

# COMBAT MAGAZINE



February 26, 2026 / Volume 36, Issue 04

U.S. Naval Activities Spain

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# What Makes Naval Station Rota Unique?

## CMC's Corner



**Command Master Chief Donald Alvarado**

Rota Family,

As I walk around our naval station, I am consistently impressed by the dedication and professionalism of each and every one of you. From our Sailors, Marines, Airmen, and Army to our civilian and Spanish local national partners, you are the lifeblood of this installation. It is your unwavering commitment that makes Naval Station Rota the strategic powerhouse it is today, who many consider "The Best" in the Navy.

Rota's designation as the "Gateway to the Mediterranean" is more than just a title; it is a testament to our critical role in

supporting U.S. and NATO objectives that makes our base highly desirable.

Our strategic location provides an unmatched logistical hub for operations in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, enabling us to support the fleet, fighter, and family. The operational tempo at Rota is high, with an increasing number of missions that support our operational commands.

This demanding environment requires a flexible and resilient workforce, and you have consistently risen to the occasion. Time and again, you have demonstrated the ability to execute last-minute national taskers with precision and expertise, showcasing a level of innovation and effort that is truly unparalleled that were validated and have impressed numerous upper leaderships during their visits. Your ability to seamlessly integrate and work alongside our Spanish allies is a force multiplier, enhancing our collective strength and readiness.

The Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Caudle's "Sailors First" initiative places the Sailor's well-being and quality of life at the forefront to improve the Navy's warfighting readiness. The time to improve quality of life and service is now! We have a few ongoing initiatives that took a few months to plan, and soon we will be seeing a bus route through housing, and a 1st Lt. division that will be manned and equipped to support base beautification efforts just to name a few.

Thank you for your hard work, your sacrifice, and your commitment to the mission. I am proud to serve as your Command Master Chief. Let's continue to work together to ensure that Naval Station Rota remains the premier installation not only in the region, but globally...ready to answer the nation's call at a moment's notice.

Sincerely,  
 CMDCM(SW/AW/IW) Donald R. Alvarado  
 Command Master Chief  
 Naval Activities Spain & Naval Station Rota

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## On The Front Cover



Equipment Operator  
 1st Class Devon Maher,  
 U.S. Navy Seabee Diver  
 assigned to Underwater  
 Construction Team  
 (UCT) One, Construction  
 Dive Detachment Bravo  
 (CDD/B), conducts ice  
 diving operations during  
 a bilateral ice diving  
 exchange with Estonian  
 Rescue Board and  
 Estonian Navy divers at  
 Rummu Quarry Lake,  
 Feb. 10, 2026. (U.S. Navy  
 photo by Chief Mass  
 Communication Specialist  
 Justin Stumberg

### 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](mailto:rotacoastline@gmail.com).

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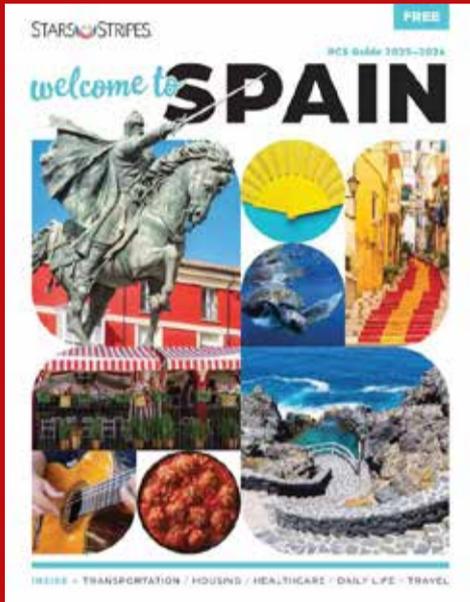
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# U.S. Navy, Estonian Partners Conduct Ice Diving Training to Enhance Baltic Maritime Readiness

**Story and photos by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Justin Stumberg**  
22nd Naval Construction Regiment

U.S. Navy Seabee Divers assigned to Underwater Construction Team (UCT) One, Construction Dive Detachment Bravo (CDD/B), are conducting ice diving and underwater demolition training with the Estonian Rescue Board (ERB) and Estonian navy divers during an annual bilateral ice exercise scheduled from Jan. 31 to Feb. 17, 2026.

The exercise focuses on developing cold weather capabilities that enhance maritime security, improve Alliance readiness, and reinforce Estonia's contributions to the conventional defense of the Baltic Sea region.

"This opportunity builds real-world capability in one of the most demanding dive environments imaginable," said Senior Chief Constructionman Keith Reed, master diver assigned to UCT-1 CDD/B. "Operating under ice requires absolute trust in equipment, procedures, and teammates, especially in conditions where precision, readiness, and discipline directly affect mission success."

The exercise takes place at Rummu Quarry Lake and Miinisadam Naval Base and includes classroom instruction, pier-side safety training, practical ice dives,

and a salvage survey of a submerged barge.

Estonia faces a significant volume of explosive remnants of war, particularly in waterways and coastal regions affected by historic conflicts. The training supports humanitarian mine action objectives while improving Allied capacity to detect, assess, and respond to underwater hazards that threaten maritime infrastructure, commercial traffic, and regional security in all weather conditions.

"Ice diving stresses every element of a diver's training from planning, communications, emergency response, and execution," Reed said. "Working alongside Estonian Rescue Board and navy divers allows us to exchange techniques, leverage their local expertise, and carry lessons forward that strengthen cold-weather and Arctic diving operations across the Naval Construction Force."

Beyond technical dive training, the training is designed to improve interoperability, expand operational readiness, and support NATO maritime safety and deterrence efforts by ensuring regional forces are prepared to operate effectively in austere and contested environments.

See **UCT One** Page 6



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# UCT One *Continued from page 4*

“This engagement reflects years of trusted coordination with Estonia and deliberate planning across U.S. and host-nation teams,” said Chief Builder David Madmon, diving action officer assigned to 22nd Naval Construction Regiment (22NCR). “Our role was to align the right capabilities, ensure safety and logistics were in place, and create a training environment that delivers lasting operational value for both nations.”

This training builds on previous U.S.–Estonian humanitarian mine action engagements dating back to 2017 and supports NATO objectives to enhance maritime readiness, resilience, and safety across the Baltic Sea region.

