

Navy shipbuilding program experiences delays and cost growth

The Navy is planning on procuring 20 new oilers from San Diego shipbuilder GD/NASSCO, but has been experiencing up to two-year delays and major hikes in cost.

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

A report released in late March by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service says critical Navy supply ships built by a San Diego Bay company have skyrocketed in pricing over the past few years – even amid

production delays. The ships in question are John Lewis-class oilers produced by General Dynamics/National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (GD/NASSCO) at its shipyard across the bay from Coronado.

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Military Sealift Command fleet replenishment oiler USNS John Lewis departs San Diego for deployment with the U.S. Navy's Nimitz Carrier Strike Group on March 3, 2025. DVIDS photo by Sarah Cannon.

2022 Coronado High grad takes over girls' beach volleyball team

BY CADE CAVIN
The Coronado News

Allison Wygal, a 2022 Coronado High School grad, is taking the reins as the head coach for the Islander's girls' beach volleyball team this season. Wygal, the current setter at San Diego City College, was a member of the 2021-22 Coronado High team that finished 8-6 (5-5 in City League play) alongside her younger sister Emily. Wygal also works part time at the La Jolla Volleyball Club as an assistant coach. She says her love for the game started in high school while playing for the Islanders and has continued into college.

"Knowing not only the game but also what it is like being a player is a huge asset to coach my team," Wygal said. "My coaches have given me examples to use with my own team. The team has started the 2025 campaign off strong, notching wins over Mira Mesa, Clairemont, San Diego, and Canyon Hills." Wygal said she has high expectations: to win

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A player on the 2024 Coronado High School girls' beach volleyball team goes up for the kill. Allison Wygal, a 2022 Coronado grad, is the head coach of the beach volleyball team this season. Photo by Kelly Moore.

Coronado and other agencies directed to pay fine for 2023 sewage spill

BY ELAINE ALFARO
The Coronado News

Coronado will be required to pay part of an \$11.4 million fine for a sewage spill that happened in 2023 if terms of a tentative settlement are finalized with the San Diego Water Board. The spill, unrelated to the Tijuana River Valley sewage crisis, discharged roughly 9.9 million gallons

of untreated wastewater into San Diego Bay and the San Diego River at 30 locations, according to the City of San Diego. A failed sensor triggered all pumps to shut down at Pump Station #2 and resulted in the overflow. The city blamed extreme rainfall from a "five-year storm event" and the fact that two of the eight pumps were out of service. Pump Station #2 handles a significant

portion of sewage flows from the city of San Diego and participating agencies of the Metro Wastewater Joint Powers Authority (Metro JPA). Metro JPA agencies include Chula Vista, Coronado, Del Mar, El Cajon, Imperial Beach, La Mesa, Lemon Grove, National City, Poway, the county government, the Otay Water District and the Padre Dam Municipal Water District. According to San Diego, station

#2's sensors have now been replaced and the two out-of-service pumps have been repaired. The city said via email those pumps were replaced in the weeks after the spill. In February 2023, the San Diego Water Board directed the city of San Diego to investigate the issue. Since then, the Water Board and the city have tentatively agreed to a

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this week

19 • Saturday

Middle schoolers, grades sixth through eighth, can join Emerald Keepers' high school interns for a fun-filled morning at Coronado High School's community garden to learn about the importance of protecting the environment. From 10-12 a.m., campers will enjoy outdoor activities, arts and crafts, and interactive lessons on sustainability. Visit emerald-keepers.org to register.

19 • Saturday

Alessandro Palermo, a professor at UC San Diego's Jacob's School of Engineering, will be presenting on the science behind bridges at 11 a.m. in the Winn Room of the Coronado Public Library.

20 • Sunday

Resurrection Lutheran Church of Coronado will sponsor the annual Easter Sunrise Service on Coronado Beach. The service will be held at the north end of Ocean Boulevard across from Sunset Park (101 Ocean Blvd) on Sunday, April 20 at 6 a.m. Rev. Timothy Eichler, retired U.S. Navy chaplain, will preside over the service. Special music will be provided by the Coronado Ukulele Club and Russ Peck.

The beach campfires will be lit by 5:30 a.m. Attendees are encouraged to wear warm clothing and bring a beach chair or blanket. Easter Worship with Holy Communion will take place at 10:15 a.m. at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 1111 5th Street.

CONTACT US

For news tips, story submissions and letters to the editor, contact Editor Sofie Fransen at sofie@thecoronadonews.com or 619-990-8465.

To advertise contact Ad Executive Braeden Stegman at braeden@numbersix.com

THINGS TO DO

Bernhard Schlink to speak at author event on April 22

Coronado News staff

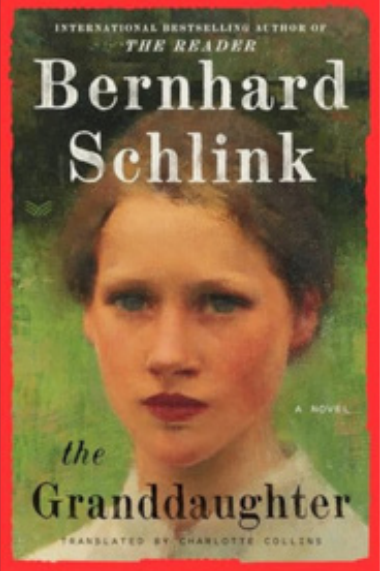
New York Times bestselling author Bernhard Schlink will be speaking on his new book, “The Granddaughter,” on April 22.

Hosted by Adventures by the Book, the free event will take place at the Coronado Public Library at 6:30 p.m.

Schlink is the New York Times and bestselling German author of “The Reader,” which became an Oscar-winning film starring Kate Winslet and Ralph Fiennes, as well as “The Woman on the Stairs,” and “Olga.”

