

STARS AND STRIPES®

stripes.com

Volume 1 Edition 18 ©SS 2026

ITALY EDITION

MAY 28, 2026



CHAD GARLAND/Stars and Stripes

Maj. Jeremy Evans, executive officer of the Army Field Support Battalion-Africa at Camp Darby, Italy, searches the Old English Cemetery in Livorno on May 6. He was looking for graves of American service members who had died in the area in the early 19th century and were buried at the cemetery, which dates from the 1600s.

Caring for history

Camp Darby troops tend to graves of America's earliest war dead **Page 3**

New Leghorn cafe creates community buzz **Page 14**



Army tests drone capable of carrying wounded soldiers **Page 12**



Sailors move off Mount Whitney as part of initiative **Page 5**



App Fee

Waived

- Low-cost tuition
- App fee waived thru 6/1



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
GLOBAL CAMPUS** in Europe

europe.umgc.edu

COVER STORY

Link with history

Camp Darby troops honor some of America's earliest overseas war dead

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

LIVORNO, Italy — They came to honor the dead, men they did not know but who were among the first American troops to die on overseas duty.

The dozen U.S. service members from nearby Camp Darby who visited Livorno's Old English Cemetery on May 6 cleaned up at least five Americans' graves, an act of service that gave them a unique link to history.

After tidying up the burial plots, the troops formed up and Army Field Support Battalion Africa commander Lt. Col. Ross Hertlein presented a Meritorious Service Medal to Capt. Jorge Guevara, who had asked to receive his end-of-tour award at the site.

"For the rest of my career and as long as I live, when I look back on my (medal) rack, it's going to be, 'Hey, I earned this award in this cemetery,'" the departing Guevara said. "Their memories and their service will not be forgotten until I die."

The service members buried there died in the first few decades after the Revolutionary War, including four sailors and a Marine who served on warships patrolling the Mediterranean Sea in the early 1800s.

For the visitors, paying respects to fellow countrymen was deeply connected to their own family histories of service.

Capt. Sydney Morriss, one of 11 soldiers and an airman who visited the burial site, hoped others in the future would show the same respect to honor fallen service members of more recent memory, such as her grandfather, an Air Force veteran.

A modern city has grown up around the high walls and locked gates of the Protestant cemetery, which dates to the early 1600s and was in use for about 200 years.

Clustered together among cypresses and elms, the jumble of some 500 carved grave-stones is all but forgotten in the shadows of parking garages and apartment buildings.

Amid rain showers, the visitors cleared away weeds and overgrowth, then planted U.S. flags and laid bouquets at the handful of tombstones of their countrymen.

At one point, Hertlein removed a large piece of ornamental stone that appeared to have been used to smash an American's headstone.

Later, he noticed that a large block of marble that had been toppled belonged to one of the Americans' graves, so he gathered a handful of soldiers to heave it back to an upright position.

A Marine buried in a neighboring plot, Capt. James McKnight, was the brother-in-law of Stephen Decatur, the Navy commodore who led the service's Mediterranean Squadron, which was formed to protect merchant ships from pirates.

In late 1815, Decatur signed the final peace treaty with the Barbary States, a region in north Africa that used piracy to try to control the sea and extract tribute from British, French and American merchant vessels.

The U.S. fought its first overseas war against the Barbary pirates from 1801 to 1805, as memorialized by the phrase "to the shores of Tripoli" in the first line of the Marines' Hymn, referring to the capital of present-day Libya. A second American war against the Barbary States was fought in 1815.



PHOTOS BY CHAD GARLAND/Stars and Stripes

Italian researcher Gabriel Pavolettoni, and Army Capt. Jorge Guevara read from a headstone at the Old English Cemetery in Livorno, Italy, on May 6. Guevara was one of 12 service members from nearby Camp Darby who searched the graveyard for the tombs of American military personnel who died in the region in the early 1800s.



Senior Airman James George prepares to place a U.S. flag and a bouquet at the grave of Capt. James McKnight. McKnight, a Marine officer who was killed in a duel in 1802, is one of several American service members buried at the Old English Cemetery, a long-closed graveyard near the U.S. military's Camp Darby.



Lt. Col. Ross Hertlein pauses to read a headstone for two Navy midshipmen who died at sea in 1817. Hertlein commands the Army Field Support Battalion-Africa at nearby Camp Darby.

McKnight, the Marine officer on the sloop-of-war USS Constellation, was killed not by pirates in combat, but by a fellow officer with whom he had quarreled, Lt. R.H.L. Lawson, who shot him in the heart during a duel in Livorno on Oct. 13, 1802.

"He had but time to say he was shot and expired," Capt. Daniel Carmick, a fellow Marine officer, wrote in a letter at the time to

William Ward Burrows, the service's second commandant, according to an article in the April 2015 edition of Leatherneck magazine.

Carmick wrote that McKnight was then taken to the burial ground "where I was to witness a scene I shall ever remember, that of being obliged to see a brother officer's heart cut out, that I might certify that the ball had passed through the center of it."

Hertlein learned that McKnight and at least four Navy officers were buried at the site from Steve Zglinicki, an Army retiree and former commander of a Camp Darby unit.

Zglinicki found out about them through a series of chance encounters while looking for the grave of a World War II Medal of Honor recipient.

Along the way, someone gave him a small wooden model of a ship, but it was broken, and the man he sought to fix it gave him a book by a local Italian author recounting the story of the duel and the burial ground.

Zglinicki found the duel site, then scaled the walls of the cemetery to locate McKnight's grave, he told the soldiers at the cemetery during their visit.

Near McKnight is buried Capt. Thomas Gamble, who died in Pisa in 1818 while commanding the USS Erie. He was the son of a Revolutionary War major and brother of War of 1812 hero Lt. Col. John M. Gamble, the first Marine to command a Navy ship.

Hertlein chose a more official path to arrange the visit for his soldiers, though it took him four months to hunt down the people with keys to the gates and arrange the date.

The soldiers and a few civilians accompanying them, including Hertlein's wife, fanned out through the cemetery. They were looking for at least the five service members' graves and those of any other Americans who may have been forgotten.

They found the graves of Capt. Henry De Butts, who died in 1801 in Sarzana, and two Navy midshipmen, John M. Cotter and Green Lynch. Both died at sea in 1817 while serving with the Mediterranean Squadron.

The experience brought up emotions for Hertlein that sprang from his family connection to the city, where his grandfather in-processed into Italy with the 88th Infantry Division in 1945 after the city's liberation during World War II.

His grandfather, who died in 2019, had been the one to encourage Hertlein to pursue a military career.

Hertlein has visited cemeteries in Europe and north Africa where America's war dead are buried, he said, but those are mainly the final resting places for those who fought in World War II.

