

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees



SIXTY-SECOND YEAR NO. 50
 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023



MIDWAY CLEANUP - Information Warfare Training Command (IWTC) San Diego Sailors and family members posed for a photo after spending their Saturday morning cleaning the USS Midway Museum as part of a command volunteer event on Jan. 21, 2023. Official Navy photo. See related story, page 8

New waterfront ship repair facility coming soon

SAN DIEGO - Austal USA will host an event Feb. 13 to kickoff the opening of new San Diego waterfront ship repair facility here.

The shipbuilding giant finalized a deal late last year to establish a repair facility in the Port of San Diego. The deal includes a long-term lease of a waterfront site in National City adjacent to Naval Base San Diego. Austal USA's 15-acre site will focus on ship repair for Navy, Military Sealift Command, and Coast Guard ships. The site will be centered on a newly-built dry dock designed to efficiently dock small surface combatants and similar sized ships.



Photo courtesy of Marine Group Boat Works

"The agreement marks a major milestone in the continued growth of Austal USA's services business," said Austal USA President Rusty Murdaugh. "When the dry dock is delivered we'll be able to provide the Navy a highly capable full-service repair facility located in the homeport of San Diego."

"We know how valuable this additional repair facility is to our customers, the Navy, Coast Guard, and Military Sealift Command, and we are ready to meet the growing demand. We're also looking forward to working closely with the National City community as we expand our presence in the area."

Austal USA will establish a full service ship repair capability providing maintenance and modernization for small surface combatants, unmanned and autonomous vessels, and other ships. The site will include a dry dock optimized to execute availabilities on littoral combat ships and other small surface combatants. Services will include technical and material support, topside work, and drydocking availabilities. The new facility will enable more availabilities to be completed in their home port of San Diego reducing the strain on the fleet and Sailors.

Navy aircraft to fly over Super Bowl LVII

by Ensign Bryan Blair
 Commander, Naval Air Forces

SAN DIEGO - Three Navy tactical aircraft squadrons will conduct an integrated flyover at the conclusion of the National Anthem during Super Bowl LVII at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Ariz., Feb. 12.

The flyover formation will include two F/A-18F Super Hornets from the "Flying Eagles" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 122, an F-35C Lightning II from the "Argonauts" of VFA-147, and an EA-18G Growler from the "Vikings" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 129. These aircraft represent the strike and electronic attack capability of the "Carrier Air Wing of the Future," providing advanced technology and enhanced flexibility to our military combatant commanders. VFA-122 and



VFA-147 are based at Naval Air Station Lemoore; VAQ-129 is based at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. The squadrons will stage and depart from nearby Luke Air Force Base.

The flyover also commemorates 50 years of women flying in the Navy. In 1973 the first eight women began flight school in Pensacola, Fla., and one year later six of those eight women, titled "The First Six," earned their Wings of Gold. Since then, women have served, operated

and led at every level of Naval Aviation.

Lt. Katie Martinez, a Naval Flight Officer assigned to VFA-122, looks forward to representing Naval Aviation at one of the world's most-watched events.

"It's not a feeling I can even put into words," said Martinez. "It doesn't get bigger than the Super Bowl, and I'm humbled and honored to be able to participate with my friends and fellow Naval Aviators as part

of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The fifth-generation strike fighter Lightning II integrates advanced stealth technology into a highly agile, supersonic aircraft that provides unprecedented battlespace awareness, versatility and survivability.

Entering fleet service in 1999, The Super Hornet has earned a reputation as the backbone of the Navy's carrier air wing and a workhorse within the fleet, continuing its key strike fighter role against the advanced threats of the 21st century.

The Growler is a variant in the F/A-18 family of aircraft that combines the proven Super Hornet platform with a sophisticated electronic warfare suite that performs a variety of functions.

Assumption of command at EODGRU 1

CORONADO - Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group 1 welcomed its newest leader during a change-of-command ceremony at the amphibious base here Jan. 24. Capt. Wade Hilderbrand relieved Capt. Ken "K9" Kleinschnittger in front of friends, family and military personnel during an outdoor ceremony. Kleinschnittger said the opportunity to work with the civilian and military personnel at EODGRU-1 and its subordinate commands was a highlight during his time as commander. "You are why people like me stick around," he said.

WWII vets lay wreaths for commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge

On Jan. 25, 2023, two World War II Army veterans returned to Arlington National Cemetery to commemorate the Battle of the Bulge, the last major German offensive campaign on the western front. Darryl Bush and John Landry witnessed a wreath-laying at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial before laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Both veterans recalled fighting the cold as well as the Germans. "It was 30 below on the day that I was shot," said Bush, a rifleman with the 75th Infantry Division, who caught a bullet in his right thigh.



Your FREE weekly paper

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Career Advice

Navigating curve balls of the new year ... Air Force review to improve domestic violence support to victims.

See page 5

Base Movie Schedule

See the latest movies offered on the bases for free or reduced prices. Check our weekly schedule.

See page 10

Decades after Desert Storm, inTransition is there for you



In this April 5, 1991 photo, Army Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf (left), U.S. Central Command commander-in-chief, inspects troops while visiting a base camp during Operation Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia. US Army photo by JoAnn Makinano

by Janet A. Aker
MHS Communications

January marks 32 years since the start of the first Gulf War—Operation Desert Storm. For those who have experienced post-traumatic stress disorder, anniversaries of traumatic events can be one of many triggers, even years later.

These “anniversary reactions—opens PTSD.VA.gov” may cause PTSD symptoms, according to the Department of Veteran Affairs. “Those dates always just kind of come back,” said U.S. Army Iraq War veteran Guillermo Sanchez on the VA’s AboutFace program. “Even if you don’t ever make an effort to remember that date ... it’ll just hit me out of nowhere.”

As a veteran of Desert Storm, or of Afghanistan or Iraq, you may or may not have sought out behavioral health resources for treating PTSD, mild traumatic brain injury, or other mental health impacts of traumatic events.

But if you need help, the De-

fense Health Agency’s global inTransition program is here to assist you with your behavioral health information needs worldwide, 24/7/365 via phone, chat or email, helping to link service members and veterans to care.

inTransition is a voluntary, free, confidential program that offers specialized coaching and assistance for active-duty service members, U.S. National Guard members, reservists, veterans, and retirees who need access to behavioral health care while in a state of transitioning or any time after discharge.

Nicholas Polizzi, inTransition’s program manager who holds a doctorate in educational psychology, explained that the program “can help clients discern what services they’re qualified or eligible for. And then help get them connected to providers, wherever and however they’re moving.”

Polizzi said, “We have that really narrow, but so important,

scope of making sure people don’t fall through the cracks after transitioning because health care, especially behavioral health care, are what’s the first thing often to go by the wayside when somebody is transitioning, or even just moving from one location to another.”

One veteran who used the program, retired Army Capt. Joel Serrano, said when he transitioned after 26 years in the U.S. Army, he felt a sadness and struggled understanding why. “The inTransition Program ... it gave me the stability, a type of mentorship guiding you to stay on the path.”

Continuity of care is important because “situations like these are precisely when behavioral health care is needed the most, due to the stressors of transitioning and being potentially more at risk as a result,” said psychiatrist Dr. Charles Hoge, the senior scientist at the behavioral health division of the Office of the U.S. Army Surgeon General, in Falls Church, Va., “inTransition is one of the safety nets.”

inTransition services are available to all military members regardless of length of service or discharge status, and there is no expiration date to enroll.

Leaving the military

Most notably, inTransition supports service members and veterans who are transitioning between behavioral health care providers, mostly because they are leaving the Department of Defense or separating from service or they’re retiring.

