



COASTLINE

July 9, 2026 / Volume 36, Issue 09

U.S. Naval Activities Spain

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Leadership Corner



Capt. Charles Chmielak
NAVSTA Rota Commanding Officer

Hola Team Rota! This month we joined our fellow citizens around the world celebrating 250 years of Independence. We were honored to raise the U.S. flag in celebration of July 4th, across from Building 1, and to celebrate Independence Day with Freedom Fest, here aboard Base Naval de Rota! It was an amazing day seeing our greater community of U.S. and Spanish service members, civilians, and our families coming together to enjoy great music, food, and fun. A special thanks to MWR, volunteers, first responders and all those who contributed to making it a success.

We are blessed to serve overseas in a nation that shares our values of freedom and democracy. The United States continues

Celebrating our nation and your summer!

to serve as a beacon of hope for people around the world, as it has for 250 years, because long ago patriots gathered upon our shores to fight for our cause of independence. Today, like 250 years ago, Spain and the U.S. stand together in defense of our common values and no one is more aware of the importance of that cooperation than we who live here and stand the watch. The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness endures today because of the hard work and sacrifice of every member of Team Rota like the generations of patriots before us.

We are marking a significant milestone in history. There will be observances of the 250th birthday of the United States of America throughout the year with events taking place around the world. Seek out those events to celebrate and reflect on the work we must continue to do to preserve our way of life and ensure freedom rings for future generations.

Remember we continue to commemorate the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen: the United States Navy. Our observance of the Navy's 250th birthday continues until October, when we cap it off with the annual birthday ball and the commencement of the Navy's 251st year of service. We carry forward that legacy of honor, courage, and commitment each day as we sustain the fleet, fighters, and families at this strategic location. The readiness of our fleet and our allies depends on all of us to do our duty.

I am proud of everything we have accomplished together over the past year. Thank you to our deployed forces and all those who support them and their families! Please reach out if you need anything!

To those ashore, have a safe and enjoyable summer. We have a wonderful opportunity living overseas to experience different places and cultures. Locally, the surrounding communities have many events planned and they are a great way to explore the culture of Southern Spain. Check out the latest edition of Vamos to see what the MWR has planned and of course don't forget to follow the Naval Station and MWR on social media for updates.

As always, I look forward to seeing you around the installation!

COASTLINE

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On The Front Cover



Sgt. Theodore Smith, assigned to Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team Company Europe, prepares to raise the American flag during an annual Independence Day flag raising ceremony held onboard Naval Station Rota, Spain, July 1, 2026.

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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Pharmacy Essentials: What You Need to Know



1. How often does the pharmacy order medications, and how long does delivery take?

- The pharmacy orders medications weekly and monitors supply daily. Due to our overseas location, deliveries typically take 14 business days to arrive. Unforeseen supply chain issues, including weather or transportation delays, may impact this timeline.

2. What happens if my medication is on backorder or unavailable?

- Sometimes medications are on backorder or are otherwise unavailable for refill. If this happens, we will work with you and your provider to try and achieve the best outcome possible. For medications that treat chronic health concerns (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure, infections), the pharmacy will work with your provider to find a suitable alternative to ensure your treatment continues uninterrupted.
- In some cases, we may recommend filling your prescription in a host-nation pharmacy. In those instances, our pharmacy will help you navigate obtaining your prescription at a Spanish pharmacy. Please check with your insurance provider in advance to confirm reimbursement eligibility.

3. Are any medications currently in short supply?

- Yes. The manufacturer may say that there is not a national shortage of GLP-1 medications, especially Zepbound; however, the demand far outweighs the supply. We are competing with other pharmacies for the medication. The pharmacy gets allocated a number of units per week set by the vendor or manufacturer. We appreciate your patience as we work to refill our supply.

4. Is there a waitlist for GLP-1 medications?

- Yes. GLP-1 medications are waitlisted. You will receive an "Out of Stock" form with an email address to check your status. Please send an email in 14 days to request a status update.

5. Is Express Scripts (Home Delivery) still available?

- Yes, Express Scripts is a great option that can ship to APO/FPO/DPO addresses and to U.S. embassy/consulate addresses overseas.
- Note: Refrigerated medications and pressurized devices (inhalers) cannot be shipped to APO/FPO/DPO addresses.

6. How much medication can I refill or stock up on?

- While TRICARE does regulate the amount of medication prescribed at one time, we recommend speaking with your provider about the possibility of increasing your medication supply, in most circumstances we are limited to filling to a 90-day supply.

Pharmacy Essentials: What You Need to Know



7. Do controlled substances take longer to receive?

- Yes. Controlled substances (e.g., Concerta, Adderall, Ativan, Xanax, Ambien, opiates) require significantly more time because they require additional clearances from customs.
- To avoid running out of your medications, contact the Pharmacy to request a refill 14 days before your last dose.

8. Can I request an early refill?

- You can check the Medication Refill tab in the MHS Genesis Patient Portal to see when your prescription is ready for refill. Typically, most medications can be refilled when you've used 75% of your supply, while controlled substances are restricted to refill after using 90% of your supply. Please contact the pharmacy if you have questions.

