

ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



SEE FLEET WEEK 2023 SCHEDULE ON PAGE 10

San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985

SIXTY-THIRD YEAR NO. 23
NOVEMBER 1, 2023

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



FLAME FIGHTERS Air Force Airman 1st Class Kyle Datu and Staff Sgt. Matt Trevizo, 99th Civil Engineering Squadron fire protection specialists, extinguish a fire during an aircraft live fire training exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev. Oct. 12, 2023. Propane igniters are built in multiple positions throughout and around the training fuselage providing firefighters with a more realistic training environment. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Zachary Rufus

Officials detail DoD's goal in Middle East

by Jim Garamone, DOD News

America's efforts in the Middle East are in support of Israel's right to defend itself from terrorism and to contain the violence, senior defense officials said Oct. 24.

The officials, speaking on background, discussed U.S. efforts in the Middle East as conflict continues to blaze in Gaza.

"As we've communicated previously, the U.S. remains committed to ensuring the security and well-being of its allies and partners, particularly in the face of escalating threats across the region," a senior defense official said.

Part of this commitment are the changes Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III ordered in U.S. defense posture in the region.

Austin ordered USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* carrier strike group to the U.S. Central Command area of operations. This is in addition to the USS *Gerald R. Ford* carrier strike group that will remain in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea.

The secretary also ordered the deployment of a terminal high-altitude area defense battery and additional Patriot battalions to the region. These assets and personnel will to enhance U.S. force protection in the region.

Finally, "an additional number of forces have been placed on prepare-to-deploy orders to increase their readiness and ensure rapid response if required," the official said. "These measures are critical to bolstering regional deterrence efforts, safeguarding our troops and assisting in the defense of Israel."

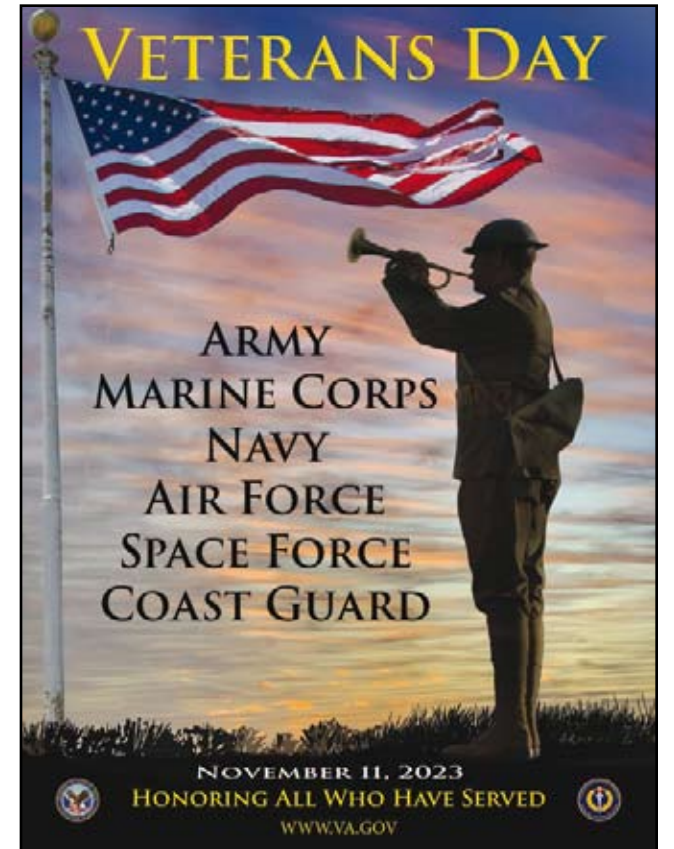
The deployment of the carrier strike groups to the region sends a clear message to all parties in the Middle East.

"Our carrier strike groups give us the ability to launch operations independently, anywhere in the world and immediately upon

see **Middle East**, page 8

NOVEMBER: LIST OF MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Good Nutrition Month | Crypto Literacy Month | Nat'l Scholarship Month | Nat'l Home Care and Hospice |
| Peanut Butter Lovers Month | Nat'l Life Writing Month | Adopt a Turkey Month | Nat'l Homeless Youth |
| World Vegan Month | Brovember | 22q Awareness Month | Awareness Month |
| Lung Cancer Awareness | Native American Heritage | Nat'l Pinhole Gum Rejuvenation | Nat'l Hunger and |
| Nat'l Pomegranate Month | Nat'l College Application | Riboflavin Transporter | Homelessness Awareness |
| Nat'l Peppercorn Month | Worldwide Bereaved Siblings | Deficiency Awareness Month | Nat'l Impotency Month |
| Nat'l Pepper Month | Nat'l Stomach Cancer | Roevermonth | Nat'l Inspirational Role Models |
| Nat'l Raisin Bread Month | Awareness Month | Addiction Awareness Month | Nat'l Long-Term Care |
| Month of the Military Family | Academic Writing Month | America Recycles Month | Awareness Month |
| American Diabetes Month | Nat'l Apprenticeship Month | CRPS Awareness Month | Nat'l Marrow Awareness |
| Nat'l Adoption Month | Nat'l Blog Posting Month | Int'l Restorative Justice | Nat'l Medical Science Liaison |
| Pancreatic Cancer Awareness | Nat'l Runaway Prevention | Manatee Awareness Month | (MSL) Awareness and |
| Nat'l Gratitude Month | Transgender Awareness | Memoir Writing Month | Appreciation Month |
| Gluten-Free Diet Awareness | Package Liquor Store Month | November | Nat'l PPSI AIDS Awareness |
| Nat'l Georgia Pecan Month | Hyperhidrosis Awareness | Nat'l Adopt a Senior Pet | Nat'l Pet Awareness Month |
| Nat'l Stuffing Month | Teff and Millet Month | Nat'l Alzheimer's Disease | Nat'l Pet Cancer Awareness |
| Sweet Potato Awareness | Nat'l Sexual Health Month | Awareness Month | PTA Healthy Lifestyles |
| Nat'l Novel Writing Month | Aviation History Month | Nat'l Bladder Health Awareness | Pet Diabetes Month |
| Nat'l Roasting Month | Critical Infrastructure | ness Month | Prematurity Awareness |
| Fun With Fondue Month | Security and Resilience | Nat'l Epilepsy Awareness | Real Jewelry Month |
| Picture Book Month | Kiwanis Family Month | Nat'l Family Caregivers | World Communication |
| Banana Pudding Lovers | Nat'l Career Development | Nat'l Fragrance Month | World Quality Month |
| No Nut November | Nat'l Child Safety & Prevention | Nat'l Healthy Skin Month | Write Nonfiction in November |



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See pages 5, 6, 8

4 ways you can observe National Veterans and Military Family Month

(StatePoint) When was the last time you thanked a military member or veteran for their service? November is National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month and an excellent time to celebrate, support and honor service members.

That's why Points of Light, a global nonprofit organization dedicated to mobilizing people to take action that changes the world, is sharing ways you can get involved, along with the stories of former military members already doing so. From volunteering to donating and beyond, these ideas are based on the Points of Light Civic Circle, a framework that highlights nine pathways to boosting social impact.

1. Listen and learn. Being informed about an issue can help you think more critically, make better decisions and lend stronger support. Check out two podcasts created by Military OneSource. Covering topics like deployment, casualty assistance, money management and parenting, they are designed to help mili-

tary members and families thrive, and can help others understand the difficulties of military life.