“The Granddaughter” offers a gripping novel that probes the past’s role in contemporary life, transporting readers from the divided Germany of the 1960s to modern day Australia.

The event is free and open to the public, but VIP guaranteed seating is available with a preorder of “The Granddaughter” from Adventures by the Book.



Bernhard Schlink will speak on his new book, “The Granddaughter,” at the Coronado Public Library on April 22. *Photo by Gaby Gerster/ Diogenes Verlag.*

PET OF THE WEEK

Meet Echo

PAWS of Coronado



Meet Echo, the pet of the week. She’s at PAWS of Coronado and is looking for her forever home. [See all adoptable animals.](#) Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera, and tap on the link.

Graphic/photo provided by PAWS of Coronado.

Echo is a 3-year-old male husky with striking bright blue eyes that sparkle with every glance.

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Hear from a board-certified orthopedic surgeon about advanced treatments, including Mako robotic-arm assisted surgery, available at **Sharp Coronado Hospital**. This type of surgery allows doctors to precisely target joints damaged by arthritis while preserving healthy bone. You can also get answers to questions from our team of experts.

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Link provided upon registration



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Never Worry About Charging Your Golf Cart Again

OUR STORY

“Once Upon A Time” my son and I were discussing solar systems over lunch. Being licensed electricians, we were familiar with Solar Applications and its advantages.

After conducting a fair amount of research, we determined that Solar Technology had advanced to the point that adding a Solar Panel to the roof of a golf cart could significantly add to the travel range, as well as several other advantages including Green Movement Tax Credits.

I had recently moved to a golf cart community and purchased a cart of my own, after installing the best and most powerful system available, the concept of installing Solar Panels on golf carts was conceived.

We began spreading the word to our friends who owned electric carts and began installing Solar Panels on their carts in our spare time out of our garage in Oceanside, CA. Due to the publicized acceptance and popularity in Beach Communities of San Diego County, we decided to expand the business even further. Many beach cities have permitted the use of golf carts in 35 mph zones and are expanding Bike Lanes to 7 feet wide to accommodate their use.

So, there you have it. There is more to the story and we would love to discuss it with you while we install your Solar Panels on your cart.

We took the concept of Green Solar Energy and put it to practical use to lessen the carbon footprint.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

Richard Stachowicz
Ride All Day Solar Carts
Owner and Coronado Resident



ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Make the Earth Happy. Solar energy is clean. No carbon dioxide is released into the atmosphere as it is when batteries are plugged into the wall to charge. Similarly, no fossil fuels are consumed as they are in gas-powered golf carts. The sun’s energy is both clean and renewable. With their renewable, clean energy and lack of generated pollution, solar charged golf carts are an Earth-friendly option. You can help ensure that golf courses will be around for a very long time.

FINANCIAL BENEFITS

While it can be costly up front to buy a solar-powered golf cart or convert your existing cart to solar, in the long run, you might save money. You might be eligible for cost incentives offered to people who go solar. Some programs include:

- Federal tax credits
- Federal grants
- State and local utility tax credits
- Rebates

Together, these can help make solar power an affordable option for your golf cart. Additionally, you will likely save quite a bit of money on your electricity bill without having an electric vehicle drawing from your home’s electricity supply. Individuals aren’t the only ones who benefit monetarily from solar power. When entire golf courses convert their fleets to solar-powered vehicles, they can slash their annual charging costs by about 20 percent. Whether you want to enhance the performance of your golf cart, help the environment, or save money in the long run, you’re sure to benefit from changing your power to the sun.

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OPINION

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CORONADO

An inside look at Coronado’s historic homes: Tickets on sale now for the Mother’s Day tour

The Coronado Historical Association is hosting the annual Mother’s Day Historic Home Tour on May 11.

Coronado News staff

For over two decades, the Coronado Historical Association has hosted a Mother’s Day Historic Home Tour, providing community members the opportunity to get an inside look at the historical abodes that grace Coronado’s streets.

This year, the tour is returning on Sunday, May 11, and participants will have the chance to walk through six historic Coronado homes — the locations revealed in a booklet on the day of the event.

“The Coronado Historic Home Tour is more than just a tour; it’s a journey through time, a celebration of our community’s architectural heritage, and a unique Mother’s Day experience,” said Christine Stokes, the executive director and curator at the Coronado Historical Association.

Stokes said that the featured residences vary each year, so returning attendees can expect a fresh tour experience. And, this year’s tour will provide access to rare gardens, along with the homes.

Member-only early bird tickets are on sale until April 15 for \$55. Non-Coronado Historical Association members can access early-bird tickets by purchasing a “new member special” for \$165, including two tickets and a one-year membership.

General admission is open after April 15, and tickets will be offered for members and non-members alike, at \$65 and \$75, respectively. After April 15, the “new member special” will be offered for \$175.



Pictured here is a room in one of the historical homes featured in the 2024 tour. Tickets are on sale now for the 2025 Historic Home Tour. Photo provided by the Coronado Historical Association.

Proceeds will directly support the Coronado Historical Association’s ongoing programs, including educational initiatives, archival preservation, and community outreach efforts, Stokes said.

“It’s a chance to step inside the stories that have shaped Coronado, and to support the preservation

of that history for future generations,” Stokes said of the tour. “We invite community members to join us in this special event, to connect with the heart of Coronado and create lasting memories.”

Tickets can be purchased online at coronadohistory.org.

MotorCars on MainStreet returns on May 4

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

MotorCars on MainStreet is back again for its 36th year on May 4 for an event filled with novelty, nostalgia and really, really cool cars.

MotorCars on MainStreet was founded in 1988 by Coronado MainStreet as a way to celebrate Coronado’s identity through classic cars during Orange Avenue’s developmental growing pains.

It started with a handful of local car owners displaying their vehicles on the island, and has now turned into a regional attraction with over 400 show cars from 1980 and older.