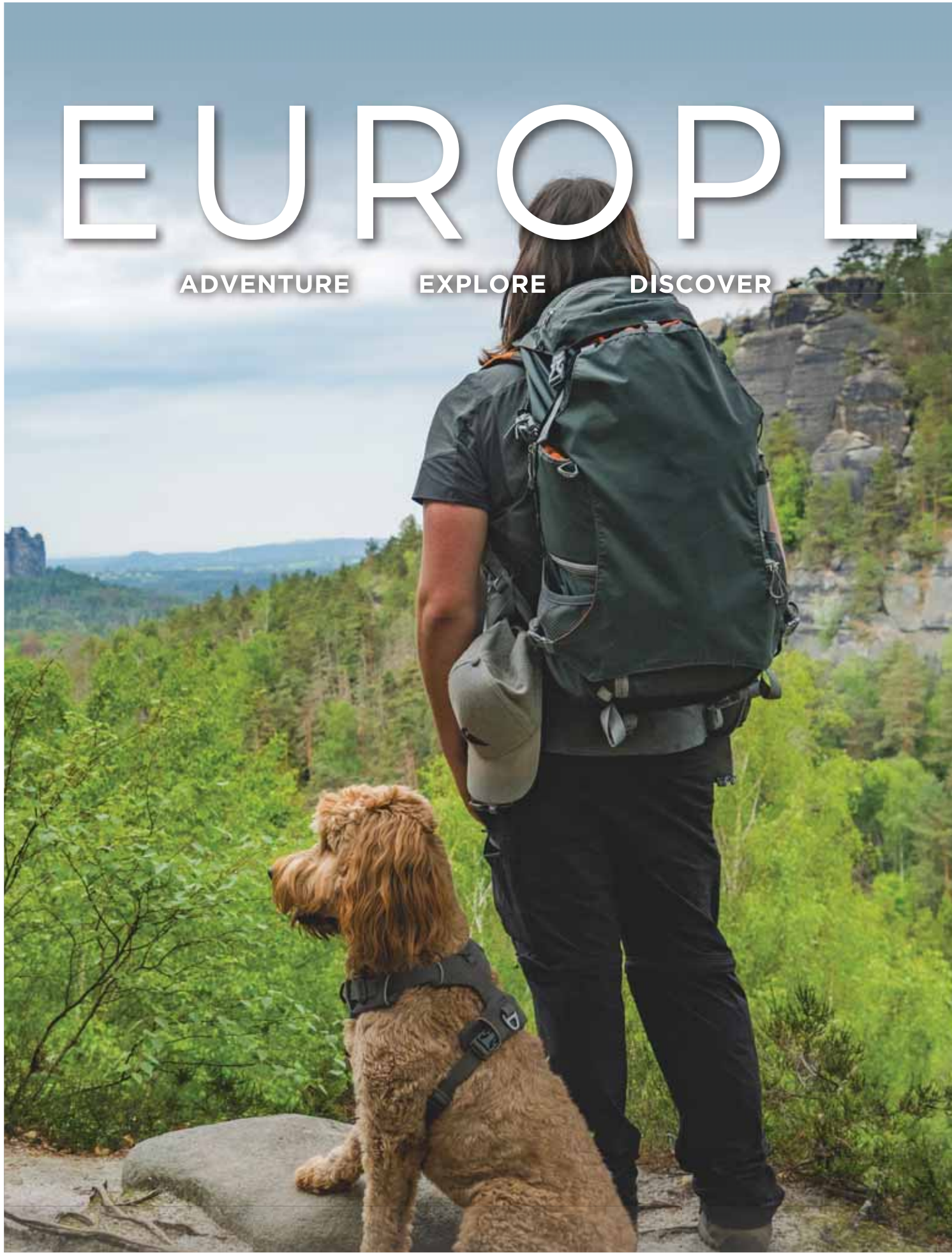
"This is once in a lifetime," he said. "This cemetery goes back to the 1600s. The service-men who died here, 1800s. You never see that."

"The fact that it's a closed cemetery that you can't even get into, I really hope that that's a special moment for them to remember."

STARS AND STRIPES®

EUROPE

ADVENTURE EXPLORE DISCOVER



SPRING/SUMMER EDITION

AVAILABLE NOW

Get your free copy at your installation's Commissary, Exchange and Express

MILITARY

US drivers urged to obey Italian traffic laws

Enforcement of rules covering license plates, insurance for electric scooters becomes stricter

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — U.S. military bases in Italy are reminding their communities to obey Italian motor vehicle licensing laws or risk serious consequences, including the potential loss of their automobiles or scooters.

The alerts come ahead of strict enforcement that started on May 15 for a law requiring license plates and insurance for electric scooters.

Italian officials also are emphasizing adherence to similar laws, violations of which can carry fines of up to 400 euros.

The scooter law also requires helmets for riders 14 and under, and the vehicles must have working lights, brakes and a bell, Naval Support Activity Naples said in a Facebook post.

“Non-compliance may result in heavy monetary fines or vehicle impoundment by authorities,” the base said in the post. Those fines can range from 100 to 400 euros, according to Italian news site LaMilano.it.

People who own electric scooters should contact base motor vehicle offices for more information, NSA Naples said.

The reminder about the new law followed a similar announcement by Naval Air Station Sigonella, on the Italian island of Sicily, that warned owners to properly display license

plates on cars, trucks and other vehicles.

Italian law requires a license plate to be physically secured to the front and rear of all four-wheel vehicles, NAS Sigonella said in a May 5 Facebook post.

Violators risk fines of up to 250 euros and potential impoundment of their vehicle for up to 90 days. Repeat offenders could permanently lose their vehicle, according to the post.

The post is intended to make base community members aware of potential penalties whether they are driving on or off base, said Lt. j.g. Gianni Paquian, a NAS Sigonella spokeswoman.

Drivers who have vehicles with bumpers that don’t easily accommodate the typically longer, narrower Italian license plates may unknowingly violate the law by improperly displaying them in a car window or another location, Paquian said.

U.S. Army Garrison Italy, Aviano Air Base and NSA Naples each said people are advised of the requirement when registering their vehicles at an installation motor vehicle office.

Public information campaigns also offer periodic reminders. For example, vehicle owners at Aviano must sign an acknowledgment that they understand the license plate requirements, the base said.



Brooke Rogers/U.S. Air Force
Air Force Airman 1st Class Kevin Tran, 31st Security Forces Squadron defender, directs traffic at the north gate of Aviano Air Base, Italy.

Sailors move off Mount Whitney as part of quality-of-life initiative

By ALISON BATH
Stars and Stripes

NAPLES, Italy — Junior sailors assigned to a Navy ship based in Italy no longer must live on the vessel when it’s not at sea, part of a broader service-wide quality-of-life campaign.

Naval Support Activity Naples recently transitioned 54 unaccompanied sailors assigned to the command-and-control ship USS Mount Whitney to housing within the local community, the base said in a recent statement.

The ship is homeported in Gaeta, Italy, about 66 miles northwest of NSA Naples, which is home to U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa/U.S. 6th Fleet. Mount Whitney is the flagship of 6th Fleet.

The move is part of a Navy-wide effort to improve quality of life for junior sailors, typically ranked E-4 and below, by ensuring they have access to clean, comfortable and safe housing while in port, the base said May 6.

“Providing our sailors with a place to decompress away from their workspace is fundamental to their mental readiness and overall well-being,” Capt. Colin Price, commanding officer of Mount Whitney, said in the statement. He added that sailors who are well-rested and have a sense of home are better prepared for 6th Fleet missions.

The NSA Naples effort follows a directive last year by chief of naval operations Adm. Daryl Caudle that ended the practice of having junior sailors live on ships year-round.

At the time, the Navy estimated that some 7,500 to 10,000 sailors were living on ships. In February, Caudle said that number had been reduced to between 2,500 and 3,000.

The directive is also in line with recommendations in a 2023 Navy investigation into the suicides of several sailors assigned to the aircraft carrier USS George Washington.

That investigation found that junior service members were living in poor conditions on and off the ship while the carrier was undergoing a grueling, yearslong overhaul. The report included 48 recommendations to better the quality of life for sailors, including improving off-ship housing and no longer having sailors stay on ships when not underway.

In the case of Mount Whitney, it took more



Chad Butler/U.S. Navy
Vice Adm. J.T. Anderson, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, poses with U.S. 6th Fleet staff on the flight deck of the USS Mount Whitney during a staff embark aboard the warship in Gaeta, Italy, on May 6.

than two months to transition the sailors into local housing, an effort that included expanding the search for available residences into communities near Gaeta, the base said.

While shared housing was an option for Mount Whitney sailors, all of those involved chose to live alone in furnished apartments, Lt. j.g. Valentine Mulango, a spokesman for NSA Naples, said. He added that some eligible sailors remained living on the ship while it was in port, an option they preferred.

Housing costs for sailors living off the ship

are covered by monthly rental and utility allowances for service members, he said.

For example, an unaccompanied E-2 service member living in Gaeta — and approved for living off-base — is eligible for nearly \$2,780 in rental and utilities allowances each month, according to the Defense Department Travel Management Office.

