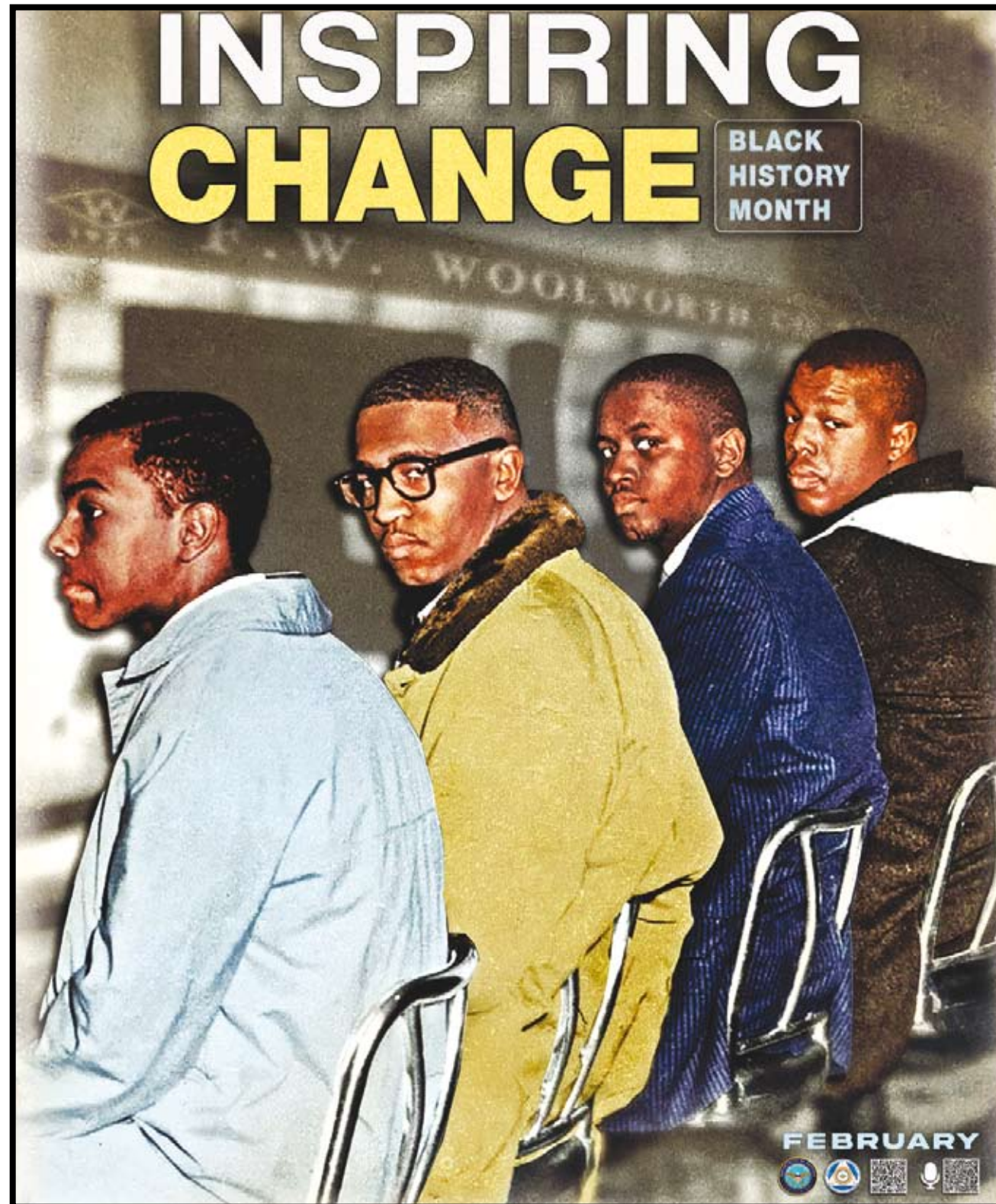


ARMED FORCES DISPATCH



San Diego Navy/Marine Corps Dispatch www.armedforcesdispatch.com 619.280.2985
 Serving active duty and retired military personnel, veterans and civil service employees

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR NO. 51
 THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023