It also reinforces a forward defense

posture by strengthening European Allies’ ability to lead regional maritime safety and security efforts, with U.S. forces providing specialized capabilities and operational support.

UCT-1 CDD/B, currently deployed under 22NCR, is a specially trained and equipped unit within Navy Expeditionary Combat Forces that specializes in diving, light salvage, underwater construction, and military engineering operations in austere environments.

22NCR commands naval construction forces for Navy Expeditionary Forces Europe-Africa/Task Force 68 across the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations to defend U.S., Allied, and partner interests.



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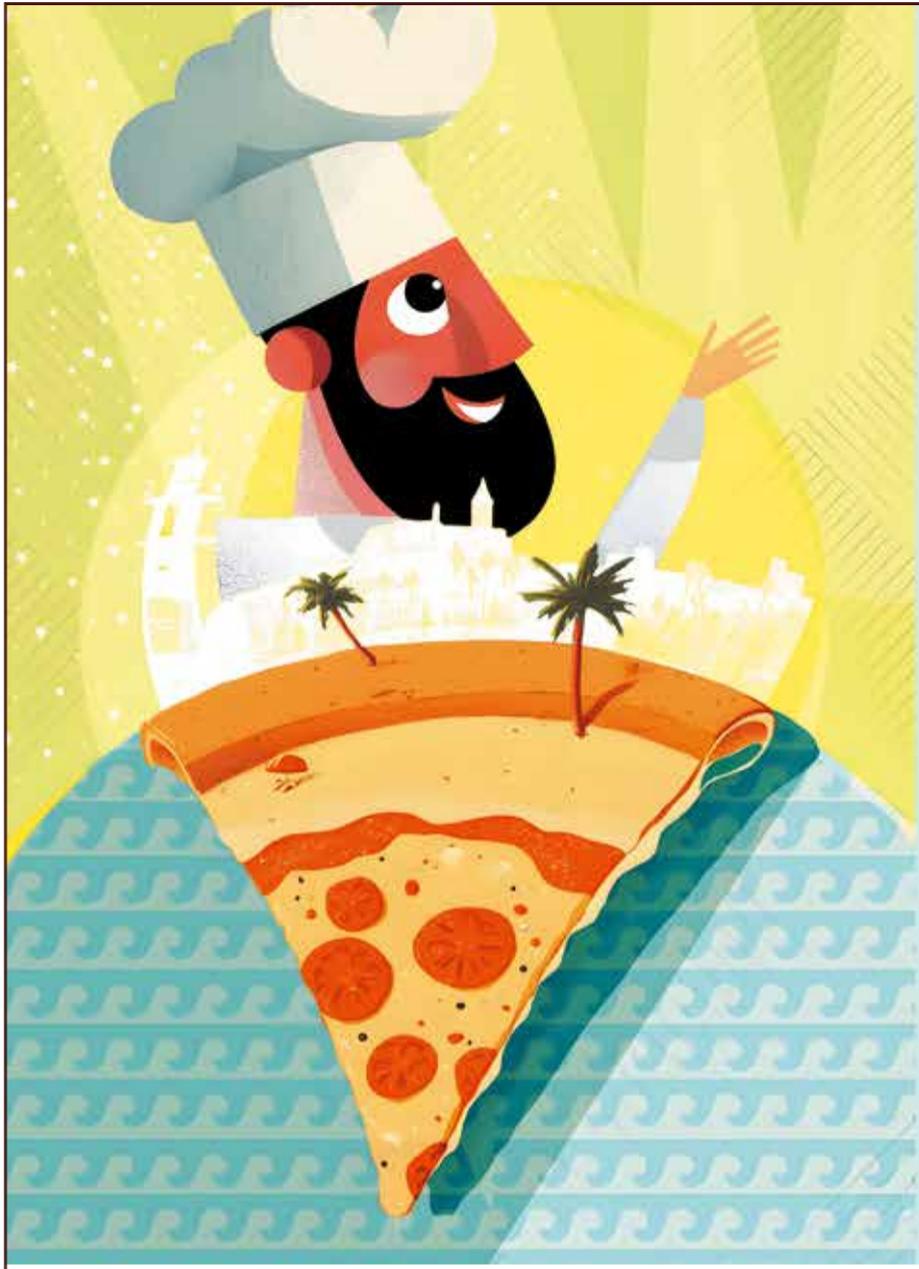


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## PUBLISHER'S CORNER

### THREE SPACES, ONE SHARED PURPOSE: CARE, CRAFT, AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN CÁDIZ

Across the Bay of Cádiz, a new generation of local businesses is redefining what it means to care for people—through health, food, and emotional support. From advanced medical care to contemporary cuisine and early childhood development, these three spaces share a common goal: improving everyday life through expertise, warmth, and attention to detail.

#### Health and Aesthetics Rooted in Experience

In the residential area of Soto de Vista Hermosa, in El Puerto de Santa María, Clínica Dr. José Pérez Jiménez has become a trusted reference in dental care and aesthetic medicine.

With over 30 years of experience, the clinic combines state-of-the-art technology with a highly specialized medical team under the direct supervision of its founder, Dr. José Pérez Jiménez. Advanced diagnostic tools such as 3D imaging, intraoral scanners, CT scans, and digital orthopantomography allow for faster, more precise diagnoses and highly personalized treatment plans.

One of the clinic's most valued services is conscious sedation, designed for patients who experience anxiety or fear when visiting the dentist. This approach transforms the dental experience into a calm, stress-free process. Alongside oral health, the clinic also offers a wide range of facial and body aesthetic treatments using cutting-edge equipment and premium products, always with a focus on natural, balanced results.

Here, medical excellence meets genuine patient care, guided by a simple philosophy: well-being comes first.

#### Urban Sushi with a Japanese Soul

In the heart of Luz Shopping, dining becomes an immersive experience at Sibuya Urban Sushi Bar, Luz Shopping.

More than a restaurant, Sibuya is a contemporary take on Japanese cuisine, where tradition is reimagined with creativity and boldness. Warm materials, natural elements, and a carefully curated interior create an inviting space designed for relaxation and escape from daily routine.

