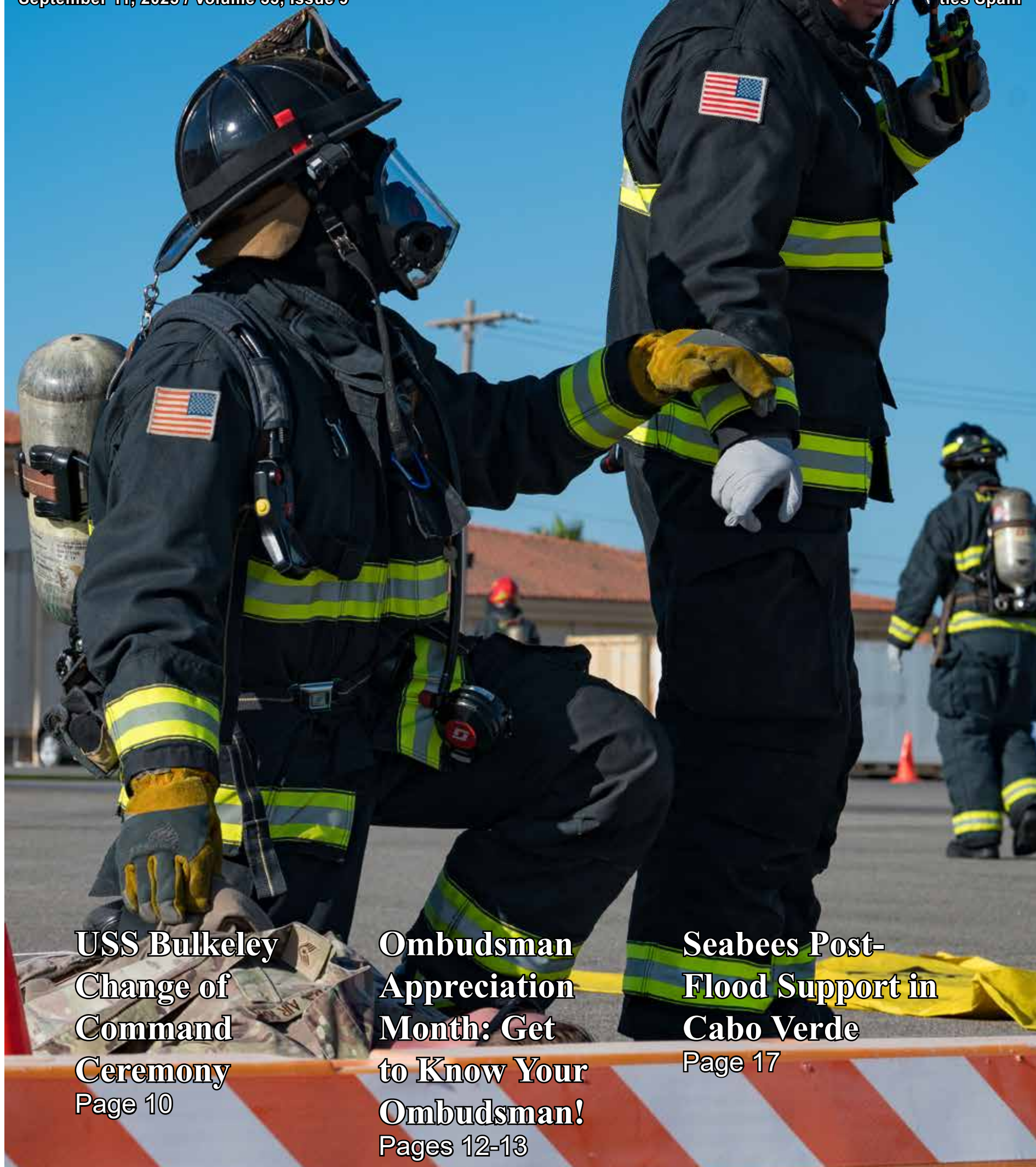


COASTLINE

September 11, 2025 / Volume 35, Issue 9

Activities Spain



**USS Bulkeley
Change of
Command
Ceremony**
Page 10

**Ombudsman
Appreciation
Month: Get
to Know Your
Ombudsman!**
Pages 12-13

**Seabees Post-
Flood Support in
Cabo Verde**
Page 17

Naval Station Rota's Housing Department: A Home Away From Home

Leadership Corner



Rodney Kayes
Housing Director

Hola Rota Navy Housing community from the Housing Directors office. My name is Rodney Kayes and I'm a 24 year career veteran of the Navy. I have been with Navy Housing Programs since 2016 and arrived to Rota in January 2024 from Joint Base Anacostia Bolling in Washington, D.C.

Housing Programs at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota play a vital role in supporting families and single Sailors who are serving far from home. NAVSTA Rota was founded in 1953 and its barracks were constructed from 1966 to 1986 and its family housing from 1957 to 1959, which are still in service today. Currently, Rota has 19 unaccompanied housing buildings offering 1,214 beds and 327 family homes with two, three and four bedroom options for our enlisted and officer Families.

