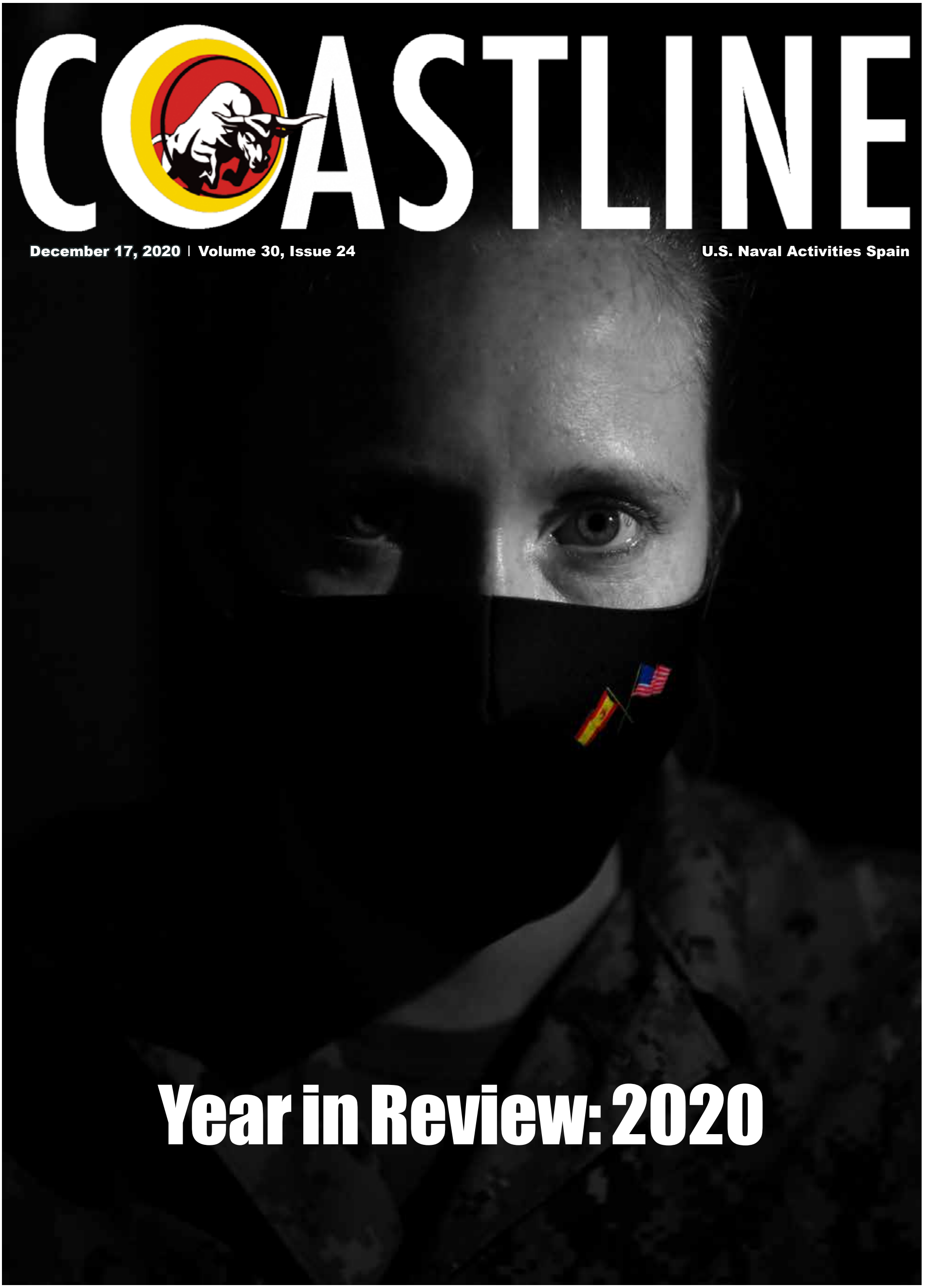
COASTLINE

December 17, 2020 | Volume 30, Issue 24

U.S. Naval Activities Spain



Year in Review: 2020

Holiday Message


CMDCM Kimberly Ferguson Capt. David S. Baird

Happy Holidays Team Rota! I think I speak for everyone in saying that 2020 has been… a year. We hoped that 2020 would be a year of perfect vision, but instead it was an unclear year filled with uncertainty, disruption of routines, and changed plans. But I also think that for our community onboard Naval Station Rota, this year has been one of togetherness, of resiliency, and of support. Even during times of isolation and quarantine, this community found ways to remain together. We all had to endure this year somewhere, and I am glad we were given the opportunity to do so here in beautiful Rota, Spain!

It has been a year of disappointment for nearly all, and tragedy for far too many. Many of us were forced to cancel travel plans over the last year. Many of us had friends and family cancel planned visits. We were all forced to adapt to dramatic changes in social behavior. Our schools and workplaces changed drastically. We had to cancel celebrations like Feria and Prom. We learned terms like incidence rate, social distancing, flattening the curve, remote learning, PCR, ROM, PPE, and many more. We binge watched a lot of TV, and we spent a lot of time on video conference calls for work and with our friends and family. We worried about our parents and grandparents. We worried about our kids. Worst of all, far too many lost a loved one and had to figure out how to grieve during a pandemic. These disappointments and these tragedies are like wounds that will all take time to heal. Some may never fully heal.

But despite all of these disappointments and tragedies, despite three months of home confinement, and despite this pandemic, our community has remained together. For months we offered nightly applause for the frontline healthcare workers, and for all those who stayed at work providing for our needs. We checked on one another. We supported one another when we were able, and we leaned on one another when we needed to. We respected each other, and we protected each other.

We adapted. We figured out "remote learning." It wasn't always easy, but we got through it. We imagined new ways to safely have celebrations like graduation, 4th of July, Halloween, and Thanksgiving. We found safe ways to get our students back into the classroom, and to hold religious services. We dined outside. We ordered takeout or delivery. We wore masks, and we got really good at smiling with our eyes.

Some of us improved our fitness level this year. Some of us look forward to doing so next year. Some of us learned a new skill or found a new hobby. Some of us realized we could do without some of our old habits or routines. Some of us spent quality time with family. Some of us yearn for the time when we will be able to see family again.

Yet throughout this tumultuous year, Naval Station Rota continued to meet our mission of Partnership, Readiness, and Presence as Team Rota. We enriched our Partnerships with our host nation and with each other. We maintained our military, personal, and family Readiness. And we did all of this here in beautiful southern Spain.

Our togetherness, our adaptability, and our resiliency has given me continued hope. Now, with the arrival of safe and effective vaccines, my hope is buoyed even further. In the coming weeks and months we will be offering COVID-19 vaccines to our community. Over time, these vaccinations will help us slowly relax some restrictions and move into a new normal. While under an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA), vaccinations will not be mandatory. I encourage everyone to research the safety and efficacy of the vaccines through credible publications, and to make a thoughtful and deliberate decision that is right for you.

2021 is destined to be a year of renewal. Renewed traditions, renewed routines, renewed travel, renewed celebrations, renewed sports, and renewed hope. I look forward to youth and high school sports, to barbeques and big parties, to galas and balls, to handshakes and hugs. I look forward to traveling and to hosting guests from afar. I look forward to big smiles, and close conversations. These things will not be possible for a while. We all need to endure a little longer. But I am so thankful to be enduring here in Rota, and I will be forever grateful for the opportunity to do so with each of you.

I wish each of you Happy Holidays, and a healthy and blessed 2021. Please stay vigilant in protecting yourself and one another by staying home if you are sick, wearing your mask, maintaining physical separation, minimizing close contacts, washing your hands, and keeping the faith – for the duration! - Capt. David Baird

This edition includes photography from the following:

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IC2 Jeffrey Abelon
MC2 Christina Brewer
MC2 Eduardo Otero Santos
MC2 Sean Rinner
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MC3 Jakob Owen
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Courtney Pollock

*In addition, there are several courtesy photos from various department, tenant commands and organizations around Rota without photo credit.

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U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Rota, Spain

Originally designated the Year of the Nurse and Midwife by the World Health Organization, the year 2020 turned out to need nurses and all medical professionals more than anyone could originally imagine. U.S. Naval Hospital (USNH) Rota took an early interest in COVID-19 and began tracking the disease early in January 2020. As world events unfolded, USNH Rota learned, consulted, and continuously adapted to the seemingly never-ending virus developments.

Being ahead of the continental U.S. while facing the pandemic, the Spanish government locked down early and with significant restrictions, pushing USNH Rota to the forefront, trailblazing care pathway development and contact tracing procedures. One of the first things USNH Rota did in response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic was stand up its Hospital Incident Command System (HICS) and enlisted the help of the Seabees to construct a temporary external COVID-19 clinic to ensure the health safety of hospital staff and medical clinic patients.

USNH Rota created COVID-19 algorithms using both the Centers for Disease Control and European Centers for Disease Control guidance.

"Algorithms are used to delineate, and organize care for patient, like what to do if you are sick, will you see a provider, will you go to the emergency room, etc. Essentially they are pathways with yes or no questions that direct care," said Lt. Megan McKim, USNH Rota public affairs officer.

Using the HICS in conjunction with Navy Medicine Forces Atlantic guidance, USNH Rota was able to minimize in-person healthcare services and the hospital's staffing footprint in order to meet local manning guidelines.

To maintain patient care but minimize in-person interactions during the height of the first wave of COVID-19, the Medical Homeport, OB/GYN, Telemedicine, and Mental Health services turned virtual - providing world class care through high quality remote appointments via cellphones, video chats, and secure messaging.

This paradigm shift created a new focus on sustaining U.S. Naval Superiority by ensuring Force Health Protection. Despite these drastic changes, USNH Rota continued to meet all standards for force health readiness in 2020 thanks to all the hard work by the military members, civilian staff, and understanding beneficiaries.

"The hospital regularly trains for events such as pandemic viruses and the healthcare workers at USNH Rota worked hard to maintain the highest medical care for all beneficiaries," said Capt. Andrew Archila, USNH Rota commanding officer. "We also worked closely with our host nation public health representatives and the Spanish Ministry of Health, whom we have a long-standing, strong working relationship with, constantly monitoring the pandemic situation and remain in daily contact with their teams."

During the de-escalation process from the State of Alarm restrictions in the summer months, USNH Rota began to reintroduce in-person care and the hospital staff worked with critical base assets, including the base gym, DGF, SAC, and the CDC ensuring safe returns to the "new normal." It was during this time that the clinic also transitioned out of the temporary COVID tents and into a more permanent location adjacent to Medical Homeport but keeping separate external entrances to ensure a minimal virus spread.

As autumn approached, Spain saw the beginning of its second wave of COVID-19. USNH Rota implemented lessons learned from the virus's first wave that have enabled USNH Rota to keep all services operational during the second wave. The new COVID-19 clinic's creation and additional safety measures, including spaced appointments, a socially distanced floor plan, and facility barrier modification, all played a role in their ability to keep services fully operational.

Although this year has been challenging for all, USNH Rota saw community teamwork at its best. They worked side-by-side with the Seabees, waterfront forces, logistical support, and base assets to ensure their missions' continued success. Additionally, USNH Rota was recognized for the 2020 AMSUS Force Health Protection Team Award with the accomplishment of providing proactive and preventative health services directly to the warfighter, including mental health crisis and prevention services, women's health, dental preventative, and physical therapy services onboard ship.

"In the end it was the commitment of local leadership and each and every person to follow the recommended mitigation measures to preserve the force and protect themselves and others," said Archila. "I am thankful to be amongst others in our Rota community who considers others above themselves."







NAVSTA Rota Public Affairs Office & Spanish Liaison Office: Coordinating COVID-19 Communications

When Spain announced the State of Alarm, March 13, 2020, many departments and tenant commands aboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota went to minimal manning and reduced work schedules. For some departments though, the workload amplified as it did for both the Public Affairs Office and Spanish Liaison Office, both of which are relatively small offices to begin with.

The Spanish Liaison Office is comprised of Maria Diaz Muñoz (Spanish Liaison Officer) and Brenda Navarro Castellet (Host Nation Protocol Advisor), and the installation Public Affairs Office consists of Lt. Lyndsi Gutierrez (Public Affairs Officer [PAO]), Mass Communications (MC) 1st Class Benjamin Lewis (outgoing Deputy PAO), MC2 Eduardo Otero Santos, MC3 Jakob Owen, and Courtney Pollock.

Together, the six of them were thrust into crisis communications mode and at the forefront of the pandemic as the primary source of information for the base personnel about the virus and all the new decrees, regulations, and mitigations being put into place from both the Spanish government and the U.S. military.

"Crisis communications is one of those things that even with the best training you never feel fully prepared for in the moment due to the dynamic, ever changing nature of the situation," said Gutierrez, "That was especially true for us with this coronavirus pandemic, but I couldn't have asked for a better team to tackle this challenge with. Our team really came together, providing endless support to the community through what seemed like endless days and nights, and doing whatever was necessary for us to get the job done and effectively communicate every change, every step of the way with the public."

First, the Spanish government would publish their policies in their state gazette called the Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE), and then each of the regional governments across Spain would publish their guidance. For Andalucía, that document was called the Boletín Oficial de la Junta de Andalucía (BOJA). Although not a usual part of their job duties, Diaz and Navarro took the initiative to translate each new BOE and BOJA from Spanish to English from which they were able to quickly provide an executive summary, or key updates, to NAVSTA Rota leadership. They would further engage with the city officials from the surrounding area regarding any local policies regarding current situation, updates, and local restrictions.

After review and translation of national, regional and local policies were complete, the public affairs team would then take the information provided by the Spanish Liaison Office and base services in order to generate daily social media updates and accompanying graphics to inform the community of the latest changes, or arranging virtual town halls for the Commanding Officer to address the community directly.

The team remained on standby almost around the clock, to answer the inevitable flood of questions that came in from both official and unofficial community social media sites following every major update to the regulations. Understandably, a fair number of questions asked went into more detail than was provided by the official government documents, so further coordination was needed between the Spanish Liaison Office and the Spanish government for clarification in order to adequately answer each question.

In addition to all the COVID related correspondence, both departments carried on with their usual duties. For the Spanish Liaison Office, this included maintaining all official correspondence between Spanish and U.S. Navy, as well as notifying our Spanish counterparts and coordinating the use of their installation for U.S. exercises, training and other operations.

For the Public Affairs Office this consisted of documenting base operations with internal photos, video, and stories for our internal audience but also externally through the Coastline newspaper and in coordination with the Spanish Liaison Office, provided external Spanish media with information for publication and/or the opportunity to film stories centered around base personnel and base operations.

In order to keep some sense of normalcy for the community, the public affairs staff continued to publish the Coastline newspaper throughout the pandemic but transitioned the publication to a digital-only format during the period of full lockdown. They solicited input from the community to help fill the pages and many of the resulting stories featured community members and how they supported each other throughout the lockdown – together but apart.

