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SIXTY-FIRST YEAR NO. 24
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2021

THREE AIRCRAFT CARRIERS TRAIN TOGETHER NEAR OKINAWA AS CHINA RAMPS UP PRESSURE ON TAIWAN

by Alex Wilson,
Stars and Stripes

Three aircraft carriers - two American and one British - were among an armada of 17 warships from six countries that trained together over the weekend in the Philippine Sea.

USS *Ronald Reagan*, fresh off its deployment to the Middle East, met USS *Carl Vinson* and HMS *Queen Elizabeth* on Saturday southwest of Okinawa, according to a Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force news release Oct. 4. They were accompanied by other vessels from the United States, Japan, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Netherlands and Canada.

The training, which included air defense, anti-submarine warfare, tactical maneuvers and communication drills, continued through Sunday, the release said.

Seventh Fleet on Monday referred questions about the exercise to the Hawaii-based U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, which did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

U.S. Navy ships involved in



Aircraft carriers USS *Ronald Reagan*, USS *Carl Vinson* and HMS *Queen Elizabeth* join the Japanese helicopter destroyer JS *Ise* in leading vessels from six nations through the Philippine Sea near Okinawa in this undated photo from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

the exercise included destroyers USS *Shiloh*, USS *Chafee*, USS *The Sullivans* and cruiser USS *Lake Champlain*, according to the release. The other nations' vessels included destroyers, frigates and replenishment ships.

Photos of the training showed the three carriers, along with the Japanese flattop helicopter destroyer JS *Ise*, leading the 13 other vessels through the sea.

The exercise wrapped up as the Chinese military flew 16 warplanes over waters south of Taiwan, less than 400 nautical miles from Okinawa.

China sent 38 warplanes into the area on Oct. 1 and 39 aircraft on Saturday, the most in a single day since Taiwan began releasing reports on flights in September 2020. The flights came in daytime and nighttime sorties.

A statement from U.S. State Department spokesman Ned Price warned that China's military activity near Taiwan risks miscalculation and undermines regional peace and stability.

"We urge Beijing to cease its military, diplomatic, and economic pressure and coercion against Taiwan," the statement said.

Scott Wiles, 58, was part of the motorcycle escort that accompanied the Marines over the final 50 miles of their journey home. He said it was important to support returning veterans, especially with suicide so common among them.

His group, the Patriot Guard Riders, aims to lift their spirits.

"This is a dark time for them. They've lost some of their teammates - people that they've trained with, bunked with and deployed with," Wiles said. "And if we can be that one bright spot, and they don't go down that dark hole, that's why we're here."



USS *CARL VINSON*
Oct. 1, 2021

Machinery Repairman Fireman Tanner Mellinger operates machinery used to trim metal for use on ship-board equipment. *Carl Vinson* Carrier Strike Group is deployed in the 7th Fleet area of operations.

Navy photo by MC3 Isaiah Williams

MARINES RETURN AFTER TRAGIC AFGHANISTAN MISSION

from Times of San Diego

<https://timesofsandiego.com/>

Marines who had been deployed to Afghanistan reached their home base, Camp Pendleton Oct. 3 after the August combat deaths of nine others from their battalion.

Marines from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines Regiment were on duty outside the Kabul airport on Aug. 26 when a suicide bomber detonated explosives, killing 13 U.S. service members and scores of Afghans.

Nine Marines from the so-called 2/1 and a Navy Sailor also based at Camp Pendleton were among the 13 killed. Two

additional Marines and an Army Soldier also died.

The fallen belonged to a separate company from the 282 Marines who returned on Sunday to the largest Marine base on the West Coast.

The Marine Corps did not give reporters full access to talk with the returning Marines and their families, though some briefly spoke with the media.

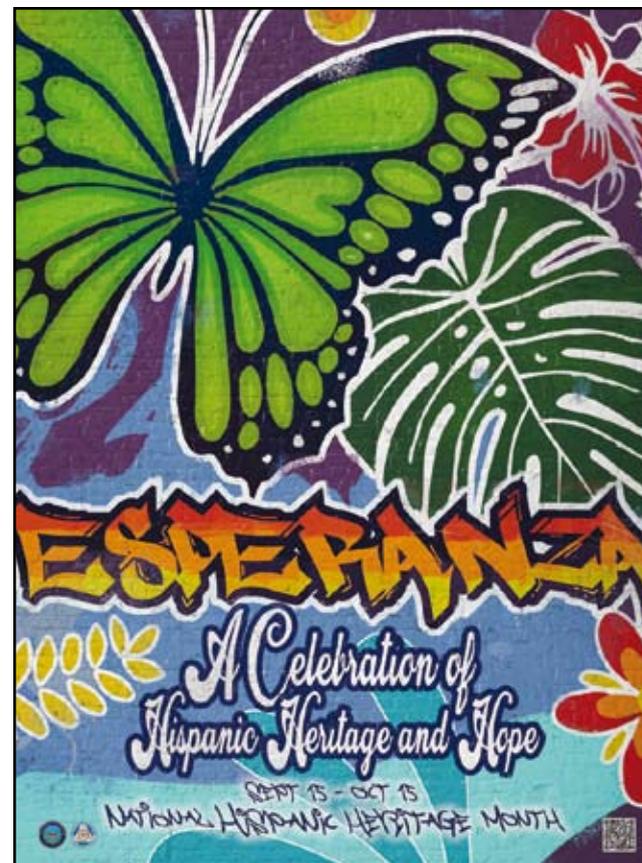
"We came all the way from Mississippi to see him," Allen Frazier, a retired Marine, said of his son, Corporal Jeffrey Frazier.

Frazier declined to comment

on how the Afghanistan mission ended, saying, "I'm just here to see my son."

The Marines died less than 10 days after the Taliban seized Kabul and control of Afghanistan, a stunningly rapid takeover as U.S. forces withdrew from nearly 20 years of war.

The Marines had been attempting to protect the airport, screening people and patting some down for weapons during a chaotic U.S. airlift that eventually got 124,000 people out of the country, including U.S. citizens, Afghans who aided the U.S. war effort, and their families.



Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. This year's theme is: "Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope."

AutoMatters & More



GOODGUYS Meguiar's Del Mar Nationals - America's Favorite Car Show

See page 9

Base Movie Schedule

Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings, Candyman, Malignant, Venom: Let There Be Carnage.

See page 10

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All DOD civilians must be fully vaccinated by Nov. 22, Pentagon orders

by Caitlin Doornbos,
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — All Defense Department civilian employees must be fully vaccinated against the coronavirus by Nov. 22, Deputy Defense Secretary Kathleen Hicks said in a memorandum issued Oct. 4.

While seven weeks remain until the deadline, Defense Department employees only have until Nov. 8 to receive their final shots. The Pentagon does not consider a person fully vaccinated until two weeks after the last shot in the series is administered.

Two available vaccines - by Moderna and Pfizer - require two shots. Those receiving the Moderna shot must receive their



A health care worker at Naval Medical Center San Diego administers a vaccination. Photo by Spc. Rae-kwon Jenkins

first dose by Oct. 11, and Pfizer recipients by Oct. 18 to be ready for the second dose by Nov. 8.

