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This month marks the 20th anniversary of DoD's Cyber Security Awareness month

Throughout the course of the month, the Department of Defense will reflect upon individual and collective roles as "Cyber Warriors," and the critical contribution of cyber to the Navy's warfighting and business support missions.

During each Monday in October, DoD will transmit a new message focused on different elements of cybersecurity and the roles we all play in them. Cybersecurity is the foundation

of everything we do, whether you are a fire control technician, 9-1-1 dispatcher, or contracting officer, the steps you take to keep the Navy cyber secure are critical to our mission success.

The CNO's North Star states "By 2027, the Navy will be more ready for sustained combat as part of a Joint and Combined force, prioritizing the People's Republic of China as the pacing challenge and focusing on enabling the Joint warfighting ecosystem."

To meet CNO's goals, it's critical the Navy and all services continue to improve cyber posture, hardening cyber defenses and improving resiliency so that Sailors can continue to operate in a contested cyber environment.

According to the Office of the Director National Intelligence, China remains the most active and persistent cyber threat to U.S. government, private-sector, and critical Infrastructure networks.

NAVY LAUNCHES INVESTIGATION INTO FAULTY WELDS ON 26 WARSHIPS AT VIRGINIA SHIPYARD

by Caitlyn Burchett
 Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - The Navy is investigating how 26 warships, including three that are operational, received faulty welds while undergoing construction or maintenance at Newport News Shipbuilding, according to a letter from the service secretary to senators and House lawmakers.

"We have given top priority to the task of defining and examining the scope of improper welds conducted on operational in-service ships and I have directed my Navy technical experts co-locate with the shipyard immediately to support a thorough review," Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro wrote in a letter dated Oct. 3 to nearly two dozen lawmakers associated with four Senate and House defense committees.

Del Toro said he learned Sept. 24 of the substandard welds that did not follow proper procedure. The welds were done at Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries, which is the sole maker of carriers for the Navy and one of only two firms that make submarines.

The welding deficiencies were made on noncritical components of three in-service ships: aircraft carrier USS *George Washington*, and submarines USS *Hyman G. Rickover* and USS *New Jersey*. *Washington* completed its midlife overhaul at the Newport News shipyard in 2023 and is en route to its new homeport of Japan.



Newport News Shipbuilding contractor welds a bolt ring on the rim of a catapult cover on the flight deck of aircraft carrier John C. Stennis in Newport News, Va., in 2022. U.S. Navy photo by Jong S. Park

The two submarines were recently commissioned and delivered to the Navy. All three ships have been certified as safe to operate by Naval Sea Systems Command, Del Toro's letter reads.

The technical experts from the Navy and the shipbuilder are working to evaluate and identify solutions to bad welds on 23 other warships, including ones being constructed now and those undergoing maintenance. Results from the inspections are expected by mid-October.

As an additional measure, the shipbuilder is conducting training across the entire welding community and related non-welding trades. It is unknown whether the faulty welds will delay the delivery of any of the 23 warships. Del

Toro said the Navy will update Congress and stakeholders of any necessary rework.

"While I am deeply disappointed about this failure to uphold quality on the part of the shipyard as required by contract, my top priority is ensuring the safety of our Sailors and platforms and communicating transparently with the Congress and the American people. The safety of our sailors and ships is of paramount importance," Del Toro wrote in the letter.

USS *New Jersey* is a Virginia-class submarine and is the first in its class designed and built with modifications for a gender-integrated crew.

On Sept. 27, Newport News see **Welds, page 4**

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Vietnam-era veterans exposed to nerve agents and hallucinogens in secret military tests seek years of back benefits

by Linda F. Hersey, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON – Vietnam-era veterans exposed to nerve agents and hallucinogenic drugs in a classified military research program more than 50 years ago are appealing for retroactive disability benefits after a federal court ruling found their constitutional rights were violated.

Now in their 70s and early 80s, the veterans were sworn to silence and restricted from reporting the debilitating health effects from the program, which included paralysis, cancer, depression and psychosis. They were also restricted from obtaining disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs, according to the court.

“I never knew what I was given in those tests,” said Frank Rochelle, 76, of North Carolina, a former Army corporal whose service from 1968-1970 included a tour in Vietnam. “When I went to file a VA claim, I was told that the tests I took part in had never happened. The records were sealed. I had no way to prove my case.”

But a 2023 ruling in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington is enabling Rochelle and other service members for the first time to obtain VA disability compensa-

tion retroactive to their date of discharge. An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 veterans who participated as human test subjects in classified studies that the U.S. Army Chemical Corps conducted at Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland are believed to be alive today.

The facility was established in 1948 primarily as a center for researching chemical warfare agents, but military equipment, protective clothing and pharmaceuticals also were tested at the facility, according to the VA. The Vietnam-era veterans were considered volunteers in classified studies that began in 1956. They signed consent agreements prior to participating in experiments but said later they were not informed of the risks.

About 7,000 military personnel participated in the tests until the Army disbanded the program in 1975, according to the Defense Department. Edgewood Arsenal now functions as

the Army’s center for research, tests and development in chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense.

The court found the secrecy agreements that the participants signed, which carried the threat of criminal penalty if violated, effectively denied them due process and disability compensation to which they were entitled, said Mark Jones, the attorney for Rochelle and several other veterans.

“This decision importantly opens a pathway for all veterans who are under a secrecy agreement to pursue their claims, whether they are Edgewood Arsenal vets or not,” he said.

Rochelle’s case is pending a higher review in the U.S. Veterans Court of Appeals, which has already ordered retroactive compensation this year in three other cases involving Edgewood veterans.

see **Benefits**, page 9

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Navy's \$10B multiship deal will bolster defense industry, help demand for more amphibious ships, top admiral says

by Caitlyn Burchett
Stars and Stripes

A Navy deal to pay nearly \$10 billion to build three new warships will help strengthen the shipbuilding industry and efforts to satisfy a congressional demand to have 31 operational amphibious ships, the service's top admiral said Oct. 2.

The \$9.6 billion purchase agreement was awarded late last month to HII for the construction of three San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ships. In recent years, the Navy has awarded multiship deals to HII for the construction of aircraft carriers, but this marks the first contract for multiple amphibious warships, which are used to deploy Marines and transport troops, vehicles and other equipment.

"This will make sure that we stay at the 31 amphibies and in the right arrangement that we need them. The Marine Corps is very focused on that, and so are we," Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations, said during a Defense Writer's Group discussion with reporters.

Lawmakers and Navy leaders have butted heads in recent years about the size of the fleet, with Marine Corps officials in public remarks calling attention to the number of in-service amphibious ships that are not operationally ready because they are undergoing or need maintenance and repair work.