And, it’s free.
Last year, the show highlighted lowriders

as a special feature, and this year, Coronado MainStreet is going back to the “essence of the show” with a mix of returning fan favorites, locally owned Coronado vehicles and custom builds from multiple different eras.

Cars must be from 1980 or older, but this event welcomes a wide range of styles, from “show-quality originals to thoughtfully customized classics,” said Executive Director Karla Robles-Puig.

The cars will line Isabella and Orange avenues on May 4 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., complete with live music from Tommy Price and the Stilettoes and food from restaurants downtown.

“MotorCars on MainStreet is more than just a car show – it’s a living piece of Coronado’s story,” Robles-Puig said.



MotorCars on MainStreet will take over Orange Avenue with over 400 novelty vehicles. Photo courtesy of Karla Robles-Puig.

Coronado Performing Arts Center presents the Tony-Award winning musical, ‘Cabaret’

Coronado News staff

The Coronado School of the Arts (CoSA) Musical Theatre and Drama Conservatory is set to dazzle with its production of the Tony-Award winning musical, “Cabaret.”

The thought-provoking production takes the stage at the Coronado Performing Arts Center on two weekends: April 25 – April 27 and May 2 – May 3. Tickets are available for purchase online on Eventbrite.

Audience members will be whisked away to a Berlin night club during the rise of the Nazi party. But the Master of Ceremonies (played by Luca Hansen) and Sally Bowles (played by Katie Moreno) and features classic songs by songwriters Kander and Ebb.

The musical is packed with clever dance numbers, which are perfectly

suited to CoSA’s “triple threat” performers who can sing, dance, and act, according to CoSA’s theatre performing arts and drama chair, Barbara Wolf.

“The actors are having a great time with the amazing choreography,” said Wolf. “We’re all very excited for the numbers ‘Mein Herr’ and ‘Money.’ They are great dances!”

The original Broadway production opened in November of 1966 and quickly became a box office hit, winning eight Tony Awards. While the subject matter is challenging and the musical touches on mature themes, Wolf said that the overriding message is one of love and kindness.

“‘Cabaret’ has a profound message of acceptance,” said Wolf.

CoSA provided a parent and audience advisory that this musical is suggested for ages 13 and up. “Cabaret” is set in Berlin, Germany prior to World War II during the rise of the Nazi regime. CoSA said the script includes references to antisemitism via a Nazi image and alludes to a character having an abortion.

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CORONADO

The city plans to consolidate Design Review Commission into Planning Commission

The city has decided to figure out what it would look like to merge the Design Review Commission and the Planning Commission, allowing all seven members from both boards to return to the newly consolidated Planning Commission.

BY MADELINE YANG
The Coronado News

The Design Review Commission (DRC), Coronado’s five-member board that oversees design elements in the community, will be consolidated into the Planning Commission in the near future, with up to seven seats for all the current commissioners if they choose to return to this newly merged group.

The Coronado City Council decided on April 1 that the new commission would welcome all seven members to return and as they get termed out, the commission would have a five-seat limit.

The current DRC has four members with one vacant seat and the Planning Commission has three members and two vacancies. They are supposed to have five members each, but according to the city, the vacancies could occur for various reasons, including relocations or personal reasons.

The city also had been contemplating consolidating the boards at a previous meeting and that could have led to not filling the empty seats.

Johanna Canlas, the city attorney, said that the Planning Commission is the only commission that is dictated by state law, and it is required to have at least five members.

According to the Department of Community Development, the DRC members are appointed by the City Council and their goal is to incorporate good design, colors, and landscaping into the community while protecting the health and comfort of the residents.

The Planning Commission is also appointed by the City Council to take action on planning appli-



The city is planning on merging the Design Review Commission with the Planning Commission, allowing all members to serve on the consolidated board. Photo taken from Coronado TV.

cations such as different permits, variances and subdivision maps; and to implement the adopted General Plan of the City of Coronado.

Starting at seven seats would leave the potential for the commission to have to go through a period where there would only be six members, which Mayor John Duncan said could be potentially problematic for voting decisions that result in a tie. But, Duncan said the council should let it stay at a six instead of removing a commissioner.

The city is also looking into having alternate seats to offset an evenly split vote and to ensure quorums.

A quorum is the minimum number of members that must be present for the meeting to proceed. Rebecca King, the current chair of the DRC, admitted that even though commissioners are supposed to meet twice a month, they’ve only had one meeting a month in the past year due to the lack of a quorum.

The DRC is composed of only four members at the moment, so if one commissioner can’t attend,

they don’t have a quorum.

Having alternates would help solve this problem. “A combined entity is a more powerful commission, in my opinion,” Duncan said.

The motion included city staff drafting an ordinance incorporating the duties of the DRC into the Planning Commission, and keeping the previous guidelines for members of the commission.

Duncan said there would be a preference of a minimum of three people with a design background and professional experience, and one person who is a former or retired businessperson who owns or operates property of a commercial nature within the city.

It was important for the city to establish that the role of the businessperson would be filled by a former or retired individual because of conflicting commitments that would potentially cause the commission to not have a quorum.

All council members voted yes for the ordinance to return at a future council meeting. It has not officially gone into effect yet.

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A plane flies into San Diego International Airport near the San Diego Bay. The untreated wastewater spill hit parts of San Diego Bay and San Diego River. Staff photo by Elaine Alfaro.

Coronado and other agencies directed to pay fine for 2023 sewage spill

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settlement that outlines the terms of the \$11.4 million fine. The Water Board said via email that this potentially would be the largest settlement that has been proposed to the Water Boards. San Diego is responsible for approximately \$7.5 million of the settlement. The rest would be paid by the 12 Metro JPA agencies based on their share of sewer system capacity. A spokesperson for Coronado said the city does not have

information to share about the spill, or the amount Coronado is responsible for, at this time. The \$11.4 million payout will go into an account that provides grants for pollution cleanup when there are no responsible parties available to undertake the work. San Diego approved the settlement in March. The Water Board is expected to vote on adoption at a June 11 meeting. If the water board approves the settlement, the city of San Diego said they project payment will happen in June or July.