The Johnson & Johnson shot requires a single dose, which

can be taken any time before Nov. 8.

Hicks' memo did not say what would happen if personnel refuse the shots, but she noted that more

guidance is forthcoming, including on possible exemptions for DoD employees for medical or religious reasons.

While the vaccinations are given at many public pharmacies and clinics, Defense Department civilian employees are also eligible to receive the shots at any military vaccination site, including military hospitals typically reserved only for troops and their families.

The Pentagon guidance comes after President Joe Biden on Sept. 9 ordered all federal agencies to require their employees get the vaccine "to ensure the health and safety of the federal workforce and members of the public with whom they interact," according to the memo.

Since the start of the pandemic, 321 Defense Department civilians and 58 service members have died from the coronavirus, according to the DOD, which does not break down the numbers by service.

Once vaccinated, personnel "must be prepared to provide a copy of their vaccine record" to their employers, though DoD

Once vaccinated, personnel "must be prepared to provide a copy of their vaccine record" to their employers, though Defense Department procedures to verify vaccination status have not yet been announced.

procedures to verify vaccination status haven't been announced.

"Vaccinating DOD civilian

employees against [the coronavirus] will save lives and allow for the defense of our nation," Hicks said in the memo.

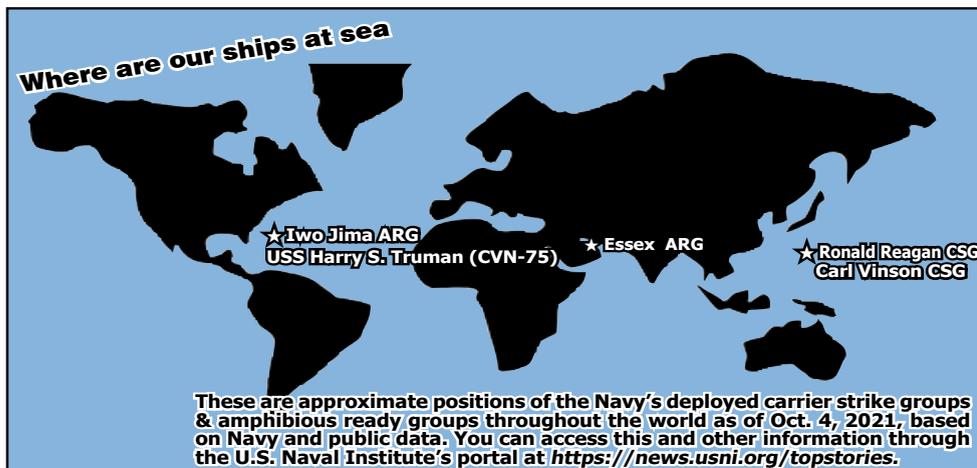
Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin required the vaccine for all service members on Aug. 24, one day after the Food and Drug Administration gave full approval to the Pfizer shot. The service branches have set indi-

vidual vaccination deadlines for their troops.

Active-duty soldiers have until Dec. 15 to become fully vaccinated, and Reserve and National Guard units have until June 30, 2022, the Army announced Sept. 14.

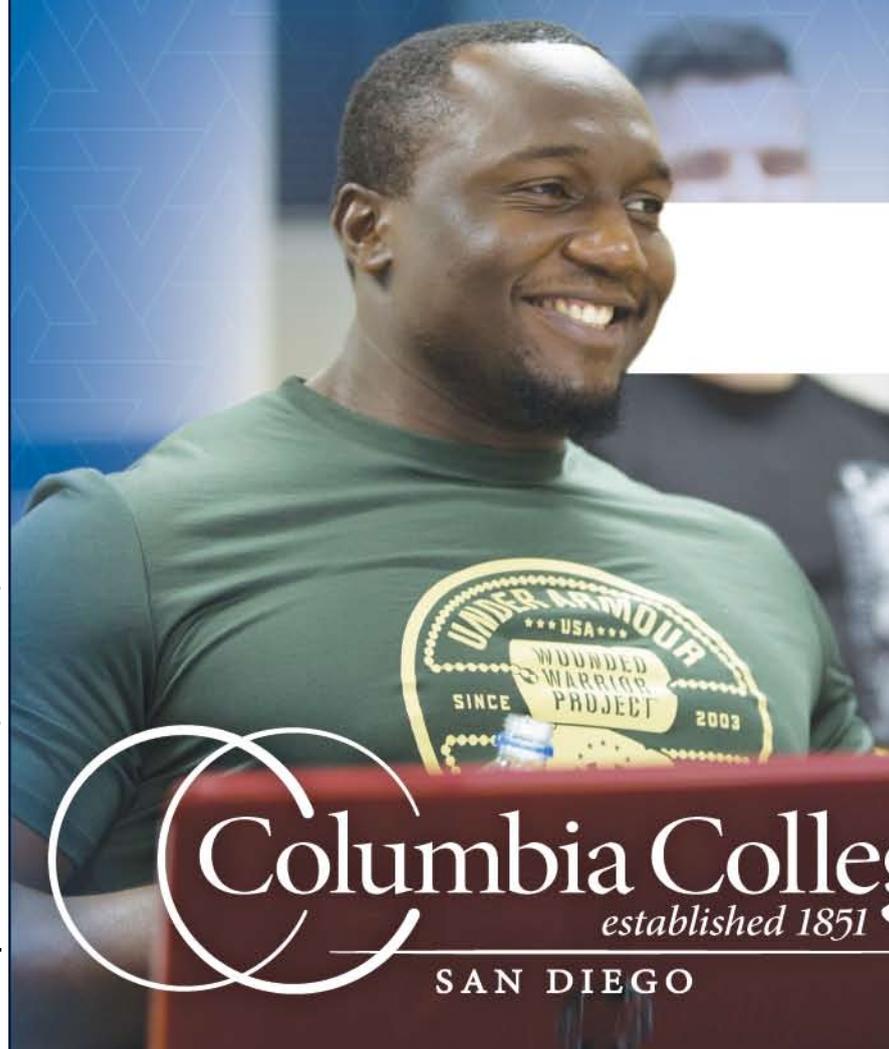
Active-duty airmen and Space Force guardians must be fully vaccinated against the coronavirus by Nov. 2, Air Force officials announced Sept. 3. Air Force reservists and Guard troops have until Dec. 2 to meet the requirement.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro on Aug. 30 ordered active-duty Sailors and Marines get the vaccine by Nov. 28 and reservists by Dec. 28.



Total Navy Battle Force: 294	
Ships underway	
Deployed ships underway: 67	
Non-deployed ships underway: 33	
Total ships underway: 100	
Ships deployed by fleet	
Fleet Forces: 3	3rd Fleet: 7
4th Fleet: 3	5th Fleet: 16
6th Fleet: 13	7th Fleet: 64
Total: 106	

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LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment Program Office realigned to NAVSEA 21 ... WASHINGTON - As part of the Navy's continuing efforts to integrate littoral combat ships with all other surface ship classes, the LCS Fleet Introduction and Sustainment Program Office realigned to Naval Sea System Command's Surface Ship Maintenance, Modernization and Sustainment directorate during a small ceremony, Oct. 1.