By the Numbers
PAO / Spanish Liaison

Pages Translated: 1,710
- BOEs: 40 (700 pages)
- BOJAs: 12 (560 pages)
- Other official documents (450 pages)

COVID-related Social Media Updates: 271
- Likes/Reactions: 17,005
- Community Comments/Questions: 9,688

COVID-related Graphics: 98
Town Halls: 15 (14 Virtual/COVID-related)
Virtual Ceremonies: 3
External Media Queries: 29

NAVSTA Rota Administration Department

The Administration Department and Command Career Counselor's (CCC) office have been quintessential to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota's mission success throughout 2020. The coronavirus brought many administrative challenges in addition to the normal workload of the Admin and CCC departments.

As with most departments, shifting to minimal manning in response to the coronavirus mitigations put in place across the country, team Admin stayed in the fight working diligently with a rotating small team in the office while others worked from home in order to process what was required by the department to meet mission and support the installation's most valuable assets: the Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, and Airmen onboard NAVSTA Rota.

Demonstrating exceptional flexibility in meeting the needs of the installation's personnel during the dynamic COVID-19 environment, the administration department tackled every new challenge head first. Despite the stop-movement order in place Sailors and civilians still needed to travel for official reasons to meet the mission. The administration department was vital in ensuring that the appropriate exceptions to policy were routed in a timely manner, allowing official travel to be executed in compliance with Navy and Region guidance.

Helping to advance the careers of their fellow Sailors, the CCC office continued to provide support throughout the pandemic. Navy counselors continued to conduct pre-separation (PRESEP) counseling during the transition assistance program course, and recruited over 40% of separating members to reserve affiliation, all while maintaining appropriate social distancing and ensuring that safety precautions were in place to combat the coronavirus.

Even with the pandemic blues clouding NAVSTA Rota, customer service remained the Administration Department's number one priority, maintaining positive attitudes and positive customer service to help brighten everyone's day. The masks might hide their smiles, but they are definitely there!

"Whether it's pandemic-related paperwork or any other standard correspondence, awards or evaluations, your NAVSTA Rota administration department is up for the job any and every day," said Lt. Simon Barger, former administration officer. "Admin work never stops and neither do we!"

By the Numbers
Admin. Dept.

Correspondence: 1,700
ROM letters: 1,064
Curfew letters: 2,123
Essential movement letters: 854
Passport applications: 310
PCS waivers: 69
Evals/Fitreps: 94
TAD/Leave waivers: 89
Transfers/Separations: 84
Gains: 22

Command Career Counselor (CCC) Office

PRESEP Briefs: 7
Reenlistments: 66
OTEIP approvals: 68





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NAVSTA Rota Air Operations

The global COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 forced a lot of changes in how operations are conducted worldwide and Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Air Operations department has been no exception.

The Rota airfield has continued to operate 24/7 throughout the year and Air Operations personnel have been working hard from the start of the pandemic to safely keep operations moving. This has required implementing additional health safety measures and closer coordination with transient units.

Even so, Air Operations supported over 3,500 aircraft, 3,000 tons of cargo, 24,000 passengers, and seven aviation detachments.

One of the key players in accomplishing this was the Rota air terminal manager, Rob Speigner. In the early stages of the pandemic and Spain's State of Alarm, hotels outside the installation had to shut down. With limited availability on base, many of the passengers transiting through Rota were left without a place to go during their layovers. Speigner coordinated with base leadership to open up the base gymnasium as a place for the passengers to rest and practice social distancing while awaiting their departure flight. He screened the flight schedule daily for any inbound flights with passengers that may not have had a place to go during the layover and notified the appropriate personnel in order to open up the base gym.

"As the air terminal manager, my team has been challenged with ensuring we have the most current movement guidance and providing that information to the command and the customer; while still ensuring our team is able to meet the mission," said Speigner.

The high number of passenger movements coupled with the limited amount of lodging options available ultimately led to a change in the prior permission required (PPR) process at NAVSTA Rota for inbound aircraft. Speigner played a key role in implementing a new PPR process that required all inbound aircraft to provide proof of lodging arrangements prior to receiving approval to land at Rota. He personally reached out to coordinate with the inbound troop commanders on an almost daily basis to inform them of the new requirement and assist where needed.

"Rota Air Operations has done a great job adapting to the constantly evolving challenges brought on by the pandemic and supporting mission requirements," said Lt. Kevin Bryant, assistant air operations officer. "One of the biggest changes to the Rota airfield this year



was the arrival of HSM-79 [helicopter squadron]. We're all excited to have U.S. aircraft stationed here, and the job of Air Operations is to support them in their mission as best we can."

Another big change to Air Operations has been the added requirement of a medical screening for all passengers and aircrew. The Air Operations Department stood up a watch team to provide 24/7 air terminal medical screening coverage. After receiving training from medical personnel, the team watch standers have been screening all inbound and outbound passengers and aircrew. These screenings have allowed the missions to continue safely while helping to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the community.

Air Operations is one of the pillars of the mission aboard NAVSTA Rota – a hub of international connections sometimes referred to as the "Gateway to the Mediterranean." It's the team of hard working Sailors, Airmen, and civilians who play a critical role in accomplishing that mission.

NAVSTA Rota Port Operations

Despite the pandemic bringing the world to a virtual standstill, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota's port remained faithful to its reputation as 6th Fleet's busiest maritime hub. The rapidly spreading virus presented its sets of challenges but in no way deterred our team of professionals from providing world-class services to our homeported and transient ships. Port Operations (Port Ops) Sailors and civilian professionals executed over 190 ship movements, sacrificing weekends and holidays.

"We are an extremely busy port where work never stops, but all of us pull together to get the job done," said Engineman 1st Class Tyler Carey, leading petty officer for the maintenance division. "We work like a well-oiled machine when we combine our efforts."

Known as the "Gateway to the Mediterranean," NAVSTA Rota's harbor welcomes ships transiting in and out of the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility (AOR). Here they can refuel, resupply, make repairs, and afford their crews much needed rest & relaxation (R&R). As one of the few full-service military ports in the Navy Region Europe, Africa, Central (CNREURAFCENT), Rota supports the largest volume of maritime traffic year-round. The Port Operations Department is the pivotal point enabling four homeported guided-missile destroyers, visiting Navy surface, submarine, and Military Sealift Command (MSC) vessels to carry out their missions in defense of U.S. national interests and our allies.

In addition to routine port visits, Port Operations' services are increasingly solicited for intermodal troop and equipment transfers, using Air Mobility Command (AMC) and MSC assets. Port Ops enables the seamless and timely relief of deployed forces in CENTCOM, AFRICOM, and EUCOM theaters of operations while saving millions of dollars to the U.S. treasury.

The Port Operations Department maintains and operates 13 small crafts, dozens of pieces of harbor support, and facilities response team (FRT) equipment to fulfill its mission. In November of 2020, the FRT showcased its oil-spill response expertise by participating in a tri-annual drill with host nation counterparts. During this evolution, U.S. Navy and Spanish Armada partners simulated the swift containment and clean up of 5,000 gallons of petroleum products in the harbor.

"None of this would be possible without a fantastic group of dedicated naval professionals and Sailors who are the operation's backbone," said Cmdr. Mark Krozel, port operations officer.

The team confronted and overcame challenges brought upon by COVID-19 to continue providing world-class services that keep our forces combat-ready.

"Teamwork and comradery are 'WHAT' makes Port Ops, Port Ops," said Machinist Mate 2nd Class Benjamin Glenn, lead coxswain and small boat instructor. "It is how we work efficiently and diligently without any mishaps."

NAVSTA Rota Port Operations bids farewell to 2020, a year that allowed its Sailors and civilian teammates to prove their mettle and carry out their mission rain or shine. 2021, Port Ops is ready for you!

USS Carney (DDG 64) Bids Farewell to Rota



Naval Station Rota Security Department

While the world was turned upside down in 2020 by COVID-19 Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Security Department came together through learning and maintain new norms. Security maintained its mission every day both on base and by supporting United States Africa Command Missions through Individual Augmenteen (IA) Support.

"I could not be prouder of the Rota Security Department team," said Lt. Cmdr.Jeff King, NAVSTA Rota security officer. "Each and every one of these Sailors have overcome every challenge thrown at them this year and continue to execute the mission with unmatched pride and professionalism."

Maintaining mission readiness and training while keeping each other safe from close contact meant learning new ways to respond to emergencies without creating unnecessary close contact.

"My NSF (Naval Security Force) team members are the first to respond to any situation," said King. "Along with their normal protective gear they are outfitted to respond wearing proper COVID protective equipment to prevent the potential spreading of illnesses on base."

During 2020 Security responded to 14,000 calls of service and trained 153 Sailors and Airmen in security tactics, techniques, procedures and weapons familiarization.

Due to COVID, large events were canceled and shifts in major inspections and visits were made, but Security still remained vigilant and continued to serve the Rota community.

"While we couldn't showcase our talents at our annual National Night Out event this year, rest assured NSF was here every day protecting all of us," said King.



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ABURI

I like good sushi and while I am willing to travel to get it, I would rather have it close at hand. Finding Aburi Sushi in Rota was very convenient as their sushi is top notch. While sushi is their specialty, they also have other traditional Japanese dishes on their menu such as teriyaki chicken accompanied by rice, yakisoba with vegetables and beef, curry noodles and much more.

Aburi has great rolls, one of my favorites is the EBI TEMPURA, shrimp fried in tempura and panko covered with cheese, avocado, eel sauce and sesame, it is one of the most requested rolls of their customers.

For salmon lovers they have a roll called SKIN DRAGÓN, a grilled salmon skin covered with flambéed salmon, eel sauce and ikura salmon roe.

They have different sushi platters that are excellent and pleasing as to the combinations of flavor and type. A selection of good sakes is on offer. If you have room it is well worth trying their Japanese deserts like dorayaki, mochis and their homemade vanilla tempura ice cream dessert.

I have noticed that good Sushi restaurants have a talented and dedicated chef as the owner and David is the professional person who holds that position here. The restaurant has a comfortable atmosphere and excellent service. Currently the restaurant is open Tuesday to Sunday (18:00 to 23:00) but due to Covid-19 governmental changes it is better to be attentive to their social networks (Facebook and Instagram) for possible future schedule changes. Please see their ads in the paper for more details.

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Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Fire and Emergency Services

While most commands were going to minimal manning and telework capabilities after Spain entered its State of Alarm mid-March, Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Fire and Emergency Services (F&ES) was trying to figure out how to maintain their work schedule of 24-hour shifts – to include work duties, eating, sleeping, and leisure time all within the confines of the fire station; while applying mitigation measures to keep the crew safe.

"It was difficult to say the least," said Shane Rayfield, NAVSTA Rota fire chief. "Maintaining social distancing with three shifts and 56 firefighters was tiresome."

But similar to fighting fires, Rayfield and the team learned to adapt, overcome and continue to meet the mission. As each new issue presented itself, they worked through it and found a solution to continue providing the base with their vital service. This included creating an isolated working group on restriction of movement (ROM) at a specific firehouse when F&ES staff came in contact with a COVID-positive person.

But through the challenges, NAVSTA Rota F&ES had several highs for 2020. They were the first in the region to send local national firefighters to the rigorous DoD firefighting school, Louis F. Garland Fire Academy, in Goodfellow, Texas.

"Although Navy Region EURAFCENT [Europe, Africa, and Central] employs 112 Host National employees on three different continents, the two Spanish firefighters are the first of them to ever attend and pass the extremely challenging course," said Regional Fire Chief Joseph Orona, program director for EURAFCENT Fire and Emergency Services.

The first two firefighters to graduate were Manuel Martinez Diaz and Juan Jerez Fernandez, who were followed shortly thereafter by Eduardo Lopez Mejia. They returned to Rota F&ES ready to use the newfound skills and teach their fellow teammates additional firefighting techniques.

Rayfield described the addition of an incident command post at the pier, a first for Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), as "huge" for managing pier incidents and fires.

These two achievements will have far-reaching impact, but there were also significant strides in the quality of day-to-day F&ES operations. This year, the department also upgraded and procured new radios for the department as well as having an onsite emergency vehicle technician.

"This has enabled us to be the only installations that has 100% frontline vehicles in service," explained Rayfield.

The year has been full of ups and downs but the team at Rota F&ES continues to wake up each day and fight whatever "fires" may come their way.

"We are blessed with all the achievements we've had amidst the pandemic," said Rayfield. "I'm just glad my team is safe and I've realized that fighting a fire is a lot easier than combating a pandemic."



Shawn Herrera, Assistant Fire Chief onboard Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, briefs Vice Adm. Gene Black, commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet, on fire and emergency operations during a tour of the installation, Dec. 9, 2020.













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Naval Station Rota Religious Ministry Department

Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Religious Ministry department focuses on improving morale and building spiritual resiliency of their community. To achieve these objectives, the chaplains and Religious Programs Specialists (RP) facilitate the gathering of the different faith congregations to allow them to interact with one another, build a sense of belonging, and work to improve themselves.

But then 2020 happened. The pandemic left the team asking the question, "How can you continue to offer resources that spiritually enrich, build resiliency and morale in the midst of a global pandemic?" Answering that question compelled them to find new ways to deliver meaningful and impactful ministry.

"It was uncharted territory for the Religious Ministry team but through cooperation and coordination, the religious needs were met," said Lt. Milo Curtis, a chaplain assigned to NAVSTA Rota.

As Spain entered its State of Alarm mid-March, the country went into lockdown. All religious programs were forced to move online so the faith communities could continue to "gather" and practice their faith. These communities were particularly important during this time of uncertainty and isolation.

Amanda Gipson, lay leader for the Jewish community, switched from providing in-person Shabbat prayer services and religious education class to gathering virtually and once possible, having limited people attend in person for Holy Days.

The Roman Catholic Community, led by Lt. Tomek Maka, gathered online for live virtual Mass and religious education. The Protestant Community provided worship playlists, online teachings, and virtual Bible studies.

For the Rota community at large, the chaplains delivered daily inspirational videos, called "Thought of the Day."



Throughout the State of Alarm, the Religious Ministry department produced 65 videos that were viewed over 150,000 times – by Rota community members and abroad.

"These videos served as a way to inspire and encourage the community during the lockdown we experienced," said Curtis.

As restrictions eased, the religious communities were again able to begin meeting in-person with COVID-19 mitigations. Through a partnership with MWR, Housing, and the help of exceptional Spanish weather, the Catholic and Protestant communities resumed live gatherings by meeting at the MWR Drive-In Theater. After six weeks, the communities migrated over to the Sea View Pines Amphitheater. It was a perfect venue to provide physical distancing and a great view of the ocean while maintaining reverence and holiness for the religious services that were performed.

As the weather began to cool, the two religious communities transitioned back to the Chapel in November but increased frequency. Both Catholic Mass and Protestant worship service offer two services every Sunday to ensure physical distancing of their congregations.

The Jewish Community continues to meet virtually with limited in-person gatherings for Shabbat prayer services. In December, the community gathered outdoors for the lighting of the Chanukah candle and to celebrate the start of Chanukah.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Lay service returned to the Chapel and began meeting in person in November. The LDS community continues to meet with mitigations in place to allow people to practice their faith on the base.

While many of the obstacles have been overcome, there are some faith events that were unable to take place this year. One tradition for the holiday season is the Chapel's annual Sounds of Christmas choir concert which features music from throughout the community – both American and Spanish. This event is a favorite of Maria Ruiz-Rojas, a local national employee at the Chapel, but due to COVID mitigations the event was not able to take place this year.