9. Can I fill my U.S. Naval Hospital Rota prescriptions at Spanish community pharmacies?

- Yes, but you'll need to take extra steps to do so.
- You will need:
 - A Spanish-licensed physician's prescription. A local Rota physician can rewrite your prescription for a fee.
 - Your military Identification/Common Access Card (CAC).
 - You'll pay the full amount for your medication when you pick it up from the pharmacy, and then you can submit a reimbursement claim to International SOS.
 - The quickest and most convenient way to submit a claim is through the Express Scripts website. Go to the Express Scripts website and log in to your account. If you don't have an account, you will need to register.
 - Please stop by the Tricare Office in the hospital to get more detailed instructions.

Please ensure your contact information is up to date in MHS GENESIS.

For assistance with updating your information, please go to Patient Administration, located at E033/E034.

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact the Pharmacy at +34 956-82-3565 or pull a "Questions" ticket from the kiosk.

11
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USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) returns to Naval Station Rota

By Mass Communication Specialists
2nd Class Jett Morgan and Leon
Vonguyen

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Oscar Austin (DDG 79) returned to Naval Station Rota, Spain after a four-month patrol, June 17.



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Future leaders shine at Child and Youth Program's European Teen Summit

By Christina Rodriguez
Youth Director, Child and Youth Program

A dynamic group of teenagers from across Europe gathered at Naval Station Rota from June 14 through June 17 for the first-ever European Teen Summit, an inspiring week dedicated to fostering the next generation of leaders. With the theme "Lead Beyond Borders," the event brought together teens from Naval Air Station Sigonella and Naval Support Activity Naples for an immersive experience in leadership, teamwork, and community service.

The summit kicked off with a powerful message from the base's Executive Officer, Cmdr. Justin Jennings, who explored how different leadership styles impact a team's strength. Sharing insights

from his own leadership journey, he encouraged the teens to fully embrace the week's opportunities and lessons.

The core of the summit was the "leadership lab," a series of workshops designed to help participants discover their unique strengths. Through activities like the "colors assessment" and sessions on different leadership styles, the teens explored their natural talents and began to develop learned skills such as public speaking and empathy. The focus was on self-awareness as the foundation of effective leadership—understanding one's own values and how they impact others.

Putting these new skills to the test, the participants took to the beach for a series of complex obstacle courses. The challenges were designed to simulate

real-world pressure, requiring teams to communicate clearly and adapt their leadership strategies to succeed. From navigating a blindfolded partner through a course to building a sandcastle with a non-participating leader, the teens learned that true leadership is about collaboration and trust.

Community service is a cornerstone of strong leadership, and the teens demonstrated this spirit wholeheartedly during the summit. They organized and led a community service project at the School Age Care center, running activity clubs for younger children that included sports, arts, and STEM challenges. Additionally, the teens helped lead a group of SAC children to make cupcakes for our local firefighters. This gesture served as a testament to their ability to apply their leadership skills in a practical, meaningful, and caring way.

Throughout the week, the teens identified and discussed key issues affecting their communities, developing potential courses of action. The summit culminated in a formal presentation where they briefed the executive officer on their findings and proposed solutions, demonstrating their growth as confident and articulate leaders.

The inaugural European Teen Summit was a transformative experience that empowered young leaders to support one another, serve their community, and step forward with purpose. The event has

laid a strong foundation for a tradition of developing thoughtful and capable leaders for years to come.



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PUBLISHER'S CORNER

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Commander, Naval Surface Group Europe holds change of command

By Lt. Hazel Spencer

Commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic
Public Affairs

Capt. Andrew Klug assumed duties as the commander of Naval Surface Group - Europe (CNSG-E), relieving Capt. Alex Mamikonian during the time-honored ceremony. Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, the commander of Naval Surface Force Atlantic (CNSL), served as the presiding officer and guest speaker.

“Over the past 26 months, Alex has served as the center of gravity for surface operations in the European theater,” said Alexander. “Under his command, highly capable destroyers became the absolute linchpin of regional security and deterrence.”

CNSG-E serves as the executive agent for CNSL for force generation, with a focus on manning, training, and equipping Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDFN-E) surface warships and warships deployed to the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) and U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) areas of responsibility.

Comprising of approximately 50 personnel, the command handles the vital logistical and administrative framework that keeps forces mission-ready. By managing complex maintenance, parts supply, and training pipelines, the command alleviates critical burdens—allowing the operational commanders of five FDFN-E destroyers and visiting warships to focus exclusively on combat readiness and mission success.

“The establishment of Naval Surface Group Europe recognized a fundamental reality of modern maritime conflict: forward presence alone is not enough,” said Capt. Mamikonian. “We essentially conducted force generation at scale across the European theater – simultaneously sustaining combat operations, preparing ships for deployment, integrating CONUS-based forces, and ensuring forward commanders had ready combat power when and where it was needed.”

Capt. Mamikonian demonstrated superb leadership in establishing CNSG-E, instituting a comprehensive administrative command structure for five destroyers and one littoral combat ship while driving combat readiness in support of EUCOM and AFRICOM. Through clear direction and decisiveness, he enabled the deployment of multiple warships in combat operations by flawlessly orchestrating the surge of two Rota, Spain-based destroyers for Operation Bright Comet and the forward-staging of critical repair and maintenance capabilities.

CNSG-E ensured U.S. 6th Fleet maintained strategic deterrence, persistent operations, enhanced warfighting capabilities, and rapid crisis response. While directing support for sustained combat operations, CNSG-E completed 66 warfare certifications, 30 watch team continuity checks, and an on-patrol Board of Inspection and Survey

material inspection. This accomplished the first-ever force certification in conflict, keeping all warships in the fight while ensuring their crews were trained and materially ready.