Caudle has said that the Navy would meet its objectives to ensure sailors don’t have to live on ships by investing in unaccompanied and family housing and helping service mem-

bers make good use of a recent increase in their basic allowance for housing.

The effort to move service members off ships is part of Caudle’s Sailors First initiative, which aims to revamp the Navy’s efforts to foster sailors’ well-being through top-notch combat platforms, training, education and support.

The effort includes ensuring that the service meets or exceeds expectations in such areas as housing, recreation, day care, grocery shopping, food service and schools.

MILITARY

New robotic kitchen faces test in the field

SAM designed to cook meals quickly with less setup time, labor

By ALEJANDRO CARRASQUEL
Stars and Stripes

CAMP CARROLL, South Korea — The Army is testing a robotic kitchen designed to quickly prepare meals for soldiers out in the field while reducing setup times and labor demands.

The system — Sustained Autonomous Meals, or SAM — is undergoing a seven-month evaluation funded through U.S. Indo-Pacific Command research and development programs, the service said.

After the success of the Market 19 autonomous kitchen at Camp Walker, this new program aims to evaluate the capabilities of its field counterpart, officials said.

“The pilot cost around \$80,000,” said Chief Warrant Officer 3 River Mitchell, food adviser for the 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command’s Distribution Management Center.

The containerized kitchen can produce between 100 and 120 meals per hour and feed as many as 800 soldiers on a single load, he said.

The system now offers two meals — one for breakfast and one for dinner — but has the capacity for up to four customizable meals, Mitchell said.

“We have a breakfast dish with chicken sausage and some spinach, and veggies,” he said. “And then we have bow tie pasta with tomato sauce and chicken.”

Unlike traditional kitchens, SAM combines food preparation, refrigeration and sanitation systems into one transportable unit that can be operational in less than four hours after arriving at a site, Mitchell said.

The unit can be moved by heavy equipment vehicles or flatbed trucks and requires either a 60-kilowatt generator or shore power to operate, he said. Onboard batteries keep refrigerated food cold during transport.

The system is intended to complement, rather than replace, existing field kitchens, Mitchell said.

The automation reduces the physical demands placed on food service personnel, said Sgt. Jose Perez, a culinary specialist assigned to the command.

“The transition from traditional kitchens to an automated one has reduced workload intensity while maintaining mission effectiveness,” he said.

Soldiers still prepare ingredients, but much of the cooking process is automated through digital controls and preprogrammed settings, allowing operators to follow guided instructions rather than manually managing each phase of cooking.



PHOTOS BY ALEJANDRO CARRASQUEL/Stars and Stripes
Army Pfc. Ximena Jimenez, a culinary specialist with 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, uses the autonomous field kitchen at Camp Carroll, South Korea. The containerized kitchen can produce between 100 and 120 meals per hour, the command’s food adviser said.



The Sustained Autonomous Meals, or SAM.

The system was developed by the German company goodBytz. Its lead software engineer, Julian Bonas, has been training soldiers on operating and troubleshooting the equipment.

“The system will tell you if there’s something wrong,” he said.

Most technical issues can be resolved on site, while more complex problems can be addressed remotely through diagnostic software, Bonas said.

Testing will continue through the end of the fiscal year as the Army evaluates whether the system can be expanded to other units, Mitchell said.



Sgt. Jose Perez, a culinary specialist with the 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command, tests SAM. The automation reduces physical demands placed on food service personnel, he said.

Delivery of fourth Ford-class carrier delayed by 2 years

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has revised the projected delivery date of the aircraft carrier USS Doris Miller to 2034 — two years later than previously expected.

The new date for delivery of the fourth Gerald R. Ford-class carrier — numbered CVN-81 — was listed in the Navy’s Fiscal Year 2027 Shipbuilding and Conversion Justification Book.

“The CVN-81 delivery date shifted from February 2032 to February 2034 due to shipbuilder construction footprint constraints limiting their ability to build CVN-81 ship modules,” the shipbuilding report says.

The shortage of physical space in the shipyard, slowing construction, has already had a domino effect on the Navy’s carrier replacement plans.

All carriers must be built at HII Newport

News Shipbuilding in Virginia, the only facility in the U.S. that can build nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

The USS George H.W. Bush was the last Nimitz-class carrier built. It was laid down in September 2003 and launched in October 2006 and received by the Navy at its commissioning in January 2009. The total time from keel laying to commissioning was five years and eight months.

Work then shifted to the new Gerald R. Ford class aircraft carriers. Work began on the initial ship, the USS Gerald R. Ford, in November 2009. The ship was launched in November 2013 and delivered at commissioning in July 2017. The total time from keel laying to commissioning was 7 years and eight months.

The second ship, the USS John F. Kennedy, was under construction in July 2015 and launched in October 2019. It’s expected to be

commissioned in March 2027. If that deadline is met, the time from keel laying to commissioning would be 11 years and eight months.

Delays in shipyard work have pushed the expected delivery of the third ship, the USS Enterprise (CVN-80), an additional eight months compared to the estimate in the Navy’s 2026 shipbuilding plan. The ship’s keel was laid in April 2022.

“The CVN-80 delivery date shifted from July 2030 to March 2031 due to delay in critical path construction required for launch of the ship,” the Navy report says.

The dates would put the keel-to-commissioning time of the Enterprise at an estimated 8 years, 11 months.

HII confirmed on May 11 that the lack of a construction schedule for the Doris Miller was being impacted by delays caused by the construction of the new USS Enterprise. Capacity constraints have hindered work in the

dry dock, but the company hopes to host the keel-laying this year.

“We are holding ourselves accountable to complete these important national security assets as quickly as possible by addressing production and supply base challenges impacting aircraft carrier programs,” said HII spokesman Danny Hernandez.

HII was continuing to expand and update its facilities at Newport News and using new technologies and a wider distribution of the workload to reclaim space in the shipyard.

The shipyard and the Navy have said delays in the carrier construction and other shipbuilding activity in recent years was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, supply-chain delays and the recruiting and retention of qualified workers.

The Navy is currently operating 11 aircraft carriers, the minimum number allowed under a congressional mandate.

MILITARY

Ford's long deployment presents questions

Navy grapples with repairs, cost, sailor retention concerns

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

USS Gerald R. Ford returned to Norfolk Naval Station, Va., on May 16, 326 days after leaving for what was supposed to be a standard deployment to Europe.

Instead, the Ford and its crew of 4,500 were at sea longer than any U.S. Navy carrier in over half a century. It crisscrossed the Atlantic four times, led attacks on two continents, launched hundreds of sorties, and its strike group fired scores of missiles.

A laundry room fire that burned for 30 hours left only minor injuries but forced 600 sailors out of their bedroom compartments and a port visit for repairs. The fire is still under investigation.

Returning home, however, is for celebration, said Adm. Daryl Caudle, the chief of naval operations.

"We're going to give our heroes a welcome back ... and it's just an extraordinary ship, extraordinary crew, an extraordinary strike group," Caudle told the House Armed Services Committee this month. "And the sailors, I could not be more proud of."

Navy officials in Norfolk on May 16 focused on the homecoming and deflected questions about what is next for the Ford.

But the end of the deployment leaves the Pentagon with plenty of questions:

- How much repair and maintenance will the fleet's \$13.3 billion carrier require?

- How should the Navy reward and retain a crew that was away from home for the better part of a year?

- How will it pay for it all?

The money is mostly folded into the \$30 billion-and-rising cost of the war against Iran. The Navy has also asked for about \$377.5 billion of the more than \$1.5 trillion in military spending the Pentagon requested for 2027.

Mark Cancian, a Marine veteran who is an analyst for the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that though there may be questions about the policy rationale for the missions the Ford was ordered to undertake, the ship and crew did their part well.

"It showed how skilled they are at fighting a war," Cancian said. "That may well help with deterrence in other areas of the world, for example, China."