“They’re leaving the DOD and that culture, becoming a civilian, and pursuing behavioral health care in the civilian sec-

tor,” Polizzi explained. “We help them find resources in their geographic area, and then support them until they are connected to the resources providers who are working for them. And then we follow up to make sure they’re happy with the care,” he said.

“We won’t rest until we help you get connected to care that works for you,” he stressed.

You can just “kick the tires” at inTransition if you don’t want help now, Polizzi said. “It’s good for you to know that inTransition remains as a service should you wish to use it in the future.”

If your situation or mental health changes, “just reach out to us anytime day or night to get that ball rolling again,” he said.

Game planning

inTransition coaches, who are licensed behavioral health care professionals steeped in military culture, work with clients to create specific goals for getting them connected to care. Those goals depend on where the service member or veteran is in terms of his or her desire to get connected or how motivated they are, Polizzi said.

“The service member or veteran identifies what’s important to them, what their goals are, in terms of getting connected to care. And then the service member or veteran and the coach come up with a mutually agreed upon action plan, a game plan, that the veteran or service member is going to engage in between now and the next coaching call,” said Polizzi.

That could involve as few as one to three goals, such as “contact the VA.”

The power is in the client’s hands: “We’re not telling the service member or veteran what to do; we are mutually coming to an agreed-upon number of goals to address between now and the next coaching session. And they are all designed to help move the ball down the field,” said Polizzi.

PTSD awareness and treatment

PTSD has been around since wars began under various names, such as battle fatigue and shell shock.

But in the past 30 years because of Iraq and Afghanistan, “there has been a huge leap both in the awareness of the problem, as well as the efforts to help people to feel more comfortable coming into care, as well as the types of treatment, and the diversity of treatments that are now available that were never available before,” said Hoge.

A retired U.S. Army colonel, Hoge is the former head of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research military psychiatry program, which was responsible for measuring the psychological and neurological consequences of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. He still serves as an attending psychiatrist at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., providing treatment to warriors and family members. He authored the first paper to describe PTSD in Iraq and Afghanistan vets in 2003, deployed to Iraq in 2004, and then deployed to Afghanistan (as a civilian) in 2011 to improve combat stress care in the field.

Hoge said PTSD therapy can work, but noted that there is still a stigma to seeking help.

“People are always concerned

that mental health care is going to make them viewed differently by their peers or leaders, or that it might affect their ability to perform their job or their security clearance. These are the fears which we’ve tried to address and dispel the stigmatizing perceptions.”

However, many patients drop out of mental health treatment for a variety of reasons, Hoge said. “Because of that, I think the most important thing is trying to help service members or veterans become comfortable coming into care, and also feeling comfortable staying in care.”

“One of the biggest priorities of treatment needs to be focused on retention in treatment rather than on any particular type of treatment being used,” Hoge said. “Research has shown that there are a whole lot of treatments that are about equally effective, both those that are specific for PTSD (trauma focused) as well as non-trauma focused therapies and medications.”

Resources

For *inTransitionOpens Health.mil*, its 20 FAQs are a helpful introduction to the program. You can call 800-424-7877, or at 800-748-8111 in Australia, Germany, Italy, Japan, and South Korea only. You can also e-mail the program at: dha.ncr.j-9.mbx.inTransition@health.mil.

The Military & Veteran Crisis Line, text-messaging service, and online chat provide free support service members, including members of the National Guard and Reserve, and all veterans, even if they are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA health care.

Call: 988 and press 1
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Austin looks to build on strengths of alliances with South Korea, the Philippines

by Jim Garamone

The security environment in the Indo-Pacific is growing more complex and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III will meet with allies in the Republic of Korea and the Philippines to continue efforts to strengthen the security environment in the region.

China remains the pacing challenge for the Defense Department and is fomenting policies designed to change the international rules-based order that has guaranteed peace since World War II.

The security environment is growing more complicated and that is why DOD is “strengthening and bolstering our regional alliances and partnerships to ensure that our combined deterrent is stronger than ever before with the aim of sustaining and ensuring regional peace and security,” a senior defense official speaking on background said.

The network of allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific is the basis for the international rules-based order. “Our network of treaty allies around the world, but particularly in the Indo-Pa-

cific stretching from the East China Sea down to Oceania, is vital to the security and the stability of the region,” the official said.

The alliances raise “the cost of coercion and aggression by any actor seeking to rewrite the rules of the road or to unilaterally change the status quo,” he said.

This is the secretary’s sixth trip to the region. He was last in the Indo-Pacific in November 2022 where he met with representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Siem Reap, Cambodia. But the secretary is also constantly in contact with defense leaders in the region.

And while there have been six trips to the region, he has met with many of the leaders as part of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group and during the NATO Summit in Madrid. He constantly keeps in telephonic or video contact, and he has hosted many of the leaders at the Pentagon. He met with Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada earlier this month, for example.

During the trip, the secretary will focus on capabilities and

interoperability with the treaty allies, the official said. This is key to deterring any challenge in the region. Specifically, the security environment is seeing a sharp uptick in destabilizing Chinese operational behavior.

These include a major increase in dangerous air-to-air intercepts, as well as destabilizing PRC behavior including

“Our network of treaty allies around the world, but particularly in the Indo-Pacific stretching from the East China Sea down to Oceania, is vital to the security and the stability of the region.”

swarms of maritime militia vessels in contentious areas of the South China Sea.

China is not the only challenge in the region. North Korea is also disturbing the peace with increasing provocations including an unprecedented number of ballistic missile launches in the last year, and threats of testing nuclear weapons.

In both South Korea and the Philippines Austin is looking

to continue to expand the scope of cooperation across multiple operational domains, including cyberspace and space. The secretary will also promote interoperability and look to build increasing complexity into combined training exercises and activities, the senior defense official said.

In South Korea, the two militaries will look to strengthen joint readiness training, including a return to live fire exercises in the country, the official said.

At the second stop in Manila, the secretary will get his first opportunity to meet with the new national security leaders, including President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. He will be hosted by Carlito Galvez, who is currently the acting secretary of National Defense. He will also meet with the Army Gen. Andres C. Centino, the chief of defense, and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Enrique Manalo.

“We anticipate that 2023 is going to be a very exciting year for the alliance,” a senior defense official traveling with the secretary said. “Right now, I think we’re seeing a very positive upswing in the trajectory of

the relationship.”

In the Philippines, the two nations would like to build on the Balikatan exercise held in 2022. “We executed the largest iteration ever of our annual Balikatan exercise in its long history with around 9,000 troops across our military services, Coast Guard’s and special forces,” the official said. “We’re really looking forward to building on these achievements this spring.”

The secretary will also discuss speeding up implementation of the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement. This allows the United States to rotate troops into the Philippines and operate facilities in the country.

The secretary will highlight the closeness of the U.S. alliance with South Korea during meetings with Minister of National Defense Lee Jong-sup.

“The U.S.-ROK alliance is truly unique in terms of a combined force with unparalleled degrees of interoperability and integration, and that has stood us in very good stead for 70 years,” another senior defense

official said.

The secretary will speak about the importance of extended deterrence to the alliance. “We have already done a lot to strengthen our extended deterrence posture in the past year, that included the deployments of fifth-generation aircraft over the past several months, the (USS) *Ronald Reagan* port visit,” the official said. “We have upgraded our dialogue on extended deterrence and I think are having a rich and productive discussion.”

Part of this effort is ensuring the two militaries have the training and readiness needed to deter any foe. “This undergirds deterrence,” the official said. “We are committed to taking the steps necessary to maintain combat credible deterrence as a U.S.-ROK alliance.”

The secretary will also discuss what the alliance means to the greater Indo-Pacific community. The South Korean military is very capable, and “we’ll be talking about — ways that we can work together to help increase the capability of our partners, both in Southeast Asia and potentially the Pacific Islands,” the official said.