This year's theme, "Inspiring Change," epitomizes the contributions of African Americans to challenging racial inequities and promoting opportunities for equal advancement within the African American community. The 2023 Department of Defense Black History Month poster depicts (from left) Joseph McNeil, Franklin McCain, Ezell A. Blair, Jr., and David Richmond, on the second day of a peaceful sit-down protest they organized at a Woolworth in Greensboro, North Carolina. The Greensboro Sit-Ins were the first prominent non-violent sit-in protests of the civil rights movement and lasted from February 1 to July 25, 1960. The protests led to the Woolworth Department Store chain ending its policy of racial segregation in its stores. The protest began when McNeil, McCain, Blair and Richmond, African American students at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, sat down at a lunch counter inside Woolworth and politely asked for service. Their request was refused, and they were asked to leave. In response, they chose to remain in their seats. This passive resistance and peaceful sit-down protest helped ignite a youth-led movement to challenge racial inequality throughout the South. McNeil went on to become a Maj. Gen. in the U.S. Air Force.

Undisclosed number of Ospreys grounded until clutch-related part fixed

DEFENSE NEWS - An undisclosed number of V-22 Ospreys across three services will halt operations until a component tied to the engine is replaced, a defense official said Feb. 4, as part of an ongoing effort to address a hard clutch engagement issue that first alarmed the Air Force in summer 2022.

At issue is the input quill assembly, which attaches the Osprey's engine to its prop-rotor gear box. The V-22 Joint Program Office on Saturday announced a time limit for these parts' use, after a recent data analytics effort showed a clear connection between the age of the input quill assemblies and the aircraft's likelihood of experiencing a hard clutch engagement.

The Defense Department isn't disclosing the flight hour limit at which the input quill assembly must be replaced, nor how many of about 400 total aircraft across all the services will require this immediate maintenance work.

Still, a defense official, who spoke to a small group of reporters on condition of not being named, said Marine Corps, Navy and Air Force Special Operations Command squadrons will continue training and operations with aircraft that have not met that time threshold as the others are replaced.

There are no further operational restrictions, the official told Defense News during the call, saying that "the aircraft that have input quills under this time limit are ready to go and ready to train and ready to fight tonight."

The Marine Corps has an inventory of 296 MV-22s, according to its spring 2022 aviation plan. Air Force Special Operations Command has 52 CV-22 aircraft, and the Navy is in the midst of receiving the 44 CMV-22s it purchased to support carrier strike groups.

2023 Department of Defense Black History Month Observance

The Department recognizes February 1, 2023 to February 28, 2023, as Black History Month. This year's theme, "Inspiring Change," celebrates the contributions of African Americans to overcoming racial inequities and promoting opportunities for equal advancement within the Black community.

World-renowned African American author Dr. Maya Angelou stated, "History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again." During Black History Month, we remember the Department's painful history of segregation and we celebrate those who worked to overcome such obstacles and advance change. Their courage to stand up or sit down, when necessary, and to come together against racial injustices changed this Department and our nation. Cognizant of this past, we recommit to providing an environment where people with different backgrounds and experiences are united by a common mission, an inclusive culture, and equal opportunities to succeed.

Diverse and inclusive workplaces improve our ability to attract, recruit, and retain the best qualified DoD workforce. The Department has made some progress with increasing African American military and civilian leaders at the senior ranks and initiatives are underway to address the gaps. The Department remains committed to strategically broadening and diversifying our talent pipelines through outreach and leveraging other talent management programs and policies to advance opportunities for all. In order to sustain and advance our capabilities, DoD must attract and retain diverse talent by incorporating equity and inclusion into daily operations.

As leaders in the Department, we must remain vigilant and courageous in our actions to remove all racial and cultural barriers, wherever they reside, and cultivate environments that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive for all DoD personnel.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.

Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness of the United States

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Career Advice

Dept. of Air Force announces overseas spouse direct-hire authority pilot program

See page 5

Base Movie Schedule

M3GAN, Puss in Boots: The Last Wish, Plane, Babylon, Armageddon Time, Jungle Cruise

See page 10

From wrestling mat to motherhood, Iowa Soldier looks for next best thing

by Sgt. Rachel White

Long before women's wrestling was sanctioned in the state of Iowa in 2022, Spc. Megan Black-Campion made a name for herself in the sport.

Black-Campion, of Batavia, Iowa, has wrestled her entire life until the recent birth of her daughter. She is always searching for the "next best thing" when it comes to wrestling and being a mother.

With her family's full support, Black-Campion began her wrestling career after her younger brother, Tucker Black, showed interest in the sport first.

"You name it, Megan and I were doing it together," said Tucker.