Unaccompanied Housing: Marwin Aquino and his wealth of experience came to us in 2023 from Camp Foster in Okinawa, Japan. His team is devoted to the mission and goes beyond assignment of rooms as they foster a welcoming environment where Sailors can rest, recharge, and build friendships. They work tirelessly to make unaccompanied housing a "home away from home," with a focus on safety, quality of life, quality of service and community. Unaccompanied housing's commitment

begins with a 24/7 front desk at building 35, ensuring residents get the assistance they need with room assignments, urgent work requests, or general questions. A challenge of managing property built from 1966 to 1986 is upkeep and maintenance. Marwin currently has seven maintenance and restoration projects which will modernize living spaces, replace outdated fixtures, and enhance comfort for residents. They represent an ongoing commitment to provide safe and well-maintained housing that meets the Navy's high standards.

On-base Housing, Facilities Branch: John Leabo came to us from Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas in December 2023. John is responsible for maintenance, upkeep and assignment of our 327 on-base homes. To qualify for housing, you must be active duty military, permanently assigned to NAVSTA Rota, and have one or more dependents on-station. Living on base is especially great for families with children since they will be close to the school, child care, and other amenities on-base. Homes are equipped with 110 volt wattage, and appliances and loaner furnishings are available for 90 days after assignment and 90 days prior to moving out to allow for arrival of and early shipment of household goods. Please visit John and his team within 30 days of reporting to Rota if you are interested in living on base.

Off-base Housing, Referrals Branch: Pablo Garrido came to us from Ventura, Calif. in February 2025. He and his team manage 2,500 off base leases in Rota and the surrounding areas and work diligently in finding new, quality listings to accommodate NAVSTA Rota's community. Living off base is a unique and rewarding experience and allows full immersion in the Spanish community. The months of July and August can make finding a new home more challenging due to the volume of vacationers, but it is worth the wait.

Please request a virtual application at rotahousing@us.navy.mil, or in-person at building 1960, Monday through Thursday from 0800 to 1600 and Friday from 0800 to 1200.

Whether you are moving into the barracks, into our family housing on base, or living out in town, the Navy Housing Team welcomes you and wishes you a great tour at NAVSTA Rota.

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On The Front Cover



Sailors, Airmen and Firefighters assigned to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, participate in an aircraft firefighting drill, Aug. 21, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson)

Do You Like to Write or Take Photos?

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

Publication is subject to approval.

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The Spain Starter Pack: 10 Cultural Habits Worth Adopting

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

Whether you've just arrived in Spain or are a few weeks into your PCS adventure, one thing becomes clear pretty quickly: you're not just living in a new country - you're living in a new rhythm.

From how people greet each other to how and when they eat dinner, Spanish life invites you to slow down, look up from your phone, and embrace a different pace. The good news? It's not just charming—it's contagious. Here's your unofficial, culturally approved "Spain Starter Pack," 10 habits worth adopting while you're stationed here.

Greeting With Two Kisses (Sometimes)

You've probably heard of the famous "dos besos," the one kiss on each cheek, starting on the left. It's a typical greeting among friends, family, and even new acquaintances. But when and where to use it can get tricky, especially for Americans who are used to firm

handshakes or a simple wave.

In casual settings, especially among women or between men and women, two kisses are standard. But in professional environments or first-time meetings, it's perfectly acceptable and often safer to offer a handshake first.

Pro tip: If someone leans in, just go with it. Don't panic. It's not invasive, it's tradition.

Understanding "Ahora" Doesn't Mean "Now"

You'll hear the word "ahora" a lot, especially when something is being promised: "Te lo mando ahora" ("I'll send it now") or "Ahora voy" ("I'm coming now.") But here's the twist: "ahora" doesn't always mean "this exact second." It can mean "soon," "in a bit," or even "whenever I get to it."

Learning the Art of Spanish Small Talk

Striking up a conversation in Spain rarely requires an excuse. Whether you're waiting in line at the bakery or walking your child to school, someone may comment on the weather, your dog, or your kid's backpack. It's friendly, spontaneous, and refreshingly unfiltered.

You'll also notice how often people say "¡Qué guapo!" or "¡Qué mayor está!" when seeing children. These are not personal judgments. They're automatic and sincere compliments. If a stranger comments on your toddler's curls or your teenager's height, smile and say "gracias." It's all part of the charm.

Slowing Down on Purpose

Spain's secret superpower? The unhurried pace of life. No one's suggesting you cancel your calendar, but the local rhythm might convince you to ease up a bit. Mealtimes are later, conversations are longer, and no one expects you to be in a rush.

Shops often close from 2 to 5 p.m. for siesta, especially in smaller towns. Sundays? They're for family and rest.

Don't expect to get a lot done, and that's the point. As frustrating as it may feel at first, these slow moments can become your favorite part of life here.

Mastering the Grocery Store Circuit

In the U.S., you may be used to doing your full weekly shop in one place. Here? Many Spaniards prefer hopping between store; a fruit stand for produce, a butcher for meat, and the supermarket for everything else.

It may seem inconvenient at first, but it's also a way of building community. You get to know your neighborhood vendors. They remember you. They'll even start saving your favorite tomatoes.

And yes, you need a coin (usually €1) for the shopping cart.

Appreciating the Power of a Good "Puente"

A "puente," or bridge, is a long weekend created when a holiday falls on a Tuesday or Thursday. Instead of going to work for just one day in the middle, many people take off the extra day and make it a mini vacation. Schools, offices, and even city services may close or operate on limited hours.

Pro tip: Keep an eye on your local ayuntamiento calendar - and maybe don't schedule anything urgent for the day after a national holiday.