“What this team accomplished together was extraordinarily difficult. Building a new command while sustaining combat operations and certifications— theater-wide force generation required relentless dedication and trust,” said Capt. Mamikonian.

“Alex, congratulations on wrapping up your tour here in Rota. I’m blown away by the excellence that this command exudes and the talent that you’ve developed and fostered within this staff,” said Capt. Klug. “Sailors of Naval Surface Group Europe, I am as motivated as I am humbled to be your commanding officer! I’ve been so impressed by you over the last couple of weeks, and I can’t wait to be fully immersed in our force generation mission.”

CNSG-E mans, trains, and equips assigned FDFN-E surface ships alongside vessels deployed to the EUCOM and AFRICOM areas of responsibility. By delivering combat-ready surface forces, CNSG-E provides operational and component commanders with the vital capabilities needed to conduct prompt, sustained naval, joint, and combined operations in support of U.S. national interests.



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The great Spanish escape: Why summer belongs to the coast

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

If you've suddenly found yourself sitting in traffic where there wasn't any two weeks ago, wondering why your favorite café now has a waiting list and why finding parking feels like winning the lottery, welcome to summer in Cádiz.

Every year, as July arrives and August gets closer, life along the coast changes almost overnight. The same grocery run that took five minutes in May now requires strategy, patience and possibly a small emotional support snack. The beach you casually visited after work in spring is now a carefully choreographed operation involving umbrellas, coolers, parking calculations and the quiet hope that someone, somewhere, is leaving at exactly the right moment.

For many Americans stationed in



Rota, this seasonal transformation can be surprising. One week, town feels familiar and manageable. The next, every street seems busier, every restaurant fuller and every parking space occupied by a car that appears to have settled in for the month.

In many cases, it probably has. Summer in Spain does not work

quite like summer vacation in the United States. While American families often plan shorter trips around work schedules, camps or long weekends, many Spanish families still organize summer around longer stays, especially near the coast. It is common for families from inland cities such as Madrid, Seville, or Córdoba to rent an apartment near the beach for two weeks, three weeks or even an entire month.

And when Spanish families travel, they often travel generously. Grandparents come. Cousins come. Friends stop by. Someone's brother-in-law may appear for lunch and somehow stay until Thursday. The result is not just tourism. It is a full seasonal migration.

There is a practical reason for this. Inland Spain gets intensely hot in July and August. Cities such as Córdoba and Seville can feel like ovens by midafternoon, and the coast offers what inland families are craving: sea breeze, cooler nights and the possibility of walking outside without feeling like you have opened an oven door.

Cádiz becomes, in many ways, everyone's backyard.

That shift affects daily life. Roads near beaches become slower. Parking near the water becomes increasingly difficult, especially on weekends. Supermarkets are busier, and the quick stop for milk, bread or fruit can suddenly become a 45-minute expedition. Some businesses extend hours to meet summer demand, and supermarkets in tourist zones may open on Sundays during high season. At the same time, prices in some areas can rise, restaurant reservations become more useful, and patience becomes the most important item in your beach bag.

The beach itself changes too. The quiet stretches of sand from spring fill with families, umbrellas and entire portable living rooms. Spanish beachgoers come

prepared. Chairs, coolers, shade, fruit, sandwiches, toys, towels, card games and enough supplies for what appears to be a minor expedition are all part of the scene. A beach day is rarely just a quick swim. It is an event.

For those used to a more spontaneous beach routine, the local approach may



feel intense at first. But there is something beautiful about it. Spanish summer beach culture is deeply family-centered. Grandparents sit under umbrellas while children run between towels. Teenagers form clusters near the shore. Someone always has a tortilla de patatas. Someone always forgot the bottle opener. Somehow, everyone manages.

The challenge, of course, is logistics.

If you are planning a beach day in July or August, timing matters. Arriving late morning may mean circling for parking longer than you actually spend in the water. Weekdays are easier than weekends. Early mornings and late evenings are often the most pleasant times to go. Many locals avoid the most crowded hours altogether and return to the beach when the sun is lower and the heat begins to soften.

Errands also require a summer mindset. Grocery shopping early in the morning or later in the evening can make a significant difference. Trying to run multiple errands in the middle of the day, especially near the coast, is a bold choice. Not impossible, but bold.

August brings its own rhythm. In many parts of Spain, it feels like the entire country collectively exhales. Some offices slow down. Some businesses close for

vacation. Schools are out. Many families organize the year around this pause. It is not unusual to hear that someone will "deal with it in September," a phrase that, in Spain, carries both cultural truth and emotional wisdom.

For military families and international residents, this can be one of the biggest adjustments. Summer is not just a season here. It is a social structure. Plans shift. Work rhythms change. Towns expand. Patience stretches.

And yet, once you understand what is happening, it becomes easier to appreciate.

The crowded beaches, the full cafés, the lack of parking and the long lines at the ice cream shop are all signs of something larger: Spain's deep commitment to summer as family time. This is when people reconnect, rest, travel and return to places that are part of their personal history. For many Spanish families, the same coastal town is not a destination. It is tradition.

That does not make finding parking easier. Let's be honest.

But it does help explain why the coast feels so different this time of year. It is not random chaos. It is an annual ritual. One that has been repeated for generations, shaped by climate, school calendars, family ties and the simple human desire to be near the sea when the heat becomes too much.

