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TALISMAN SABRE 25

STRENGTH AND UNITY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

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6 TIMES OF AMERICA

Magazine of the USS America

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USS America in Minecraft built by Elijah Adkins, son of Chief Cryptologic Technician (Collection) Daniel Adkins



TIMES OF AMERICA

COMMANDING OFFICER

CAPT. E. M. Rule

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CAPT. M. T. Plageman

COMMAND MASTER CHIEF

CMDCM S. J. McQueen

USS AMERICA'S PAO

LT. Carolina Fernandez

MEDIA LCPO

MCC Byron Linder

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

MCSN Nicholas Douglass

CONTRIBUTORS

MC2 Cole Pursley
MC2 Amy Mullins
MC3 Kenneth Melseth
MC3 Jeadan Andre
MCSN Sam McNeely

PRINT EDITOR

MC3 Jeadan Andre

TIMES OF AMERICA

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Public Affairs Team

CAPTAIN'S CORNER

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDING OFFICER

Team of Teams,

For many of us, this is the end of an era, as we draw the operational phase of our patrol to a close and bid a fond farewell to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit. Our blue-green team has blended to complete numerous operations and two major multinational exercises, while staying brilliant on the day-to-day basics that resulted in large-scale accomplishments.

While there will be many farewells, there will be a great deal of welcoming to the Sailors and Marines cross-decking to AMERICA from USS TRIPOLI. In typical AMERICA fashion, please integrate our new teammates into the family that is AMERICA. I encourage you to engage with our new shipmates and extend the same warm welcome we always do to bring people into the fold.

As we pull away from Sasebo, our mission set will noticeably shift – we'll be going from high-speed flight operations and blue-green team training to a whole new mission set focused on getting our ship and mindsets ready for an in-depth maintenance and dry dock period. With kinetic operations winding down, it's time to double down on furthering your shipboard qualifications with underway training. As always, safety is the first priority – slow is safe and safe is fast. We need everyone to return with all ten fingers and toes.

When we arrive in San Diego, there will still be much to do to prepare our lives and our ship as we begin to bring AMERICA into the shipyard – both on ship and off ship. Many of us don't have a home in San Diego quite yet. Getting you and your families settled in to our new home is pivotal. If you're concerned about you or your family's living situation that means your mind isn't on the mission. We as leaders will make the necessary adjustments to ensure everyone has the opportunity to get settled in, so you can come to the ship every day with your mind clear and ready to execute AMERICA's maintenance availability.

In closing, I encourage you to make your voice heard by taking the DEOCS survey. The survey is anonymous and there is no way to trace your input to your name. It is one of the most critical tools I have to drive change and improve morale. In less than 20 minutes, you can help me make the command an even better place to be.

Thank you for your commitment and courage day in and day out. You never cease to amaze me, Team AMERICA!



With utmost respect and admiration,
CAPT Ethan M. Rule
Commanding Officer, USS AMERICA

WHAT OUR SAILORS & MARINES ARE READING

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MCSN DOUGLASS



LAST KIDS ON EARTH

By Max Brallier

Thirteen-year-old boy named Jack Sullivan a 13 year old boy who moves into his foster brother's tree house after a zombie outbreak hits his hometown, Wakefield, Massachusetts. He is accompanied by his best friend Quint Baker, who loves experimenting; June Del Toro, a strong, brave girl who used to be the school newspaper's editor-in-chief; and Dirk Savage, the local bully with exceptional fighting skills.

AB FAR CHARLES



GOOSEBUMPS

By R.L. Stine

Goosebumps is a series of Children's horror novels where the protagonists are usually young teens who find themselves in frightening circumstances, often involving the supernatural, paranormal or the occult. Between 1992 and 1997, sixty-two books were published under the Goosebumps umbrella title. Since the release of its first novel, Welcome to Dead House, the books have achieved immense popularity garnering positive reviews, and achieved commercial success captivating a diverse audience.

L CPL CINETTI



THE OUTSIDERS

By S.E. Hinton

Telling the story of ponyboy Curtis and his fellow Greasers, a group of lower-class teenagers in a divided town, and their rivalry with the wealthy Socs. After a tragic incident where Johnny, Ponyboy's best friend, kills a Soc, they go on the run, leading to escalating violence and ultimately, the death of Johnny and Dally, another Greaser. The novel explores themes of social class, violence, loyalty, and the struggles of growing up.

CPL GONZALEZ



HP & THE SORCERER STONE

By J.K. Rowling

The first book in a 8-books series, begins the story of Harry Potter, an orphaned boy who discovers he's a wizard on his eleventh birthday. He learns of his parents' death at the hand of Voldemort and his own fame in the wizarding world. At Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Harry befriends Ron and Hermione, and they face challenges to protect the Sorcerer's Stone from the dark wizard, who is trying to regain his power. In the finale, the Voldemort confronts Harry in a spectacular duel.