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NAVY

Navy shipbuilding program experiences delays and cost growth

» Continued from Page 1

They build Navy auxiliaries, ships designed to support combatant vessels; sealift ships, cargo ships used for deploying military assets and for ocean transportation for all U.S. military services as well as for other government agencies; and commercial cargo vessels.

According to the Congressional Research Service (CRS), procurement costs for the oilers have jumped 54% in the last four years. In 2021, to procure one ship cost \$557 million. By 2025, it was \$850 million to procure one ship.

There was also a delay of around two years for the first oiler, TAO-205, to be delivered, and the report says subsequent ships in the program are expected to be delayed.

The CRS report says escalating prices and delayed production could affect the Navy's capabilities and funding capacity.

GD/NASSCO did not respond on deadline to inquiries about costs and scheduling.

Delays were caused by several issues that the CRS report outlines, including COVID-related labor shortages and flooding at the plant, which suspended the shipbuilding process for twelve months.

In terms of cost growth, the Navy cited cybersecurity change orders that were not provided in the original shipbuilding contract, and cost growth in government-furnished equipment for the ship.

The program calls for 20 new John Lewis class oilers. So far, the Navy has received 10. The 11th and 12th ships were scheduled for completion in 2026, but the Navy did not request funding for FY2025 for additional oilers. However, they did request \$227 million in cost-to-complete funding to cover the cost growth on oilers procured in prior years.

The role of these oilers is to transfer fuel so Navy surface ships at sea can extend their "operating endurance" while supporting aircraft based on carriers.

The oilers also provide other resources such as fresh water and small amounts of dry cargo.

"The Navy states that the ability to rearm, refuel and re-provision our ships at sea, independent of any restrictions placed on it by a foreign country, is critical to the Navy's ability to project war fighting power from the sea," said the report.

John Lewis class oilers are replacing Kaiser-class oilers that were made between 1982 and 1989. Seven of the old oilers will be retiring between 2025 and 2029.

The Navy said that fleet oilers are critical to its ability to operate in forward-deployed areas around the world on a sustained basis.

This report also comes after President Trump's nearly two-hour address to a joint session of Congress on March 4 where he said he would "resurrect the American shipbuilding industry, including commercial shipbuilding and military shipbuilding."

"I'm announcing tonight that we will create a new office of shipbuilding in the White House and offer special tax incentives to bring this industry home to America, where it belongs," Trump said. "We used to make so many ships. We don't make them anymore very much, but we're going to make them very fast, very soon. It will have a huge impact."

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced in late February on an on-camera address that the administration wants to tackle excess spending and address the issue of fraud, waste and abuse within the Department of Defense (DOD).

There would be an 8%, or around \$50 billion, cut for non-lethal programs within the DOD, but submarine programs, missile defense, drone technology and other initiatives would not experience defunding.



NASA and European Space Agency astronauts transit down a ramp in the upper vehicle stowage area of amphibious transport dock USS Somerset during NASA Underway Recovery Test 12 in the Pacific Ocean on March 28, 2025.U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Evan Diaz.

USS Somerset involved in training for NASA's Artemis launch

DVIDS

In preparation for the launch of NASA's Orion spacecraft, a joint NASA and Department of Defense team spent a week aboard San Diego's USS Somerset off the coast of California to practice recovery procedures.

From March 25-31, the crew successfully completed Underway Recovery Test 12. The team is now certified to recover the Orion spacecraft as part of the upcoming Artemis II test flight — a 10-day orbit around the moon.

During the simulated capsule recovery, boats deployed from the Somerset after the command, "Splashdown!"

Navy divers and independent duty corpsmen with Explosive Ordinance Disposal Expeditionary Support Unit 1 surrounded the crew module test article and constructed an orange buoyant ledge, known as the "front porch," around its edges.

MH-60S Seahawks from Helicopter Sea Combat

Squadron 23 lowered fast ropes, enabling crew members to rappel down to the floating capsule.

Astronauts participating in the underway training were extracted one by one from the front porch. The helicopters transported them to the ship's flight deck, where naval air crewmen and hospital corpsmen awaited their arrival, ready to escort the astronauts to the medical ward for assessment.

"Navy medicine has accustomed us to being adaptable. We are trained to work with many different people across all terrains," said Cmdr. Matthew Bidlack, officer in charge of Fleet Surgical Team 1. "During URT-12, we integrated multiple medical teams that don't normally work together—many of which don't typically operate on ships—with flawless cohesion."

Artemis II astronaut and U.S. Navy Capt. Victor Glover embarked the ship for Underway Recovery Test 12.

"This puts my two loves together, space and the Navy. I am really in my happy place here," said Glover.

Lithuanians bid farewell to 4 US soldiers who died during training exercise

Associated Press

Lithuania's political and religious leaders joined thousands of people on April 3 to bid farewell to four American soldiers who died during a training exercise in the Baltic nation.

President Gitanas Nausėda and other dignitaries were among those who stood in respect as hearses carried the bodies of the four young Americans to Vilnius airport before being flown to the United States for burial.

Many of the onlookers were in tears, and Nausėda said that the reaction of the population and the military to the disappearance of soldiers was rooted in Lithuania's own difficult history.

"For us, it is more than a duty, it is an emotion. We have experienced trials in our history and therefore we understand well what loss is, what death is, what honourable duty is," Nausėda said in a speech to those gathered.

Schoolchildren accompanied by teachers waved Lithuanian and U.S. flags to honor the soldiers, who died in an accident along NATO's eastern flank, a region that is on edge due to Russia's aggression in nearby Ukraine.

