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PARADE REST Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Savannah Pizano, a senior drill instructor with India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, participates in a battalion commander inspection at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego in late October. The battalion commander's inspection surveys new Marines for knowledge, bearing, and attention to detail as one of their last tests before graduating. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Sarah M. Grawcock

Austin marks deepening U.S.-Philippine ties during visit to Manila

by Joseph Clark, DoD News

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III visited the Philippines this week where he continues to build on the momentum built under his tenure in strengthening the long-time U.S.-Philippine alliance.

Throughout the two-day stop during his 12th trip to the Indo-Pacific, the secretary engaged with senior leaders to reaffirm the United States' ironclad commitment to the U.S.-Philippine mutual defense treaty and continue to build upon the foundation of defense cooperation and interoperability between the two nations.

Austin met with Philippine Secretary of National Defense Gilbert Teodoro for a bilateral exchange before attending an official signing ceremony for the newly established General Military Information Agreement, or GSOMIA, that provides a legal framework enabling enhanced and expanded sharing of information and defense technology between the two countries.

The agreement, which was reached after two years of highly detailed negotiations, marks a "huge breakthrough in our ability to continue to deepen the detailed cooperation that we have with the Philippines," a defense official said following today's signing ceremony.

The agreement serves as a foundation for further enhancing interoperability between U.S. and Philippine forces and paves the way for additional security agreements in the future.

Austin and Teodoro also broke ground on a new combined coordination center at Camp Aguinaldo in Manila to further enable information sharing between U.S. and Philippine forces.

The new center will boost interoperability "for many years to come," Austin said during the groundbreaking.

"It will be a place where our forces can work side by side to respond to regional challenges," he said. "You've heard me say so many times as secretary that we are more than allies. We are family."

Later, Austin met with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. at Malacanang Palace in Manila where the secretary further underscored the strong ties between the two countries.

Austin also offered his condolences for all those impacted by the six recent storms that have battered the region in quick succession, including Super Typhoon Pepito that made landfall ahead of his visit.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3967671/>

Coast Guard takes over 29,000 pounds of cocaine out of circulation

The crew of Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* offloaded more than 29,000 pounds of cocaine, with an estimated value of more than \$335.8 million, on Nov. 19 in San Diego. The offload is a result of nine separate suspected drug smuggling vessel interdictions or events off the coasts of Mexico and Central and South America by *Munro*, cutters *Vigorous* and *Hamilton* and USS *St. Louis* in September and October. *Munro* is homeported in Alameda.

Port mission boosts U.S.-Portugal partnership

A U.S. vessel delivered 750 pieces of Army equipment to the Port of Setúbal, Portugal, in a historic first, highlighting the logistical capabilities of Portugal as a key contributor to the collective readiness of the NATO alliance. "Using this port in Portugal illustrates the U.S. Department of Defense's unique capability to execute power projection platforms through our relationships with our allies and partners to execute any type of unit rotation, exercise, or initiative, such as Atlantic Resolve so that we can provide options at a time and place of our choosing," said Lt. Col. Michael Harrell, 839th Transportation Battalion commander.

NATIVE AMERICAN WOMEN TAKE PRIDE IN THEIR MILITARY SERVICE

by Dave Vergun
DOD News

Native American women, like their male counterparts, share a proud tradition of military service.

She died in 1824 at the age of 84.

The first active duty Native American women were

four Sioux nuns, serving as Army nurses during the Spanish-American War, in 1898. One of them died in Cuba from an illness and was buried with military honors.

France where she treated wounded soldiers in the hospital and on the battlefield. After the war, she moved back to her reservation in Canada and continued her nursing practice there. In April 1996, she died at age 106.

During World War I, 14 Native American women were in the Army Nurse Corps.

Charlotte Edith Anderson Monture, a Mohawk from Ontario, Canada, graduated from nursing school in New York in 1914 and found work there. In April 1917, when the U.S. entered the war, she volunteered for the Army Nurse Corps.

In February 1918, she sailed to

About 800 Native American women served in uniform during World War II. Thousands of others who were civilians worked in factories on the home front producing arms for the war effort.

Marge Pascale, an Ojibwe, joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Corps, or WAAC, in 1943. "One thing about the service,

see **Native**, page 2



Native American members of the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps stand at attention during World War II. U.S. Army photo

During the Revolutionary War, Tyanajanegan, an Oneida, fought on the side of the United States with her husband during the Battle of Oriskany, Aug. 6, 1777, in New York.

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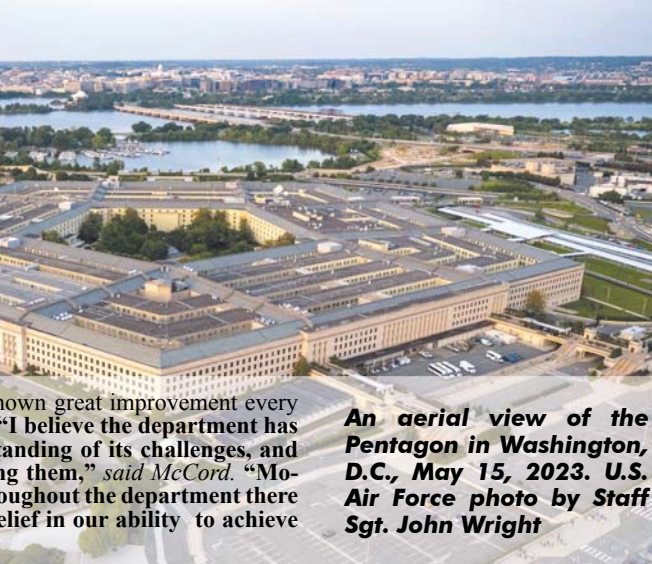
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DOD'S 2024 AUDIT SHOWS PROGRESS TOWARD 2028 GOALS

by C. Todd Lopez
DOD News

The Defense Department released the results of its departmentwide fiscal year 2024 financial audit, the seventh such audit since 2018.

For this most-recent effort, the department's inspector general provided an overall "disclaimer of opinion" on DOD financial statements, which means the department has not yet achieved a clean audit, said Mike McCord, the department's chief financial officer. Despite that result, McCord said the department has shown great improvement every year on departmentwide audits. **"I believe the department has turned a corner in its understanding of its challenges, and more importantly in addressing them," said McCord. "Momentum is on our side, and throughout the department there is strong commitment - and belief in our ability to achieve an unmodified audit opinion."**



An aerial view of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., May 15, 2023. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. John Wright

In total, the FY2024 overall DOD audit involved 28 different reporting entities each undergoing their own stand-alone financial statement audits.

Of those individual audits, nine entities achieved "unmodified audit opinions." Results from three additional entities are still pending, but McCord said its expected that two of those will, as they did last year, also achieve unmodified audit opinions. If that happens, it will mean that eleven audits come back clean — one more than in fiscal year 2023.

This year, for the first time, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency achieved an unmodified

audit opinion. This is only the second year DTRA has undergone a stand-alone audit, McCord said.

Also, as part of this year's departmentwide audit, McCord said, one entity received a qualified opinion, while 15 other entities received disclaimers.

