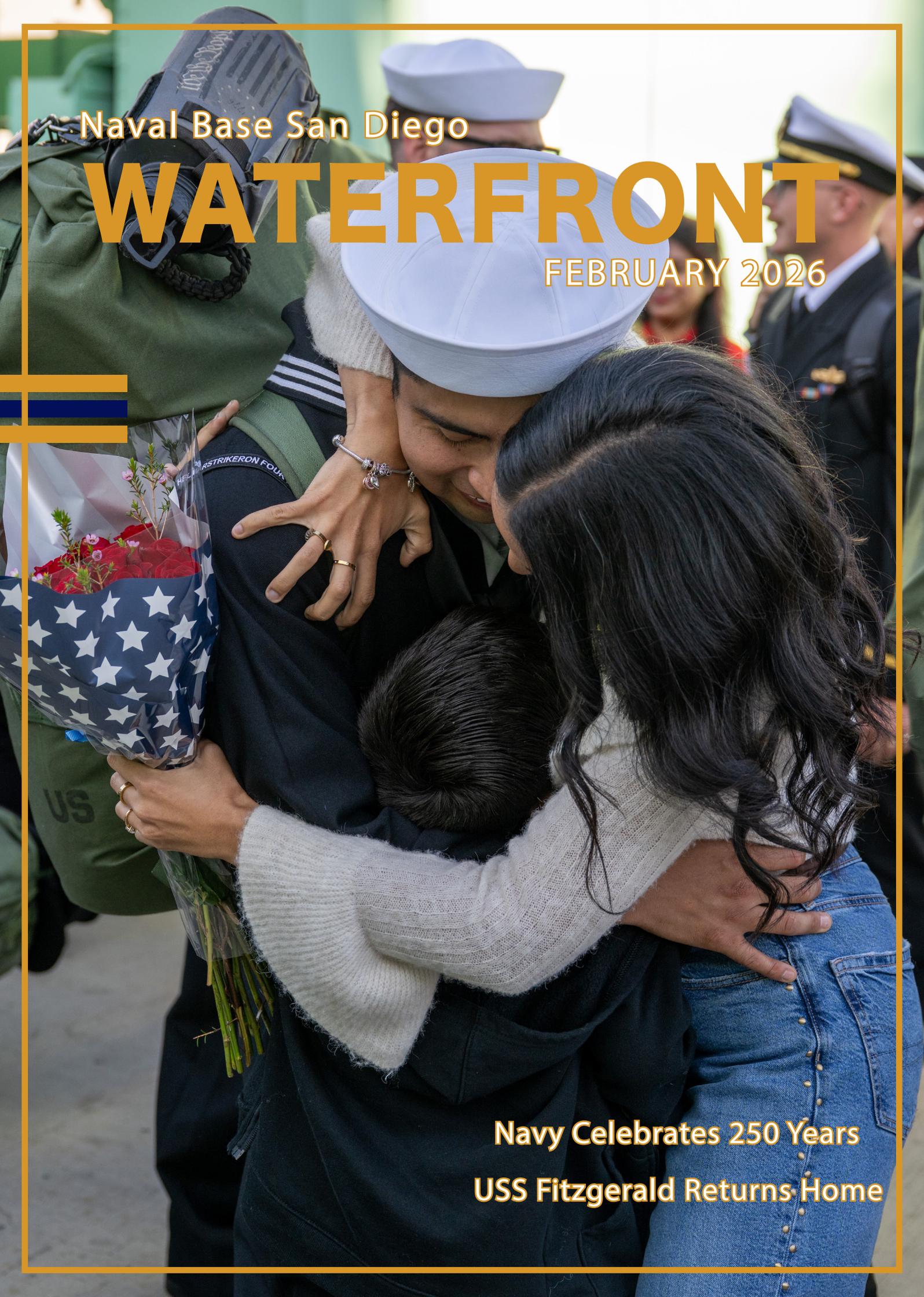


Naval Base San Diego

WATERFRONT

FEBRUARY 2026



Navy Celebrates 250 Years
USS Fitzgerald Returns Home



Captain's Call

2025 was a banner year for Naval Base San Diego, earning the first ever Shore Battle "E" – a proud moment for the entire team! This recognition belongs to the Sailors, civilians, and our partners who deliver ready, reliable shore support every day – living up to our commitment to One Team, One Fight. Our mission is both clear and demanding: to provide unwavering support to the Fleet and the warfighter, while ensuring the well-being of our personnel and

their families. This award affirms our team's success in meeting this critical charge, not only in the course of routine operations but also under the most challenging circumstances. We extend our sincere gratitude for your invaluable contributions. Let's carry this momentum into 2026 and continue setting the standard as the Navy's finest installation.