PMS 505 was established in 2011 under the purview of PEO Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC) to ensure the unique aspects of LCS sustainment were fully aligned under a single Program Executive Office. "We are excited to have PMS 505 join our team of world class maintainers and sustainers," said Director, NAVSEA 21, Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage. "This transition will ensure LCS sustainment plans remain aligned with all other surface ship classes as we serve the fleet." Under PEO USC, more than half of the 35-ship LCS class has been delivered, LCS ships are routinely deploying to combatant commands, and training facilities are successfully executing the Train-to-Qualify/Certify plan for the crews.



Navy realigns submarine acquisition workforce ...

The Navy's submarine acquisition community moved from a competency- to a platform-centric organization during a change-of-office ceremony at the Washington Navy Yard recently. The change realigns two program executive offices and initiates a third to better support submarine acquisition, operational capability and availability. The Navy is committed to ensuring all decisions are aligned with and do not impact ongoing Columbia construction. "Aligning submarine acquisition and sustainment along platform lines, with cradle-to-grave ownership and accountability, is the most effective way to tackle the challenges we face and provide the nation with the most lethal undersea force possible," said Rear Adm. Scott Pappano, PEO strategic submarines (formerly PEO Columbia). "I look forward to the opportunity to proactively manage the Ohio-to-Columbia transition, including strategic shore infrastructure and industrial base capacity, to ensure uninterrupted sea-based strategic deterrent coverage into the 2080s."

Taliban remains dangerous, harbors al-Qaida, joint chiefs chairman says

by Jim Garamone, DOD News

The Taliban remains dangerous and is harboring al-Qaida, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Army Gen. Mark A. Milley told the panel that when President Joe Biden was inaugurated in January the situation in Afghanistan was at a stalemate with roughly 10,000 U.S. and NATO troops in the nation.

The Trump administration had negotiated the Doha Agreement with the Taliban in Qatar in February 2020. Under the agreement, the United States would begin to withdraw its forces contingent upon the Taliban meeting certain conditions. This would lead to a political agreement between the Taliban and the government of Afghanistan. "There were seven conditions [in the Doha Agreement] applicable to the Taliban and eight conditions applicable to the United States," Milley said. "While the Taliban did not attack U.S. forces, which was one of the conditions, it failed to fully honor any, any other condition under the Doha Agreement.

"And perhaps most importantly for U.S. national security, the Taliban has never renounced al-Qaida, or broke its affiliation with them."

Milley said the United States adhered to every condition.

In the fall of 2020, Milley's analysis of the situation in Afghanistan was that an accelerated withdrawal would risk "losing the substantial gains made in Afghanistan, damaging U.S. worldwide credibility, and could precipitate a general collapse of the ANSF [Afghan National Security Forces] and the Afghan government, resulting in a complete Taliban takeover or general Civil War," he told the Senate panel. "That was a year ago."

Then-President Donald J. Trump ordered an immediate withdrawal from Afghanistan to end by Jan. 15, 2021. That order was subsequently rescinded by Trump before leaving office, and one of the Biden Administration's first duties was to examine the situation in the country and recommend a course moving forward.

Milley participated in a rigorous interagency review of the situation in Afghanistan in February, March and April. The advice and recommendations were given serious consideration by the administration, he said. "We provided a broad range of options and our assessment of their potential outcomes," he said. "On 14 April, President [Biden] announced his decision, and the U.S. military received a change of mission to retrograde all U.S. military forces."

The United States would keep a small unit to protect the embassy in Kabul and ensure access to the airport.

"It is clear, it is obvious, that the war in Afghanistan did not end on the terms we wanted, with the Taliban now in power in Kabul," Milley said. "Although the [non-combatant evacuation operation] was unprecedented as the largest air evacuation in history evacuating 124,000 people, it came at an incredible cost of 11 Marines, one soldier and a Navy corpsman. Those 13 gave their lives so that people they never met, will have an opportunity to live in freedom. And we must remember that the Taliban was — and remains — a terrorist organization. And they still have not broken ties with al-Qaida."

Milley said he doesn't know if the group can consolidate power in the country or if the country will further fracture into civil war. "But we must continue to protect the United States of America and its people from terrorist attacks coming from Afghanistan. A reconstituted al-Qaida or [Islamic State] with aspirations to attack the United States is a very real possibility."

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In 2020, the Trust received its second perfect score rating from Charity Navigator.

CFC #11322

USS *Ralph Johnson* joins forward-deployed Naval Forces Japan

Destroyer USS *Ralph Johnson* (DDG 114) arrived Oct. 4 to their new forward-deployed location in Yokosuka, Japan.

Ralph Johnson is a Flight IIA multi-mission destroyer, capable

of embarking two MH-60 variant helicopters with air warfare, submarine warfare, and surface warfare capabilities; designed to operate independently or with carrier strike groups, surface action groups, or amphibious

ready groups.

“*Ralph Johnson* and her crew look forward to joining the forward-deployed team in Yokosuka and to building relationships with our allies and partners in the region,” said Cmdr. Colin Roberts, commanding officer of USS *Ralph Johnson*. “It’s an honor to join the DESRON 15 team and an honor to know that *Ralph Johnson* will play a role in ensuring the future of a free and open Indo-Pacific.”

The U.S. values Japan’s long-term hospitality and contributions in hosting U.S. forward-deployed forces. Along with their counterparts in the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, U.S. forces frequently operate together in the Indo-Pacific Region.

“*Ralph Johnson* comes over as one of the newest and most capable destroyers in the U.S. Navy,” said Capt. Chase Sargeant, commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15. “The addition of *Ralph Johnson* demonstrates our unwavering commitment to maintain maritime security in the Indo-Pacific alongside our alliances and partnerships.”

Sailors and their family members received training regarding policies in the region, including the current Naval Forces Japan COVID-19 mitigation measures. All service members and their families have been directed to adhere to these preventative measures to ensure the United States Navy is doing its part to stop the spread of the COVID-19 and protect Sailors, their families

and the local community.

As the U.S. Navy’s largest forward-deployed fleet, 7th Fleet employs 50 to 70 ships and submarines across the Western

Pacific and Indian oceans. U.S. 7th Fleet routinely operates and interacts with 35 maritime nations while conducting missions to preserve and protect a free and open Indo-Pacific region.




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SPOTLIGHT

Stars Behind the Stripes

What makes America’s military the finest force in history are its people – the service members, veterans, families and DOD civilians who readily give their time, talents and tenacity.

Access these stories and more at <https://www.defense.gov/Spotlights/Stars-Behind-the-Stripes/source/GovDelivery/>.