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DOD's Safe Helpline has aided victims for a decade

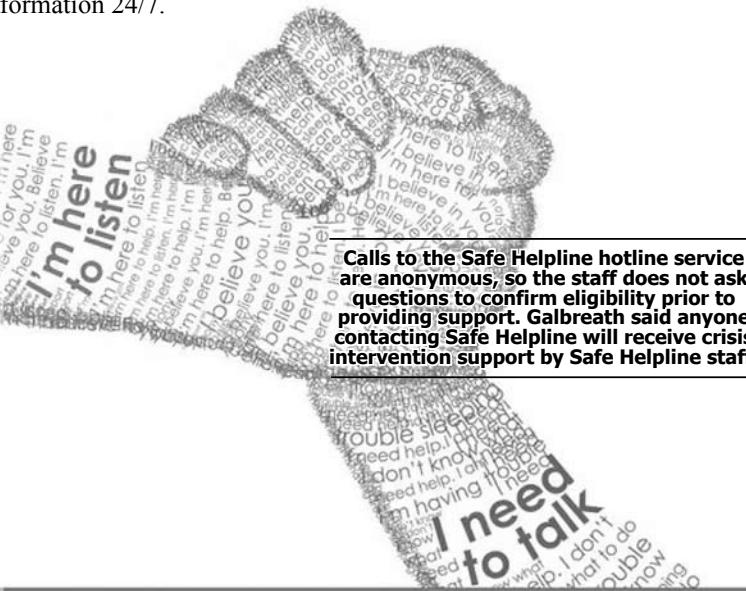
by David Vergun
DOD News

For over a decade, the Defense Department's Safe Helpline has provided a secure place for military survivors of sexual assault and their loved ones to get support and information 24/7.

The Safe Helpline staff is uniquely trained to provide specialized support to survivors in the military and can help connect service members to resources in the community, said Nathan Galbreath, acting director of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office.

It's not just a referral service, although referrals to other resources are an important part of what Safe Helpline does as part of crisis support, he added. A Safe Helpline user can access one-on-one support, peer-to-peer support, information, resources and self-care exercises to aid recovery.

Safe Helpline



Calls to the Safe Helpline hotline service are anonymous, so the staff does not ask questions to confirm eligibility prior to providing support. Galbreath said anyone contacting Safe Helpline will receive crisis intervention support by Safe Helpline staff.

DoD Safe Helpline
A Look at 10 Years of Service
2011-2021

December 2022

Those in need can contact Safe Helpline by:

- Telephone: (877) 995-5247
- Text: 552-47 (inside the U.S.) 571-470-5546 (outside the U.S.)
- Online Chat: SafeHelpline.org
- Peer-to-peer support: Safe-HelpRoom.org
- Safe Helpline app: www.safehelpline.org/app, which can be downloaded from App Store or Google Play

Those eligible for Safe Helpline services are:

- Adult service members in the active duty, National Guard, or reserve component, as well as the Coast Guard and their family members 18 years of age and older.
- DOD civilian employees and their dependents, age 18 years and older, when employees are stationed or performing duties outside of the United States.
- DOD contractors who are U.S. citizens while authorized to accompany armed forces in a contingency operation outside of the continental U.S.

The Family Advocacy Program on each installation supports adult military family members who were sexually assaulted by a spouse or intimate partner and military family members aged 17 and younger who were sexual assault victims, Galbreath said.

Army

- Army reservist stole \$53,000 while on the job
- Bronze Stars and Purple Hearts: A look at the next Army enlisted leader's combat record
- The Army is readying a new directed energy weapon to swat drone swarms out of the sky



Navy

- Suspected prowler turns out to be Navy Sailor who deserted in 1978
- USS America takes out drone with 'fire-and-forget' missile near Okinawa
- Maryland lawmakers urge more

public input on Navy's proposed Greenbury Point 'danger zones'

Marine Corps

- 108-year-old original Montford Point Marine honored for his service
- Marines consulting outside experts for fixes to recruiting challenge
- Marine Corps hosts encore activation ceremony for Camp Blaz, its new base on Guam
- SC lawmakers introduce bill to prevent Parris Island from closing. Here's what it would do

Air Force

- The Air Force is moving forward with a replacement for its decades-old long-range radar
- The Air Force is swapping out Eielson's aging F-16 fighter jets

Space Force

- Supporting military operations on Earth to remain US Space Force's top priority
- Worst thing in the world: Space acquisition leaders target satellite ground system gaps

National Guard

- Georgia governor declares state of emergency, activates 1,000 National Guard troops amid Atlanta protests

Your Military

- New 'black box' pilot program aims to reduce military rollover deaths
- Medevac team successfully gets premature baby from Kuwait to Germany
- Solar power 'clustering' could come to thousands of military homes in Hawaii

Veterans

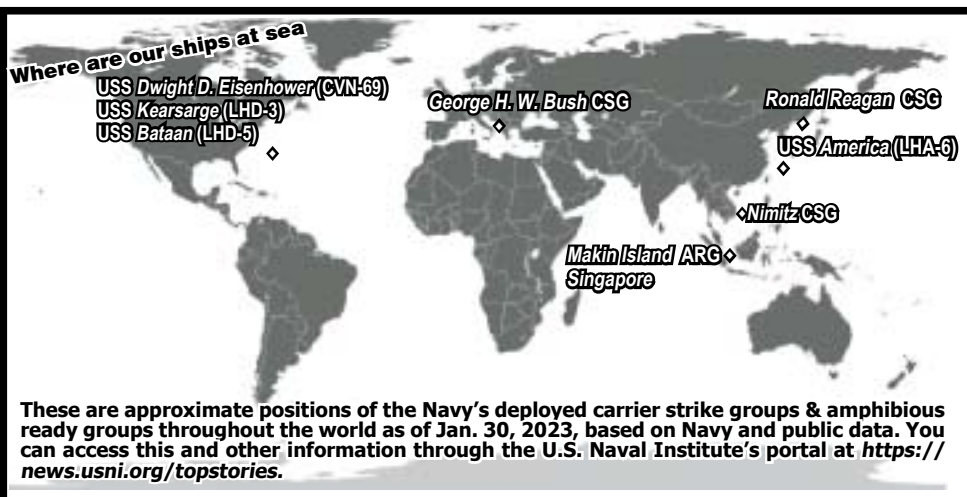
- Enrollments in VA medical care spiked after PACT Act passage last year

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

- US Space Command's Shaw sees need for rapid, responsive launch

Defense Industry

- Northrop eyes low-rate production contract for B-21 this year



Ships Underway
Total Battle Force: 293
(USS 237, USNS 56)
Deployed: 102
(USS 67, USNS 35)
Underway: 58
(42 Deployed, 16 Local)
Ships Deployed by Fleet
2nd Fleet, 1: 3rd Fleet, 1:
4th Fleet, 1: 5th Fleet, 11:
6th Fleet, 20: 7th Fleet, 68.
Total 102

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(858) 454-6459
LaJollaLutheranChurch.com

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Pastor: Rev. Steven Duescher

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We thank you for your service!

Career and Education

Navigating curve balls of the new year

by Dr. Daneen Skube
Tribune Content Agency

Q: I'm hoping 2023 is boring but I'm guessing this year will have more curve balls I don't expect. I manage a large team for an international organization, and want to improve my leadership skills. How can I manage my team better when I feel like I'm drinking from a change firehose all the time?

A: As Warren Bennis, an American leadership expert, sagely observed, "Success in management requires learning as fast as the world is changing." As a leader you cannot see around corners or know the unknowable, but you can model resiliency and adaptation.