Capt. Brian C. Bungay,
Commanding Officer

Installation Excellence Award

Naval Base San Diego (NBSD), the largest naval installation in the Pacific, has been awarded the 2025 Shore Battle “E” Award in the Fleet Concentration/Extra Large category, recognizing sustained excellence in operational readiness, installation management, and unwavering support to the Fleet, warfighters, and Navy families.

“This recognition belongs to the Sailors, civilians, and partners who deliver ready, reliable shore support every day,” said Capt. Brian Bungay, commanding officer, NBSD. “Our mission is simple and demanding, support the Fleet and warfighter while taking care of our people and their families. This award reflects a team that meets that charge—on routine days and during the most challenging moments.”

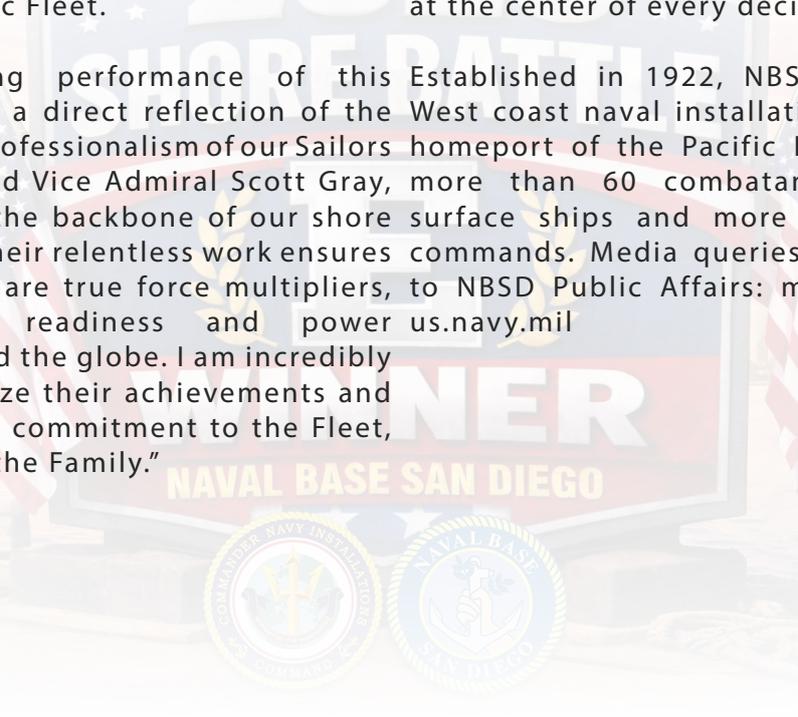
The Shore Battle “E” Award, presented by Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), honors installations that demonstrate superior performance across mission execution, readiness, safety, and quality of life. NBSD earned the distinction for its world-class operational support to 58 afloat tenants and 251 ashore commands, serving as the primary West Coast homeport for the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

“The outstanding performance of this year’s winners is a direct reflection of the dedication and professionalism of our Sailors and civilians,” said Vice Admiral Scott Gray, CNIC. “They are the backbone of our shore enterprise, and their relentless work ensures our installations are true force multipliers, enabling fleet readiness and power projection around the globe. I am incredibly proud to recognize their achievements and their unwavering commitment to the Fleet, the Fighter, and the Family.”

Throughout 2025, the installation managed more than 1,300 ship movements and welcomed over 13 million personnel, ensuring safe, efficient access to the waterfront while sustaining the operational tempo required for forward-deployed forces. In parallel, the base advanced significant quality-of-life and sustainability initiatives, adding 680 electric vehicle charging stations and increasing shuttle ridership by more than 200 percent, improving mobility, reducing congestion, and supporting environmental stewardship for the workforce and families who rely on the installation every day.