In 2022, Gen. David Berger, then-commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote a letter to the House Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee arguing 31 amphibious ships were necessary to maintain readiness and

"reliably react to unforeseen contingencies." Navy leaders in years prior suggested shrinking the fleet without plans to replace ships that were retiring.

In response, lawmakers in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act, an annual law that sets policy and spending priorities for the Defense Department, called on the Navy to have "not less than 31 operational amphibious warfare ships" to be at full strength. The NDAA permitted the Navy to procure up to five amphibious ships in a block-buy purchase to replace aging warships that will be retired in the coming years.

According to the deal, which was first outlined by the Navy secretary in August, the first dock ship in the block-buy would be procured in fiscal 2025 for \$2.2 billion. A second dock ship would be procured in fiscal 2027 for \$2.3 billion, and a third in fiscal 2029 for \$2.4 billion.

The August draft outlined an estimated cost of \$11.5 billion — about \$2 billion less than the agreed upon contract. The contract announcement is comprised solely of the shipbuilding construction cost provided by HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division, while the amount outlined in the Aug. 14 certification to Congress includes a cost estimate to build the ship, provide government furnished equipment and other

program costs, said Alan Baribeau, a spokesperson for HII. The new transport docks will be built at HII's Ingalls Shipbuilding division in Pascagoula, Miss.

The bulk buy, Franchetti said, brings predictability to the shipbuilding industry and has the potential to accelerate the construction.

"[Shipbuilders] want to have headlights. They want to know what's coming because then



USS Richard M. McCool Jr., a San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship, pulls into Naval Station Mayport, Fla., on Sept. 12, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Brandon J. Vinson

they can make the capital investments they need to make. They can hire the workforce they need," she said.

Paul Roden, the chairman of the Amphibious Warship Industrial Base Coalition, also said the announcement of the contract will bring much-needed stability to the industrial base. The coalition, which is a group of companies that advocates for sustained funding to construct amphibious ships, has lobbied for the deal for more than a decade.

"When there is a clear road

map and consistent demand, suppliers can more effectively manage supply chains, source long-lead time materials and sustain a highly skilled workforce. We can't make these assets, crucial to the U.S. Navy-Marine Corps team, without a strong industrial base which relies on predictability," Roden wrote in an email.

The predictable funding, he said, allows shipbuilders to invest in the workforce, get ahead of inflation and ensure on-time deliveries of the warships. Additionally, buying the ships in bulk is expected to save \$1 billion, officials with the Navy and HII have said.

"Suppliers will now have more opportunities for research and development, necessary to drive the innovation that we need for a stronger fleet," Roden said.

The deal was awarded one week after Franchetti's office announced a new initiative called "Project 33," which is meant to prepare the Navy fleet for a potential fight with China by 2027.

The deal represents a long-term effort to maintain the Navy's maritime advantage, though outlined in Project 33 is a near-term priority to "get more players on the field." The service is doing this, she said, by taking a new approach to maintenance cycles for all warships — not just amphibious ships.

"We have had sort of a 'just in time' approach to being able to

order some of the supplies, the government furnished materials, the spare parts. We know there are going to be some consistent things that we need to do in maintenance periods. So how do we get ahead of that? Instead of 'just in time,' have it 'just in case,'" Franchetti said.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2024-10-02/navy-amphibious-ships-15383160.html>

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The evolution of the Marine Corps' Eagle, Globe and Anchor

The Marine's Eagle, Globe and Anchor is coveted by anyone who's earned it, but the history is long and complicated.

Read this feature story at <https://taskandpurpose.com/culture/marine-corps-eagle-globe-anchor/>.

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•Tomb Guard who went viral last year takes her final walk, aims for new role

Navy

•Navy helicopter makes 'precautionary landing' on Japanese beach

•Inspired by son, father reenlists in Navy 20 years later

Marine Corps

•Marine captain makes her professional boxing debut

•Marine veteran sentenced by Russia for being Ukraine mercenary

•Marine Corps unveils retention bonuses, suspends 'Broken Service' bonus program for upcoming year

Air Force

•Allvin wants airmen to study past airpower failures to prepare for wars of the future

•'We punch right through the side': Air Force pilot describes flying into Hurricane Milton

•Kadena adds new F-16 and F-22 fighters, some F-15s remain

•Nellis AFB officer accused of sexual abuse could face new charges

•Strike Eagle returns to service 4 years after landing gear collapse

Space Force

•Space Force taps commercial satellites for Hurricane Helene disaster relief

Coast Guard

•Coast Guard rescues four boaters stranded near Oregon Inlet in rough seas

National Guard

•Thousands of Florida Guard troops get to work after Milton batters state in second hurricane in 2 weeks

•National Guard Black Hawks reach residents in remote mountain areas cut off by Helene

Your Military

•Prep courses, policy tweaks largely drove the military's recruiting success in 2024

Austin says DoD fully engaged at home and abroad

by David Vergun

Following a U.S. Transportation Command change of command at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, Oct. 4, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III held a news briefing to provide updates about the Middle East, Hurricane Helene response, Ukraine and the trilateral security partnership that the United States participates in with the United Kingdom and Australia.

Last week, Iran launched an "outrageous missile attack against Israel, and you saw once more that the U.S. came to their defense and helped Israel defend itself," Austin said.

"We condemn this brazen attack by Iran. We've been in close conversation with our Israeli counterparts about defending against this kind of attack, and we'll stay in close coordina-

tion with them over the coming days," the secretary said.

Closer to home, the Defense Department is actively supporting federal, state and local efforts to respond to Hurricane Helene.

"This was a tough storm, a lot of loss of life, and a lot of people's lives changed overnight. And the fact that it went through

so many states and created such damage, I think, really presented us, presented the country, with some challenges," he said.

"But we've been here before, and we will, we will rise to meet the challenge," Austin added.

Already, thousands of National Guard troops have come to the aid of their home states, activated by their governors, working under the direction of FEMA.

"We're going to continue to stay actively engaged on this, and we'll keep our fellow Americans who have been impacted by the storm in our thoughts," he said.

"Additionally, we're also laser-focused on quickly getting Ukraine the capabilities that it needs," Austin said, adding that he's looking forward to the Ukraine Defense Contact Group meeting next week, in which President Joe Biden will also participate.

Switching subjects to focus on AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership among Australia, the U. and the U.S., Austin said that last week's visit in London with his counterparts from those two nations was productive. He also said that objectives and benchmarks are being met on the optimal path forward to get Australia nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines and other critical military technologies.