Ruiz-Rojas enjoys the concert and working with families from the various communities, especially with the children.



Seeing their smiles and joy that have come from helping others has been the reason that she comes to work every day.

"I am very happy because this was the job I always wanted, being here in the chapel allowed me to help anyone I could," said Ruiz-Rojas. "It helped me be the bridge between the people and the chaplains."

Through all these changes, the constant drum beat of military life continued at the Chapel. The team bid farewell to Cmdr. Samuel Ravelo and welcomed Cmdr. Tony Moore as the command chaplain. Petty Officer Caitlin Stephens was meritoriously promoted to Religious Program Specialist 3rd Class. Maria Ruiz-Rojas celebrated 20 years at the Chapel. This is all to remind us that despite the many challenges and unique situations of living through a pandemic, there are things that remain constant – like faith – and you just have to trust.

"Team Rota, my family and I are so glad to be a part of this community and are looking forward expectantly to all that 2021 has to offer," said Moore. "I have the privilege of serving with a tremendous group of professionals here at the Chapel. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of service to you and your family."

USO Rota

USO Rota started off 2020 with their usual programs like "Soup-er" Bowl, trivia, "Treats for your Sweets" Valentine's day program, homecoming support, and more. They provided these services to the local community as taking care of transient personnel.

Similar to everyone worldwide, USO Rota was faced with the challenge of how to deliver their programs during a global pandemic and Spain's State of Alarm. USO Rota had to close their physical doors but immediately began looking for creative ways to provide service to our military community and keep them connected to family.

The USO Rota team regrouped and quickly pivoted to virtual programing to ensure that the community could stay together despite being physically apart.

"We adapted some of our traditional center programs for virtual delivery," said DeAnna Pazdyk, center manager for USO Rota. "Content that we have created and are sharing on FB are things such as: Spanish tip of the day, Recipe Round-Up with Tara, Work Out tips from Kelli, Storytime with Kayla, and tutorials like professional pointers, craft time, and science experiments designed to be done with ingredients most of us have on hand."

They also planned larger virtual engagement activities such as the base flash mob where community members submitted videos as well as footage taken by USO Rota as they rode along with first responders in base housing. The video brought the community together and got

See **USO ROTA** Page 11





USO ROTA

Continued from page 10

them dancing in their bubble!

For Memorial Day, USO Rota had to revamp their usual 24-hour walk/run keeping the flag aloft. This year, USO Rota did a virtual ceremony where people were asked to submit what they were doing to honor the fallen and USO Rota compiled a video with personal remembrances and tributes to share with the community.

The team continued to provide visiting submarines and ships with services by working with base departments. This allowed USO Rota to provide contactless BBQs and pool parties so crews could maintain their "bubble" and enjoy sunny Spain!

USO Rota found creative ways to provide a sense of community while maintaining physical distancing and host nation restrictions. They offered book clubs, social walking groups, craft and activity kits, and welcome kits to families in restriction of movement (ROM). USO Rota provided commands with support through Zoom gaming and hygiene packs for Rota's expeditionary forces.

Despite the lockdown and COVID restrictions, USO Rota did not slow down even though their doors were closed. Instead, they focused on acts of kindness to provide bright spots and help where needs were identified. Ultimately, USO Rota and their volunteers were able to successfully provide over 34,860 service instances….and they have no intention of slowing down as the year comes to an end! USO Rota is still working to ensure expeditionary forces at Rota and Moron Air Base are taken care of with holiday packs and parties. They are also continuing their annual Operation Cookie Drop, with over 2,000 cookies delivered to watchstanders across the base on Christmas Eve and Christmas day, but with all safety precautions in place.



"Happy Holidays to everyone near and far," said Pazdyk. "We look forward to serving you in the New Year!"

NAVSTA Rota Human Resources Office

The Human Resources Office (HRO) provides staffing, recruitment, employee entitlements and allowances, employee and labor relations, training, and classification for local national (LN) and U.S. civilian employees, to over 25 base departments and commands.

This year, COVID-19 brought significant hiring challenges to Rota. Office closures forced HRO to review and revamp our LN application procedures. In order to facilitate the need to continue the hiring process for LN employment, we converted to a fully electronic application process. Through close coordination with outside parties and staffing section, HRO was able to implement the electronic application process and get it fully operational in just a few short months.

The office received 927 internal applications for 89 internal announcements and 1,254 external applications for 29 external announcements. The staff processed 2,530 labor status documents (personnel actions for LNs), classified over 70 position descriptions, and processed 1,660 U.S. and LN awards.

HRO has worked on a telework policy for LNs to be implemented for current and future needs, in case of emergencies, and when continuation of operations are required. HRO staff are currently compiling data from departments/activities in order to provide required training previous to the signature of telework agreements.

During the first State of Alarm in March, HRO coordinated a total of 640 certificates of movement to authorize LNs employees come to work. So far, during the second State of Alarm, a total of 493 requests have been processed. Additionally, HRO has coordinated with the Prevention Service and U.S. Naval Hospital Rota regarding situations where LNs are put on sick leave status due to COVID-19 related matters.



NAVSTA Rota HRO has a total of 19 personnel comprised of 15 LNs and 4 U.S. personnel.

2020 HIRING

U.S. Hires: 75

Temporary Local Nationals: 38

Permanent Local Nationals: 127

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COMSIXTHFLT Mine Countermeasures Detachment Rota

Historically, the U.S. Navy has relied on sonar platforms employed by mine-hunting ships, aircraft, or divers to perform search operations for underwater sea mines that pose significant threats to maritime traffic. In recent years, the Navy mine countermeasures (MCM) force has become increasingly reliant on unmanned systems to perform this task in a safer and more efficient manner. This year, Commander, Sixth Fleet (COMSIXTHFLT) MCM Detachment Rota participated in a joint experiment that resulted in Underwater Unmanned Vehicles (UUVs) achieving collaborative autonomy.

"The success of this collaborative autonomy event demonstrates a technological breakthrough leading to more efficient mine clearance with unmanned systems," said Lt. Cmdr. Rick Haley, executive officer for COMSIXTHFLT MCM Det Rota. "This is a significant step to further automate the U.S. Navy's ability to find, fix, and finish underwater mines to ensure freedom of movement in the maritime domain."

For the first time in this theater, U.S. Navy Mk 18 Mod 2 UUV systems successfully demonstrated the ability to autonomously identify underwater mine contacts using side scan sonar and acoustically pass real-time data from one UUV to another, allowing further inspection and identification of underwater contacts.

The experiment was joint effort, with equipment and personnel from COMSIXTHFLT MCM Detachment Rota and civilians from Navy Information Warfare Center Pacific (NIWC PAC) and SeeByte, Inc., completed onboard NATO research vessel Alliance as a part of the French Maritime Forces exercise Dynamic Mariner 2020. With over 20 personnel traveling from four different countries, rigorous planning and flexibility were required given the current pandemic and the ever-changing safety protocols. MCM Det. Rota demonstrated their expertise by transporting heavy and expensive equipment within theater – which is tedious in normal times – but during a pandemic, compounded the logistical challenges.

The first hurdle was to get all team members and equipment to Italy. After meeting all host nation and navies' entry requirements as well as the mandatory restriction of movement (ROM), the team established a COVID-free "bubble" aboard Alliance for the duration of the experiment.

Alliance experienced several days of high winds and heavy seas – and was even forced to seek refuge in port Toulon – that prevented the team from launching and recovering UUVs. Once the weather subsided, the U.S. team stepped into overdrive by working around-the-clock, performing multiple UUV missions by day, and analyzing data by night to finish surveying the entire exercise area of approximately 19 nautical miles.

With intelligence preparation of the operating environment (IPOE) complete, the team then focused their attention on conducting collaborative autonomy trials. UUVs have begun to implement automated target recognition (ATR) allowing the underwater vehicles to autonomously identify mine shapes – a task normally required to be completed by human operators analyzing post-mission sonar data. This application allows mine detection and identification to be performed quicker and more safely than relying solely on humans. In addition, the demonstrated ability of UUVs to "talk" to one another using acoustic communications while completing search operations is a significant breakthrough leading to more efficient minefield clearance.

In their first attempt, MCM Det Rota was successful in demonstrating collaborative



autonomy between two MK18 Mod 2 UUVs. This meant the two UUVs worked in tandem with a lead MK18 surveying the bottom while a second MK18 conducted detailed searches with side-scan sonar on contacts called by the lead UUV.

The ability to search, locate, and reacquire targets in-stride is an operational first for the U.S. Navy and a breakthrough in UUV experimentation. This simple application has the potential to reduce mine hunting timelines from days to just hours, in addition to the accuracy and quality of the sonar imagery captured.

The success of this event is a testament to the ingenuity, innovation, dedication, and adaptability of U.S. Navy Sailors and civilians. Overcoming technological hurdles and weather, they were able to achieve their objectives while ensuring all personnel and equipment deployed, accomplished the mission, and returned home safely — COVID free.

"Our next major experimentation event focused on developing this technology in theater will happen in conjunction with exercise BALTOPS 50," said Lt. Evan Day, operations officer for COMSIXTHFLT MCM Det Rota. "After overcoming numerous safety and logistical hurdles for Dynamic Mariner, we look forward to more successful experimentation events next year to improve the Navy's MCM capability."

COMSIXTHFLT MCM Det Rota is a relatively new command on Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota. Established in 2019, the detachment was developed to address Sixth Fleet's need for MCM planning and command and control within the fleet. The detachment utilizes Mk 18 UUV systems in order to perform experimentation and intelligence preparation of the operating environment (IPOE) missions. Despite a small team, the group's responsibility spectrum ranges from operational level MCM planning and NATO MCM integration to tactical level employment of UUV systems in support of fleet objectives.





By the Numbers:

+ 8 UUV missions completed
+ 19 square nautical miles of bottom surveyed
+ 100 hours of UUV in-water operations;
+ 100 hours of post-mission sonar data analysis completed
+ 5 Intelligence Preparation of the Operating Environment (IPOE) missions completed
+ 3 Successful UUV collaborative autonomy missions completed
+ 31 days of ROM/quarantine completed by each participant to enable the experimentation event
+ 5 days lost to adverse weather

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Commander, Destroyer Squadron 60 (DESRON 60)
Staying Safe While Coordinating Multi-National Exercises

COVID-19 brought unprecedented challenges to Commander, Destroyer Squadron 60's (DESRON 60) mission of ensuring our ships remain optimally manned, trained and equipped. Growth through challenge has been DESRON 60's motto this year and her achievements reflect that.

"A 120-day stop movement order and the introduction of mandatory restrictions of movement on any round trip for the U.S. to Rota forces us to coordinate more closely than ever before with our partner organizations," said Chief Staff Readiness Officer Cmdr. Matthew Powel. "We were able to accomplish more with less while still meeting the mission."

DESRON 60's success would not have happened without the dedication of her staff. A team of three Navy Yeoman processed over 600 individual travel waivers in support of Forward Deployed Sailors ensuring the Navy kept moving forward.

"Our admin department has dedicated hundreds of hours of their time outside of normal working hours to support the needs of over 1,000 Sailors on the waterfront," said Assistant Training and Readiness Officer Lt. Tereza Skruzna. "Every PCS, TDY, or leave request has passed through their hands."

In addition to taking care of her people, DESRON 60 maintained readiness through inspections and training.

"Despite the COVID restrictions in place, we were able to work directly with the Afloat Training Group (ATG) and all other training groups to ensure that force generation was maintained throughout the pandemic," said Training and Readiness Officer Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Zeller.

In addition to ATG supporting every required certification event, Surface Warfare School Command went above the call and sent 30 instructors to Naval Station Rota to conduct critical damage control training for 300 shipboard Sailors reducing downtime due to mandatory 14-day restriction of movement (ROM) for all personal traveling and the potential for spreading the virus.

The introduction of terms like "COVID Bubble" quickly forced our fleet training and readiness departments to become experts in the methodology of "bubble-to-bubble" transfers and to work through the extensive logistical challenges presented.

"Our logistic specialists have worked tirelessly to ensure that the limitations and logistics of travel have never prevented a ship from receiving critical parts no matter where in the theater they were needed," said Powel.

Naval Munitions Command has successfully executed 13 ammunition movements while maintaining the integrity of "COVID Bubbles" and preventing the spread of illness.

"Chief Aviation Ordnanceman Terry Ramos and his team have done a wonderful job ensuring the 'tip of the spear' remains sharp," said Ordnance Manager Chief Fire Controlman Virginia Hansen.

Internationally, CDS 60's greatest success was the full execution of exercise Joint Warrior in conjunction with multiple NATO nations and ensuring theater certification for Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) and USS Ross (DDG 71).

"2020 has presented unique challenges in every aspect of our lives. DESRON 60, her staff, and our ships have met each of these challenges in innovative ways, allowing the ships of our DESRON to meet and exceed all operational requirements," said Deputy Commodore Capt. Kyle Gantt.

Commander, Task Force (CTF) 65
Staying Operational during COVID-19

COVID-19 did not slow down operations at Commander Task Force 65 (CTF 65) as, the command had a successful year of supporting operations, exercises, and training evolutions throughout Europe, Africa and the 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

CTF 65 oversaw the homeport shifts of ArleighBurke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Carney (DDG 64) and USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) all while completing their final move to the new permanent headquarters with their homeport shift from Naples to Rota in 2019.

"Homeport shifts are hard enough already," said CTF 65 Commodore Capt. Joe Gagliano. "But to complete it flawlessly in the middle of a pandemic shows what true professionals are onboard USS Roosevelt."

COVID brought with it new restrictions, but Sailors stationed aboard Carney and Roosevelt stayed steadfast and were able to complete three multi-ship Barents Sea Operations for the first time in 30 years.

"Though COVID provided unique challenges, the Sailors of CTF 65 demonstrated their resiliency throughout the year," said CTF 65 Deputy Commodore Capt. Kyle Gantt. "Our Sailors came together as a team and never lost sight of the mission. "

Due to travel restrictions, CTF 65 was able to improvise and create virtual planning procedures resulting in the successful execution of Exercise Sea Breeze, a multi-national NATO exercise with Ukraine that took place in the Black Sea.

In addition to completing first time multi-national exercises, Carney circumnavigated Africa, Ross operated with the French carrier Charles De Gaulle and Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe ships made seven trips to the Black Sea, three trips to the Baltic and maintained tactical control of six other ships throughout the year.

"I am amazed at how mature our Sailors have been this year when it comes to the restrictions and requirements that COVID-19 has brought to the way we conduct our business," said CTF 65 Command Master Chief Gary Rosenbaum. "From the long underway time to very limited liberty to the need to support shipmates, family and friends during ROM (restriction of movement), the Sailors in our fleet have executed the mission remarkably. They have shown everyone that they do have the right stuff and they are a generation that can lead us in the future. We are proud of you, Shipmates!"







NAVSTA Rota Emergency Management Department

This has been a difficult and challenging year to say the least! But it was met with opportunities and change to ensure the emergency management (EM) program continued to provide a service to the community, even during the most difficult times.

It was made possible because of the selfless dedication and flexibility of the personnel in Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota's Emergency Management Department, especially the local dispatch center (LDC) civilian and military dispatchers.