Dinner at 9 p.m.? Why Not

One of the biggest culture shocks is the timing of meals. Lunch is the main meal of the day and often happens around 2 or 3 p.m. Dinner is lighter and later, sometimes not until 9:30 or 10 p.m.

Kids stay up late too, especially in summer. Don't be surprised to see toddlers at the fair at midnight or families still out at tapas bars well past what Americans would consider bedtime. It's not bad parenting: it's just Spain.

The Incredible Disappearing Line (aka "La Cola")

Spaniards do queue, but not always in the neat, rope-line style you might be used to. In small shops, banks, or clinics, it's normal to ask "¿Quién es el último?" ("Who's last?") when you enter. Then you mentally note the person ahead of you and wait for your turn. No numbered tickets, no chaos - just a system that works.

Always Bring a Bag

Plastic bags are not free at most stores. You'll either be asked if you want



one ("¿Bolsa?") or expected to bring your own. Keep a foldable bag in your car or purse. It'll come in handy more often than you think.

Savoring Your Coffee, Always

Coffee in Spain isn't meant to be gulped in a to-go cup while rushing to your next meeting. It's an event, even if it only lasts five minutes. Café con leche in the morning, café solo after lunch, or café cortado when you're splitting the difference.

And yes, you can ask for your coffee "para llevar" (to go), but don't be surprised if the barista hands it to you in a tiny paper cup with a raised eyebrow.

Embracing It All

Living in Spain isn't about changing who you are: It's about expanding your comfort zone. Adopting a few of these habits don't just help you fit in but can also help you feel more at home. So, greet someone with two kisses, say "buenos días" to every stranger you pass, and take a little extra time over lunch.

You're not just visiting: You're living here. And with a little curiosity and a lot of openness, you might just find yourself falling in love with life, Spanish-style.

For questions about local customs, schools, or navigating your new life in Spain, the Rota community is here to help. You're not alone. We're all learning together.



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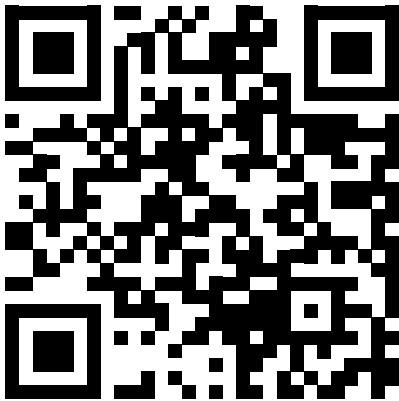
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725 Air Mobility Squadron Tenant Command Spotlight

Coastline's PAO team highlighted the 725th Air Mobility Squadron for August's Tenant Command Spotlight. Alongside the video, we also collected some photos of the Airmen doing their thing at the squadron.

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Rota Strengthens Warfighter Readiness Through Joint Mass Casualty Exercise

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

A successful large-scale mass casualty exercise was carried out by U.S. Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Rota, in collaboration with Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota and Federal Firefighters, Aug. 21, 2025, onboard the installation.

The exercise was designed to strengthen contingency planning and enhance warfighter readiness. The integrated drill, dubbed Lazy Altitude, tested the installation's ability to respond to a complex emergency while validating medical surge capacity and joint interoperability.

The scenario simulated a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III, a transport

aircraft crash resulting in eight casualties of varying injury levels. Responders were tasked with triaging, stabilizing, and transporting patients under pressure while maintaining command and control of a rapidly evolving situation. Within minutes, NMRTC Rota personnel surged clinical operations, activated command center processes, and demonstrated their ability to expand capacity in support of operational forces and their families.

"Exercises like this are not just about medical care; they are about proving that as a team, we are ready to respond to the unexpected," said Lt. Aidan Stubbs, the Assistant Emergency Management Officer at NMRTC Rota. "The collaboration between the hospital, the base, and our emergency services partners ensures that if a real-world crisis occurs, we are



A C-17 Globemaster III takes off from Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota's airfield while Sailors, Airmen and Firefighters assigned to the installation participate in an aircraft firefighting drill, Aug. 21, 2025. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson)

prepared to act decisively and effectively."

The training validated key capabilities, including triage, treatment, and command center operations, while also identifying opportunities for improvement in patient tracking, mortuary affairs, communication, and blood product resupply. Leaders emphasized that finding these gaps is a strength, and continuous improvement builds resilience and readiness across the installation.

In today's complex global security environment, joint preparedness is essential. Lazy Altitude reinforced the importance of integrated training between medical, operational, and emergency response partners. By working side-by-side, NMRTC Rota, NAVSTA Rota, and Federal Firefighters reaffirmed their dedication to protecting the force, enabling the mission, and guaranteeing contingency planning that keeps

warfighters ready.

"Readiness in peace, contingency, or in conflict is our mission!" said NMRTC Rota Commanding Officer Capt. Michael Mercado. "Whether it's one casualty or many, our team is always ready."

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

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



Clinical staff at Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Rota receive a simulated casualty during a mass casualty joint training exercise. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. Cmdr. Jonathan Phillips)

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USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) Holds Change of Command Ceremony

**Photos and Story by Mass
Communication Specialist 2nd Class
Jonathan Nye**
USS Bulkeley Public Affairs

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) held its change of command ceremony at Pier 1 on Naval Station Rota, Spain, Aug. 7, 2025.