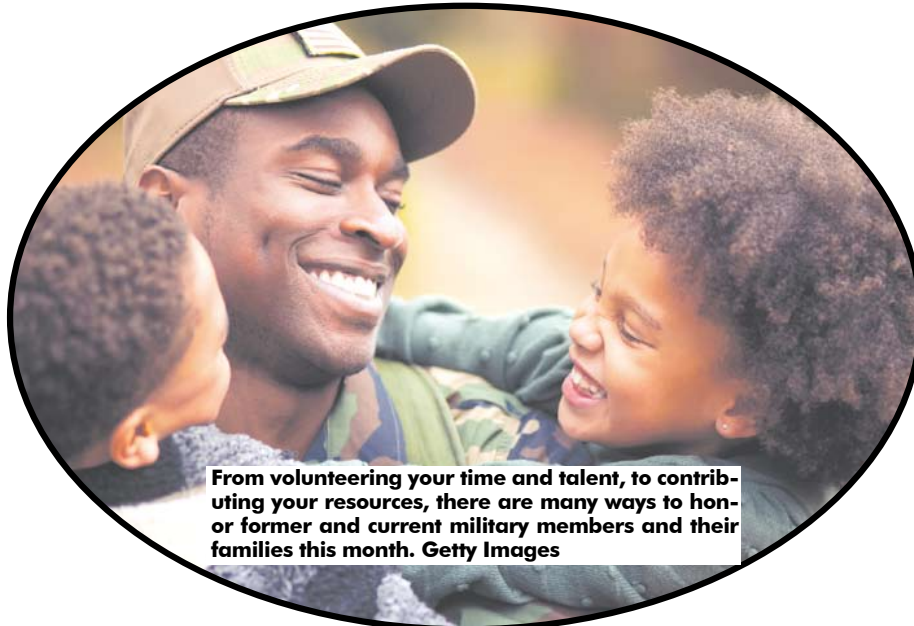
2. Volunteer. Hands-on support is some of the most impactful work you can do in the nonprofit sector, and organizations rely heavily on volunteer power to carry out their missions. The

training, but can be carried out from anywhere, and shifts are flexible. Whether you're looking for remote or in-person volunteer opportunities, search Points of Light Engage, the world's most comprehensive database of volunteer opportunities around the globe.

You can also get inspired

advocated for mental health in the military, volunteering her time with Patrol Base Abbate, a nonprofit that fosters community and purpose among service members and veterans.

3. Donate. Nonprofits and NGOs are dependent on donations to pay their staff, recruit volunteers and exe-



From volunteering your time and talent, to contributing your resources, there are many ways to honor former and current military members and their families this month. Getty Images

American Red Cross is currently recruiting caseworkers for military members, veterans and families. This volunteer role requires some

by such dedicated volunteers as Navy servicewoman and Daily Point of Light Honoree Michaela White. For the past two years, she's

cute their high-impact work. This year marks Wounded Warrior Project's 20th anniversary. You can support its mission of providing career

and VA benefits counseling, mental health support, adaptive sports initiatives and more, by making a donation for National Veterans and Military Family Appreciation Month.

4. Celebrate, thank and honor veterans. Veterans and their family members are everywhere - from working alongside you to doing everyday things like grocery shopping, eating at a restaurant and more. Consider ways you can celebrate and honor military members or veterans in your community. It might be as simple as thanking a coworker for their service, writing a thank you note and dropping it off at your local VA or sending one virtually through Sol-

diers' Angels. You might also attend a Veterans Day parade or event in your community or simply ask a veteran about their service. These gestures can go a long way in helping veterans and service members feel seen and appreciated.

Retired fireman, Army veteran and Daily Point of Light Honoree Tom Schneider is a great example of someone who integrates his work with causes he cares about. Since 2017, he's extended a helping hand to those devastated by floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes and even plane crashes as an American Red Cross volunteer.



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DOD report details Chinese efforts to build military power

by Jim Garamone

The People's Republic of China is continuing its efforts to overturn the international rules-based order and is building an increasingly effective military to further these aims, said a senior defense official speaking on background.

The official gave reporters a preview of the 2023 China Military Power Report that DOD delivered to Congress Oct. 19. The annual report to Congress is based on the National Defense Strategy's premise that China is the only competitor with the intent, will and capability to reshape the international order, said the official. "The 2022 National Defense Strategy identifies the PRC as increasingly capable military as the department's top pacing challenge," he said.

The report "charts the current course of the PRC's national economic and military strategies, and offers insight into the strategy, its current capabilities, some of its operational activities, as well as its future modernization goals," he said.

Communist leaders seek "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," by 2049 – the 100th

anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party's takeover of the world's largest country.

Part of this effort is China is increasing military coercion, the official said. An example of this is the increasing numbers of unsafe intercepts of U.S., allied and partner vessels and aircraft operating in international air and seaways of the Indo-Pacific region. "Between the fall of 2021 and the fall of 2023, the United States documented over 180 instances of coercive and risky air intercepts against U.S. aircraft in the region," the official said. When allies and partners are included, this jumps to more than 300 instances.

The report also covers China's intensifying pressure campaign against Taiwan including Chinese ballistic missile overflights of Taiwan, increased flights into Taiwan's self-declared air defense identification zone and the large-scale simulated joint blockade and simulated joint firepower strike operations done after a visit to the island by a U.S. congressional delegation.

Additionally, China's deepening security ties with Russia are covered. In fact, as the official was detailing the content of the

report, Chinese President Xi Jinping was meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin at a ceremony marking the 10th anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative in China. The senior defense official said China sees its emergence as a great power as tied to the alliance with Russia.

The report also looks at the continued development of the Chinese military's nuclear, space and cyberspace capabilities. "We see the PRC continuing to quite rapidly modernize and diversify and expand its nuclear forces," he said. "They are expanding and investing in their land, sea and air-based nuclear delivery platforms, as well as the infrastructure that's required to support this."

The report estimates the Chinese had more than 500 operational nuclear warheads as of May 2023. "That is on track to exceed some of our previous predictions," he said.

China is developing new intercontinental ballistic missiles. These may also be conventionally-armed missiles. "If developed and fielded, such capabilities would allow the PRC to threaten conventional strikes against

targets in the continental United States, Hawaii and Alaska," the official said.

According to the report, Chinese leaders are seeking to modernize People's Liberation Army capabilities in all domains of warfare.

On the land, the PLA continues to modernize its equipment and focus on combined arms and joint training, the official said. The Chinese military is still a conscript force with two intakes a year. The military is working to field long-range fires and incorporate the capability into their doctrine.

At sea, China has the world's largest navy with a battle force of more than 370 ships and submarines. The Chinese launched their third aircraft carrier in the past year and commissioned their third amphibious assault ship.

The PLA Air Force "is rapidly catching up to western air forces," the official said. The air force continues to build up manned and unmanned aircraft and the Chinese announced the fielding of the H-6N – its first nuclear-capable, air-to-air refueled bomber.

see **China**, page 4

FROM THE SERVICES

Top 5

- Biden asks Congress for Israel, Ukraine aid in giant defense package
- Army private who ran to North Korea charged with desertion
- China more than doubled its nuclear arsenal since 2020, Pentagon says
- U.S. troops overseas thwart multiple drone attacks in just days
- Infantry unit Marine was shot, killed in 'isolated incident' in barracks at Camp Lejeune

Army

- Army needs a lot of money for barracks, but it's fighting for pocket change
- Army faces logistics, alliance hurdles in the Pacific

Navy

- Former San Diego Navy chief sentenced in \$2 million insurance fraud scam
- Carrier USS Ronald Reagan, Japanese warships drill in East China Sea
- Sailor suicides spark effort to change Navy's mental health culture
- Man guilty in 1990 killing of Navy Sailor in Point Loma

Marine Corps

- What you need to know about the 48th Marine Corps Marathon

Air Force

- B-52 squadron commander talks up joint training during bomber's rare stop in South Korea
- Air Force Reserve crew at JBLM receives medals for efforts during Afghanistan withdrawal

Space Force

- Space Force finalizes plan for commercial surge capacity during crisis
- Why declassifying space is such a struggle, according to the CSO



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Pentagon increases cap on military medical malpractice damages to \$750,000

by Rose L. Thayer
Stars and Stripes

The Defense Department increased its cap on medical malpractice claims to allow for non-economic damages up to \$750,000 to be paid out to service members who are mistreated in military medical facilities, the Pentagon announced Oct. 20.

The change, which goes into effect immediately, raises that

cap from \$600,000, and applies to any pending claims, according to the Defense Department.

A second proposed change updates how the Pentagon offsets payouts to service members based on military or Department of Veteran Affairs benefits that they receive because of the medical condition involved in the claim.