Bryan Clark, an analyst for the Hudson Institute, said the extra-long deployment scrambled the Navy's timetable for ship repairs.

"The impact of the Ford isn't just wear and tear," Clark said. "They are late for their maintenance availability, which will have a cascading effect on the shipyards, which are already overtaxed and oversubscribed."

Under the Navy's Optimized Fleet Response Plan, each of the 11 carriers is plotted into a staggered 36-month schedule divided into deployment, sustainment, training and maintenance. Aircraft carriers are designed to deploy for up to seven months, but the Ford was at sea for 11.

Though a confluence of events, including the war with Iran, led to the longer-than-expected deployment, Caudle doesn't "want that to be a precedent," he told CNN.

Michael Fabey, an analyst for London-based defense analysis firm Janes, said that because the Gerald R. Ford is the first ship of a new class, repairs are more difficult.

"Lord knows what problems they will find," Fabey said. "There are a lot of unknowns. And not a lot of extra spare parts around for repairs."

The impact on sailors' recruiting and retention is another issue to monitor.

"I don't think that the Ford deployment will



PHOTOS BY KAYLYN BARNHART BATISTA/Stars and Stripes

A girl embraces a sailor after the USS Gerald R. Ford returned to Naval Station Norfolk, Va., on May 16, after a record-setting deployment.



Families wait for their sailors as the Ford returns to Naval Station Norfolk.

have much of an impact on recruiting," Cancian said. "There's always going to be some 18- or 19-year-old who sees all this and wants to go to sea. But retention is different. They ask themselves, 'Would I want to do that again?'"

Dr. Steven Wills is a 20-year naval officer who is now a naval analyst for The Center for Maritime Strategy. He worries about the Navy retaining experienced sailors whom the service has invested time and money in training.

"When we used to over-deploy, people voted with their feet — 'I'm out of here,'" Wills said, adding that the Navy needs to invest in retaining top performers on the Ford crew.

"We can't afford to lose them," Wills said. "There has to be some sort of benefit. Hand out awards, get them into the preferred Navy schools and training."



The Ford returns to Norfolk after 326 days on a historic deployment.



Sailors disembark as Ford returns to Norfolk.

With a long maintenance period expected for the Ford following a historically long de-

ployment, sailors will have plenty of time to reflect on their lives and careers.

TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE | stripesurope.com

Passport to Adventure:

The Best European Destinations for Teens



By **Kaelyn Ronnau**
Youth Writer

Wondering where to take your teens? Here are the top 10 best destinations for teenagers as chosen by Kaelyn Ronnau, our Stars and Stripes Europe teen intern. Ronnau is a high school senior participating at our office with her school's Career Practicum program.

Malta

A small Mediterranean island nation known for its sunny weather, crystal-blue water and captivating ancient history, in Malta, teens can swim in the famous Blue Lagoon, relax on sandy beaches, enjoy water sports and even explore Game of Thrones filming locations.



Iceland

The land of fire and ice provides so many opportunities, from Icelandic horseback riding, snorkeling between tectonic plates and visiting the black sand beach. But don't forget to enjoy nature by going to see glaciers, waterfalls and even by relaxing in the natural geothermal hot springs.



Egypt

Famous for its ancient civilizations and massive pyramids, Egypt provides many unexpected activities for teens. This desert landscape hides experiences such as riding camels near the pyramids, snorkeling in the Red Sea, exploring Cairo's market and even thrilling 4x4 desert rides.



Portugal

Portugal is a coastal country known for beautiful beaches, colorful cities and a relaxed vibe. Teens can surf in the Atlantic, explore Lisbon's hills and trams, relax in the Algarve, and try traditional pastries and cooking classes.



Italian Coastline

Italy's coast is famous for its stunning seaside towns, food, and history. Swimming in clear waters, boating along the Amalfi Coast, exploring ancient ruins of Pompeii and marveling at the vibrant street art are some of the opportunities teens have at their fingertips.



Morocco

Blending African, Arab and European cultures with deserts, mountains and colorful cities, Morocco is one of a kind. Teens can ride camels in the Sahara, explore busy souks, surf the Atlantic coast and visit historic palaces and markets.



Greece

Known for its ancient ruins, island life and beautiful beaches, Greece has an abundance of activities that teens can remember for a lifetime. Teens can swim in turquoise water, go island hopping, explore historic temples, take cooking classes and enjoy boat tours and coastal adventures.



Austria

Austria is a mountainous country famous for alpine scenery, classical music and outdoor sports. Teens can take on skiing in the Alps, hike scenic trails, explore castles, ice skate and swim in crystal-clear alpine lakes.



Croatia

Croatia is a coastal country known for its islands, medieval towns, and clear Adriatic Sea. Teens can kayak along the coast, swim in waterfalls, explore historic cities, visit islands, and see famous filming locations.



Finland

Finland is known for forests, lakes and winter magic. Teens can have once in a lifetime experiences like, going dog sledding, seeing the Northern Lights, trying ice fishing, staying in snow hotels and just relaxing in traditional saunas. In summer they can enjoy hiking, kayaking and lake swimming.



VISIT STRIPESEUROPE.COM FOR MORE STORIES WRITTEN BY MILITARY-AFFILIATED YOUTH.

For ADVERTISING, CONTACT US:
Telephone: +49 (0) 631-3615-9111 or DSN: 314-583-9111
Email: memberservices@stripes.com

STARS AND STRIPES®

STARS AND STRIPES.

FREE

welcome to

PCS Guide 2026–2027

NORTHERN ITALY



INSIDE > PRACTICALITIES / HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS / LOCAL LIFE / SHOPPING / TRAVEL

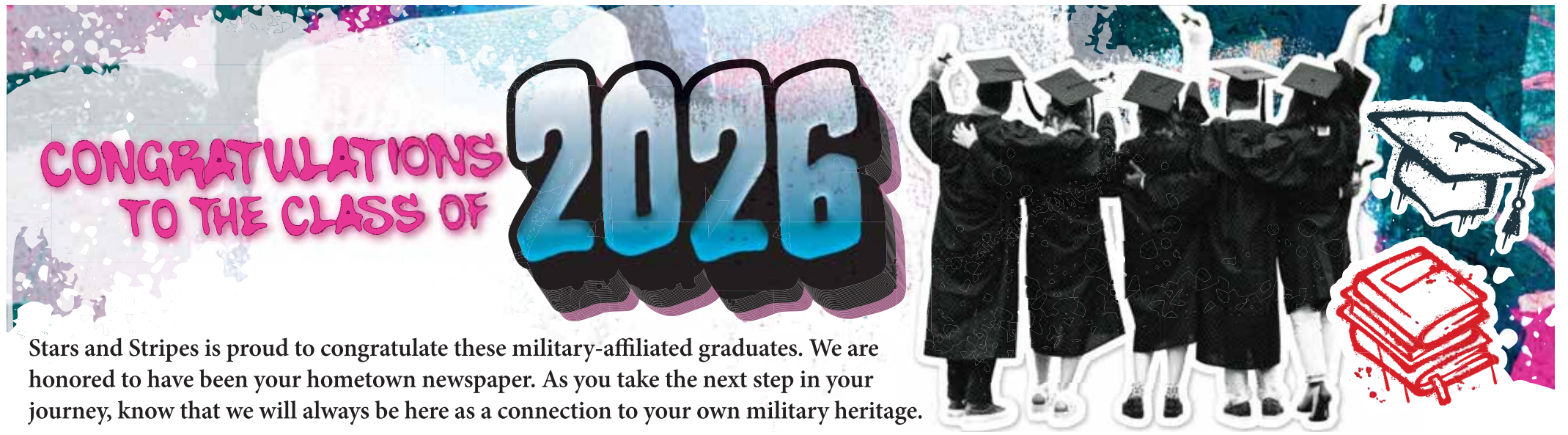
Need help getting settled at your new duty station?
Stars and Stripes has you covered.