EM implemented mitigation factors like limited presence in the LDC, use of hand sanitizer, and frequent disinfecting of shared equipment such as desks, phones, chairs, and computers but they overcame the obstacles. They even implemented some physical safeguards like Plexiglas barriers in the LDC and strict adherence to mask use allowing dispatchers to remain operationally ready.

Some of the implemented restrictions, such as strict adherence to minimum manning actually resulted in an increased workload for those on duty but it was embraced because it was for safety of not only themselves, but their families too.

Changes to the posture and processes in the Emergency Operation Center (EOC) were also made by performing monthly EOC training virtually, restricting participation to an as-needed vice fully-manned EOC, and implemented the same hand sanitizer and frequent equipment disinfecting practices that were being performed in dispatch.

Even with the challenges, EM was able to complete the required quarterly emergency management working groups, monthly EOC training, EM annual inspections, and maintain a posture of mission-ready to provide response-support.



Many of the adopted practices such as physical distancing, teleworking when able, mask wearing in all shared spaces, and staying home when sick will continue.

"Each practice affected our abilities and capabilities in some measurable manner," said Emergency Management Officer, Rick Peterson, "but it's a pleasure to capture the sacrifice-for-success efforts of everyone involved.



The department's public awareness events continued in 2020 but were less intrusive as years past. They reminded the community of the exceptional sacrifice of our LDC dispatchers during the National Public Safety Telecommunicator Week in April and the inclusive community of preparedness and awareness during National Preparedness Month in September. The support from Fleet and Family Service Center, American Forces Network, Public Affairs, Defense Commissary Agency, American Red Cross and many others helped EM continue to be successful and effective throughout 2020.

"For that, we thank you the community, and the many other departments and associations not already mentioned," said Peterson. "We welcome our newly arriving EM personnel (Ms. Duck, Mr. Gormley, AO1 Pfeilsticker) and wish Fair Winds and Following Seas to those that have moved on (Mr. Couto, Mr. Harris, Mr. Kwak, ABH2 Creagh, FC1 Green, DC1 Hunter) during this period. Remember; Disasters don't wait. Make your plan today."







USS Roosevelt (DDG 80)

Carrying a camera bag and orders to his first afloat command, Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Austin Collins stepped aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) to begin his assignment as the embarked mass communications specialist (MC) for the upcoming homeport shift. Though the most junior MC at Navy Public Affairs Support Element-Southeast, Roosevelt's transition from Mayport, Florida to Rota, Spain necessitated his presence and talents for the 10-day transit.

This was not just another homeport shift after all: Roosevelt's new membership in Commander Task Force (CTF) 65 and Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) was historic. Her presence in 6th Fleet served as the culminating stage of the 2009 European Phased Adaptive Approach which supplemented NATO's ballistic missile defense system with U.S. technologies and support. Collins was expected to document the ship's exercises underway and her arrival in-port. After a busy transatlantic voyage and change of command ceremony, he would return stateside to his new bride. At least, that was the plan.

COVID-19 emerged just as Roosevelt began her voyage and the schedule grew from 10 to 22 days. The ship arrived in Rota with little fanfare, refueled quickly, then returned to sea as one of the few healthy bubbles in the operating area. Though Collins wasn't expecting to join the crew on what became known as "mini-patrol," he took advantage of the experience to earn his sea legs and hone his skills as an MC. He was pleasantly surprised to find himself inducted into the "Order of the Blue Nose" too. When the ship returned to Spain a month later, he said he was grateful for the adventure. His only regret was that he didn't have enough time to earn his Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) pin. Collins detached from Roosevelt and spent a few weeks at Armed Forces Network (AFN) Rota before a flight home.

Meanwhile, the number of COVID cases were growing and Roosevelt's request for a MC for the duration of the patrol was met with the recognition that Collins was still in Spain and well-prepared to reintegrate with the crew. He was not thrilled at the prospect of four months away from his parent command and his loved ones, but he drew strength from their support and reveled in the opportunities Roosevelt offered.

Roosevelt continued making history over the course of her inaugural patrol. She participated in Exercise Dynamic Mongoose, travelled to the 76th Parallel in the Arctic Circle, and sailed through the storied waters of the Mediterranean and Black seas. She conducted joint interoperability operations with U.S. Air Force Europe and a host of passing and tracking exercises with NATO nations and partners to include a meaningful event with 25 military officers and dignitaries in Algiers, Algeria. Roosevelt proved her mettle as a warfighter and virtue as a member of the powerful NATO Alliance.


MC3 Austin Collins

Collins was there to capture each poignant moment. Though Roosevelt's accomplishments demanded much of his time, he made good on his goal to earn his ESWS pin. He found himself pleasantly surprised once more to have also earned a Navy Achievement Medal and win the $5,000 grand prize in the final bingo tournament! When Roosevelt finally returned to Rota after a grueling homeport shift, an unplanned underway, and successful first patrol during a global pandemic, Collins' 10 days at sea had turned into 207 days.

Collins' story is one of many among Roosevelt's crew that demonstrates resiliency, grit, and perseverance in uncertain and evolving times. Plans and tasking changed again and again to meet operational needs over the course of the year. With these changes, Roosevelt's leadership, crew, and families endured with the patient understanding of sacrifice and service. As 2020 comes to a close, the crew looks to the year ahead with hope for the future and pride in their past: USS Roosevelt and her crew are capable, strong, and prepared for any challenge.

By The Numbers
Homeport Shift / Mini Patrol

MH-60R hours flown: 217.7 hours
MH-60R Landings: 346
Water produced: 600,000 gallons
Fuel burned: 404,240 gallons
Nautical Miles Traveled: 16,202

By the Numbers
Patrol 1

6 countries, 2 continents
36 days above the Arctic Circle
Nautical Miles: 26,446
F-76 fuel consumed: 4,163,585 gallons
JP-5 supplied: 66,091 gallons
Water produced: 2,800,000 gallons

Crab legs: 940 lbs
Eggs: 6,270 dozen
Ribeye Steak: 2,590 lbs
Milk: 1,375 gallons
Energy drinks sold: 14,200

USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) Sailor Keeps Shipmates Safe during COVID-19

COVID-19 has added many challenges to the U.S. Navy's mission, including maintaining a safe work environment for Sailors. The crew of Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Donald Cook (DDG 75) has remained COVID-19 free this year, due to the diligence and sharp watch-standing of her crew. Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Josebagino Escamilla, assigned to Donald Cook, received a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (NAM), Oct. 21, after stopping a visitor from boarding the ship with COVID-19 symptoms.

"As the Sailor approached the ship, I could hear him coughing pretty loudly from a distance, so I knew something wasn't right," said Escamilla. "I continued with the screening process, and when I asked him if he had any of the following symptoms, he answered that he had been feeling a couple of them. I made sure medical was informed of the situation so they could examine him."

Knowing the contagiousness and seriousness of the virus, Escamilla was not willing to take any chances. His actions may have prevented an outbreak onboard Donald Cook and Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain.

"Our junior Sailors are our first line of defense against the virus," said Cmdr. Kelley Jones, commanding officer of Donald Cook. "Their roles as watchstanders are even more important than usual. They protect us against both visible threats and now invisible ones too. Petty Officer Escamilla did what I hope every junior Sailor would have the courage to do – look for the signs of COVID and keep the ship safe."

Escamilla is a native of Biscoe, North Carolina and has been in the Navy for a little over a year.

"I was surprised to hear I was being awarded a NAM," he said. "I was just doing my job as a watchstander."

Donald Cook completed her 10th FDNF-E Patrol of the 6th Fleet AOR in June 2020, and was the first Rota destroyer to execute brief stops for fuel and stores in foreign ports with minimal-contact COVID measures. The ship is currently on her 11th FDNF-E Patrol, for which the crew established a quarantined COVID "bubble" since September. The crew continues to refuel and replenish without outside contact as well as continuing routine operations without exposing the crew to the virus.


GM3 Josebagino Escamilla

"We have adjusted our patrols to fit a new normal," said Jones. "COVID has certainly changed certain aspects, but we've managed to continue the 6th Fleet mission while protecting the crew. During this unprecedented time, I couldn't be more proud of these Sailors and their families."

Donald Cook is one of four U.S. Navy destroyers based in Rota, Spain, and assigned to Commander, Task Force 65 in support of NATO's Integrated Air Missile Defense architecture. In support of 6th Fleet, these Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe ships have the flexibility to operate throughout the waters of Europe and Africa, from the Cape of Good Hope to the Arctic Circle, demonstrating their mastery of the maritime domain.

USS Porter (DDG 78)



As the year comes to a close, the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78) and her crew look back on a successful eighth patrol and an in-port period – especially considering the extenuating circumstances of maintaining mission readiness during a global pandemic.

Porter traveled 34,150 nautical miles over her 155-day patrol, transiting the Atlantic Ocean, North Sea, Norwegian Sea, Barents Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, English Channel, Strait of Gibraltar, Strait of Sicily, and the Turkish Straits.

"I'm incredibly proud of the hard work and dedication this crew has shown over the past 12 months," said Cmdr. Thomas Ralston, commanding officer of USS Porter. "Whether it was operating in the High North, in the Black Sea, executing a minimal notice INSURV, or succeeding in a challenging COVID-19 environment, Porter and her crew have excelled through determination and a shared sense of purpose and ownership."

The crew participated in operations with allied and partner nations including at-sea training with the Romanian navy in the Black Sea; joint interoperability exercises with the Italian and French navies in the Mediterranean Sea; operations within a Surface Action Group with the Royal navy in the High North and Barents Sea; passing exercises (PASSEX) with the Tunisian navy; exercise Sea Breeze 2020 with Ukrainian, Romanian, Turkish, Georgian, Bulgarian, and Spanish navies; and a Black Sea protection operation with NATO and other U.S. European Command components that focused on both joint and NATO interoperability.



"It's always exciting being a part of such large scale operations," said Quarter Master 3rd Class Hunter Hazlett. "It makes you feel as if you're involved in something bigger than yourself."

Porter also established the first Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations (EMSO) cell on the waterfront and was nominated by Destroyer Squadron 60 for the Association of Old Crows Award.

In August, Porter held a change of command ceremony where Cmdr. Thomas G. Ralston relieved Cmdr. Craig Trent as commanding officer. Ralston immediately began preparing Porter for an extensive pier-side maintenance period to prepare to return to sea for her ninth patrol beginning December 2020.

"We are ready to start our ninth patrol and look forward to seeing what the next year brings, and stand ready to answer the nation's call," said Ralston.





USS Ross (DDG 71)

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) finished 2020 with two forward-deployed naval forces (FDNF) patrols in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests in Europe and Africa during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the year, Ross conducted various multinational exercises to improve interoperability between allies and partner countries, as well as training in all warfare areas for Ross Sailors, while successfully maintaining mission readiness in a COVID-free bubble.

During her 9th patrol, Ross participated in two multi-national exercises, PEAN 19 and FOCH 20, with French navy Charles de Gaulle Carrier Strike Group Task Force (CTF 473) working with naval and air assets from France, Italy, Spain, Greece, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands.

"The countless multinational exercises in which Ross was able to participate allowed us to make the most of our training by operating with international partners and allies," said Combat Information Center Officer Lt. j.g. Joseph Carroll. "I never stop being impressed by the adaptability of our Sailors when called upon to team up with regional partners in defense of maritime security."

When not completing multi-national exercise, Ross could be counted on to escort Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group 8 east across the Mediterranean and as well as conducting maritime security operations in the Black Sea in support of regional security and stability while participating in dynamic at-sea training with regional allies.

While transiting south through the Turkish Straits in the Sea of Marmara, Ross's look-outs spotted smoke and flames coming from a small vessel. Ross Sailors were the first on scene to render lifesaving assistance to men in the water before handing the situation over to the Turkish Coast Guard.

"Our Sailors' quick and effective response in challenging times proved to us what we already know, that we engage in diverse and focused training to react quickly and safely when every second counts," said Lt. j.g. Jacqueline Benedict, rescue and assistance team member.

Ross concluded her 9th FDNF patrol on March 14, 2020, only to be faced with a new challenge that the crew took on head first: the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, Ross adapted to the challenges at hand by continuing to accomplish necessary in-port maintenance while respecting local protocol and entering a period of sequester to establish a COVID-free bubble, allowing for total mission readiness.

"The biggest challenge with sequester was maintaining a safe bubble," said Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, native, Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Marissa Jenkins. "We administered approximately 588 COVID tests, ensuring everyone was double tested."

In early September as part of a Surface Action Group, Ross, along with a P-8A Poseidon from Patrol Squadron (VP) 47, began its 10th Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Europe patrol. Ross partnered with the Royal British and Norwegian navy to conduct maritime security operations in the Barents Sea before joining NATO and allied forces in Exercise Joint Warrior 20-2, in the Northeast Atlantic.

After completing Exercise Joint Warrior 20-2, Ross joined Henry J. Kaiser-class Replenishment Oiler USNS Laramie (T-AO-203) to conduct multiple replenishment-at-sea evolutions within the harsh arctic climate, allowing uninterrupted supply lines for sustained operations in the Barents.

"This past year has been filled with notable challenges that have forced us to think differently about how we solve problems," said Commanding Officer Cmdr. John D. John. "Onboard Ross, we value the health of our crew and the importance of accomplishing the mission, both of which are mutually dependent on each other. Thanks to the dedication of every member of Team Ross, we were able to achieve both of our goals by staying COVID-free and supporting maritime stability with our allies in the Barents, Baltic, and North Atlantic seas."

After a busy year in 6th Fleet, through exercises in the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean, Baltic, Barents, and Black seas, Ross is thrilled to return home in time for the holidays.



NAVAL STATION ROTA QUALITY OF LIFE PROGRAMS

Fleet & Family Support Center (FFSC) Rota

2020 brought unexpected challenges and struggles. No one anticipated a virus that would require us to remain at home, limit our social activities, telework, and wear a mask. Doomscrolling through social media feeds became the new pastime. We turned to technology to meet social needs, to complete our professional responsibilities, and to simply distract us from the stress of the day.

And yet, throughout the challenge, we persevered. We found ways to maintain meaningful connections with those we loved. We reached out to our families, our friends, our colleagues, our fellow service members, our community, and our retirees to make sure they were safe and well cared for. We all took a deep breath, strengthened our resolve, and collectively stepped up to the meet the new demands.

The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) Rota team was up for the challenge and quickly began to adjust their programs and services.

"FFSC staff know how to mobilize during a crisis," said Kim Semancik, director of FFSC Rota. "When the shutdown was announced in Spain, FFSC staff got busy. They grabbed their cell phones, opened their laptops and began working from home to develop new programs."

Semancik said she was in awe of their energy, flexibility, and compassion to initiate and execute an immediate and long-lasting pandemic response. One example included transitioning from in-person, drop-in counseling to telephonic counseling where community members could receive clinical counseling from the comfort and safety of their own homes.

The staff began carrying duty phones to meet the need for increased information and referral services where they responded quickly and effectively. FFSC coordinated the filming and distribution of a video recording of the installation's Intercultural Relations program so new personnel could view and attend the virtual version of ICR during their ROM.