Of note, McCord said, are DOD's efforts in closing or "downgrading" material weaknesses that show up in audits. The term "material weakness" in regard to an audit, he said, "roughly translates as concerns you must resolve to succeed."

In particular, he said, Secre-

tary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and the department have put an emphasis on eliminating material weakness related to the department's fund balance with the Treasury.

"Fund balance with [the] Treasury is, in layperson terms, like balancing your checkbook," McCord said. "Except I said we have 1,500 checkbooks with \$850 billion in them. So, it's a little more complicated than it might sound, but that's basically what it is. It's reconciling your version of all the money you have with [the Treasury Department's] version of all the money you have in these 1,500 pots."

Native

continued from page 1

you get two pair of shoes and you get a bed and you get to eat," she said, having experienced poverty.

Margie Williams, a Lakota Sioux, said during World War II, "It is with much pride that the Indian woman dons the uniform of her country to aid in settling the turmoil."

Ola Rexroat, an Oglala-Lakota, was the only Native American woman to serve in the Women Airforce Service Pilots during World War II. She flew AT-6 and PT-19 airplanes and towed targets for aerial gunners.

Following the war, Rexroat became an air traffic controller for the newly formed Air Force, making it a career. She also saw service during the Korean War.

Marine Corps Pvt. Minnie Spotted-Wolf enlisted in July 1943, becoming the first female Native American to join that service.

In 1980, 60 Native American women were serving in the Alaska National Guard as Eskimo Scouts, patrolling the west coast of Alaska.

Terri Ann Hagen, an Army National Guard medic, was killed in 1994 while fighting a fire on Storm King Mountain in Colorado.

Many Native American women served in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Army Spc. Lori Piestewa, a Hopi,



Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Trinity Sells holds a protection arrow passed down from her ancestors during a National Native American Heritage Month ceremony. U.S. Navy photo by Seaman Marlan Sawyer

was killed in Iraq, March 23, 2003, when her convoy was ambushed. She was the first Native American female soldier killed in action on foreign soil.

Squaw Peak, near Phoenix, Arizona, was renamed Piestewa Peak in her honor.

Pfc. Jennifer Ruth Knowshisgun, an intelligence analyst at the 91st Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, from the northern Cheyenne and Crow Nations, said that her two years in the Army has helped her to develop leadership skills.

"The Army has given me more responsibilities," said Knowshisgun, speaking at Fort Hood, Texas, now named Fort Cavazos, Nov. 20, 2015. "I'm still a private, but I've gotten

the chance to help out by getting the new soldiers situated into our unit."

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Trinity Sells carried a protection arrow passed down from her ancestors during a National Native American Heritage Month ceremony on board the aircraft carrier USS George Washington, at Newport News, Virginia, Nov. 14, 2018. The arrow is said to offer protection from evil spirits entering their soul or household.

"I take pride in being an American Indian sailor," said Sells. "I will continue my traditional way of life with more determination because living isn't enough for my heritage to survive. It is my time to teach the Navy about the Navajo tribe and its people."

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Centcom conducts strikes in Yemen, Syria



Two Navy F-35Cs fly at the left-wing observation position during a training mission near Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. F-35C aircraft such as these were involved in recent airstrikes in Yemen. U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Kelly

by C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

For nearly two weeks, U.S. Central Command has conducted strikes against Iranian-backed Houthi targets in Yemen and against targets in Syria as part of the defeat-ISIS mission there.

On Nov. 9-10, Centcom forces executed airstrikes against multiple Houthi weapons storage facilities within Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen, said Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Maj. Gen. Pat Ryder during a recent briefing.

“These facilities housed a variety of advanced conventional weapons used by the Iran-backed Houthis to target U.S. and international military and civilian vessels navigating international waters in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden,” Ryder said.

Both Air Force and Navy assets, including F-35C fighter aircraft, were involved in the strikes, which were in response to Houthi attacks on commercial, U.S. and coalition vessels in the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait and Gulf of Aden.

“As you’ve heard us say before, we will continue to make clear to the Houthis that there will be consequences for their illegal and reckless attacks,” Ryder said.

On Nov. 11, Ryder said, Centcom also conducted strikes against nine targets in two locations as-

sociated with Iranian groups in Syria. The strikes, he said, were in response to two attacks on U.S. personnel in Syria that happened Nov. 10 at Mission Support Site Green Village in northeast Syria.

One of those attacks involved a UAV, while the second attack involved an indirect fire incident with two rockets. There were no U.S. injuries involved with either attack.

Ryder said the U.S. strikes will degrade the ability of Iranian-backed groups to plan and launch future attacks on U.S. and coalition forces who are in the region to conduct the defeat-ISIS operations.

Centcom commander Army Gen. Michael Erik Kurilla said the U.S. will do what’s needed to defend its personnel in the Centcom area of responsibility.

“Our message is clear. Attacks against U.S. and coalition partners in the region will not be tolerated,” said Kurilla. “We will continue to take every step necessary to protect our personnel and coalition partners and respond to reckless attacks.”

Greatest lady of the seas, USS Nantucket commissions

by Lt. Ayifa Brooks

BOSTON, Mass. -- The Navy commissioned its newest Freedom-variant littoral combat ship USS *Nantucket* (LCS 27) Nov. 16, 2024 here. To honor naval history, *Nantucket* became the newest ship in the fleet while moored stern-to-stern with USS *Constitution*, the Navy’s oldest commissioned ship.

“I want to thank all of you for your service and your dedication, I know it’s been a long journey to get to this point. In the past few weeks alone, you’ve traveled over 2,000 nautical miles through four Great Lakes and 15 locks to get here,” said Michelle Wu, mayor of Boston. “While we know the Charlestown Navy Ship Yard isn’t your final stop, it’s a source of great pride for this city and the people of Boston to be granted the privilege of sending you off to your homeport.”

“Today we gather to celebrate a remarkable addition to our naval fleet, USS *Nantucket*. I’m honored to represent Lockheed Martin and we’re proud to partner with the U.S. Navy to build the Freedom-variant littoral combat ships,” said Paul Lemmo of Lockheed Martin. “USS *Nantucket* is not just a ship, it embodies innovation, resilience, and the spirit of our maritime forces.”

The ship’s sponsor, Polly Spencer, wife of the 76th Secretary of the Navy, joined by her two daughters, Sarah Minella and Amy Ambrecht gave the order to “man our ship and bring her to life!”

“I’m so heartened to look out and see young boys and girls here and I hope they leave today inspired to answer the call to service,” said Maura Healey, governor of Massachusetts. “The freedom - all the freedoms, all the privileges that we enjoy today as Americans are only possible because of those who have served and those who continue to serve.”

Nantucket is the 14th Freedom-variant littoral combat ship (LCS) commissioned in the Navy and the third to be commissioned in naval service to bear this namesake.

“My journey began in September 2021 when I received word that I would be the first commanding officer of USS *Nantucket* and unveiled the crest on the island,” said Cmdr. Kari Yakubisin, *Nantucket*’s commanding officer. “Our mission on *Nantucket* is the same as *Constitution* was in 1812, while technology has changed over the last 200 years, the mission of the United States Navy remains the same.”