Welds

continued from page 1

Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin announced the faulty welds on social media—a discovery that was made by other shipbuilders. The company subsequently launched an investigation, made up of internal and independent experts, to validate the reports.

"Most concerning is that some of the welds in question were made by welders who knowingly violated weld procedures," Boykin



Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro gives remarks during the commissioning ceremony of USS New Jersey on Sept. 14, 2024, at Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J. U.S. Navy photo by William Bennett

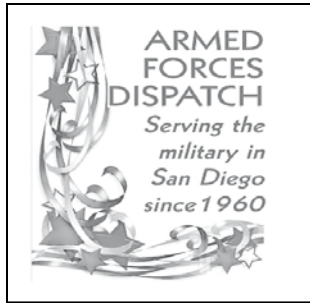
said. The shipbuilder notified the Navy, as well as the Department of Justice.

behavior or actions by others," Boykin said.

According to Del Toro, the Justice Department is investigating any potential breaches of contract or submission of false claims.

"Rest assured, the Navy is evaluating all legal options and reserving our rights accordingly," the letter reads.

"I cannot over stress that individual actions and behaviors either strengthen — or weaken — our ethical culture in an instant. Every choice you make as a shipbuilder has long lasting impact. Ask for help when you are unsure. And speak up if you see questionable



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Armed Forces Dispatch
published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
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Editor.....Scott Sutherland

The Dispatch is published online weekly on Thursdays, and in print on the 1st & 16th of each month by Western States Weeklies, Inc., as a commercial, free-enterprise newspaper. The editorial objective of the Dispatch is to promote support for a strong military presence. Contents of the Armed Forces Dispatch are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or U.S. Marine Corps. The opinions and views of writers whose materials appear herein are those of the writers and not the publishers. Appearance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or any other DOD component, this newspaper, or Western States Weeklies, Inc. Subscription cost is \$75/year.

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NETC training: A cornerstone in the careers of Blue Angels personnel

by Austen McClain

The Navy Blue Angels, known for their aerial demonstrations and elite personnel, are a powerful representation of the skill and dedication of Navy personnel. Behind the scenes, many of the Blue Angels' team members owe their success to the robust training programs provided by Naval Education and Training Command (NETC) and its subordinate commands.

Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Anthony Munoz, from Tampa, embarked on his Navy journey in 2012 when he attended Airframes "A" School at Naval Air Technical Training Center (NATTC) at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla.

Reflecting on his initial experience, Munoz said, "My initial experience was way outside of my comfort zone, but NATTC set the foundation for me being comfortable with being uncomfortable. That set the tone for me and the success I found in my career."

Munoz's career trajectory has taken him from his first assignment with the "Ironmen" of Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ) 3 Detachment Offutt, Ne-

braska, through several critical roles, including the "Jolly Rogers" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 103 in Virginia Beach, Va., where he deployed aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72). His dedication and skills

NATTC for his ability to adapt and excel in various challenging environments and roles.

"The training I received at NATTC while in 'A' school taught me and excited me to be

apply and join one of the most prestigious teams in the Navy. Interested candidates should submit applications by Feb. 14, 2025. For detailed information on the application process and re-

quirements, visit the official Blue Angels website at <https://www.blueangels.navy.mil/join/>.

As NETC continues to produce world-class Sailors, stories

like Munoz's highlight the role this training plays in shaping the leaders and specialists who contribute to the success of the Navy's most visible and demanding missions.



Navy Aviation Structural Mechanic 1st Class Anthony Munoz poses in front of a Blue Angels F/A-18 Super Hornet at Naval Air Station Pensacola, Fla., Aug. 2, 2024. Munoz serves with the Blue Angels, the U.S. Navy's flight demonstration squadron. U.S. Navy photo by Austen McClain

eventually led him to the Blue Angels, where he now serves in the airframes shop.

Looking back on his career, Munoz credits the education and training provided by NETC and

in naval aviation," said Munoz. "Before joining, I knew nothing about aviation, and the training provided by my instructors in the spring of 2012 was nothing short of outstanding."

The most rewarding aspect of his training, Munoz noted, was passing his hydraulic exam and earning his winged cross mauls—a significant milestone in his naval career.

For those inspired by Munoz's story and interested in becoming part of the Blue Angels, the Navy is accepting enlisted applications for 2026. This is a unique opportunity for E-5/E-6 personnel across various Navy ratings to

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Navy demonstrates first at-sea reloading of Vertical Launching System

by Thomas McMahon

SAN DIEGO - The Navy achieved a breakthrough in combat readiness Oct. 10 as it successfully demonstrated the Transferrable Reload At-sea Method, or TRAM, on an underway warship in open ocean for the first time.

Sailors aboard cruiser *Chosin* used the hydraulically-powered TRAM device to load an empty

missile canister into the ship's MK 41 Vertical Launching System (VLS) while off the coast of San Diego.

The successful demonstration marks a critical step in the capability to rearm warships at sea—a top priority outlined by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

“Today, we proved just how game-changing TRAM truly

is—and what a powerful deterrent it will be to our competitors,” said Del Toro, who witnessed the demonstration. “This demonstration marks a key milestone on the path to perfecting this capability and fielding it for sustained operations at sea.”

“This was an outstanding effort by the Sailors and civilians involved in demonstrating this game-changing capability for

developed the TRAM prototype as a way to rearm warships during the underway replenishment process—when a supply ship connects to a combatant at sea to transfer vital material such as fuel and food.

“The combatant can stay near the fight to be rearmed, refueled and resupplied all at the same time,” said Rich Hadley, UNREP division manager at NSWC PHD. “As Capt. Arleigh Burke

and ammunition ship, which transferred the missile canister across cables to the cruiser. The sailors then used TRAM to move the missile canister along rails attached to the cruiser's VLS modules, tilt it into a vertical position, and lower it into a VLS cell with TRAM's built-in cable and pulley system.

“Deploying TRAM into the Military Sealift Command logistics fleet,” said Tim Barnard, director of the NAVSEA technology office (05T), “would enable combatants to remain

in theater while reloading their VLS missile launchers instead of having to travel long distances to a port, greatly expanding the volume and tempo of long-range fires—and the Navy's advantage over adversaries.”

MK 41 VLS provides rapid-fire missile launch capability for the Navy's destroyers, cruisers and future Constellation-class frigates.

Del Toro said the Navy is on track to begin fielding TRAM in two to three years.



“ This was an outstanding effort by the Sailors and civilians involved in demonstrating this game-changing capability for the Navy.”

Capt. James “Mike” Williams, skipper of USS Chosin

the Navy,” said Capt. James “Mike” Williams, commanding officer of *Chosin*.