- ◆ Guardsman Helps Deliver Afghan Baby
- ◆ First Female, Person of Color Heads Air Guard Chaplain Corps
- ◆ Chaplain Emil J. Kapaun: ‘Padre’ Finally Returns Home

Army

- ◆ Task Force Phoenix halfway through Middle East mission
- ◆ 405th AFSB LAR shows 2-1 CAB aviators how to replace failing seal in austere environment
- ◆ Dreadnaughts introduce Female SMA to Soldiers: ‘We’re more ready than we’ve ever been’

Air Force

- ◆ First female, person of color ANG director of chaplains applies “Bayanihan” concept to strengthen force
- ◆ AFCLC provides language support to DoD missions

Coast Guard

- ◆ Unified command continues response to oil spill off Newport Beach
- ◆ Coast Guard assists 2 people 15 miles off South Padre Island
- ◆ Crews transfer 199 Haitians to the Haitian authorities in Cap-Haitien, Haiti
- ◆ Academy ranks among the nation’s top colleges

Navy

- ◆ Virginia sailor who enlisted fresh out of high school takes command of USS *Ford*’s air wing
- ◆ Navy hit by another international bribery scandal
- ◆ Navy awards \$122 million contract to build gun range for Marines on Guam
- ◆ Navy completes environmental cleanup at site of Lake Worth military jet crash

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN 2021

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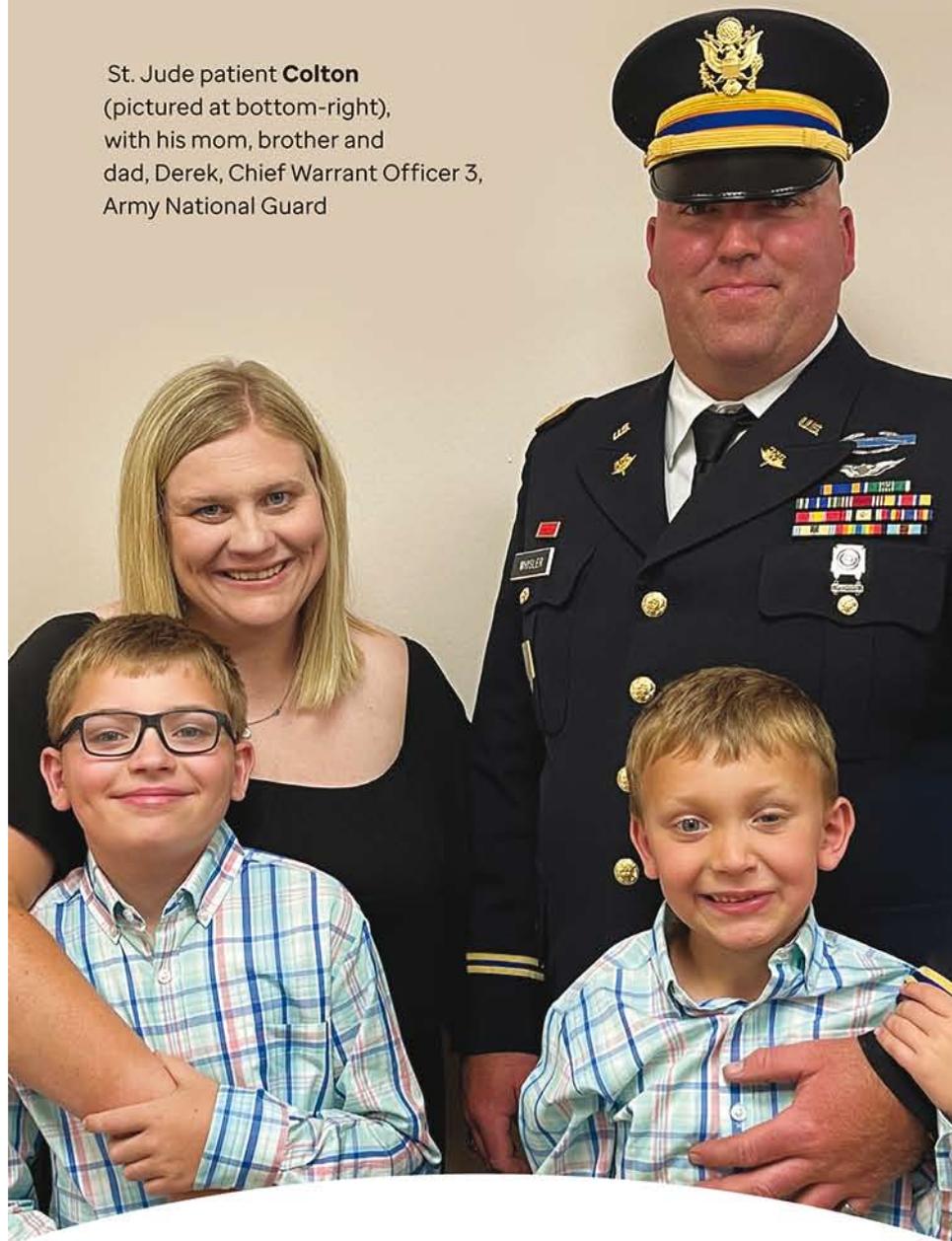
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Naval Community College begins Pilot II; Now accepting applications

by Chief Petty Officer Alexander Gamble

QUANTICO, Va. - The U.S. Naval Community College is taking applications for the first phase of its Pilot II program, as of Oct. 1.

The USNCC Pilot II program offers active duty enlisted Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen an opportunity to earn a naval-relevant associate degree, a naval studies certificate, and a professional certificate in one of seven concentration areas at no cost to the service member.

nity College enables our enlisted members to be life-long learners, growing both personally and professionally," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard Jason M. Vanderhaven. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to have Coast Guard members participate with the USNCC and I look forward to an enduring successful partnership."

The courses for the USNCC are offered in an online and asynchronous format, allowing the service member the flexibility to earn their degree while still focusing on their mission.

wish I had when I was a young Marine," said Sgt. Maj. Mike Hensley, sergeant major for the Marine Corps' Education Command and Marine Corps University. "When Lance Cpl. Hensley wanted to go to school, someone would have to drive out to the training field, pick me up, take me to my class, and then drive me back out to the field to finish training. Requests like that were not often approved."

Now, as long as the service member has access to the internet, these educational opportunities can be done during off-duty hours without having to meet at a specific time or location. This flexibility makes active duty enlisted education more accessible.

"Part of our covenant with Sailors when we recruit them is that in appreciation for their willingness to defend our nation, we return them to society better postured to find success in any endeavor," said Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith. "More importantly during their time in service, this advances our fleet performance, provides warfighting advantages, and ensures that the development of our naval leaders remains a priority."

The USNCC plans to accept and enroll up to 5,500 active duty enlisted Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard students by the end of Pilot II. This will include associate degree programs in coordination with our partnership schools in Military Studies, Cybersecurity, Nuclear Engineering, Data Analytics, Aviation Maintenance, Organizational Leadership, and Logistics.

"By helping to form a foundation for lifelong learning and developing critical thinking skills, the United States Naval Community College simultaneously makes the naval service more lethal, while allowing enlisted personnel to achieve their personal educational goals by leveraging military job skills and training to earn credits toward college degrees," said Sgt. Maj. Troy E. Black, sergeant major of the Marine Corps.

Each degree program at the USNCC has an embedded five-course, 15-credit naval studies certificate which makes up a quarter of each associate degree.