Army

•Army asks Germans to rent out more homes as troop numbers set to rise in Baumholder

•How the Army’s cavalry scouts earn their spurs

•Army offers incentive pay to first-term Soldiers who extend service for deployments

•Police: 75-year-old Army veteran found dead in West Melbourne on Veterans Day

Navy

•IG offers scathing assessment of Navy oversight of Red Hill fuel facility in Hawaii

Marine Corps

•Marine veteran misused a combat technique in fatal chokehold of NYC subway rider, trainer testifies

Air Force

•Grassroots Iron Athena initiative tackles barriers faced by female airmen

•How the Air Force is revamping acquisition to prepare for a Pacific fight

•Air Force electronic warfare chief sees limits to AI

•Air Force Silver Star recipients among those honored for repulsing Iranian missile and drone attack

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•Russia and China conducting joint Arctic operations for first time, Coast Guard says

National Guard

•Cape Cod National Guard member indicted on child pornography

Veterans

•Military veteran gets time served for making ricin out of ‘curiosity’

•See inside the Veterans Village providing 123 low-cost homes in Ocean County

Military Culture & History

•Families of Nazi SS hostages held as bargaining chips in WWII say lessons from the war still resonate

Cyber, Space & Unmanned

•SOCOM looking for ‘multidomain’ micro drones that can operate in the air and underwater



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Gallantry under fire

RAF Lakenheath honors decorated Airmen for repelling mass Iranian drone attack

by Airman 1st Class
Delanie Brown

48th Fighter Wing Public Affairs
RAF LAKENHEATH, United Kingdom (AFNS) - Air Force Airmen from the 494th Fighter Squadron and 494th Fighter Generation Squadron were recognized during a ceremony Nov. 12 here for their contributions during a

defensive operation against hundreds of one-way attack drones, formally known as one-way attack unmanned aerial vehicles, and missiles launched from Iran and Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen against Israel April 13-14, 2024, while deployed in the U.S. Central Command's area of responsibility.

Members of the squadrons fought in the largest air-to-air enemy engagement in over 50 years, beginning April 13 and ending in the early hours of April 14.

The historical achievement drove a direct call from President Joe Biden to the deployed team, lauding their exceptional airmanship and skill.

On April 13 and throughout the morning of April 14, a mix of U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagles and other defensive assets successfully engaged and destroyed more than 80 one-way attack UAVs intended to strike Israel from Iran and Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen.

In total, Iran and its proxy forces launched more than 300 UAVs and missiles. Coalition Forces and Israel destroyed nearly 99 percent of all inbound weapons and systems.

F-15Es from RAF Lakenheath and Seymour-Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., as part of the 494th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron and 335th EFS, were vital during the fight that intercepted and engaged aerial threats as part of the coalition's robust Integrated Air and Missile Defense Network leveraging air, ground, sea, and space-based capabilities.

Lt. Col. Timothy Causey, 494th FS commander, said his team's success was due to their ability to remain focused and carry out what they've been trained to do.

"We all fell into an execution rhythm: call, shoot, and confirm the target was destroyed before we moved on to the next task we had to accomplish to keep everyone safe," Causey said.

The highest level of decoration awarded during the ceremony, the Silver Star Medal, was presented to F-15E instructor pilot,

Maj. Benjamin Coffey, and F-15E instructor weapon systems officer, Capt. Lacie Hester.

The Silver Star Medal is the U.S. Armed Force's third-highest military decoration for valor in combat.

The Silver Stars were presented based on the aircrew's gallantry in action repelling the

multiple times throughout the night despite having severe aircraft emergencies and while under falling debris at the expeditionary base caused by hostile fire from the enemy.

"Although intelligence provided the numbers of how many (one-way attack) drones we could expect to see, it was still surprising to see them all,"

gating gun of the F-15E after they expended all their air-to-air missiles.

He went on to express the challenges the mission presented and how the teams worked in tandem.

"We have the pilots working the air-to-air radar, [to] make sure they don't hit the ground, they don't hit their element leads and [we're] employing and we start to get another data point and another data point and another data point."

Hester is also the first woman in the Air Force to receive the Silver Star and only the 10th woman in the Dept. of Defense to receive the prestigious decoration.

Other aircrew recognized during the ceremony received Distinguished Flying Crosses for their commitment to their mission, flying their F-15Es through a complex and dangerous airspace filled with engagements by active air defense systems and falling debris multiple times that night.

Continue reading at <https://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/3966248/gallantry-under-fire-raf-lakenheath-honors-decorated-airmen-for-repelling-mass/>.



A family member takes a video Air Force Gen. James Hecker, Air Forces in Europe - Air Forces Africa commander, prepares to present the Distinguished Flying Cross to members of the 494th Fighter Squadron. U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Olivia Gibson

Iranian attack as the airborne mission commanders directing coalition forces during the unprecedented large-scale attack against Israel.

The team engaged the enemy

Hester said.

Additionally, at great personal risk, Coffey and Hester engaged low-altitude one-way attack UAVs in the complete darkness of night with the air-to-air

MOVE THE MISSILE

Air Force Staff Sgt. Christina Phillips loads a missile on a lift truck during a Rapid Aircraft Generation Exercise at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., Oct. 28, 2024. The data collected during the exercise will be presented to the Air Combat Command to illustrate real-world aircraft generation standards. U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Brianna Vetro



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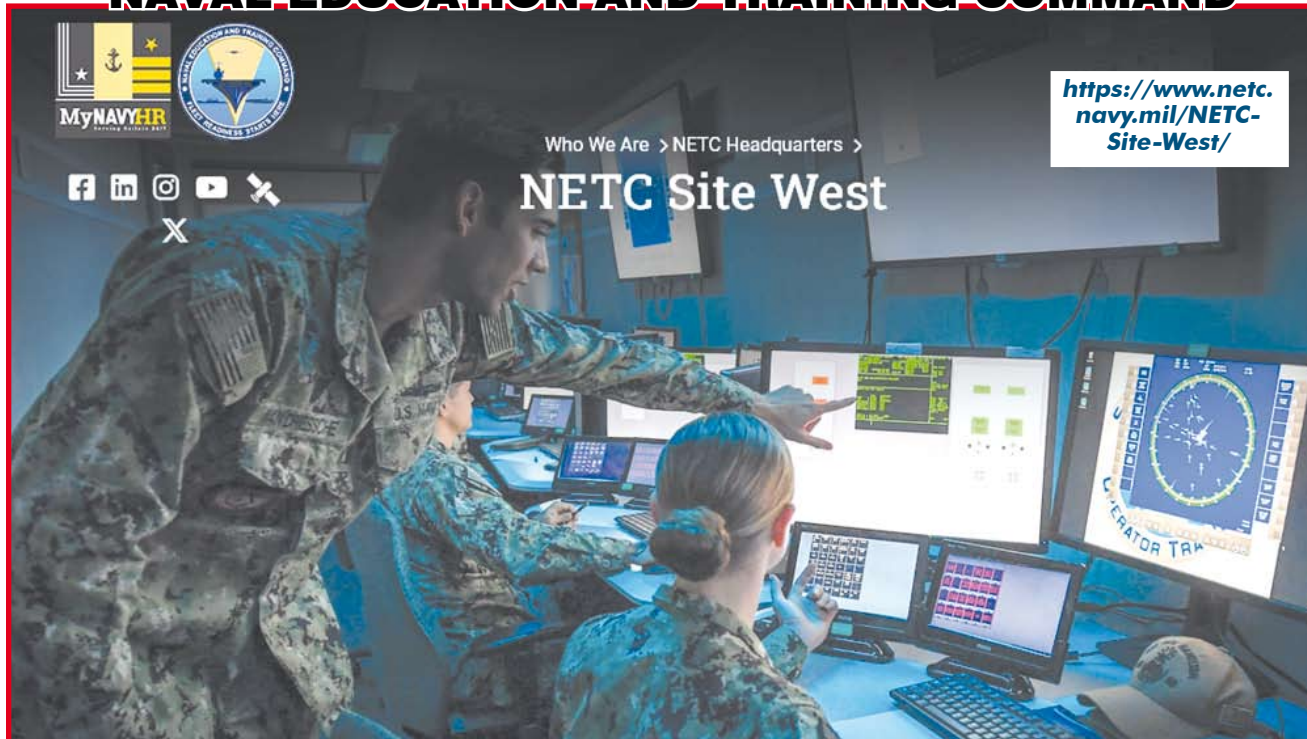
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Navy leader highlights shipyards' vital role in fleet readiness during Pacific Northwest visit