Leading one group was Justin Boyd, the secondary school principal of the American International School in Vilnius, who said his group was there "to honor the fallen soldiers from the United States and to honor the relationship between Lithuania and America and the de-



U.S. Army soldiers and Lithuanian servicemen salute as they attend a solemn farewell ceremony at Cathedral Square in Vilnius, Lithuania, Thursday, April 3, 2025 for the US soldiers who died during training exercise. AP Photo/Mindaugas Kulbis.

fensive pact that represents."

"It's important for us to give dignity to the fallen and to let the families know that we are with them and we support them in this time," Boyd said.

The soldiers, part of the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, were on a tactical training exercise when they and their vehicle went missing a week ago, the Army said.

Lithuanian, Polish and U.S. soldiers and rescuers searched through the forests and swamps at the Gen. Silvestras Žukauskas training ground in the town of Pabradė, 6 miles (10 kilometers) west of the border with Belarus. The M88 Hercules armored vehicle was pulled from a peat bog on March 31 and the final body was recovered on April 1.

"I feel sorry for these young men," said one mourner from the town of Pabradė as he watched the hearses make their way towards the airport. "I live nearby, and I know that swamp. Dangerous places for anyone who enters that area."

The U.S. Army has identified the soldiers as Staff Sgt. Troy S. Knutson-Collins, 28, of Battle Creek, Michigan; Staff Sgt. Jose Duenez Jr., 25, of Joliet, Illinois; Staff Sgt. Edwin F. Franco, 25, of Glendale, California; and Pfc. Dante D. Taitano, 21, of Dededo, Guam.

About 3,500 soldiers from the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team deployed in January to Poland and the Baltic states for a nine-month rotation as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve, which supports NATO allies and partners following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.



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SPORTS

2022 Coronado High grad takes over girls’ beach volleyball team

» Continued from Page 1

league and help her players develop a better understanding of the beach game.

“My team’s style of play is definitely focused around playing smarter,” she said. “I’ve worked with them to get a better understanding of using ‘easy’ plays to get the ball to hit the sand. We don’t need big flashy hitters, just a good game plan!”

The strong identity is something Wygal said she tries to instill by being overly encouraging – sometimes to the point of embarrassment.

“I love to be big and extra when I cheer them on, even if it ends up embarrassing myself a little,” she said. “The last game I kept yelling ‘get hungry’ to my team, and they ended up coming back from a deficit. So, I think it helped.”

Wygal highlighted senior Sadie Proctor’s work ethic and effort as key, while noting that the lone freshman on varsity could develop into an important contributor.

“Sadie is a senior; I don’t know what her college plans are but she has amazing skill on the beach,” Wygal said. “Jamison is our freshman on varsity. I can see her being a great leader in the future once she gains good confidence in herself.”

Now in the final sprint of the 2025, the Islanders will need to run the gauntlet of seven games in 20 days to secure a playoff spot and continue their pursuit of a CIF title. The regular season wraps up on April 24 versus Patrick Henry High School.

Senior Reif Souder leads Central League in 110 and 300-meter hurdles

Coronado News staff

Coronado High School senior Reif Souder notched first place victories in both the 110-meter hurdles and the 300-meter hurdles at the Central League meet on March 26, establishing his place as the Central League leader in both events.

Junior Eddie Gonzalez also emerged victorious in the shot put and discus events, while in the running events, Davin Collins took first place in the 100- and 200-meter dashes and was a part of the winning 4 x 400-meter relay team. The team also included freshman Ah’Mahn Oliver, junior Nathan Ayan and junior Mason Gibbs.

Junior Michaela Gistaro won four events: the 100-meter dash, 200-meter dash, 4 x 100-meter relay and 4 x 400-meter relay. She was joined on both relays by sophomore Maya Wilson, junior Summer Little, and senior Lauren Gilhooly.

Other event winners for the girls were Gilhooly in the 400-meter dash, freshman Ava Schlomer in the 1600-meter run and Claudia Wagner in the Long Jump, with a leap of 15’10”. Wagner is the current Central League leader in that event.



Reif Souder won both the 110 and 300 hurdles at the 4-school cluster on March 26. Photo by George Green.

Jackson Merrill hits 2-run homer hours after Padres sign him to \$135 million, 9-year contract

Associated Press

All-Star center fielder Jackson Merrill started paying immediate dividends on the \$135 million, nine-year contract he and the San Diego Padres finalized on April 2.

A few hours after the ink dried on the contract that covers 2026-34, Merrill hit a two-run home run with two outs in the third inning to give the Padres a 4-0 lead over the Cleveland Guardians. Merrill took several steps, tossed his bat in the air and gestured with his right arm. He homered for the second straight game and has hit safely in all seven games this year.

The Padres won 5-2 for the first 7-0 start in their 57-year history.

It’s been a big week so far for Merrill, who had a bobblehead night on March 31 and then got the big deal on April 2.

“7-0 is all that matters,” Merrill said. “If we didn’t win that game today, I would have been (mad).”

The Padres held a news conference 3 1/2 hours before first pitch.

“Besides talking all day, it felt like a normal day,” he said. “Came into the locker room right after the press conference and got locked in. It’s my job.”

Merrill struck out leading off the second.

“Striking out first A-B, I was like, ‘Damn, damn. Is this how we’re going to go?’ I had to come with something. I had to give the fans something,” Merrill said.

