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Daily News **WEEKEND**

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PULSE NIGHTCLUB

10 YEARS LATER



Local and federal law enforcement work at the residence of Omar Mateen in Fort Pierce. Omar Mateen opened fire June 12, 2016, at Pulse nightclub in a mass shooting that left 49 dead and 58 injured. JEREMIAH WILSON/TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS

Shooter's ties to Fort Pierce recalled

Will Greenlee Treasure Coast Newspapers | USA TODAY NETWORK

ST. LUCIE COUNTY — Ten years ago this month, a 29-year-old Fort Pierce man fatally shot dozens of people at a gay nightclub in Orlando before dying in a confrontation with law enforcement officers. ● Omar Mateen opened fire June 12, 2016, at Pulse nightclub in a mass shooting that left 49 dead and 58 injured. Of those who died, none were reported to have been living on the Treasure Coast at the time of the shooting. ● Mateen's actions brought significant attention to the Treasure Coast and St. Lucie County, where he grew up, worked and worshipped at the Islamic Center of Fort Pierce. ● An Orlando police dispatcher around 2:35 a.m. during the incident asked Mateen's name, and he said, "My name is I pledge of allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi of the Islamic State," according to a release from the FBI.

He later identified as an Islamic soldier in conversations with crisis negotiators.

Mateen, killed after a standoff with law enforcement officials, was buried in the Muslim Cemetery of South Florida in Hialeah Gardens. Toxicology results were negative for alcohol and a variety of drugs, including amphetamines and opiates.

After the shootings, the Islamic Cen-

ter of Fort Pierce issued this statement on its Facebook page:

"We condemn this monstrous attack and offer our heartfelt condolences to the families and loved ones of all those killed or injured. The Muslim community of Fort Pierce joins our fellow Americans in repudiating anyone or any group that would claim to justify or excuse such an appalling act of violence." The former Pulse nightclub was de-

molished in March to make way for a formal memorial in Orlando. The memorial is scheduled to be completed in 2027.

Omar Mateen brings national attention to Fort Pierce

On June 13, 2016 — a day after the shootings — Mateen's father, Seddique Mateen, spoke to a host of reporters in a home in Port St. Lucie.

"As a father, I don't want any father to go through what we are going through. I don't approve what he did," Seddique Mateen said. "What he did was completely (the) act of (a) terrorist."

Seddique Mateen described the United States as his "house," saying the country "is the house that always (is) taking care of me, my family, all the people from my homeland." He said he came to the United States in the 1980s after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, which he said is his homeland, and moved to Port St. Lucie from New York

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Mateen

Fort Walton Beach hotel receives a top Hilton award

DeonTay Smith
Panama City News Herald
USA TODAY NETWORK

FORT WALTON BEACH — Home2 Suites by Hilton Fort Walton Beach — Eglin Air Force Base at Freedom Tech Center hasn't been open long, but it already has earned Hilton's Conrad Achievement Award.

The extended-stay hotel, 1930 Lewis Turner Blvd., is located about eight minutes from the base, eight minutes from the back gate of Hurlburt Field, and nine minutes from Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS).

According to a press release from the hotel, this Home2 Suites is one of only six Home2 Suites properties worldwide to earn the recognition in 2025. The property earned the distinction less than two years after opening. The two-year anniversary was celebrated on May 16.

The hotel offers custom-designed hospitality spaces, 126 modern suites with in-room kitchens, full-service food and beverage offerings, meeting and event facilities, an attached conference center, and amenities designed for military, business and leisure travelers.

The property also features resort-style outdoor spaces and the FTC Bar.

The Conrad Achievement Award recognizes properties that consistently deliver exceptional guest experiences while maintaining Hilton's highest operational standards, the news release says.

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Home2 Suites by Hilton Fort Walton Beach Eglin Air Force Base at Freedom Tech Center, which opened in 2024, has received Hilton's Conrad Achievement Award, becoming one of only six Home2 Suites properties worldwide to earn that recognition in 2025. PROVIDED BY HOME2 SUITES BY HILTON

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