Black-Campion played sports alongside her brother through high school. Tucker said she was a tough wrestler even at a young age.

Although the Black family was passionate about sports, some of the other kids in Black-Campion's class didn't take sports as seriously. She remembers liking wrestling because of the individual responsibility. Her success was in her hands, no one else's.

It wasn't until she started high school that she realized not every competitor would be open to wrestling a girl.

During practice, Black-Campion was held to the same standards as her male teammates. However, competitors would often mock her and forfeit matches.

"I don't remember one time where I could visibly see it get to her," said Tucker, "and that was



Spc. Megan Black-Campion, a recruiter for the Iowa Army National Guard, smiles for a photo at Fort Carson, Colo., July 2020. Black-Campion joined the Colorado Army National Guard and wrestled for the Army World Class Athlete Program in 2019. She was also the first woman to win a match at the Iowa state wrestling tournament. Courtesy photo

something I was really proud of as a brother."

She said other people always seemed to make a bigger deal out of being a female wrestler than she did. It never crossed her mind that she might one day make history.

Black-Campion qualified for the Iowa state wrestling tournament in 2012 with a broken wrist and became the first woman to win a match at the tournament.

She remembers going on to win the Pan American Championship in 2016. She stood on top of the podium listening to the national anthem play as the U.S. flag was raised. The room roared with applause from wrestlers and spectators alike.

In that moment, her world seemed to stop.

"Wearing that uniform, with the flag . . . it means the most to me. You wear that with pride."

Black-Campion earned the title of All-American four years in a row in college. She was a two-time national finalist and a 2018 University National Champion. She graduated from McKendree University in Illinois with a bachelor's degree in physical education.

Even though she loved PE, she felt like she still had a lot to give to the sport. Black-Campion took the next step in her career and began wrestling as a training partner at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs. Her partner at the time wrestled for the Army World Class Athlete Program.

WCAP coach Sgt. 1st Class Jermaine Hodge helped Black-Campion find her next best thing. He suggested she pursue a wrestling career in the U.S. Army.

"I was like, 'Oh man. I get to do what I love and chase a dream?' Yeah, sign me up," said Black-Campion.

sands of people in the crowd sounded just like an Iowa high school wrestling tournament on a Saturday.

"It made wrestling in other places easy," said Black-Campion. "Iowans love wrestling, and they come out in big numbers to support. They're loud and rambunctious. I grew up only knowing that."

Years of intense training and matches take a toll on the body, even on world class athletes.

Black-Campion had knee and shoulder surgeries in her last few years of wrestling. These setbacks were just part of the process of being an athlete, she said.

There were two things that helped Black-Campion get through these hardships and recover. The first was prayer. She said she wouldn't have been able to get back on the mat without God on her side.

The second thing Black-Campion did was focus on what she could control – an important skill all Soldiers are taught.

She recalled some advice Hodge had given her at the start of her military career: always focus on the "next best thing." For Black-Campion, that meant staying engaged mentally and physically.

She spent hours watching wrestling tapes while her injuries healed.

"I would visualize myself wrestling those matches, in

those positions," said Black-Campion.

When she wasn't watching wrestling film, she found herself in the pool. Black-Campion spent her time in physical therapy working to stay in shape for when it was time to return to the mat.

After her recovery, Black-Campion was gearing up for another year of wrestling for the Army team when she found out she and her husband were going to be parents.

"When you've been working your whole life for a goal, like being an Olympic champion, that love for wrestling doesn't just stop when you find out you're pregnant," Black-Campion said. "As an athlete, we're told that the next match is the most important match."

Black-Campion's next match was motherhood.

Her daughter Leighton Campion was born in the summer of 2022.

"Holding her is better than any medal I could ever hold," said Black-Campion.

Growing up, Black-Campion could be found wherever her brother was. The same is true now. She and Tucker coach the William Penn University women's wrestling team.

The next best thing for Black-Campion is recruiting for the Iowa Army National Guard and spending time with her family.

'Warrior's spirit': Army marks 72 years since its last major bayonet charge in Korean War

by Christopher Green
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea - Around 50 U.S. service members, veterans, and their families gathered atop a hill on this installation south of Seoul to remember a seasoned combat veteran who helped turn the tide of the 1950-53 Korean War.

The Feb. 2 ceremony paid respects to the memory of Army Capt. Lewis Millett, who led the soldiers of Easy Company, 27th Infantry Regiment, in what the Army regards as its last major bayonet charge.