FFSC collaborated with Rota MWR to provide weekly support and connection activities to unaccompanied service members. Titled Beat the Barracks Blues, this virtual program utilized social media to share coping tips. FFSC topics including relaxation techniques and managing feelings of loneliness; the six videos received nearly 3,000 views.

"FFSC increased our digital content to meet customer needs during the pandemic," said Semancik. "We found ways to connect with the community virtually on social media. We filmed inspiring educational videos on topics of self-care, relaxation techniques, military family and spouse appreciation, gratitude for first responders, and managing feelings of loneliness. We even offered a Spanish cooking show!"

The Clinical team wrote social media posts, including three virtual newsletters, on how to cope during the State of Alarm restrictions, including a focus on parenting, staying safe emotionally and in relationships, anxiety in adults and youth, and relationship communication skills. We offered additional resiliency education during our weekly AFN radio show.

FFSC supported suicide prevention awareness by working with command leadership to film a suicide prevention video. The video asks personnel to





reach out and reach in, while encouraging frank, open discussions to address this silent crisis. The video received over 1,100 views in the first two weeks of posting. Additionally, FFSC promoted the Defense Suicide Prevention Office #bethere campaign by participating in the Virtual Run/Walk for Life, contributing an article to the Coastline newspaper and developing a support (SOS) response program to provide easy access and contact information for suicide prevention, family advocacy and sexual assault.

FFSC's 2020 Rota Ignites Spouse Enrichment Expo was executed virtually to provide enrichment experiences for the Rota spouse community. Usually a one-day, in-person expo, it was expanded into a month-long virtual celebration that included weekly themes of education, employment, and empowerment. FFSC offered training opportunities through webinars, AFN live broadcasts, and interactive Facebook posts. Community organizations such as USO, RAWL, Navy College, and DECA collaborated in this virtual event. This event exceeded all expectations and allowed for personalized training experiences and greater participation reaching over 1,000 community spouses. As a result, there was a heightened interest in home-based businesses as well as a significant increase in resume and employment counseling sessions.

To recognize the heroic actions of our community during the pandemic, FFSC created Champions of Rota, a video recognizing the dedication of first responders, healthcare workers, teachers, mental health providers, and Ombudsmen. FFSC Rota solicited pictures and drawings from children to use in the video to thank the community for their strength and dedication.

SAPR maintained a full response capacity throughout every stage of COVID and collaborated with stakeholders, including the hospital, to ensure seamless victim response that included necessary safety protocols for the wellbeing of victims and advocates. Thanks to the extraordinary commitment and consistent communication of SAPR and its stakeholders, all aspects of SAPR services remained available to victims of sexual assault. The SAPR team adapted trainings to a virtual platform to ensure current Victim Advocates and points of contact (POCs) received the required initial and continuing education necessary to fulfil their roles. This included adapting a 40-hour, week-long training to an approved virtual platform. The virtual trainings provided were dynamic and engaging and included activities and personalized conversations.

"This past year has been like no other," said Semancik. "We have suffered, we have struggled, and yet, we have grown. We have a deeper understanding of our need for community and personal interactions. We have a newfound appreciation for teachers, for first responders, for caretakers, for nature, for science. And as we look forward to 2021, we can rest in the knowledge that collectively, we came together to face a common challenge - and we did it with grace."





By the Numbers

Telephonic Counseling (April-Aug): >190 sessions

Inquiries by telephone/email (March-Oct): > 7,000

Virtual ICR (March-Oct): 1,542 participants

Virtual RISE event: > 1,000 Rota spouses participated

Fleet & Family Support Center (FFSC) Rota

Community Support Building (CSB): Bldg. 3293, 1st Floor

Phone: 727-3232 / +34 956-82-3232

Email: ffsc.rota@eu.navy.mil

Facebook: www.facebook.com/ffsc.rota

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Rota

Living overseas provides base personnel with numerous opportunities to experience different cultures and countries, but what about those things you miss from home? For many, the annual progression of holidays serve as fixed points throughout the year marking the path forward. Overseas, several traditional American holiday events can be hard to come by and this is where Morale,v Welfare and Recreation (MWR) steps in to fill that gap – and give you a taste of home.

This past year has been hard worldwide due to the COVID-19 pandemic and many traditional holiday events being cancelled. For personnel at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Rota MWR worked to find solutions for annual American holiday events that fit within the host nation restrictions.

It started early in the year, with Spain entering its State of Alarm mid-March, only a few weeks before the annual Easter egg hunt.

“The Eggsplosion was our first big test,” said Doug Hasselbring, Rota MWR Community Recreation director. “I don’t remember how many times we went back to the drawing board before finally deciding on the final plan.”

Ultimately, the Rota MWR team prepped 900+ bags of candy-filled eggs, craft kits, spring-themed activities, jokes and recipe ideas. The bags were distributed in front of the Commissary during the week leading up to the holiday. Participants were encouraged to take photos of their at-home egg hunts and send pictures to Rota MWR to share.

While this wasn’t the ideal format for recreation professionals and the community, it was well received by the Rota community and motivated the staff to continue to be innovative in how they deliver programming. The next big holiday would be the Fourth of July.

Spain was just beginning to enter its de-escalation plan so it was hard to judge what the local conditions and restrictions would be like in early July. Rota MWR had to prep and plan for several different scenarios.

“During the pandemic, we have been forced to create three or four feasible contingency plans for each community event,” said Hasselbring. "Each plan would then be reviewed by the several different key players on the installation – both American and Spanish – and at a regional level."

Rota MWR thought outside the box for the Independence Fest and decided that tailgating was the perfect compromise between hosting a community event, supporting physical distancing, and feeling like a bit of home.

“The Dinosaur parade was just the ridiculous element required to put a positive spin on 2020,” laughed Hasselbring.

Large community events were not the only programs that required MWR staff to look at with fresh eyes.

“This past year has forced us to get creative with MWR programming by thinking 'outside the box' with new ideas and not traditional brick and mortar programming,” said Amy Hutyra, Rota MWR marketing director. This included ideas such a Plan of the Day, various workout videos, Beat the Barracks collaboration project for Liberty patrons, and more.

Throughout the de-escalation, Rota MWR reopened many of their facilities and adjusted their programs to fit mandatory physical distancing and host nation restrictions.

Which brings us back to the holidays,



Halloween was quickly approaching as Spain’s numbers were increasing. Rota MWR needed to find a solution to the usual Trunk or Treat event at the drive-in.

“We had to figure out a way to provide the essential elements of Halloween to people in a way that was impactful but also kept everyone safe,” explained Hasselbring when describing how they developed MWR’s Reverse Trick-or-Treat. “We brought Halloween to the people!”

Candy convoy teams traveled through base housing tossing candy to costumed children. That evening, Rota MWR delivered over 1,500 bags of candy to the NAVSTA Rota community with the help of base leadership, USO Rota and volunteers.

“I had the pleasure to go with one of the three candy convoy delivery teams,” said Hutyra. “It was so fun and fulfilling to know that we were able to provide something for our community during this time. I enjoyed seeing everyone’s costumes and excitement as the vehicles went by.”

Hasselbring said that despite the short notice, the community turned out to support. He also said it has been his favorite event thus far this year.

“The entire team had a blast at the Reverse Trick-or-Treat Halloween event,” said Hasselbring. “We could literally feel the positive energy emanating from the families that took part. It was bananas!”

As the year comes to an end, Rota MWR’s year of “outside the box” holiday events came to a close with the annual tree lighting event. This year the event was held at the base drive-in instead of the usual location of the Navy Exchange complex and included live music, a Santa sighting, the lighting of the trees, and finished with a holiday movie.

While not the normal Rota tree lighting event, the event certainly brought a taste of home to everyone stationed here in Spain.

“I hope that we have been able to provide our local NAVSTA Rota community with an overall sense of well-being, community and a semblance of normalcy during this time of constant change and uncertainty,” said Hutyra.



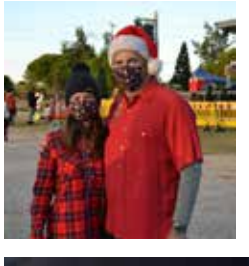














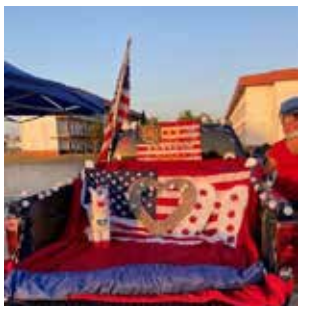












Rota David Glasgow Farragut (DGF) Schools

The New Normal … for Now: A Teacher's Perspective

Teaching and learning during a pandemic are daunting. After so many months away, teachers utilize laser-focused instruction to course-correct. There are also many new challenges, such as keeping out-of-practice learners motivated and balancing best teaching practices and safety protocols. Staff actively monitors the children's social, emotional, and academic needs – all while a virus simmers in the background.

But Rota DGF Elementary School has embraced our new normal. Face covering are worn every day. Desks are far apart and facing in one direction. Students are lined-up in socially-distanced lines stretching down the halls. There is no sharing of supplies or snacks. And everything is assigned and scheduled – arrivals and dismissals, classroom seating, lunch periods and cafeteria seating, recess, locker times, bathroom breaks, and handwashing and sanitizing. Despite all of this, there is joy. So much joy. It has filled DGF campus, thanks to the little people we serve.

Students arrive each day excited to be here, eager to see friends, and restless to spend time in their classroom. Their enthusiasm is contagious and reflected in our teachers' conversations, who are pleased to get to teach in-person again. And, even though we have had to rethink every aspect of our day, we have persevered. We have reimagined our practice.

Students and teachers are accustomed to their austere classrooms or the absence of collaborative learning spaces, with classrooms being emptied at the beginning of the year to comply with safety measures. Students have politely adapted to staying in their assigned spots and understand the need for a different learning approach. Academic tasks are completed independently, instead of with a partner, or guided in small groups. The children seem to notice only the beauty of our airy classrooms. They are buoyed by a bit of normalcy in this extraordinary time and appreciate being together. We are energized by teaching and learning at school – regardless of the circumstance – and are grateful for the possibility.

Do the teachers think about COVID-19? Of course. Does it change whether being back at school and teaching the children face-to-face is preferable and even restorative? No. We hone our teaching tools for our students and, with expertise and resilience, we carry out our mission. We are DoDEA teachers. It's what we do – even during a pandemic.

Rota DGF Elementary School and Rota DGF Middle/High School went remote beginning mid-March due to Spain's State of Alarm decree till the end of the 19-20 school year. For school year 20-21, the schools began remotely, Aug. 24, 2020, until it was deemed safe to return to in-person instruction. Rota DGF schools reopened Oct. 5, 2020 to in-person instruction.

School Liaison Officer (SLO)

For Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota School Liaison Officer (SLO) Randy Lambert, 2020 brought the usual flurry of emails, homeschool meet & greets, Spanish school informational sessions, and more. However, the year quickly shifted directions as the COVID-19 pandemic began to spread worldwide.

Prior to the pandemic arriving in Spain, Lambert was in the midst of assisting families from the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Carney (DDG 64) with their homeport shift to Naval Station Mayport, Florida as well as preparing families attached to USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) for their move to Rota, Spain. Lambert's SLO segment for the virtual ICR that would be recorded for USS Roosevelt personnel would suddenly be used for all incoming personnel to take their local ICR virtually due to the pandemic.

When Spain entered its state of alarm mid-March, Lambert began publishing daily updates with information about Rota DGF schools and resources for families to keep children engaged and learning. The updates included virtual field trips, study and virtual learning tips, arts and crafts, music, STEM, and tutoring. He also promoted the over 120 virtual workshops for families sponsored by Navy School Liaison Office with topics from financial aid and college prep to numerous COVID-19 related sessions for early childhood through teens.

As Spain entered its de-escalation phase and summer holiday approached, Lambert scaled back his updates from daily to weekly then monthly. He also able began providing one-on-one family sessions.

In June, graduating seniors from Rota DGF Middle/High School were allowed to participate in a live graduation ceremony on the campus football field. Although the number of attendeeswere limited and not the usual large crowd, graduates and families were happy to have an in-person ceremony. The graduation was also live-streamed for family members who could not travel to Spain.

While the year has been unlike previous years, Lambert was thankful to organize some events with the school prior to the state of alarm. Lambert assisted in coordinating one of the bigger community collaboration event, Read Across DoDEA, with Rota DGF Elementary School. The annual event celebrates Dr. Seuss's birthday and this year, almost 60 volunteers from across the installation volunteered to read to students in preschool through fifth grade.

Another large event from early March was the health and wellness fair at Rota DGF Middle/High School. U.S. Naval Hospital Health Promotion, Fleet & Family Support Center (FFSC), USO Rota, American Red Cross, Military Family Life Counselors, and Child & Youth Programs offered information, games and activities to promote healthy lifestyle choices. Students were able to ask questions about internet safety, healthy treats, fitness, and other topics.

As the year comes to an end, Lambert is now helping families of USS Arleigh Burke prepare for their upcoming homeport shift to Rota, and he is also assisting the USS Ross families to prepare for their PCS to Norfolk, Virginia.


















Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS)

Opportunity and resiliency often accompany change – and 2020 dealt a hand full of change to Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) Rota and Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota community. In the middle of the State of Alarm, NMCRS Rota bid farewell to Courtney Snyder and Katie McCarthy stepped into the role of director.

"Stepping in as Director during a pandemic has been both challenging and advantageous," explained McCarthy. "Learning how to navigate the complexities of the role at times felt overwhelming with the state of affairs in the community. At times it is difficult to feel 'seen' as a new face in this new world full of teleconferencing meetings and limited interaction."

This unusual time allowed McCarthy to focus on the internal operations of NMCRS Rota and learn them firsthand. From financial counseling, helping out at the Thrift Shop, discussing command readiness with the leadership, social media, and more – the position requires McCarthy to wear many hats but she relishes in the diversity.

While NMCRS doors were physically closed during the lockdown, emergency financial assistance continued and NMCRS Rota provided over $90,000 in assistance this year. As Spain entered its de-escalation phase, the focus shifted to McCarthy's first big challenge of reopening services.

"From the onset of my tenure here at NMCRS Rota, the primary objective was reconstitution of all services - including both the Business Office and the Thrift Shop," said McCarthy. "By July, we were operating at our current schedule in the office and making preparations for opening the Thrift Shop in August."

NMCRS is volunteer-based and thrives upon a dedicated volunteer team. Despite a reduced volunteer force due to COVID-19, NMCRS Rota volunteers have served a combined 1,500 hours in the office and the Thrift Shop since reopening in July. At the helm of the Thrift Shop volunteer effort is Abigail Gross, who is also NMCRS Rota 2020 Volunteer of the Year and Thrift Shop Lead.

Gross says she enjoys volunteering for NMCRS because of "connection, engagement, and fun" which leads to a sense of fulfillment.

"Volunteering at the Thrift Shop allows me to meet new people and say hello to old acquaintances, but also give me an escape to just be and sort/organize till my heart's content," said Gross who has enjoyed learning about retail, visual marketing, product placement, and the likes and dislikes of the Rota community.



Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) Rota Director, Katie McCarthy, right, presents Abigail Gross, left, with the NMCRS Rota Volunteer of the Year for her work as lead of the Thrift Shop.