Acting Under Secretary of the Navy Tom Mancinelli visited Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility (PSNS & IMF) in Bremerton, Wash., Nov. 18, where he engaged with shipyard leadership, employees, and Sailors, emphasizing the critical role the Navy's public shipyards have in maintaining maritime readiness.

Mancinelli's visit focused on the Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Program (SIOP), a long-term effort to modernize the Navy's four public shipyards, and also included a tour of USS *Jimmy Carter* (SSN 23), a Seawolf-class submarine currently undergoing maintenance.

"We must continue to build, maintain, and modernize ships, submarines and aircraft to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow," said Mancinelli. "What you do here matters deeply to the Navy and to our nation's security. Your work is vital to defending our country and our way of life."

Mancinelli toured Dry Docks 3, 5, and 6, where he observed seismic upgrades and discussed planned improvements under SIOP.

"The Shipyard Infrastructure Optimization Plan is a once-in-a-century investment that reflects the Department of Navy's commitment to ensuring our fleet remains ready for future challenges," said Mancinelli. "These upgrades are critical to the overall strength of the Navy and are critical to our effort to keep our fleet ready."

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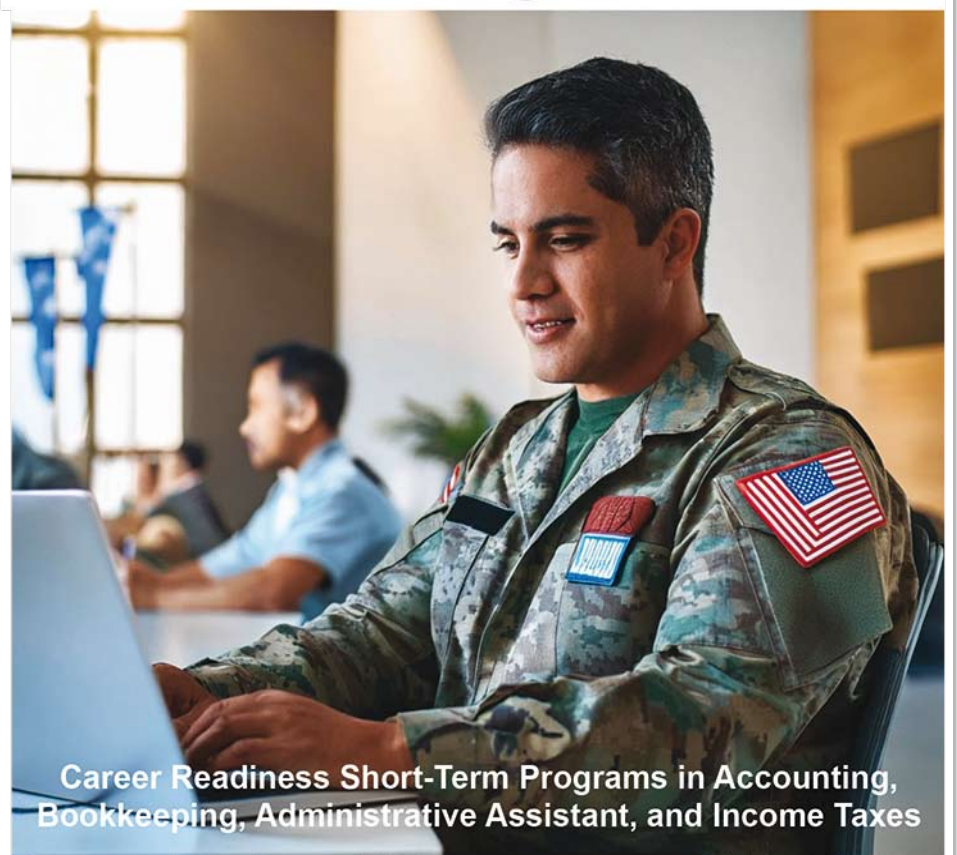


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North Island detachment honors retired Navy commander, POW survivor

by Chief Petty Officer
Russell Stevenson

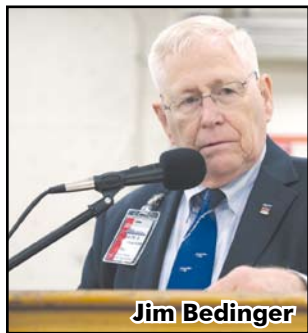
Center for Security Forces

On the heels of Veterans Day, the Center for Security Forces Detachment North Island, traditionally known as SERE West, honored Jim Bedinger, a retired Navy commander and former prisoner of war.

Bedinger served in the Navy Reserve in 1963 and earned his commission in 1967. He subsequently earned his wings as a Naval Flight Officer in 1968.

During his naval service, he completed training as a radar intercept officer for the F4 Phantom II and the F14 Tomcat and served with several strike fighter squadrons. Later, he served at Naval Military Personnel Command, Joint Chief of Staff, and Naval Training Center San Diego.

He served during the Cold War and fought in the Vietnam War. During a mission, he had to eject from his aircraft and



Jim Bedinger

was captured by North Vietnamese forces. Bedinger spent 1,232 days as a prisoner of war in the infamous Hanoi Hilton, where he endured heinous and torturous conditions before his eventual release.

Bedinger recently sat down for an interview to discuss his reason for joining the military, his experience as a POW, and his advice to anyone interested in joining the military today.

Q: Could you tell us more about what a radar intercept officer was during that time?

Bedinger: The first rule was to help the pilot with anything needed. As a radar intercept officer, you were there to help the pilot. You do missile intercept, bomb delivery, and other tactics to help the pilot.