The changes follow calls

from members of Congress and the military community that the guidelines put into place roughly two years ago were not providing the right amount of oversight and were failing troops with valid claims.

Master Sgt. Richard Stayskal, the soldier whose story moved Congress in 2019 to change the more than 70-year-old law that shielded the military from malpractice claims, had his own claim denied earlier this year.

Stayskal, who is assigned to Fort Liberty, N.C., was diagnosed in 2017 with terminal lung cancer that grew for months as military doctors mistook his symptoms for pneumonia. It's since spread to his neck, lymph nodes, spleen, liver, spine, a hip joint and other areas of his body.

The Pentagon began accepting claims in January 2020, but only began adjudicating them on July 17, 2021, when the interim rules on how to do so went into effect, according to the Federal Register.

In March, several members of Congress rallied with Stayskal at a news conference to call for improvements to the Pentagon's malpractice regulations.

Natalie Khawam, Stayskal's attorney, said she's "cautiously optimistic" that the proposed changes will get additional

resources in the hands of medical malpractice victims "that's more commensurate with the harm done to them."

She called on Congress to do more to improve the medical malpractice system and pass a House bill that allows service members to take their medical malpractice claims to district court. The Healthcare Equality and Rights for Our Heroes Act has not had any further action since its introduction in July.

The proposed regulation changes published Friday in the Federal Register will undergo a 60-day comment period and final evaluation before becoming law, according to the Pentagon.

If published as a final rule, offsetting of other benefits would only apply to economic damages, and would require clarification on when lost wages might be awarded – allowing some troops to receive larger payouts. It also clarifies how to consider the claimant's ability to return to work.

Of the four claims filed in 2021 and 2022 that would have been affected by these changes, only one would have been different, according to the Federal Register. In that claim, \$200,000 was subject to offset. It would not have been offset under the proposed changes.



SIERRA DEL RETIN TRAINING CAMP, Spain (Oct. 6, 2023) A Marine gives the signal for the Marines to begin fast roping out of an MV-22 Osprey. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Michele Clarke



ADAZI, Latvia (Oct. 20, 2023) U.S. Army Soldiers and NATO allies complete a 1-kilometer canoe portage testing their physical and mental resilience during the Baltic Warrior Challenge. U.S. Army photo by Capt. H Howey

GREAT LAKES, III. (Oct. 19, 2023) Navy Recruit Training Command's Pass in Review. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Christopher M. O'Grady



China continued from page 3

The Chinese military has not been involved in a shooting war since 1979 and "this actually is one of the shortcomings that the PRC highlights and a lot of their own self assessments," the official said. "They tried to address that, I think, by attempting to make their training and their exercises more realistic, to more closely approximate ... actual combat type conditions.

"I think they tried to address it as well, by learning whatever lessons they can from other countries' involvement in military conflicts," he continued.

Chinese military leaders carefully studied military conflicts involving U.S. forces, Russian forces and others over the years. That is one of the key sources they draw upon to better understand how they need to prepare

themselves for future combat operations. "Certainly, they're watching very closely Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine," the official said.

The Chinese military is looking for bases overseas and looking to develop the resources needed to be a globally relevant force. They have established an overall logistics command and they are working hand-in-glove with the Belt and Road Initiative to gain access.

Finally, the report also discusses the dearth of contacts between U.S. and Chinese defense officials. "The PLA's refusal to engage in military-to-military communications with the United States, combined with the PLA's increasingly coercive and risky operational behavior, raises the risk of an operational incident or miscalculation spiraling into crisis or conflict," the official said.

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Military well prepared for civilian transition, official says

by David Vergun
DOD News

Service members are better prepared for their transition to civilian life today than at any other time in history, reflecting the Defense Department's commitment to taking care of its people, Ashish S. Vazirani said.

Vazirani, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, testified on a panel Oct. 18 at a joint hearing of the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees on military-to-civilian transition.

"Our investments in our service members' training and education, financial readiness, and health and well-being, coupled with the whole of government efforts to support their transition, are proving effective," he said.

Veterans using the post-9/11 GI Bill are more likely to graduate and have a higher grade-point average than those of previous periods. Veterans are 20% more likely to be homeowners than their civilian counterparts. Also, veterans enrolled with the Department of Veterans Affairs have better health outcomes than their

civilian counterparts, he said.

The VA-DOD Joint Executive Committee provides the framework through which the two departments jointly oversee the transition process. The Transition Assistance Program Executive Council, a subordinate committee, is responsible for ensuring the two departments are meeting statutory requirements and continuously improving the transition process, Vazirani said.

DOD and the VA "have made great strides in mental health support services, career advancement and educational resources, transitioning spouse employment assistance, and homelessness prevention just to name a few," he said.

"It is our duty to ensure a successful service member is a successful veteran," he added.

"Members of the military and their families repeatedly prove their dedication, courage and selflessness in protecting our nation. In return, our value proposition is to provide them with the support, services and resources they need to thrive beyond the



In this April 2, 2023 photo, Air Force reservists stand in formation at the Pittsburgh International Airport Air Reserve Station. U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. James E. Harris III

battlefield," he said.

Joshua D. Jacobs, the VA's undersecretary for benefits, said that each year approximately 200,000 service members transition from military to civilian life.

"For many, transition is an opportunity to take on new challenges and build the next chapter in their lives. For others, this time can be daunting and filled with a mix of emotions and uncertainties. It's our duty to care for all types of veterans, regardless of where they are in this journey," Jacobs said.

Veterans who use their earned

benefits are healthier, they earn more, and they're better set up for success as they enter civilian life, he noted.

Success or failure in connecting veterans with their benefits has lasting impact on the military's ability to recruit future generations of service members, he said.

Service members are allowed to begin TAP one year prior to separation, or two years prior to retiring, he said.

"Attending TAP as early as possible in the transition process is critical for transitioning service members, given the vast

amount of information they need to digest in a compressed timeframe. It also gives them the opportunity to access their earned VA benefits more quickly," Jacobs said.

James Rodriguez, the Department of Labor's assistant secretary for the Veterans' Employment and Training Service, said his department helps prepare veterans, service members and military spouses for meaningful careers, provides them with employment resources and expertise, protects their employment rights and promotes their employment opportunities.

In fiscal year 2022, the Labor Department provided career-related instructions to more than

Vietnam War Commemoration at Midway Museum

The U.S.A. Vietnam War Commemoration will host an event at the USS Midway Museum Nov. 9 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to thank and honor San Diego's Vietnam veterans and their families, as well as all the organizations in and around San Diego that support our Vietnam veteran community. Our nation's Vietnam veterans served their country with valor and honor yet did not receive the proper "Welcome Home!" or "Thank you for your service!" they deserved.

This event is limited to 400 guests and admission to the USS Midway Museum is free for all participants. Registration is required using the following link: https://www.vietnamwar50th.com/san_diego_registration/.

266,000 participants, which is an increase of more than 40 percent from the previous workshop record in fiscal year 2021, he said.

In fiscal year 2023, 97 percent of participants indicated they would use what they learned in their own transition planning and 95 percent reported that their confidence in transition planning was enhanced, Rodriguez said.

"Our long-term strategic goal for TAP is for the nation to recognize military service as a path to high-quality civilian careers. The future of the country's all-volunteer force across the armed services depends on this recognition," he said.

--- COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN ---

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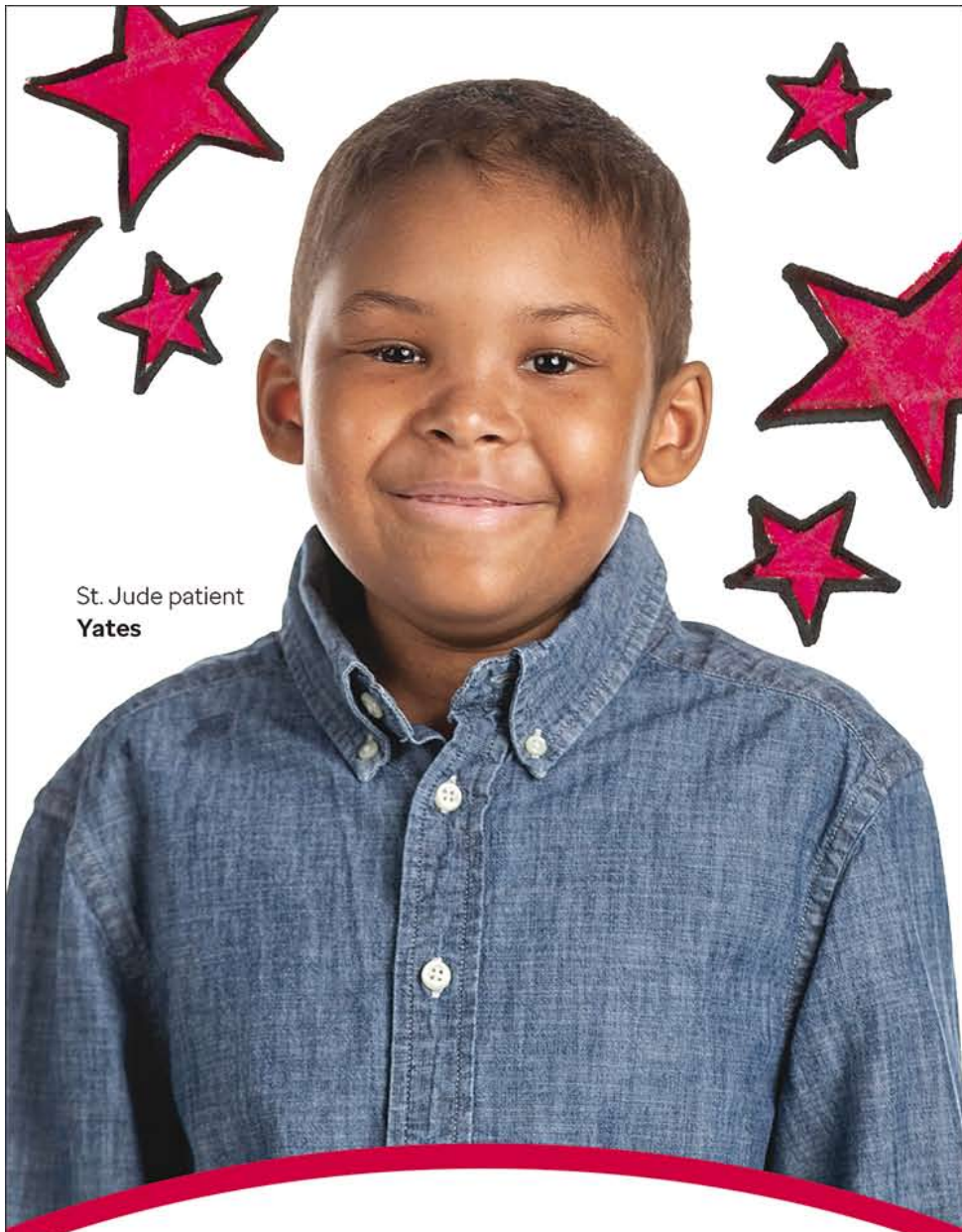
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Local Military

Navy breaks ground on \$51.9 million aircraft hangar in Coronado



<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/456035/>

Base officials from Naval Base Coronado, along with construction contractors, gather for a groundbreaking ceremony for a new aircraft hangar Oct. 13. U.S. Navy photo by Katie Cadiao

NAS NORTH ISLAND Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southwest and its partners broke ground on a new aircraft hangar at here Oct. 13. The new hangar will be built by RQ Construction, LLC.

“RQ Construction’s track record across the Southwest is long and strong and we are proud to have partners like them, who take pride in delivering quality construction to our installation commanders,” said Capt. Laurie Scott, commanding officer for NAVFAC Southwest.

The \$51.9 million state-of-the-art building will take about two years to complete and will add much-needed capacity for aircraft repair and maintenance. Once completed, the new single-story depot-level hangar will enable Sailors to work on large-wing aircraft like the Osprey, a task currently performed in a hangar that was built at NASNI during WWII.

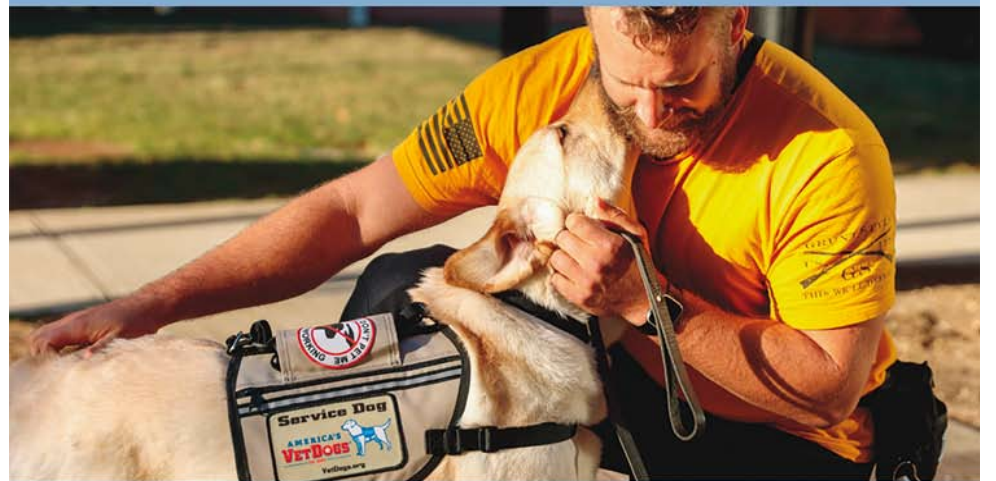
“This new facility is representing a fresh start for naval aviation at NAS North Island,” said Capt. Newt “Bomb” McKissick, commanding officer, Naval Base Coronado.

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Navy fires skipper of guided-missile cruiser for 'loss of confidence'

The Navy has removed the commander of cruiser USS *Lake Erie* for unspecified performance issues. Capt. Danielle DeFant was relieved by Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander of Carrier Strike Group 9, "due to a loss of confidence in her ability to command," Naval Surface Force said earlier this month in a news release. "Navy commanding officers are held to high standards of personal and professional conduct," the release said. "They are expected to uphold the highest standards of responsibility, reliability and leadership, and the Navy holds them accountable when they fall short of those standards."

Hospital ship *Mercy* begins annual Pacific Partnership tour of island nations

A Navy hospital ship steamed out of San Diego Bay recently and began making its way across the Pacific, where it plans to stop at island nations as part of an annual disaster preparedness mission. USNS *Mercy* leads Pacific Partnership 2024. Equipped with 1,000 hospital beds and a crew of 800 civilian and military personnel, including doctors and dentists, the ship will host symposiums and training events throughout the region, the Navy said in a news release.

USNCC president speaks at CLO Symposium

SAN DIEGO – U.S. Naval Community College's President Randi Cosentino spoke at the Chief Learning Officer Symposium on Oct. 16. The 19th annual CLO Symposium provides an opportunity for leaders in learning and development to share their perspectives, approaches and lessons on learning environments and their impact on organizations and the career journeys of employees. "It was a pleasure to participate in the CLO symposium and discuss the impact that organizations can have when they invest in targeted educational opportunities for their employees," said Cosentino. "Whether in the government, military, or in the private sector, we are all facing a changing work landscape and education is a critical path to meet tomorrow's needs."

Middle East continued from page 1

arrival," the official said. "When we send them somewhere, we are deliberately sending an incredibly strong signal to our adversaries, but also to our allies and partners about the depth of our support, and the ability of the U.S. military to expeditiously, dynamically respond to contingencies anywhere in the world."

The groups provide a wide range of support from intelligence collection to maritime dominance to long-range strikes. This is a strategic move to show American support "not only to the region, but also to support Israel, and its right to defend itself from the brutal Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attacks," the official said.

These naval assets and the earlier deployment of fighter jets to the region are deterrence in the flesh. "Our advice to those who might seek to exploit the situation or amplify the conflict is simple: Don't," the official said.