"The naval core provides context so they know how their new skill fits into the job they are going to be doing as a mili-

tary member," said Navy Commander (Ret.) Russ Evans, the associate dean of naval studies at the USNCC. "We're trying to find an advantage over our adversary. You may know how to do the thing you are trained to do. We're going to give you the critical thinking skills to translate that new skill you got from school, and leverage it academically for your unit or organization.

"A lot of times, people think of enlisted members as technicians, but they are more than that. We're putting more responsibility on junior service members, so we need to better prepare them for these critical thinking skills to see how their mission fits into

the larger picture."

This naval core allows Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen to provide insights from their own services' perspectives in an educational environment. Evans said that this allows these service members to understand joint service operations before they are in a real-life, high-stress situation. "When you can do that across services, your ability to innovate will grow tremendously," said Evans.

Active duty enlisted Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen can fill out an application on the USNCC website, www.usncc.edu. The first courses will start in January 2022.

Navy Super Hornet crashed in Death Valley

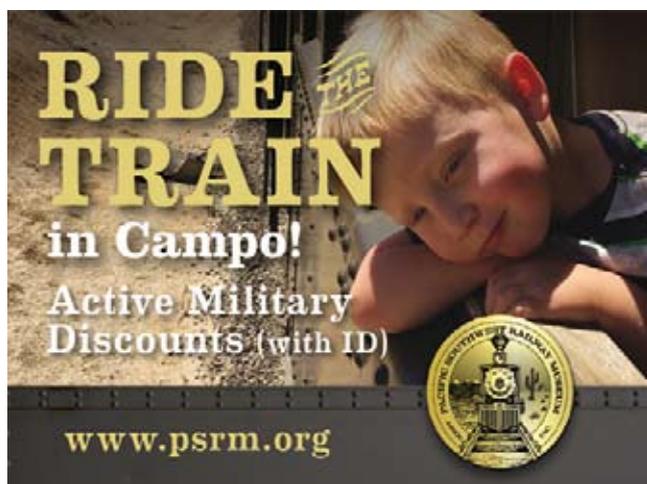
by Lt.j.g. Alyssa La Rosa

SAN DIEGO - An F/A-18F Super Hornet crashed in Death Valley National Park on Oct. 4. The pilot was treated for minor injuries at Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas, Nev., and released later that night.

The aircraft was assigned to Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 9 based at Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake.

Search and rescue units from NAWS China Lake, Fort Irwin Army Base, and Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron (MAWTS) 1 from MCAS Yuma responded to the scene and rescued the pilot.

No civilians were harmed as a result of this incident. The aircraft crashed in a remote area in southern Death Valley National Park. The National Park Service and Navy will work together to coordinate cleanup of this Wilderness area.



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Navy continues Block III Super Hornet testing, accepts first new production jet

by Carrie Munn

NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS COMMAND, PATUXENT RIVER, Md. - The Navy recently accepted delivery of the first new-production Block III F/A-18 Super Hornet.

Since accepting delivery of Block III test jets last summer, VX-23 and VX-31, at NAWS China Lake, have put the latest configuration of the multi-mission strike fighter through its paces.

“The new aircraft has successfully completed Carrier Suitability Testing, and a comprehensive evaluation of the new Block III mission system components is now underway,” said Bob David, the F/A-18 & EA-18G Program Office’s (PMA-265) Assistant Program Manager for Test and Evaluation.

VX-23 conducted shake, rattle and roll testing, which mimics the aircraft carrier environment to ensure the aircraft and each new system installed can withstand the intense forces of both a catapult-assisted launch and a

ship-based arrested landing. The Block III test jet successfully completed this multi-test point challenge in January.

“Scrutinizing these new systems in a test environment ahead of fielding to our warfighter is very important and allows the Navy to make sure the delivered system meets the requirements provided to the manufacturing contractor and that our fleet is receiving an effective, interoperable and sustainable aircraft that will support the mission,” said David.

The comprehensive testing conducted by the Navy, to date, provides a high level of risk reduction, allowing refinements to be made and integrated into the production jet’s hardware and software updates. Developmental and operational testing will continue through early summer next year. Boeing is contracted to deliver two Block III aircraft, per month, through the end of calendar year 2024.

The Block III Super Hornet brings several new capabilities to the fleet and enables the



F/A-18 Block III flight test aircraft F287. Photo courtesy of Boeing

F/A-18 to remain the backbone of carrier-based aviation power projection. Improvements making Block III the most lethal and survivable F/A-18 in operation include an advanced cockpit with new, aircrew-configurable displays, advanced networking, radar signature enhancements, and a 10,000-hour service life. The Block III’s design provides expeditious growth capacity and enables ease of integration of future technologies, allowing the Super Hornet to outpace adversaries in today’s dynamic threat environment.

Referring to the significance of the Block III production delivery, see **Hornet, page 8**

USS Oakland Gold Crew holds assumption of command

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Vance Hand

NAVAL BASE SAN DIEGO - Cmdr. William Carroll assumed command of USS Oakland littoral combat ship Gold Crew during an assumption of command ceremony Oct. 1 here.

Carroll was previously assigned as the executive officer on USS *Fort Worth* (LCS 3) before assuming command of *Oakland Gold* Crew.

“It is an incredible honor to be the first commanding officer of *Oakland Gold*,” said Carroll. “Every day will bring new challenges as we build the command and train for deployment. I have the utmost faith in the crew to build an indomitable will that will enable us to meet any challenge head.”

Carroll completes the command triad with Cmdr. Andrew Laidler as executive officer and

Command Senior Chief Blake Wohl as the senior enlisted leader. Laidler praised the work of *Oakland Gold* Sailors and getting to this point.

“The crew and I could not be more excited to have our commanding officer onboard with us now,” said Laidler. “The sailors of *Oakland Gold* crew have worked tirelessly over the last year to complete schools, training, and certifications to be ready to take the hull. Today we are one step closer to achieving that goal.”

Oakland Gold Crew is preparing to complete their basic phase certification later this year.

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U.S., Japan navies conduct cooperative deployment

SAN DIEGO - The U.S. Navy and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) conducted a cooperative deployment in the Hawaiian Islands Operating Area, Oct. 4.

USS *Port Royal* guided-mis-

sile cruiser, USS *Wayne E. Meyer* guided-missile destroyer, and JMSDF training ship JS *Kashima* (TV 3508) conducted the CODEP, consisting of unit exercises testing cooperation, communication and interoperability in advanced ship maneu-

vering and tactics.

CODEPs are designed to increase operational readiness and interoperability between participating ships, increase planning and communication abilities, and improve complex maritime operations efficiency and effectiveness.

"This was a great opportunity to steam alongside our Japanese partners in open waters," said Cmdr. Bryan Geisert, *Wayne E. Meyer's* commanding officer. "Evolutions like this help us build closer ties and demonstrate our commitment to maritime security throughout the region."

Cooperative deployments afford the opportunity for the U.S. Navy and partner nations to develop greater trust, understand-

ing and respect for each other's unique capabilities all while improving crews' knowledge and demonstrating shared tactics strengthening partnerships in the region.