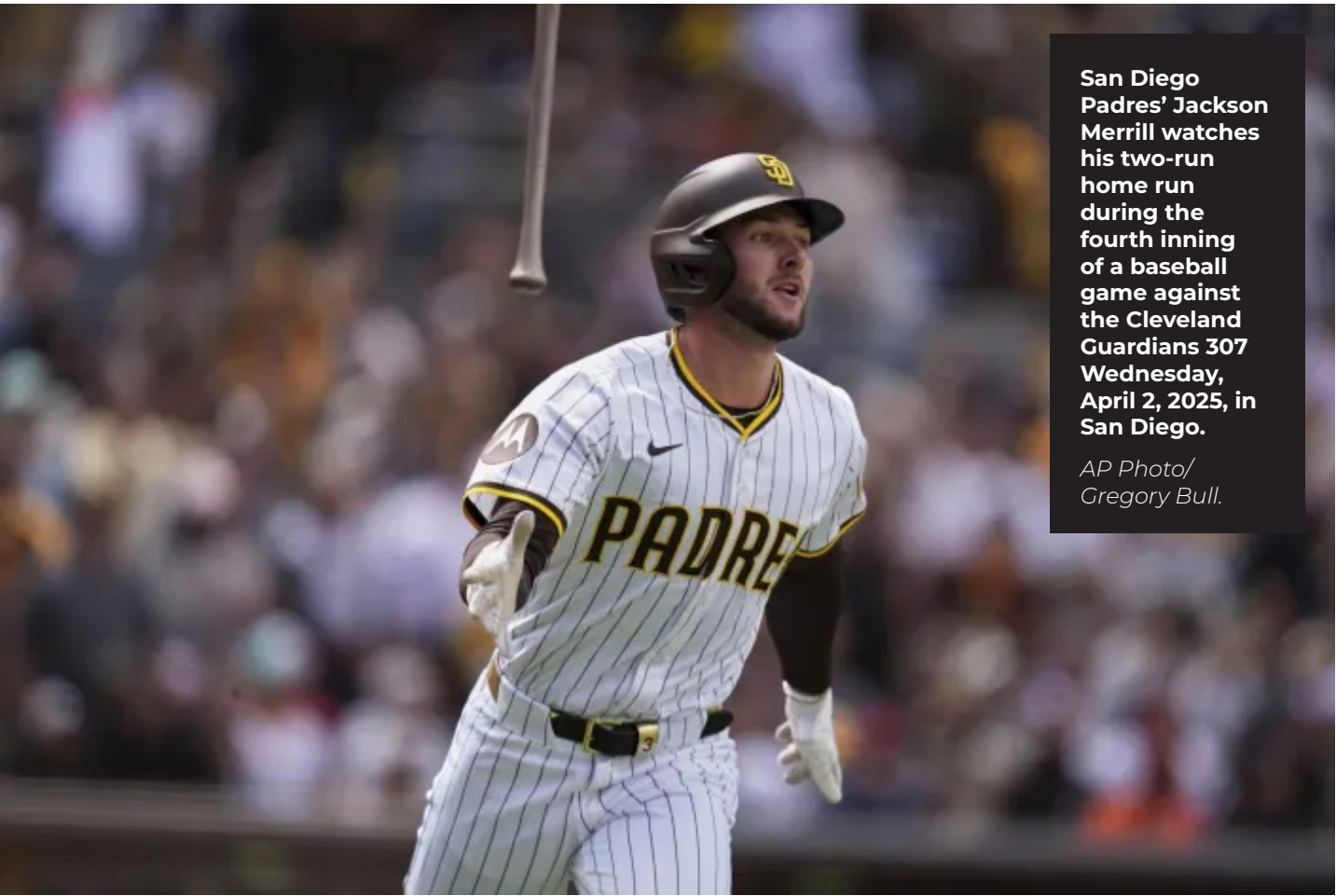
Winning pitcher Dylan Cease, who was wearing a “Merrill Madness” T-shirt, joked that Merrill stole the spotlight on his start day.

“Anytime he has a home run it’s not surprising. Feels about right for the script,” Cease said.

“That was amazing. The right way how to celebrate his big contract,” right fielder Fernando Tatis Jr. said. “Man, the future holds a lot for him.”

Tatis’ \$340 million, 14-year contract runs through 2033.

“He’s a great player, great teammate, great guy to have around. Can’t



wait to play nine more years right next to him,” Tatis said about Merrill.

Merrill had a sensational rookie season in 2024 and said several times he wanted to stay long term with the Padres.

“An opportunity to sign with the San Diego Padres is enough for me. But I also feel like there comes a line where you know your worth, you know your value,” Merrill said at the pregame news conference. “Listen, I know there are contracts out there that are beyond absurd, there’s super amounts of money. But having a relationship with a real human being and a real team like I have here, you can’t beat that.”

Merrill, who turns 22 on April 19, was moved from shortstop to center field in spring training last year when the Padres had only two outfielders

on their roster. He made the opening day roster and hit .292 with 24 homers, 90 RBIs and 16 stolen bases. He finished second in NL Rookie of the Year voting behind Pittsburgh pitcher Paul Skenes.

“The Padres were the first team that ever reached out to me, ever scouted me,” he said. “They believed in me from Day 1. They wanted me. It feels good to be wanted. I always felt they had a certain trust in me.”

Merrill gets a \$10 million signing bonus, \$1 million payable within 30 days of the contract’s approval by Major League Baseball and \$3 million on Jan. 15 in each of the next three years.

He gets salaries of \$1 million in 2026, \$6 million in 2027, \$8 million in 2028, \$10 million in 2029 and \$20 million annually from 2030-34.

San Diego has a \$21 million option

for 2034 that would become a player option at the same salary if he finishes among the top five in MVP voting in any season from 2026-34.

His salary would escalate by \$1 million for all remaining years for any season in which he has 500 or more plate appearances.

Merrill’s option price would escalate by \$1 million each time he finishes among the top 10 in MVP voting.

He also gets a hotel suite on road trips.

He has an \$809,500 salary while in the major leagues this year after earning the \$740,000 minimum last year and gaining \$1,191,534 from the pre-arbitration bonus pool.