The menu features more than 50 unique sushi creations, each crafted to surprise from the very first bite. Signature flame-grilled pieces add a theatrical touch, while the house Sibuya Sake brings a distinctive personality to the experience. High-end cuisine is offered at accessible prices, making quality sushi something to enjoy again and again.

Already a favorite among locals, Sibuya has become a ritual destination in Jerez, where urban style and Japanese artistry meet at the table.



## Supporting Children Through Connection and Care

Focused on early childhood development, Bright Eyes offers a small-group, play-based environment designed for young children who benefit from additional developmental support.

The program centers on relationships, curiosity, and emotional safety. A specialized clinical team provides individualized support in language and communication, social interaction, emotional regulation, adaptive learning, and sensory-motor coordination. Each child's participation is carefully assessed to ensure the right level of support for their specific needs.

Families play a central role in the process. Through ongoing communication and family sessions, Bright Eyes ensures continuity between the program and home life, reinforcing progress and confidence beyond the classroom.

### A Shared Commitment to Quality

Though each space serves a different purpose—healthcare, gastronomy, and child development—they are united by the same values: professionalism, innovation, and a deep respect for the people they serve. Together, they reflect a Cádiz that looks forward, where local businesses lead with care, creativity, and human connection.



## USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) and ITS Virgino Fasan (F 591) Perform a Cross-Deck Visit

**Story and photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Johnny Garcia**  
USS Bulkeley (DDG 84)

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) welcomed Italian Sailors assigned to the Carlo Bergamini-class frigate ITS Virgino Fasan (F 591) for a cross deck visit, Feb. 10, 2026.

During the visit, Italian Sailors toured the Bulkeley while learning about the history and legacy of the ship.

"USS Bulkeley enjoyed the opportunity to participate in a cross deck evolution with ITS Fasan," said Cmdr. Schelcher, commanding officer of the Bulkeley. "This allowed us to celebrate a successful week of NATO operations and allowed Sailors from both Navies to experience different cultures and build camaraderie with a valued ally."

Bulkeley Sailors were happy at the opportunity to meet and interact with their Italian guests.

"It was great being able to meet our Italian counterparts, show off our crew, and learn from each other as we work together supporting the NATO mission in the East Med," said Ens. Luca Greenspun, American tour guide for Fasan Sailors. "Sharing a meal with them was a great experience. It's awesome because you get to see how similar we are, knowing each other on the human level and appreciating who we're serving alongside with."

During the evolution, Bulkeley Sailors also received the honor of touring the Fasan.

"The biggest thing I learned was we have a lot of similarities when it comes to training, knowing our jobs in-rate, and what needs to be done to be mission ready," said Personnel Specialist 2nd Class John Paul Necio, guest aboard Fasan. "It's great because you realize we're not alone in the region."

Bulkeley hopes to continue conducting similar visits in the future.

"We hope to continue strengthening our ties with our NATO Allies and regional partners in the Mediterranean Sea, in support of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2," said Schelcher. "Fasan's excellence reflects credit upon the Marina Militare and our NATO Allies. USS Bulkeley looks forward to further interaction with ITS Fasan as we continue our patrol in the U.S Sixth Fleet area of operations."

Bulkeley departed Naval Station Rota, Spain, Jan. 26, 2026, to begin its 5th patrol as one of the five Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe Arleigh-Burke class guided-missile destroyers in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations.

U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.



# Living Between Two Seas: Why Cádiz Is Geographically Unique

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



wide, firm stretches of sand at low tide and transforming the same beach into something entirely different just hours later.

That tidal rhythm surprises many newcomers. On Spain's Mediterranean coast, water levels barely shift. In Cádiz, the Atlantic breathes in and out all day long. Morning and afternoon can look like two separate places.

The Atlantic also tends to be cooler. Even in peak summer, the water feels fresh — sometimes brisk — compared to the warmer, calmer Mediterranean beaches farther east. In winter months like February, it can look wild and cinematic, more North Atlantic postcard than Mediterranean postcard.

And then there is the wind.

Anyone stationed here long enough becomes fluent in two words: Levante and Poniente. The Levante, an easterly wind, can blow strong and dry, stirring sand and lifting waves. The Poniente, from the west, usually brings cooler, more temperate air and calmer seas. Beach plans are often decided less by temperature and more by wind direction.

Locals check wind forecasts the way others check sports scores.



If you've recently arrived in southern Spain, you may have heard someone say, almost casually, "We're on the Atlantic side."

It sounds like a minor detail. Water is water, right?

Not here.

One of the most distinctive things about living in Cádiz province is that you are positioned at a rare geographical crossroads. This is where the Atlantic Ocean meets the Mediterranean Sea, and that meeting shapes everything from water temperature to tides, beach culture and even daily conversation.

For newcomers, especially those experiencing their first winter or spring on the coast, understanding that difference changes how you see the shoreline.

Because this is not just "a beach." It's an Atlantic beach.

### The Atlantic Personality

Stand on the sand in February and you'll notice it immediately. The ocean here moves with intention. Long, rolling waves stretch toward shore. The tide pulls dramatically in and out, revealing

### A Coast That Feels Alive

Cádiz province sits just north of the Strait of Gibraltar, one of the world's most important maritime passages. Through that narrow channel, Atlantic and Mediterranean waters mix constantly, shaping marine life and coastal currents.

That mixture gives this coastline its character. It also explains why seafood here is so varied and why weather can shift quickly.

Because the Atlantic faces the open ocean, beaches tend to feel expansive. At low tide, stretches of sand in places like Rota, Chipiona and El Puerto can seem endless. Families walk far beyond where the shoreline stood earlier. Children explore tide pools that will disappear a few hours later.

It's dynamic. It changes. It keeps you paying attention.

That dynamism is part of why nearby areas such as El Palmar and Tarifa have strong surf and kite-surf cultures. The Atlantic provides energy. The Mediterranean, by contrast, often provides calm.

Neither is better. They're simply different experiences.

stretch for miles.

It's during these quieter months that many residents realize the beach here isn't just for sunbathing. It's a year-round part of daily life.

You begin to notice how dramatically the tide shifts. You learn which wind makes the air feel warmer. You start to understand why locals discuss the sea as if it has moods.