An integral part of U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. 3rd Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to flawlessly execute our Navy's role across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

3rd Fleet works together with our allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security for the Indo-Pacific region.

CENSEALSWCC updates name to NLEAD

by Lt. Kara Handley

The Center for SEAL and SWCC (CENSEALSWCC) changed its name to Naval Special Warfare Leadership Education and Development (NLEAD) Command Oct. 1.

NLEAD is responsible for the education and development of special warfare operators through professional military education, critical skills training, and career management.

Approved by Naval Education and Training Command and Naval Special Warfare Command, the name change defines the command's critical mission for the force and distinguishes it from the similarly named Naval Special Warfare Center. NSW values cognitive, character and leadership development as it provides a competitive edge against adversaries in an uncertain and challenging geo-political environment.

"Updating our command's name may seem like a small change, but it is one of many in the evolution of NSW's unwavering commitment to the professionalization and development of our team," said Capt. Ryan Shann, NLEAD's CO.

NLEAD provides professional military education through leadership milestone courses, such as platoon and troop leader courses, and leverages technology and digital content to share professional development information with the force. Their education programs offer critical skills training and online education from top academic institutions and counseling for those pursuing academic certificates, degrees, and other scholarship opportunities.



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Hornet

continued from page 7

ies now underway, PMA-265 Program Manager Capt. Jason Denney said, "The development and integration of Block III capabilities, to include both hardware and software, has been a complex undertaking.

"With the simultaneous efforts to integrate these capabilities into our new production aircraft as well as develop the retrofit kits and technical directives for incorporation into Block II aircraft during Service Life Modification, the Naval Avia-

tion Enterprise team, as well as our industry partners, have performed tremendously to bring these capabilities online safely and efficiently."

"We're excited to see new production deliveries rolling off the line in St. Louis," said Denney, "and are eagerly watching as the jets continue through developmental and operational test programs. Our F/A-18 team continues to test, refine and improve the program, ensuring we deliver the most lethal, reliable and sustainable strike fighter to meet the fleet's needs."

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VA resumes debt collections after 18-month pause due to the coronavirus pandemic

by Nikki Wentling,
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Millions of veterans must begin paying back debts to the Department of Veterans Affairs now that the agency resumed collections following an 18-month pause.

The collection of debts from medical co-pays and benefits overpayments had been stalled to help ease financial hardships caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The pause initially ended Jan. 1, but VA officials extended it through September after receiving pressure from

lawmakers and advocates who argued the economic effects of the pandemic were still being felt by veterans.

The VA resumed debt collections Oct. 1. Beginning in January 2022, the agency will restart deducting veterans' debts from their benefits payments.

About 2 million veterans owe debts to the VA. The department sent letters to the veterans notifying them that payments would now come due.

In a statement Oct. 1, the VA said it would continue to provide some debt relief options for veterans who have been affected

financially by the pandemic.

"The department will continue to provide relief options such as extending repayment plans, waivers and temporary hardship suspensions during these challenging times," the agency said. "It has been and will remain a priority of the department to work individually with each veteran."

To seek relief from the collections, veterans are asked to call 1-800-827-0648 for debt from benefits overpayments and 1-866-400-1238 for debt from medical co-pays.

Local Sailor's remains to be buried after being MIA for 80 years

Steward's Mate 2nd Class Jesus Garcia, a native of Agana, Guam, who died aboard USS Oklahoma during the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, was buried Oct. 6 in San Diego.

Garcia's remains were identified by the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). According to Lt. Cmdr. Jory Morr, POW/MIA Branch Head, Navy Casualty Office, as of Sept. 21, 388 of 429 Oklahoma Sailors have been positively identified.

Garcia, 19, was part of Oklahoma's mess attendants, responsible for feeding and serving officers.

His awards and decorations included a Purple Heart Medal, American Defense Service Medal (with Fleet Clasp), Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal (with Bronze Star) and World War II Victory Medal.

"Once DPAA identifies a Sailor, the Navy Casualty Office makes the official notification to the Person Authorized to Direct Disposition, or PADD," said Morr. "Following the notification a Navy Casualty case worker is assigned to the family to coordinate a formal briefing to discuss the identification, their wishes for disposition options."

A Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) and Navy Ca-



Jesus Garcia

sualty case worker conduct a family visit/briefing with the family via various methods (Virtual, telephonically or in-person) and explain all entitlements, processes and assist with the final disposition of the remains.

OCTOBER IS A MONTH FULL OF OBSERVANCES: DOGS, CORN, INKTOBER, BOWL

Adopt A Shelter Dog Month
AIDS Awareness Month
American Pharmacists Month
Antidepressant Death Awareness
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month
Apple Month
Bat Appreciation Month
Black Speculative Fiction Month
Breast Cancer Awareness
Bullying Prevention Month
Blindness Awareness Month
Caffeine Addiction Recovery
Celiac Disease Awareness

Celebrating The Bilingual Child
Children's Magazine Month
Christmas Seal Campaign
Church Library Month
Church Safety and Security
Class Reunion Month
Contact Lens Safety Month
Co-op Awareness Month
Corn Month
Country Music Month
Cut Out Dissection Month
Domestic Violence Awareness
Down Syndrome Awareness
Dyslexia Awareness Month

Eat Better, Eat Together Month
Emotional Intelligence Awareness
Emotional Wellness Month
Employee Ownership Month
Energy Management is a Family
Affair-Improve Your Home Month
Eye Injury Prevention Month
Fair Trade Month
Financial Planning Month
Feral Hog Month or Hog Out
Gay & Lesbian History Month
German-American Heritage
Global Diversity Awareness Mo

Go Hog Wild - Eat Country Ham
Go Sober For October
Halloween Safety Month
Head Start Awareness Month
Health Literacy Month
Home Eye Safety Month
I'm Just Me Because Month
Inktober
Italian-American Heritage
Int'l Augmentative & Alternative
Communication (AAC) Awareness
Int'l Starman Month
Int'l Strategic Planning Month
Int'l Walk To School Month

Intergeneration Month
Learn To Bowl Month
LGBT History Month
Long Term Care Planning
Month of Free Thought
Nat'l Aesthetics Month
Nat'l AIDS Awareness Month
Nat'l Animal Safety and
Protection Month
Nat'l Arts & Humanities Month
Nat'l Audiology/Protect Your
Hearing Month
Nat'l Bake and Decorate Month
Nat'l Bullying Prevention Awareness

Nat'l Caramel Month
Nat'l Chili Month
Nat'l Chiropractic Health Month
Nat'l Cookbook Month
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Nat'l Critical Illness Awareness
Nat'l Cyber Security Awareness
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Nat'l Disability Employment
Awareness Month
Nat'l Depression Education &
Awareness Month
Nat'l Domestic Violence Awareness
Nat'l Dwarfism Awareness Month

The Pumpkin Renaissance: Not just decor anymore

Let's take a quick trip back in time, just a few decades ago, to our childhood years...

It's the month of October, and the neighborhood is abuzz with anticipation. Houses are decorated with hay bales, corn stalks and gourds. Kids run from school bus stops, unable to resist jumping into neat piles of freshly raked leaves. Black cats skitter past scarecrows made from straw-stuffed flannel shirts and work pants with patches at the knees.