SN DENNIS



WHEN BREATH BECOMES AIR

By Paul Kalanithi

A poignant memoir of Kalanithi, a neurosurgeon who, at the age of 36, is diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. The book chronicles his journey from a promising medical career to a terminal cancer patient, forcing him to confront existential questions about life, death, and meaning. Through his eloquent prose, Kalanithi grapples with the fragility of life, the doctor-patient relationship, and the search for purpose in the face of mortality.

HMS RIKIYA



THE GIVER

By Lois Lowry

In a seemingly perfect, dystopian society suppressing emotions and memories to eliminate suffering and conflict, Jonas, a young boy, is chosen as the Receiver of memory, tasked with holding the community's collective memories of the past. Through his training with the Giver, Jonas learns about pain, joy, love and other complex emotions, realizing the cost of his society's "sameness." Ultimately, Jonas escapes with a baby named Gabriel to share these memories with the community and disrupt existence.

AOAN TANIYA



ALIENS

By Alan Dean Foster

As a novelization of the movie, a group of space marines investigates a human colony on a planet where the crew of the Nostromo previously encountered a deadly alien species. The colony has gone silent, and the marines, led by Ripley, the sole survivor of the Nostromo incident, discover that the colonists have been wiped out by the same alien creatures, now in a much larger and more terrifying form. Ripley and the marines must fight for survival against overwhelming odds in a desperate battle.

SN ALEMANGARCIA



METAMORPHOSIS

By Franz Kafka

Telling the story of Gregor Samsa, a traveling salesman, who wakes up one morning to find he has transformed into a giant insect. The novella explores themes of alienation, isolation, and the dehumanizing effects of modern life as Gregor struggles to adjust to his new form and his family's reaction to his transformation. His family, initially horrified, gradually comes to view him as a burden, leading to his isolation and eventual death.

CPL POLANCO



THE MEG GENERATION

By Steve Alten

The MEG series revolves around the discovery and encounters with prehistoric megalodon sharks, some of the largest and most ferocious predators the earth has ever known, and the efforts to control or stop them. The main character, Dr. Jonas Taylor, is a deep-sea diver and paleontologist who first encounters a megalodon in the Mariana Trench and dedicates his life to understanding and managing the threat these creatures pose to humanity.

CPL DICKERSON



HP & THE ORDER OF THE PHEONIX

By J.K. Rowling

Harry learns that many in the wizarding community do not know the truth of his encounter with Lord Voldemort. Cornelius Fudge, minister of Magic, appoints Dolores Umbridge, as Defense Against the Dark Arts teacher. But her teaching is deficient and her methods, cruel, so Harry prepares a group of students to defend the school against a rising evil.

QTR1 SHORTMAN



CAT IN THE HAT

By Dr. Seuss

Two bored children, Sally and her brother, who are stuck inside on a rainy day. A mischievous cat in a tall, red and white striped hat appears, promising them fun despite the dreary weather. The cat's arrival brings chaos and unconventional games, including introducing Thing One and Thing Two, who further disrupt the house. Just as their mother is about to return, the cat uses a machine to clean up the mess, leaving the house spotless.

CPL BLACK



THINGS I WANTED TO SAY

By Monica Murphy

A dark and angst-y romance set at Lancaster Prep, a prestigious boarding school. The story follows Summer Savage, who transfers to Lancaster after a family scandal, and Whit Lancaster, the school's "untouchable prince." Their families are connected by a past affair, and Whit uses this to make Summer's life miserable. When he finds her journal containing her deepest secrets, he threatens to expose them, leading to complicated and often toxic relationship fueled by obsession and attraction.

OS3 BROWN



MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

By Viktor Frankl

A book by Viktor Frankl chronicling his experiences as a prisoner in Nazi concentration camps during World War II, and describing his psychotherapeutic method, which involved identifying a purpose to each person's life through one of three ways: the completion of tasks, caring for another person, or finding meaning by facing suffering with dignity.

DC2 4ZAROV



THE LAST FULL MEASURE

By Jeff Shaara

Concludes the Civil War trilogy, following the events after the Battle of Gettysburg through the final surrender at Appomattox. The novel focuses on the perspectives of key figures like General Robert E. Lee, General Ulysses S. Grant, and Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, exploring their strategies, personal dilemmas, and the evolving nature of the war.

BM2 DEFIBAUGH



WHITE NIGHTS

By Fyodor Dostoevsky

Short stories about a lonely, unnamed narrator in St. Petersburg who meets and forms a brief, intense connection with a young woman named Nastenka during four "white nights" (Nights with very little darkness). The story explores themes of loneliness, the power of dreams, and the bittersweet nature of unrequited love as the narrator helps Nastenka reunite with her fiancé, despite his growing feelings for her.

CPL CASTRO



LINCOLN ON LEADERSHIP

By Donald T. Phillips

Highlighting Abraham Lincoln's leadership style through his actions and decisions during the Civil War. Key takeaways include Lincoln's emphasis on building strong relationships, his use of persuasive communication rather than coercion, and his ability to remain calm, and decisive during crisis. He also demonstrated a democratic leadership style, encouraging participation and sharing of ideas, and took responsibility for mistakes.

