirming the command's commitment to a culture of excellence.

"This crew has demonstrated remarkable resilience and unwavering dedication throughout a period of significant change and demanding



operations," said Cmdr. Gerald Sellars, the ship's Executive Officer. "From navigating the complexities of a homeport shift to successfully executing deployments in both Fifth and Sixth Fleets, their teamwork and commitment have been instrumental in overcoming every challenge. The crew's ability to adapt and persevere ensures mission success and, most importantly, a safe return home to their families. It is an honor to serve alongside this team."

Upon their return home, Sailors manned the rails in their dress whites and newly-earned ribbons as the ship pulled into Pier 1 in Rota, Spain, marking the completion of its first FDNF-E patrol.



Sailors assigned to the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) man the rails during sea and anchor detail at Naval Station Rota, Spain, June 10, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Alyssa Sperle)



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Health Promotions: Youth Sports Injury Prevention

By Devin Evans

Naval Hospital Rota, Health Promotions Department

Injuries can happen without warning. They can occur in the workplace from repetitive motions like bending at the waist and when lifting items overhead. An injury could result from a slip or fall from uneven or wet flooring. There is also the potential for injury when we are participating in activities that we enjoy such as recreational sports, or something as casual as taking the family pet for a walk. Injuries can happen during any activity where we rely on the mechanics of our body to perform movement.

Injuries are not exclusive to a specific age group or gender, but we can be proactive in limiting or even preventing

injuries. The potential for injuries increases when activities are associated with sports. Throughout the year there are a multitude of opportunities to participate in organized sports, especially for youths. With sports camps and more structured activities, youths today are increasingly more likely to play their chosen sport year-round. More time practicing and competing on the field brings a greater risk of experiencing a sports-related injury.

Youth sports injuries can result from contact sports which may require protective equipment to participate in or from non-contact sports that may not require any protective devices.

It is important to discuss injury prevention prior to engaging in physical activities, especially if there is a requirement for protective equipment such as mouth guards, helmets, elbow or knee pads. Make sure to explain the importance of safety equipment and what the consequences of not wearing it may result in.

Pediatric sports medicine experts recommend these tips for anyone with a youth athlete on how to help prevent a sports injury.

- Start off with talking to your young athlete. Make sure that they understand that they should communicate right away if they are experiencing pain or if something doesn't "feel right" during physical activity. Some youth athletes may try and "push through the pain" but

this can lead to more serious conditions that could have been prevented earlier if they had notified someone.

- Be sure to have a current sports physical. These can often be obtained during a sport's pre-season or back-to-school physical health fairs. If your school or organization does not offer this then be sure to schedule an appointment with your Primary Care Provider.

- There is nothing wrong with a young athlete preferring one physical activity over another, but sports medicine providers caution against limiting physical activity to one specific action that continuously puts stress on the same muscles and joints. Also, consider limiting the number of teams an athlete is on at any given time and changing up their routine regularly so that the same motions and muscle groups are not overused.

- Encourage warming up. Conditioning coaches suggest a mixture of both static and dynamic warmups to loosen muscles before strenuous use. Examples of static stretching include toe-touches or arm crossovers. Dynamic stretches involve movement of the body during the stretch, such as jumping jacks..

- Explain the importance of rest. The time between practices, games, and events is crucial to decreasing muscle fatigue. Some athletes may desire to stay active every day of the week and never take an off-season, but physical trainers warn against this as it does not provide

an adequate recovery period for young bodies.

- Emphasize a well-balanced diet and adequate hydration. It is important to know how much fluid and food a young person requires. Have an open discussion with your medical provider or schedule an appointment to speak with a Registered Dietician.

- Lastly, if all of the prevention steps have been put in place and an injury still occurs, recognize an injury and get help early. Parents need to look for signs or changes in their athlete's technique, such as a limp when running, throwing differently or rubbing a leg during activity. Beware of small injuries that can lead to bigger ones.

Make prevention a priority so that your young athlete has a positive experience while participating in sports and physical activity!