And of course, there are pumpkins. Tall and skinny, short and stout, perfectly round, warty and misshapen. Plucked fresh from local farmers' fields, or picked from crates in front of grocery stores. Adorning stoops, flower boxes, porches, benches, lawns and stumps. Pumpkins are our most essential and ubiquitous seasonal symbol.

With one notable exception — pumpkin pie, which really doesn't count because it's made with processed and spiced mush from a can — pumpkins are only meant for decorating, carving, and smashing. Certainly, no one would ever eat pumpkins, or God forbid flavor their coffee with them. Squash-flavored beverages? What's next, kale salad? Blech!

Sure, we may fish a few slippery seeds out of pumpkins' open cavities for roasting and salting, but there is no possibility that anyone will make palatable food out of the stringy, slimy pulp of this oversized species of winter vegetation.

Pumpkins might be homely, but they aspire to loftier goals than soup, for criminy's sake. They may mingle modestly with gourds in seasonal displays, but make no mistake about it.

On Halloween, pumpkins willingly take center stage, becoming the stars of the show. As soon as Mom says it's time to surgically transform them with sharpened knives — carefully gutting, scraping, and whittling their thick meat into exaggerated personi-

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

fications — pumpkins courageously report for duty as Jack-o-lanterns, keeping watch at every house with a spooky orange glow.

Then, after the kids have removed their Casper masks, gorged themselves on Laffy Taffy, and fallen into a sticky slumber, our brave pumpkins must face their mortality. In the days following Halloween, will they shrivel in the sun, only to be tossed, soft and gnatty, into trash bins on garbage day? Or will they be assaulted in the night and die dramatic deaths at the hands (or feet as it were) of smashing hooligans, the same vandals who toilet-papered the neighbors' houses during trick-or-treating?

Regardless of our pumpkins' final fates, we can all agree — they served their singular purpose respectably.

Now, let's pause our trip down memory lane, and return to the present. It's October 2021, and somewhere along the way, the pumpkin has become the most exploited vegetable on Earth.

It started innocently enough. In 2003, an executive at Starbucks suggested that a new fall beverage should be added to the company's seasonal repertoire which already included winter flavors such as Peppermint Mocha and Eggnog. From the moment the first Starbucks Pumpkin Spiced Latte was served through a drive-thru window to a mom in a minivan who just finished her step aerobics class, our lives were forever changed.

Quite suddenly, pumpkins and their traditional spices — nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves, allspice and ginger — were everywhere.

Pumpkins no longer have to wait for Halloween to become the star of the show, because today, pumpkin spice is featured in everything from lasagne noodles to lip balm, Triscuits to toothpaste, Bud Light to baloney, cream cheese to cat litter, car polish to Kombucha, cigarillos to Spam, Jell-o shots to shower gel, Pop Tarts to personal lubricants, and everything in between.

It's unclear why pumpkin went from unpalatable fall decor to consumers' cultural icon. However, Starbucks has sold more than 424 million pumpkin spiced lattes in the U.S. since 2003, surpassing all the other coffee flavors. Clearly, today's public loves the essence of the once humble pumpkin. So much so, they now demand that mustache wax, Cup-a-noodles, goat cheese, Twinkies, hand sanitizer, hummus, dog chews, cough drops and vodka are produced in pumpkin inspired varieties.

Those who claimed this was "just a trend" need to shut their pie hole. Clearly, we are in the midst of a Pumpkin Renaissance and we might as well enjoy it.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

After a long absence due to COVID-19, GOODGUYS Del Mar Nationals returned to the Del Mar Fairgrounds three-day October weekend.

This mega event is so much more than just a car show. At this year's event, they pulled out all the stops. Listed on the event program were: a swap meet and "4 Sale Corral," a model and pedal car show that included a "Free Kids' Model Make & Take," a massive indoor car show, a stunning PPG lowrider display, vendors and exhibitors, a featured car club (Der Kleiner Kampfwagens), a Del Mar Cruise, the always thrilling GOODGUYS CPP Autocross, live nostalgia entertainment, the GOODGUYS Nitro Thunderfest presented by Summit Racing (dragsters) and a burn-out competition.

Each participant received a custom dash plaque in the Saturday Specialty Parking Areas, which included: Trick Truck Corral - All trucks are welcome, Homebuilt Heaven — Did you build it yourself? Park here for recognition, 'Ya Gotta Drive 'Em — Did you drive over 300 miles to get here? — Drivers wanted, Deuce Doins — Make Henry Ford proud, show off your '32 here, Builder's Choice — Going for top awards of the event? This area is for you. Selected by Charley Hutton, Lowrider Showcase — Low and slow? Park here!, Tri-Five Chevys — All '55, '56 & '57 Chevys welcome, Mighty Muscle — Factory correct or modified — show your Muscle here. Muscle Car of the Year finalist selected from this area, Camaro Corral — All Camaros welcome, The Next Generation — 25

GOODGUYS Meguiar's Del Mar Nationals - America's Favorite Car Show



years or younger? Park here!, Air Cooled Corral — All air cooled cars welcome! and last, but certainly not least, Good Wood — Got wood? Park Here!

My time at the Del Mar Nationals was very limited this year. I covered and took lots of pictures of the "All American Sunday" portion of the GOODGUYS CPP "Duel in Del Mar" autocross, with 1988 and newer muscle cars, hot rods, sports cars and trucks. That was followed by the Wilwood 8-car All American Shootout, where the drivers competed for the top autocross honors.

In past years I had also competed in the "All American Sunday" autocross in my 2011 Mustang GT, but I sold that car in order to buy my Racing Orange 2019 Mazda MX-5 Miata. That does not qualify as an American car.

Following the autocross on Sunday afternoon, I quickly headed over to the Winners Circle event and took more pictures, as car after car (and truck) drove up to the reviewing stand. There, the honored winners were presented with over 100 awards, as spectators sat on the grass, clapped and enjoyed the procession. The selection criteria, which varied by the award, included superior body and paint, engineering, fit & finish, modifications, components, styling, handling and more.

The first in line of the Del Mar Nationals finalists for top honors was also the winner of that award. As reported in a Goodguys Fuel Curve news story

linked from the primary GOODGUYS website, Gary Devine's 1932 Ford Roadster Pickup earned the 2021 Meguiar's Street Rod d'Elegance Top 12 Title. "One of the oldest and most storied of the Goodguys/Meguiar's Top 12 'Of The Year' honors, Street Rod d'Elegance is awarded to the most elegant and gorgeous pre-'49 vehicle from among the contenders at the Meguiar's Del Mar Nationals." Dave Shuten at Galpin Auto Sports was credited for his exquisite detail work on Gary's roadster. For a full photo spread by Damon Lee, editor of the Goodguys Gazette, visit: <https://www.fuelcurve.com/gary-devine-2021-street-rod-d-elegance/>

These automobiles literally took years to build, with extreme attention to detail.