Q: During the intense, stressful time, what was going through your mind before and when you ejected from your aircraft?

Bedinger: My first concern was we have to pull up. I was concerned if we really had to eject or not and I was waiting for the correct call to eject. The risk to survive was on my mind, thinking about it when my parachute opened."

Q: How did you keep the faith?

Bedinger: I had a tripod, three great legs of resistance: faith in God, faith in my country, and faith in my family and friends, including my cellmates and fellow POW's. That, in addition to the Code of Conduct.

Q: Do you have any advice for anyone who wants to join the military?

Bedinger: Joining the military is not a career or a final decision, it's the ability to use your skills to best succeed the most regard-

less of your beliefs, race, color, or creed, which mean nothing; it is about what you do and how you perform.

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each year in Force Protection, Expeditionary Warfare, Code of Conduct, Law Enforcement, and Small Craft Operations. It has training locations across the United States and worldwide, where training breeds confidence.

Railway car recycling kicks off at Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station

by Gregg Smith

Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach

A program to recycle over 100 unused railway cars got underway aboard Seal Beach Naval Weapons Station Nov. 15 with the first railcars being transported off base.

The program will see the recycling of over 2,500 tons of steel from 126 boxcars and flatcars that had previously been used to transport munitions around the installation.

"It's really exciting to see this project get underway," said base Commanding Officer Capt. Jessica O'Brien. "I'm especially proud that we will be able to do this at no cost to the Navy."

"Thanks to an innovative contract arrangement through the Navy's Qualified Recycling Program

and the current market price for scrap steel, this project will easily pay for itself," said Public Works Officer Lt. Cmdr. Timothy Palik. "We're even projecting a profit of over \$50,000, to invest back into the recycling program."

The railcars will be separated from their carriage assemblies, sealed, and then both parts will be transported off base to a recycling center in the nearby city of Long

Beach. The project is currently scheduled to take several months to complete.

While the rail system had been the transportation backbone of the base for over six decades, a 2008 study determined that use of modern trucks for munitions transport was more efficient and less polluting. The rail system aboard the base was disestablished soon after that.

Marine Corps general officer announcements

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced Nov. 13 that the president has made the following nominations:

Marine Corps Maj. Gen. **Robert C. Fulford** for appointment to lieutenant general, with assignment as deputy commander, U.S. European Command. Fulford is currently commanding general, 1st Marine Division, Camp Pendleton.

Marine Corps Brig. Gen. **Mark H. Clingan** for appointment to major general. Clingan is currently commanding general, Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms.

Marine Corps Brig. Gen. **Andrew M. Niebel** for appointment to major general. Niebel is currently serving as commanding general, 1st Marine Logistics Group, Camp Pendleton.

Flag officer announcements; Pollard, Zerr

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III announced Nov. 14 that the president has made the following nominations:

Navy Capt. **Davidtavis M. Pollard** for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Pollard is currently serving as executive assistant to Commander Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

Navy Capt. **Thomas J. Zerr** for appointment to the grade of rear admiral (lower half). Zerr is currently serving as chief of staff, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet, San Diego.

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NAVFAC delivers south airfield complex to Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake

by Katie Cadio

Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command (NAVFAC) Southwest Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake is another step closer to restoring full mission capabilities for base operations and its largest tenant, Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division, after recently celebrating the ribbon cutting of the South Airfield Complex to mark the completion of six projects that make up the complex.

This cluster of projects represents the single-largest contract of the Earthquake Recovery Program. The program was established after Ridgecrest was rocked by back-to-back magni-

tude 6.4 and 7.1 earthquakes in July 2019, causing widespread damage across the installation.

Following the earthquakes, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command established Officer In Charge of Construction China Lake to manage the \$2.7 billion reconstruction and repair of damaged facilities. The program identified 29 projects that had to be addressed to bring NAWCWS China Lake and NAWCWD back online.

"Between the design, construction, and the installed specialized equipment within these facilities, the South Airfield Complex represents a nearly



Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. Courtesy photo

\$1 billion investment for the Navy," said Capt. Nathan Hardy, resident OICC China Lake. "I've had the privilege of supporting this program and this project in a variety of roles since the establishment of OICC China Lake in the summer of 2020, and it has been a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see these projects through from start to finish."

The South Airfield Complex includes a fire rescue station, an air operations air traffic control tower, new hangars, and laboratory facilities. The contract was awarded in September 2020 and broke ground in March 2021 on what was once an empty 200-acre site.

Capt. Laurie Scott, NAVFAC Southwest commanding officer, was the NAVFAC Southwest operations officer when the earthquakes struck. He was part of the team that developed the multi-billion-dollar recovery program within four months of the earthquakes and stood up the integrated NAVFAC/NAWCWD in August 2020 as the OICC's first commanding officer.

"I can remember March 9, 2021, like it was yesterday when

we broke ground on this parcel, and in just over 1,300 days we are delivering the Super Bowl of projects," said Scott.

"By fully integrating NAVFAC and NAWCWD professionals, it allowed us to award all projects on time, pioneer new integrated processes, embrace and implement innovative construction management technologies in the field, and most importantly, we were able to attract top-tier civilian leaders from both organizations to work in partnership to deliver this one-of-a-kind construction program."

Earlier this year, the OICC transitioned to a ROICC structure, a significant milestone that indicates that most of the Earthquake Recovery Program projects are complete, or nearing completion.

Navy ousts commander of S.D. information warfare training group

STARS AND STRIPES - The Navy ousted the commanding officer of the Naval Information Warfare Training Group in San Diego, the service announced earlier this month.

Cmdr. Cayanne McFarlane was fired due to a loss of confidence in her ability to command the training group. The U.S. military routinely cites only a vague "loss of confidence" when removing commanders and other leaders from authority positions.

"The Navy maintains the highest standards for commanding officers and holds them accountable when those standards are not met," the Navy said in a statement.

Cmdr. Dominic DiMaggio, executive officer of Fleet Weather Center in San Diego, has been temporarily assigned as the commanding officer until a permanent replacement is assigned. The firing was the second in as many days. The service recently announced that the commanding officer of the San Diego Navy Leadership and Ethics Center was relieved from his position due to a loss of confidence.

'Fat Leonard,' Navy scandal mastermind, sentenced to 15 years

In a report in *Stars and Stripes*, former military defense contractor Leonard "Fat Leonard" Francis was sentenced earlier this month to 15 years in prison for masterminding a decade-long bribery scheme that swept up dozens of Navy officers, federal prosecutors said. U.S. District Judge Janis L. Sammartino also ordered Francis to pay \$20 million in restitution to the Navy and a \$150,000 fine, according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney's Office. He was also ordered to forfeit \$35 million in "ill-gotten proceeds from his crimes," the statement said.

Prosecutors said the sentence results from Leonard's first guilty plea in 2015 concerning bribery and fraud, his extensive cooperation with the government since then, and another guilty plea Tuesday for failing to appear for his original sentencing hearing in 2022. Shortly before he was due to be sentenced in September 2022, Leonard cut off a GPS monitor he was wearing while under house arrest and fled the country. He was later arrested in Venezuela and brought back to the U.S. in December 2023.