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PUBLISHER’S CORNER

Back to the Origin: roots with flavor that make a difference

In a world that moves too fast and leans toward the artificial, Grupo La Rotta invites us to pause, look back, and rediscover the true value of authenticity. With deep roots in the town of Rota, this family has turned a story of tradition into an innovative, sustainable, and flavor-packed project. Through their brands—Obrador San Antonio, El Bucarito, and ConBocados Catering—they’ve created more than just a business. They’ve brought to life a lifestyle with heart.

It all began in 1950, when grandfather Antonio kneaded his first loaves in a small bakery. Since then, generation after generation has continued to grow their own grains, raise animals in open pastures, and craft products by hand, with care and respect. Their sourdough starter is over 20 years old, and each loaf of bread, wedge of cheese, cut of meat or cured ham tells a story of quality, sustainability, and flavor done right.

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“I’ll Have What She’s Having”

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Member

Almost everyone has heard the phrase: “The grass is greener on the other side.” This proverb comes from the poet Ovid. The original phrase was “The harvest is richer in another man’s field.” Ovid had reason to write this. He started out life in an influential family. They had wealth and status. They educated their children at the most sought-after schools of that time. Ovid did well after school, becoming popular amongst the elite of Rome. But, that position of prestige did nothing for him. He wanted more (or really less).

Unfortunately for him, his personal life was disastrous. He was married three times, was caught up in a scandal involving a Roman emperor’s daughter

and was exiled to the Island of Tomis. He begged his family to write to the Roman government and insist he be pardoned, but they never did. After some time, he accepted his fate and died in Tomis. Ovid had then seen the grass, or field, on both sides.

Have you ever been running late? You brush your hair, throw something on and rush out the door. Add kids into that mix and now you have to make sure everyone is dressed, shoes are on and random snacks are tossed into your purse. You look like a hot, sweaty mess and then you see her. The neighbor across the street. She’s dressed like she just walked out of Anne Taylor. Hair: perfect. Kids: in line. Snacks: homemade, and in bento boxes. Sweat: zero. You secretly want that. Like, all of that. You’d even take just not being sweaty at this point.

We look at those around us and compare what we don’t have. But what does the other side of the grass really look like? You can see perfect on the outside, but inside there could be hidden “skeletons in the closet.” Maybe major debt or a loveless marriage plagues their daily lives. Depression, anxiety and constant thoughts of not being good enough could be playing on a never-ending reel. And meanwhile, they could see you with all your “imperfections” and want that.

See **Spouse Talk** Page 22



COASTLINE

FOLLOW NAVAL STATION ROTA ON ALL PLATFORMS



SCAN ME!





"Spouse Talk" is written by Ashley Leigh, a military spouse of 16+ years and a homeschool parent to one "spunky" redhead. She hopes her frank conversations on military life will inspire others to embrace the challenge and find the good at each duty station.

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U.S. Naval Station Rota Holds Change of Command Ceremony

By Lt. Daniel Ehrlich
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

U.S. Naval Activities Spain/U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain held a change of command ceremony in front of the installation's headquarters building, June 12, 2025.

Capt. Charles A. Chmielak relieved Capt. Teague J. Suarez as commander of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and commanding officer of NAVSTA Rota during the ceremony attended by more than 150 guests and featured formations of American and Spanish service members.

During the ceremony, Suarez was presented with the U.S. military's Legion of Merit award by Rear Adm. Brad Collins, commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central, which is awarded for extremely meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding duties. This award encapsulated the three years Suarez served as commander of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and NAVSTA Rota since his ascension to the post on July 14, 2022.

"In my view, selection for command at any level is the ultimate compliment to an officer," said Collins. "It is a responsibility like no other, and if done correctly, with your heart and your soul invested, it will be the hardest, but the most rewarding, job that you will ever have."

While in command, Suarez facilitated the scheduled rotation of three guided-missile destroyers, supported the safe redeployment of U.S. forces from Africa, and oversaw the arrival of the fifth Arleigh Burke guided-missile destroyer, USS



Oscar Austin (DDG 79), to Spain.