Cmdr. Michael Schelcher relieved Cmdr. Arturo Trejo as Bulkeley's commanding officer in a ceremony presided over by Capt. Alex Mamikonian, Commodore, Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60, and Commander, Task Force (CTF) 65.

"This crew has exemplified what Naval excellence looks like—what it means to pursue our core values and demand that we all treat each other well," said Trejo during the ceremony. "This ship and crew has done unimaginable things."

During Cmdr. Trejo's command, Bulkeley was involved in rescuing 60 refugees in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea, offering direct aid and medical attention to two vessels in distress. Bulkeley supported the USS Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group's deterrence efforts in the Eastern Mediterranean. On Oct. 1, 2024, Bulkeley engaged multiple Iranian ballistic missiles in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea while defending Israel. Most recently, the ship participated in Formidable Shield 2025, the largest at-sea live-fire exercise in the European theater, with 11 nations participating.

Cmdr. Trejo led Bulkeley through

multiple exercises and operations during a recent Comprehensive Unit Training Exercise (COMPTUEX). During COMPTUEX, Bulkeley was underway for approximately 25 days in the Atlantic Ocean with the USS Iwo Jima Amphibious Readiness Group (ARG) and 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), integrating capabilities led by Carrier Strike Group Four and the ARG-MEU team. Bulkeley also integrated with USS Stout (DDG 55) and USS Normandy (CG 60), conducting multiple maneuvering exercises, helicopter operations, underway replenishments, and gunnery exercises.

Under Cmdr. Trejo's command, the ship was also successful in multiple shipboard inspections and drills between patrols, maintaining excellent proficiency and interoperability.

Prior to assuming command, Cmdr. Schelcher also served as the executive officer alongside Cmdr. Trejo beginning in January of 2024.

Cmdr. Trejo, A native of El Monte, California, enlisted in the Navy in 1998, where he performed duties as an Air Traffic Controller. In 2005, he was commissioned via the NROTC program from the University of California Los Angeles with a Bachelor's of Science in Astrophysics. Cmdr. Trejo holds a Master of Arts degree in Public Policy from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs.

His sea assignments include: Second Division Officer and Electronic Warfare Officer aboard USS Essex (LHD 2);



Cmdr. Michael Schelcher, Commanding Officer of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), is rung off the stage during a change of command ceremony, August 7, 2025.



Cmdr. Arturo Trejo, Commanding Officer of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84), gives remarks during his change of command ceremony, August 7, 2025.

Reactor Propulsion Division Officer aboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68); Operations Officer aboard USS Stockdale (DDG 106); Main Propulsion Assistant aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71); executive officer and commanding officer of USS Bulkeley (DDG 84).

His shore assignments include the Senior Staff Officer and C4I representative to NATO for Commander Maritime Headquarters Atlantic (MARLANT HQ) in Nova Scotia, Canada, and as a Junior Board Member for the U.S. Pacific Fleet's Nuclear Propulsion Examining Board.

Trejo is especially thankful for his loving wife, Amanda, and his three beautiful children Remi, Phoenix, and Gia, whose love and support made his command tour possible.

Cmdr. Schelcher, a native of Monterey, California, is a 2008 graduate of the United States Naval Academy where he earned his commission and a Bachelor's of Science degree in History with a minor in Spanish. He graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School in 2012 with a Master of National Security Affairs: Security Studies of East Asia, and also completed the Naval War College Joint Professional Military Education Phase I curriculum.

"It's an honor of a lifetime to serve alongside the incredible Sailors of USS

Bulkeley,” said Schelcher. “I’m proud of what has been accomplished together and grateful for the opportunity to lead such a talented and dedicated team.”

Cmdr. Schelcher will take Bulkeley to sea for the first time as commanding officer during its fourth Forward Deployed Naval Forces Europe (FDNF-E) patrol. He will command the ship and crew in executing operations in the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) areas of responsibility, including sea lines of communication protection, maritime interdiction operations, direct support to NATO combined and joint operations and exercises, counter-terrorism operations, counter-piracy operations, Africa maritime law enforcement partnership operations, whole of government Africa partnership deployments, and theater security cooperation activities in-port and underway.

Commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allies, international partners, and other U.S. government departments and agencies to advance U.S. national interests, security, and stability in Europe and Africa.

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HOW TO GET THERE?



Spouse Talk: Bumps in the Road

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Member

It happens to all of us. We have an expectation of how things are going to play out. There's a point A to point B, a beginning and an end. But then something happens to disrupt the expectation. It might be something minor or so disastrous you can't see a way out. How do we go about moving forward when we now have an obstacle blocking the way to our expectations?

A few weeks ago, I had a friend and fellow military wife go through a major life change that threw her into a whirlwind of disarray. For three hours, she spilled out a treasure trove of secrets her spouse had been keeping from her and their family. It was unexpected, and she had no idea about the secret life her husband had been keeping. In an instant, her life changed. The goals they had made together for their future post-retirement were sent down the drain. Within weeks, she became a single mom. Her kids were down a parent, which was foreign to their family dynamic. Now the main breadwinner and emotional support buddy for her children, she found herself the anchor holding it all together. But she's a chaos thriver, problem solver, and all-around move-forward kind of person. So, she grieved the loss of the life she thought was going to happen and started fresh.

Not everyone can bounce back like that. The phrase "cool as a cucumber"



"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.

is true for some, but for most of us, our cucumber is still sitting in the blazing sun waiting to be taken to the next destination. We just can't stay calm when everything is crashing around us. But, at some point, we have to face the unexpected and with our lifestyles in the military, the unexpected is a way of life.