"A lot of things intrigue me!"

Abigail has reformed and reinvigorated the Thrift Shop and cultivated a dedicated group of volunteers who have served over 1,600 customers in the Thrift Shop this year.

"The Thrift Shop is a valuable community resource," said Gross. "It supports an amazing non-profit, it brings out the budget savvy, and the people who love to minimize their carbon footprints by buying second hand."

The Thrift Shop isn't the only program to undergo big changes this year due to the pandemic. Financial assistance has evolved to include the COVID-19 Rapid Response Loan – an interest-free loan of up to $1,500 that minimizes face-to-face client contact. The popular Budget for Baby Workshop for expecting families received an upgrade to two offerings a month and registration extended to include civilian families.

McCarthy and her team are motivated by the NMCRS mission and the ability to positively impact the lives of active duty service members, retirees, and their family members each day. Whether it is providing high quality, low cost items from the NMCRS Thrift Shop, teaching prospective parents financial management through Budget for Baby, or assisting with plane tickets for family emergencies, NMCRS Rota continually gives back and supports the community which it serves.

Few Things Are Certain In Life: Death, Taxes and the Galley Feeding Sailors

COVID-19 has provided the Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota Gateway Galley staff with numerous challenges this year, but her crew of Sailors and local nationals have continued to come out on top.

"COVID presented us with numerous challenges, but health and safety of galley staff and patrons was always our priority," said Gateway Galley's Leading Culinary Specialist Chief Culinary Specialist Terrell Downs. "We increased sanitation protocols and switched from a dine-in facility to takeout only to mitigate COVID exposure."

In order to ensure increased health and safety precautions were met, the galley staff was quick to put in place supplemental protective equipment and patronage guidelines to limit exposure to COVID-19. The galley installed additional hand washing and sanitizing stations throughout the facility and went from being able to service the whole NAVSTA Rota community to having to curtail patronage to active duty only.

"Serving spouses, retirees and DoD employees was our way of supporting the community. It gave spouses a chance to see how we feed service members and nostalgic memories for retirees," said Downs. "They have been very understanding and supportive of our decision to limit services and are looking forward to when we can allow them to frequent the facility again."

The dine-in facility quickly became a takeout-only operation after the Navy announced guidelines aimed at reducing potential exposure due to close physical contact with others.

"Becoming a takeaway only facility was a challenge for my predecessor because of the amount of consumables our team had to procure in a short amount of time," said Downs.

In addition to providing takeaway meals, the staff also prepared more than 100 meals daily for Sailors stationed at NAVSTA Rota and tenant commands placed in a mandatory 14-day restriction of movement (ROM) period upon arrival to Spain.

If COVID-19 wasn't a big enough challenge, the galley is also currently undergoing a $3.5 million scheduled renovation updating the galley's fire suppression system, plumbing, electrical, steam and ventilation infrastructure.

"Our staff is maintaining quality service and flexibility through the pandemic and the renovation," said Downs. "We understand why we are here and that we have a job to do. Nothing will stop us from completing our mission of feeding people."

NMCRS Rota By the Numbers

$90,000
Financial Assistance to Community

1,500
NMCRS Rota Volunteer Hours

1,600
Thrift Store Customers





NAVSUP Fleet Logistics Center Sigonella – Site Rota, Spain

Naval Supply Systems Command (NAVSUP) Fleet Logistics Center (FLC) Sigonella site in Rota, Spain is a uniquely strategic site within the 6th Fleet area of responsibility. NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota had a challenging yet highly successful year of supporting the fleet and multiple branches of the Department of Defense during the COVID-19 pandemic. Its personnel of 177 military, civilians and host nation partners put in immense efforts throughout the year to ensure that Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota operations and their assets continued to function smoothly.

Postal Operations led the way with NAVSTA Rota Post Office managing, routing, and processing 1.2 million pounds of mail in spite of consistent challenges in support of tenant commands, forward-deployed Naval forces ships, visiting assets, retired military members and families. The post office served as the Commander, 6th Fleet distribution hub for incoming mail for further movement to the area of responsibility and was the logistical arm for outgoing mail movement to the 5th Fleet area of responsibility during the lockdown ensuring end-to-end Navy supply chain postal support.

"We've had great teamwork to be able to work towards a common vision and goal to improve ourselves and maintain exceptional customer service to the Rota community," said Logistics Specialist Seaman Mario Garcia Romero, postal clerk.

The NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota Defense Fuel Support Point (DFSP) remained a 24-hour operation throughout the height of the COVID-19 lockdown in Spain in order to provide on-specification fuel to the ships and aircraft of the United States, Spanish, and other NATO forces operating in 5th and 6th Fleet areas of responsibility. The team, comprised of U.S. military, U.S. civil servants, host nation partners, and contract personnel, utilized a minimal manning construct that enabled the mission to be met, while at the same time maintaining social distance.

The lockdown strictly limited the movement of personnel in Spain, however, the needs of Rota's customers did not see a downturn. Rota issued just over 19 million gallons of petroleum products consisting of JP-8, F-76, JP-5, gasoline and diesel from March 2020 to June 2020. DFSP Rota also implemented a contactless refueling contingency operating plan that is in effect for the duration of COVID-19. This policy mirrors a replenishment at sea, utilizing heaving lines to pass necessary fittings, hoses and documentation from the pier to moored vessels. This enables the vessels to be refueled safely, allows the crews of the moored vessels to maintain their bubble, and eliminates close personal contact. COVID-19 has brought unique challenges to normal day to day refueling operations, but the team at Rota has adapted quickly in order to overcome them and support the mission.

Going above and beyond the call of duty by formulating innovative ways to counter logistical challenges brought about by the pandemic, the fleet support team at Logistics Support Center (LSC) was instrumental in elevating the morale of ships' crews and their ability to continue on with their mission. Their efforts benefitted Sailors and Civilian Mariners of 22 ships spanning a total of 600 in-port days to afford them their well-deserved port visit liberty. With the crew restricted to the pier, the Logistics Support Representatives (LSR) at LSC facilitated installation of Wi-Fi services on the piers enabling the crew to connect with their loved ones at home.

"Providing bubble-to-bubble service has played such a significant role in providing a huge morale boost to the crews of the ships that have made port here in Rota during this epidemic," said Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Ramiro Mendoza, logistics support representative. "We have coordinated several events along with the help of the base such as; Beer on the Pier, Beach Picnics, Golf Days, Pool Days, Movie Days, and NEX opening before and after scope of working hours to accommodate crew-only shopping".

Redefining port visit liberty, the bubble-to-bubble (B2B) liberty concept was introduced. This entailed dividing groups of the crews into small sections and allotting times for each of these sections to do different activities such as visiting the beach and golf course on base, as well as exclusive use of services throughout the base like the Navy Exchange main store, mini mart, and laundry facilities. The LSC team, together with NAVSTA Rota Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR), worked to provide opportunities for the visiting crews to participate in pier events such as movie nights, barbecues, beer and ice cream on the pier, sports and games and even pier side lodging. Equally notable is the LSR team's efforts in the safe and timely delivery of over 2,000 pallets of cargo and provisions despite an order restricting crew onboard and social distancing measures in place. This allowed the warfighters and assets of the USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) and Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69) Strike Groups, USS Bataan (LHD 5) Amphibious Readiness Group, Submarine Group 8 assets, our own forward-deployed ships and Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic units to successfully continue on with their mission by having mission critical parts and sustainment items on hand.

"Every ship has come with their own unique situation as to how they are maintaining their bubble-to-bubble and how they want us to respect their rules," said Logistics Specialist 2nd Class Ramiro Mendoza, logistics support representative. "We however have yet to provide anything less than outstanding support for the transiting ships making port here in Rota as well as increasing morale for their crews."

NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota LSC also coordinated movement of aircrafts during intermodal evolutions in support of United States Army Combat Aviation Brigades (CABs), United States Marine Corps (USMC) Aviation Squadrons and United States Air Force (USAF) Special Operations Command. Through a joint effort with NAVSTA Rota Air Operations, Port Operations, Naval Security Forces and Spanish Security Forces, LSC facilitated the mishap-free movement of 30 aircraft in the past year enabling the units a seamless transition to and from theater. In addition, the transportation



team at Site Rota working through the COVID-19 pandemic, was able to plan and coordinate 5 expeditionary forces deployments to Bahrain, Israel, Ukraine and Italy moving Naval Mobile Construction Battalion's Civil Engineering Support Equipment (CESE) with a total weight of 316K pounds. Cargo was transported by ocean to Bahrain and Israel and by commercial truck to Ukraine and Italy.

During the pandemic, the Personal Property Shipping Office (PPSO) faced many challenges such as Spain's State of Alarm and restriction of movement (ROM), the Department of Defense's Permanent Change of Station (PCS) stop/delay, among others. Once able to resume operations, PPSO successfully executed the first Forward-Deployed Naval Forces-Europe (FDNF-E) homeport change between USS Carney and USS Roosevelt. In an intense three-week period, PPSO staff achieved the first FDNF-E transition back to the continental United States by executing 112 household goods (HHG) pack-outs, 85 unaccompanied baggage, and 29 alcohol shipments weighing 750,000 pounds. This was done while allowing the unit to maintain its full operational readiness and meeting all set timelines prior to departure. Moreover, PPSO effectively tackled a 60% increase in HHG pack-out services totaling over 1.5 million pounds, processed the importation and exportation of over 300 privately-owned vehicles and performed 100% Quality Control (QC) inspections and COVID-19 health protocol surveys on 1,000 HHG delivery and pack-out services as required by new United States Transportation Command and NAVSUP policies.

"During major operations there is always an emphasis on communications and planning," said Antonio Polo Sanchez, Personal Property Transportation Officer. "And, what better example to prove it than the successful execution of the Carney homeport change. Our Personal Property Team worked along Carney's leadership to clear the hurdles of the host nation's restrictions imposed due to the pandemic resulting in the crew's successful HHG pack-out."

The Site-Rota Hazardous Material (HAZMAT) Center manages an inventory of $2.5 million and serves a wide-array of customers to include FDNF ships, NAVSTA Rota tenant commands, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps units. They were critical in the storage and distribution of 2,281 gallons of hand sanitizers and disinfectants in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The HAZMAT center processed over 21,000 issues in support of customer requirements. The team also oversees the proper storage of over 7,500 line items stored in 59 satellite lockers base-wide ensuring NAVSTA Rota is in accordance with environmental regulations.

The Material Support Integration (MSI) division is the main source of repair parts onboard NAVSTA Rota. MSI manages 3,200 line items with an estimated value of $1.8 million. Working hand-in-hand with Naval Facilities (NAVFAC) and Public Works, MSI purchased over $7.6 million worth of parts in support of NAVFAC to ensure uninterrupted support to NAVSTA Rota's sustainment, transportation and utilities.

Another milestone for NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota is the absorption of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) distribution operations under the Navy Warehouse Transfer (NWT) initiative. This past year DLA was responsible for the receipt and dispatch of well over 50,000 pieces of cargo and parts in support of homeported ships and transiting units operating in the 6th Fleet area of responsibility. DLA played a critical role in NAVSTA Rota's uninterrupted operations during the COVID-19 pandemic by receiving and distributing 518 truckloads of material to all the tenant commands. With this development NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota plays a vital role in providing end-to-end supply support within the Iberian Peninsula.

"Our team, consisting of Military, GS civilians, contractors, and host nation personnel at Fleet Logistics Center Site Rota are true professionals," said Cmdr. Bert Phillips, NAVSUP FLCSI-Site Rota director. "The effort and passion that they put into meeting the requirements, is unmatched. They did not miss a beat throughout the entire pandemic and always found ways to not only meet mission but thrive while developing new and innovative policies, processes, and procedures to ensure the safety of all of our customers."

U. S. Naval Hospital Rota
Birth Announcements

Jude G. Van Nielen
born December 8, 2020
to Dominic and Brittany Van Nielen
Weighing 6 lbs 12.6 oz

Zoey I. Liu
born December 13, 2020
to Garin and Daysi Liu
Weighing 6 lbs 14.8 oz

NAVY FAMILY OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM

The Center

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

Ombudsman Coordinator Jessa Quitiquit 727-3232 (Jessa.quitiquit.ctr@eu.navy.mil)

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Naval Mobile Construction Battalions Provide Vital Support to NAVSTA Rota Operations

The year 2020, unsurprisingly, proved to have many unique challenges for the Seabees of Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCBs) 1 and 133. Yet, with characteristic "Can Do" attitude, the Seabees overcame and provided vital support to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota operations. The Seabees of NMCB-1 and NMCB-133 deployed from Gulfport, Mississippi to Rota, Spain to operate on base and at remote locations throughout Europe and Africa for project builds, exercise participation, and logistics operations in support of Fleet priorities.

The Seabees started the year by helping aid the coronavirus fight in Rota, Spain. A group of Seabees assigned to NMCB-1 constructed, powered, and maintained a 24-hour medical pre-screening tent to vet patients at the U.S. Naval Hospital Rota hospital for COVID-19. The Seabees also supported local medical staff and patients by printing ear guards, which provide relief from over-the-ear mask wear, using the command's additive manufacturing (3D) printer. In addition to the hospital, the Seabees assisted NAVSTA Rota's Public Works Department, together fabricating 25 Plexiglas windows and three operation boxes that were then installed in essential locations throughout the base. The installation of these windows and boxes helped prevent the spread of the virus while allowing for the safe continued operation of essential services, such as the Navy Exchange and Commissary.