So, if your five-minute grocery run takes 45 minutes, if your favorite chiringuito is packed, or if you find yourself celebrating a parking spot like a major life achievement, take a breath. You are witnessing Spanish summer in full swing.

For locals, summer is not something they fit into life: Life reorganizes itself around summer.





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NAVFAC constructs new helicopter hangar for HSM 79

Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jackson Wanous

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Europe, Africa, Central (EURAFCENT) completed construction on the framework of a new hangar that will be utilized by Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 79, June 4, 2026.

To celebrate the occasion, Cmdr. Kira Devers-Jones, commanding officer of HSM 79, signed her name on the frame of the helicopter hangar alongside members of NAVFAC EURAFCENT and contractor personnel.



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LA TERRAZA
PUERTO SHERRY

Health Promotions: Summer injury prevention and safety

By Devin Evans
U.S. Naval Hospital Rota

Summer is here and schools are letting out. As warmer weather approaches more people are spending time outside enjoying the sun and being more active. And for those who can get away, this is a great time of year to travel for vacation with family and friends.

While there is an association during warmer months with fun and relaxation, be mindful that it can also be a time of unpredictability, with more risks for injury. There are more cars on roadways, beaches are crowded, temperatures can spike, and children want to be outdoors more with friends participating in sporting activities.

It is true that you can't control your environment, but you can control how you

manage risk within it.

Here are some tips for Summer specific safety topics.

Sun safety: While sunlight is necessary for our bodies, too much sun can pose a number of health risks. Protecting your skin from the sun's UV rays is the best way to decrease your risk of sunburn and skin cancer. Each sunburn increases a person's chance of developing a skin cancer later in life. To decrease your chances of a burn, remember to stay in a shaded area during peak sun hours. Use clothing like wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and long sleeved shirts while always applying a sunscreen with a SPF of 30 or higher. Avoid products labeled "tanning oil" and reapply lotion every two hours, especially after swimming or sweating.

Heat safety: High temperatures are dangerous to everyone but especially to vulnerable groups like people with chronic health conditions. Other specific groups that can be more sensitive to increased temperatures are pregnant people, young children, advanced age adults, and those working outdoors. Increased body temperature can lead to heatstroke which is the most dangerous heat-related illness and needs to be identified immediately. Signs include flushed skin, lack of sweating, rapid breathing, headache, and ultimately if left untreated, unresponsiveness. Seek

medical help immediately if someone is suffering from heat stroke. To avoid this condition limit your time outdoors during hot days. If possible, access air conditioned spaces to cool down as well. Incorporate adequate hydration into your "staying cool" plan too. Avoid alcoholic, caffeinated, and sugary beverages which can dehydrate you even more. Water is the best choice for beating the heat and keeping you hydrated.

Swimming hazards: Swimming in pools, lakes, beaches or waterparks can be fun and an excellent exercise while keeping cool. Water safety is vital for identifying possible injuries that can lead to drowning. First, make sure that anyone entering the water knows how to swim. Even entering shallow water can be dangerous if conditions change or if a non-swimmer is left unsupervised. Always make sure that a lifeguard is on duty. They will alert swimmers to hazardous water conditions. And avoid being in water if adverse weather like lightning is present.

Celebrate safely: A unique event during summertime is celebrating with fireworks. They are an exciting part of holiday celebrations that are to be experienced from a safe distance and handled by professionals. Fireworks are exceptionally hot and burn at temperatures in an excess of 2,000 degrees, which poses a great risk to skin if directly contacted. If you are interested in fireworks, attend



a public display which will provide a safe and fun time.

Road safety: Reports state that over 85% of all Americans plan to travel during summer months. This translates into more people and cars being on the road at any given point in time. The greatest injury prevention tool related to motor vehicles is wearing a seatbelt. If you are a pedestrian, make good decisions and adhere to the rules of the road by crossing only at designated crosswalks. If you are traveling outside of the United States, get to know the country's laws especially which way the traffic flows when driving. And always remember to wear a helmet and reflective clothing when bicycling.

Knowing the hazards is the first step in preventing summer injuries. But don't let that stop you from getting out and making the most of this summer, safely.



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Laurianne "Coach" Allard

Laurianne "Coach" Allard, from Portland, Maine, was the Kindergarten - 5th Grade Elementary Physical Education Teacher at Rota Elementary School onboard Naval Station Rota before retiring at the beginning of this July after 10 years in the role. Before that, Allard was the MWR Fitness Director on base from 2001 to 2015.

Allard's daily duties as the Elementary Physical Education teacher included developing student excellence by creating daily lessons in sports, fitness, active games, character traits, and having fun.

"My favorite thing about my job is the

joy of moving and exercising with the students," stated Allard.

Allard also implemented and helped oversee the annual Elementary School Field Day event and was the lead for Europe South physical education focused collaboration lead.

Outside of school, Coach Allard obviously enjoys working out, but she also loves dancing, traveling, going on new adventures, and spending time with her friends, family, and grandchildren.