Merrill would have been eligible for arbitration after the 2026 season and for free agency after the 2029 World Series.

SPORTS

MLB’s average salary tops \$5 million for first time, AP study shows

Associated Press

Major League Baseball’s average salary broke the \$5 million barrier on opening day for the first time, according to a study by The Associated Press.

The New York Mets, with Juan Soto’s record \$61.9 million pay, led MLB for the third straight opening day with a \$322.6 million payroll, just ahead of the World Series champion Los Angeles Dodgers at \$319.5 million. Those two teams each spent roughly five times as much as the Miami Marlins, who at \$64.9 million ended the Athletics’ three-year streak as the lowest spender.

Still, the Mets were down from their record high of \$355.4 million in 2023.

The average rose 3.6% to \$5,160,245. That was up from a 1.5% increase last year but down from an 11.1% increase in 2023.

Adding Blake Snell, Michael Conforto, Tanner Scott and Kirby Yates, the Dodgers boosted payroll by a big league-high \$69 million from opening day last year. Baltimore hiked spending by \$66 million, followed by Arizona (\$55 million), San Diego (\$47 million), Philadelphia (\$41 million) and Detroit (\$39 million).

Los Angeles’ payroll figure was held down by deferred payments. Shohei Ohtani’s \$70 million salary was discounted to a present-day value of \$28.2 million because it won’t be paid in full until 2035, causing him to be listed as the 18th-highest-paid player. Other Dodgers with deferred payments include Mookie Betts, Tommy Edman, Freddie Freeman, Teos-



New York Mets’ Juan Soto (22) hits a home run as Houston Astros catcher Yainer Diaz reaches for the pitch during the third inning of a baseball game Friday, March 28, 2025, in Houston. AP Photo/David J. Phillip.

car Hernández, Scott, Will Smith and Snell.

Following their record 121-loss season, the Chicago White Sox cut payroll by \$60.8 million, San Francisco by \$39.1 million, Miami by \$31.7 million and St. Louis by \$31.6 million. The American League champion Yankees dropped by \$18.5 million.

Just five teams were under \$100 million, with the Marlins joined by the A’s (\$74.9 million), Tampa Bay (\$79.2 million), the White Sox (\$80.9

million) and Pittsburgh (\$87.9 million).

Soto broke the previous high of \$43.3 million shared by pitchers Max Scherzer and Justin Verlander under deals they agreed to with the Mets.

Phillies pitcher Zack Wheeler is second at \$42 million, followed by Texas pitcher Jacob deGrom and Yankees outfielder Aaron Judge at \$40 million each.

Of 953 players in the major leagues on opening day, 526 had salaries of \$1

million or more, 55%, and down from 532 last year and 546 in 2023.

There were 15 players at \$30 million or more, a drop of two; 66 at \$20 million, up from 66; and 177 at \$10 million, an increase from 166.

A total of 35 players made the \$760,000 minimum.

The top 50 players make 29% of the salaries, the same as in the prior two years, and the top 100 earn 48%, up from 47%.

Baseball’s median salary, the point at which an equal number of players are above and below, dropped to \$1.35 million from \$1.5 million and well below the record high of \$1.65 million at the start of 2015.

Average and median salaries decline over the course of the season as veterans are released and replaced by younger players making closer to the minimum. The AP’s average was \$4.98 million at the start of last season; MLB calculated the final average at \$4.59 million and the players’ association at \$4.66 million.

Because they started the season in the minor leagues, Baltimore pitcher Kyle Gibson (\$5.25 million), Detroit pitcher Jason Foley (\$3.15 million) and Dodgers second baseman Hye-seong Kim (\$2.8 million) were among the players not included in the opening day payroll figures.

The AP’s figures include salaries and prorated shares of signing bonuses and other guaranteed income.

Payroll figures factor in adjustments for cash transactions in trades, signing bonuses that are the responsibility of the club agreeing to the contract, option buyouts and termination pay for released players.

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FEATURES

Val Kilmer, ‘Top Gun’ and Batman star with an intense approach, dies at 65

Associated Press

Val Kilmer, the brooding, versatile actor who played fan favorite Iceman in “Top Gun,” donned a voluminous cape as Batman in “Batman Forever” and portrayed Jim Morrison in “The Doors,” has died. He was 65.

Kilmer died on April 1 in Los Angeles, surrounded by family and friends, his daughter, Mercedes Kilmer, said in an email to The Associated Press.

Kilmer died from pneumonia. He had recovered after a 2014 throat cancer diagnosis that required two tracheotomies. The New York Times was the first to report his death.

Kilmer, who at 17 was the youngest actor ever accepted to the prestigious Juilliard School at the time he attended, experienced the ups and downs of fame more dramatically than most.

“I have behaved poorly. I have behaved bravely. I have behaved bizarrely to some. I deny none of this and have no regrets because I have lost and found parts of myself that I never knew existed,” he says toward the end of “Val,” the 2021 documentary on his career. “And I am blessed.”

His break came in 1984’s spy spoof “Top Secret!” followed by the comedy “Real Genius” in 1985. Kilmer would later show his comedy chops again in films including “MacGruber” and “Kiss Kiss Bang Bang.”

His movie career hit its zenith in the early 1990s as he made a name for himself as a dashing leading man, starring alongside Kurt Russell and Bill Paxton in 1993’s “Tombstone,” as Elvis’ ghost in “True Romance” and as a bank-robbing demolition expert in Michael Mann’s 1995 film “Heat” with Al Pacino and Robert De Niro.

“While working with Val on ‘Heat’ I always marvelled at the range, the brilliant variability within the powerful current of Val’s possessing and expressing character,” director Michael Mann said in a statement.

Actor Josh Brolin, a friend of Kilmer, was among others paying tribute.

“You were a smart, challenging, brave, uber-creative firecracker,” Brolin wrote on Instagram. “There’s not a lot left of those.”