"What an amazing three years!" said Suarez, "We have done so much in my time here, and that is a testament to the dedication of our civilians, local nationals, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Soldiers, and their families. We showed the world the strength of the U.S. and Spanish partnership, especially as part of NATO; that was only possible because of everybody's hard work, and the incredible support of the Andalucían communities around us."

Suarez also directed more than \$500 million of infrastructure modernization projects on the base, and saw the American population grow to more than 7,000 service members and families. He focused on the efforts of personnel from Naval Station Rota's six lines of effort – port operations, air operations, safety, security, quality of life, and the core (fuel, water, power, and information technology infrastructure) – that support the 45 commands from a variety of mission areas that call the installation home.

"Words cannot express my gratitude and pride in the Rota family," said Suarez. "You answered the call, every time. You ensured our warfighters and our Fleet were prepared to execute - to deploy on-time, every time, with the resources they needed to execute their mission. You have been incredible stewards to our community, and exemplary guests and friends to our Spanish allies."

The ceremony featured several distinguished visitors, including Rian Harris, Charge D'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy; Blanca del Pilar Flores Cueto, subdelegate for the province of Cadiz; Javier Ruiz, mayor of the city of Rota; German Beardo, mayor of the city of El Puerto de Santa Maria; and Luis Aparcero, mayor of the city of Chipiona. Vice Adm. Ruben Rodriguez Peña, commander of the Cadiz Arsenal, represented the Spanish Armada as a guest speaker.

"Since we will share needs, we can also share solutions, as we have done up to now," said Rodriguez Peña. "I also hope to continue reinforcing the relationship between our two communities. From today forward, I offer you my full availability for anything you may need and I truly want to contribute to your smooth landing on

this craft carrier."

The change of command ceremony is a time-honored tradition of the U.S. Navy, as the incumbent commanding officer is officially relieved of his duties by the incoming commanding officer. As part of this tradition, both Suarez and Chmielak read their official orders, conducted an exchange of salutes, and made a formal announcement to their superior commander, Collins, that the command of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and NAVSTA Rota had been properly exchanged.

After formally taking command, Chmielak reflected on Capt. Suarez's legacy at Naval Station Rota and looked ahead to what the future of the U.S. presence in Spain holds in store:

See **Change of Command** Page 23



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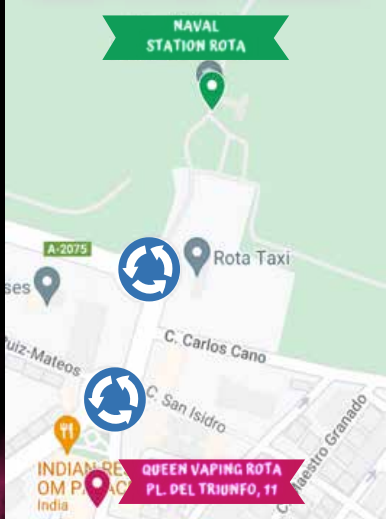


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Naval Station Rota Holds Annual Flag Raising Ceremony

Every year, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain holds a flag raising ceremony in celebration of Independence Day. Every Independence Day weekend, The Spanish Armada authorizes the hoisting of the American Flag, making the ceremony a special occasion on our installation.



Photos by MC1 Drace Wilson

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Photo by MC2 Jett Morgan



FASTEUR Saber Guardian 2025 725 AMS Change of Command

Marines assigned to Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Company Europe (FASTEUR) took part in U.S. Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF) exercise "Saber Guardian". FASTEUR worked along side U.S. Army First Battalion Third Aviation Regiment (1/3) and Twelfth Combat Aviation Brigade (12 CAB).

During the exercise, FASTEUR provided security for 1/3 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, armament systems, and refueling points. FASTEUR Integrated with the 12 CAB and 1/3, conducting refuels and loading of rockets on the AH-64 Apache attack helicopters. FASTEUR additionally worked alongside the 12 CAB fire direction center, and learned the tactics and equipment of the 12 CAB, French, and Spanish Joint Terminal Attack Controllers. Finally FASTEUR taught classes to 12 CAB on Counter Unmanned Aircraft Systems (CUAS) and aided in building a CUAS battle drill.