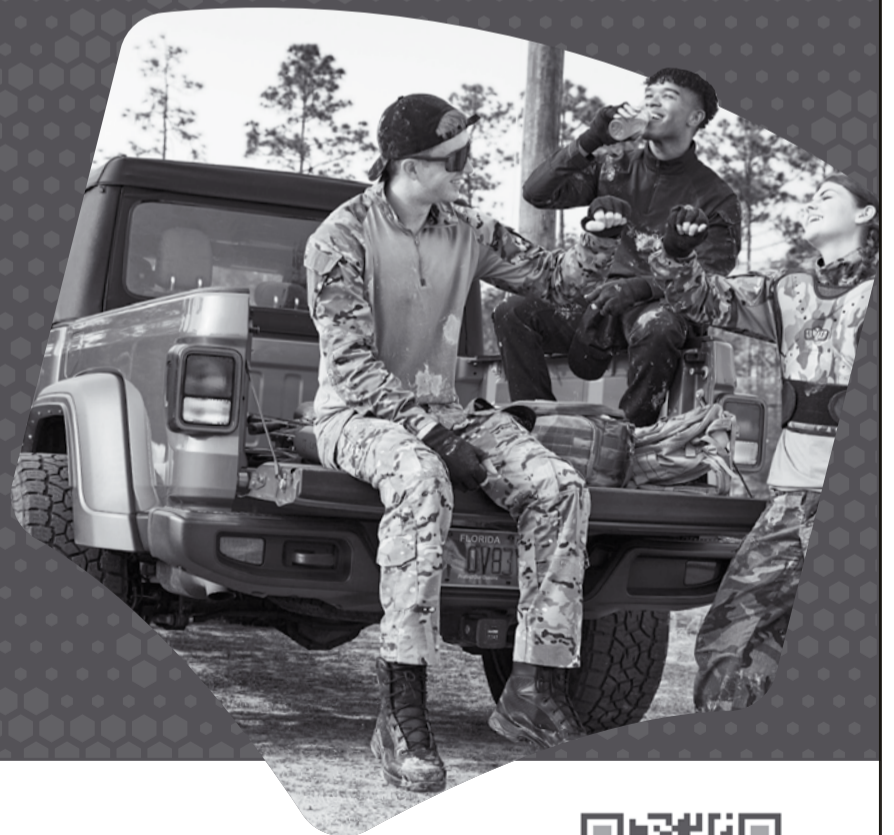
"I have retired, but everyday I try to follow the student PE motto: 'Go Be Great!'"



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NAVSTA Rota, supported commands participate in flag raising ceremony

Photos by Ev Lopez and Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Drace Wilson

Personnel assigned to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota and its supported commands came together to participate in the 2026 flag raising ceremony on July 1.

After a singing of the national anthem and a short address from Capt. Charles Chmielak, the commanding officer of NAVSTA Rota, participants stood at attention for a group photo alongside the U.S. flag to commemorate the occasion.



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U.S. forces observe the United States' 250th birthday onboard Base Naval de Rota

Story by Lt. Daniel Ehrlich

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

Members of the U.S. Navy, Army, Air Force, and Marine Corps, U.S. Department of War civilian and contractor personnel, and Spanish local nationals observed the United States of America's landmark 250th birthday, known as Independence Day or the Fourth of July, with a ceremonial flag raising outside of the installation's headquarters building onboard U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, July 1, 2026. More than 500 personnel stood in a military formation during the ceremony, representing some of NAVSTA Rota's 46 supported commands. A joint-service color guard featuring four military branches raised the American flag.

The Fourth of July weekend is the only time of the year that the U.S. flag is permitted to be flown, as Naval Station Rota is hosted onboard Base Naval de Rota, an Armada base. Spanish law and the Agreement of Defense Cooperation between the Kingdom of Spain and the United States of America prohibit the flying of any other national flag onboard Spanish military bases, but an exception request is submitted and approved each year in honor of America's Independence Day and the continued partnership between the two military forces.

"We are, and always have been, a maritime nation. We were founded upon the strength of the sea," said NAVSTA Rota Commanding Officer Capt. Charles Chmielak during the ceremony. "The United States Navy has continued sailing the globe to protect our way of life... Through conflicts and peacetime, our armed forces have answered the call."

After finishing the ceremony, the Fourth of July celebrations began in earnest with NAVSTA Rota's annual Independence Fest party held by the installation's Morale, Welfare, and Recreation department. American military and civilian personnel who work onboard the installation enjoyed games, music, and food from local vendors alongside their Spanish local national colleagues and their families, demonstrating the variety of backgrounds and experiences

that combine to form NAVSTA Rota's shared Navy story, one that makes it America's most capable power projection platform in Europe.

"Our freedom and independence is earned each day through your service and sacrifice," said Chmielak. "We are proud to serve overseas in a country whose story is intertwined with our own. Without the assistance of our Spanish allies, we would not be here today."

American country artist Larry Fleet headlined the event that concluded in a traditional display of red, white, and blue fireworks.

The Independence Day festivities in honor of the United States' 250th birthday have only begun for both the U.S. and Spanish armed forces. On the Fourth of July, the U.S. Navy will host the International Naval Review in New York City. The event will feature a parade of U.S. Navy and partner military and sailing ships, including the Armada, showcasing global maritime cooperation.

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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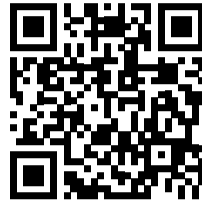


LN Legends: NAVSTA Port Operations

This month's LN Legends focuses on the Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Port Operations team.

Serving as one of NAVSTA Rota's six lines of operations, our Port Operations teammates ensure that U.S. and Allied forces are ready to operate when called upon and enable the U.S. Navy's sustained forward combat capability.

Scan the QR code to watch the video!



