

# NB San Diego MWR: The Heart of Fleet and Family Readiness

**T**he Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) program at NB San Diego, Calif. — homeport to the Navy’s Pacific fleet — is all about supporting the fleet and family through quality-of-life programs and facilities.

“We believe that MWR has a direct impact on the readiness and retention of the troops, and we focus a lot on our core programs, which is deployed forces support, fitness, sports, aquatics, single sailor facilities — these are the heartbeat of MWR,” says NB San Diego Fleet and Family Readiness Director Ron Vogel.

In the area of fitness, NB San Diego has a great responsibility in supporting fleet and family members.

“From outstanding equipment and facilities, to highly trained staff, it is obvious the level of support NB San Diego and Navy Region Southwest extends to our fitness program is outstanding,” says Andi Mazor, Regional Fitness Program manager, Navy Region Southwest MWR. “Fitness has been at the forefront of MWR operations for some time now and receives the attention it deserves because leadership recognizes the critical link to mission and family readiness through physical fitness. For example, NB San Diego is one of three Navy sites to

offer SHAPE (Senior Health Assessment Program Enterprise), a program that educates and motivates senior personnel (over the age of 40) to achieve long-lasting health through permanent behavior change.”

## UPGRADING FACILITIES

NB San Diego is continually in the process of improving and adding new facilities. One of the biggest projects recently completed is the opening of a new Waterfront Recreation Center in December. The \$2 million project included the transformation of an antiquated nightclub into a modern facility that offers much more for the base community.

“The Recreation Center has just been a huge success for us, and this is the direction that we are trying to go in the future,” notes Vogel.

“It starts at the command level. The command here is totally engaged in quality of life and fleet and family readiness.”

The consolidated facility combines an ITT office, meeting rooms, more than 50 computers and gaming stations, billiards tables, a Starbucks and a Brewhouse restaurant, as well as front and rear patios.

The base also has a hi-tech, state-of-the-art Liberty Center that is dedicated to single sailors, with a lot of programs tailored for them. The facility reflects



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## Morale, Welfare and Recreation

what the technology-savvy sailors of today want. “Just about every one of our MWR facilities is Wi-Fi compatible, so no matter where you go in MWR, sailors and families can bring their laptops, plug in and they are ready to go,” says Vogel.

Other improvement projects underway include a \$2.1 million project to install two new synthetic softball fields, featuring FieldTurf synthetic turf. “We will be among the first in the Navy to have total synthetic softball fields, infield and outfield, and we are looking forward to that,” notes Vogel.

He points out that having adequate sports fields is essential for a sports program and training that is going at full strength 365 days a year.

On the business side of activities, MWR is continually upgrading things.

“We transformed our bowling center from a dark, underused facility into a non-smoking, family-friendly center that has something for everyone, from bowling to games to great food and atmosphere,” notes Vogel.

Working with QubicaAMF, the bowling center features a completely automated bowling scoring system that has been a big hit with bowlers. The family fun center also has more than 50 flat screen TVs throughout, billiards tables, video games, Wi-Fi and an outdoor patio with billiards and TVs.

“It is no longer just a bowling center, but a recreation destination,” says Vogel. “People come in there to bowl, but our food and beverage activities are one of the highest in the Navy for a snack bar. Patronage has gone up and it is the highest-volume bowling center in the Navy.”

Another family-friendly project is a complete upgrade of playground equipment at Admiral Baker Recreation Center. The \$350,000 project will completely replace the main playground there with ADA-compliant playground equipment from Grounds for Play and new shade structures.

Also at the Admiral Baker Rec Center, MWR recently completed the renovation of the rest rooms and showers at the RV park, which “is a big benefit for our RV

patrons,” notes Vogel. A new vehicle-storage facility that can accommodate 300 vehicles was also added.

On the child and youth side the base was fortunate to get approval for three child development projects. The biggest of the three is a \$13 million, 32,000-square-foot child development center with 23 classrooms and a capacity for 300 children.

Another large-scale project on the books is the transformation of the Admiral Baker golf course into “one of the finest golf courses in San Diego when it is done,” says Vogel.