Photos by Marine Sgt. Jacob Carnavale

The 725th Air Mobility Squadron (AMS) held a change of command ceremony on June 18, 2025. The ceremony saw Lt. Col. Bradlee Seehawer relieve Lt. Col. Brian Shea as the commanding officer of the squadron.



Photos by MC1 Drace Wilson



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Let's Eat!

By Pilar Ruiz



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

A Different Salmorejo, With Avocado And Hard Boiled Egg

Are you enjoying the summer? We are sure you are making the most of it! We live in a very privileged area, the bay of Cadiz, and we feel very lucky to have very nice ingredients from the land and the sea to prepare and enjoy so many nice dishes.

This time we've prepared a very special and tasty dish we can enjoy at this time of the year, with high temperatures: the Salmorejo. Originally, this was a recipe unique to Cordoba. Today, it is not only prepared in Andalusia and can be found in every province throughout the whole country. It is simultaneously healthy, tasty and refreshing.

We have prepared a very healthy version without bread, ideal for people who can't tolerate gluten or who have decided to avoid eating gluten for any reason. We really hope you enjoy it as much as we do.

INGREDIENTS:

- *Ingredients (For 4 Servings):*
- * 1 lb 2 oz (1/2 kg) of red, ripe tomatoes
- * 1 avocado
- * 1 hard boiled egg
- * 1 large clove of garlic
- * a splash of Sherry Wine vinegar
- * 1 tablespoon salt
- * 2 – 3 oz (75 ml) Virgin olive oil
- *To garnish:*
- * 1 diced or chopped hard-cooked egg
- * 2 oz (50 g) of diced avocado



PREPARATION:

- In an immersion blender beaker, we add the garlic, the peeled tomatoes (a good tip, put the tomatoes in a pot of hot water and let it continue to cook for a few minutes. They peel on their own!) and salt and puree everything with the blender.
- Add the avocado and the hard boiled egg and we blend it again.
- Add the wine vinegar and blend again.
- While blending, pour the olive oil in slowly.
- Keep in the fridge until ready to serve.
- We recommend serving the salmorejo in nice cups, such as cups typically used to serve desserts in (mousse, ice cream, etc.)
- Garnish the top with diced/chopped hard boiled eggs and the diced avocado. Delicious!

Keep on enjoying a wonderful summer time! By the way, if you have any questions regarding this recipe or many others you can find in our blog at www.aprendiendoacocinar.es, do not hesitate to contact us at info@aprendiendoacocinar.es

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Monica Gonzalez

Monica Gonzalez works as a Work and Family Life Specialist at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota's Fleet and Family Support Center. Although originally from El Centro, Calif., Gonzalez considers Whidbey Island, Wash. As her true home. She has worked with the military for around 10 years and has worked onboard NAVSTA Rota for almost 2 and a half years.

"I currently manage the Ombudsman program, Family Employment program, and Transition Assistance Program (TAP)," stated Gonzalez. "I previously managed the Relocation program and Deployed Forces Support."

As the Ombudsman Coordinator, Gonzalez provides administrative support to Ombudsmen and Command Leadership. For the Family Employment Program, she facilitates employment readiness classes such as resume writing as well as providing 1:1 support for resume reviews and job/career search.

For the TAP program, she works with service members and career counselors to ensure service members are prepared for their transition from military to civilian life.

"My favorite thing about my job is being able to provide the tools our service members and families need to be successful," said Gonzalez. "I love sharing that as a military spouse, it is possible to have a career and growth. I began my career as an MWR Teen Hire when my dad was active duty and have been fortunate to have been able to grow with MWR and FFSC as I've moved across the world with my husband. I love being able to share information, resources, or a tip that will bring other spouses and active duty members one step closer to achieving their goals.

Outside of work, Gonzalez enjoys reading, baking, and traveling with her family. She also loves the color purple!





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From The Stage: 4th of July Independence Fest

By Christina Brewer
Rota MWR

Every year, the lead-up to Independence Fest is a whirlwind of planning and anticipation for Naval Station Rota's largest annual event. Each summer, the team from the Liberty Center locks in and takes the reins - recruiting and training volunteers months in advance and ensuring every guest enjoys a safe, memorable experience.