If we look at life's expectations as a road, we can bring good visualization as to what we can do when life doesn't turn out the way we expected. We start with a smooth, paved road. The road signs are marked and visible. Nothing stands in the way of our goals. But then obstacles start showing up, and the once smooth road is now filled with potholes. But

See "Spouse Talk" on Page 23

MWR Rota Library's Summer Reading 2025

By Minerva Jimenez
MWR Rota Library

This summer, from June 10 to Aug. 13, 2025, the MWR Rota Library created a vibrant Summer Reading Program with 361 enthusiastic readers who enjoyed engaging activities tailored for all ages. The program featured two exciting components:

Independent Reading Challenge: Readers tracked their minutes using the Beanstack tracker app and worked toward personal goals. With a collective total of 366,782 minutes read, the community soared past our original goal of 300,000 minutes: An incredible testament to the dedication and enthusiasm of our book lovers. Participants who reached their reading milestones earned prizes along the way, adding extra motivation and celebration to their progress.

Weekly Activity Sessions: Each week, families gathered at the library for themed activities that brought stories to life through crafts, games, and hands-on fun.

The program concluded with a joyful celebration on Aug. 13, where the library hosted a party complete with pizza, drinks, games, and a bouncy house, turning the library lawn into a playground of excitement.

We're proud of all our young readers and grateful to the families who made this program a success. Here's to another season of stories, smiles, and shared adventures!



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Celebrating Ombudsman Appreciation Month:

Shaunte Branson NAVSTA Rota

- 1. Name: Shaunte Branson
- 2. Hometown: Denver, Colo.
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
Almost three years
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
Best part of being an Ombudsman is the ability to provide the correct resources to anyone in need. I genuinely enjoy being a helpful resource.
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
I will never turn down an Iced Coffee!



Jerdone McGhee NAVSUP

- 1. Name: Jerdone McGhee
- 2. Hometown: Austin, Texas
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
10 months
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
We had a gap at the command for an Ombudsman which needed to be urgently filled. Simply put, helping families is the best part. As an Ombudsman, we have the ability to provide a great, positive impact on people and facilitate emergencies. That is quite rewarding in my opinion. Our command is very people oriented and leadership's role here has been greatly supportive to the families and the program.
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
Proud to be one of the oldest families in Texas (Texas 300) , and fun fact my father was in the Guinness Book of Records for many years. I also speak good Spanish and fluent French. Have been fortunate to have lived in 7 different countries in my life. I also Love Spain as my parents met here.

Adinia Mueller USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)

- 1. Name: Adinia Mueller, I go by Dean
- 2. Hometown: From a military family so..... the place I spent the longest at was Roy, Utah
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
One year
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
I knew the current Ombudsman was PCSing and the command was in need of someone to take over. I tend to want to help if help is needed.
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
I have a healthy obsession with Coffee and like to dabble in things. If I have the opportunity to learn or try something new I will jump at it.



Piloya Abuka Otermat USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51)

- 1. Name: Piloya Abuka Otermat
- 2. Hometown: San Diego, California
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
For six months
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
I was chosen by the Command. Best part of being an Ombudsman is that there is nothing better than volunteering your free time to help others.
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
My smile! :)



LeAnn Olsen USS Paul Ignatius (DDG 117)

- 1. Name: LeAnn Olsen
- 2. Hometown: Utah
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
I have been an ombudsman for seven months.
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
I enjoy meeting the families of our sailors and finding ways to help them. It's not easy being so far from family, especially when the ship is out. Working alongside the Paul Ignatius Family Support Group has been a wonderful way to create the feeling of a "home away from home."
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
I'd rather be sewing!



Jessica Sanchez USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)

- 1. Name: Jessica Sanchez
- 2. Hometown: Portland, Maine
- 3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?
Almost two years
- 4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?
The best part of being an ombudsman is being able to help the families in our command have a sense of community outside of the friends and family they've left behind to be here with their sailor!
- 5. Fun fact about yourself
I did not know what an ombudsman was when I was offered the position



Get to Know Rota's Ombudsman Team!

Michael Toole

DESRON 60

1. Name: Michael Toole
2. Hometown: Chattahoochee, Fla.
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?

Two months

4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I became an Ombudsman after retirement so I could continue to help Navy families, and there was a need so I stepped in.

5. Fun fact about yourself

I love to travel, I've been to 35+ countries (I've lost count), I've been to more countries than States.



Carrie Nanning

HSM 79

1. Name: Carrie Nanning
2. Hometown: La Crosse, Wis.
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?

Since February 2025

4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I chose to become an Ombudsman to address the gaps I experienced as a spouse living overseas. Navigating life in a foreign country can be challenging, especially while experiencing deployments. A helping hand and an understanding personality can make a significant difference. I am honored to represent our command and to assist families during their most vulnerable moments.

5. Fun fact about yourself

Spain is the third country I have lived in as an adult, but the first with the Navy.



Lisa Eckard

NMRTC Rota

1. Name: Lisa Eckard
2. Hometown: Fort Washington, Md.
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?

I've been an Ombudsman at two separate commands for a total of three years.