CMC MCQUEEN



BIBLE

By Multiple Authors

The Bible tells a unified story of God's relationship with humanity, encompassing creation, human rebellion, God's plan for redemption, and ultimately, the restoration of all things. It's a collection of 66 books, divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The overarching narrative explores themes of God's love, justice, and the human condition, highlighting both our capacity for good and our tendency towards sin.

XO PLAGEMAN



NEPTUNE'S INFERNO

By James D. Hornfischer

A historical account of the naval battles fought during the Guadalcanal campaign of World War II. The book details the brutal struggle between the U.S. and Japanese navies in the Solomon Islands, highlighting the sacrifices and challenges faced by American Sailors. It emphasizes the significance of this campaign as the first major offensive against Japan, marking a turning point in the Pacific theater.

CAPT RULE

SERVING BEYOND THE UNIFORM DEEPENING CROSS-CULTURAL TIES IN BRISBANE

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY MCSN DOUGLASS

Sailors from the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 6) and U.S. Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) recently participated in a unique community outreach event at the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary near Brisbane, Australia, on July 7, 2025. This unique collaboration provided U.S. service members with a hands-on opportunity to connect with wildlife conservation efforts, learning about the country's biodiversity while planting saplings throughout the world's largest koala sanctuary.

CMDR. Barrett Craig, USS America's Chaplain, spearheaded the coordination of this community relations event, working closely with the U.S. Consulate. He and the Command Religious Ministry Department regularly organize volunteer opportunities for Sailors and Marines during scheduled port visits.

"Service members are not only warriors but also volunteers, learners, and ambassadors of goodwill," said Craig. "Giving back to our allies offers an opportunity for building relationships person to person, country to country."

For the United States Navy and Marine Corps, engaging with host nations through community relations projects provide a meaningful and tangible way to strengthen bilateral ties, build trust, and reinforce our commitment to our partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region.

"These community efforts genuinely strengthen relationships with our allies. Life really moves at the speed of relationships," said Craig. "When we have strong trusting relationships with others, especially our allies, it helps us work faster and more efficiently."

During the event, the Sailors and Marines put in hard work, digging and planting holes for new trees. "The Marines and Sailors got dirty, had sweat on their foreheads, and worked hard. In the end, we all gathered and admired what we had accomplished," said Craig.

"Our Navy and Marine Corps mission goes beyond just going into battle. We have the vital task of winning the hearts and minds by building strong, trusting relationships with our allies and the communities we serve. Our community relations projects are key opportunities to demonstrate our genuine desire to serve and help people," said Chaplain Craig. "That was the highlight... petting a koala was pretty impactful, too. Even more, the Marines and Sailors who serve together build a bond that strengthens their relationships back on the ship, fostering a stronger team within our crew."

As the Indo-Pacific remains a key focus for U.S. security interests, community engagement with partner and allied nations like

Australia are more important than ever, and moments like these play a vital role in nurturing global partnerships.

The America Amphibious Group is currently conducting routine integrated operations in U.S. 7th Fleet areas of operations. U.S. 7th Fleet is the U.S. Navy's largest forward-deployed numbered fleet and routinely interacts and operates with allies and partners in preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific region.





TALISMAN SABRE 25

Talisman Sabre 25 is a bilateral exercise with multinational participation with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The Talisman Sabre series is the principle Australian-U.S. bilateral military training activity focused on mid intensity, high-end warfighting. Countries participating include Australia, Canada, Fiji, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Tonga, and the United Kingdom.



STRENGTH IN FORMATION

SIX NATIONS, FOURTEEN SHIPS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMERICA'S MEDIA TEAM



FORGING STRONGER BONDS

TRAINING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH AUSTRALIAN MILITARY

WRITTEN BY MCSN DOUGLASS

Aboard the forward-deployed amphibious assault ship USS America (LHA 8), United States Navy and Marines with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Royal Australian Navy (RAN), and Australian Army medical personnel worked seamlessly together to strengthen medical interoperability during Exercise Talisman Sabre 25, July, 2025. This bilateral training emphasizes the importance of multinational cooperation, especially in the field of maritime medicine.

RAN Lt. Cmdr. Irene Navay led a group of five Australian army medical personnel aboard the ship, sharing facilities in a joint learning ground where personnel from all services engaged in hands-on training designed to simulate real-world medical scenarios.

"I find this an invaluable opportunity to enhance our interoperability, share innovations between the military medical setting, see how the Navy does things, how we can learn, and how we can cross pollinate knowledge..." said Navay. "We have never had the opportunity to work alongside the Navy or Marine Corps in such a setting, that's why we are all super excited!"

The combined teams tackled challenging environments that mirrored both combat casualty care and humanitarian assistance missions, where space constraints, movement at sea, and operational tempo tested coordination and efficiency.

"At first, it was quite challenging being in such a new environment. We just don't know how things are done on a ship, so we have gone through the last week and are just starting to understand the routine of living on a ship," said ARA Capt. Samantha Dowdney.

Participants rotated through triage, resuscitation, surgical support, and post-operative care, observing and learning how allied partners manage critical care during a mass casualty event. This allowed for the exchange of procedures, techniques, and protocols used by both nations, enhancing mutual understanding and adaptability.