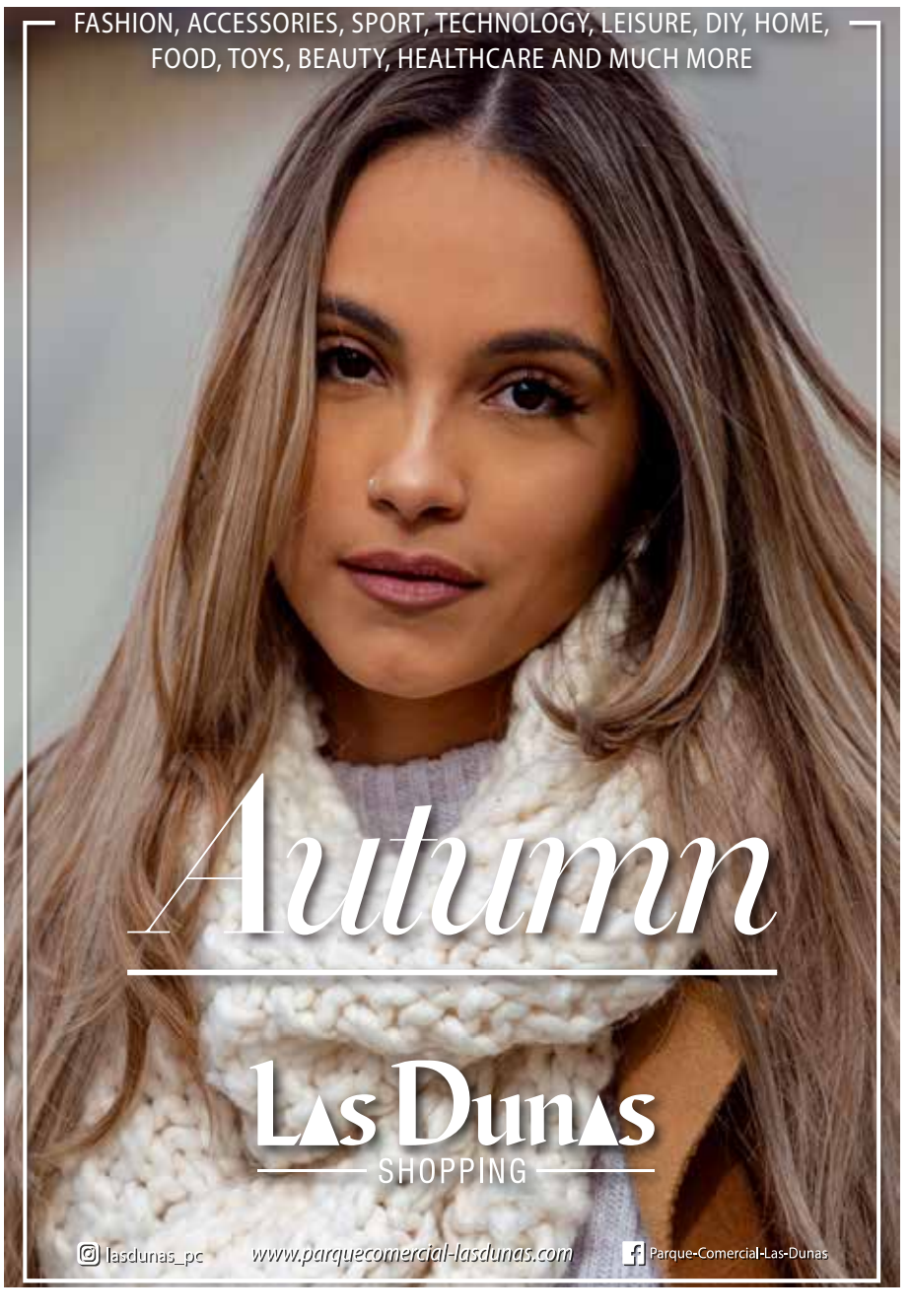
Not only did the Seabees help with COVID-19 mitigation measures, they quickly adapted to the newly established COVID-19 restrictions. Holding paramount the safety of both service members and the public, essential construction projects and improvements continued around the base, utilizing additional PPE such as masks when physical distancing was not possible. The Seabees made significant progress on several critical construction projects: the installation of new street lamps along Enriquez Street to improve traffic and pedestrian safety; the cliffline erosion repair project, a multi-year project aimed at strengthening the integrity of nearly a kilometer of NAVSTA Rota's coastline; and the new military working dog kennel, which will provide improved training abilities and a better quality of life for the military working dogs.



While onboard NAVSTA Rota, the Seabees also contributed to a variety of key fleet training exercises. Sailors assigned to NMCB-133 simulated the operation of an evacuation control center. They also participated in Operation Lisa Azul, a joint training conducted with the Coastal Riverine Squadron, the U.S. Marines of the Fleet Anti-Terrorism Security Team Company, and the Spanish marines. The exercise promoted partnership and maritime security between the U.S. and Spain, a win for multinational cooperation that will result in enhanced security, readiness, and combat capability, despite the pandemic.

As we close the year and another chapter in the long-standing history of the "Bees in Rota," we find ourselves grateful for the continued partnership between the Naval Mobile Construction Battalions, NAVSTA Rota, and the vibrant host city of Rota, Spain. Through this continued fruitful collaboration, we celebrate the accomplishments of this year, confident in our ability to meet the challenges of tomorrow, and celebrate our shared success for many years to come.





Naval Station Rota NAVFAC / Public Works Department

The Public Works Department (PWD) at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain, provides a full range of Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) facility and environmental products and services to the installation to include quality life-cycle facilities management, utilities, transportation, and environmental services to support mission requirements of the Commander, Naval Activities Spain and other supported commands. Working closely with the commanding officer, regional engineer, and supported commanders, they develop, coordinate, and prioritize work execution and installation requirements.

During 2020, throughout all the challenges brought in by the COVID-19 pandemic, their resolve to support the mission was no different than prior years.

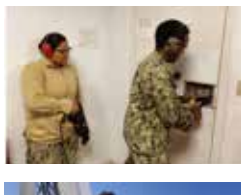
During the month of April, Public Works Rota Seabees and local national employees conducted operations in support of COVID-19 responses and relief efforts on NAVSTA Rota. The combined efforts of the team contributed to the fabrication of 25 Plexiglas windows and three operation boxes that were installed in essential locations within the base including the medical center, commissary, mini NEX, gas station, security office, legal office, and Personnel Support Detachment (PSD). The installation of these windows and boxes helped prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus and still contribute to safety among all military and civilian personnel aboard NAVSTA Rota.

The Public Works Rota Crane Team comprised of Seabees, U.S. civilians, and local nationals provided crane, shore power, water, waste, and contractor support for 245 ship movements for Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 60 guided-missile destroyers as well as Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic, Submarine Force Atlantic, and Military Sealift Command assets, including ammo handling operations and crane lifts even during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included USS Roosevelt's arrival, USS Porter's homecoming, an ammunition swapping operation at USS Carney, and many others. The crane crew also conducted many of the in-house work, including the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning replacement at BLDG 59A, one of PWD Rota's buildings.

The Seabees continued supporting the installation mission by conducting construction projects within NAVSTA Rota. During the month of September, several Seabees were involved in the fencing project that would contribute to increased security capabilities for installation weapon and ordinance storage. Also, a Seabee team conducted work at the NAVSTA Rota Fire Department Emergency Command Center (ECC) on Pier 1. This construction project enabled the fire department to continue its essential mission in one of the critical locations on base.

The Facilities Engineering & Acquisition Division (FEAD) of PWD has completed renovation of Building 575 to include an operations control center, providing space for DESRON 60. This is a previously abandoned admin-only building that the public works FEAD division was able to convert into a suitable space for the command, and is equipped with conference/video teleconferencing room, lounge and break area, among other amenities as well as provisions to support additional rotational and transient personnel. The FEAD team continued to maintain 26 projects in the installation valuing $170 million, including the Rota Navy Lodge expansion, the new communications center for Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Pacific, the new Morale Welfare and Recreation center, and many other essential projects.

NAVFAC and PWD are valued for delivering mission capability whenever and wherever required. And if this year has proven anything, it's that it takes more than a global pandemic to stop this team.











725th Air Mobility Squadron (AMS)

The 725th Air Mobility Squadron (AMS) is comprised of 185 Airmen, supports Air Mobility Command (AMC) cargo and passenger transport to project power from the continental United States to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The 725th AMS provides mission assurance for supported commanders and puts the "rapid" in Rapid Global Mobility. They are charged to conquer any challenge head-on through the spirit of the 725th AMS motto, "By the Horns!".

The team at the 725th AMS adapted to the evolving challenges presented by COVID-19 this year by moving to minimum manning, partitioning shift work, and implementing physical distancing while continuing to respond to the needs of the warfighter.

"Even though we knew things were going to be a bit different and tougher than they have been in the past, we maintained an optimistic mindset," said Lt. Col. Ryan Herman, commander 725th Air Mobility Squadron. "We've anticipated and responded to challenges in front of us, and because of that our combatant commanders have not seen an interruption in service."



One of the primary ways the squadron responded to the COVID challenge this year was to quickly master aircraft disinfection procedures for when a passenger exhibited COVID-like symptoms during transit.

"The learning process for myself and my teammates is ongoing every day. Each day we learn more and implement new processes to effectively disinfect aircraft and mitigate the spread of this deadly virus" said Tech. Sgt. Levi B. Ledbetter. "This is a team effort! Cross-telling information is key amongst us as an Air Force to move forward to a new normal."

The team procured disinfectant, taught courses on proper procedures, and even constructed a training video that was disseminated across the AMC. If a disinfection is required, each member wears a protective equipment, such as goggles, face shields, appropriate face masks, long-sleeved waterproof aprons, rubber gloves and boots, and shoe coverings. They then proceed to disinfect the plane by applying the appropriate disinfectant and allowing it to penetrate and kill any pathogens. In addition to disinfecting surfaces, the team also operates the air recirculation system for approximately three hours to cleanse trapped aircraft air. The entire process lasts around four and a half hours, and this is just the start of what they are doing to help in the fight against COVID-19.

The 725th AMS also operates a Maintenance Operations Center and Air Mobility Control Center, which serves as a command, control and communications node to service aircraft and aircrews. Normally, the team performs duties only for the AMC crews, however during the COVID-19 operations, team members stepped up to assist the Navy with screening requirements by providing temperature screenings and medical questionnaires.



Health protection conditions and cessation of normal off-base lodging and services led to additional complications, such as cases where there weren't enough rooms to service competing requirements at Rota. To solve these the Airmen of the 725th AMS stepped up in a big way, by developing a new system to identify missions in real time. They created a sophisticated, color-coded tracking system that stretches across three widescreen monitors and shows real time status of both missions and rooms in an efficient and visually appealing way.

"The spreadsheet allows us to track in real time the 33 rooms we regularly reserve for aircrews," said Master Sgt. Robert Rein. "Additionally, we coordinate with NGIS for any additional rooms which may be available. This allows us to liaise with the 618th Air Operations Center to maximize the amount of crews and missions that can remain overnight at NAVSTA Rota for the next 72 hours."

In addition to making sure their missions continue to move, the 725th AMS also made sure to maintain their resiliency. To make sure Airmen could stay connected even when they couldn't physically connect, the squadron created a private Facebook group which enabled members to interact and check on each other virtually. Herman, began conducting "Facebook live" town halls once a week to help keep Airmen informed and answer questions for Airmen and spouses.

Facebook wasn't the only virtual tool the squadron utilized during the pandemic. The team also set up a Zoom Government account for the squadron to conduct Commander's Calls and to continue their routine outreach virtually. In addition to staying connected virtually, the squadron's first sergeant, Master Sgt. Gina Escanes, and the squadron's Key Spouses, set up many programs that allowed Airmen and their families opportunities to stay engaged, such as an Easter egg pick-up, Halloween goodie bag pick-up, and many squadron contests to help boost morale.

"During these hard and isolating times, it is important to provide support and outlets to our most valuable assets: our Airmen," said Master Sgt. Gina Escanes. "Providing different virtual events keeps our Airmen engaged and increases morale in times of uncertainty."

While COVID-19 has created more challenges than normal, it hasn't impacted the 725th AMS mission, and they continue to overcome every challenge by taking it "By the Horns."

"We and our Navy partners have conquered so many challenges, but often it doesn't ripple up even to my level because our Airmen solve the problems at theirs" said Herman. "That all comes from the leaders in the squadron from the bottom on up, and I couldn't be more proud."

521st Air Mobility Operations Group (AMOG)

The 521st Air Mobility Operations Group's (AMOG) span of control reaches from Rota, Spain all the way to Bagram, Afghanistan, including four squadrons and seven detachments/operating locations. Approximately 750 Airmen provide maintenance, aerial support, and command and control and operational support for approximately 6,00 air mobility sorties a year to deploy and sustain the Joint Force in Africa, Europe, and Asia.

Due to the nature of rapid global mobility operations, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly increased risk across the air mobility enterprise and added layers of complexity to traveling internationally, which increased the strain on our global freedom of movement.

Despite a reduction in overall travel, the 521st AMOG's mission to support OCONUS (outside continental United States) and deployed joint teams never ceased. The Airmen there have continuously adapted to the logistics challenges brought on by this pandemic and the varied host nations' responses to it by adopting new tactics, techniques and procedures.

The team also supported the development of new equipment during this time to enable the safe movement of personnel and cargo. One example of this being the negatively pressurized conex (NPC), which was rapidly developed to fit inside both the C-5 Super Galaxy and C-17 Globemaster III. The NPC enable safe transport for up to 28 patients, as well as teams of medical professionals to medical facilities around the globe.

The Airmen of the AMOG wasted no time in putting this to use, partnering with other units to field and train on this capability during the summer to accelerate the movement of personnel in need of urgent medical care while mitigating exposure.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the 521st AMOG in many ways this year, their ingenuity, innovation, and resourcefulness has ensured the air mobility mission continues to support deterrence, assurance, competition and contingency operations.









Celestino Mutis Botanic Park

It is situated near the coastline and it is a place created to relax, enjoy and study the life it contains. In this Botanic Park, you can find a small representation of the vegetation on the planet and, especially, a representation of the autochthonous flora. Some plants such as the Canary Islands Dragon Tree and the Moroccan Atlas Cedar have adapted to our dry, sunny Mediterranean climate. In this natural area you can also observe and learn about the fauna which live here such as birds, insects and reptiles. The chameleon is the most emblematic animal in the area.

Mayetería

If we talk about agriculture in Rota, we talk about mayetería. In Rota, people use the word Mayetería to refer to agriculture. The mayetos were the local farmers who worked in the fields. They have always lived devoted exclusively to grow the best fruits and vegetables which they collected with great effort in May. The origin of the house where the mayetos lived is similar to the archaic barracks from the east which were owned by the old Muslim market gardeners.

Rota´s Rail Trail

This rail trail is a bridleway, used for walking, cycling and sometimes horse riding. It covers 5 miles (8 kilometers) of disused railway track between El Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda, a stretch which passes through the city limits of Rota.