Sammartino sentenced him to more than 13 1/2 years for the bribery and fraud charges plus 16 months for failing to appear, to be served consecutively.

SPARKS FLY



CAMP PENDLETON (Oct. 31, 2-24) Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Joseph Schweig cuts into a staged vehicle during a tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel course here. The course provides Marines with the knowledge and skills required to recover aircraft and personnel in potential search and rescue situations on deployment.

U. S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Simon Saravia

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'Our veterans deserve the best': Lawmakers urge Army to restore horse-drawn funerals at Arlington

by Linda F. Hersey, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - The return of military horses that have escorted caskets to gravesites at Arlington National Cemetery for more than 75 years will depend on the Army securing adequate pastureland, repairing rundown stables and improving training for handlers, officials said.

Unsanitary living conditions and a lack of open space for the herd to graze led to an indefinite suspension of the 3rd Infantry Regiment Caisson Platoon in May 2023 after several horses died, Maj. Gen. Trevor Bredenkamp, commander of the Army Military District of Washington, said recently at a hearing of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's subpanel on disability and memorial affairs.

Lawmakers sought an update on the Army's work to improve care for the horses and develop a plan for the resumption of horse-drawn funerals at Arlington.

"Caisson-pulling military horses were dying in 2022 because of the Army's failure to provide proper food, veterinary care, pastureland and stables for the herd," said Rep. Morgan Luttrell, R-Texas, chairman of the subcommittee. "Our caisson platoon should be the most elite organization of its kind on the planet."

Known as the Old Guard, the caisson platoon of the 3rd Infantry Regiment has carried the caskets of deceased service members to gravesites at Arlington since 1948. The caisson - a ceremonial wagon that bears the casket - is drawn by four specially trained horses. The processions are considered an integral part of traditional full-honor military funerals at Arlington.

"The Army has given us no estimate on a time or date when these operations will resume," Luttrell said.

An Army investigation in 2023 revealed the horses were kept in cramped quarters with a lack of maintenance or care. The herd was grazing on land with construction debris and manure. Horses were consuming low-quality feed and suffering from parasites, according to the findings.

Sand and gravel were found in the digestive tracts of two horses that died. The problems evolved over time, said Bredenkamp, who also commands the Joint Task Force-National Capital Region. They included stables in disrepair, lack of open land to exercise and graze the horses, and handlers with little or no training in working with horses.

"After decades of neglect the platoon was taken out of commission — and rightfully so. But families deserve to know the Army is working diligently to returning the platoon to its rightful stature," said Rep. Chris Pappas of New Hampshire, the top Democrat on the subcommittee.

Thirty-four families are now waiting for the return of the horse platoon to honor a deceased military member or veteran with full honors at Arlington, Bredenkamp said. More than 2,000 veterans have been denied the benefit of the iconic procession since the service was canceled, he said.

The Army Military District of Washington is responsible for military funerals with full honors to the nation's veterans. The herd size — and its health — directly relate to the wait

time for families seeking to have the horse-drawn wagons in funeral processions of loved ones, Bredenkamp said.

The Army now is focusing on land acquisition, horse fitness and talent management. Plans are to secure 100 acres for permanent stables with pasture for grazing and housing for staff, he said.

About 40 horses have been retired since 2023 because of age, medical conditions or both, Bredenkamp said. The Army might seek to change regulations to allow soldiers to stay in the caisson longer than a two- or three-year assignment to develop and use their horsemanship skills, he said.

The service is also identifying a larger pool of equine veterinarians who can treat the herd. Though the horses have been stabled at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall in Virginia for more than 70 years, there's no open pastureland left in the area, Bredenkamp said.

Plans are to update stables at Fort Myer, which is next to Arlington, to use the paddocks when horses are working at funeral processions. But the herd will be kept at a larger permanent facility with pastureland, he said. Renovations at Fort Myer will include improved ventilation at the barns, enlarged stalls and replacement of flooring to reduce the strain on the horses.

"Too many of our nation's heroes have not been able to receive the full military funeral honors they have earned due to



Horses ridden by service members in uniform pull a coffin in a funeral procession at Arlington National Cemetery. The caisson platoon of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, also known as the Old Guard, leads a funeral procession in December 2016 at Arlington National Cemetery, Va. U.S. Navy photo by Huey D. Younger, Jr.

the Army's yearslong mismanagement of the caisson platoon military horses," Rep. Mike Bost, R-Ill., chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee said in August.

A "haphazard and ineffective approach" to improving the health and living conditions for the herd led to the deaths of the military horses, he said. Bost had asked for quarterly briefings about improvements underway for the caisson platoon program until it is fully operational.

The Army plans to have a herd of 80 horses to support funeral processions, Bredenkamp said. The service intends to resume operations when it can support 20 funerals per week, he said.

The Army has hired a herd manager and facilities manager, improved the diet of the horses

and is using 10 acres temporarily in Virginia to graze and exercise them until a permanent facility is acquired.

"The Army is unwavering in its commitment to continue this solemn duty for those eligible and rendering honors to those who have served our nation," Bredenkamp said.

VA proposes to remove copays for telehealth, and expand access

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing to eliminate copayments for all VA telehealth services and establish a grant program to fund designated VA telehealth access points in non-VA facilities, with a focus on rural and medically underserved communities. These changes would be made by regulation.

The proposed grant program, called Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS), would provide funding to organizations — including nonprofits and private businesses — to offer Veterans comfortable, private spaces equipped with high-speed internet access and the technology to meet with VA providers remotely. Grants would also provide designated funding to train on-site personnel to support the program.

"Waiving copays for telehealth services and launching this grant program are both major steps forward in ensuring Veterans can access health care where and when they need it," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "VA is the best and most affordable care in America for Veterans — and with these steps, we can make it easier for Veterans to access their earned VA health care."

The rulemaking can be viewed in the Federal Register under public inspection tomorrow, and will be published and open for comment beginning Wednesday (findable by searching for the rule on VA's Federal Register webpage). VA anticipates a notice of funding opportunity for this grant program to be published following publication of the final rule.

For more information, visit the VA Telehealth Services at <https://telehealth.va.gov/>.



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2024 In-N-Out Burger NHRA drag racing finals

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Professional motorsports series are winding down for 2024. IndyCar and NASCAR have already crowned their champions. What is a fan of motorsports supposed to do?

This past weekend was the final NHRA race meet of 2024: the In-N-Out Burger NHRA Finals at Pomona Dragstrip. I went on Sunday, checked out most of what auto racing fans might want to see, and shot thousands of photos. Some of the class titles had already been decided but that did not take away from the intense competition in all racing classes.

Under an absolutely beautiful, clear blue sky, fans filled the parking lots. Once inside, there was much to choose from. Enthusiasts or the simply curious could watch inside the open-ended big tents as crews prepared their cars — and motorcycles — for battle. There was an amazing car show.

On the NHRA stage, drivers were introduced. Fans were invited to participate in the traditional morning track walk — this time led by a marching band and the Budweiser stallions. The track surface, which was coated in melted tire rubber, was very sticky — so much so that it tried to pull off your shoes as you walked on it.