As for me, I have the best job of all: I get to host the event from the stage.

For nearly half a decade, I have had the privilege of stepping onstage and addressing our incredible Rota community - both American and Spanish. I have introduced commanding officers, professional athletes, and rock stars.

Every year, Independence Fest gets bigger and better and this year was no exception.

My favorite part of emceeing the event is connecting with all of you and hearing what the Fourth of July means to you on a personal level.

"Each person feels the word 'freedom' differently. For me, the Fourth of July means total freedom. I was born in a communist country, where freedom was a distant, almost unreachable dream. When I left to live abroad, my homeland no longer saw me as one of its own. I became an immigrant, a tourist, a foreigner. I no longer belonged, but the United States welcomed me. It gave me the chance to live freely, to speak openly, to build a life without fear. I found what I never had before: a true home. I see this country as my homeland. On the Fourth of July, I don't just celebrate a nation's independence. I celebrate my own freedom—and the gift of belonging," says Elier Acosta, Department of Defense civilian.

The musical acts also brought some serious energy to the stage.

"Grateful for the opportunity to play music for everyone in Rota Naval Station," said Alonso J. Ortiz, who's currently serving in the U.S. Air Force and is a guitarist and vocalist for Ape Oscura. The band kicked off the party with a powerful set of early 2000s rock.

"It's always been true that any celebration worth attending - and

remembering - has good food and good music," added drummer Tyler Cannon, a U.S. Navy retiree. "They bring strong meaning and feeling to our lives in the moment. We're super proud to have been part of that for you this Fourth of July."

The highlight of the night for me was watching USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) Sailors Nathaniel Stone, a Quartermaster, and Kenny Wright, a Retail Specialist, also known by his artist name "2K Kenny," take the stage. Seeing two of our local Sailors perform and hearing the crowd sing along was a powerful reminder of community supporting community.

"We all connect on a different level," said Wright. "Going from performing on the ship with my boys to the stage in front of a crowd like that and getting the support we did from MWR here in Rota, the locals, and the Sailors - it just seems unreal. I'm living out my dream, and the Navy isn't holding me back. It's projecting my dream even more."

"I haven't known 2K Kenny for long, but his music helped me cope with the emotional turmoil of being at sea - especially after a recent breakup," said Stone. "His performance on stage was like witnessing an angelic presence, speaking truth and capturing the essence of a Sailor's experiences: 'I'm out in the ocean, floating with my emotion.'"



Photos by Christina Brewer

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4th of July Independence Fest (Continued)



Photos by Everett Lopez

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Hotter Than a Frying Pan: What to Expect From Summer in Southern Spain

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 Brenda Navarro & Ellie McDonald
Contributing Community Members

Welcome to July in Andalusia, where the skies are bluer, the sun shines brighter, and your steering wheel could double as a stovetop. For those new to southern Spain, especially our military and civilian community stationed in the Rota area, summer might bring a few surprises. Yes, the beaches are beautiful. Yes, the sunsets are stunning. But brace yourself, because summer in Spain isn't just a season; it's a lifestyle adjustment.



Welcome to Peak Season: Heat and High Tourism

If you thought June was warm, July and August are about to raise the stakes. Southern Spain can easily see temperatures soar into the high 90s—or higher—with little to no evening relief. And just when you think the heat is enough, the population triples.

That's right. Coastal towns like Rota, El Puerto de Santa María, Chipiona, and Conil become hotspots for summer vacationers, especially from inland cities like Madrid, Seville and Córdoba. With

them comes the buzz of activity: packed restaurants, lines at the bakery, and parking spaces that vanish faster than ice cream in the sun.

Air Conditioning, Spanish Style

Before you crank the thermostat down to "Arctic," it's worth knowing that most homes here are built to keep heat out naturally without relying on central air. Instead, you'll become very familiar with:

- Fans in every room
- Split-unit ACs (that don't always reach every corner)
- Ceramic tile floors for barefoot relief
- And the mighty persiana—Spain's secret summer weapon.