Grab a **free** copy of the Welcome to Germany guide at your local Commissary, Exchange, Express or Welcome Center.



View the guide digitally at
stripes.com/epaper/special-publications

TRAVEL & LIFESTYLE | stripesurope.com



Stars and Stripes is proud to congratulate these military-affiliated graduates. We are honored to have been your hometown newspaper. As you take the next step in your journey, know that we will always be here as a connection to your own military heritage.



Aviano Middle High School



Arvin Ablao
Julian Aniciete
Angelene Araiza
Anaiah Cottingham
Cruz Cottingham
Kevin Cruz Rivera
Daniel Curtis
Andrew Dahle
Ysabella Esparza
Sara Mei Fussinger
Aiden Gibson
Kaylee Gillispie
Levi Jennings

Taylor Diestro
Addison Krajicek
Zuriel Krause Gordon Lauzon
Ethan Marks
Tyler Mellon
Arianna Meraz
RyLee Merboth
Skyler Merboth
Nothstine, Leah
Luca Payan
Jae'Lianny Rodriguez
Felicity Rushing
Kennedy Rose

Kamren Rutland
Topanga Stone
Ethan Sumagang
Andre Sunia
Teagan Tanfield
Kristian Thomas
Madeleine Tolley
Lilian Williams
Clara Young
Ily Faith Zamora
Sulaekha Ulat

As Senior Class President, I'm proud to celebrate the Aviano High School Class of 2026 and everything we've accomplished together. As military kids, we've learned how to adapt, stay strong through change, and build friendships wherever life takes us. Those experiences have shaped our class in a special way.

Graduation is the start of a new chapter. Whether we head to college, the military, careers, or new adventures, we'll always share the bond of being part of this class.

Thank you to our families, teachers, and staff for supporting us through every move, challenge, and success. To my fellow graduates, be proud of how far you've come and ready for what's next.

Addison Krajicek, Senior Class President



Naples Middle High School



Anderson, Emily
Aramburu, Anna
Banks, Joshua
Biggs, Madison
Bofman, Sophia
Bordley, Alexandra
Botts, Bridgette
Bowie, Deshaun
Brown, Janessa
Clopton, Madison
Crabtree, Loralee
Crowson, Olivia
Cruceanu, Ema
Davis, Mitchel

Diekemper, Sara
Dillard, Noya
Drexler, Jane
Dugan, Enzo
Folts, Aaron
Fromm, Audrey
Garcia, Emma
Garcia, Sabrina
Go Oco, Caleb Phoenix
Gonzalez, Jonathan
Harris, Reason
Harrour, Ritaj
Heathington, Mason
Heavrin, Landon

Henson, Ella Mars
Irvine Jr., Steven
Jacobs, Oriana
Jarvis, Andrew
Jordan, Kyle
Kim, Eyan
Klimis, Madison
Lopez, Colton
Lottinville, Matias
Ludwa, Tanner
Manus, David
Martens, Jake
Mc Dorman, Alyssa
Mc Dorman, Kaiden

Megahed, Noora
Mole, Tori
Molinaro, Lainey
Munz, Sasha
Nelson, Jalana
Nicholson, June
Nickerson, Eric
Palmer, Kaiya
Parker, Julian
Porter, Kailyn
Price, Brady
Ralston, Patrick
Reiss, Samuel
Robinson, Jeremiah

Rosenbaum, Sacha
Ruiz Burciaga, Liam
Rygh, Riley
Schermerhorn, Nikolas
Selph, Hudson
Serrano, Andrew
Shine, Darcel
Solomon, Margaret
Stringfield, Bryson
Thomas, Daphne
Tilo, Diondre
van de Mortel, Hans
Vasquez, Arianna
Vincent, Kyler

Even before we began our senior year, we were told that now was the time to get serious and start acting like adults, because soon enough, we'd be in the real world.

As the end of our high school chapter is fast approaching, I realize that the moments that made this year special were not due to our newfound status as seniors and proximity to adulthood, but rather through exploring and rediscovering our childhood selves.

It's easy for us, as the oldest in the school, to dismiss the knowledge found in our youth. Lessons we learned in the sandbox long ago about how to make a friend reemerge in the seemingly unconventional bonds we have formed with each other this year. Elementary holiday parties are now mirrored in the potlucks we've hosted, and the bread we have broken together.

Though we are about to receive our diplomas, a physical representation of all we have learned over the last twelve years, it is equally important for us to acknowledge what we do not know. As we graduate from one school, we begin a new sort of education in the school of life. Let us take notes from our younger selves about how to be open and curious about the opportunities ahead of us. Even though we are now so "old and wise," we need to remember the value in seeking all that we do not know. I challenge each of us to remember that this year is not only a celebration of the work we have put in during high school, but also a whole lifetime of learning and maturing. Our accomplishments are a reflection of every version of ourselves – our work and willingness to grow – and by acknowledging that we open ourselves to the wonder of new possibilities.

Margaret Solomon, Naples Middle High School



Sigonella Middle High School



Bedard, Amanda
 Calleja, Victoria
 Cayton, Keiron
 Dimapilis, Vaughn
 Dry, Victoria
 Duron, Arianna
 Fernandez, Nyeema
 Giesler, Isla
 Gruny, Julia
 Guth, Grady
 Harpel, Aaron
 Harrison, Cooper
 Hernandez-Bowles, Adrian
 Hitchcock, Sean
 Hoy, Madison
 Irizarry Morales, Zoe
 James, Kaleb
 Kpakpa, Gloria

Kurneta, Victoria
 Mackay, Aidan
 Maloney, Jacob
 Martinsen, Tess
 McDaniel, Makayla
 McElree, Bodhi
 Miniard, Ryan
 Nestler, Lasse
 Schmidt, Tim
 Shaposka, Aiden
 Steele, Addison
 Stinyard, James
 Tesfay, Gideon
 Thompson, William
 Vail, Nicolas
 Wise, Chase
 Wofra, Liam

As the Sigonella Class of 2026's chapter comes to an end, I find a deep sense of pride in reminiscing on exactly how much this class has lived through together. Everything about our class is constantly evolving. We've welcomed new faces, said goodbye to others, adjusted to new schedules, and explored many countries and cultures. Somehow, through all of this movement, we've managed to build an iridescent community that feels like home. Our cohort is ever-changing, but unmistakably ours.

Beyond the books, we have been involved in many aspects of SHS life: sports, music, JROTC, robotics, MUN, JSHS, and countless other clubs and activities that have kept our school busy and connected. This year, we continued traditions like Senior Sunrise and Sunset, sharing many experiences that made our final year feel

full and genuinely our own.

Serving as Class President has been one of the biggest honors of my time at SHS. From freshmen to seniors, my class worked tenaciously through fundraisers, pep rallies, spirit weeks, and everything it took to bring prom to life. None of it was easy, but we showed up for each other when we really needed it, and that is incredibly special.

We've gotten used to change, and that's something we'll take with us. Whatever comes next, from new places to new people to new routines, we already know how to handle it. We've done it together for years. I think that's going to help us more than we realize.

Cheers to the SHS Class of 2026!