### STRONGER FLEET AND FAMILIES

Of the four fitness facilities at NBSD, the Admiral Prout

Headquarters building).

Outside, NBSD has a synthetic football/multi-purpose field (pictured), a synthetic eight-lane 400m track, two synthetic softball fields, two natural surface ball fields, three tennis courts, an eight-lane Olympic outdoor pool, a seasonal recreation pool with slide and three sand volleyball courts.

“We continue to be able to upgrade our facilities and equipment to maintain the highest possible level of service for customers,” says Mazor. “For example, in April 2010, the Old Gym received new Matrix treadmills with integrated LCD screens, and we outfitted the remaining treadmills with stand-alone LCD TV monitors.”

Earlier this year, the base upgraded its outdoor fitness equipment to include



Fitness and Sports Complex is the main hub of fitness, sports and aquatic activities on the installation. The 40,000-square-foot facility features dedicated cardio, stretching and strength training spaces, locker rooms and an eight-lane Olympic size outdoor pool. Adjacent to the Prout Fieldhouse is the 7,000-square-foot fitness Station where most of the group exercise classes are taught and the building is also used by many commands for unit PT.

Other fitness facilities include: Old Gym, a 55,000-square-foot facility; Harborside Fitness & Sports Complex (located pier side on the installation), a 15,000-square-foot facility; and Mussel's Fitness Center (located in downtown San Diego in the Navy Region Southwest

new pull-up bars, abdominal, assisted pull up/push up, dip/chin up, plyometric and balance stations. New synthetic turf from Exerplay was installed under the equipment.

Fitness center equipment is state-of-the-art throughout all facilities and includes Hammer Strength, Life Fitness, Precor, Fitness Anywhere/TRX, Concept2, Matrix, Cybex, Nautilus, Freemotion, Hoist, Keiser, LeMond, EFI Sports Medicine, Reebok, Broadcast Vision and Polar Tri-Fit.

Increasing support to families has been a big emphasis throughout the Navy, and NB San Diego is a leader in this area. For example, MWR Fitness worked with a NBSD Seabee Battalion to

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transform an underutilized fitness space in its Racquetball Court building into a wonderful Family Friendly Fitness space where parents can bring their young children. The equipment includes a Precor elliptical, a Life Fitness bike, a Quinton treadmill, a Matrix stair machine and Hoist selectorized machines.

Mazor points out that fitness also includes family programming in the yearly fitness calendar, and family fitness has been integrated into many of the base's biggest events.

"Events like the Wolf Walk, a 1- or 2-mile walk for the entire family and their dog, the Family Fitness Challenge, and Backyard Fitness Challenge create opportunities for families to exercise together," notes Mazor. "Partnerships have also been formed with our Child and Youth Programs in delivering successful events like the Armed Forces Kids Fun Run. Almost 400 kids participated in the 2010 event! Also, our group exercise schedule includes classes like yoga and muscle conditioning that are kid friendly."

#### PROGRAMMING POWER

With the weather so beautiful in San Diego, sports are hugely popular, and more than half a million people participate in the intramural sports programs annually. Softball, basketball and flag football still show the highest participation, but everything from dodgeball to wiffleball to sand volleyball is offered on a year-round basis. Fitness and sports competitions, including 5K fun runs, competitive fitness events and facility incentive programs are offered to encourage individuals to participate in different activities.

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On the fitness side, spin classes remain the most popular, but new classes that include more functional training are growing in popularity.

As one would expect to find in San Diego, the outdoor recreation program is very strong. Popular activities include all types of water sports, from kayaking and surfing to snorkeling and SCUBA diving. Outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, snow skiing, camp-

ing and hiking are also big attractions. All camping equipment, bikes, skis and snowboards are purchased through MMI.

"Because of where we are located with summer and winter activities, we have a very strong equipment rental program," notes Vogel.

Aquatic programming is another important aspect of MWR. Lap swim hours have been established and masters swim sessions and aquatic group exercise classes are offered to give swimmers an alternate pool workout. NB San Diego also offers a robust youth swim lesson program during the summer.

The SMART Sports Medicine Clinic at the Branch Medical Clinic uses NB San Diego facilities to augment its services to active-duty members.