Because it does.



### Living Between Two Worlds

Few places in Europe offer such proximity to two distinct marine environments. Within a few hours' drive, you can swim in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean on the same weekend. But living in Cádiz means your everyday backdrop is the Atlantic — open, tidal and constantly in motion.

For families stationed in Rota, that uniqueness becomes part of the assignment experience. It explains why beach days are wind-dependent. Why the water might feel cooler than expected in June. Why the shoreline looks completely different from morning to evening.

It also explains why locals have strong opinions about "a good beach day."

Living between two seas is more than a geographic footnote. It's a daily reminder that this corner of Spain is distinct.

So the next time someone says, "We're on the Atlantic side," you'll know what they mean.

And by summer, you may even have a favorite type of wind!



### Winter Reveals the Coast's True Nature

While summer brings crowds and beach umbrellas, February offers clarity. Without peak tourism, the coastline feels spacious and contemplative. Long walks replace long afternoons under shade. Fishermen cast lines into deeper swells. Dogs sprint across sand that seems to

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# NCTAMS Lant Detachment Rota Holds Change of Charge Ceremony

Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jett Morgan  
NAVSTA Rota Public Affairs



Capt. Craig Gabriellini, commander of Naval Computer and Telecommunications Station, Naples, middle, exchanges salutes with Lt. Cmdr. Colleen Johnson, left, outgoing officer in charge of Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Atlantic, Detachment Rota, during a change of charge ceremony onboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, Feb. 5, 2026.



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# EOD Technicians Prove Arctic Warfare Readiness in Norway

Story and photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Jackson Adkins

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group Two

Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 8, assigned to Commander, Task Force 68, completed Exercise Arctic Specialist 26 alongside allied forces from Norway and Sweden, Feb. 3 to 12, 2026.

Arctic Specialist is an annual Norwegian-hosted multinational exercise focused on expeditionary mine countermeasure operations and land-based explosive ordnance disposal tactics. The strategic location of the exercise provides valuable training in an extreme cold-weather environment, where conditions are dynamic, and the operating environment continues to evolve.



"The sailors of EODMU-8 have made me immensely proud, demonstrating unparalleled skill and resolve by executing complex operations across the EOD spectrum in the harshest conditions with our allies," said Navy Cmdr. Matthew Guido, the unit's commanding officer. "Their achievement is a testament to the hard work and professionalism they conduct daily in preparation to maintain security and access in the Arctic corridor. Our partnership with the Norwegian Navy EOD is vital to our shared success in

the Arctic, and we are grateful for their collaboration and friendship."

During the 10-day exercise, U.S. Navy EOD technicians conducted a wide range of operations, including underwater demolitions, exploitation of mines, conventional munitions disposal, rapid airfield damage repair, close-quarters combat, rappel operations and trench clearance. These training events collectively contributed to increased lethality and technical expertise in the Arctic domain and emphasized integration among allied forces in preparation for future conflicts.

The exercise provided valuable real-world training opportunities for EOD technicians to refine their professional skills while operating in extreme cold-weather conditions. Arctic Specialist evaluates planning, communications and operational oversight while simultaneously providing warfighters and enablers with valuable operational experience as they test the people, equipment and logistics needed to execute missions in remote and austere locations.

"In the Arctic, there is no margin for complacency. Our Norwegian partners and Navy EOD operators demonstrate that in freezing environments, the smallest detail can become the biggest threat," said Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Juan Hernandez, an ordnance disposal technician assigned to EODMU-8. "We look forward to continued U.S. participation in Exercise Arctic Specialist for years to come, strengthening our partnerships and advancing our cold-weather capabilities alongside our allies."

The Norwegian-hosted exercise also served as a venue for exchanging tactics, techniques and procedures through the integration of foreign EOD professionals embedded within U.S. Navy EOD platoons.

"We are very pleased that this exercise has participants from several NATO nations and different branches of defense," said Navy Cmdr. Senior Grade Christian Couillault, executive director and chief of the Norwegian Naval EOD Commando. "This is one of the few exercises where the main training audience is the Navy EOD diver himself and his team. The cooperation we have developed and maintained over the many



years with EODMU-8 is strong."

Arctic presence remains a high-priority mission for forces across the War Department and is central to homeland defense as its strategic importance grows.

The effects of emerging technologies and increased economic competition continue to shape an evolving security environment, requiring an increased level of regional stability and cooperation. These conditions demand naval forces capable of operating effectively in high-

latitude environments.