Julia Gruny, Class President



Vicenza High School



Anyormi, Hilda
 Argo, Rylie
 Beane, David
 Casper, Rielynn
 Castaneda, Valeria
 Cirilo Ramos, Philip
 Coffey, Andrew
 Costas, Pedro
 Culpepper, John
 Davis, Keith Seth
 Ellis, Jasmyn

Espersen, Benjamin
 Findlay, Hannah
 Gainey, Chanele
 Galesi, Lucas
 Gilbert, Simon
 Grady, Lillian
 Green, Katherine
 Herron, Nala
 Holguin, Asia
 Horrigan, Dylan
 Horval, Maddalena

Irwin, Benjamin
 Jeffers, Nicholas
 Kim, Karis
 Kim, Lynn
 Kirsch, Taylor
 Lewis, Trishauna
 Lubba, Kayla
 Macanas, Lance Benedi
 Manso, Dathan
 McCann, Finnegan
 McCarthy, Cormac

McGovern, Jacob
 Morales, Frances-Lee
 Morris, Lilla
 Motz-Delgado, Kylie
 Mukai, Kyler
 Nelson, Alexandra
 Perry, Austin
 Piccolo, Nicole
 Price, Landon
 Rainey, Sophia
 Rose-Browning, Adaira

Svenson, Annika
 Trescott, Aaron
 Trescott, Alexander
 Vargas, Melany
 Ventura-Reyes, Nalani
 Washington, Zavier
 Weigel, Ryan
 Wilson, Adalei

Congratulations to the Vicenza High School Class of 2026! I am Katherine Green, the Senior Class President, with Karis Kim, Senior Class Vice President, Hannah Findlay, Senior Class Treasurer, and Nicole Piccolo, Senior Class Secretary.

We started this year with our lovely La La Land-themed homecoming, followed by Senior game days and events to encourage school spirit. Upcoming, we have our Gardaland Senior Trip, Senior Dinner, and, finally, Graduation, which will be on June 6th at 1500. We want to give a huge thank you to our Vicenza community- to our parents, faculty, and staff for all the guidance, encouragement, and support they have given, ensuring this final year has been amazing.

The Senior Class wants to give special recognition to Mrs. Jami Bahmer for everything she has done over the past 5 years. She has been an integral part of our school community and spirit, and we are forever grateful for all of her dedication.

Katherine Green, Senior Class President

MILITARY

Army tests drone for carrying wounded

By LYDIA GORDON
Stars and Stripes

The Army has field-tested drones that can scout enemy positions, deliver blood bags to the front lines and rain attacks from above. Now, it is testing a drone designed to carry something bigger: a wounded soldier.

Troops watched last weekend as a test dummy was strapped onto Flowcopter's FC-100 aircraft while company operators prepared the unmanned drone for flight. The aircraft is capable of carrying up to 1,400 pounds.

The demonstration marked another step in the military's expanding use of unmanned aircraft — not just to identify or destroy targets, but potentially to evacuate casualties from contested battlefields where traditional medevac helicopters may be unable to safely operate.

Among those observing were soldiers from the Vilseck, Germany-based 2nd Cavalry Regiment, which has played a key role in testing emerging autonomous technologies through Army initiatives such as Transforming in Contact and Project Fly-trap.

The test took place during Saber Strike, a large-scale Army exercise involving more than 15,000 U.S. and NATO troops training on air defense systems, counter-drone operations and battlefield coordination across Eastern Europe.

"The Army has many different demands to improve how medical decisions are made," Capt. James Yu, with the 75th Innovation Command, said in an Army video.

"We're looking at technologies that will really improve the U.S.'s ability to fight and take care of its warfighters in future large-scale combat operation environments," he added.

The Army has spent years experimenting



THOMAS MADRZAK/U.S. Army

Soldiers strap down a test dummy to a drone during an Autonomous Triage and Treatment Challenge taking place near Bemowo Piskie Training Area, Poland, on May 10.

with drones capable of delivering blood bags and other lifesaving medical supplies to frontline troops.

Flowcopter pushed the concept further by testing whether unmanned aircraft could eventually evacuate wounded troops without exposing more soldiers or medics to combat.

Unlike smaller commercial-style drones, the FC-100 uses a hydraulic-powered engine and relies on preplanned flight paths, auton-

omous navigation systems and remote piloting capabilities that allow operators to monitor and adjust the aircraft during flight.

According to the company, the drone can remain airborne for up to 11 hours while carrying 110 pounds, or about five hours with a 330-pound payload. Carrying 220 pounds, the aircraft can travel more than 60 miles.

Still, the concept presents challenges for

battlefield medicine. Unlike traditional medevac helicopters staffed with medics, unmanned aircraft cannot provide treatment while transporting casualties.

The Army has not announced whether Flowcopter will move forward with additional prototyping, but the test offered soldiers a glimpse into how autonomous evacuation and medical resupply systems could become more common on future battlefields.

Army aims for protein-rich rations made near front lines

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

The Army is exploring ways to produce meatless, protein-rich rations near the front lines, part of a broader push to reduce the massive logistical burden of feeding troops in future conflicts.

A notice posted by the service's Combat Feeding Division on April 29 to the federal government's contracting website called for industry and academia to partner with the Army in developing new technologies to produce "alternative proteins" downrange.

The Army calls the technology "strategically vital" because of its logistical benefit, cutting down on the "massive amount of transport and storage required to sustain troops," according to a Combat Capabilities Development Command on May 11.

The provisions need to be nutritious, protein-rich, tasty, lightweight, safe to eat and shelf-stable, according to the Army documents.

In a similar vein, a California startup named Biosphere was recently awarded a \$9 million Defense Department contract for the development of portable bioreactors that can produce protein rations from air, water and unspecified energy sources.

The technology will be used to provide 2,800 calories per person per day for up to 18 service members, with plans to scale the system to support 250 personnel, the company said in a statement last week.

It was not clear whether the Biosphere contract was related to the Sam.gov announcement. The notice was issued to identify interested sources, with no contract to be



JEFFREY GARLAND/Fort Irwin Operations Group

A soldier assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division carries boxes of Meals Ready-to-Eat at Fort Irwin, Calif. The Army Combat Capabilities Development Command Soldier Center is seeking partners to develop lightweight, nutrient-dense alternative proteins for the next generation of MREs, set to debut in 2027.

awarded from the announcement, the document said.

The contract has a duration of three years and six months.

It falls under the Pentagon's Other Transaction Authority, which allows the Defense Department to bypass some federal acquisition regulations and accelerate the fielding of new technology.

The effort to improve field rations and ease supply-chain issues downrange focuses on protein because of the nutrient's importance for sustained physical and cognitive performance and muscle recovery.

"Traditional protein sources can be bulky, heavy, and require extensive processing to achieve the necessary shelf stability," com-

mand officials said in a statement.

Alternative proteins "offer the unique ability to customize rations" along with the possibility of targeting certain organisms to produce specific nutritional compounds, the statement said.

Once developed, the meatless rations could be included in Meals, Ready to Eat, and the technology used could be applied commercially, officials said.

Anyone interested in working with the Army on developing these alternative proteins must be able to conduct consumer research aimed at enhancing "the acceptability and consumption of alternative proteins within a military population," the Sam.gov notice said.

5 bases to get energy weapons

By GARY WARNER
Stars and Stripes

Lasers, microwaves and other directed-energy weapons systems will be deployed to defend against illegal drone flights around five military bases under a Pentagon trial program.

The bases chosen, according to a statement from Joint Interagency Task Force 401, are: Naval Base Kitsap, Wash.; Fort Bliss, Texas; Fort Huachuca, Ariz.; Grand Forks Air Force Base, N.D.; and Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo.

The task force was created in 2025 to consolidate efforts to defend U.S. facilities against drones. Based at the Pentagon and run by the Army, the task force also works with the Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration and federal law enforcement agencies.

U.S. Northern Command, which oversees most domestic military bases, said in October that drone incursions over installation airspace happen almost daily.

"There were 350 detections reported last year on military installations, and that was 350 over a total of 100 different installations of all types and levels of security," Gen. Gregory Guillot, the NORTHCOM commander, told Congress during a February 2025 hearing.

The bases were selected to allow for testing and assessment of different weapons at a cross-section of installations that have different environments and roles.

The task force said that, within 180 days, it wants to have devices at the bases selected for the trial program.

The counterdrone devices could include high-energy lasers and high-powered microwave systems, the task force said. Multiple systems could be employed for a "layered defense."

MILITARY

No mental health playbook for evacuees

US troops, families who left Bahrain face lingering trauma

By SHANNON RENFROE
Stars and Stripes

A car door slams outside, and the sailor flinches. His chest tightens. His breath catches. It's what his body does now, against his will.