I made my way trackside, where I took my first photos of the racing action: one race, two races and then, suddenly, the racing stopped. I could see no reason why. The cars, drivers, teams and broadcast television crews were ready to continue with the racing. What had just happened?

Soon we got our answer. A

small plane had just crashed near the end of the dragstrip, in a parking lot.

The racing was ultimately delayed for about two hours as emergency personnel rushed to the scene and dealt with what had just happened. Later in the day, news reports filled in the details. Four people on board the airplane were injured in the

The shot was taken from high above by a drone.

When the racing finally resumed there were no more interruptions. As a huge bonus, the two-hour delay meant that it would be dark for the final few races. It was cool seeing spectacular flames erupt from the exhaust pipes. Then, as I was leaving, I spotted (and pho-



crash — two seriously. Fortunately, plenty of help arrived at the scene almost immediately. In addition to local emergency services personnel, the NHRA was also well prepared to handle emergencies. They spread kitty litter over the spilled fuel. The injured were taken to hospital. Fortunately, no one else was hurt, but several vehicles in the parking lot were damaged.

During the break I walked over to the grandstand nearest to the end of the track, closest to the crash scene, to join the race fans who were gathered along the grandstand's railing to try to see what had happened. However, between my heavy professional camera gear which also put me off-balance, my sprained knee and the lack of a handrail to hold on to on the staircase, I feared I might fall while climbing up. Thankfully a kind race fan recognized my plight and helped me climb to the top row of the grandstand. I got there just in time to take a few quick photos of the accident scene before track personnel arrived to completely clear out the grandstand — press included. I had seen a badly flattened truck, but the plane itself was mostly hidden behind a motorhome. Later, someone shared a photo with me that included the plane.

tographed) drag racing legend John Force, who'd returned to visit at the track after his serious injury earlier this year had sidelined his racing career.

History was made as Funny Car world champ Austin Prock (Funny Car) made the fastest run in NHRA history: 341.68 mph! An extremely emotional and grateful Antron Brown secured his fourth Mission Foods NHRA Top Fuel world championship. Competing against much younger drivers, Greg Anderson (Pro Stock) became a six-time world champion. Subbing for the injured John Force, championship runner-up Jack Beckman got a Funny Car race win.

To see official NHRA race reports, results and more about the 2024 In-N-Out Burger NHRA Finals, visit <https://www.nhra.com/> and then select NEWS, RESULTS and STANDINGS.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse. Copyright © 2024 by Jan Wagner — AutoMatters & More #861

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

We do it every year. We cut out recipes. We make lists. We go to the commissary. We elbow each other out of the way to grab turkeys, cranberries, yams, and mini-marshmallows. We jam enough food into our pantries to feed an Army... or Navy, as it were.

Why? Because it's Thanksgiving, of course!

When our invited guests politely ask, "What can we bring?" we are faced with an interesting dilemma. On one hand, our brains are about to explode over the exhausting details of hosting, so contributions would be nice. But on the other hand, we have envisioned holiday meals using only our own families' traditional recipes, and what if our guests bring dishes that are strange and unfamiliar?

Thirty years ago, when my Navy husband and I lived in base housing at Fort Ord, California, we couldn't afford to fly back east to spend the holiday with our extended families. So, we accepted an invitation to have Thanksgiving dinner at another military family's house on post.

"What can I bring?" I asked the other wife. "Uh, well, um..." she stuttered uncomfortably, "I'll get back to you on that." I fancied myself a pretty darned good cook back in those days (before kids turned my brain to mush and our staple food into boxed mac-n-cheese) and was looking forward to contributing my culinary talents to the meal.

"You've got to let me bring something," I pleaded.

"Well, alright then," she answered, somewhat irritated,

My gravy's better than yours

"just bring a dish of corn — frozen corn."

"Frozen corn?" I thought. "Are you kidding me?" She wasn't.

Over the next few days, I hounded the other spouse, offering my delectable Sausage Apple Pecan Cornbread Dressing, my rich Guinness Gravy, my addictive Swiss Onion Bread, my snappy Waldorf Salad. She resisted, but finally agreed to let me bring a plain pumpkin pie, reminding me to not forget the "tub of Cool Whip."

I swallowed my disappointment that Thanksgiving -- along with her boring stuffing -- and resolved to make what I wanted from then on.

However, year after year, the same dilemma kept cropping up. Whether host or guest, I didn't like giving up my holiday traditions. But when we were too far away from family, I wanted to reach out to other military families rather than spending holidays alone.

Eventually I realized that, unless I wanted to spend Thanksgiving stubbornly alone with my coveted recipes, I'd better learn to compromise. I lectured myself, "Now, if someone invites us over to their house for Thanksgiving, for goodness sakes don't turn your nose up if the hostess serves homemade cranberry sauce just because you love the canned stuff."

"Don't judge if the host doesn't brine his bird!" I admonished, and reminded myself to never make passive aggressive comments like, "Could

you pass the canned gravy? A little breast meat is stuck in my throat." I promised I wouldn't be bitter if the hostess declines my offer to show off my Pecan Cheesecake with Gingersnap Crust. Instead, I vowed to shut my pumpkin pie hole and gladly eat whatever she serves.

When I offered to host other military friends on holidays, I trained myself to happily make way for a guests' beloved Tex Mex corn soufflé... even if it does clash with my Ambrosia. "You can give up your Swiss Onion Bread just this once," I told myself one Thanksgiving, "and let her bring her Gammie's Poppy Seed Loaf if it makes her feel at home." "C'mon," I argued with myself, "no one really cares how you think sweet potatoes should be cooked anyway. Surely, no one has ever died from eating mini-marshmallows!"

In the end, I not only survived each holiday meal for which I compromised my traditions... I gained ten pounds in the process.

Besides, Thanksgiving is the time of year that we're supposed to contemplate all the things we're thankful for, like our family and friends. Not the Green Bean Casserole with the French-fried onions, for Pete's sake.

Friends and family truly are the meat and potatoes of life. The food? Let's face it — No matter whether it's canned, powdered, microwaved, or slow cooked from the drippings, it's just the gravy.

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Working septuagenarian asks about disability benefits

Dear Rusty: I retired at my full retirement age, am now 79 and will be 80 in December. I have been working consistently since. I get a meager Social Security benefit, only about \$800 due to my federal retirement offset. Most jobs I have held since filing and collecting SS have involved very labor-intensive work, to include my current position. This has taken a toll.

My question: is there any provision in Social Security that permits re-evaluation of Social Security benefits for disability after one has collected and paid into the system for some 15 years? I suspect not but thought I would ask, since at my not so tender age, I am faced with having to cease employment that generates needed income.

Signed: Working Still at 79

Dear Still Working: I'm afraid that Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits are no longer available once you reach your SS "full retirement age," or "FRA," which for you was age 66. Indeed, anyone collecting SSDI at full retirement age is automatically converted to their regular SS retirement benefits at the same amount they were previously receiving on SSDI. That's because SSDI benefits are intended to sustain workers up to their SS full retirement age, but SSDI goes away once FRA is attained.