Rota Leadership Suggestion Box

Use the QR code above to submit a question directly to the CO, XO, and CMC of Naval Activities Spain / Naval Station Rota

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U.S. Naval Hospital Rota & DoWEA support student athletes and military families

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

U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Rota recently partnered with Department of War Education Activity (DoWEA) schools to provide sports physicals for student athletes ahead of the 2026–2027 school year.

Hospital staff completed 169 sports physicals at David Glasgow Farragut Middle High School, helping students meet participation requirements for school athletics and ensuring they are medically cleared to safely compete during the upcoming school year.

The event provided military families with a convenient opportunity to complete an important requirement before the start of classes. Providers, nurses, Hospital Corpsmen, and support staff worked together to conduct the physicals and support the health and well-being of military-connected students.

"Providing care and services that support our military families is an important part of our mission," said Lt. Marlina Irizarry, nurse in Medical Homeport and lead coordinator for the event. "Events like these allow us to bring healthcare directly to our community while helping students prepare for a safe and successful school year."

The annual event reflects USNH Rota's ongoing partnership with DoWEA schools and commitment to supporting military families across Naval Station Rota. By providing convenient access to sports

physicals, the hospital helps students stay active, healthy, and ready to participate in school athletics.

Strategically positioned on the Iberian Peninsula, the hospital plays a critical role in defending, restoring, and elevating the health of warfighters and their families. USNH Rota provides ready, reliable care to 8,700 service members and their families.

For more information on USNH Rota and its mission, visit www.rota.tricare.mil



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VBS - rainforest falls

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Writer

One of Rota's most exciting events is gearing up to take place at the chapel next month. Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a week long, faith-based experience where kids ages kindergarten through fifth grade can join together while they explore the Bible and Jesus's love through song, story, crafts, and games. This year's theme is Rainforest Falls: Being rooted in God's love. Children will immerse themselves in adventure, learning about the beauty of God's creation while seeing waterfalls,

vibrant birds and tropical flowers, they will grow in faith by understanding that God's love is a safe place and a strong foundation and they will have fun as the stories told from the Bible come to life. Each day will be a new experience as Bible Buddies teach who God is.

This free event is open to all children in our community and will be held at the base chapel on August 3 through 7 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30p.m. Registration for this event will open July 12. Volunteers are needed to help make this event the best Rota as seen.



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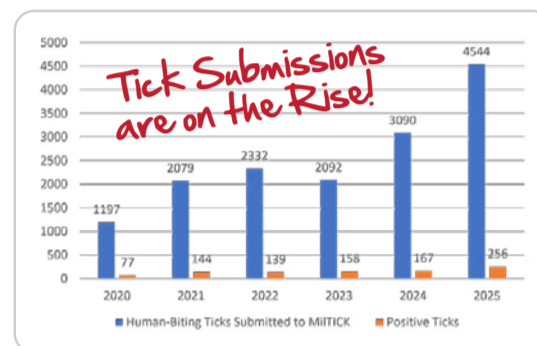
- Order tick kits, which are completely free, and distribute them to patients or keep them on retainer (follow QR code).
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For more information, contact dha.agc.pub-health-a.mbx.tickcom@health.mil

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USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) conducts shipboard firefighting drill

Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Johnny Garcia

Sailors assigned to Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Bulkeley (DDG 84) fight a simulated fire during a shipboard firefighting drill onboard Naval Station Rota, Spain, June 9, 2026.

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Dama del Rosario 2026: Maria Isabel Lanker

Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Jett Morgan

Maria Isabel Lanker will represent the U.S. community in Rota during this year's Virgen del Rosario festivities.

Every year in October, Rota celebrates Virgen del Rosario, its patron saint. Almost every association in Rota is represented during the festivities by a young person called "dama" or "caballero."

The U.S. community onboard U.S. Naval Station Rota has participated in this local tradition for years, which strengthens the relationship between the two communities and provides an opportunity to learn more about the local culture.

This year, Rota Middle-High School student Maria Isabel Lanker will be the Dama del Rosario representing the U.S. community in Rota.

Do you want to know what it feels like to be a Dama del Rosario?

Melissa Doelfel, our Dama for 2025-2026, shares what she liked the most about this experience and the impact that the last year has had on her life by scanning the QR code below:



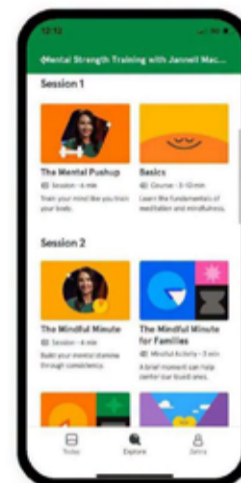
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Spouse Talk: Getting back to pretty

By Ashley Leigh
Contributing Community Writer

Unless you've been shut up inside your home (or maybe on a ship for the last several months), you've probably noticed a shift in the weather. Cool mornings are slowly being replaced with muggy temperatures and frizzy hair. Soon, everyone will be wearing shorts and sandals. The tourists will make their way to Rota beaches and parking will become nonexistent off base. Chances are you'll be amongst the fray at the beach, trying to claim a good spot on the sand, and saying to yourself, "it's too peoplely out here." But as you grumble about the masses, you might notice in the sand a small gem in the form of a tile.

The tiles here are my kryptonite. It's a small "addiction" to walk the beach and flip the tiles just to find that one with a pattern. Tiles are unique in that on one side they maybe plain, rough, sun bleached and all around ugly. But, flip it over and you may end up with an unexpected and thrilling splash of blue, yellow or pink. These addictive little tiles make good examples of the various relationships we have.