The military capabilities and personnel in the region always retain the right of self-defense, the official said. Attacks will be answered decisively "at a time and place of our choosing."

The official also addressed the humanitarian aspects of the Hamas terror attack. "The loss

of innocent lives, including U.S. citizens, Israeli civilians and Palestinian civilians is truly heart-breaking," the official said. "We have worked across the board from the White House to the State Department to the Defense Department to prioritize civilian protections and safety, as well as ensure the delivery of life-saving humanitarian aid to Gaza over the weekend."

Civilians should not be deliberately targeted. "Our partner, Israel, is a law-abiding country obligated to adhere to the law of armed conflict," the official said. "Hamas — a terrorist organization — didn't, doesn't, and continues to deliberately target civilians and hold civilians hostage."

Iran and Iranian proxy groups remain roadblocks to peace in the region. Hamas is a proxy group of Tehran as is Lebanese Hezbollah and many groups operating in Syria and parts of Iraq. U.S. personnel in Syria and Iraq have been targets and destroyer USS *Carney*, operating in the Red Sea, foiled cruise missile and suicide drone attacks last week.

"We see a prospect for a more significant escalation against U.S. forces and personnel in the near term," the official said. "And let's be clear about it — the road leads back to Iran. Iran funds, arms, equips and trains militias and proxy forces all across the region."



Aircraft carrier *Gerald R. Ford* receives supplies from USNS *Laramie* in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea Oct. 11. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Jackson Adkins

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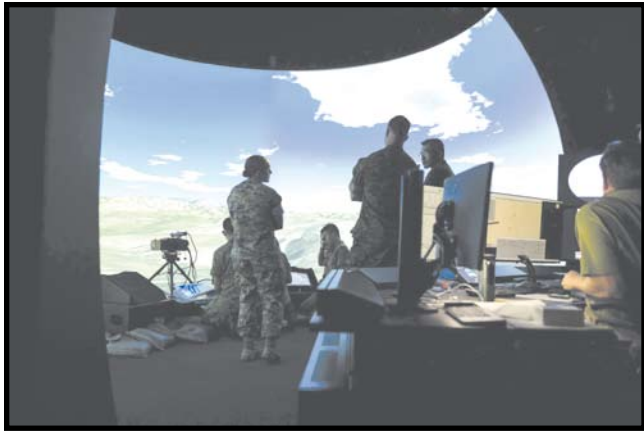


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SIMULATION SETTING
 U.S. Marines and Singaporean guardsmen conduct simulations in combined arms, fire support and communications capabilities on the small arms virtual trainer during Valiant Mark at Camp Pendleton Oct. 10, 2023. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Samantha Devine

GETTING UNTANGLED
 Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Celeste FloresCastillo, a logistics specialist with I Marine Expeditionary Force, untangles chains for a quadcon container in preparation for an upcoming deployment on Camp Pendleton Oct. 20, 2023. U.S. Marine Corps photo Cpl. Dean Gurule



CUTTING EVENT
 Capt. Elizabeth Adriano (left), commanding officer of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command San Diego, helped celebrate National Pharmacy Week with HM3 Elsy Salmeron, the youngest Sailor in the NMRTC Pharmacy. U.S. Navy photo

Germantown holds change of command

Dock landing ship USS *Germantown* held a change of command ceremony aboard the ship's flight deck

of you I am," said Welgan. "You have been an extension of my family for the past 3 years."

about this ship's future".



Cmdr. Kenneth Zilka

at Naval Base San Diego, Oct. 20.

homeport shift to San Diego in October 2021.

Cmdr. Kenneth Zilka relieved Cmdr. Michael Welgan, as the ship's skipper. "To the men and women of *Germantown*, I'll never be able to adequately express how proud

Before turning over command to Zilka, Welgan said, "I'm completely impressed by your dedication and ingenuity to accomplish every task. You have changed every conversation

Prior to assuming command of *Germantown* in April 2022 We l g a n served 18 months as the executive officer, taking part in numerous patrols in the 7th Fleet area of operation and a

Incoming CO Zilka's last assignment was director of manpower and personnel (N1) at Surface Warfare Schools Command in Newport, R.I.

Zilka addressed the crew for the first time as commanding officer, thanking Welgan and providing a positive outlook for *Germantown's* future.

"I want to congratulate Cmdr. Welgan on turning over such a great ship and crew," said Zilka. "I'm truly honored to have the opportunity to lead the officers and crew of *Germantown* as we continue the push to be operationally ready to sail into harm's way when called upon."

Germantown is homeported in San Diego and is a part of Amphibious Squadron 7 which is responsible for six amphibious ships and embarked Marine expeditionary unit forces.



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Then

USS Essex turns 31!

Now



Oct. 17, 1992: The commissioning ceremony for USS Essex LHD-2 at Naval Air Station, North Island.

U.S. NAVY PHOTOS



Oct. 17, 1992: Cmdr. Jeffrey Parks, left, and Seaman Isaiah Parks, cut a cake in celebration of Essex' 31st birthday.

Fleet Week San Diego

Many events are at Broadway Pier downtown San Diego



For more information visit www.fleetweeksandiego.org

San Diego is home to the largest U.S. military concentration in the country. Fleet Week San Diego is designed to honor and celebrate the military's incalculable contributions as defenders of our nation and neighbors in our community.

NOV 8-12 • 10am-4pm
MILITARY & VETERANS ART EXHIBIT
Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego

NOV 3 • 11:30am
ENLISTED RECOGNITION LUNCHEON
San Diego Zoo

NOV 3 • 4:45-6pm
MILITARY BAND CONCERT
Spreckels Organ Pavilion at Balboa Park

NOV 4, 2023
SDSU FLEET WEEK FOOTBALL CLASSIC
Snapdragon Stadium Mission Valley

NOV 8 • 7:30am
SDMAC FLEET WEEK BREAKFAST
Midway Museum

NOV 8-9 • 9am-3pm
STUDENT STEM DAYS

NOV 10 • 10am-4pm
OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FLEET WEEK INNOVATION ZONE
This space showcases some of the latest high-tech equipment used in both Military and Civilian applications, and is an exciting attraction for all ages. Register: <https://www.fleetweeksandiego.org/innovation-zone/>

NOV 10-12 • 10am-4pm
PUBLIC SHIP TOURS
Tour a Navy and Coast Guard Ship. Free. No reservations necessary

NOV 11 • 10am-4pm
MILITARY FAMILY DAY
Broadway Pier. FREE.

NOV 11, 2023
MRE COOKING CONTEST
Military members show their cooking skills.

NOV 12 • 9:30am
VETERANS DAY BOAT PARADE
San Diego Bay

NOV 12 2pm
VETERANS DAY CONCERT
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Marine veteran and his horse complete coast-to-coast journey for PTSD Awareness



Matt Perella and his horse, Buck, end a 184-day cross-country journey at Onslow Beach, Camp Lejeune. Photo courtesy of Matt Perella.

by Rikki Almanza

On Tuesday, Oct. 10, Marine Veteran Matt Perella and his horse, Buck, completed a remarkable 7,000-mile journey across 17 states from Camp Pendleton, California to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

This feat, achieved in just under six months, made Buck the fastest horse to cross the country coast-to-coast. Perella embarked on this journey to raise awareness for Veterans struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, inspired by the suicides of military friends and his own battles with PTSD.

Perella found solace in his horse, Buck, and nature, which inspired him to leave everything behind and set out on this adventure. Along the way, he encountered numerous challenges, including injuries to Buck, but the support and generosity of people they met kept them going.

This experience inspired Perella to find a deeper purpose in helping not only Veterans but also animals in need.

During his journey, Perella fundraised to support his future project, the Righteous Life Rescue

Ranch, a 300-acre property in his hometown of Asheville. This venture will be a mental health rehabilitation center for healing and renewal for both Veterans and animals. Perella emphasized the importance of nature's influence and its role in the healing process.

Perella wants to help other Veterans, just as his animals have provided support to him. The ranch will serve as a sanctuary for retired animals like Buck and rescue animals like his own dog, Rafe.