The groundbreaking at-sea test follows a successful land-based demonstration in July at Naval Surface Warfare Center, Port Hueneme Division (NSWC PHD).

Engineers at NSWC PHD

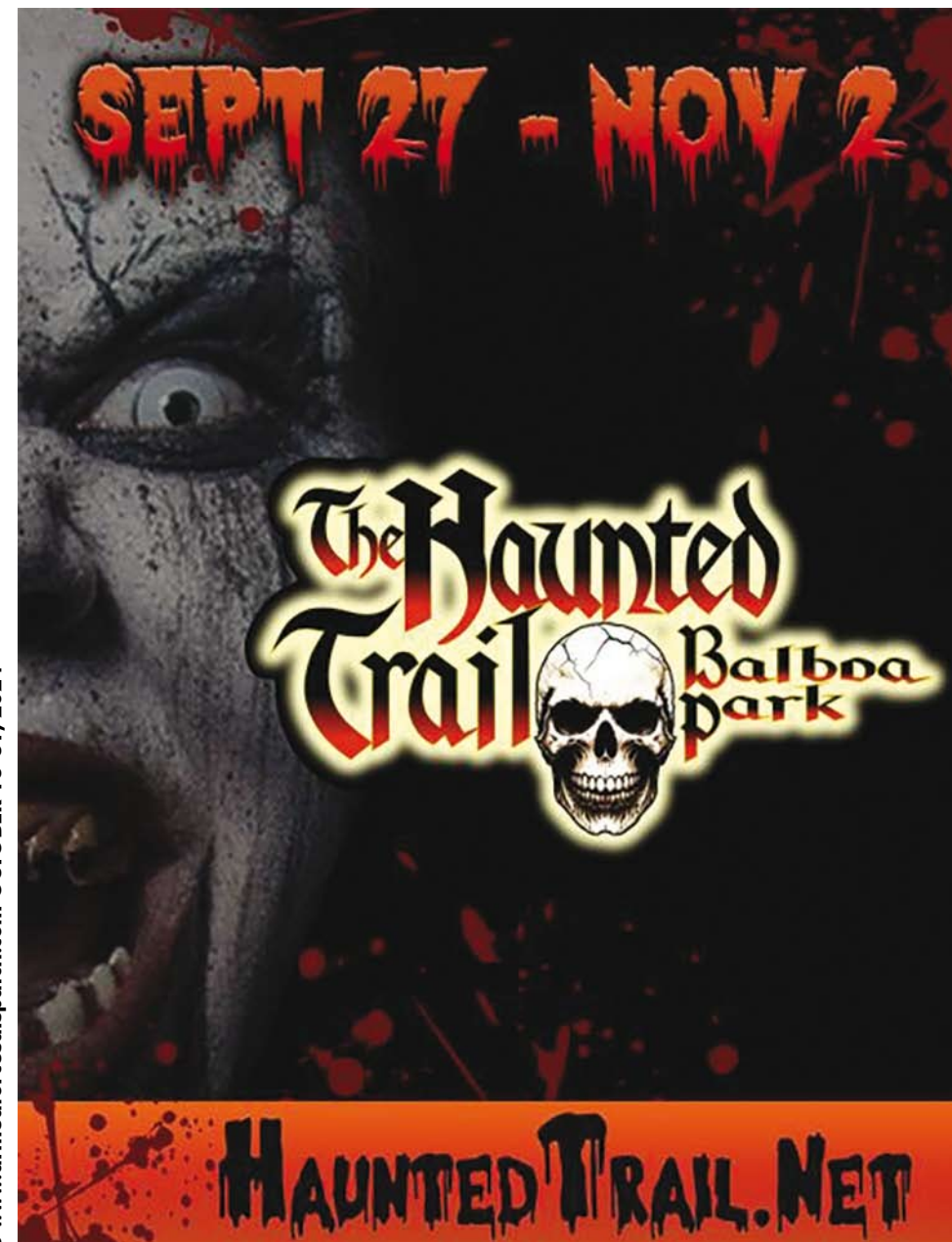
said, ‘All time spent in replenishing was time lost in combat.’ TRAM improves operational effectiveness by reducing the amount of time the warfighter must spend away from the fight replenishing.”

For the at-sea demonstration, *Chosin* connected to USNS *Washington Chambers*, a Military Sealift Command dry cargo

Tripoli wins inaugural ‘Chow Line Challenge’ at San Francisco Fleet Week

by Petty Officer 3rd Class Kaleb Schultz, USS Tripoli

SAN FRANCISCO - Amphibious assault carrier USS Tripoli hosted the inaugural Chow Line Challenge during San Francisco Fleet Week, October 12, 2024. During the challenge, five competing teams - one from amphibious transport dock ship USS *Somerset*, one from Royal Canadian Navy Frigate HMCS Regina, one from U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Bertholf*, and two from *Tripoli* - had one hour to prepare, assemble, and plate nine tacos for three judges. The judges chosen to evaluate the culinary skills of the teams were Chef Tyler Florence, Chef Matt Horn, and Chef Hayden Florence. The judges deliberated following the presentations and awarded Culinary Specialist 3rd Class Calvin Dion and Cpl. Jonathan Santos, one of *Tripoli*'s teams, as the first champions of the San Francisco Fleet Week Chow Line Challenge. “We wanted to combine both of our cultures, Mexican and Philippine, into making some amazing tacos and I believe we made it work,” said Santos. “I took the flank steak and made some carne asada, which I combined with a few other ingredients for one of the tacos.”



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Photo Gallery

TRIPOLI VIEW

San Francisco locals observe amphibious assault ship **USS Tripoli** as it transits the San Francisco Bay in support of San Francisco Fleet Week (SFFW) 2024, Oct. 6, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Jesse Monford



BARSTOW TOUR
Senior leadership aboard Marine Corps Logistics Base Barstow organized a base tour for Brigadier Gen. Nick Brown, commanding general, MCIWEST, Oct. 2, 2024. The itinerary included horseback riding at the Marine Corps Mounted Color Guard stables. Photo by Kristyn Galvan

3RD FLEET OBSERVANCE

Vice Adm. John Wade, commander, 3rd Fleet (back right), hosts an Hispanic Heritage Month Observance at C3F headquarters, Naval Base Point Loma, Oct. 4, 2024. U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Sarah C. Eaton



Courage in crisis: Marine captain aids fellow Marine after motorcycle crash

by Lance Cpl. Fabian Ortiz
I MEF Information Group

A U.S. Marine Corps captain from Palmdale, Calif., earned the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal for actions taken following a motorcycle crash in Oceanside, Calif., Sept. 11, 2024.