The charge took place at Osan on Feb. 5, 1951, according to the Army. Millett was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions that day.

The captain was leading his company against a

strongly held Chinese Communist position when he noticed an Army platoon pinned down by small-arms, automatic and antitank fire, according to his 2009 Army obituary.

Millett, who received a battlefield commission during World War II, decided the only way to gain the upper hand was to take the hill.

"Fix bayonets," Millett yelled as he and his men charged up the hill, according to an Eighth Army account of the charge.

Millett dodged eight grenades but a ninth left him with shrapnel in his legs and back, according to the account. He continued to fight until Easy Company was atop Hill 180, now known as "Bay-

see Millett, page 4

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The USS Midway Museum is currently recruiting for docents, air craft restoration, ship restoration and safety volunteers. These assignments are a regular commitment of at least 6 months.

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Navy saves millions using DLA Disposition Services for ship recycling

by Jeff Landenberger
BATTLE CREEK, Mich. - Defense Logistics Agency Disposition Services is assisting the Navy in recycling five retired ships as part of a scrap sales contract to protect the environment and save taxpayer money.

The winning bid for recycling the ships was \$360,000, according to DLA Disposition Services Public Sales Division Chief Carlos Torres. The important take-away for taxpayers, Torres said, is that the contract allows the Navy to avoid per-ship disposal costs that could reach millions of dollars for each vessel.

DLA Disposition Services and the Navy partnered in writing the contract, Torres said. Navy officials then reviewed technical proposals and ensured that companies bidding could meet the requirements.

When a ship is retired from the active fleet it's decommissioned. Once that happens, the Navy places them in its reserve, or what is often referred to as its "Mothball Fleet." Some ships are retained in case they are needed in an emergency. But as newer ships are moved into the reserve fleet, older ones are re-

leased to make room and reduce maintenance costs.

Torres said ships are towed from both Philadelphia and Washington's Puget Sound to Brownsville, Texas, where full dismantling will commence and 98 percent of all removed materials are expected to be recycled.

"The cool thing is, before the last cut, they stop all the work," Torres said. "There are about 100, 150 employees there who all gather around, and the owner of the company reads the history of the ship. Then they do a moment of silence. So, it's really respectful and honorable how they do that."

Torres said he and Navy Rear Adm. Doug Noble, director of DLA Logistics Operations have both toured the contractor's facility to see the dismantling process.

"Getting to see the ship recycling program here in Brownsville is bittersweet," Noble said.

"Over their many years of service, the ships we saw today served as homes at sea for

USS America takes out drone with 'fire-and-forget' missile near Okinawa

by Jonathan Snyder
Stars and Stripes

USS America "detected, tracked and engaged a target" with an RIM-116 rolling airframe missile this week in the Philippine Sea, an exercise the Navy says was aimed at keeping the amphibious assault ship's crew ready for warfighting.

The RIM-116 is a low-cost, lightweight, quick-reaction, "fire-and-forget" weapon designed to destroy anti-ship cruise missiles and other air and surface threats, according to the Navy's website.

thousands of sailors, spanning a total of 149 years," Noble said. "There are many memories, I'm sure, that the crewmembers have with their ships. Thankfully, we still have those memories."

"The ship recycling program provides a vitally important function at the end of a weapons system's service life, enabling the Department to ensure we are being good stewards of both the taxpayer's money and good stewards of the environment."

"The missile was launched toward Taiwan, which is less than 400 nautical miles from

to simulate an anti-ship cruise missile to test the ship's surface-to-air defense systems and reinforce the crew's warfighting readiness," the ship's spokesman, Lt. Beau Nickerson, told Stars and Stripes by email Thursday.

Only one missile was fired during Tuesday's exercise, which took place "in the vicinity of Okinawa," he added.

The exercise came about two weeks after China conducted a series of naval drills, including a large-scale combat strike exercise on Jan. 9 in the Taiwan Strait. During those drills, Chinese forces sent 57 aircraft and four ships into the strait

toward Taiwan, which is less than 400 nautical miles from

cer, Cmdr. Avery Wilson, said Tuesday's exercise showed off his team's ability to work together, coordinating across multiple departments, to execute a mission safely and effectively.

"We demonstrated that through the hard work of our technicians and logistics support, our equipment is fully operational and our watchstanders in the Combat Information Center are trained and prepared for any threat," she said in a Navy press release Tuesday.