“Our goal at Naval Base San Diego is to exemplify what it means to enable Fleet readiness,” Bungay said. Operational excellence was further demonstrated during pivotal events in 2025, including a seamless change of command that ensured continuity of mission execution, and the coordinated response to the Murphy Canyon plane crash. During these moments, base leadership and emergency partners acted swiftly to protect lives, support affected families and maintained mission continuity—underscoring the installation’s readiness to lead under pressure while keeping people at the center of every decision.

Established in 1922, NBSD is the largest West coast naval installation and principal homeport of the Pacific Fleet, supporting more than 60 combatant and auxiliary surface ships and more than 250 shore commands. Media queries can be directed to NBSD Public Affairs: <mailto:NBSD.PAO@us.navy.mil>







USS MAKIN ISLAND HOSTS TOUR FOR HOLIDAY BOWL

As part of the NCAA Holiday Bowl festivities, representatives from Southern Methodist University and the University of Arizona joined bowl officials, sponsors, and community partners for a special tour aboard the USS Makin Island (LHD 8), offering a unique look at life and operations aboard one of the U.S. Navy's most advanced amphibious assault ships.

Docked along the San Diego waterfront, the USS Makin Island welcomed guests connected to the SMU Mustangs and the Arizona Wildcats for a guided tour highlighting the ship's flight deck, hangar bays, medical facilities, and living quarters. Sailors assigned to the ship led the tours, explaining daily operations while sharing insights into the mission, technology, and teamwork required to operate the vessel.

The tour served as a key event during Holiday Bowl week, continuing the bowl's long-standing tradition of honoring the U.S. military while building connections between college athletics and the armed forces. With SMU and Arizona set to face off in the NCAA Holiday Bowl, the experience provided an opportunity for both universities to engage with Sailors and gain a deeper appreciation for military service.

For many of the SMU and Arizona guests, the visit marked their first time aboard an active-duty Navy ship. Participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to interact directly with Sailors and gain insight into naval life beyond traditional game-day tributes or ceremonial events.

The USS Makin Island tour continues the Holiday Bowl's commitment to military appreciation and community engagement, reinforcing San Diego's deep ties to the Navy while highlighting the shared values that unite college athletics and military service.

As Holiday Bowl week continues, organizers say experiences like the USS Makin Island tour remain a cornerstone of the event, celebrating excellence, service, and teamwork both on the field and at sea.



USS HIGBEE RETURNS TO HOMEPORT

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123) returned to its homeport of San Diego following nine months of operations in the U.S. 3rd, 5th and 7th Fleets, Dec. 19.

Higbee departed San Diego with the Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMSG) on Mar. 26, 2025, with an air wing detachment from Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 49. As part of Nimitz Carrier Strike Group (NIMCSG), Higbee conducted various missions, including protecting sea lines of communication, supporting maritime stability, and interdiction operations while in the U.S. 5th and 7th Fleet areas of operations (AOO).



Higbee and the detachment from HSM-49 traveled over 75,000 nautical miles, flew 1,100 hours, conducted 46 replenishments-at-sea, and accomplished 22 sea and anchor details. Higbee and the detachment from HSM-49 traveled over 75,000 nautical miles, flew 1,100 hours, conducted 46 replenishments-at-sea, and accomplished 22 sea and anchor details.





USS FITZGERALD RETURNS TO HOME PORT

Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) returned to its homeport of Naval Base San Diego following a seven-month underway to the U.S. 3rd, 5th, and 7th Fleet areas of operation, Jan. 6, 2026. While underway, Fitzgerald conducted a wide range of operations, including routine presence patrols and maritime security operations.

The ship participated in several multinational exercises, enhancing interoperability and strengthening partnerships with key allies, including the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Republic of Korea Navy.

Fitzgerald executed six transits of the Strait of Hormuz, ensuring freedom of navigation in the Arabian Gulf, and participated in major multinational exercises including MALABAR 2025 and SWARMEX 2025, enhancing interoperability and strengthened partnerships with the navies of Australia, Bangladesh, Germany, India, Japan, Pakistan, the Philippines, and the United Arab Emirates, all contributing to a free and open Indo-Pacific.