4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I wanted to be an ombudsman because I'm passionate about supporting and advocating for military families. The best part of being an Ombudsman is connecting with my Command community and being that connection and link between the command, service members and their families especially as we navigate this OCONUS life.

5. Fun fact about yourself

I love fall, sweater weather and football season.



Kristin Morris

USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51)

1. Name: Kristin Morris
2. Hometown: Asheboro, N.C.
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman? Three months
4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I chose to be an ombudsman because I love helping other spouses and families navigate life as a military spouse, especially new spouses, and letting them know that they're not alone.

5. Fun fact about yourself

I love to work out and be in nature as much as possible! I'm also a Harry Potter fanatic!

Katie White

NPASE Detachment Rota

1. Name: Katie White
2. Hometown: Kettering, Ohio
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?

One year with the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) and a few months with NPASE Detachment Rota

4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I've always enjoyed being able to help others. I think it's important for people to know that they have someone in their corner who also understands the challenges that come with military life.

5. Fun fact about yourself

I make soap as a hobby, I've worked jobs on land, sea, and air, and I've visited all 50 states.



Kelli Wise

EODMU 8

1. Name: Kelli Wise
2. Hometown: Sacramento, Calif.
3. How long have you been an Ombudsman?

I have been serving as a Command Ombudsman since July 2020 (just over five years now) at EOD Mobile Unit EIGHT.

4. Why did you choose to be an Ombudsman or What is the best part of being an Ombudsman?

I have thoroughly enjoyed serving as a liaison and supporting our command families. It has been such a rewarding experience to help others understand the opportunities and resources available to them while navigating the challenges of military life overseas. I am passionate about helping people, building community and advocating for our spouses and families. I am so thankful that I have been able to assist in their transition and help them thrive here in Spain. I have met so many wonderful people through this position over the years and I am thankful for the professional and personal skills as well as the networks and friendships it has given me.

5. Fun fact about yourself

One of my favorite hobbies here has been learning to dance sevillanas. I took flamenco dance classes consistently for about a year and a half and even performed in a couple of shows. I was totally out of my element, but it was fun learning something new, making friends and challenging myself. My advice is to embrace the beautiful culture here and don't be afraid to try and learn new things outside of your comfort zone!





By Pilar Ruiz

Garlic Shrimp – Gambas al Ajillo: A Spanish Tapa Favorite in Minutes

A Spanish classic you'll find in nearly every tapas bar, this dish is proof that the simplest recipes can be the most delicious. With just a handful of ingredients and a few minutes on the stove, you can bring the flavors of Spain straight to your table.

Ingredients (Serves 4):

- 4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 lb (½ kg) shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (preferably “Pimentón de la Vera”)
- 1 fresh chili pepper, thinly sliced
- 1 small bunch of fresh parsley, chopped
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Lightly season the shrimp with salt and pepper.
2. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and chili pepper, cook until lightly golden.
3. Add the shrimp and parsley, and

cook for 1–2 minutes per side until the shrimp turns pink and is tender.
4. Stir in the paprika, toss everything well, and cook for one more minute.
5. Serve immediately with plenty of crusty bread to soak up the flavorful oil.
Now it's time to sit down, relax and enjoy this delicious starter!

Wishing you a wonderful September. If you have any questions about our recipes, feel free to reach out to us at: info@aprendiendoacocinar.es.



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



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Cpl. Jessica Thomson

U.S. Army Cpl. Jessica Thomson, hailing from Cool, Calif., is the Animal Care Specialist for the U.S. Army Veterinary Readiness Activity Italy, Rota Branch. Cpl. Thomson says that her typical day-to-day activities include seeing personally owned animals for medical examinations, assisting in surgical procedures, providing medical and emergency care to the Military Working Dogs, and inspecting installation animal housing facilities. She emphasizes that her favorite part of working at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Veterinary Clinic is having the opportunity to work with both animals and people to ensure public safety on and off-base.

"I particularly enjoy interacting with the Military Working Dogs, whose service and dedication are truly inspiring," said Thomson. "It's incredibly rewarding to contribute to the health and wellbeing of these remarkable animals while also serving our military community."

In her free time, Thomson enjoys traveling to new countries and experiencing different cultures, she also loves relaxing on the beach and trying different types of food. Prior to arriving at NAVSTA Rota, Cpl. Thomson was previously assigned to the Navy Medical Research Command in Silver Spring, Maryland from December 2022 to June 2025. "I originally had orders to the U.K. but I got re-routed to Spain at the last minute. I was extremely excited for the change in assignment!" NAVSTA Rota is lucky to have her!





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Seabees Support Post-Flood Damage Assessments in Mindelo, Cabo Verde

**Chief Mass Communication Specialist
Justin Stumberg**
22nd Naval Construction Regiment

A team of Seabees from the 22nd Naval Construction Regiment (22 NCR) deployed to Cabo Verde following a devastating tropical storm and flooding that struck the islands of São Vicente, Santo Antão, and São Nicolau on Aug. 11, 2025.

The Seabees are working alongside the Cabo Verdean Coast Guard, the Portuguese Navy, the United Nations resident office, local authorities and other international partners to conduct a large-area harbor search and infrastructure damage assessments to help communities access and recover from the severe flooding and landslides caused by the storm.

"Our team's success on this mission with the Cabo Verdean Coast Guard and Portuguese Navy partners is a result of working with them during other operations and exercises like Obangame Express," said Engineering Aid 1st Class Dylan Maznicki.