"We looked at the principles of managing severe trauma in an austere environment, and we had the opportunity to impart some of that knowledge back to the medical providers who were assisting in those procedures. These are critical lifesaving procedures, which have a very real impact when performed correctly," said ARA Capt. Katrina Cornish, who assisted with a mass casualty training.

While both trainings remain the same, the Australian military medical care share some differences between the U.S. Navy: "The medical infrastructure is quite remarkable in my opinion, but what I'm most impressed by are the [U.S.] enlisted members. The [U.S.] enlisted Sailors are relied upon to do activities and

procedures that the Australian military had done with officers, and utilizing enlisted to perform those advanced procedures is pretty inspiring," said ARA Private Luke Newman when recalling his experience of the mass casualty training.

To comment on this, from the U.S. Navy perspective is Cmdr. Todd Hansen, from Danville, New Jersey, who serves as the amphibious task force surgeon under Task Force 76, and Amphibious Squadron 11, "Australian and American medical practice align perhaps not 100, but a good 95 percent... But we afford our corpsman more responsibility, and as a result, more capability than we see in our partners and allies. There is a robust mechanism of oversight working under direct or indirect physician supervision."

As the exercises drew to a close, Talisman Sabre 25 provided an environment where both U.S. and Australian participants gained firsthand insight into how their counterparts approach emergency medicine and logistics. Building a shared framework through interoperability within medical operations ensures that allied forces can provide care under any conditions, anywhere in the world.



THE BATTLE OF HAMPTON ROADS CLASH OF THE IRONCLADS

WRITTEN BY MC3 MELSETH POSTER BY NAVAL HISTORY & HERITAGE COMMAND

In the smoke and thunder of the bay, two machines met not just to decide the fate of a harbor, but to define a new era of naval warfare.

In the early days of the American Civil War, the age of wooden warships would prove obsolete. The battle was fought over two days, March 8 and 9, 1862, the waters of Hampton Roads, Virginia, became the stage for one of the most revolutionary naval battles in history, a brutal clash between the Union's USS Monitor and the Confederate CSS Virginia. It was the first meeting of ironclad warships, and the world would never be the same.

The CSS Virginia, formerly the scuttled Union frigate USS Merrimack, had been salvaged by the Confederacy and transformed into a terrifying war machine. Her upper deck was sawed off and replaced with a sloped casemate of thick iron plating. Armed with powerful guns and an iron ram at her prow, the Virginia was unlike anything the Union Navy had ever faced. On March 8, 1862, she steamed into Hampton Roads with a single goal: break the Union blockade choking Southern ports. The Virginia unleashed devastation on the Union Navy's wooden fleet. She rammed and sank the USS Cumberland and set the USS Congress ablaze. Cannonballs from Union ships bounced harmlessly off her armored hull. The old wooden navy was powerless before her. Panic spread through Union ranks. If the Virginia escaped to open waters, she could threaten the entire Northern coast.

But the Union had a secret.

Late that night, the USS Monitor arrived under the cover of darkness. She was a radical design: flat, low to the water, with a single revolving turret housing two powerful cannons. Built in just 100 days, she was the Union's answer to the Confederate menace. At dawn on March 9, the Monitor moved to intercept the Virginia as she returned to finish off the Union fleet. The two ironclads met in the center of the bay. For over four hours they battered each other at close range, exchanging thunderous volleys that echoed across the coast. Cannonballs screamed and ricocheted. Smoke choked the air. Water boiled from near-misses.

Neither ship could penetrate the other's armor. It was a brutal stalemate, an unstoppable force meeting an immovable object. Eventually, both vessels withdrew with only minor damage. There was no clear victor that day, but the consequences were seismic. The Battle of Hampton Roads marked the end of the wooden warship and the dawn of the ironclad age. Navies across the world took notice. Overnight, the great fleets of Europe were obsolete. Though the Monitor had prevented the Virginia from breaking the blockade, both ships had already rewritten the rules of naval warfare. Their duel was more than just a battle, it was a turning point in history. Iron had triumphed over wood, and the future of naval power would be forged in metal.



AIRCRAFT INTERMEDIATE MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT (AIMD)

A WORD FROM ASAN ANDERSON

"It's tough to put into words what AIMD means to me- I wouldn't be where I am without them. Every morning, right at the end of muster, we say 'no air support without ground support,' because we literally couldn't do our jobs without all the moving pieces. PC ensuring we sign out tool log, or an AZ granting access to NALCOMIS. I couldn't tackle half of my maintenance without the AMs and ADs pitching in, or ATs and AEs handling the electronic work. We break tools, we request parts - Aviation Supply makes sure we have what we need, and QA certifies the GSE is safe to operate, AIMD isn't on the flightline stage, we're behind the curtain. The crew making everything run seamlessly, whether we're supporting RAS or swapping out engines, we always have a part in something whether you see us or not. So when some people ask why I care so much, I tell them 'countless people depend on me to get it right.' If one tool goes missing or a bolt is left out, flight ops is stalled- or worse. At the end of the day, it's easy to overlook all the moving pieces that brought me here, but AIMD never misses a beat, and that is why I'm so proud to be a part of it. NASWOGS!"