These thick exterior blinds help block out the sun during the hottest hours. Locals swear by the method: close everything up tight by noon, then reopen windows around 9 or 10 p.m. when the air finally cools. It's less "cool breeze" and more "strategic siege," but it works.

Yes, Everyone Else Is Here Too

When summer hits, the coast gets busy. Like, really busy. Most inland Spaniards head straight for the beach—and who can blame them? But that means more traffic, more noise, and yes, far fewer parking spaces.

A few things to know:

- Weekends are especially crowded. If you can swing weekday outings, do it.
- Beachfront parking may be gone by 10 a.m.
- Consider alternative beaches slightly farther afield or get comfortable walking farther..
- Expect longer lines at the ice cream shop, restaurants, and even the pharmacy.

On the bright side? The energy is infectious. Towns are lively, streets are

filled with music and conversation, and nearly every bar has its own version of tinto de verano ready to go.

Unexpected Closures—and Openings

Spain in summer means some businesses shift into modo verano. That



can include:

- Early closing hours, especially during heatwaves
- Afternoon breaks that extend longer than expected
- Limited staff at certain offices

But here's the upside: supermarkets that are normally closed on Sundays open up during high season to meet the demand. Some major chains even extend their hours, especially near beach zones. Just expect crowds, and don't be surprised if the same loaf of bread costs a bit more than it did in May.

Cool-Down Hacks and Local Know-How

Here's how seasoned locals beat the

heat:

- Errands? Do them before 10 a.m., or wait until after 8 p.m.
- Lunch? Lighter, cooler meals—like gazpacho or ensaladilla rusa—rule the season.
- Shade is sacred. When walking, stick to the shadowy side of the street (la sombra) whenever possible.
- Midday outings? Best avoided. Use that time for an indoor siesta or a café con hielo in a shaded terrace.
- Need a break? Museums, shopping centers, and grocery stores are reliably air-conditioned hideaways.

Final Thoughts: Don't Just Survive it—Enjoy it

Yes, it's hot. Yes, it's crowded. But summer in Andalusia is full of charm: evening concerts, tapas under the stars, family-friendly beaches, and a rhythm that makes you slow down and take it all in.

Adjust your schedule, pack your patience, and learn to lean into the heat. After all, there's something special about a place where dinner starts at 10 p.m., flip-flops are practically formal wear, and ice-cold gazpacho is considered a national treasure.

Just don't forget your fan and your best parallel-parking skills. You'll need both!



Have an idea on what we should write about next?

We're always happy to hear from the community and would love to get ideas straight from the readers! Email us at heretohelp@bepainsavvy.com or bepainsavvy@gmail.com and share your thoughts or ideas!

We hope to hear from you soon!

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NAVAL STATION ROTA COMMUNITY RESOURCES

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS MEETINGS

AA on base: "Rota 213" meets Tuesday and Thursday, 1800-1900 (6-7pm) in person in the NAVSTA Rota Chapel (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).

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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/nmc.rsrota> 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/nmc.rsrota> 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.

WIC OVERSEAS

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Overseas is a nutrition education and supplemental food program that aims to improve the overall health and wellness of families for active duty service members and their dependents, DoD civilian employees and their dependents, DoD contractors and their dependents. Basic nutrition and health screenings, drafts to be redeemed for nutritious foods, access to resources & tips that help you and your family lead healthier lives, healthier birth weights for babies, reduced anemia rates for children, breastfeeding support, breast pump loan program, breastfeeding/pumping room open to everyone. Call DSN 727-2921 or commercial, +34 956-82-2921, for more information.

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Change of Command *Continued from page 10*

“I am honored to take command of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and Naval Station Rota. I am thrilled to enjoy the incredible experiences that come with residing in Spain and becoming part of this welcoming community. I cannot thank Capt. Suarez enough for the meticulous work he has done to ensure that U.S. forces in Spain are supported and prepared for whenever the nation calls upon them and to sustain the ironclad relationship with our Spanish hosts and allies. I will do my utmost to ensure that Team Rota continues to maintain the high standard of performance in every one of our efforts, keeping focus on shore support for the fleet, fighters, and their families.”