Maznicki said that 22 NCR's ability to respond rapidly and work shoulder-to-shoulder with the Cabo Verdean Coast Guard was built on the trust and relationships formed over the last few years working together.

"I spent five weeks working here in Cabo Verde last April, so I feel like I was already way ahead of anyone coming for the first time," said Maznicki.

The storm brought unprecedented rainfall, including more than 160 millimeters

in a single hour, overwhelming infrastructure and resulting in widespread damage. Cabo Verde's government declared a state of calamity after the disaster, which claimed nine lives, left three people missing, and displaced over 1,500 residents.

"We are so glad the U.S. Navy Seabees came to Mindelo to provide additional support and special expertise in hydrographic surveys and engineer assessments" said Lt. Cmdr. Francisco Semedo Moreira, Operations Officer for the Cabo Verdean Coast Guard headquarters. "This storm has been a major disaster for us and its very reassuring having the Seabees here by our side."

Deployed at the request of the U.S. 6th Fleet Commander and in coordination with the U.S. Embassy in Praia, the Seabees are assisting in conducting a large-area harbor search and surveying damaged schools, orphanages, the waste water treatment plant, and other public facilities.

"I've been a Seabee for nearly three decades, and this is the kind of mission that reminds you why we wear the uniform," said Master Chief Constructionman Scott Balius. "The damage here is real - families without homes, roads washed out, and communities cut off - but what stands out most is the resilience of the Cabo Verdean people."

Balius said that their efforts are focused on helping officials prioritize reconstruction and restoring essential services in the hardest-hit areas.

"We're here to roll up our sleeves, put our technical expertise to work, and help them get back on their feet," said Balius.



The Seabees' contribution supports what is a monumental effort for both the Cabo Verdean Coast Guard and the local government of Cabo Verde. The effort is supported by the Portuguese Navy, the United Nations, the International Organization for Migration, UNICEF, and the Red Cross, who are all working together conducting community surveys, mapping affected areas, and providing emergency relief supplies.

The Portuguese Navy were some of the earliest to arrive on-scene and worked for over two weeks straight to restore power and water to the residents of Sao Vicente and Santo Antao.

"We were on our way home to Lisbon after a four-month deployment sailing along the West African Coast when we got the order to turn around and head to Sao Vicente to respond to this calamity" said Lt. Cmdr. Silva Santos, commanding officer

of the Portuguese Viana do Castelo-class ocean patrol vessel NRP Sines. "What the community of Mindelo needs most right now is skilled technical support to repair the electrical and utility systems in the city that will prevent a health crisis from lack of sanitation."

Santos added that they are glad the U.S. Navy sent in Seabees to help with this effort.

Early estimates indicate more than 3,800 buildings were impacted, with critical needs spanning potable water, food distribution, health services, and temporary shelter. Nearly three hundred people are still displaced and living in several schools around the city that have been set up as temporary shelters. These shelters are supported almost entirely by grass-roots organized community volunteers who have brought in essential supplies and prepare and serve the daily meals for those who have lost everything.




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NAVSTA Rota Protestant Community Hold Vacation Bible School

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

The Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota chapel received a complete makeover during this year's Vacation Bible School (VBS) held from Aug. 4 through Aug. 8. This year's VBS theme was "True North: Trusting Jesus in a Wild World," and the scenery was transformed to match the freezing climate of Alaska's wilderness. During each day of the week-long event, kids are separated into small groups, or "crews," to learn about a specific bible point. The crews swap between unique activities at various stations, creating an engaging learning experience. The children had six stations to cycle through each day that included activities such as singing songs, playing scripture-based games, making crafts, and science experiments, and eating tundra-themed snacks.

With over 240 children and staff taking part in VBS this year, Ms. Melissa "Missy" Weiss, the chapel's Protestant Director of Religious Education, and her team of volunteers wanted to ensure that everyone has an experience to match how important the event is to her.

"(The children) are our future, and seeing them be able to trust in Jesus and be able to take that wherever they go next is very important for our community," explained Missy.

Even though VBS is mainly for the child participants, Missy stated that it's rewarding seeing how much fun the kids have and hearing about all of their stories and experiences during the course of the week. The other volunteers mimic Missy's sentiments, with 12 year-old Ainsley, one of the crew assistants, stating that it's just as much fun leading as it is participating.

"The first time I came to VBS, it was a blast!" exclaimed Ainsley. "I decided to volunteer this year as well as last year. It's the highlight of my summer. I love spending time with all the kids, getting to know their names, and why they went to VBS in the first place. VBS is awesome!"

Missy stated that VBS's importance stems from its ability to get more children from outside the immediate Protestant community involved. Doing this gives them a chance to learn more about the community's teachings and to share what they've learned to others.



"After VBS, we will typically see a lot of people start coming to the chapel and attending service more often," explained Missy. "Having more people pack into the chapel isn't necessarily the goal, but having more people grow in faith is the most important part."

Despite having only a couple of months after obtaining her position at the chapel to plan the learning curriculum, put together a team of volunteers, and to transform the chapel courtyard into a winter wonderland, Missy feels as though this year's VBS was a success...And the smiles of the children playing games outside the chapel seemed to prove it too!

"Shout out to the entire VBS team. The team that has helped me work and put this all together, I could not have done this without any of them. We've had over 100 volunteers and there were a few key people that have helped immensely. I feel like God really put people in the right place at the right time when we needed them for this whole event to work. I could not have done this in two months without Him."