After his long cross-country

journey, Matt Perella anticipates a three-month recovery, and he looks forward to the opening of the Righteous Life Rescue Ranch.

Rikki Almanza is a graduate student and Web Content Coordinator for the American Legion, Department of California. With a deep-rooted connection to the military, a spouse who is a Navy veteran, a father who served in the Air Force for 25 years, and a grandfather who proudly served, Rikki is committed to using her skills and knowledge to provide valuable assistance and resources to servicemembers and veterans. For more stories visit <https://calegion.org/category/veterans-news/>

Saluting our veterans. Thank you for your service.

Veterans Day events in San Diego

Salute those who have served in our armed forces by attending these Veterans Day events and attractions. Active duty and retired service members can also take advantage of special offers around San Diego.

Red, White & Blue Salute. **SeaWorld** holds the service members of our armed forces in the highest regard and is honored to host them as guests. Nov. 10-12. SeaWorld, Interstate 5, exit SeaWorld Dr. Tickets: www.seaworldsandiego.com

Celebration on the **Midway Museum**. Nov. 11, 10 am-3 pm. Free entry with military ID. 910 N. Harbor Dr. Details: www.midway.org

Ceremony. Thank and honor our nation's veterans and their families. Nov. 11, 11 am-12 noon. **Mt. Soledad** National Veterans Memorial, 6905 La Jolla Scenic Dr. S. www.soledadmemorial.org

Flag Raising at **The Garden**. Thank our local veterans for their bravery and service to our country. Nov. 11, 8 am. Free admission for all. The Water Conservation Garden, 12122 Cuyamaca College Dr. W., El Cajon. www.thegarden.org

Ceremony. A ceremony to honor those who selflessly served our country. Nov. 11, 11 am. **Veterans Park**, 14134 Midland Rd., Poway. www.poway.org

East Village SALUTES! A day of festivities, gratitude and community spirit to honor the armed forces. Nov. 12, 12:30-4:30 pm. Park 12 Luxury Apts., 100 Park Plaza. www.eastvillagesandiego.com

Boat Parade. View the parade from the shore of Shelter Island, Harbor Island, Embarcadero, Seaport Village and Coronado Tidelands Park. Nov. 12, 9:30 am. www.fleetweeksandiego.org/veterans-day-boat-parade

Concert. See The Sully Band live in concert on Broadway Pier. More info coming soon! Nov. 12, 2 pm. Broadway Pier, 1000 N. Harbor Dr.

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Check before you go: Veterans Day discounts and freebies

On Veterans Day, businesses across the nation offer their thanks by providing a discount or a free meal to veterans and military service members.

Please verify discount with the business before you go. Independently-owned franchises may not participate so call ahead to ensure your store is participating.

For discounts businesses may require proof of service, such as military ID or DD-214. Membership cards for veteran service organizations and state-issued IDs with veteran designation. Ask before you go!

Food

Applebee's Veterans Day Free Meal Veterans and active-duty military can select a free meal from a limited menu on Veterans Day. Proof of service is required.

BJ's Restaurant On Veterans Day, all service members can enjoy a complimentary meal plus a free Dr. Pepper by presenting a military ID or proof of service.

Black Angus Steakhouse is proud to support the military community and honor those that have served. Active military, veterans and their spouses enjoy a 15% discount when you dine-in at our restaurants.

Bruegger's Bagels Veterans Day Deal Veterans can grab a free medium fresh-brewed hot or iced coffee with their breakfast on Veterans Day.

Buffalo Wild Wings All day on Veterans Day, veterans and active-duty military who dine in at

their local B-Dubs can receive a free order of boneless wings and a side of fries. At participating U.S. locations only.

California Pizza Kitchen On Veterans Day, all veterans or active-duty military personnel will be able to select a free entrée from a special Veterans Day menu including pizza, salads and pasta. Please come in uniform or bring your military ID or other proof of service.

Chick-fil-A Some participating Chick-fil-A locations may offer specials or discounts. Check your local Chick-fil-A to confirm.

Chili's Grill & Bar All veterans and active-duty military personnel can choose a complimentary meal from a select menu on Veterans Day.

Cicis Pizza Free adult buffet with valid active-duty or retired military ID on Veterans Day.

Circle K is offering all veterans and active military with a free medium coffee on Veterans Day.

Claim Jumper Veterans Day Deal Veterans who show valid ID may receive a free entrée from a special menu and a \$5 bounce-back card for the next visit. This offer is valid for dine-in only at participating restaurants.

Coco's Restaurant Veterans Day Deal All veterans and active-duty military receive a free slice of pie with proof of service. Plus buy one, get one free entrée for breakfast, lunch or dinner on Veterans Day. Coco's offers a 10% military discount to all active duty and retired military members every day for in-store purchases.

Cracker Barrel During military family appreciation month, Crack-

er Barrel will offer in-store specials on Veterans Day for military veterans and promotions throughout November to support military families in partnership with Operation Homefront. On Veterans Day, veterans can receive a free slice of double fudge Coca-Cola cake with their meal.

Denny's Veterans Day Deal All active, non-active or retired military personnel at all participating Denny's restaurants nationwide will receive a free build-your-own grand slam breakfast on Veterans Day 5 a.m.-noon. Diners must show ID to receive this offer.

Dunkin' Donuts On November 11, 2023, Dunkin' Donuts is offering a complimentary donut to active-duty military and veterans. The offer is limited to one donut per person, available in-store, with no purchase or military ID needed. It's advisable to check with local Dunkin' Donuts locations for participation.

Einstein Bros. Bagels Veterans Day Deal Free hot or iced coffee of any size with purchase when veterans show their ID inside each bakery location.

Famous Dave's On Veterans Day, all former and current military personnel will receive a free Georgia chopped pork sandwich plus a side. Dine-in or to go.

Farmer Boys On November 11, Farmer Boys offers veterans a complimentary Big Cheese cheeseburger. It's recommended to verify participation with your local Farmer Boys. Proof of service is required when ordering, and the offer is not available for delivery or mobile orders.

Fogo de Chao Veterans Day Deal Active-duty military and veterans enjoy 50% off their meal, plus an additional 10% off for up to three guests.

Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night On Monday, November 13, 2023, from 5pm to close, active and former military members are invited for Military Appreciation Night, where they can receive a complimentary meal. This offer is for dine-in only.

Hard Rock Cafe Military Discount Present your valid military ID to receive your 15% military discount on all food, beverage (non-alcoholic), and retail purchases through Veterans Advantage.

Hooters On Veterans Day, November 11, veterans and active-duty military can enjoy a complimentary dinner entrée from the Hooters Veterans Day Menu upon presenting proof of service or a military ID and purchasing a beverage. This offer is for dine-in only and is available at participating Hooters locations.

IHOP Veterans Day Deal On November 11, veterans and active-duty military can enjoy free Red, White & Blueberry Pancakes at participating locations. Dine-in only with military ID or proof of service. One per guest; restrictions apply.

Ikea Enjoy a free meal at Ikea on Veterans Day at participating locations. Military ID required.

Joe's Crab Shack On Veterans Day, all veterans can enjoy 20% off. Valid for parties up to four.

Krispy Kreme On Veterans Day, a doughnut and coffee will be on the house.

Little Caesars Pizza On Veterans Day, veterans and active military members can receive a free lunch combo, which features four slices of Little Caesars popular Detroit-style deep-dish pizza, paired with a 20-ounce Pepsi product.

Luna Grill offers a year-round discount of 10% off your entire purchase, excluding alcohol. Valid in-restaurant only with valid ID or uniform required.

Macaroni Grill Veterans Day, all veterans and active military receive a free mom's ricotta meatballs + spaghetti with military ID.

McCormick & Schmick's Veterans and Gold Star families (parents and spouses) can enjoy a half-priced lunch or dinner at McCormick and Schmick's on Veterans Day.

Melting Pot Veterans eat for free on Veterans Day at select Melting Pot locations with the purchase of regular-priced four-course meals. Veterans must show military IDs.

Menchie's On Veterans Day, Menchie's Frozen Yogurt offers veterans the first 6 oz. of frozen yogurt at no cost. This promotion is available at participating locations with the presentation of a military ID.