After 35 years of coaching leaders in management, I've noticed the hardest habit for managers to quickly give up is the past. As humans most of us are more nostalgic than we admit. We have a tendency to keep

looking backward even when the pace of change requires us to run, and so we fall and fail.

Cultivating a mantra of "that

Interpersonal Edge



by Dr. Daneen Skube

was then, this is now," allows us to keep our eyes looking forward as we stay on our feet. We cannot model adaptation to what is coming when we keep staring back behind us.

Realize that your team is also composed of nostalgic people. Allow your subordinates to express their sadness that their jobs, industry, and workplace are not what they used to be. People more easily move into the present if they can acknowledge what they feel they've lost.

You should also acknowledge the "change firehose" in team meetings. Historians tell us that no generation has seen as much change in a single lifetime as we're seeing. Thus there has never been a better time to learn resiliency and adaption as critical career skills.

Anticipation can also be a powerful tool in your management skill set. In meetings encourage your team to look at the factors you are aware of and imagine multiple scenarios that might occur. Think of anticipation as life math where there is an (x) you don't know, but the rest of the numbers in the equation you do know.

Once your team can imagine multiple scenarios make sure you develop plan A, B, C, and D. Then no matter what curve balls you get, you have done advance preparation.

The change firehose may give you a situation you could not possibly imagine but more often people deny future indicators. Leaders and employees frequently see the writing on the wall but these warnings make them nervous. Since most of us are wired to ignore what makes us anxious, we don't use early warning signals to get ready.

To blast through anxiety, have your team imagine worst-case

scenarios. Many fears your team imagines will be highly unlikely. However, if you can talk about them and plan for them the anxiety level of your team will decrease. Once your team has acknowledged their worst fears, your team can engage in creating preparedness plans for the more likely situations of 2023.

If we linger in nostalgia and pity, we end up sitting on train tracks when the train has already left the station. If we refuse to get off our old track, the next train will run us over. If we stop gazing in the direction of the past train which went by, and buy a ticket for the next train, we can transport our career many miles down the track.

The last word(s)

Q: Even at the start of this year I'm feeling unmotivated about my goals. I think about what I want to do and then get overwhelmed. Are there tricks for me to stay on the road to success when my get up and go is nowhere to be found?

A: Yes, as Will Rogers -- an American humorist from the early 20th century -- pointed out, "The road to success is dotted with many tempting parking spaces." Sometimes the best we can do is one small thing every day to avoid parking our progress.

Air Force review to improve domestic violence support to victims

ARLINGTON, Va. - The secretary of the Air Force directed a 90-day cross-functional review Jan. 25 to comprehensively assess how domestic violence victims are supported in the Department of the Air Force.

"Domestic violence has no place in our Air and Space Forces - it breaks the bonds of our service family, destroys individuals, families, and our communities, and is illegal," said Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall. "We owe survivors of both domestic violence and sexual assault a foundation of trust to report violence, and confidence that all members of the Department of the Air Force know how to effectively respond and support."

An Inspector General of the Department of the Air Force investigation into allegations concerning improper handling of domestic violence incidents found areas for improvement in establishing trust and rapport with victims, particularly in the early stages of reporting, response and investigations.

"While we have taken actions to improve victim response and support programs, there is more work to be done in earning and sustaining the trust of survivors," Kendall said.

The review will take a holistic look at the DAF's response to domestic violence and the support services offered to survivors of abuse. The effort will include partnering with outside organizations experienced in supporting military spouses and former military spouses who are domestic violence survivors to ensure programs, therapy and services are appropriately designed and employed for the proper prevention and treatment of those experiencing abuse. Additionally, the Secretary issued a call across the DAF to consider how their actions create a safe and responsive environment for potential victims and survivors.

"Every member of our Air Force family deserves dignity and respect, and those who exhibit the strength and courage to seek support must be able to do so with the knowledge they will be treated with genuine care and competence," said Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. The DAF has taken on multiple initiatives in recent years to combat domestic violence.

"Our approach is centered on supporting survivors and helping to prevent domestic violence and/or sexual assault in the first place," said Under Secretary of the Air Force Gina Ortiz Jones. "This is a warfighting issue, a readiness issue and a leadership issue."

- Refer to <https://www.spaceforce.mil/News/Article>.

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Virtual reality may be the future of Naval training

by MC2 Elisha Smith

Navy Public Affairs Support Element West

The future is here, and it's virtual. In a world where technology is rapidly evolving, it's essential that the Navy evolves with it. One way to keep up with the times is to utilize the latest technology to enhance the Navy's training methods. Afloat Training Group Pacific's (ATGPac) mission is to keep the fleet mission-ready and they are navigating the technological field to do just that.

On Jan. 18, ATGPac demonstrated a new virtual reality firefighting training system that allows Sailors to fight simulated fires in a safe and cost-efficient way, answering the demand for more contemporary training methods.

"We learned at our training

that today's Sailor prefers to receive training in a much different method than our Sailors of the late 1980s and 1990s," said Capt. Christopher Follin, commodore of ATGPac.

"Today's Sailors are far more advanced in their skill sets with technology and our current training methods are obsolete," he said. "'Get Real - Get Better' identifies that we require advanced methods of training to close the gap between our best and worst. Advanced warfighters require advanced training capabilities."

The new technology consists of goggles that simulate over 70 environments, including naval ships and shipyards, a vest that can reach temperatures of up to 200 degrees Fahrenheit as Sailors approach the simulated fire, and an attached hose that pulls

Sailors backward, emulating the force of water coming out with varying spray patterns.

The Navy's current training methods involve using color-coded flags for Sailors to determine what class of fire they are fighting; electrical, gasoline, or wood, and what the current status of the fire is; lit or unlit.

Sailors who tried the system were impressed with the accuracy of the simulation, stating that it felt more realistic than their current training methods.

"There's still a place for on-hand flag training that we have now, but this is more of the future," said Hull Technician 3rd Class Hunter Dillow. "It's a lot more immersive, it's better than just using a flag and your imagination because you have the heat coming off the vest, the



Hull Technician 3rd Class Hunter Dillow participates in a virtual-reality firefighting training system demonstration aboard destroyer USS O'Kane Jan. 18. US Navy photo by MC2 Elisha Smith



Test Team Sailors perform a countermeasure washdown system test on the flight deck of aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln in the Pacific Ocean, Jan. 21, 2023.

US Navy photo by Seaman Apprentice Andri Juarez Gutierrez

smoke, and you can use all of the different situations for different casualties."

Firefighting is a crucial part of the Navy's training to keep Sailors prepared for various situations that can happen while out at sea. However, Follin believes this virtual experience can be a valuable alternative to keep muscle memory fresh for Sailors who are unable to attend training at schoolhouses.

While this is not a Navy-wide standard yet, there is a possibility of training like this becoming a more regular part of onboard training.

"We are introducing this type of training as a pilot to see if it applies Fleet-wide," said Follin. "ATGPac intends to utilize this system at each of the Afloat Training Organizations as a supplemental training tool for Damage Control firefighting

teams in the basic phase, damage control industrial training, and upon request by any ship or Federal Fire Department that desires additional training opportunities. This initiative is just one of the measures ATG Pacific will pilot to keep our Sailors proficient while in a maintenance period."

Afloat Training Group Pacific's mission is to provide surface ships, including U.S. Coast Guard, with education, training, and assessments to maximize training efficiency and effectiveness and they are doing just that while pushing the Navy forward with the help of the latest technology and training methods.