Kilmer — who took part in the Method branch of Suzuki arts training — threw himself into parts. When he played Doc Holliday in “Tombstone,” he filled his bed with ice for the final scene to mimic the feeling of dying from tuberculosis. To play Morrison, he wore leather pants all the time, asked castmates and crew to only refer to him as Morrison and blasted The Doors for a year.

That intensity also gave Kilmer a reputation that he was difficult to work with — something he grudgingly agreed with later in life, while always defending himself by emphasizing art over commerce.

“In an unflinching attempt to



Val Kilmer poses for a portrait, Jan. 9, 2014, in Nashville, Tenn. AP Photo/Mark Humphrey, File.

empower directors, actors and other collaborators to honor the truth and essence of each project, an attempt to breathe Suzukian life into a myriad Hollywood moments, I had been deemed difficult and alienated the head of every major studio,” he wrote in his 2020 memoir, “I’m Your Huckleberry.”

One of his more iconic roles — hotshot pilot Tom “Iceman” Kazansky opposite Tom Cruise in 1986’s “Top Gun” — almost didn’t happen. Kilmer was courted by director Tony Scott but initially balked. “I didn’t want the part. I didn’t care about the film. The story didn’t interest me,” he wrote in his memoir. He agreed after being promised that his role would improve from the initial script. He would reprise the role in the film’s 2022 sequel, “Top Gun: Maverick.”

One career nadir was playing Batman in Joel Schumacher’s goofy, garish “Batman Forever” (1995) with Nicole Kidman and Chris O’Donnell — before George Clooney took up the mantle for 1997’s “Batman & Robin” and after Michael Keaton played the Dark Knight in 1989’s “Batman” and 1992’s “Batman Returns.”

The New York Times’ Janet Maslin said Kilmer was “hamstrung by the straight-man aspects of the role,” while Roger Ebert deadpanned that he was a “completely acceptable” substitute for Keaton. Kilmer, who was one and done as Batman, blamed much of his performance on the suit.

“When you’re in it, you can barely move and people have to help you stand up and sit down,” Kilmer said in “Val,” in lines spoken by his son Jack, who voiced the part of his father after Kilmer’s ability to speak was impaired by cancer treatment. “You also can’t hear anything and after a while people stop talking to you, it’s very isolating. It was a struggle for me to get a performance past the suit, and it

was frustrating until I realized that my role in the film was just to show up and stand where I was told to.”

His next projects were the film version of the 1960s TV series “The Saint” — fussily putting on wigs, accents and glasses — and “The Island of Dr. Moreau” with Marlon Brando, which became one of the 1990s’ most infamously cursed productions.

David Gregory’s 2014 documentary “Lost Soul: The Doomed Journey of Richard Stanley’s Island of Dr. Moreau,” described a cursed set subject to a hurricane, Kilmer bullying director Richard Stanley, the firing via fax of Stanley (who sneaked back on set as an extra with a mask on) and extensive rewrites by Kilmer and Brando. The older actor told the younger at one point: “It’s a job now, Val. A lark. We’ll get through it.” I was as sad as I’ve ever been on a set,” Kilmer wrote in his memoir.

In 1996, Entertainment Weekly ran a cover story about Kilmer titled “The Man Hollywood Loves to Hate.” The directors Schumacher and John Frankenheimer, who finished “The Island of Dr. Moreau,” said he was difficult. Frankenheimer said there were two things he would never do: “Climb Mount Everest and work with Val Kilmer again.”

Other artists came to his defense, like D. J. Caruso, who directed Kilmer in “The Salton Sea” and said the actor simply liked to talk out scenes and enjoyed having a director’s attention.

“Val needs to immerse himself in a character. I think what happened with directors like Frankenheimer and Schumacher is that Val would ask a lot of questions, and a guy like Schumacher would say, ‘You’re Batman! Just go do it,’” Caruso told the Times in 2002.

After “The Island of Dr. Moreau,” the movies were smaller, like David Mamet’s human-trafficking thriller

“Spartan”; “Joe the King,” in which he played a paunchy, abusive alcoholic; and 2003’s “Wonderland,” in which he played the doomed ’70s porn star John Holmes. He also threw himself into his one-man stage show “Citizen Twain,” in which he played Mark Twain.

“I enjoy the depth and soul the piece has that Twain had for his fellow man and America,” he told Variety in 2018. “And the comedy that’s always so close to the surface, and how valuable his genius is for us today.”

Kilmer spent his formative years in the Chatsworth neighborhood of Los Angeles. He attended Chatsworth High School alongside future Oscar winner Kevin Spacey and future Emmy winner Mare Winningham. Shortly after he left for Juilliard, his younger brother Wesley suffered an epileptic seizure in the family’s Jacuzzi and died on the way to the hospital. Wesley, just 15, was an aspiring filmmaker.

“I miss him and miss his things. I have his art up. I like to think about what he would have created. I’m still inspired by him,” Kilmer told the Times in 2002.

While still at Juilliard, Kilmer co-wrote and appeared in the play “How It All Began” and later turned down a role in Francis Ford Coppola’s “The Outsiders” for the Broadway play “Slab Boys,” alongside Kevin Bacon and Sean Penn.

Kilmer published two books of poetry (including “My Edens After Burns”) and was nominated for a spoken word album Grammy in 2012 for “The Mark of Zorro.” He was also a visual artist and a lifelong Christian Scientist.

He dated Cher, and married and divorced actor Joanne Whalley. He is survived by their two children, Mercedes and Jack.

“I have no regrets,” Kilmer told the AP in 2021. “I’ve witnessed and experienced miracles.”

“I have behaved poorly. I have behaved bravely. I have behaved bizarrely to some. I deny none of this and have no regrets because I have lost and found parts of myself that I never knew existed ... And I am blessed.”

- Val Kilmer



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