Mimi's Cafe is offering 20% off for veterans and their families.

Morton's The Steakhouse All current and former military members enjoy 20% off on Veterans Day. Valid for parties up to four. Must show valid ID.

Nekter Juice Bar Veterans Day Deal is giving Free 16 oz Juices and Smoothies to Veterans and Active Duty Military all day long at participating locations.

Olive Garden This Veterans Day, Olive Garden is offering veterans and active-duty service members a free entree from a special menu. All entrees include Olive Garden's famous breadsticks.

On the Border This Veterans Day, veterans, retired and active-duty military will receive a free pick-two combo meal.

Outback Steakhouse Veterans Day Deal, all military veterans and active service members can enjoy a free bloom'in' onion and Coca-Cola.

Pilot Flying J/U.S. Pilot Veterans Day Deal. All active-duty and retired military veterans get a free breakfast including a coffee. Offer is available via the app.

Red Lobster On Veterans Day, veterans, active-duty military and reservists, offered a free Walt's Favorite Shrimp, Fries, and Cole-slaw, featuring six hand-breaded, butterflied and lightly fried shrimp, served with cocktail sauce, as well as crispy French Fries and Cole-slaw.

Red Robin Veterans Day Deal Veterans and active-duty military get a free Red's Tavern Double when dining in on Veterans Day. This classic burger also comes with free refills of Bottomless Steak Fries.

Smashburger Veterans and active-duty military get a free double classic smash on Veterans Day.

Smoothie King Free 20-ounce smoothie with a military ID on Veterans Day.

Starbucks On Veterans Day, active-duty service members, veterans and military spouses are invited to enjoy a free tall (12-ounce) hot or iced coffee.

TCBY First six-ounces are free for veterans and active military on Veterans Day.

Texas de Brazil Veterans receive 25% off dinner for Veterans Day.

Texas Roadhouse Veterans Day Free Meal Texas Roadhouse

will distribute meal vouchers from 11 am - 2 pm. Vouchers can be redeemed for a dine in or carry out meal from a select menu. Contact your local Texas Roadhouse for details.

TCBY First six-ounces are free for veterans and active military on Veterans Day.

Uno's Pizzeria On Veterans Day, all past and present military members get a free entrée.

Wienerschnitzel Veterans Day Deal free chili dog with a small fry and a small Pepsi to veterans and active-duty service members. Bring your military ID.

Wendy's nationwide are offering active military and veterans a free breakfast combo with valid military ID on Veterans Day. No purchase is necessary.

Yard House Veterans and active-duty military will receive a complimentary appetizer on Veterans Day with a valid military ID. The offer is valid for dine-in only.

Stuff

Bass Pro Shops are proud to honor military servicemembers and veterans with their Legendary Salute - a 5% discount available every day, both online and in-store. The 5% discount is also now available on firearms and ammunition and can be combined with other sales and promotions (excluding things like boats, ATVs, Tractors, and other large vehicles). Bass Pro Shops will be increasing their military discount to **10% for Veterans Day, running from 11/10 - 11/13.**

AAFES Veterans Day Deal The Exchange will feature one-day-only specials on Veterans Day, including a free coffee for all shoppers at Express and participating Exchange restaurant locations. The Exchange will also feature deals in stores and online at ShopMyExchange.com.

Microsoft offers up to 10% off select products for active, former, and retired military personnel and their families. Delivery supported to APO/FPO.

Seaworld Veterans and Active Duty military receive location-based discounts or free admission. Veterans promotion includes SeaWorld Orlando, SeaWorld San Antonio, SeaWorld San Diego, Busch Gardens Tampa, Busch Gardens Williamsburg, and Sesame Place Langhorne. The program does not include Discovery Cove® in Orlando or Aquatica, SeaWorld's Waterpark.

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The haunted house that made me a scaredy-cat

It was a small-town fundraiser during a cool, clear October in the 1970s, but it's a night that I'll never forget.

Back then, Halloween activities involved more than a one-night candy-grab. To start, there were pumpkins to carve, without the benefit of kid-safe carving kits or elaborate stencils. On a bed of newspapers, we wielded sharp knives, piercing flesh, scooping guts, and carving orange skin into faces using triangles and squares. Lit up on front porches, Jack-o-lanterns gave off an eerie glow, along with the sickening stench of pumpkin meat cooking over candle flame.

Furthermore, Halloween costumes had to be planned, especially if you had to make your own like I did (which explains why I was "A Hobo" or "An Old Lady" year after year). But also, the phrase "Trick or Treat?" was taken quite literally back then. Just in case someone picked "trick," kids practiced magic stunts, knock-knock jokes, and dance moves before Halloween.

But on the night of the fundraiser, I wasn't carving pumpkins, planning my costume, or practicing my trick. I was in my parents station wagon, on our way to the U.S. Junior Chamber (aka, Jaycees) "Haunted Jail House" event. Too young to stay home alone, my parents brought me along so they could help out. My mother volunteered to sell hot cocoa and cookies in the concessions booth, and my father volunteered to play "Igor," the hunch-backed assistant to Dr. Frankenstein.

After my father parked, we

walked up Eighth Street toward the "Old Jail House." All I knew about the creepy abandoned building was that it was our town's jail back in the olden days.

Later in life, Google helped me learn that the ornate brick Italianate structure was built in 1887 to house

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

the Sheriff and his family in the decorative street-side of the building, and to imprison up to 32 criminals in the back. The main cells were located on four floors with long vertical barred windows, and the solitary confinement cells were in a basement dungeon.

"Typical of small town jails, [it] provided, in the same facility, overnight housing for drunks, fighters, vagrants and committers of a myriad of other minor wrongs, as well as those tried and convicted of major crimes . . . On fewer occasions, jail residents were awaiting the carrying out of the ultimate sentence of the courts — hanging," the historical records read, explaining that the last execution took place inside the jail on November 23, 1913.

In a jovial mood, my father met up with other Jaycees, who were his hunting and golf buddies. He put on

his burlap Igor costume, and offered to show me around the old jail before the event started. "Okay, Daddy," I reluctantly agreed, sensing that he wanted me to be gutsy.

The next part is foggy, but I recall dark, filthy, concrete walls. Metal bars. Rust. High ceilings that dripped. Echoing staircases. Insect carcasses. The smell of mildew. My father laughing. The undeniable feeling of agony, pain and fear.

I knew the people dressed in horrifying costumes in the old cells were just Jaycees pretending to be zombies, monsters and axe murderers. I knew the blood, guts and gore were fake. Regardless, it felt real, and it was the most terrifying moment of my young life.

The next thing I remember, I was sitting on the curb outside of the concessions booth, with my back to the jail, holding a cup of hot cocoa given to me by my mother. I had stifled my tears and screams in the jail, afraid to disappoint my father, but now, I gripped my cup tightly so as to hide the tremble in my hands. While people streamed in and out of the haunted jail that night, laughing and enjoying themselves, I waited stiffly, refusing to look back again.

I'm not sure if I was simply too young, or if the old jail really was haunted, but the fear I experienced that night stayed with me. Nowadays, this scaredy-cat carves happy rather than angry Jack-o-lanterns. I wear funny rather than scary costumes. I watch psychological thrillers rather than horror.

And always, I pick hayrides over haunted houses, every time.

AutoMatters™ & More by Jan Wagner



The five pillars of nuclear science are: Carbon-free Energy, Global Leadership, Transformative Healthcare, Innovation & Technology and Space Exploration. These topics were explored recently, during Nuclear Science Week (observed Oct. 16 - 20, 2023).

Now in its fourteenth year, "the week-long celebration (was) organized by collaborating with international, national, and local organizations, including academic institutions, scientific societies, government agencies, and industry partners." Billed as "an international, annual celebration to raise awareness and understanding of nuclear science and its applications, Nuclear Science Week included "a diverse range of activities and events... organized around the globe to showcase the numerous applications of nuclear science" through "interactive exhibits, workshops, documentary film screenings, and demonstrations. Participants (had) the chance to interact with renowned experts, learn about the latest advancements in nuclear technology, and explore the impact of nuclear science in its many applications."