Two months ago, he was sheltering in Bahrain, listening to Iranian missiles and drones hit close enough to shake the walls. He never knew when the next attack was coming or where it would land.

A few days in, he woke to a string of nearby strikes and began shaking uncontrollably. It was the first panic attack of his life.

Now, almost every slamming door sounds like one of those impacts. When a plane passes overhead, the panic returns.

"It's such a strange feeling that something like that can have that much control over me, elicit that much of a response from me," he said.

He is among thousands of sailors, military family members and Defense Department civilians who evacuated from Naval Support Activity Bahrain after Iranian missile and drone strikes began hitting the island on Feb. 28, in retaliation for U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran at the start of the war.

The evacuees were part of a forward-stationed community, with schools, a commissary and the everyday routines of American life overseas, suddenly inside the impact radius of a war.

The sailor and his family are now safe. But the effects have lingered in ways that are harder to see.

In the weeks after the Bahrain evacuation — one of the largest emergency movements of U.S. military-linked personnel in recent history — evacuees described panic, hypervigilance and delayed stress after experiencing wartime attacks without the support systems typical of combat deployments.

In previous interviews with Stars and Stripes, some who left Bahrain expressed frustration with what they described as insufficient planning and inconsistent communication from military leadership during the evacuation, and still are reluctant to speak openly about the matter.

In reporting this story, Stars and Stripes spoke to about a dozen sailors, government employees and family members. They were not identified because many feared professional repercussions for discussing their mental health struggles and experiences during the Bahrain evacuation.

A first war

The Defense Department spent over two decades building mental health systems around the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, including pre-deployment briefings, post-deployment screenings and Veterans Affairs pathways tied to PTSD from combat service. But the system does not neatly map onto the people who left Bahrain.

The evacuation is now forcing some of those structures to adapt to a population that falls somewhere between a combat deployment and a civilian disaster response.

U.S. Central Command, which oversees operations in the region, told Stars and Stripes that evacuees will be offered the same post-deployment screenings used for troops returning from combat theaters.

But the Bahrain evacuees are not returning from war in the traditional sense. Many were sailors living with spouses and children in what had felt, until days earlier, like an ordinary overseas posting.

For most younger sailors, the experience was far outside anything they had seen in uniform. The Navy's combat exposure during the post-9/11 wars was narrower than that of



SHANNON RENFROE/Stars and Stripes

A column of black smoke rises over the skyline of Manama on Feb. 28, following the first Iranian strike on U.S. Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

the Army or Marine Corps, aside from special operations and programs such as Individual Augmentee, which sent thousands of sailors into ground combat billets in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most junior enlisted sailors serving today entered the Navy after the August 2021 withdrawal from Afghanistan. Except for the Red Sea engagements against Houthi missile and drone attacks since late 2023, most have never been on the receiving end of enemy fire.

Under fire

One sailor was in her apartment in Juffair, the neighborhood surrounding NSA Bahrain, watching a rebroadcast of President Donald Trump's speech announcing the Iran strikes, when the first missile-threat alert came over her phone. She didn't know what to do.

She was outside during the initial impact. Her first thought was that a U.S. missile-defense system had launched; it never occurred to her that her apartment could come under attack. The shockwave hit before she understood what had happened, making her physically sick.

As she opened her door to seek refuge on a lower floor, the second strike came. She remembers the hallway windows blowing open, the shockwave moving through her chest like bass at a concert, and herself screaming.

In the hallway, she caught a glimpse of her tear-stained face in a mirror, and the thought arrived all at once — *Is this just the base, or are they going to start bombing us here?*

According to the VA's National Center for PTSD, roughly one in five people exposed to traumatic events develops acute stress disorder within a month. Research has found that intentional trauma — combat, terror attacks and assaults — tends to produce more persistent PTSD symptoms than accidents or natural disasters.

For the female sailor, what's left two months later is anger, directed less at Iran than at the comparison game that she feels has followed her out of Bahrain. People who deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan insist they understand. But those who go to combat zones, she points out, arrive prepared; they are armed and they know they may not return home for a while. Her situation was different. Bahrain was home, and she had to leave it on an hour's notice.

At this point, she said, she feels closer to a refugee than to a sailor.

"I felt very cowardly for a week," she said. "I couldn't do anything to help myself."

In the weeks since, she has realized she wasn't processing any of it in Bahrain. She was in survival mode. From the outside, she looked calm, even annoyed with sailors who were visibly afraid. The processing came later.

After she started journaling and talking to other evacuees, she learned that no two are coming out of it the same way.

Four trajectories

What she's describing has been studied for decades. Researchers have a term for the numbed, on-autopilot state she was in: peritraumatic dissociation, a common response in which processing comes later, once the person is safe.

A 2018 review of 54 trauma studies by Columbia University psychologist George Bonanno found that people process trauma differently: some recover quickly, some slowly, some develop lasting PTSD symptoms and others appear fine before symptoms emerge later.

Two months after they fled, Bahrain evacuees describe a wide range of reactions.

For the sailor who watched the strikes from her apartment in Juffair, life feels filled with questions. When will she be reunited with her possessions? When will she see her friends from Bahrain? She tries not to think about it constantly, she said. But the sadness comes in unpredictable waves, before passing.

Family burden

Spouses and children are in even stranger territory. They likely prepared only as much as their previous post's family-readiness brief had asked of them.

Much of the research on military-family trauma focuses on deployment separation and reintegration afterward.

The Bahrain evacuees invert that experience: many of the service members were at home with family when the war arrived at their door.

One sailor remembers an evacuation drop-off point in Bahrain crowded almost entirely with spouses and children. He watched his wife leave without knowing whether he would see her again. That night, he smoked his first cigarette in years.

The psychological impacts likely extend beyond Bahrain. U.S. installations across the region — including Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi

Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — also came under Iranian fire during the war. Fourteen U.S. service members have died during the broader conflict, including seven killed in attacks on regional bases.

Hundreds more were wounded, though most have since returned to duty, the Pentagon has said. No deaths were reported within the U.S. military community in Bahrain.

Remote recovery

According to support materials reviewed by Stars and Stripes, the Navy has set up counseling, chaplain support and mental health services for evacuees, largely by phone or video.

While research suggests virtual PTSD treatment can be effective, studies typically focus on patients in long-term, structured therapy rather than short-term crisis support.

Base chaplains, who are talking with evacuees remotely, were contacted for this story, but none agreed to be interviewed.

The Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society distributed roughly \$1 million in emergency aid to about 2,000 sailors and families affected by the evacuation, said Dawn Cutler, a retired rear admiral and the society's chief operations officer. The organization said assistance covered emergency expenses such as food, rent, transportation and pay problems.

U.S. Central Command said it is coordinating follow-on care through military medical facilities and the Defense Health Agency, adding that medical and administrative personnel are working with service members and their families on a case-by-case basis.

The Navy has not told evacuees when, or whether, they'll return to Bahrain, although CENTCOM commander Adm. Brad Cooper has said he intends to welcome back service members and families as soon as possible.

Not all evacuees are convinced that it will happen. The sailor who opened this story is now in transitional housing in Europe, with no clear idea whether he will return to the life he was building.

Whatever happens next in the Gulf, the effects are already moving through bedrooms at 3 a.m., pediatricians' offices, school counselors' calendars and through the reaction that still comes when a door slams far from Bahrain.

"Most of the time it feels normal," one sailor shared, "until I remember where I am, and that I was never supposed to be here."

TRAVEL



PHOTOS BY CHAD GARLAND/Stars and Stripes

A row of coffee drinks lines the counter at the Depot Bar coffee shop during its first day in business on May 6, at Leghorn Army Depot in Livorno, Italy. Patrons filtered in to enjoy the hot beverages and catch up with colleagues, despite intermittent rain showers.