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Visitors watch an F/A-18E Super Hornet prepare to make an arrested landing during a friends and family day aboard aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln. US Navy photo by MC3 Han Puyu

San Diego-based aircraft carrier hosts 'day cruise'

by Seaman Michael Cintron and Petty Officer 3rd Class Caitlin Coyle

USS Abraham Lincoln

More than 850 family members and friends of *Abraham Lincoln* and Carrier Strike Group 3 Sailors got to see firsthand what their loved ones do on board as they got underway with the crew from Naval Air Station North Island in the morning and returned later that evening.

the hangar bay. Guests enjoyed lunch onboard, and were given the opportunity to buy Lincoln memorabilia.

chance for us family members to move around the ship freely and take everything in has been amazing."



Sailors serve visitors lunch in the hangar bay. US Navy photo by MC3 Han Puyu

An air-power demonstration, held on the flight deck in the afternoon, showcased F-35C Lightning II and F/A-18E Super Hornet fighter jets from Carrier Air Wing 9 (CVW-9). The jets launched, landed and overflew the family and friends gathered on the flight deck.

Abraham Lincoln recently concluded a

seven-month deployment to U.S. 7th Fleet area of responsibility and is scheduled to commence a Planned Incremental Availability maintenance period in the coming months.

"I think it was a great opportunity for friends and family who have not had a chance to be onboard a warship to experience what our ship does at sea," said Senior Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Equipment) Larry Pugh, one of the enlisted event coordinators. "I hope those who had the chance to be on this cruise walked away with a greater appreciation of what their Sailor does on a daily basis. It was an awesome turnout."

"Everything was wonderful," said Darrell Thorp, a guest aboard during the cruise. "The food display was great and everyone onboard was so polite. The

Joint services participate in mass casualty recovery event

by Petty Officer 1st Class Sara Eshleman

Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 3 (HSC 3)

SAN DIEGO – Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 3 Chief of Naval Operations Search and Rescue Model Manager (SARMM) recently saw a joint agency search and rescue personnel recovery event off the coast of Southern California.

In addition to HSC-3, the mass casualty simulation involved service members assigned to HSC-8, HSC-23, Coast Guard Sector San Diego, and crewmembers assigned to the Air Force 445th Airlift Wing. During the evolution, nearly 40 Air Force C-17 Airmen from the 445th Operations Group's 89th Airlift Squadron, 445th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron and 445th Operations Support Squadron were recovered via hoist to MH-60S Seahawk helicopters.

"We saw it as a really great opportunity to not only integrate with the Air Force, but also to tackle some of the challenges in terms of large-scale maritime personnel recovery operations; things that have real world application," said Lt. John Dunne, representative from HSC-3 SARMM and officer in charge of the event. "This is something that has never really been done before."

According to Capt. Cecelia Photinos, C-17 Aircraft Commander and Aircrew Flight Equipment Officer for the 445th Operations Support Squadron, the evolution was an extension of Air Force 445th Airlift Wing's annual tour and training requirements. Every year, the wing visits Naval Air Station North Island to complete open-ocean survival, evasion, resistance and escape (SERE) training. This year, the team had the opportunity to receive hoist training in the most real-world setting possible.

"This flyaway exercise provides our squadrons with an excellent opportunity to complete C-17 flying check rides, aeromedical training, real-world water and combat survival training as well as courses such as tactics,

communications, intelligence, first aid, etc.," said Photinos. "Joint exercises such as this are a great opportunity for the services to improve and ensure readiness while working together as we would in real-world scenarios. Previously, our water survival course had been performed in the base pool or a nearby lake without support from the USN and/or the USCG. The addition of their support through helicopters, hoists, rescue swimmers, etc., is absolutely invaluable to our readiness as an Airlift Wing."

Providing transportation for nearly 40 personnel to the open ocean where the simulation would occur was no small feat, and in addition to SARMM's surface support, SoCal Maritime Transportation and Coast Guard Sector San Diego assisted in transporting the USAF personnel to the site.

Coast Guard Petty Officer 2nd Class Richard St. Jean performed responsibilities as coxswain during the evolution and had similar sentiments to those of Dunne and Photinos. "Conducting joint operation exercises like this one strengthens our relationships with our partner agencies, keeps our crews sharp and allows us the opportunity to teach Coast Guard search and rescue practices," said St. Jean.

"We have two search and rescue capable services right across the bay from each other," said Dunne. "With the Air Force, we're building relationships geared more towards the tactical wartime hostile environment to show them that we can do this with them."

"Joint training is crucial for operability and professional/tactical development," said Photinos. "Understanding joint operations through real-world training such as this evolution allows us to be more understanding and effective as leaders while building reliable relationships within the services."

Both days of the evolution were successful, and all training objectives were met.

"The biggest thing is shifting the mindset, of getting out of our comfort zone and train to real world, and making the training as realistic as possible because you get so much more out of it," said Dunne. "Which I think is something as a community is starting to shift and we need to keep doing that because not only are we shifting mission sets pretty drastically, but we need to actually have realistic training; putting live survivors in the water and utilizing the equipment. Making it as real world as possible so that we can train like we fight."



A Naval aircrewmembers hoist a crewmember assigned to Air Force 445th Airlift Wing to a Seahawk helicopter during a mass casualty at sea personnel recovery event. US Navy photo by MC1 Sara Eshleman

Sailors and guests began the day with an early sea and anchor evolution, getting underway at 8 a.m. Participants then gathered on the flight deck for a narrated, guided tour of the San Diego Bay as *Lincoln* navigated toward open waters.

Sailors conducted dozens of tours throughout the day to acquaint visitors with the ship's operational capabilities. Guests also participated in interactive lessons on damage control in

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National Security Authority Understanding 'our modern geopolitical world'

As part of a continuing education program in national security, Executive Steering Committee members at Naval Medical Center San Diego attended a lecture by a well-known national strategist Jan. 20.

Vice Adm. (Ret.) Charles Martoglio is one of the Navy and nation's preeminent strategists who has worked in Washington, Europe, and Asia.

"Knowing why you're doing what you're doing is important," he said, "so I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to discuss America's security challenges with those who are serving today, at a time when your service really counts. From the COVID-19 pandemic, to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, to China's agitation in the Western Pacific, these are some of the most challenging times America has faced, certainly in all of our lifetimes...so it is especially timely to have this discussion with NMCS D's leadership."

"Within our Executive Steering Committee, we strive to bolster our members' leadership capabilities," said Capt. Jeff Johnson, NMCS D Strategy and Modernization director. "A critical component is being able to understand the landscape of our modern geopolitical world."

The delivery of health care from NMCS D often reaches expansive distances far beyond the confines of San Diego's fleet concentration area.

"We serve and provide medical support across the globe, and thus, it is important that our leaders have a grasp of the international relations that are intricately connected to our national security priorities," said Johnson.

"The exceptional thing about commanders in today's military is that they do not operate in a vacuum," expressed Martoglio. "Our world has become and will continue to be interconnected. The more we understand the geopolitical aspects, the better chance we have at remaining the world's premier fighting force."

Martoglio thanked NMCS D for all that they do in support of our Navy and military, our operational forces, and our families – highlighting the absolutely critical role military medicine has in the readiness and morale of our forces. In closing he said, "We couldn't do it without you – and we appreciate all you do every day, everywhere."

NMCS D prepares service members to shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research.

Operation Paper Route 'We are employing legacy systems in new missions'

by Ensign Valentine Mulango, Expeditionary Strike Group Three
CORONADO - Naval Beach Group (NBG) 1 completed a four-day intensive integrated amphibious training exercise Jan. 20, rehearsing its ability to respond to real-world ship-to-shore logistical transportation missions.

During the exercise, dubbed Operation Paper Route, a task-tailored force from NBG 1 subordinate units deployed to the Silver Strand Training Complex here, to simulate beach traffic control and distribution of ship-to-shore logistics including personnel, supplies, and equipment.