Celebrating 250 Years of the US Navy

October 13, 2025 marked 250 years of the United States Navy, honoring a legacy that began in 1775. Two and a half centuries, the Navy has grown into the world's most formidable maritime force protecting commerce, advancing peace and defending the nation's interests across every ocean.

Commissioned in 1922, Naval Base San Diego (NBSD) has played a critical role through major global conflicts to today's dynamic Indo-Pacific partnerships. NBSD is the principal homeport of the Pacific Fleet, supporting more than 60 combatant and auxiliary surface ships and more than 250 shore commands. The total base population is roughly 55,000 including 31,000 military personnel and 23,000 civilians.



Across the country and around the world, the celebration takes many forms: from ship-parades and naval reviews to community outreach, veteran tributes, and ceremonial events. The milestone is not only a remembrance of the Navy's storied past but also a reaffirmation of its ongoing mission: defending freedom, securing maritime trade routes, and projecting stability globally. Leaders from both civilian and veteran communities have underscored the anniversary as more than symbolic. It's a moment to honor generations of Sailors, Marines, and their families, whose courage and commitment have shaped national security and to inspire the next generation to consider service, whether in uniform or as supportive citizens.



BEWARE OF JET BLAST AND ROTORS
JACK LUCAS AIRFIELD

7



JS CHOKAI INVITES NBSD TO CELEBRATE MOCHITSUKI

Sailors aboard the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) destroyer JS Chokai (DDG 176) welcomed members of Naval Base San Diego and the local military community to participate in a traditional Mochitsuki ceremony, celebrating Japanese culture and strengthening international maritime partnerships.

Held aboard JS Chokai, the Mochitsuki event marked a time-honored Japanese tradition in which steamed rice is pounded into mochi, a symbol of good fortune, unity, and renewal. U.S. Navy Sailors, base leadership, and guests joined JMSDF crew members in the hands-on ceremony, learning about the cultural significance behind the ritual while taking part in the preparation.

Naval Base San Diego officials expressed appreciation for the invitation, noting that events like these provide meaningful opportunities for Sailors to connect beyond operational training and exercises.





Ask the Chief!

2025 was a strong year because of you! Together, as 'One Team, One Fight,' we proved what's possible when Sailors and families come first; standards stay high, and we show up Ready every day. Earning Battle "E" wasn't luck!—it was the result of discipline, technical mastery, and a team that refuses to settle for average. As we move into 2026, our focus remains clear: Build competence. Live character. Be consistent with our efforts. That means continuing to invest in our people through continuous development,

smart management, and mastery of our craft—on the deckplates, on the shore, and at home. Our families are part of this fight, and their support makes our success possible. Momentum matters. Let's keep pushing, keep learning, and keep taking care of one another. The bar is set—now let's raise it. Stay Gucci!

Kristopher D. Freyberg,
Command Master Chief

EVENTS



- 07 BREAKFAST WITH FAIRYTALES
Saturday | 9:30 am | Adults \$25, Kids
(2-12) \$20 | Anchors Catering &
Conference Center Bldg. 3210

- 08 THE BIG GAME LX WATCH PARTY
Sunday | 2:30 pm | \$20
Waterfront Recreation Center, Bldg. 45

- 14-16 LAP TRIP: BIG BEAR GETAWAY
Saturday-Monday | \$175
Active-Duty Junior Enlisted & Geo
Bachelors Only

- 16 FAMILY HIKE CLUB
Monday | 9 am | FREE
Chollas Lake Park, Gloria's Mesa

- 18 PET PORTRAIT NIGHT
Wednesday | 5:30 pm | \$15 | Waterfront
Recreation Center, Bldg. 45

- 22 NAVY TEN-MILER
7:00 am - 12:00 pm | Chula Vista
Register: [https://runsignup.com/Race/
CA/ChulaVista/NavyTenMiler](https://runsignup.com/Race/CA/ChulaVista/NavyTenMiler)

- 25 GLOW ZUMBA
Tuesday, February 24 | 6 pm | FREE
Fitness Station, Bldg. 3417

<https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/events>