AVIATION ORDNANCE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

AO2 EVIN SANTANA, A RISING HERO

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY MC2 PURSLEY & MC2 MULLINS

The dew-covered grass curled around his hands. 1...2...3...4...5. He began his final test. He pushed more and more giving the test his all. 20...21...22...23... push up after push up his chest bounced off the cold wet grass. 57...58...59...60. 'Can't stop.' 63...64...65...66... 'Won't stop.' 71...72...73...74. 'Keep going.' He counted every pushup in his head until he dropped; he gave everything. He gave his dream 85 hard earned pushups. His dream of becoming an Aircrewman was on the horizon, he was so close. The proctor for the test walked up to him and his partner. He failed his final Physical Readiness Test (PRT).

"I made it towards the very end of Aircrew candidate school until graduation day. My partner and I got dropped during the final test," Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Evin Santana said, "We were told we were dropped because we weren't counting our pushups out loud, so they conspired us of cheating." Being dropped from Aircrew caused Santana to choose a new path away from his dream. He was given 5 options to start a new journey.

"They offered me 5 jobs," Santana said, "I wanted to stay aviation, I wanted to stay in Pensacola out of the options they gave me."

Santana thought out of the 5 jobs he was offered; Master-at-Arms, Engineman, Hull Technician, Air PACT or Aviation Ordnanceman. Santana would become an Aviation Ordnanceman (AO).

"I talked to an officer in my barracks who stood watch there," Santana said, "I was talking to him about my options and he told me 'It's no big deal, you can become an AO, they're gym rats, get strong, get big, work out, meet great people, make bombs and then come back to Aircrew.' I thought it wasn't a bad idea, I'll do that."

After Santana signed on to be an AO, he became motivated and ready to be the best AO he can be. A mix of rage and determination fueling the fire within. "I picked AO and at this point I'm fueled. The day I got dropped was the day that I started getting angry and started getting very ambitious," Santana said, "I started getting pumped and I thought 'Now I have to do something, now I need to change course, I need to do something with what I got.'"

Santana's motivation led him to triumphant results when he attended A-school. He surpassed his classmates in the school house leading him to early leadership responsibilities.

"Once I struck AO I decided and swore to myself and my friends that I was going to be the best AO in the school house," Santana said, "so going forward not only did I become the top of my class I also became the school house leader in the AO school house."

Schooling for Santana was just the tip of the iceberg the fleet is where he will be trained, tested and molded into the most qualified AO he can be. But shifting from school to the fleet was a real change for Santana.

"When I first came to the fleet everything changed, it was like being an 8th grader and becoming a freshman in high school, being at the bottom of the barrel."

Adjusting to the fleet was rough for Santana, but Santana recalls when he went to see his recruiter for the first time and was notified that the fleet was going to be a major change and might become uncomfortable for Santana, which also became one of the reasons he joined the military.

"It was rough for me at first to get adjusted to the fleet, but that's why I joined, when I went to the recruiting office my recruiter was honest and told my mother, 'Listen your son is going to be far from home and he is going to be homesick, he's going to be uncomfortable, it's our job to boost his morale and keep him moving forward.'" Santana said, "That exact quote got me hooked! It hooked me on and I said, 'Yes! Get me in there!'"

Finally, Santana got into the fleet and was sent straight to Sasebo, Japan to join the forward deployed amphibious assault ship USS America's (LHA 6)

crew, where he met an unexpected fate. Cranking.

"When I got here it was rough. At the time I was new, the atmosphere was different, I felt alone. I was by myself. It was also a culture shock as well," Santana said, "Who knew I was going to get my dream location off the bat, to come to Japan and experience it, it was great. Not to long after that I went underway for 23.2 patrol and was sent to be a Food Service Attendant (FSA). It became even more rough."

Santana had to shift away from being an AO to being in FSA. This change dampened his progress for qualifying himself in his rate and caused him to lose all his knowledge.

"I was no longer an AO, in the time I was FSA I lost my knowledge, I lost all the things I learned at the school house because I didn't get to be hands on," Santana said, "I didn't get to practice my work, I didn't get to do any of that. I became more of a Culinary Specialist (CS) than an AO at that point."

Through the tough challenges of being taken away from his new path and dealing with FSA duties Santana still keeps himself motivated and maintains a positive mindset.

"I was told it was the most difficult part of your career in the navy, which I agree upon, but it's ok because when I got out it made me grateful for what I have," Santana said, "FSA wasn't all bad, it had a lot of good sides to it; meeting good people, built good connections, test stress levels and build good connections in all aspects of the navy."

As Santana pushed himself through FSA with his motivated mindset, he finally got to do his job and experience the AO lifestyle. From maintaining America's Galley to Building America's Ordnance Santana is enjoying the change.

"Being an AO is awesome! Building bombs is great! The community is amazing. No one parties like AOs. They are good people, good family,"



Santana said, "I highly recommend being an AO to anybody who wants to experience it, like the gym. You like the gym? Become an AO. You like deadlifting? Come over and pick up this missile, see what it's like carrying a missile with 4 people. It's a dangerous job but it is absolutely fun."