Natural Beaches

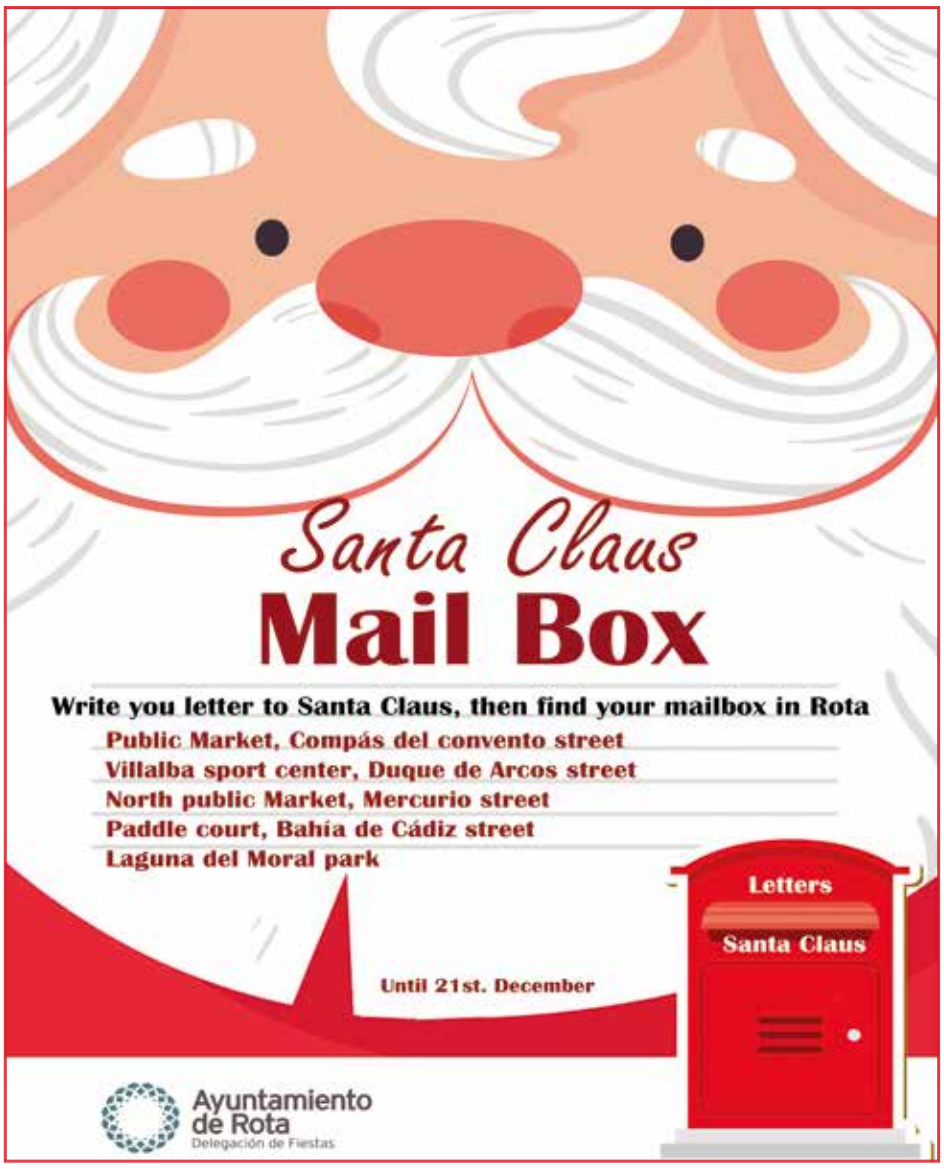
Rota has also really beautiful and exotic beaches bathed by the Atlantic Ocean such as Puntalillo, Corrales, Punta Candor and Pegina. They are located in a wild and natural environment and they are backed by vast pinewoods.

If you are looking for peace and quiet, these virgin beaches are the best suited to your needs. The beauty of their surroundings and the crystal clear waters make this spot an ideal place to enjoy the Costa de la Luz.

Urban Beaches

The old city of Rota is surrounded by different beaches such as Galeones, Rompidillo and La Costilla. There is also a beach called La Ballena which is located next to the Golf Court in the residential area of Costa Ballena.

These beaches boast an attractive promenade which covers the whole length of the beach, perfect to walk, relax and see the wonderful sunset.


Santa Claus
Mail Box
Write you letter to Santa Claus, then find your mailbox in Rota
Public Market, Compás del convento street
Villalba sport center, Duque de Arcos street
North public Market, Mercurio street
Paddle court, Bahía de Cádiz street
Laguna del Moral park
Letters
Santa Claus
Until 21st. December
Ayuntamiento de Rota
Delegación de Fiestas


restaurant
AJEDREZ BEACH CLUB
casa al mar
WE ARE CLOSED UNTIL
WE ARE ALL VACCINATED AGAINST
COVID AND CAN OPEN SECURELY.
WE WILL COMMUNICATE OUR
OPENING DATE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
Asian & Mediterranean Cuisine
Home Delivery is available.
Open for lunch and dinner on the terrace
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Hammocks Over the Ocean
Chill Out Bar - Terrace - Cocktails & Music
Massages, Showers
Reservations: 956 23 50 71 - 626 126 960
Facebook/ajedrezbeach - @AjedrezBeach - www.ajedrezbeachclub.es
Calle Miramar, 1 - Playa tres piedras - Costa Ballena
GPS 36° 41'41.99N 6°25'30.37W


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Navy Environmental & Preventive Medicine Unit (NEPMU) 7

COVID-19 has upturned all of our lives this past year, and Navy Environmental & Preventive Medicine Unit Seven (NEPMU-7) has been at the center of this viral hurricane since the beginning. Starting in January, the team has worked to minimize and control the virus's spread to military members in conjunction with the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC), U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command, and U.S. Central Command. Their team consists of 20 personnel who all had to adjust their tactics to complete standard mission essential tasks such as: infectious disease tracking, ship sanitation inspections and entomology vector control to name a few.

"One of our primary missions is to respond to outbreaks," said Cmdr. Tammy Servies, officer-in-charge of NEPMU-7. "The team was aware of the critical role they would play in the pandemic and they stepped up. I feel extraordinarily lucky to work with every member of this resilient, dedicated team of professionals every day."

Even with restrictions in place, NEPMU-7 personnel supported 33 units with 51 tri-service missions totaling 301 days. Demonstrating their commitment to "One Navy Medicine," NEPMU-7 provided immediate assistance to NMRTC Rota (formerly U.S. Naval Hospital Rota) to augment its COVID-19 response posture. In fiscal year 2020, NEPMU-7's eight preventive medicine technicians assisted NMRTC Rota with 156 days of sustained support, conducting numerous telephonic wellness checks. In addition, the preventive medicine technicians conducted multiple health inspections of on-base facilities, ensuring proper compliance with applicable health directives and adherence to COVID-19 requirements. They also provided initial setup assistance and ongoing technical advice to NMRTC Rota's laboratory for the new diagnostic equipment utilized to identify cases of COVID-19.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team at NEPMU-7 could not physically inspect Department of Defense (DoD) naval assets to provide them with a current Ship Sanitation Control Exemption Certificate (SSCEC), a document certifying that the ship is free of animal vectors, potential disease vectors, or ill humans. Anticipating this requirement, the threat assessment and mission support departments, in close collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NMCPHC, pioneered the virtual SSCEC inspection, enabling NEPMU-7 personnel to conduct 13 of the 25 inspections virtually. This newly developed capability enabled U.S. Navy ships to meet their global mission taskings despite the travel and other restrictions caused by the unprecedented global pandemic.

NEPMU-7's threat assessment team is responsible for tracking communicable disease and responding to outbreaks, either in person or through remote guidance to field medical personnel. The team followed the COVID-19 every step of the way this year, assisting the combatant commanders and theater medical personnel from the very beginning. In March, the team began analyzing the data of cases in Germany and providing more clarity on the severity of symptoms active-duty service members might experience, informing tri-service medical personnel worldwide. They were also responsible for conducting contact tracing training for over 200 joint personnel in March with an additional 3,600 trained since then via the online video created from their training.



After receiving a call for assistance, NEPMU-7 rapidly deployed its members as a small Mobile Outbreak Response Unit to Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti within 48 hours to provide technical oversight and outbreak investigation expertise in support of the COVID-19 outbreak. Lt. Cmdr. Eric Larsen, the lead on the unit, conducted an epidemiological study and outbreak investigation, collecting data on routes of disease transmission, incubation time frames, and disease severity. Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Torre Mays conducted door-to-door quarantine checks and contact tracing to stop COVID-19 transmission and provide training and respiratory fit testing to several expeditionary medical facility (EMF) staff members to ensure their safety interacting with the suspected patients. Then the team developed a local COVID-19 response standard operating procedure. Their finding was then presented in an epidemiological analysis and after-action report, which will be published in a peer-reviewed publication.

"We integrated with the teams on the ground to make comprehensive recommendations that resulted in resolution of the outbreak and changes to theater policy," said Larsen. "It was a privilege to support our frontline warfighters and forward deployed personnel during these challenging times."

Even though COVID-19 has presented significant challenges for the world, Team Rota has stepped up to ensure we ride this viral storm out together and fulfill the missions. The menace still endures, so everyone must work together to be safe and minimize the spread of the virus.

Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Atlantic Detachment Rota Spain

Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station Atlantic Detachment Rota Spain (NCTAMS LANT DET ROTA) is comprised of over 70 active duty, civilian, and local national personnel who are dedicated to providing resilient and outstanding information technology (IT) services. They provide communication services and technical support to Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, its tenant commands, forward-deployed Naval forces (FDNF), homeported ships, and visiting units afloat throughout the Iberian Peninsula.

This year NCTAMS's accomplishments include providing phone and internet protocol (IP) services to support homeported and transient vessels, resolving 467 ONE-Net incidents, 170 Request for Changes (RFC), and 33 circuit outages. Additionally, they deployed 83 telework capable laptops across five commands, ensuring zero mission downtime during the COVID-19 crisis.

"The restraints of COVID-19 pandemic have allowed us to step back and analyze the best ways to safely and efficiently accomplish our tasks," said Information Specialist Technician 1st Class Jovan Hall, Department Leading Petty Officer. "Communication is critical to accomplish any mission, and I believe that we are blessed with a great team to carry out the support to our areas of responsibilities effortlessly."



The Base Communications Office (BCO) provides day-to-day operational support and management and technical support concerning Data Switch Networks (DSN), phone lines, and voicemail. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, our local technicians went to great lengths to ensure they complied with all social distancing rules while still conducting maintenance on equipment and resolving customer issues.

The Financial department developed telework schedules to maximize workers' effectiveness and maintain good health and safety. The staff upgraded their personal laptops with smart card terminals enabling access to official work email.

"We had a lot of support in this matter, and we want to thank the IT team for everything they did to allow us to continue doing our job," said Luis Blanco, lead financial technician. "We all had to put forth a great amount of effort for this year."

The Information Assurance (IA) department was challenged creatively in October 2020 to deliver the annual National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) program and hold the quarterly communications information technology working group (CITWG). This year the team conducted three AFN Radio interviews and utilized email correspondence to spread the message "Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart." The CITWG was conducted via Microsoft Teams with 49 military and civilian personnel representing 16 departments and tenant commands.









Furthermore, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA) node site coordinators worked around the clock to process administrative responsibilities, coordinate with DISA contractors, and assist the local network service center with trouble-shooting.

"We utilize the unique strengths of all personnel to ensure all communication-related mission requirements are fulfilled to the highest standards possible," said Information Specialist Technician 2nd Class Alvin Farmer, Defense Information Systems Agency Node Site Coordinator.

During the fiscal year, seven Sailors advanced to the next paygrade, 12 have earned the enlisted information warfare specialist pin, eight local national employees were promoted to EA6, and 19 received appreciation awards. NCTAMS Sailors' dedication also reflects outside of the workplace in their pursuit of higher learning. Five collegiate degrees and over 100 credit hours of higher education were earned.

El Mercado

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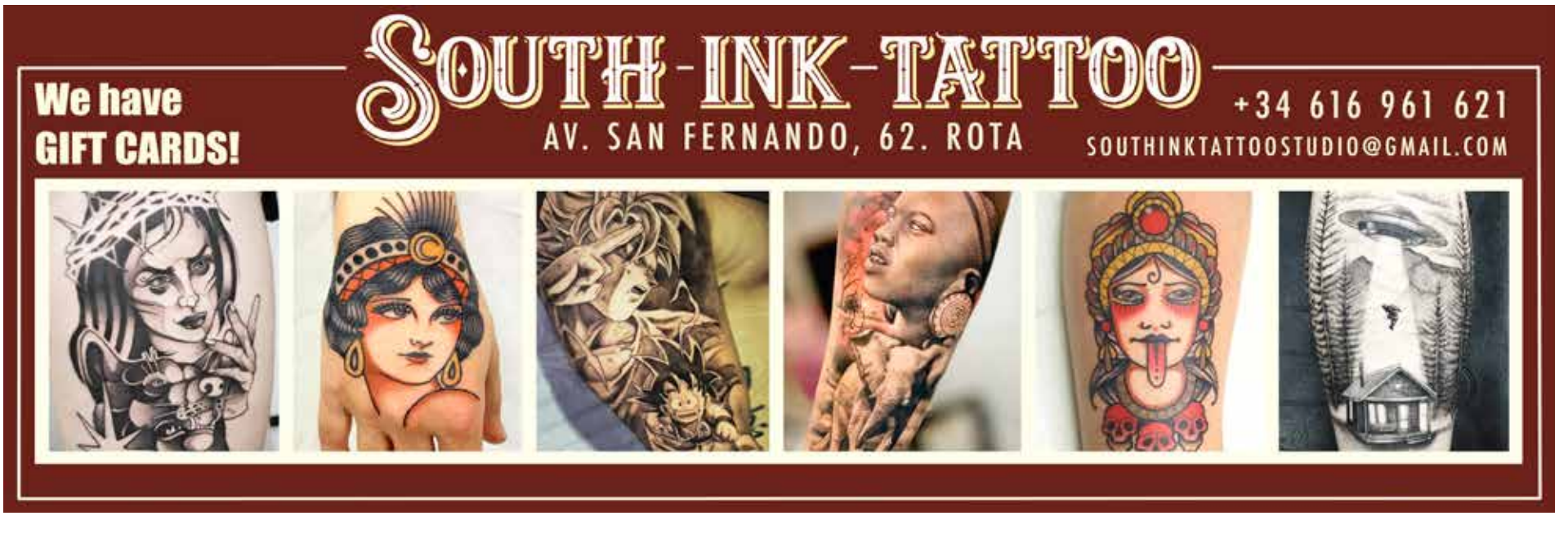
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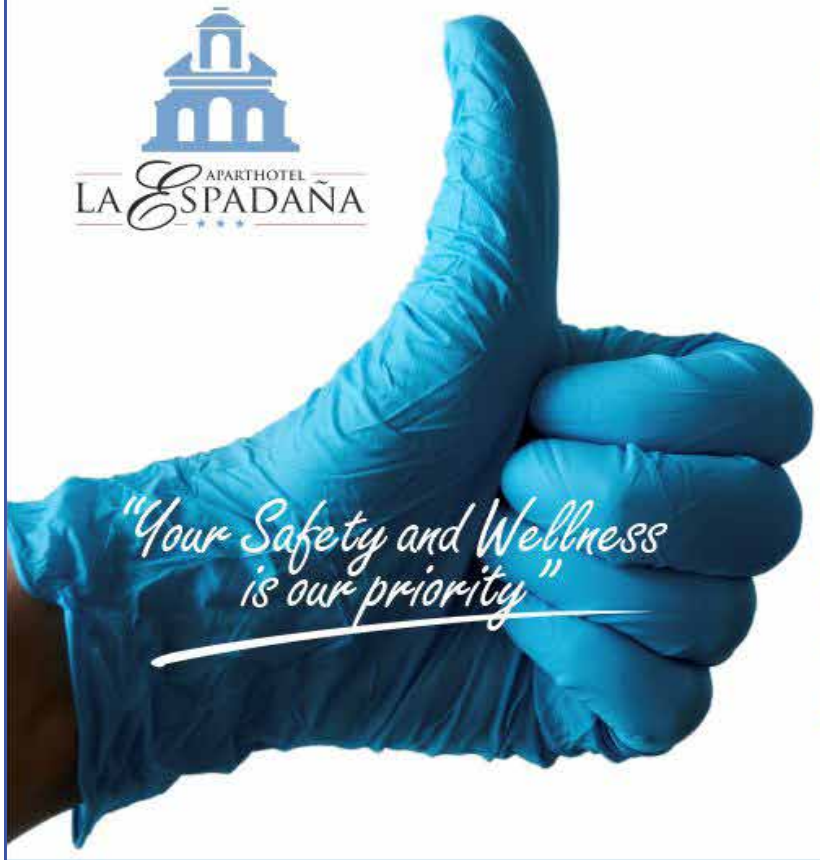
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