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Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central Visits U.S. Naval Station Rota

By Alexa Ponce
Naval Station Rota Public Affairs

Commander, Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central (EURAFCENT) Rear Adm. Brad Rosen traveled to Spain this week to tour U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota and its facilities.

Rear Adm. Rosen, who newly assumed command on July 17, met with Capt. Charles Chmielak, commanding officer of U.S. Naval Activities Spain and NAVSTA Rota, and Vice Adm. Ruben Rodriguez Peña, Admiral of Logistics Support, Bay of Cádiz to discuss operations that support fleet readiness. The tour included engagements with command leadership, junior Sailors, and installation personnel, highlighting the teamwork and dedication that strengthen the ties between Spain and the U.S.

"Naval Station Rota, and the personnel who work here, are critical to all operations within Region EURAFCENT," expressed Rosen. "Rota is a strategic hub for logistics, fleet movements, and the incredibly important relationship with our Spanish counterparts. Naval Station Rota is a joint force enabler, allowing commanders throughout the AOR and the fleet to rely on the ever-expanding capabilities."

Rosen visited several installation establishments including Port Operations, Defence Fuel Support Point, David Glasgow Farragut Middle/High School, and several N92 facilities. The Region Commander's engagements provide an opportunity to observe firsthand the different services that enhance the well-being of active duty service members and their families, and to review logistical and administrative capabilities that ensure mission readiness throughout

EURAFCENT. "Our team demonstrated to Rear Admiral Rosen how Rota is a force multiplier that enables sustained operations at a strategic location that is ready for any contingency." Capt. Chmielak proudly stated. It was an honor to showcase why Rota is his most capable power projection platform and truly the 'Gateway to the Mediterranean!'"

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.



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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).

NAVY-MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY (NMCRS)

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

loan or grant, you will receive funds immediately. There is no application fee and the appointment is completely free. If you need \$1,000 or less, you may be eligible for our Quick Assist Loan.

NMCRS Business Office

Monday-Friday; 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Office: DSN 727-1614 or +34 956-821-614

After Hours Duty Cell: +34 660 984 511

After Hours Emergency Assistance: +1 (877) 272-7337

Email: rota@nmcrs.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/nmcrsrota

NMCRS Thrift Shop

Hours of Operation

Monday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Thursday: 3-6 p.m. (third Thursday / active duty + dependents only)

Third Saturday of month: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

NMCRS Casework and Classes

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

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

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

UPCOMING NMCRS AND HOSPITAL MATERNAL PROGRAMS AND CLASSES:

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

NMCRS: VOLUNTEER WITH US!

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

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

PRESCHOOL SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

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

RETIRED ACTIVITIES OFFICE (RAO)

Fleet and Family Support Center, Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., by appointment only, +34 956 82 3232.

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 Personell 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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USS Arleigh Burke Waterfront Cleanup

By Lt. Adewale Giwa-Alaka
USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51)

As USS Arleigh Burke (DDG 51) prepared for her upcoming Patrol 6, the Sailors and families of the Forward-Deployed Guided-Missile Destroyer united for a community clean-up initiative during the Memorial Day 2025 weekend.

A group of 11-volunteers, supported by Arleigh Burke's Religious Ministries Department and Sailor 360 team, focused their efforts on removing litter and improving the appearance of the Pier One Parking Lot. The location, known for high usage by Sailors stationed on the ships of Naval Station Rota, presented an excellent outreach opportunity with immediate impact on the community.

The clean-up event underscored the commitment of Arleigh Burke's crew to

their community and served as a call to action for others to positively improve their environment. "It is encouraging to see people come out and demonstrate their enthusiasm for revitalizing their area," said Shana, a family member volunteer.

Arleigh Burke's Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Ethan Reber, expressed his appreciation for the volunteers' efforts. He praised their stewardship and dedication to maintaining the natural beauty of the waterfront and beaches for all of the personnel and families that call Naval Station Rota home.

"This clean-up initiative not only reflects Team 51's values of service and community, but also emphasizes the importance of maintaining a clean and inviting environment for all personnel and visitors," stated Reber.





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Spouse Talk Continued from page 11

it's alright, we can handle a little stress. We keep on going, knowing we can still make it without any more hiccups as long as we still have our road signs. We avoid the potholes as much as possible, and for a while it seems as if we can do it, but then a big Levante wind comes through and blows down all our signs. Now, we are left with holes in the road and no direction to help us to our destination.

But this is life, right? We have challenges that can bring us to our knees. What we also have are friends, resources here on base, and tons of other spouses

who have gone through what seems like it will never end. Take the courage to patch the potholes and continue your journey with confidence that everything will be alright. That's what we do! We face things head-on. Military life forces us to take on challenges and wrestle them into submission. We do hard things, make difficult decisions, and all the while keeping it together for the sake of the kids or for your own sanity. Try not to let trouble take you down. Talk it out, weigh the options, and trust that you can make it without a map down the bumpy road.

The City of Rota's Annual Triathlon



U.S. service members, civilians and family members volunteered during the Rota Triathlon on Sept. 7, 2025. Every year, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota community participates in this event organized by the city of Rota in collaboration with the Armada.

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2. OBTAIN A COPY OF YOUR POLICE REPORT

3. TAKE POLICE REPORT TO NCIS

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