Following the "Winners Circle," even though the weekend's event was over, I quickly made my way over to the building where the lowriders exhibit had been. It was outside that building, parked in the late afternoon sun, that I came upon one of the most gorgeous lowriders that I have ever seen.

Guy Russell is a member of the Majestics San Diego car club. His car, named "Final Judgement," began its life as a 1964 Chevrolet Impala.

The detail work on his car is absolutely incredible. The customization process included paint and body, murals, upholstery, engine, brakes, hydraulics, chrome, engraving, exhaust, LED lighting, audio and more.

To see the most photos and the latest text, and to explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, visit AutoMatters & More at AutoMatters.net. On the Home Page, search by title or topic, or click on the blue 'years' boxes.

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9	2	8	6	9	1	8	7	2
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4	5	1	9	8	2	8	2	6

EVENTS AROUND TOWN

Oct 1-31: **Museum Month—Kids Free** in many San Diego museums and attractions www.sandiegomuseumcouncil.org

Thru Oct 31: **Haunted Hotel** Mission Valley and **Haunted Trail** Balboa Park. www.hauntedhotel.com

Thru Oct 31: **Knotts Scary Farm** www.knotts.com

Oct 1-31: **Bates Nut Farm—Pumpkin Festival**, batesnutfarm.biz

Oct 1-31: **Scream Zone** at Del Mar Fairgrounds, thecreamzone.com

Oct 2-30: **Brick-or-Treat** at Legoland. www.legoland.com

Oct 7-10: **Joshua Tree Music Festival**, joshuatreemusicfestival.com

Oct 8: **The Doobie Brothers** at North Island Credit Union Amphitheatre www.ticketmaster.com

Oct 8-9: **Cabaret in the Courtyard: The Sounds of the '70s** at California Center for the Arts Escondido. www.artcenter.org

Oct 8-10: **The Harvest Festival**, 10am-5pm, Sun 10-4. Art & Craft Show, Del Mar Fairgrounds. harvestfestival.com

Oct 9: **Big Kahuna Beachfest**, 7am-7pm. South Mission Beach Sports Park. facebook.com/6ManVolleyballSD/

Oct 9: **North County Unplugged Acoustic Open Mic** at Aztec Brewing Company, 1-6pm. www.aztecbrewery.com

Oct 9-10: **Art Glass Guild Fall Show & Sale** 10am-5pm. Spanish Village Art Center, Balboa Park. artglassguild.com

Oct 9-10: **La Jolla Art & Wine Festival**, Girard Ave www.ljawf.com

Oct 10: **LA Chargers vs. Cleveland Browns** at SoFi Stadium, 1:05pm. www.chargers.com

Oct 10: **Dropkick Murphys** and **Rancid** at Petco Park ticketmaster.com

Oct 10: **Indigo Girls** at Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, 7:30pm. theshell.org

Oct 15-16: **Blended Festival** at Embarcadero Marina Park North www.blendedfestival.com

Roy's sudoku

9	8					5	4
				1		2	
			4	9			
	7			5		8	
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	3			9		1	
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7	5					6	1

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Thursday, Oct 7

6pm Shang-Chi: Ten Rings (PG-13)

Friday, Oct 8

5:30pm Candyman (2021) (R)

8:10pm Malignant (R)

Saturday, Oct 9

3:10pm Venom: Carnage (PG-13)

6pm Shang-Chi: Ten Rings (PG-13)

Sunday, Oct 3

3:10pm Venom: Carnage (PG-13)

5:50pm Shang-Chi: Ten Rings (PG-13)

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Friday, Oct 8

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9pm The Protege(R)

Saturday, Oct 9

3pm Venom: Carnage (PG-13)

6pm Malignant (R)

Please verify online before attending

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Bldg. 650

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Friday, Oct 8

6pm Malignant (R)

Saturday, Oct 9

3pm Shang-Chi: Ten Rings (PG-13)

6pm Venom: Carnage (PG-13)

Sunday, Oct 10

1pm Paw Patrol: The Movie (G)

4pm The Protege (R)

Updates: sandiego.navylifefsw.com

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When should older adults stop driving?

You may have gotten your driver's license the day you turned 16. By the time you retire, you could have driven daily for more than half a century. But for some people, there comes a time in the aging process when driving becomes dangerous.

"On the whole, older drivers are safe," says Dr. Marian Betz, an expert in healthy aging at the University of Colorado, Anschutz Medical Campus. "They tend to drive slower than younger drivers and have a lot of experience."

But some health conditions common with aging may make it riskier to get behind the wheel. Stiffer joints and weaker muscles can make it harder to steer or brake safely. Eye diseases and some medications can cause vision problems. Hearing loss can blunt the sounds of horns or sirens. And cognitive changes, even mild ones, may impair quick decisions behind the wheel.

Deciding to stop driving can be emotionally challenging for older adults, says Betz. "Many people see their car as a marker of independence. Giving up the privilege of driving can feel like a real loss."

People often depend on cars to get them to and from the activities

Wise Choices: Is it time to stop driving?



If you answer "yes" to any of the below questions, it may be time to consider stopping driving:

- Do other drivers often honk at you?
- Have you had some accidents, even if they were only "fender benders?"
- Do you get lost, even on roads you know?
- Do cars or people walking seem to appear out of nowhere?
- Do you get distracted while driving?
- Has anyone told you they're worried about your driving?
- Do you have trouble staying in your lane?
- Do you have trouble moving your foot between the gas and the brake pedals, or sometimes confuse the two?

they enjoy. Or to see the people they care about. So stopping driving can lead to isolation. That's why it's important to have a plan for alternative transportation.

"We don't want older adults isolated and shut in," Betz says. "We want people to be emotionally and socially connected, as well as be able to get out and exercise."

Feeling disconnected can lead to poorer health. Studies have shown that loneliness and social isolation are linked to higher risks for some health problems. These include heart disease, depression, and cognitive decline.

There are many alternatives to driving. Some areas provide free or low-cost bus or taxi services for

older adults. Some communities offer a carpool service, or scheduled trips to stores or the doctor. Rideshare service may also be an option. Your local Area Agency on Aging can help you find services. Call 1-800-677-1116 or go to eldercare.acl.gov to learn more.

Betz and her colleagues are currently testing an online tool to help older adults and their families make decisions about driving.

"We're not telling people 'you need to stop,'" explains Betz. But they hope to make people feel comfortable and empowered when they do decide to stop driving. "That makes such a decision more likely to stick," Betz says.

Options for getting things done

without leaving the house have also boomed recently. Grocery delivery, telehealth visits, and online social hours can reduce the need to drive every day.

Online options can't—and shouldn't—replace everything, says Betz. "But some of these things are good solutions for people to reduce their need to drive."

If you're wondering whether it may be time for you or someone else to stop driving, see the Wise Choices box for questions to ask.

Hike, Bike scenic chairlift: Fall fun just a couple hours away!

The San Bernardino National Forest recently reopened after closing in August due to wildfire concerns, and Snow Valley Mountain Resort, a 2.5 hour drive from San Diego, is offering scenic chairlift rides, hiking and lift-served mountain biking from 7,841 feet above sea level Friday-through-Sunday all October. Details at snow-valley.com

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