For example, when you first get married, everything is seen through rose colored glasses (that's the pretty side of the tile). But as we all know, those glasses get foggy and we eventually need to clean them. When we take them off, low and behold everything isn't perfect. Our relationships go through tumbles, refining

and eventually end up at a standstill. We wonder if we will ever see our pretty side again. We know its there, but can we get back to that point?

So back to the tiles we go. Tiles will at some point end up in the ocean. They've fractured off their home base and are now tossing around on the seafloor. Sand it wearing down those edges, breaking the tile up into smaller pieces and eventually sending it to the shoreline where it sits with the ugly side up, waiting to be flipped over and exposing what it once was.

Relationships, whether with a friend, spouse, parent, child, or coworker, all go through these refinements like the tile. They suffer being sent into the tempest, tested and challenged. The ugly is let out for everyone to see and all we want is for the pretty side to be showing again. The relationship doesn't always right itself back. Sometimes it takes help from another entity (counseling, a personal or physical change, a big blowup) to get back to the pretty side of things. In reality, that flip from ugly to pretty doesn't always happen. Try as you might, our pretty may never see the light of day again. But, if you know you've done your best to correct the ugly and get back to your best version of pretty with no resounding result, then take some peace with you when you have to step away. You tried to push the tile back, you wanted things pretty and now you move forward as a stronger, newer tile.

Navy League Council Madrid awardees

Courtesy Photos

Members of our Team Rota community were recently recognized by the Navy League Council Madrid for their contributions and hard work.

The chosen service members had the opportunity to meet with U.S. Ambassador to Spain and Andorra Benjamín León Jr. at his residence in Madrid. Congratulations to Air Traffic Controlman 1st Class Christopher Blake, Master-at-Arms 1st Class Nathalia Londono, and Marine Sgt. Jacob Carnavale!



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725th AMS members complete OSHA course

By 725th Air Mobility Squadron Public Affairs

Members of Team Rota participated in the Occupational Safety and Health Administration 30-Hour General Industry Course from June 23 through 26, 2026. The course is designed to teach supervisors, employees, and safety managers about the industry standards established in public law and how they apply to their workcenters around the base.

The course was instructed by Tech. Sgt. Kevin Tuskey, 725th Air Mobility Squadron Safety Superintendent, who taught topics such as operations within confined spaces, fall protection procedures, and how to safely handle hazardous materials.

"Only about 3% of the US workforce holds an OSHA General Industry 30

Hour Card," said Tuskey. "This credential distinguishes applicants and is used by companies to lower insurance costs, decrease mishaps rates and select employees for advancement into supervisory and management roles."

While the course is not a mandatory part of the Air Force or Navy safety curriculum, participants received a certification card from the United States Department of Labor documenting completion of the course and can apply what they learned in their offices.

"I highly recommend this course," said Mr. Jose Cortez, NAVSTA Rota Occupational Safety and Health Specialist. "Even personnel without a background in safety would benefit from taking this class to broaden their understanding of safety in the workplace."



NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM



The Navy Family Ombudsman Program is designed to provide better and faster communication between Navy families and Navy leadership. Navy commands and all deploying units, including the reserves have an Ombudsman, typically a spouse of one of the command's active-duty members. Ombudsmen are official, appointed, liaisons between commanding officers and families. They can expedite communication between the command and families. In addition, Ombudsmen provide information on services, upcoming events, and/or help in crisis situations. Air Force Key Spouses & Family Readiness Assistants are similar to Ombudsmen, support service members, their families, and command leadership. Contact your command's representative to be added to their distribution list.

Ombudsman Coordinator Fatima M-Nicholson (fatemeh.majidi-nicholson.naf@us.navy.mil)

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Let's Eat!

By Pilar Ruiz



Spanish potato salad – Ensaladilla Rusa

A treasured family recipe from Rota, Cádiz

Every Spanish family has a recipe that brings everyone together, and this is one of them.

This traditional ensaladilla rusa, or Spanish potato salad, was lovingly prepared for many years by Josefa Pizones Rico, affectionately known as Tita Josefi. Her recipe became a favorite at family celebrations in the coastal town of Rota, where generous bowls of this creamy salad were always among the first dishes to disappear from the table.

Today, her daughter María José continues making the recipe just as her mother taught her, preserving a family tradition that has been enjoyed for generations. Like so many classic Spanish dishes, its secret lies not in complicated techniques but in good ingredients, simple preparation and the pleasure of sharing it with family and friends.

Local Tip: In Andalucía, ensaladilla rusa is much more than a tapa. You'll find it in almost every neighborhood bar, at family celebrations and on summer tables throughout the region. Every cook has their own version, making it one of Spain's most loved comfort foods.

Ingredients:

- 3,3 lbs/1 ½ kg of potatoes
- 2 large carrots
- 1 can (15 oz) of peas
- 1 can (12 oz) of roasted red peppers
- 5 hard-boiled eggs
- 1 jar (8 oz) of pitted olives
- 1 ½ cups of homemade mayonnaise (or store-bought)
- 3 cans (5 oz each) of tuna in olive oil
- 1 package (8 oz) of imitation crab sticks
- Salt to taste

Method:

In a large pot, bring salted water to a boil. Peel and dice the potatoes and carrots into even cubes, then add them to the pot and cook for 8 minutes, until tender but not mushy.