Capt. Randall McDermott, a ground supply officer assigned to 1st Radio Battalion, I Marine Expeditionary Force Information Group, at Camp Pendleton, was driving to work around 7:50 a.m. when there was a halt in traffic near College Boulevard and North River Road.

"I noticed an injured motorcyclist on the ground who had evidently been involved in a traffic collision," McDermott said, recalling the incident. With no emergency services on site, he decided to act.

"Arriving second on the scene behind the other party involved in the accident, I

ensured 911 was contacted and provided basic first aid to the victim," he said.

Remembering his prior experience as a lifeguard in Palmdale, Calif., paired with his basic military training, McDermott continued administering aid until first responders arrived to transport the victim to a higher level of care.

While stabilizing the motorcyclist's head and neck, McDermott discovered a military ID card tucked inside his helmet, identifying him as a fellow Marine. McDermott contacted his battalion executive officer asking him to notify the injured Marine's chain of command.

His actions were not only noted by his unit who presented him with a NAM but were recognized by Lt. Gen. Michael S. Cederholm, commanding general of I Marine Expeditionary Force.

"Your reactions were out-

standing," said Cederholm. "You were everything that day. Instant care and action under pressure is what makes a difference in recovery timelines."

While McDermott said his actions in this moment of crisis were driven by a strong sense of duty, they also exemplify the core values instilled in every Marine.

"The only thing that went through my head during the incident was closely aligned with a famous quote from the notable Marine, 1st Lt. Travis Manion: 'If not me, then who?'" McDermott said, reflecting on the urgency of the situation. "I decided that any help I could provide would be better than none. I'm by no means an emergency medical professional, but as a husband, father, son and brother, I can say that I would want someone to assist if myself or my family was in a similar position."

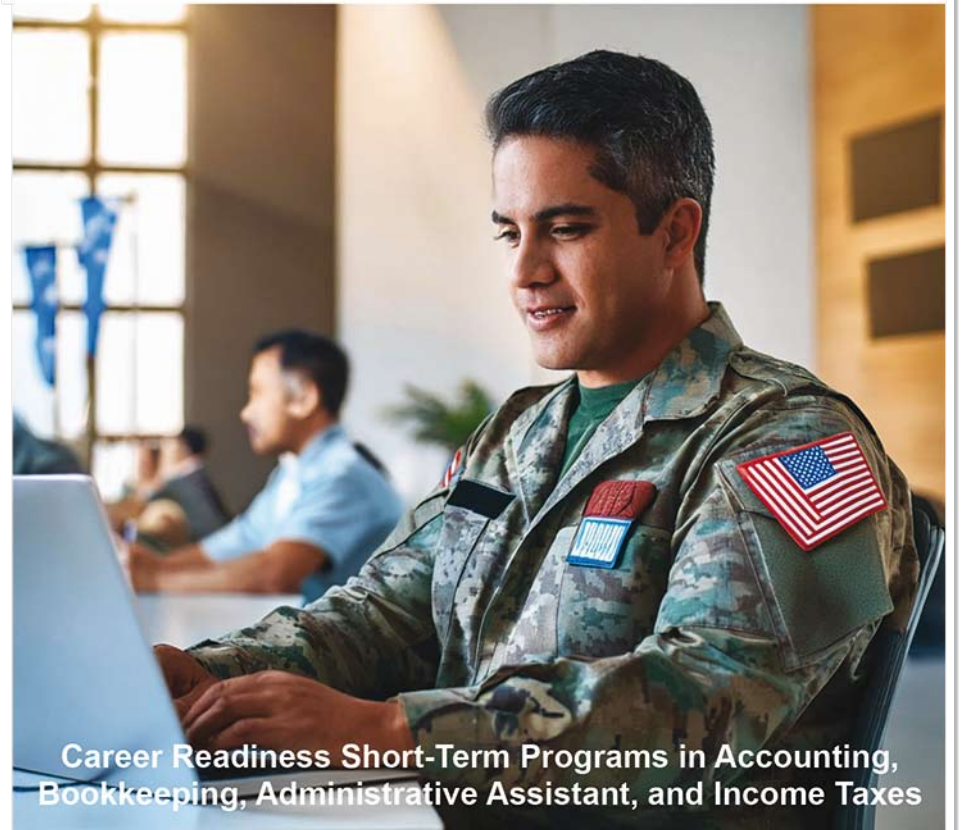


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Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group returns to San Diego after 9 month deployment

TRCSG deployed to the Indo-Pacific region to support regional security and stability, keep sea lanes open, and to reassure our allies and partners of the U.S. Navy's unwavering commitment to the region. The strike group was later ordered to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility to strengthen U.S. military force posture and capabilities throughout the Middle East in light of escalating regional tensions.



PACIFIC OCEAN (Oct. 6, 2024) Retail Services Specialist Seaman Desiree Harper participates in a security reaction force course aboard carrier Theodore Roosevelt. U.S. Navy photo



PACIFIC OCEAN (Oct. 11, 2024) A Sailor aboard carrier Roosevelt practices small arms qualification while on deployment. U.S. Navy photo



PACIFIC OCEAN (Oct. 11, 2024) Aviation Ordnanceman 3rd Class Emiliano Duenas prepares cargo nets for an ammunition handling evolution on the flight deck Theodore Roosevelt. U.S. Navy photo



PACIFIC OCEAN (Oct. 7, 2024) Aviation Support Equipment Technician 2nd Class Zhentong Guo conducts maintenance on an aircraft tractor in the hangar bay aboard Theodore Roosevelt. U.S. Navy photo

USS Comstock returns to San Diego after Indo-Pacific deployment

Dock landing ship USS Comstock (LSD 45) returned to homeport in San Diego, following a nearly four-month deployment to the 7th Fleet area of operations, Oct. 8.

Along with its more than 400 Sailors, Comstock participated in multiple exercises and operations, displaying interoperability and the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific region. "The Sailors aboard Comstock performed their duty in an exemplary manner to support tasking in U.S. 7th Fleet," said Cmdr. Byron Stocks, commanding officer of Comstock. "The mission execution afforded the opportu-

nity to demonstrate joint force capability." With a focus on joint operations, Comstock and its embarked units supported the America Amphibious Ready Group and the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit during advanced integrated training and MEU certification. Comstock also successfully integrated with motorized weapons company of 31st MEU and Combat Logistics Battalion 31.

During the deployment, Comstock embarked two landing crafts utility from Naval Beach Group 7 to rehearse and demonstrate capability of the amphibious Navy's shore connectors.