"This exercise afforded Beach Group One the opportunity to train the team for upcoming operations in the 7th Fleet area of responsibility by demonstrating over-the-shore capabilities," said NBG-1 commander, Capt. Joel Stewart. "In so doing, we are employing legacy systems in new missions to meet requirements for supporting the Marine Corps who is our primary customer."

Headquartered at Naval Amphibious Base Coronado, NBG 1 provides personnel to support and operate the Improved Navy Lighterage System, landing craft, air cushion, landing craft, utility, buoyant ship-to-shore bulk fuel systems, beach traffic control, and beach salvage equipment.

Participating NBG 1 subordinate units included Amphibious Construction Battalion 1, Assault Craft Unit 1, Assault Craft Unit 5 and Beachmaster Unit 1. These units are assigned to Expeditionary Strike Group 3, which comprises four amphibious squadrons, 15 amphibious warships, and eight naval support elements including approximately 18,000 active-duty and reserve Sailors and Marines. As the deputy commander for amphibious and littoral warfare, 3rd Fleet, the ESG 3 commander also oversees Mine Countermeasures Group 3 and the 14 littoral combat ships and two subordinate divisions under Littoral Combat Ship Squadron 1. ESG 3 is postured in support of U.S. 3rd Fleet as a globally responsive and scalable naval command element, capable of generating, deploying, and employing naval forces and formations for crisis and contingency response, forward presence, and major combat operations focusing on amphibious operations, humanitarian and disaster relief and support to defense civil authorities, and expeditionary logistics.



Volunteer effort helps instill Navy pride in IWTC Sailors

SAN DIEGO – A group of 15 Sailors with Information Warfare Training Command (IWTC) San Diego took time out Jan. 21 to volunteer at the Midway Museum, strengthening the bond between Sailors, the city of San Diego, and the USS Midway Museum.

The group assisted in cleaning out padeyes, to prevent rust and corrosion on the flight deck and aircraft elevators, maintaining ship spaces, to ensure a museum-quality experience for visitors, and clearing a berthing compartment of racks, lockers, and cabinets for future use.

The volunteer event served to expose Sailors to an important piece of Navy history. Aircraft carrier USS Midway, named for the Battle of Midway, was decommissioned by the Navy after 47 years of service including action during the Vietnam War and Operation Desert Storm.

While volunteering, the IWTC San Diego Sailors interacted with museum volunteers, including vets who served on board Midway, who shared sea stories and instilled a sense of pride and naval heritage.

Cryptologic Technician (Technical) 1st Class Romon Vanarsdale orchestrated the event to start the year off on a positive note.

"This event provided the command an opportunity to come together at the start of the New Year and give back to the community of San Diego," said Vanarsdale. "It also provided Sailors an opportunity to learn about the history of Midway and the importance of respecting and protecting U.S. naval heritage."

"I'm immensely proud of today's volunteers, who graciously put aside their personal time to help preserve naval history," said Cmdr. Jordan Adler, IWTC San Diego executive officer. "The event instilled camaraderie and sense of pride, all while getting a physical workout moving numerous pieces of berthing furniture up two decks and across many passageways."

"Within the berthing compartment, we discovered a late 1980's carbon-copy special request chit, a basic damage control personnel qualification standard cover page, and a 3M test - all programs and processes that link Navy Sailors across decades."

LOCAL MILITARY PHOTO GALLERY



SINGAPORE - Navy Logistics Specialist Seaman Ax-Daniel Abiva assigned to aircraft carrier *Nimitz*, participates in an MWR tour while the carrier group was in port Jan. 24. US Navy photo by MC3 Hannah Kantner



BRIDGEPORT - Marines with 2nd Marine Division conduct contact drills during a mountain warfare training exercise Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center Jan. 28, 2023. MTX prepares units to survive and conduct extended operations in mountainous terrain during the winter. US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Ryan Ramsammy



SAN DIEGO - Coast Guard Cutter *Alert*'s crew offloads approximately 4,000 pounds of marijuana, Jan. 18, 2023, in San Diego. The marijuana was seized and suspected smugglers were detained. US Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Alex Gray



EL CENTRO - Left wing pilot, Lt. Amanda Lee, assigned to the Blue Angels, prepares for takeoff prior to a training flight over Naval Air Facility. Lee is the squadron's first woman F/A-18E/F demonstration pilot. US Navy photo by MCC Michael Russell



OCEANSIDE - Members of the Fallbrook Vintage Car Club pose for a photo at the Santa Margarita Ranch House on Camp Pendleton Jan. 20, 2023. The club shot photos in preparation for their poster announcing their annual car show. Each year the poster features a historic landmark within the Fallbrook area to use as a backdrop. US Marine Corps photo by Ismael Pena

VA housed more than 40,000 homeless vets in 2022 amid push to tackle crisis

by Svetlana Shkolnikova
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs put more than 40,000 veterans into safe and stable homes last year, taking a sizable step toward its goal of eradicating homelessness among veterans in the U.S., according to agency officials.

The department said last week that it had aimed to house 38,000 veterans permanently in 2022 and exceeded that goal by 3,401, or 6.3 percent. The number of veterans experiencing homelessness nationally dropped by 11 percent since 2020.

"There are thousands of formerly homeless veterans who are going to sleep tonight in good, safe, stable homes - and there's nothing more important than that," VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement. "This is great progress, but it's just the beginning. We at VA will not rest until the phrase 'homeless veteran' is a thing of the past."

Veterans make up nearly 7 percent of the adult homeless population, according to a De-

cember 2022 report by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness.

Former service members are more likely than civilians to end up homeless due to a higher risk of traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions that impact reintegration into civilian life, according to the report. Women veterans in particular are more than twice as likely as nonveteran women to experience homelessness partly due to military sexual trauma.

The VA has worked to combat the problem by first providing housing to veterans and then health care, job training, legal and education support. The department credited those efforts for contributing to a 55.3 percent decline in the number of homeless veterans since 2010.

Throughout 2022, the VA found apartments or houses for veterans to rent or own and often provided a subsidy to make the housing affordable. VA staff also helped some veterans end their homelessness by reuniting them with family and friends, according to the VA.



The VA put more than 40,000 vets into safe and stable homes last year, taking a sizable step toward its goal of eradicating homelessness among veterans in the U.S., according to agency officials. (VA.gov)

The department paid extra attention to Los Angeles, where the number of homeless veterans is higher than any other American city.

McDonough said last February that he wanted to get at least 1,500 homeless veterans in Los Angeles into permanent housing in 2022. The VA said it provided 1,301 permanent housing placements to formerly homeless veterans in the area last year.

The Biden administration aims to reduce all homelessness by 25

percent by 2025, according to a strategic plan released last year.

The VA announced in November that an annual point-in-time tally showed an 11% decline in veteran homelessness since the last full count in early 2020. On a single night in January 2022, there were 33,136 veterans experiencing homelessness compared to 37,252 in 2020.

The decrease represented the biggest drop in veteran homelessness in more than five years, according to the VA.

Fleet Reserve Association NewsBytes

CBO recommends TFL beneficiaries pay more for TRICARE

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has recently issued a report recommending two separate proposals to reduce the cost of TRICARE-For-Life (TFL) to help reduce the budget deficit. The CBO recommends that TFL beneficiaries pay the first \$850 in healthcare cost and that TFL would only pay 50 percent of the next \$7,650 in cost annually. Currently TFL beneficiaries don't pay an annual enrollment fee. The report recommends TFL beneficiaries pay an annual enrollment fee of \$575 for individual coverage or \$1,150 for family coverage. The enrollment fees would be indexed to grow at the same rate as average Medicare costs in later years. Although this has not yet been introduced as legislation, the FRA will oppose any proposal that increases costs to retirees who rely on TFL to supplement their Medicare benefits.

Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season

An FRA-supported provision in the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) to provide a Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Open Season in the 2023 act. The SBP Open Season has started and ends on Jan. 1, 2024. The SBP Open Season also allows eligible members and former members who are currently enrolled in either SBP or RCSBP to permanently discontinue their SBP coverage. The law generally requires the covered beneficiaries to concur in writing with the election to discontinue. Previously paid premiums will not be refunded. The SBP Open Season allows retirees receiving retired pay, eligible members, or former members awaiting retired pay who are currently NOT enrolled in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) to enroll. For a member who enrolls during the SBP Open Season, the law generally requires that the member will be responsible to pay retroactive SBP premium costs that would have been paid if the member had enrolled at retirement (or enrolled at another earlier date, depending on the member's family circumstances).

NewsBytes is FRA's weekly legislative update.

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

"There's one! It's still open!" I said, pointing to a storefront sign reading "Tourist Information - Maps Inside."

My husband, Francis, and I had been aimlessly walking Charleston, S.C.'s historic district since we'd arrived at noon. With only four days left of our trip, we'd decided that a map was necessary to make the most of it. We stepped inside and stood before a colorful display of brochures. A man smiled to us from behind a counter, "How can I help you folks tonight?"

"Just looking for a map," Francis said, perusing the rack.

"Here's one," the man said, pulling a pamphlet from a hidden shelf. "What sites do you wanna see?"

Francis rattled off our wish list, "A ghost walk, horse and carriage tour, the Gibbes Museum, Point Sumter..."

The man leaned over the counter as if he was about to impart a secret tip, "Ya'll doing anything tomorrow morning at nine?"

We looked at each other and shrugged. "Nope," Francis said. We were game.

"I can get you complimentary tickets to all these sights, which'd cost you a couple hundred bucks. All you have to do is listen to a short presentation," he whispered as if his offer was exclusive to us.

At the mention of "complimentary

Gullible's Travels: Narrow escape from a tourist trap

tickets" we leaned in, revealing our shameless penchant for freebies. We never passed up Costco samples, coins on the sidewalk, hotel mini shampoos, and church doughnuts.

But when we heard "presentation," we frowned. Sensing our disappointment, he continued, "Ever been to one of those awful time-share presentations?" We nodded, remembering a long-ago trip to Cancun. "That's not this. It's a travel club — all you have to do is show up, drink coffee, get your tickets and leave. Trust me, it's a great deal."

The next morning, I whispered to Francis as we walked through the door, "Remember, when it's over, we grab those tickets and leave."

"Welcome!" an attractive woman in the exposed-brick lobby said, introducing us to her husband who smiled warmly. She gestured to an elaborate coffee bar offering French and Columbian roasts, then led us upstairs to a room where five middle-aged couples sat at small round tables. Her husband activated a large screen at one end of the room. Slides of tropical waters, ancient ruins, snow-capped mountains and luxury spa scenes appeared. Our presenter was the kind of unassuming guy that we'd normally hang out with, but we adopted a defensive posture, our legs and arms tightly crossed.

"Y'all like to travel, right, Lisa?" he suddenly directed toward me. I felt like a third-grader who hadn't been paying attention in class.

"Y-y-yeah, sure," I stuttered. Francis grimaced suspiciously. The guy went on, describing trips to the wonders of

the world, flying first class, staying in luxury hotels and beautiful rental properties — all for half price.

"Travel Club members pay a one-time fee of \$12,995," he said, scribbling numbers on a dry-erase board. There it was - the catch. We still had twenty minutes left before we could leave. I sighed.

"Is it warm in here?" our presenter asked, seeing a woman hormonally fanning herself across the room. He gestured to his wife, who scurried downstairs, returning with a hand-held fan for the woman.

"He's good," I thought. He went on, charming us with jokes and calling us by our first names, and dropping the membership price to \$9,995. When his presentation was done, he made a beeline for our table, holding a flyer upon which he began to scribble offers. Five minutes later, he'd reduced the club membership fee to \$2,995. When we still didn't bite, he us left abruptly.

"What do you think?" the couple behind us asked as we stood up to leave.

The presenter swooped in before we could answer. "They don't travel," he waved us off dismissively. We were dead to him. He scribbled at his next victim's table like a spider wrapping flies in his web.

On the boat to Fort Sumter, Francis and I opened the map that had started it all, and found a rudimentary cartoon diagram surrounded by paid advertisements. We had played their game and won, but had to concede the undeniable truth: Nothing in life is free.

In search of the happiest theme park in Southern Calif.

It has been said that Disneyland is the happiest place on earth, so last Friday, Jan. 27, I visited the Disneyland Resort — for which I was required to make an often impossible to get, daily Park reservation in advance of my visit. I chose to go there on that specific day to check out the first day of the year-long Disney100 Celebration at the Disneyland Resort, as well as the opening day for the new "Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway" in Toontown (the rest of which is scheduled to open on March 8).

Disneyland is one of the oldest, most established and largest of the Southern California theme parks. Bob Chapek (former Disney CEO), told us during the opening ceremonies of last year's D23 Expo at the Anaheim Convention Center, that "Ten decades of creativity, innovation, and determination created The Walt Disney Company you know today—the most enduring and beloved name in entertainment... It's an awesome responsibility to lead Disney as we begin our second century of telling stories and creating magic that will endure for another 100 years." Since then, that Bob was replaced as Disney CEO by Bob Iger. What will he do towards achieving that goal?

As was evident on my visit last week, much has changed since Disneyland first opened on July 17, 1955. For one thing, the Disneyland Resort now consists of two distinct Parks: Disneyland and Disney California Adventure.

The Disneyland Resort has always explored up to the edges of what was technologically possible. Furthermore, it benefits greatly from the vast treasure of Disney and increasingly other popular intellectual property (IP). As the available technology has evolved over the decades into what Walt Disney

might only have imagined, the Disney Parks have remained at the head of the curve. Its latest attractions are truly technological masterpieces — perhaps none more so than Star Wars: Rise of the Resistance (my favorite ride at the Disneyland Resort).

However, not all of the evolution of the Disneyland Resort has been for the better. To cope with and survive the upheaval caused by COVID-19, required substantial, drastic changes in Park operations, not the least of

for that privilege.

Long ago, when a new ride opened, Park visitors who really wanted to ride that ride could choose to wait in a standby line to do so. I waited in such a line for hours to ride on "Rocket Rods."

Standby lines are no longer available, at first. Instead, as was implemented for Rise of the Resistance and now for "Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway," the only way that guests may ride on these newly opened rides at no extra charge is to take part in an extremely iffy, convoluted process called "virtual queue," on the Disneyland app. Despite meeting all of the requirements and making my attempt to get assigned to a boarding group and precisely the prescribed time, I — and many other Park guests, as confirmed by the three Cast Members who I spoke to about it — failed and could not ride the ride that day.

These changes, including upcharges for what used to be included in the price of admission do not provide a happy experience for Park guests. My use of the Lightning Lane at Radiator Springs Racers nevertheless necessitated waiting in a long line, and the Standby line was huge. It will be interesting to see if Bob Iger reverses these policies.

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which was shutting down the Parks entirely for many months. When the Parks eventually reopened, they did so with serious restrictions, some of which continue to this day, which I and many others experienced on Friday. These have arguably tarnished Disneyland's reputation for being the happiest place on Earth.

Before COVID-19, visitors could spontaneously visit whenever they felt like it. Now a Park reservation is required to visit, with penalties for repeatedly being a no-show.

It used to be that visitors could get a Fast Pass for particular attractions, free of extra charge, so that they could return without having to wait in long standby lines for the most popular attractions. Now guests must pay extra

Equine therapy reduces staff stress and anxiety at NMCS D

by Janet A. Aker,
MHS Communications

Military facility animals—whose job is to de-stress staff and patients at hospitals and clinics—come in all shapes and sizes.