Thus, the provision to apply for SS disability allows only those who have not yet reached their full retirement age to seek disability benefits. Once FRA is reached, SSDI benefits are no longer available. Simply for your awareness, there would be no financial advantage for you to receive SS disability benefits anyway, because the most you can get on SSDI is your full retirement age amount. Thus, since you retired and claimed SS at your full retirement age, no additional disability amount would be available anyway.

FYI, I admire, at your "tender age," that you are still actively working, but I'm afraid you cannot claim more now on Social Security disability because you've already reached your FRA. However, from what you've written, your SS retirement benefit has been affected by the so-called Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) which affects those with a separate pension earned without contributing to Social Security.

If you've been separately working (and contributing to Social Security) since you left government service, and you now have more than 20 years contributing to SS from other non-government "substantial earnings," it's possible that you can request a reevaluation of your WEP penalty. WEP provides relief for those who have more than 20 years contributing to Social Security. So, if you have more than that over your lifetime, you could ask that your WEP reduction be reevaluated to consider your additional years contributing to Social Security. If that is the case, your monthly amount would be increased to consider those additional years contributing to SS since you first claimed.

I suggest, if you now have more than 20 years of contributions to Social Security from your non-government work over your lifetime, that you call Social Security to request reevaluation of your WEP retirement amount. FYI, you can see exactly how many years of SS-covered work you have by requesting an "Earnings Statement" from Social Security. You can get this Statement by calling 1.800.772.1213, or you can also get it at your personal "my Social Security" online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount (Social Security will also be able to tell you this directly when you call). In any case, I wish you good fortune, and hope that reevaluating the WEP reduction to your SS benefit may offer some small financial relief as you go forward.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org.



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Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

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MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. <https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/>

Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not possess military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal. FREE-Children 5 & under, Active Duty military including reservists (w/ valid ID). Adult \$34 (ages 13+). Youth \$24 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) \$24*Must show ID at entrance.
Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. <https://www.midway.org/>

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758 The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open daily 10am-5pm • Last admission at 4pm

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85°	104°	119°

Stopping middle-age spread: Maintain a healthy weight as you age

If you're an adult in the U.S., you can expect to gain 10 to 25 pounds between your 20s and your 40s. Starting between ages 30 and 40, you may find losing weight and exercising more challenging. The exercise you do may not have the same effect as before. It's not necessarily a sign that something is wrong. This weight gain in middle age—known as “middle-age spread”—is a natural consequence of aging.

“Your metabolism tends to slow down as you get older,” says NIH's Dr. Rafael de Cabo, an expert on aging. “But your appetite and your food intake do not. So, you have a steady increase of body weight with age.”

Much of the weight gain comes in the form of fat tissue. The distribution of fat in your body also shifts. There's less under your skin and more around your internal organs. Meanwhile, you start to lose lean



muscle with age. Many people also become less active as they age, especially if they have a job that involves a lot of sitting. This can lead to further fat gain and muscle loss.

Those extra pounds have consequences beyond your clothes not fitting. The risk of many chronic diseases, such as diabe-

tes, heart disease, and neurodegenerative diseases, goes up with age. Excess weight can further heighten these risks.

Fortunately, you can take steps to maintain a healthy weight as you age. Your diet can play a key role. Having a slower metabolism means you'll need fewer calories. But you

also want to make sure you still get all the nutrients your body needs. Get tips on healthy eating as you age.

De Cabo studies the effects of dietary changes on health and longevity. One example is intermittent fasting, in which meals are interspersed with long fasting periods. For example, you might limit eating to only eight hours per day. Studies suggest intermittent fasting may help some people to eat less and keep weight off. But De Cabo and others have been finding that it might also have benefits for your metabolism.

His work has shown that mice live longer and stay healthier when they go for long periods between meals. This was true even if they were eating the same amounts and types of foods as mice that ate whenever they wanted. Other studies have also suggested that periods of fasting may bring benefits beyond weight loss.

Physical activity is important for combating the changes that come with aging, too.

“The key is to maintain an active lifestyle,” de Cabo says. “Try to incorporate daily walks or daily visits to the gym. If you have an office job, get a stand-up desk, so you spend a few

hours a day standing instead of sitting. Small doses of exercise throughout the day will help tremendously.”

For more suggestions on how to fight age-related weight changes, see the Wise Choices box.

Wise Choices....

Small steps to fight middle-age spread

- Commit to a healthy diet. Focus on nutrient-dense foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, seafood, lean meats, eggs, legumes, nuts, and seeds.
- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Move more. Every minute counts. Take the stairs and add walking breaks to your day. Experts recommend getting at least 150 minutes of moderate activity a week.
- Get plenty of sleep.
- Limit alcohol use.
- Avoid tobacco products.
- Visit the doctor regularly.

Health capsules

Trying to develop an accurate blood test for Alzheimer's disease

Older adults who are worried about their thinking, memory, or reasoning skills may want to get tested for Alzheimer's disease. But current tests are invasive and expensive. One type uses a sample of spinal fluid. Another uses expensive brain imaging. These tests can't be done in primary care clinics, which limits access for many people.

To address these issues, researchers have been trying to develop blood tests for Alzheimer's disease. These measure proteins that spill from the brain into the bloodstream. In a new study, researchers looked at how well a blood test, called

PrecivityAD2, works for detecting Alzheimer's.

The team collected blood samples from more than 1,000 people who were concerned they might have Alzheimer's disease. The scientists then compared the blood test results with those from either a spinal-fluid test or imaging scan. They also compared the blood test with an evaluation performed by doctors.

The blood test predicted a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease with about 90% accuracy. In contrast, evaluations done by doctors picked out only about 60% to 70% of Alzheimer's cases.

“The next steps include establishing clear guidelines for how an Alzheimer's blood test can be used in clinical practice,”

says Dr. Oskar Hansson from Lund University in Sweden, who helped lead the study.

While it is sold in the U.S., the test is not yet approved by the FDA. More studies are needed to verify how well the test works in more diverse populations.

What Is ADHD?

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that first appears during childhood. It can last into adulthood. ADHD can lead to a wide range of ongoing symptoms that interfere with friendships, schoolwork, and daily life.

Some people with ADHD find it hard to pay attention or remember important things, like daily chores. Others may be hyperactive and have trouble sitting still or staying calm. They may act impulsively and have

difficulty with self-control. For example, they may interrupt others or act without thinking.

Anyone can have ADHD. But it's more common in males than females. Boys and men tend to have more hyperactive and impulsive symptoms. Girls and women are more likely to have symptoms of inattention. Some people have all types of

symptoms.

The causes of ADHD are unknown. Genes likely play an important role. Scientists are exploring whether other factors—like nutrition or a person's social environment—also contribute.

There is no cure for ADHD. But treatment can help reduce symptoms. Treatment may in-

clude medication, psychotherapy, education, school-based programs, or a combination of these.

Some adults with ADHD are not diagnosed until later in life. They may have trouble getting organized, completing projects, or keeping appointments. It's never too late to get diagnosed and treated for ADHD.



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Mortgage interest rates have dropped to the lowest point in 17 months...



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