Navy parachutist misses mark during San Francisco Fleet Week, lands on mother and daughter

SAN FRANCISCO - In a report filed by the Bay Area News Group Oct. 14, a Navy parachutist performing during Fleet Week festivities here on Oct. 13 missed his mark on Marina Green and hit a mother and juvenile daughter in the gathered crowd, causing minor injuries, according to the San Francisco Fire Department.

A video of the incident shows the parachutist, carrying a green flag, descending quickly, landing feet first on the grass and with a quick skid, plowing into a loose crowd.

The mishap occurred shortly after 12:30 p.m. during the performance of the Navy's Leap Frogs parachute team, said Lt. Mariano Elias, whose emergency crews were stationed at the event. The pair were taken by ambulance to the hospital.

"Our thoughts are with the individual and their family," Navy officials said in a statement Sunday. "We cannot immediately assess what happened; however, we will review this incident to determine the cause."

Held annually between the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz, the waterfront event is headlined by the Blue Angels, which were delayed by fog but performed Sunday afternoon.

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Pacific Airshow Huntington Beach 2024

The 2024 Pacific Airshow Huntington Beach (Oct. 4–6) was quite a different event from the MCAS Miramar Air Show a week before. Whereas the latter enjoyed a mostly sunny weekend in San Diego, a low, dense fog bank hovered above the water in front of Huntington Beach for most of the three days. The only exception was Friday afternoon, when the fog lifted long enough for spectators to see the Air Force Thunderbirds perform. I went on Saturday and only saw one plane (an F-22) fly all day, for a few seconds as it emerged from a small gap in the fog bank.

Kevin Elliot, executive director of the airshow, offered everyone who purchased a ticket for Friday or Saturday, the opportunity to return on Sunday for free general admission. He told us, “There is nothing more that we want to see than airplanes in the sky. Unfortunately, when you are doing live events outdoors, the one thing you do not control is the weather. We’re not going to give up until we exhaust every opportunity to show you everything we’ve brought for you this weekend. At least we can have three days of party out here at the beach!”

This was not a totally wasted day at the airshow. There were interesting, interactive exhibits; special appearances by look-alikes for Maverick and Iceman (from “Top Gun”); there was merchandise for

sale; and we got to spend a thoroughly relaxing day hanging out at the beach — a welcome, albeit unexpected, change of pace.

Announcers kept us informed throughout the day: “This is a very expensive and complicated event to put on. Here at Show Center, we’ve got a team of people from the FAA, from SoCal TRACON, all led by our Air Operations Director Ken (Ashmore) and Wayne” (Boggs — Air Boss), who told us: “In order to put on an airshow, whether it’s at the beach over water or at an airport or something, there’s all the paperwork and documentation that has to be done with the Federal Aviation Administration, because what we’re going to do out here is actually disregard a lot of federal air regulations. FAA gives us permission to do certain things that a pilot would (not normally) be able to do. Once all of that is taken care of, they send out an IIC — an Inspector In Charge. You have SoCal TRACON, John Wayne Airport, Long Beach Airport, the army base — temporary flight restrictions greatly impact all the airports around here. The air traffic controllers have to miss this five-mile ring that is centered over us up to 15,000 feet.

Traffic that would normally go through this to the airports are vectored around this particular area, in order to protect the aircraft that are flying within that five miles. All of this is a prerequisite for an airshow to be approved. Then 10,000 personnel-hours will put into motion everything you see on the beach.”

“There is one common denominator that drives everything that we do, and that’s S-A-F-E-T-Y. Here

again the FAA plays a huge part in that. Everything is designed not just to protect the pilots, but also protect the spectators. This paperwork that is submitted to the FAA to waive these Federal air regulations dictate where we’re able to do aerobatic flight. They have to meet certain standards, certain distances from people, where the airplanes can fly, and then you bring the weather involved into it. Instrument Flight Rules start basically when the deck of the clouds is below a thousand feet and the visibility is less than three miles. Once it reaches that point we’re at a standstill. We can’t do anything, and basically that’s what we’ve had. We didn’t have the ceiling to actually do things.

The top of that ceiling — you heard the airplanes flying over it — was actually a thousand feet. Basically, a thousand feet above this beach level it was clear above. Here it’s nice and cool, but above that thousand feet it was 90-degrees. You’ve got all that heat up there and you’ve got all this coolness down here. That causes an inversion layer which creates all of this, and unless the sun can penetrate and burn it off, it’s going to hang around.”

After the airshow, we walked across the street to one of the many trendy restaurants, where we sat at an outdoor table and watched as interesting vehicles, including a large group of classic VW vans, slowly cruised by.

Hopefully next year’s Pacific Airshow Huntington Beach will be scheduled for a time of year where fog over the beach is less likely, if there is such a time.

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What I believe about Hell and hand baskets

“The country’s going to Hell in a hand basket!” I’ve heard more than once. Each time, I recoil and wonder, could it be true? After all, one tap of the smartphone or flick of the television clicker opens up a world of crisis, division, hate, blame, and fear.

I see, hear and read reports of protests, riots, and violence committed over hot button issues plaguing the U.S. — politics, abortion, racism, immigration, foreign policy, climate change, education, economics, terrorism, religion, fossil fuels, the justice system, healthcare, taxes, foreign policy, LGBTQ rights, the military, homelessness, healthcare, gender identity, reproductive rights, law enforcement, elections, drug trafficking — you name it, people are mad about it.

From all accounts, it appears that we are indeed heaped into that ill-fated hand basket destined for the fiery depths of Hell, or at least, economic collapse, war, dictatorship or anarchy, environmental disaster, and the end of life as we know it.

When I allow myself to consider these possibilities, the moment is brief before I reject the thought and tell myself, “No, it isn’t true. We’ll be okay.”

Am I in denial? Is the truth so overwhelming, that I just can’t face reality? Are we really on the brink of disaster? Am I naive for having faith in America?

With Election Day coming, and the projected calamities that will befall the U.S. regardless of which candidate wins, I feel compelled to decide this issue once and for all. I must either begin building a bunker in the backyard, or carry on with life as I have for the last 58 years.

Any threat assessment involves looking back at history. In the 248 years since America declared its independence, it not only survived, it became a leader of the free world. What changed? What happened to lead the U.S. toward the apparent precipice of catastrophe?

In the past, America experienced many of the same crises and trends we see today. In the 20th Century alone, Americans endured the Great Depression; the Industrial Revolution; foreign wars; the Civil Rights, Gay Liberation, “Hippie” Counter-culture, Feminist and Anti-Colonialism movements; and more.