New Leghorn cafe creates community buzz

Depot Bar revives hub for Italian workers that some officials hope will boost morale

BY CHAD GARLAND
Stars and Stripes

LIVORNO, Italy — Between bursts of rain, workers filtered into a newly opened coffee bar at an Army logistics hub in Italy's Tuscany region to partake in what some officials hope will bring a renewed communal spirit and maybe a productivity boost.

The Depot Bar at Leghorn Army Depot near Pisa is the only Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility in that part of the Darby Military Community. For over a year, there wasn't even that after a previous operator shuttered it.

After its opening May 6, "word got around fast," said Todd Smith, MWR's combined activities manager at the base.

The new cafe is run by a Livorno-based vendor and offers a variety of refreshments. An Americano costs 1 euro and a cappuccino 10 cents more, a bit less than prices at the nearest cafes about 10 to 15 minutes from post.

A sometimes overlooked facility, the depot features 750,000 square feet of warehouses for tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and other sensitive equipment, as well as 1.5 million square feet of outdoor storage pads to support commands in Europe, Africa and points farther east.

Workers in dozens of maintenance bays and other trade shops there refurbish tracked and wheeled vehicles.

Espressos, at 90 euro cents, seemed especially popular around noontime with patrons, who sipped them while standing at or near



A statue of a chef greets customers to the Depot Bar coffee shop.

the counter, as is customary for the many Italian workers at the logistics base.

A few minutes down the road at Camp Darby, MWR offerings are a bit more robust and include a community center, library, gym and sports fields, but those are mostly services for the airmen, soldiers and other Americans.

Italian workers at the depot don't typically stick around after the workday to play softball or basketball with colleagues, Smith said.

On the depot side, a past vendor struggled with the coffee bar in part because base workers brought coffee machines into their workspaces during the socially isolating months of



Workers from nearby offices, warehouses and trade shops on Leghorn Army Depot gather for a coffee at the Depot Bar.



Employees chat over cigarettes and coffee at the Depot Bar during its first day of business.

the coronavirus pandemic, officials say.

Officials are hoping staffers at those facilities are ready to return to communal coffee-drinking rituals. That could bring a rise in productivity by giving them a gathering spot to catch up, brainstorm and whatnot.

"It serves a purpose, especially at Darby, where there's a lot more Italians than in Vi-

cenza," Smith said.

The Darby Military Community, which some workers compare to a small town, is the kind of place where everyone knows your name and it's easy to find the right person to connect with, Smith added.

"You can get a lot of things done really quick," he said.

Max D. Lederer Jr., Publisher
Erik Slavin, Editor in Chief
Brian Bowers, Italy Edition Editor
Scott Foley, Revenue Director

CONTACT US

633 3rd Street NW, Suite 500, Washington, D.C. 20001
Editorial: (202) 886-0005
Advertising: (202) 886-0014
Additional contact information: stripes.com

This publication is a compilation of stories from Stars and Stripes, the editorially independent newspaper authorized by the Department of Defense for members of the military community.

The contents of Stars and Stripes are unofficial and are not to be considered as the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, including the Defense Department or the military services. The Italy Edition of Stars and Stripes is published jointly by Stars and Stripes and this newspaper. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or Stars and Stripes of the products or services advertised.

Products or services advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use, or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other nonmerit factor of the purchaser, user, or patron.

STARS AND STRIPES
 stripes.com | mobile apps

Get Unlimited Digital Access

to the #1 source of U.S. military news

What you get

- ▶ Unbiased, First Amendment-protected reporting from installations around the world.
- ▶ Coverage of all military branches
- ▶ Veterans Topics
- ▶ Photos from our archives
- ▶ Special features on current issues
- ▶ And much more



Subscribe Now



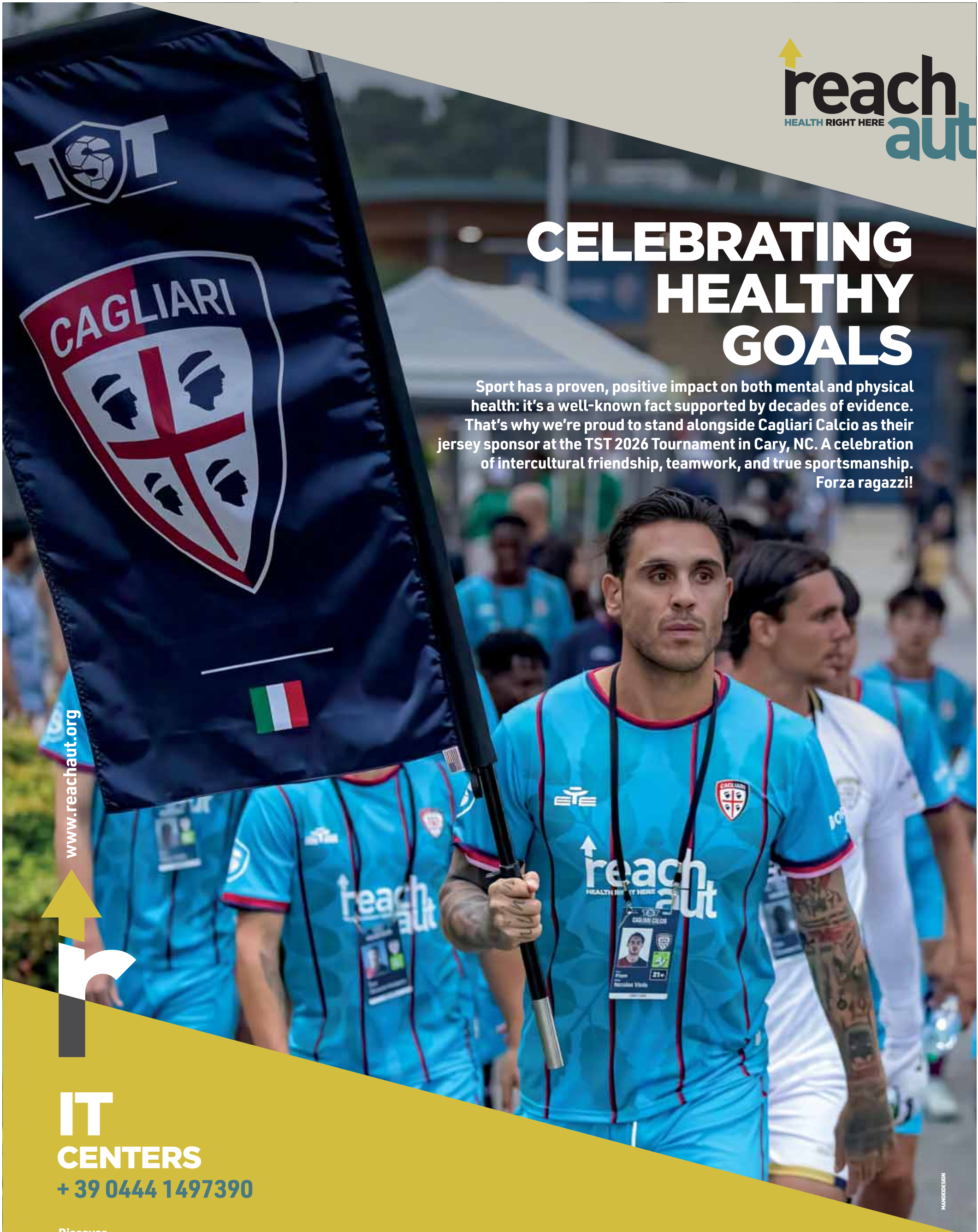
stripes.com/subscribe

ONE-MONTH FREE TRIAL



CELEBRATING HEALTHY GOALS

Sport has a proven, positive impact on both mental and physical health: it's a well-known fact supported by decades of evidence. That's why we're proud to stand alongside Cagliari Calcio as their jersey sponsor at the TST 2026 Tournament in Cary, NC. A celebration of intercultural friendship, teamwork, and true sportsmanship. Forza ragazzi!



www.rechaut.org



IT CENTERS
+ 39 0444 1497390

Discover all our Centers



reachaut.org/centers



MANDDESIGN