With Santana joining the AO team he focuses on team dynamics and team work. Team work is an important trait for mission success. Santana is a big supporter of team work and morale affect on getting the job done.

"I enjoy working with the team. I'm a team player. I am all for my team and my people, I'm a huge believer in morale and a huge believer on a positive work force," Santana said, "If you can learn how to lead your team or work with your team to work as one, and everyone remains open minded to find the best solution to complete that task and start to mold into a liquid state of matter when you can work as one it is a very effective team. I'm all for that!" Being on the AO team is not Santana's first time being on a team, Santana looks back and reminisces about the first team he was on before he joined the navy.

"I used to be part of a team before the military. I led a dance team, a competition team. We were that team that won first place. We were always the top and we always killed it, put in the hard work and worked as one mind," Santana said, "In order to do that you have to be open minded to not be bitter towards each other, to trust each other, to communicate together, to coordinate with each other. That is a huge key to make it happen."

As an experienced team leader Santana looks for specific traits in future members thinking about being AOs so he can have accountable team mates. "If I were to see someone else become an AO, I would expect them to be trustworthy, I am trusting them with equipment that is dangerous to all, it's explosives it can kill. I expect someone who cherishes life, someone who knows when to be firm but also someone who knows when to be delicate," Santana said, "I expect someone who can plan and not be impatient, this is the kind of work force where you should think first. Coordinate, plan it out, and push through. Be a team player, you cannot be an AO without being a team player. The biggest traits are; trust, being a team player, understanding the responsibility you carry and the mindset you put into it."

AOs carry the burden of dealing with lethal equipment as well as standing watch where there is the potential to take a life. Santana explains the scale of the responsibly AOs carry for their job.

"AOs are put on SCATT teams or at some point Ordnanceman will carry a gun or have to fire a crew serve weapon," Santana said, "but their intent to not just want to kill or take a life, they're intent needs to be 'Protect those around me' it needs to be 'I want to protect everyone from danger. I want to prevent danger. To be a hero, not to be someone who wants to take a life.'"

Santana hones in on the hero mentality and further explains where it originated for him.

"There was always a quote that has come a long way with me throughout my life, I grew up reading and listening to this quote, 'A hero takes pride in how far they've come and will remain faithful in how far they will go.'" Santana said, "That's something that will always stay with me and something that I always look forward to, something that I always remind myself of, something that I always carry along with me."

Santana reminisces back to his old dance crew days and how it put him on a path of glory.

"There was a placard that was right above the studio of Heroes of Hip-Hop studio, and it would say the quote. It was something I would always read for years and stuck with me forever. I decided to maintain that mindset of positivity and open mindedness," Santana said, "If you stay openminded knowing you can always get back up on your feet nothing can stop you from reaching your goals, nothing can stop you from turning dreams into goals, nothing can stop you from what you want to do and leaving your mark on this world. If you want to make a change it's possible you just have to have that mindset."

Santana has turned his dreams to goals, setting up a great future for himself. "My goals go from short range to long range. Short range I am trying to make 1st Class in September. I don't think I am ready to be 1st Class, but I also didn't think I was ready to be a 2nd Class, but sometimes you need to be thrown into the water to see if you can swim or drown. Middle range would be knocking out my college courses while I am in San Diego, to push hard in the next 2 to 3 years to get my bachelors. I am interested in something involved with intelligence or communications, maybe psychology," Santana said, "Once I get my bachelors I will be pushing to commission to officer, which is my long-range goal. I still need to look into it, I want to go OCS, but I

still need to do research. But all in all, I want to be an officer in the intelligence field. That's my goal but I don't know, we'll see what happens, we'll see what the future tells."



PATROL 25.2 HIGHLIGHTS



Flawlessly executed over 2,290 mishap-free flight hours and 1,085 aircraft sorties with a 90% sortie completion rate in direct support of real world operations, amphibious integrated training and two multinational exercises. Hosted 16 foreign aircraft from four partner nations, to include the launch and recovery of two United Kingdom F-35 Lightning II aircraft.



America conducted three innovative Search and Rescue training exercises with HSC-25's MH-60 Seahawk and for the first time ever coordinating and integrating SAR capabilities with an MV-22 Osprey as a proof of concept, significantly enhancing the ship's readiness and improving response capabilities in the region.



America's Sailors and 31st MEU Marines demonstrated peak operational readiness during Amphibious Integrated Training and Certification Exercise, completing 5 Maritime Strikes, 6 Helo Raids, 3 VBSS/MIO Missions, and 21 restricted communications drills.



Conducted three total port visits to Sydney and Brisbane. Hosted 300+ distinguished visitors, dignitaries and partner militaries for tours during port visits, and organized two high impact COMREL's fostering positive relationships and promoting U.S. Interest in the region.



As the flagship maintenance service-provider, America's Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD) completed 3,589 aircraft maintenance actions, five engineering fabrications, maintaining an 87% availability of parts ready-for-issue in support of aircraft across three amphibious ships and 8 embarked Navy and Marine Corps units, ensuring higher than average aircraft operational readiness.