Microchips and semiconduc-

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
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tors were invented in the 1950s, but it wasn’t until the Internet was foisted upon the public in 1990 that Americans experienced massive social change. With innovations such as Facebook in 2004 and mobile “smart” devices in 2007, Americans altered the way they worked, communicated, and socialized. Furthermore, in the Post-Pandemic Era people became accustomed to interacting remotely, relying on screens for everything from relationships and healthcare appointments to education and information gathering.

Today, over 95% of Americans (as opposed to 66% of people world-

wide) have access to the internet, and spend an average of seven hours online each day. Other statistics measuring media consumption (including television, apps, internet, and mobile devices) indicate that Americans over age 18 spend almost 60 hours per week consuming media.

Recent studies have found that:
1. Internet algorithms contain filter bubbles and echo chambers that reinforce user biases;
2. Internet users are attracted to opinions that are more extreme than their own;
3. Increasingly biased news sources (traditional and social media) have polarized Americans;
4. Many Americans “believe themselves to be more divided than they really are, resulting in blindness to common ground.”

Clearly, my belief that America will be okay is not the result of denial. In fact, those who believe that America is “going to hell in a hand basket” are the ones with their heads in the sand, or in their screens as it were. The overconsumption of polarizing and extreme information on the internet, social media and news media have blinded many Americans to the reality we are more alike than we are different. We are all slogging together through life, trying to earn a living, raise children, pay bills, stay healthy, negotiate relationships and have a little fun.

I choose to have faith in our country, our Constitution, and the inherent goodness in people. I believe that, no matter who wins the upcoming election, America will be okay. The ideological pendulum may swing, albeit wildly at times, but it won’t fly off the clock. Time will march on, and American democracy will survive.

Benefits

continued from page 2

Jones said though the VA states it now has a process in place for Edgewood Arsenal veterans to file to receive benefits, the agency continues to delay decisions and deny their claims.

Terrence Hayes, the VA press secretary, said the VA does not have figures on how many Vietnam-era veterans have submitted claims for retroactive payments related to illnesses and injuries from serving as test subjects at the Edgewood Arsenal.

In 2023, Army veteran Bob

Taylor of Idaho was the first veteran to receive disability compensation retroactive to his military discharge for illnesses and injuries that he suffered after participating in the classified research project, according to court documents.

Taylor’s attorneys first argued in U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans that he was entitled to compensation back to his discharge date of 1971.

But the court denied the claim, which was then appealed in U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in Washington, D.C.

That court ruled the government-imposed secrecy that kept

him silent about his medical problems entitled him to receive disability compensation dating to the day after he was separated from the military.

“I went to Edgewood, and my whole world fell apart,” said Taylor, a 73-year-old former private.

Taylor, who served from 1969-1971, has been diagnosed with multiple cancers, depression, insomnia and post-traumatic stress disorder.

“I’m trying to stay alive and see this case to the end,” he said. “This is not just about me. I’m fighting for all veterans to get their full benefits. You don’t leave your brothers and sisters

behind. Anyone who signs a secrecy agreement should be able to get their claims prosecuted.”

He and other Edgewood veterans said they thought they had volunteered to test military equipment in the 1960s and 1970s but were directed instead to military research labs for human trials using chemical substances they received in gas chambers, by injection and other means.

“The court holds that when a veteran has been determined to be entitled to benefits for one or more disabilities connected to participation in the Edgewood

program, the required effective date of such benefits is the date that the veteran would have had in the absence of the challenged government conduct,” according to the ruling.

Taylor was exposed to at least three highly poisonous chemical agents during the Edgewood experiments, according to court documents. Some of the agents were known only by numbered references with the prefix “EA” for Edgewood Arsenal.

They were EA-3580, a form of sarin gas; EA-3547, a derivative of tear gas, and scopolamine, a highly toxic chemical test as a “truth serum” but that

can cause psychosis.

The service-connected illnesses and injuries of Taylor and other veterans from the experiments were not recognized by the VA until the secrecy agreements were partially lifted by the Defense Department in 2006, according to court documents.

“We were lied to about our reasons for going to Edgewood. We thought that the Army was testing equipment to better the forces,” said Rochelle, whose medical problems from his experiences at Edgewood made him “unemployable,” according to VA records. “This has been ignored for 30 to 50 years.”

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

S	T	E	J	X	V	N	V	X	L	E	D		
S	V	C	N	I	E	N	I	A	O	E	L	E	
O	I	U	J	L	T	B	E	B	S	I	S		
L	I	N	L	E	V	E	N	V	I	A	V		
L	D	E	C	C	V	E	N	I	T	E	E	B	
S	A	S	N	V	S	T	W	A	O	G	V		
A	T	V	R	I	S	E	S	O	L	C			
R	W	M	V	L	V	B	A	L	F	E	A	E	
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G	N	B	N	T	O	L	V	K	C	O	I	R	O
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4	9	3	8	1	7	5	2	6
8	5	2	9	3	6	1	7	4
1	6	7	4	2	5	9	8	3
3	1	5	7	6	8	2	4	9
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7	2	9	5	4	3	8	6	1
5	3	8	6	7	1	4	9	2
4	2	6	3	5	9	7	1	8
9	1	7	2	8	4	6	3	5

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Across

- Merged thespian union
- 6 Stars
- Sault __ Marie
- Show fear
- Draw in the air
- Disadvantage
- Nightspot in "A Bug's Life"?
- Throw __
- Meditation sounds
- __ Alyscamps": van Gogh work
- Canon competitor
- Hang out in the sun
- Purse in "A Bug's Life"?
- "Star Wars" droid
- Normandy battle town
- "Raising Buchanan" star Auberjonois
- Not-so-VIP group
- Garlicky sauces
- Private __
- Fancy dance in "A Bug's Life"?
- Disfigure
- Skeleton's place?
- Hopping mad
- Mythological ship
- Recipe info: Abbr.
- Frozen custard chain in 14 states
- Queue in "A Bug's Life"?
- Swallow
- Winged, perhaps
- Down
- Zip
- Member of the fam
- Fruity beverage in "A Bug's Life"?
- Day before Thanksgiving, e.g.
- Woolly, say
- Ancient Peruvians
- Actor Benicio __ Toro
- Alprazolam brand
- Believes

Down

- Four-star review, e.g.
- At one time
- Flexible fastener
- __ hall
- Ancient sanctuary
- Box office take
- Rainbows, say
- Party pro
- Earthbound bird
- Valuable fur
- Professional copyist
- Colorful bird
- Occupy
- Tarzan player Ron
- Good listeners?
- They're allowed
- Cracking-up letters
- Fountain orders
- Veg out
- Bully's reply
- Land with yaks
- Like a pelvic artery
- Advance
- Tried to get along
- Irregular
- Fidgety
- Tab, e.g.
- Org. with an elephant in its logo
- Put down
- Bring back
- Dr. Seuss' real last name
- Mail collector
- Had a bite
- Italian hot spot
- "Jeopardy!" name for 36 years
- Actress Longoria
- German article
- Brand "choosy moms choose," in ads
- French article

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
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57						58	59	60			61	62	
63											65		
66						67						68	

MOVIES AT THE BASES

MOVIE SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE SO PLEASE CHECK THE WEB SITE DAY-OF TO MAKE SURE THE TITLE AND TIME ARE STILL CORRECT...