Chmielak is the 35th commanding officer of U.S. Naval Station Rota.

As the “Gateway to the Mediterranean,” NAVSTA Rota provides U.S., NATO and allied forces a strategic hub for operations in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. NAVSTA Rota is a force multiplier, capable of promptly deploying and supporting combat-ready forces through land, air, and sea, enabling warfighters and their families, sustaining the fleet, and fostering the long-standing, 250-year-long U.S. and Spanish partnership.

For more information about U.S. Naval Activities Spain/U.S. Naval Station Rota, Spain, go to the installation’s website at <https://cnreurafcen.cnic.navy.mil/Installations/NAVSTA-Rota/> or follow the installation Naval Station Rota, Spain on Facebook, @navstarotaspain on Instagram, or @NAVSTA_Rota on X.

Spouse Talk *Continued from page 9*

Really though, there is no way anyone would want to be the hot mess across the street. Let me tell you, there are times I would like to be more relaxed and let go of needing everything perfect. I think, at some point, we all compare our “grass” to the grass on the other side. It’s natural to want more, to be better, and have total control over our situations. Instead, we should look at our lives and seek out the

positive. What do we “have” that we would never trade or give up? It could be small, trivial, and seem completely ridiculous, but it’s ours and it’s important. So, I challenge you - and myself - to put up an imaginary privacy fence. When we start to look over it and compare our negatives to their positives, step away and look at what we have. Be content and grateful for it.

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Catholic Coordinator of Religious Education (CCRE) CONTRACT OPPORTUNITY

The Naval Station Rota Chapel is seeking one (1) contracted PART-TIME (approx. 25 hours per week), Catholic Coordinator of Religious Education.

The anticipated qualifications are:

REQUIRED: High school diploma or equivalent certificate.
REQUIRED: Possess legal status to reside in Spain and work with US Forces in Spain throughout the duration of the contract (i.e., possession of a TEI card).
REQUIRED: Successfully complete a criminal background check conducted by the United States Government (USG).
REQUIRED: Possess at least one (1) year experience teaching/working in a military or civilian United States congregation religious education program.
REQUIRED: Possess a professional working knowledge of Roman Catholic theology, catechetical educational methods, current Roman Catholic educational texts, material, and literature.
REQUIRED: Possess a current AMS Catechist certificate in accordance with Archdiocese for the Military Services (USA) guidelines.
DESIRED: Be a regular attendee and active in a Roman Catholic congregation; be familiar with the military chapel communities; and be knowledgeable of chapel community activities and concerns.
DESIRED: Demonstrate a spiritual maturity in accordance with the tenets of the applicant's faith group.
DESIRED: Maintain a professional aptitude and human relations skills to manage a religious education program, including recruiting, training, and leading volunteer teachers and religious education assistants.
DESIRED: Proficient computer skills using Microsoft Office Suite, G suite, and information technology especially in the areas of social media, distance learning environments, and web content management.

NOTE: The selectee will be an independent contractor. The USG provides no fringe benefits. The contract will be for one (1) year with the option to extend for up to a total of three (3) years.

Interested contractors that meet the above qualifications shall contact NAVSUP Contracting office by email at javier.b.soria.civ@us.navy.mil and Julius.j.arrascue-pastor.civ@us.navy.mil in order to obtain a full copy of the Request for Quote and other related documents. **The deadline to submit quotes is 30 July 2025.**

*** Prospective applicants must registered in SAM.gov in order to be eligible to receive a contract award: <https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration>.**

CRIME VICTIM CHECKLIST

1. NOTIFY LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

** Use the free app AlertCops for the quickest response. You can also dial 091 for local police, 112 for emergency translation services, 956-82-2911 for on-base emergency dispatch or 911 from a base landline phone.*

2. OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR POLICE REPORT

3. TAKE POLICE REPORT TO NCIS

** NCIS is located in bldg. 3263 across from the NEX behind the main Security building.*

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