From May through August, America's 2,500 Sailors and Marines transited over 12,722 nautical miles and conducted 18 sea and anchor details, 6 restricted water transits, consumed 2.3 million gallons of fuel, operated APMs for 487 hours with an estimated fuel burn savings of \$1.5 million dollars.



America's Supply department supported George Washington Carrier Strike Group in a moment's notice with parts from VMFA-242. America's ability to integrate sustainment efforts in a coalition environment by supporting cross-deck logistics with the George Washington Carrier Strike Group, expanded interoperability objectives and enhanced readiness across platforms while operating in close proximity- a first of its kind in this region.



In support of naval and atmospheric research, America deployed 4 weather and oceanographic data collection devices, collecting critical information for developing short and long term weather forecasts, further improving timely warnings and protective measures for operations.



America's six years of maintaining a high operational tempo and successful deployment exemplifies the Navy's commitment to readiness, integrated deterrence and enduring partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.



NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO A BRIEF HOMEPORT GUIDE

FLEET & FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER SAN DIEGO | WWW.SANDIEGO.NAVYLIFESW.COM/FFSC

Homecoming is a long-standing tradition enjoyed by Sailors and their families. This guide provides resource contact information to those responsible for coordinating events on Homecoming day at Naval Base San Diego (NBSD). Not every command returns home in the same manner, therefore prior to initiating any plans for a Homecoming event, specific guidance must be obtained from the returning command's Commanding Officer (CO). To prepare, consider enlisting the support of a Host Ship. A working party from a Host Ship can provide the muscle needed to set up tents, chairs and awnings and then break everything down once the event is over.

POINT OF CONTACTS

FRG / OMBUDSMAN sdfscombudsman@us.navy.mil 619-556-7404	PORT OPERATIONS nbsd_portops@us.navy.mil 619-556-3147	BASE ACCESS nbsdovac_status@us.navy.mil 619-556-1653	PUBLIC AFFAIRS nbsd.pao@us.navy.mil 619-556-7359	PUBLIC WORKS nbsdmd22@us.navy.mil
MWR Equipment Rental: 619-556-7493 POV & HHG Storage pickup: 619-556-3320	PARKING nbsd_parking@us.navy.mil	FLEET & FAMILY ffscsdtrainingrequest@us.navy.mil 619-556-7359	HOMEPORT ASHORE sandiego_unaccompaniedhousing@us.navy.mil (619) 556-1179 (619) 556-1143 (619) 556-9713	NAVY BAND navybandswoperations@us.navy.mil 619-556-6959

FFSC POST-DEPLOYMENT WORKSHOP

The Post-Deployment Workshop, also referenced as the Homecoming Workshop, is available for FRG meetings. Homecoming and Reintegration workshops are designed for spouses, partners, adult family members and children of service members who are returning from deployment. The purpose of these workshops is to help families re-establish connections with their service member by re-learning face-to-face communication, celebrating growth, managing expectations and understanding operational stress.

CONTACT: FFSCSDTrainingRequest@us.navy.mil

FIRST KISS/HUG/NEW PARENT

Be sure to get command approval before proceeding with your plans for the First Kiss and/or First Hug opportunity drawing. It is completely up to your individual command how this tradition will be utilized, if at all. Also, commands will sometimes provide an opportunity for new parents to disembark first.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

AMERICAN RED CROSS: 619-310-2144
 ARMED SERVICES YMCA (ASYMCA): 858-751-5755
 FAMILIES OVERCOMING UNDER STRESS (FOCUS): 858-751-5755
 FLEET & FAMILY SUPPORT CENTER: 619-556-7404
 LIBERTY MILITARY HOUSING: 858-633-2105
 MILITARY ONESOURCE: 800-342-9647
 NAVY LEAGUE SAN DIEGO: 619-230-0301
 NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY: 619-767-6800
 NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST LEGAL SERVICES OFFICE: 619-556-0049
 OPERATION HOMEFRONT: 858-242-4995
 SCHOOL LIAISON OFFICER: 619-349-7678 or 619-556-6201
 TRICARE BENEFICIARY EDUCATOR, SAN DIEGO: 619-372-1208
 UNACCOMPANIED HOUSING: 619-556-1077
 UNITED THROUGH READING (FAMILY LITERACY): 858-481-7323
 OPERATION HOMEFRONT: 858-242-4995
 USO SAN DIEGO: 619-235-6503



OFFICE OF FINANCIAL READINESS CAR BUYING STRATEGIES

ESSENTIAL STEPS BEFORE YOU BUY A CAR

RESEARCH VEHICLES	SPENDING PLAN	GET PRE-APPROVED	NEGOTIATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fuel Efficiency Safety Features Brand Size Comfort Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate your Finances Monthly Income Consider Savings Avoid Overextending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check your credit Review your monthly income Calculate your Loan Consider a trade-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set a Spending Limit Willing to Walk Away Detail Everything Have Everything on Paper Timing Matters