<https://sandiego.navylifefsw.com/> select movies at dropdown menu on left
<https://miramar.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/movies>
<https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/dining-entertainment/theater>

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- Audiovisual assistive equipment available to customers at the front counter.
- Handicap seats and child booster seats are available.



Movie Rating System

- G – General audiences ALL ages admitted.
- PG – Parental guidance suggested some material may not be suitable for children.
- PG-13 – Parents strongly cautioned some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.
- R – Restricted under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian.

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Sailor receives President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award

by Matthew Morrison

Naval Supply Systems Command NAVSUP Ammunition Logistics Center's LS1 Marco Velez received the President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award last month, for volunteering over 4,000 hours of his time at the Objective Zero Foundation, a foundation dedicated to suicide prevention and mental health.

This is the first ever President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award presented by the Objective Zero Foundation, whose mission is to connect the military community to mental health and wellness resources and to a network of peer and civilian supporters to prevent suicide.

They do this through the Objective Zero app, the top suicide prevention, behavioral and mental health, wellness, and peer-to-peer support mobile app for military veterans in the United States.



LS1 Marco Velez with his President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award. Photo by Matthew Morrison

"On the app, I am primarily available all day on the weekends, but I also make myself available

on my off time on the weekdays," said Velez. "Objective Zero is the volunteer platform I've decided to stick with for so long because I have, in my personal life, experienced personal loss from friends committing suicide. If I could help stop just one, I think that would be okay."

Velez started volunteering at Objective Zero in 2021 after a friend told him about the foundation.

"What initially drew my interest was the flexibility to volunteer and the convenience of the volunteer structure," said Velez.

Velez feels strongly about volunteering for the greater good, noting that, "Volunteering is not

about getting an award or reward; it's about doing something that has no potential for payback other than the satisfaction of helping someone."

He plans use his reception of the President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award as motivation to continue dedicating his time and energy to the communities around him.

"I intend to continue volunteering with Objective Zero every chance I get," said Velez. "I believe in the organization's mission. I also plan on being more proactive in the future with another organization, New York Cares, which is in my hometown of New York City."

Velez reflected humbly on receiving the award.

"I am not typically used to the spotlight, but it was a blessing in disguise," said Velez. "The

award allowed me to highlight Objective Zero's vital work for the veteran community. I think it's a pretty cool award. I'm getting it framed!"

The President's Lifetime Achievement Volunteer Service Award, given to volunteers that have exceeded 4,000 volunteer hours, is part of the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) program founded by the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation to recognize the role of volunteers in America's strength and national identity. These awards honor individuals whose service had a positive effect on communities and inspires those around them to take action.

Led by AmeriCorps and managed in partnership with Points of Light, the world's largest organization dedicated to volunteer service, the PVSA program allows certifying organizations to recognize their

most exceptional volunteers.

"Volunteering is the lifeblood of our communities, and LS1 Marco Velez's recognition with the President's Lifetime Achievement Award from Objective Zero Foundation highlights the immense impact of his service," said Michael D. Smith, CEO of AmeriCorps.

"This award underscores the vital role volunteers play in our society, and we appreciate the sacrifices our sailors make to serve both on and off the field."

For more information about the Objective Zero Foundation visit <https://www.objectivezero.org/>.

For more information about the President's Volunteer Service Award and its history visit <https://presidentalserviceawards.gov/about>.

Unlock your health by knowing when to get emergency care vs. urgent care

TRICARE Communications

Do you know the difference between emergency and urgent care? It can make a difference in your health. Both emergency rooms and urgent care clinics can help you with a medical issue. But they're different and serve your needs in different ways. When you or a family member needs medical care quickly, it's important to know the difference between the two.

"In times of stress or concern—like having a sick or injured family member—it can be difficult to know what the right course of care might be," said Jeannine Pickrell, RN, nurse director of Population Health, TRICARE Health Plan, at the Defense Health Agency. "Making the right choice will ensure you and your family receive the right level of care when you need it."

When to get emergency care

Emergency care means care for an illness or injury that threatens your life, limb, sight, or safety. If you reasonably believe you have

an emergency, always call 911 or your international emergency number. Or, go to the nearest emergency room.

When to get urgent care

Urgent care is for medical issues that aren't emergencies, but still need attention within 24 hours—for example, a high fever or a sprained ankle. Urgent care providers help with issues that can't wait for a regular appointment but aren't so bad that you need to go to the emergency room. Urgent care clinics are often open late and can help with health problems that need care but aren't life-threatening.

Getting answers

If you're still unsure about which type of care you need, call the Military Health System Nurse Advice Line (MHSNurseAdviceLine.com). Nurses are available day and night to answer your questions and give you advice on where to go. Call 800-TRICARE if you're in the United States, Guam, or Puerto Rico. If you're overseas,

visit MHSNurseAdviceLine.com to find your country-specific number.

Making the right choice—especially when you must act quickly—will help you get the care you need.

Knowing what TRICARE covers

TRICARE covers emergency care from any provider, and urgent care from TRICARE-authorized clinics at specific rates based on their group. Learn more about how to get care (TRICARE.mil) and what's covered.

You have options that include telemedicine, telemental health, and urgent care from network providers. Check with your regional contractor to find network providers who offer telemedicine services.

TRICARE will also pay for urgent care from non-network providers, but you might be responsible for out-of-pocket costs.

For more information about emergency and urgent care costs, check out the TRICARE Costs and Fees Fact Sheet online. (Note: A provider must be TRICARE-authorized for TRICARE to pay any part of your claim, as described in the TRICARE Choices in the United States Handbook.)

Making the best choice

When you must act quickly, knowing the difference between emergency and urgent care will help you make the best decision for you and your family's health. And making the right choice may lower your costs, too.

Remember, emergency rooms are for serious problems that threaten your life, limb, sight, or

safety. Urgent care clinics help with less serious problems that still need immediate attention.

The MHS Nurse Advice Line (MHSNurseAdviceLine.com) is always available to help you decide where to go.

Unlock your health by getting the right care when you need it.

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APR as low as
5.500%

Term
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Rate

THE
TAWY
TEAM



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