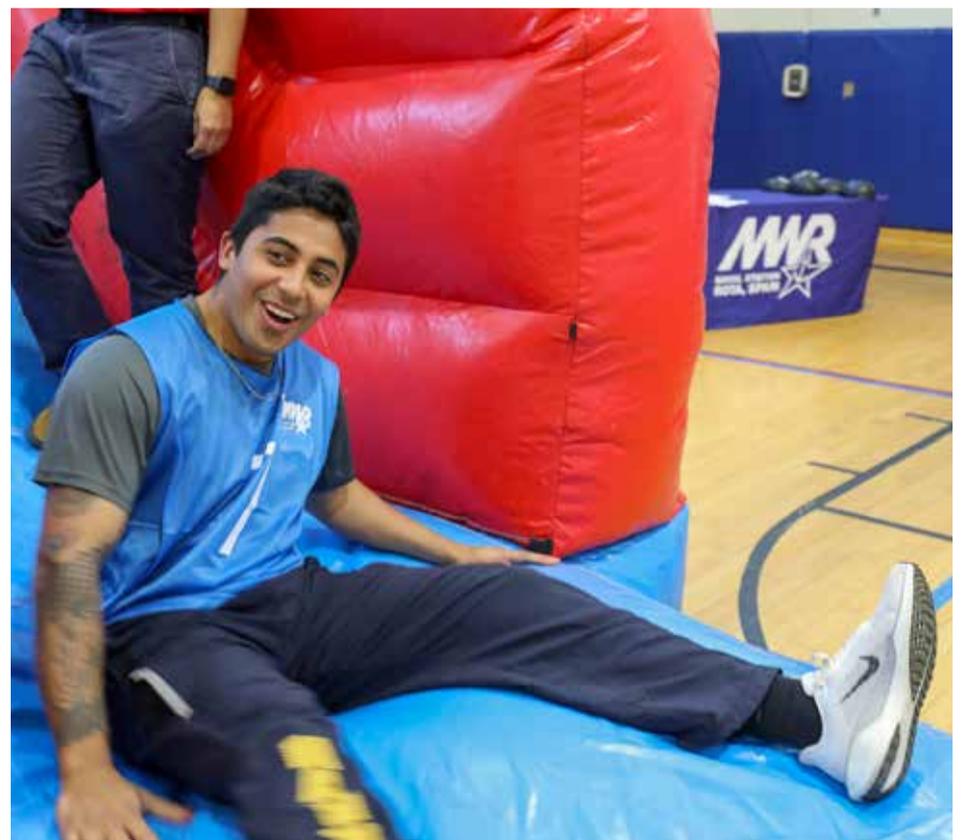
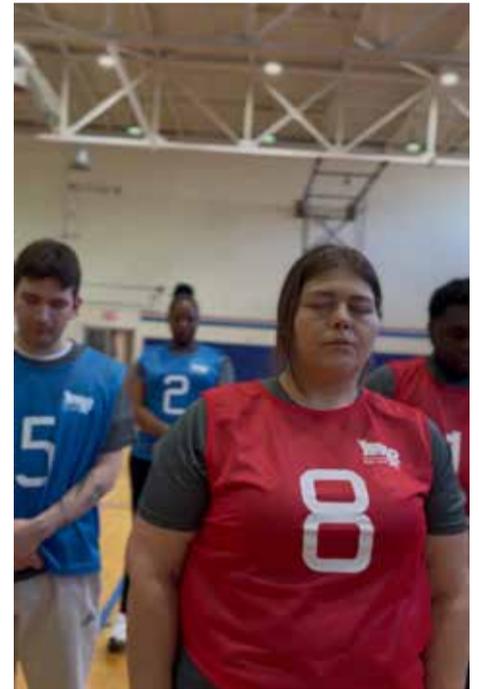
"We are grateful that the U.S. Navy sends its best sailors to create realistic training missions," Couillault said. "The technology brought by the U.S. Navy EOD team to test in Norway enriches us all in the development track. The fact that we are able to develop procedures together within several military skills in demanding arctic conditions makes us better equipped for joint operations in the north."



# Mind-Body Mental Fitness Team Hosts Kraken Games 2026

Photos by Christina Brewer, Amber Courtney-Duncan, and Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson

The third annual Kraken Games was held at the Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota gym on Feb. 24. Hosted by the Mind-Body Mental Fitness Team, teams participated in a variety of exercises aimed at cooperation and learned different techniques aimed at monitor and manage the stressors of everyday life. As part of the Warrior Toughness program, the Mind Body Mental Fitness course equips our community with tools to navigate stress, stay focused, and thrive under pressure.



# Aerospace Engineering Students Tour 725th AMS

Photos by Alejandra Tirapu

Aerospace engineering students from Universidad Politécnica de Madrid visited Base Naval de Rota on Jan. 29, 2026. The visit, coordinated in collaboration with the Spanish Armada, included a tour of a C-17 thanks to the support of 725th AMS. These visits highlight the partnership between the U.S. forces in Spain and the Spanish community and serve as an educational tool for future leaders.



# LN Legends: Antonio Guerrero Torres

Photo by Alejandra Tirapu

Antonio Guerrero Torres, representing our friends at American Forces Network (AFN), is this month's featured LN Legend!

Within the "LN Legends" reel series, you will be able to follow our featured

legend through their daily tasks and learn more about how they support the fleet and how they make their job special to them.

Scan the QR Code below to watch the video about Torres and learn about his history with radio and how it has changed since he was a child.



  
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# UPDATED INSTALLATION SHUTTLE BUS ROUTES AND TIMES!

| ROUTE 2 (MONDAY - SUNDAY) |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Morning Stops</b>      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Galley                    | 06:00 | 06:20 | 06:40 | 07:00 | 07:20 | 07:40 | 08:00 |
| Pier 1 - (Inside)         | 06:10 | 06:30 | 06:50 | 07:10 | 07:30 | 07:50 | 08:10 |
| Camp Mitchell             | 06:15 | 06:35 | 06:55 | 07:15 | 07:35 | 07:55 | 08:15 |
| <b>Lunch Stops</b>        |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Inside)         | 11:00 | 11:25 | 11:50 | 12:15 | 12:40 | 13:05 |       |
| Galley                    | 11:10 | 11:35 | 12:00 | 12:25 | 12:50 | 13:15 |       |
| NEX                       | 11:15 | 11:40 | 12:05 | 12:30 | 12:55 |       |       |
| Camp Mitchell             | 11:20 | 11:45 | 12:10 | 12:35 | 13:00 |       |       |
| <b>Evening Stops</b>      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Inside)         | 14:45 | 15:21 | 15:57 | 16:33 | 17:09 | 17:45 |       |
| NEX                       | 14:51 | 15:27 | 16:03 | 16:39 | 17:15 |       |       |
| Gym/Liberty Center        | 14:55 | 15:31 | 16:07 | 16:43 | 17:19 |       |       |
| Laundry                   | 15:00 | 15:36 | 16:12 | 16:48 | 17:24 |       |       |
| Galley                    | 15:04 | 15:40 | 16:16 | 16:52 | 17:28 |       |       |
| Camp Mitchell             | 15:11 | 15:47 | 16:23 | 16:59 | 17:35 |       |       |