Boil the eggs in a separate pot for 10 minutes, then set aside to cool.

Drain the potatoes and carrots and place them in a large mixing bowl.

Peel and chop the eggs, and add them to the bowl along with the olives, peas, tuna, sliced crab sticks, and chopped roasted peppers.

Drizzle with a little olive oil (use the oil from the tuna) and add a pinch of salt. Let it cool slightly.

Once cooled, mix in mayonnaise to taste, ensuring everything is coated evenly.

Spread a generous layer of mayonnaise over the top and decorate with roasted pepper strips, olives, chopped egg, tuna, peas, and crab sticks.



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Technology plays a crucial role in harbor defense during BALTOPS 2026

Story by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Brandie Nuzzi
22nd Naval Construction Regiment

Naval Surface Warfare Center (NSWC) Panama City and Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Group (UUVGRU) One executed a multi-national harbor protection demonstration to show how the advancement of technology plays a crucial role in protecting the Navy's assets during exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) 2026.

There was essential tactical support from Amphibious Construction Battalion (ACB) 1, Underwater Construction Team (UCT) One Construction Dive Detachment Charlie (CDD/C), Netherlands Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), and a Latvian boat crew.

"I campaigned for the harbor protection counter unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) demonstration in BALTOPS to strengthen our relationships with our Baltic allies and partners to address the emerging threat of unmanned systems," said Charles Humphrey, a science advisor with the Office of Navy Research-Global.

The demonstration showcased three emerging technologies including an expeditionary air curtain, an artificial kelp UUV net, and sea water neutralization charges which are designed to counter UUV threats.

The expeditionary air curtain is a rapidly deployable underwater system that is used to protect mission-critical assets below the waterline. The air curtain defends against UUV threats and can be used at Naval bases and military installations as well as ports and harbors by aerating the water to affect the UUVs depth sensors, acoustic sensors, buoyancy and propulsion.

"We are testing the air curtain to see how it disrupts and hinders UUV sensors. It is a quick, expeditionary solution because it can be deployed easily," said Javi Handal, a Senior Electrical Engineer with NSWC Panama City.

UUVGRU-1 played a huge role in testing the air curtain technology by conducting operations using the Iver3 UUV.

The purpose of a UUV is that it navigates autonomously and executes a pre-programmed mission profile which can last from hours to several months depending on the size and type of the



Submarine Navigation 1st Class Kenneth Mangahas, front, and Fire Control Technician 1st Class Zane Elliott, assigned to Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Group (UUVGRU) 1, launch an Iver3 Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) during exercise Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) 2026 in Liepaja, Latvia, June 10, 2026.

vehicle. When conducting a standard sortie, the UUV uses on-board sensors to gather intelligence. Tasks can include seabed mapping, mine detection, or electronic surveillance. Once the UUV is recovered, the collected data can be downloaded and analyzed.

"The reason the Iver is such a great vehicle is the capabilities of its employment. It takes very little logistics to actually get it in the water and to operate it," said Fire Control Technician 1st Class Zane Elliott, assigned to UUVGRU-1. "We can easily get a vehicle out in the water and conduct a survey, or do whatever we need to do. It's the employment of the small vehicles that are so much faster, so you are able to get on the scene and get what you need done accomplished."

UUVGRU-1 is able to provide critical insights by running sorties and working in tandem with the Naval Surface Warfare Center. Using the UUV to go through the air curtain will allow both sides to see how their technologies operate and respond. Both of these capabilities are important to the warfighting mission and strengthening deterrence efforts.

"At UUVGRU-1, we like to say 'extend the reach,' but this is truly the future of warfighting with robotics warfare. It will save more Sailors' lives, and it's going to increase our capability as a warfighting force, tenfold," said Elliott.

Chief Electronics Technician,

Submarine Navigation, Jabril Smith, assigned to UUVGRU-1, explained an important characteristic of the UUV. He said that it can outfit the necessary payloads to fit whatever the mission is, and it is able to gather metric data which can be analyzed by the experts. The data is very useful for the NSWC team because it is important for them to find expendable and expeditionary solutions to counteract UUV threats.

"First and foremost, it serves as a means of building relations with foreign nations and its occupants. Also, it serves as an excellent training opportunity for our service members, so they are able to get outside of their normal operating environment and see things we don't normally see," said Smith.

Key regional partners and observers monitoring the event included the Latvian Navy, the Chief of Staff of the Lithuanian



"Each time we conduct these operations, we are able to evolve," said Handal. "It is helpful to know what specific sensors are affected, so we can learn how to be able to effectively operate better."

NSWC and UUVGRU-1 were able to collaborate in order to strengthen the Navy's operational readiness. For both commands, being able to participate in BALTOPS reaches beyond being able to employ technology.

"I think it is important to be able to showcase our capabilities and work with our NATO partners and allies. Being able to participate in exercises such as this allows us to counter active world threats," said Handal.

For UUVGRU-1, being able to participate in BALTOPS means being able to expand their knowledge and operate outside their normal working environment.

Navy Sea and Coastal Surveillance, and the Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) Innovation Department.

BALTOPS is the premier annual maritime exercise in the Baltic Sea region. There are approximately 6,000 personnel from 15 Allied nations participating in BALTOPS. This is the 55th iteration of the U.S. led exercise that focuses on strengthening deterrence, building interoperability, command-and-control milestones, and securing critical infrastructure.

Commander, U.S. Sixth 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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