At the Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS D) [<https://sandiego.tricare.mil/>], miniature horses are one more resource to aid in coping with stress and optimizing the staff's daily performance in an unconventional, yet effective, way.

Simply by being there, these tiny, shaggy creatures (about 30 inches high and 250-300 pounds) are showing they are just as capable of reducing stress and the anxiety in staff and patients as facility dogs used elsewhere at military medical facilities and the Uniformed Services University's medical school.

The miniature horses—and, sometimes, mini-donkeys—are extremely popular at NMCS D. The military facility animals were actually called



U.S. Navy Capt. Ted Carlson, a commanding officer at Naval Base San Diego, interacts with a therapy miniature horse at Bainbridge Park. U.S. Navy MC2 Aja Bleu Jackson.

to work during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when medical demand was at its highest among overworked and emotionally vulnerable staff.

Their owner, Judy Lee Beckett, from a ranch outside San Diego, took all necessary public health and safety precautions, including the use of personal protective equipment and physical distancing so the horses could still come to NMCS D's courtyard during lunch hours.

"The health and wellness of our team of health care professionals is a top priority at NMCS D," said the hospital's director, U.S. Navy Capt. Kimberly Davis. "Walking through the courtyard and encountering these miniature horses adds sunshine to anyone's day."

She added: "The therapeutic effect of these animals on both staff and patients is significant. The volunteer support has been greatly appreciated, especially during COVID-19 when we all benefited from fresh air and a fun distraction."

If the pandemic proved one

thing, it's that doctors, nurses, and medical staff need to be in a healthy place, emotionally, to be effective for their patients.

Other military equine therapy proponents have seen the value of interactions with horses and recovering service members. Opens Health.mil article, such as a program with full-size horses at Fort Campbell in Kentucky. Beckett also uses full-size horses for service member, staff, and family recovery at her ranch and has had an established relationship with NMCS D since 2008.

For both mini- and full-size creatures, the horses' ability to draw people out of themselves simply by their presence and gentleness remains a much-awaited draw that has become a ritual for many on the NMCS D's grounds and has even extended beyond its gates to the nearby naval fleet concentration area.

Researchers have learned that horses and humans tend to align their physiological responses to emotional stimulation. It's called "mirroring." A similar phenomenon occurs with other animals: Research has shown that people's blood pressure drops simply by petting a dog or cat, while the levels of the so-called "feel good" hormones oxytocin and dopamine increase.

"There is something truly magical about these horses' ability to empathize with us without being able to utter a single word," said Kim Kobayashi Elliott, a certified therapeutic recreation specialist at NMCS D, who advocates for the program and has worked with Beckett for many years.

"The importance of just taking time out of your day to stop and pause, and really look around you, to appreciate the horses, is pretty amazing," she said.

"Animals have a way of unconditionally accepting you. Also, people feel more at ease," Elliott said. "They can tell an animal anything, right? They don't break secrets. They're not into politics. But we're also trying to promote healthy recreation and experiences for staff and their families. That's what these animals do for us."

Learn about TRICARE's coverage of hippotherapy [<https://www.tricare.mil/CoveredServices/IsItCovered/Hippotherapy>], an exercise program that offers a person with a disability a means of physical activity that aids in improving balance, posture, coordination, the development of a positive attitude, and a sense of accomplishment through use of a horse and a physical or occupational therapist.

Artificial Intelligence and medical research

Artificial intelligence, or AI, has been around for decades. In the past 20 years or so, it's become a growing part of our lives. Researchers are now drawing on the power of AI to improve medicine and health care in innovative and far-reaching ways. NIH is on the cutting edge supporting these efforts.

At first, computers could simply do calculations based on human input. In AI, they learn to perform certain tasks. Some early forms of AI could play checkers or chess and even defeat human world champions. Others could recognize and convert speech to text.

Today, different forms of AI are being used to improve medical care. Researchers are exploring how AI could be used to sift through test results and image data. AI could then make recommendations to help with treatment decisions.

Some NIH-funded studies are using AI to develop "smart clothing" that can reduce low back pain. This technology could warn the wearer of unsafe body movements. Other studies are seeking ways to better manage blood glucose (or blood sugar) levels using wearable sensors.

Learn more about the different types of AI and their use in medical research.

What are the types of AI and how do they differ?

Artificial Intelligence: A feature where machines learn to perform tasks, rather than simply carrying out computations that are input by human users.

Early applications of AI included machines that could play games such as checkers and chess, and programs that could reproduce

language.

Machine Learning: An approach to AI in which a computer algorithm (a set of rules and procedures) is developed to analyze and make predictions from data that is fed into the system.

Machine learning-based technologies are routinely used every day, such as personalized news feeds and traffic prediction maps.

Neural Networks: A machine learning approach modeled after the brain in which algorithms process signals via interconnected nodes called artificial neurons.

Mimicking biological nervous systems, artificial neural networks have been used successfully to recognize and predict patterns of neural signals involved in brain function.

Deep Learning: A form of machine learning that uses many layers of computation to form

what is described as a deep neural network, capable of learning from large amounts of complex, unstructured data.

Deep neural networks are responsible for voice-controlled virtual assistants as well as self-driving vehicles, which learn to recognize traffic signs.

How is AI being used to improve medical care and biomedical research?

Radiology: The ability of AI to interpret imaging results may aid in detecting a minute change in an image that a clinician might accidentally miss.

Imaging: One example is the use of AI to evaluate how an individual will look after facial and cleft palate surgery.

Telehealth: Wearable devices allow for constant monitoring of a patient and the detection of physiological changes that may provide

Active Tuberculosis reported at Boys & Girls Club National City

Students and staff at Boys & Girls Club's National City location and some Boys & Girls Club summer camp sites may have been exposed to tuberculosis, the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) announced Jan. 26. HHSA Public Health Services department and the Boys and Girls Club officials have worked in close collaboration to identify and notify those with a high risk of exposure to tuberculosis (TB). No-cost testing will be provided to individuals at increased risk for infection. The period of exposure is from May 28, 2022, to Nov. 8, 2022. Individuals who would like more information on this potential exposure should call:

Boys and Girls Club National City at (619) 452-1859
San Diego County TB Control Program at (619) 692-8621

Consolidated Department of Defense Coronavirus Disease 2019 Force Health Protection Guidance Revision Jan. 31, 2023

The Department of Defense recently released the memorandum for the Consolidated Department of Defense Coronavirus Disease 2019 Force Health Protection (FHP) Guidance – Revision 4. Effective immediately, the memorandum amends the preamble, executive summary, and sections 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 3.3, 4.1-4.4, 5.1-5.5, 5.9-5.10, 5.12, 6, 7.1-7.7, and 9 of the "Consolidated Department of Defense Coronavirus Disease 2019 Force Health Protection Guidance," (August 29, 2022 version).

Where applicable, these changes end coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) screening testing based on vaccination status; end the requirement to ask about COVID-19 vaccination status; update protocols for individuals exposed to someone with COVID-19; no longer require workplace occupancy limits for each Health Protection Condition levels; and modify travel guidance.

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- School of Infantry Recreation Center: Single Marine Support
- Volunteer Opportunities

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- Santa's Workshop and Secret SANTA
- Neighborhood Exchange - Food and Diaper Distribution

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- Apple Juice
- Condiments

- Cereal
- Spices
- Rice
- Canned tuna
- Jelly
- Chicken Broth
- Soup

The Pendleton Pantry ensures military families have everything they need to make ends meet and have homes running smoothly.

Questions? Email Lisi Carranza at ecarranza@asymca.org

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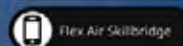


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