| ROUTE 1 (MONDAY - FRIDAY) |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Morning Stops</b>      |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Galley                    | 05:45 | 06:02 | 06:19 | 06:36 |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        | 05:52 | 06:09 | 06:26 | 06:43 |       |       |
| Fuentebravia Gate         |       |       |       | 07:00 | 07:45 |       |
| Bldg. 600                 |       |       |       | 07:05 | 07:50 |       |
| Housing Pool              |       |       |       | 07:08 | 07:58 |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        |       |       |       | 07:14 | 08:04 |       |
| Camp Mitchell             | 05:57 | 06:14 | 06:31 |       |       |       |
| NEX                       |       |       |       | 07:19 | 08:09 |       |
| Galley                    |       |       |       | 07:22 | 08:12 |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        |       |       |       | 07:30 | 08:20 |       |
| <b>Lunch Stops</b>        |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        | 10:45 | 11:07 | 11:29 | 11:51 | 12:13 | 12:35 |
| Galley                    | 10:52 | 11:14 | 11:36 | 11:58 | 12:20 | 12:42 |
| NEX                       | 10:57 | 11:19 | 11:41 | 12:03 | 12:25 | 12:47 |
| Camp Mitchell             | 11:02 | 11:24 | 11:46 | 12:08 | 12:30 | 12:52 |
| <b>Evening Stops</b>      |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| Fuentebravia Gate         |       | 15:35 | 16:25 | 17:13 |       |       |
| Bldg. 600                 |       | 15:40 | 16:30 | 17:18 |       |       |
| Housing Pool              |       | 15:43 | 16:33 | 17:21 |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        | 15:00 | 15:49 | 16:39 | 17:27 |       |       |
| Galley                    | 15:07 | 15:56 | 16:44 | 17:32 |       |       |
| Gym/Liberty Center        | 15:11 | 16:00 | 16:48 | 17:36 |       |       |
| NEX                       | 15:14 | 16:03 | 16:51 | 17:39 |       |       |
| Camp Mitchell             | 15:18 | 16:07 | 16:55 | 17:43 |       |       |
| Pier 1 - (Outside)        | 15:23 | 16:12 | 17:00 | 17:48 |       |       |



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## Eloy Soto

Eloy Soto, from Cádiz, Spain, is currently an IT specialist at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota N6 department. Soto previously worked as a Safety Specialist at the NAVSTA Rota Safety office, but technology has always been his passion.

“Bits have run in my blood since I was 5 years old,” joked Soto.

Soto provides a variety of technical support across the installation, from assisting with ONE-Net and Flank Speed accounts to providing troubleshooting services for software, hardware, and network issues that NAVSTA personnel might experience. Additionally, he assists with the review and updates of troubleshooting guides as well as the testing of new tools and software prior to their release for general users.

“My favorite thing about my job is solving problems and helping people,” said Soto. “I enjoy taking a technical issue that may be frustrating for a customer

and turning it into a smooth, positive experience.” Thanks to his job and his team, he is able to learn something new every day and improve his skills while helping users. “In IT, we often deal with complex issues, and it is great to collaborate, share knowledge, and learn from one another to find the best solutions,” mentioned Soto.

He loves helping others and making a positive impact every day. “By staying present in each interaction, I can truly understand people’s needs and provide thoughtful support. Living in the moment helps me connect, collaborate, and bring my best to everything I do,” expressed Soto.

During his free time, Soto enjoys engaging in activities that help him relax and stay creative. He loves spending time with friends and family, playing sports, and playing the guitar in a rock band



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# Let's Eat!

By Pilar Ruiz

## Spanish Garlic Chicken – Pollo al ajillo

In Spain, Pollo al Ajillo is the kind of dish that feels like home. Served in family kitchens and traditional taverns alike, it showcases the beauty of simple cooking: Garlic gently sizzling in olive oil, tender chicken, and a splash of wine that brings everything together.

It's authentic, comforting, and wonderfully easy to recreate in your own kitchen. Are you ready to cook with us? This is our recipe:

### Ingredients (Serves 4):

- 1 whole chicken, cut into small pieces
- 8–10 cloves of garlic, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup dry sherry wine or just regular white wine
- 1 cup chicken broth
- A chili pepper (optional)
- 4–5 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 teaspoon paprika (optional)
- 1 bay leaf

### Preparation:

#### 1. Sauté the chicken:

In a large frying pan or skillet, heat

the olive oil over medium heat. Add the chicken pieces, previously seasoned with salt and pepper, and cook until browned all over (about 10 minutes). Remove and set aside.

#### 2. Cook the garlic:

In the same pan, add the sliced garlic and sauté gently until soft and fragrant (don't let it burn!).

#### 3. Add wine and broth:

Pour in the dry sherry wine (or regular white wine) and let it reduce a bit. Add the chicken broth, bay leaf, and a chili pepper (if using).

#### 4. Combine everything:

Return the chicken to the pan. Lower the heat, cover, and let it simmer for about 20 to 25 minutes until the chicken is cooked through.

#### 5. Serve:

Plate the chicken with French fries or a nice green salad, and enjoy!

Thank you all so much, and we'll see you very soon with our next recipe.

If there's a particular dish you'd like us to share, don't hesitate to contact us at [info@aprendiendoacocinar.es](mailto:info@aprendiendoacocinar.es) we'd love to hear your suggestions!



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# Ask the Tax Guy! Are You Ready for the New Tax Season?

By **Richard Griffith**

*Community Tax Professional*

Tax season can be a hectic time, especially when searching for various documents to ensure you have all the correct information when filing your federal and state taxes.

As a tax preparer and filer, the goal is to properly report and submit all required tax documents so the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will not reject your Form 1040.

As a reminder, a taxable year is from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, and any taxable transactions that occur during that year are reportable to the IRS. The tax season typically begins around Jan. 25 of the following year and ends on April 15. If you live abroad, you are automatically granted an extension until June 15. You can also request an additional extension using Form 4868 until Oct. 15.

#### Who must file:

All U.S. Persons (U.S. Citizens, Green Card Holders, and Resident Aliens) are required to file annually, regardless of:

- Where their income is earned
- Where in the world do they live?
- Whether or not the U.S. has a Tax Treaty with that country
- Whether or not they also pay Foreign Taxes

#### The minimum gross income to file:

- Single and under 65 by Dec. 31 is \$15,750
- Married Filing Jointly is \$31,500
- Head of Household is \$23,625
- Married Filing Separately is \$ 5
- 65 years and older is an additional \$2000 deduction, plus a new \$6000 deduction

- Single is \$23,750
- Married Filing Jointly is \$46,700
- Head of the Household is \$31,625

Additionally, you are required to file taxes if your net earnings from self-employment (side jobs or other independent work) were at least \$400, or if you owe taxes on unreported tips, retirement account distributions, capital gains, etc., or if you got advance premium tax credits (health insurance subsidies) or if you want to claim a refund or credit (like Earned Income Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit).