"Nuclear Science Week brings together scientists, educators, industry professionals, and the general public to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for nuclear science and its contributions to various fields," said Jennifer Hayden, President and CEO of the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History, and Chair of the NSW International Steering Committee.

2023 International Nuclear Science Week

"Nuclear Science Week is dedicated to promoting education and inspiring the next generation of scientists. As part of the program, outreach activities (were) arranged in collaboration with local schools offering students the opportunity to engage in hands-on experiments, demonstrations, and career exploration opportunities. We're excited to bring together experts, professionals, and the public to celebrate the remarkable achievements of nuclear science and its potential for shaping our future," concluded Hayden.

An expo, filled with informative exhibits and open to the public, took place at the Fleet Science Center in San Diego's Balboa Park.

At the General Atomics exhibit, we learned that "nuclear science is the study of one of the smallest things we know—the atomic nucleus. But, even though it's 100,000 times smaller than an atom, the tiny nucleus has a huge impact on our world. Nuclear science brings us cancer treatments, power for space missions, smoke detectors, better food supplies, and one of the cleanest and greenest ways of generating electricity."

Nuclear fission splits a larger atom into two or more smaller atoms. Nuclear fusion is the opposite reaction, fusing two or more lighter atoms into a larger atom. "Nuclear fusion can produce four times the amount of energy as nuclear fission."

"Fission releases energy in the form of heat." While this can occur naturally, "fission as encountered in the modern world is usually a deliberate man-made nuclear reaction." It "provides about 10% of the world's electricity, powers naval vessels around the world, and has powered space missions. The energy released by fission is a million times greater than the chemical energy released by combustion, so a small amount of nuclear fuel, usually uranium,

produces an enormous amount of heat." Fission reactors at nuclear power plants "create steam that turns a turbine to generate electricity."

At several exhibits, Geiger Counters were used to detect safe levels of radiation in common household items.

Elsewhere, we learned about the decommissioning of Southern California's San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station—a "plant that produced 2,200 megawatts of clean energy to power 1.4 million residential homes"—and the ongoing efforts to "safely dismantle the plant. How do you demolish structures whose walls are three to four-feet of cement and rebar?" Appointments for two-hour walking tours of the facility are offered to the public, to explore "what is usually only visible in photographs."

A fascinating, highly detailed scale model showed us fuel rods and fuel pellets from a nuclear reactor.

"Nuclear, combined with other forms of clean energy, provides our most robust alternative to fossil fuels." Nuclear fission is the "largest source of ultra-low carbon power in North America and Europe," but what about the waste? "If a person's entire lifetime supply of energy was provided by fission reactors, the waste would fit in a soda can. Thanks to the four billion (metric tons) of uranium dissolved in the ocean, we have enough nuclear fuel for over 200 million years."

For more information about Nuclear Science Week, visit nuclearscience-week.org.

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CELEBRATING
VETERANS



Army doctor helps care for unresponsive child on plane

by Lori Newman

A Brooke Army Medical Center physician put his skills to the test on a flight back to San Antonio when a child on the plane became unresponsive.

Army Capt. (Dr.) Ronak Patel, neurologist, was returning home with his wife and baby, after visiting family in Maryland when an urgent call asking for a physician came over the intercom.

A uniformed service member stands inside a room with medical equipment.

"I didn't hear the announcement because I had my noise-cancelling headphones on, but my wife heard it and tapped me on the shoulder," Patel said.

The flight attendant came and said they already had someone to assist but a short time later she returned to ask Patel for his help.

"The other person who

volunteered was a retired Air Force physician assistant who hadn't practiced for more than 20 years," the doctor said. "So, we worked together. He helped with finding the medical equipment that was available on the plane."

The parents said the 4-year-old, who had a genetic disorder and several other medical issues, wasn't responding when they tried to wake her. They checked her oxygen level, and it was only at about 40%. Her normal oxygen level is 90% or above.

"She was breathing very shallow, rapid breathes," Patel said. "She had a tracheostomy tube from past surgeries, but the parents said she wasn't currently oxygen dependent."

They tried giving her oxygen and it helped a little, but not as much as they hoped it would.

"When we opened her trach, she gave a little cough and we could hear her congestion," he



Army Capt. (Dr.) Ronak Patel, a neurologist at Brooke Army Medical Center, was returning home with his wife and baby, after visiting family in Maryland when an urgent call asking for a physician came over the plane's intercom. A child on the plane

became unresponsive and they needed a physician to help save the child. Patel was able to assist until the plane landed and Emergency Medical Services came to provide additional care. Photo by Jason W. Edwards

said.

The parents told Patel that she had been sick a couple of days earlier and that she was on antibiotics.

"I asked if they had some type of suction device on the plane, but the parents said they had one and a nebulizer in their bags," Patel said. "We were able to suck some mucus out through the trach tube and give her a nebulizer treatment. Then her oxygen level started to go up, but as soon as we would take the oxygen mask off it would start to drop again."

Even though her oxygen level was back in the 90s, she still wasn't waking up, so they collectively made the decision to divert the plane to Houston so

the child could get additional medical treatment.

"As we made that decision, she slowly started wiggling around so I asked her mother to call her name and stimulate her by tapping her a little," he said. "Then she did open her eyes and give a good cough. We tried to keep her awake until the plane landed, but she was in and out."

As soon as the plane landed Emergency Medical Services came and took the child off the plane, so Patel doesn't know the outcome.

"Am just happy I was there and able to assist," he said. "I hope that she was able to get the additional care she needed to recover."

USU researchers develop potential cure for rabies infection

by Sarah Marshall

Researchers at the Uniformed Services University (USU) have made a significant breakthrough in the fight against the deadly viral infection rabies.

USU's Drs. Brian Schaefer and Christopher Broder, professors in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, published a study Sept. 28 - World Rabies Day - in EMBO Molecular Medicine, along with scientists in their lab, that demonstrates an effective treatment for combating lyssavirus infection (rabies). The research team's findings suggest that this single-dose treatment could be easily administered for symptomatic rabies.

"Lyssaviruses are typically transmitted to humans by a bite or scratch from an infected animal, most commonly a dog," said Schaefer. "These viruses then invade the nervous system of mammals, causing the disease called rabies. Although there are highly effective vaccines and post-exposure treatments for rabies, these interventions do not work once the virus reaches the central nervous system and neurological symptoms become apparent. Symptomatic rabies infection in humans is essentially 100 percent fatal."

Currently, there is no validated treatment in humans that prevents death following symptomatic rabies. Although human rabies in industrialized countries is rare, there are about 60,000 deaths per year worldwide from rabies transmitted by dogs. Almost all human rabies deaths occur in poorer countries, where rabid dogs can be common and access to preventive measures is limited or absent. This harsh reality is especially significant for our nation's military troops who often serve in regions around the world where encounters

with rabid animals are a real and concerning risk.

The USU research team and their collaborators have previously demonstrated that a lab-made monoclonal antibody, called F11, can effectively block lyssavirus infections in lab cell cultures. In this current study, led by Emerging Infectious Diseases graduate student Celeste Huaman and Dr. Kate Mastraccio, the researchers looked to see if F11 would prevent rabies after lyssavirus infection. They expected the antibody to effectively block the viral infection at very early stages of the disease, before it replicated in the spinal cord and brain.

The researchers were surprised to find in this study, however, that a single dose of F11 was effective much later in the course of infection, reversing signs of the disease after they were already apparent. Remarkably, F11 actually prevented death induced by either ABLV or CVS-11, even when F11 was administered after the virus entered the central nervous system and was causing signs of neurological disease.

While low levels of the virus remained in those given the F11 treatment, levels did not increase and signs of rabies disease did not return over the course of this study. Ultimately, the researchers suggest that the F11 monoclonal antibody could prove to be a successful cure for human rabies.

"If these findings can be generalized to other viral pathogens that target the spinal cord and brain, this work may have broad implications for treating many other human viral diseases of the central nervous system, which are currently difficult to treat and often result in high rates of fatality and/or life-long debilitation," Schaefer said.

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