CONSIDERATIONS FOR BUYING NEW

PROS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latest technology Manufacturer warranty coverage Low maintenance Financing incentives Higher resale value 	CONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher purchase price, taxes, and registration fees Rapid depreciation More expensive insurance
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CONSIDERATIONS FOR PRE-OWNED

PROS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less expensive Less depreciation Lower insurance premiums Certified Pre-owned Options (CPO) are available Wide variety of vehicle options 	CONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More frequent maintenance Limited or no warranties Vehicle history may not be fully transparent Lack of latest technology Potential unfavorable finance terms
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LEASING CONSIDERATIONS

PROS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower monthly payments Lower upfront costs Ability to drive newer models Under warranty No need to sell or trade in No concern for future market value Potential early termination protection under SCRA 	CONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not own the vehicle Upfront costs apply Early termination charges Limited miles you can drive Charged for wear to the vehicle Payment to re-lease or purchase Tax implications
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RESOURCES

The DOD Office of Financial Readiness (FINRED)
[finred.usa.gov/money/car-buying-basics](https://www.usa.gov/money/car-buying-basics)
 FINRED – Major Purchases
[finred.usa.gov/money/major-purchases](https://www.usa.gov/money/major-purchases)

FINRED – Auto Calculators
[finred.usa.gov/tools-and-resources/auto-calculators](https://www.usa.gov/tools-and-resources/auto-calculators)
 SenSe app
[finred.usa.gov/tools-and-resources/sense-app](https://www.usa.gov/tools-and-resources/sense-app)

Federal Trade Commission
[consumer.ftc.gov/articles/buying-used-car-dealer](https://www.ftc.gov/articles/buying-used-car-dealer)
 Credit reports
<https://www.annualcreditreport.com/index.action>



MWR AUG CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
August 10,000 Step Challenge! Walk 10,000 steps a day for your chance to win a prize! Stop by the MWR office for more details.					1 <i>Find The Rock!</i> Anime Club	2 <i>Karaoke & Ice Cream</i>
3	4	5 <i>Texas Hold'em</i>	6 <i>America Social Night</i> Chess Club	7 <i>Madden Tournament</i>	8 <i>Find The Rock!</i> Anime Club	9 <i>Talent Show</i>
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 <i>American Social Night</i> Chess Club	21 <i>Smash Bros Tournament</i>	22 <i>Find The Rock!</i> Anime Club	23 <i>Movie Night</i>
24	25	26 <i>Trivia</i>	27 <i>American Social Night</i> Chess Club	28	29 <i>Find The Rock!</i> Anime Club	30 <i>BINGO</i>
31						

America Club: 2000 Rec Room. Find the Rock: Clues will be posted by 1300. Karaoke and Ice Cream Social: 2000 Mess Deck. Texas Hold'em Tournament: Mess Deck 2000. America's Social Night: Mess Deck 2000-2200. Come play board games, D&D, Yu-Gi-Oh, Magic the Gathering, Video Games or Art & Crafts. Chess Club: Mess Deck 2000 Learn how to play. Madden Tournament: Mess Deck 2000. Talent Show: Location TBD 2000. Super Smash Tournament: Mess Deck 2000-2200. Registration taken at 2000. Do not be late. Movie Night: Mess Deck 2000. Trivia: Mess Deck 2000. Teams of 4. BINGO: 2000 CCTV. Tickets will be sold during lunch and dinner.



FACES OF AMERICA

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SAILORS OF THE AMERICA





FACES OF THE 31st MEU

U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTOS BY 31ST MEU COMMSTRAT



FAREWELL FIT BOSS

WRITTEN BY MCSN MCNEELY

Fit Boss, Kevin Rocha is an essential part of the morale team aboard the USS America. Some Sailors consider him a friend and some consider him family. Kevin Rocha's impact on the Sailors and Marines embarked on the USS America has been nothing short of inspiring, he has motivated, cultivated and shaped the Sailors and Marines aboard USS America into the golden standard of how Sailors and Marines should train. Kevin Rocha has done more than just shaping bodies, he's shaped minds and made a family out of the USS America.

"The USS America is my first Navy home away from home, my first ship, and my first time out at sea. I'll always cherish my new family I met aboard," Said USS America's Fit Boss Kevin Rocha.



CO'S VIRTUAL SUGGESTION BOX

This virtual Suggestion Box is your opportunity to share your thoughts and concerns with leadership at your command.

https://usnavy.gov/qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9FiQbwnfgRgFXR?UIC=20103



Need to Talk?

If you've been sexually assaulted, anonymous help is available.

safehelpline.org
877-995-5247

Safe Helpline

SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES

SAPRVAS@LHA6.NAVY.MIL | Duty SAPR dial: 2999

SUBSTANCE ABUSE SUPPORT

DAPA@LHA6.NAVY.MIL | AOCS Shackleford dial: 2850

SPEAK WITH A CHAPLAIN

JAMES.HARPER@LHA6.NAVY.MIL | CDR Harper dial: 2737

**PREPARED IN WAR
OR IN PEACE**



6 TIMES OF AMERICA