#### Filing Tips:

I have listed some tips that should ease the filing process:

- A newborn requires a Social Security number to be claimed as a dependent. The Social Security number must be issued in the same year as the newborn's birth to receive credit. If a Social Security number is issued later, then the tax credit will be for the year the Social Security number was issued. This is not retroactive

- Individual Tax Identification number (ITIN): Given to foreign nationals who do not have a Social Security number. The application can be submitted with the 1040 tax return and mailed to the IRS

- Sales of home: A closing statement that has all the details of home sales, you also need the original cost/value of the property

- Rental Property: You will need the annual income and expenses

- Mortgage company: The mortgage company should send a 1098 Mortgage Interest Statement, if any

- Power of Attorney for deployments: IRS does not accept General or Special powers of attorney. IRS has a very specific power of attorney for tax-related documents (Form 2848)

- Bank Interest, Dividends, and Capital Gains statements: All banks or investment institutions will send a 1099-INT/1099-DIV and/or 1099-B at the beginning of the year if there is earned interest, dividends, or capital gains

- Stocks and Crypto investments: All investment companies will provide statements on 1099-B if there have been any reportable transactions

- W-2: A W-2 is issued from the current and or previous employer for the same taxable year

- Pensions and Annuitants: A 1099R or a 1042S will be provided by the employer to report yearly income

- Student Loan Statements: 1098 Student Loan statement is provided by the lender with the interest paid on the loan

- Schedule K-1: Use to report income, losses, deductions, and credits from trusts, S corporations, and partnerships

- CDC/Childcare are claimable expenses

- Unearned interest, dividends, and capital gains of minors can be reported on the parents' return if certain requirements

are met

- Some out-of-pocket dependent medical expenses

#### Claiming Minors:

You can get the full deduction if your child is under 17 by Dec. 31 of the current tax year and doesn't meet the minimum earned or unearned gross income requirements

You can claim a minor child and be eligible for the full deduction if they earn less than \$15,750 for the year

Divorced or legally separated: If the court-designated custodial parent allows the non-custodial parent to claim their minor children, then the custodial parent must sign the IRS Form 8332, which releases the custodial parent's claim to an exemption, and the non-custodial parent must attach a copy of the form to their return

Parents can claim college students if the student's income doesn't meet the minimum filing requirements, and the parent provides more than half the support

#### Claiming Dependents:

What is the difference between a qualifying child and a qualifying relative? Please refer to

[https://www.irs.gov/publications/p501#en\\_US\\_2024\\_publink1000220702](https://www.irs.gov/publications/p501#en_US_2024_publink1000220702) or IRS Pub 501. You can also scan the QR code below.



#### Dependents with special needs:

IRS offers tax benefits and credits that may be available to qualifying taxpayers.

Please refer to <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3966.pdf> or scan the QR code below for more information.



#### Some New Budget Bill Tax Changes:

- Standard deduction
  - Single filer: \$15,750
  - Married Filing Jointly: \$31,500
  - Head of the Household: \$23,625
  - 65 years and older: Extra \$6000 (2025 to 2028)
- Child Tax Credit:
  - Boost to \$2200
- State and Local Tax (SALT) deductions
  - Temporarily raising the cap to \$40,000 for tax years 2026 to 2029
- Tips and Overtime (2025 to 2028)
  - Tip Income Deduction
  - Overtime Income Deduction (No w-2 will be issued must keep your records and submit on new 1040 Schedule Form).
- Other Individual Tax Items
  - Senior Bonus Deduction: A temporary additional \$6000 deduction for those 65 years and older
  - Mortgage Interest Deduction: A \$750,000 limit for deducting mortgage interest on acquisition debt is now permanent
  - Adoption Credit: Up to \$5000 of credit for adoption expenses
  - Foreign Earned Income Exclusion
    - Increases to \$130,000
  - Car loan interest deductions (2025 to 2028)
    - Up to \$10,000 per year tax deduction on qualifying vehicle loan interest payments



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# FFSC and NCIS Collaborate to Teach Families about Online Safety for Teens

**Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson**  
NAVSTA Rota Public Affairs

The Fleet & Family Support Center (FFSC) teamed up with Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) Rota and the Fleet & Family Support Center to deliver in-depth training and handouts to parents about children’s internet safety, resources for reporting, and receiving assistance to parents and caregivers at the Rota Middle-High School, Feb. 19, 2026.

Elizabeth Schwoch, Rota Middle-High School Adolescent Counselor and FFSC Non-Medical Counselor and NCIS Special Agents (SA) Stephen Barbour and Ernesto Andino Gonzalez presented information on a wide variety of topics: Sextortion & deep fakes, cyberbullying, catfishing, doxing, online solicitation & grooming, and problematic sexual behavior in child and youth (PSB-CY) as well as Legal consequences of sharing explicit images.

Military members rely on the communication capabilities that modern technology affords them. Children in military families are no exception. Being

able to talk with friends and family all over the world is vitally important, but the online environment opens up risks that parents may not have any experience with, and becoming knowledgeable is important to manage safe digital behaviors at home.

The training also touched on digital footprints and privacy online, along with the emotional impact and warning signs of digital harm to look for in children at home.

“It is imperative that parents know the importance of educating their children on legal risks, emotional consequences, and real-life situations in a way that’s age-appropriate and empowering,” said Schwoch. “Parents must have explicit conversations on what is not okay online and to not assume your child knows better. It is necessary to teach children boundaries, digital consent and create a space for children to be able to report and ask for help from a parent or primary caregiver.”

One of the most prevalent type of threat a child can encounter online is sextortion. SA Stephen Barbour presented real case studies to drive the point home that children are at risk of the cybercrime-sextortion. Useful tips for parents who are



The training was led by (from left) NCIS Special Agent (SA) Ernesto Andino Gonzalez, FFSC counselors Katie Scaible and Elizabeth Schwoch, and SA Stephen Barbour.

concerned about their child’s online safety were discussed in order to avoid the threat. If a child finds that they had made a mistake online and have encountered a problem, parents must stay calm and support child. It is also important to not delete anything that could be considered evidence ( such as chats, profiles, and images), do not pay in the event of blackmail, and contact and report the incident to NCIS.