Tasked with delivering programs at the deck plate, highly qualified staff are an important asset to MWR. All fitness trainers are certified through nationally recognized organizations, such as the American Council on Exercise (ACE)

and The Cooper Institute, for example.

"We would be missing the mark if we didn't have qualified staff who provide outreach programming to commands during the times when they can PT," notes Mazor. "We recently hosted a CNIC-funded 'train the trainer' course on the new NOFFS (Navy Operational Fitness and Fueling Series) Program being rolled out Navy-wide."

## DEPLOYED SUPPORT

Deployed Forces Support is another program that is at the heart of MWR.

"Wherever we have a surface ship home-ported or deployed to, we ensure that they are supported in terms of fitness, recreation, audits, inspections and proper use of their available shipboard recreation funds," says Mario Garden, Recreation Program manager for Commander, Naval Surface Forces (COMNAVSURFOR), San Diego, which provides guidance and policy for all surface ships in the Navy.

Garden works closely with many agencies to ensure that support is available and provided to include MWR Deployed

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Forces Support Offices, Fleet Readiness Branch at Commander, Naval Installations Command (CNIC), Afloat Fit and Fun Bosses, and key personnel on ships.

“We have a great Deployed Forces Support Office in San Diego that is in constant contact with the ships on the waterfront,” notes Garden. “They work for Southwest Region MWR and always assess the needs of the ships, subs and carriers home-ported here, plus visiting ships.”

Because there is a much higher rate of OPTEMPO nowadays, COMNAVSURFOR tries to be proactive and anticipates the needs of its ships.

“Often times complete fitness centers are replaced, recreation equipment and games newly stocked, new personnel trained on how to manage an afloat recreation program, and required fund

audits completed prior to the ship leaving again. CNIC now also has to support many more Navy personnel on the ground at remote sites all over the world.” Garden explains.

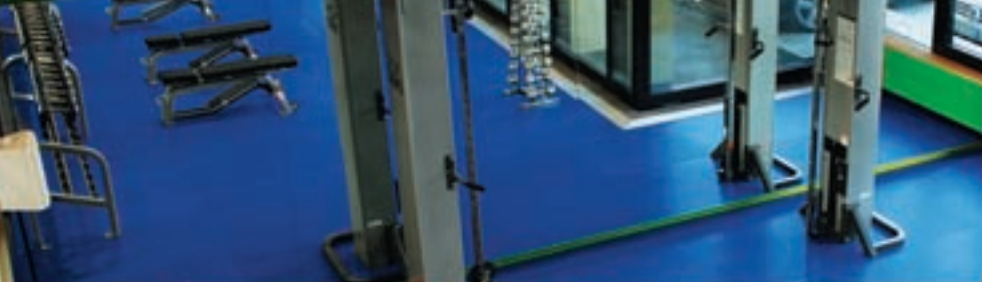
Submarines, Mine Countermeasure ships (MCMs), Patrol Coastal ships (PCs) and the new Littoral Combat ships (LCS) all have a much smaller footprint than the large Carriers, Amphibious Assault, Destroyers, Cruisers and Frigates, so modifications must be made.

“Sailors have to stay in shape no matter where they are and we do our best to meet their demands with smaller cardio equipment, Power Blocks, benches and fitness band kits,” notes Garden. “Once the Navy’s NOFFS program is implemented and becomes more widespread available, sailors will have another alternative to conduct exercise in a confined space.”

The Deployed Forces Support (DFS) Office in San Diego has developed a Fitness-At-Sea (FAS) and Fitness-At-Sea-Instructor (FASI) training program. Designated individuals are trained and certified by DFS staff personnel to teach and train group fitness programs such as indoor cycling, hi/low core classes, circuit training and core/functional fitness onboard an underway ship. Certain CFL-certified DFS staff members will offer follow-up (afloat specific) CFL workshops to enhance, adapt or develop underway Fitness Enhancement Programs and Physical Readiness Training.

“We also work very close with the civilian Fit and Fun Bosses on the bigger ships,” says Garden. “Treadmills are still the most requested piece of equipment, followed by cross trainers and weight equipment.”





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