Luckily, there are many avenues to properly address online threats before they even become a problem. Setting social media accounts to “private,” limiting message requests to “people you follow,”

and setting posts you or your child are tagged in to “manually approve” are just a few simple ways to safe online when using platforms such as Instagram or Tik Tok.

“It’s important to foster a safe and open environment with your child about online safety, helping them feel assured that they can go to their parent or primary care giver if they encounter any strange or dangerous situations” Schwoch stated.

For more information and resources, contact FFSC @ (314) 727-3232 or +34 956 82 3232. NCIS Rota Spain, @ 34-956-82-2222. General Information: NCIS Hotline 1-877-579-3648

## Anchors of Support: How FFSC Rota Helps Build a Resilient & Strong Community

**By Jessa Quitiquit**  
Fleet and Family Support Center

Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, is more than a strategic location: It’s a home away from home for thousands of American service members and their families. In this unique overseas environment, the Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) serves as the bedrock of community resilience. Its mission is to enhance operational readiness by providing a framework of support structured around four essential pillars: Work and Family Life, Counseling and Advocacy, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, and Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce.

**Pillar 1: Work and Family Life (WFL).** The WFL pillar is the cornerstone of practical support. This begins upon arrival with relocation assistance and the mandatory Intercultural Relations (ICR) class, an essential introduction to Spanish culture. Throughout a tour, WFL provides comprehensive Deployment Support, transition planning (TAP),

spouse employment readiness (FERP), personal financial management (PFM), and dedicated support for families with special needs via the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).

**Pillar 2: Counseling and Advocacy Program (CAP).** This pillar addresses emotional and mental health through confidential clinical counseling for individuals, couples, and families. It also includes the Family Advocacy Program (FAP) to prevent and address domestic abuse, and the New Parent Support Home Visitation Program, which offers crucial in-home guidance for parents navigating challenges far from their stateside support systems.

**Pillar 3: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR).** A distinct and critical pillar, SAPR provides a 24/7 confidential reporting system and comprehensive support for victims of sexual assault. The program ensures immediate crisis intervention and long-term advocacy, providing compassionate care to empower survivors on their path

to recovery while vigorously promoting a command-wide culture of prevention.

**Pillar 4: Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW).** Representing a strategic shift towards proactive prevention, the IPP mission is to stop harmful behaviors before they ever occur. The Integrated Primary Prevention Workforce (IPPW) works together with leadership to implement data-driven activities that reduce risks for destructive behaviors that include suicide, harassment, and substance misuse, fostering a healthier command climate and enabling the Navy’s Culture of Excellence.

A Unified Force in a Unique Location  
At the strategic crossroads of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, Naval Station Rota is a high-tempo duty station unlike any other. Personnel are not just stationed overseas; they are immersed in a new culture, thousands of miles from the familiar support of home. This environment, with its unique stressors of distance and high operational demands,

requires more than just services, it requires a unified system of support. This is the core strength of the FFSC. Its four pillars are designed to be deeply interconnected, working together to address every aspect of a challenge. By functioning as a single, unified force, FFSC Rota fortifies the readiness and well-being of every community member. It provides the essential tools, resources, and care necessary for sailors and their families to not only excel in a demanding mission but truly thrive.

To learn more about the programs offered or to get in touch with the Fleet and Family Support Center, please use the contact information below.

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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@nmcrcs.org](mailto:rota@nmcrcs.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nmcrcsrota](http://www.facebook.com/nmcrcsrota)

## 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/nmcrcsrota> 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/nmcrcsrota> 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 Personnel 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](http://VOLUNTEERS.USO.ORG).

For all USO Rota events and more, follow "USO Rota" on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/USORota](http://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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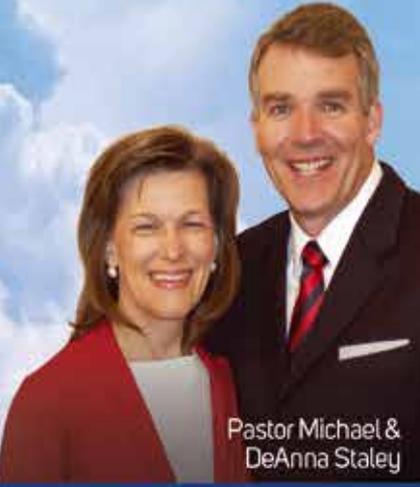


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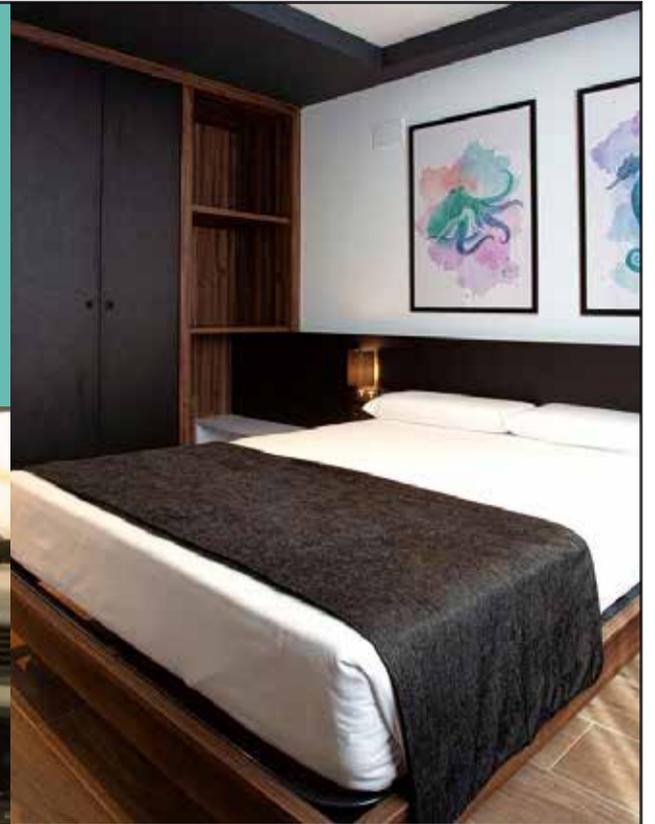
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