America, along with Amphibious Squadron 11 and USS Green Bay amphibious transport dock ship, have been at sea since Jan. 8 for a routine patrol of the region, Nickerson said.

Okinawa, according to the island's Ministry of National Defense.

America's operations offi-



Amphibious assault ship America fires a RIM-116 rolling airframe missile while underway in the Philippine Sea Jan. 24. Official US Navy photo

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Our Members Are the Mission

Navy collecting surveillance balloon debris

by David Vergun
DOD News

The U.S. military began collecting the remnants of a Chinese high-altitude surveillance balloon shot down by an Air Force fighter over the weekend.

Air Force Gen. Glen D. VanHerck, commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, said the recovery effort began about 10 a.m. Mon-

day. Rough seas thwarted safe, comprehensive debris collection yesterday, he said.

On Saturday, an F-22 Raptor fighter from the 1st Fighter Wing at Langley Air Force Base, Va., fired one AIM-9X Sidewinder missile at the balloon, which had floated southeastward across the United States.

It fell about six miles off the coast of South Carolina into

about 50 feet of water. No one was hurt.

Precautions are being taken during the salvage operation in case explosives or toxic substances are present, VanHerck said.

Due to changing ocean currents, it's possible that some debris could escape notice and wash ashore. VanHerck said members of the public can assist

by informing local law enforcement personnel if they spot remnants of the balloon; they should not collect it themselves.

Amphibious landing ship *Carter Hall* is collecting debris in the vicinity of the splashdown, he said. USNS *Pathfinder*, a survey ship, is mapping the ocean floor using sonar for the debris search, VanHerck said.

Explosive ordnance members and at least one unmanned underwater vehicle are also participating, he said.

In addition, VanHerck said the Coast Guard cutters *Venturous*, *Richard Snyder* and *Nathan B. Bruckenthal*, along with Coast Guard aviation support, are keeping the area safe for military personnel and the general public.

The FBI and Naval Criminal Investigative Service agents are embedded with salvage operations personnel to assist in counterintelligence work, he added.

VanHerck mentioned that the Federal Aviation Administration was helpful in closing air space when the balloon was being shot down.

later that I got the answer," he said. "During my combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, I can attest that the American fighting spirit is as strong today as it was 72 years ago."

Holler laid a basket of flowers at the Hill 180 monument in memory of the battle's fallen soldiers. He was joined by Col. Jeffrey Munn, commander of the battlefield detachment; South Korean army Col. Lee Hyun Gyu; and Ron Davis, former commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8180.

"We have to remember what occurred – educate those on what occurred so that we understand the purpose of why we're here," Munn said. "Those who sacrifice before us to establish the freedoms and that

peace that we enjoy today are the bedrock and foundation for why we're here to preserve that same peace."

Ernest Lee, a retired Air Force chief master sergeant, said the retelling of the fight brought up many of emotions.

"A lot of us went through similar things in our time as active-duty members," he told Stars and Stripes after the ceremony.

"This man was a warrior through and through," Lee said. "While the character of the war may have changed over time, the nature of war remains the same. It will require leaders – young, mid-level and senior leaders – who have a warrior's spirit and are willing to be bold and audacious when it counts."

Millett continued from page 2

onet Hill." Millett, who retired a colonel, died Nov. 14, 2009, at Loma Linda, Calif., at age 88, according to his obituary.

Millett's heroism was recalled once more during Thursday's ceremony, hosted by the 3rd Battlefield Coordination Detachment-Korea. The guest speaker, Army Brig. Gen. Mark Holler, Eighth Army's deputy commander for operations, recalled meeting Millett in 1996.

Millett's deeds exemplify the Army's fighting spirit, Holler said.

"I ask myself, would today's soldiers be able to do the same thing? It wasn't many years



Ships Underway

Total Battle Force: 294

(USS 238, USNS 56)

Deployed: 102

(USS 67, USNS 35)

Underway: 61

(41 Deployed, 20 Local)

Ships Deployed by Fleet

2nd Fleet, 2: 3rd Fleet, 1:

4th Fleet, 1: 5th Fleet, 11:

6th Fleet, 19: 7th Fleet, 68.

Total 102

Top 4

- US downs Chinese balloon, a flashpoint in US-China tensions
- Navy surpasses FY22 retention goals amid recruitment challenges
- Cracked engine part sparked giant B-1 bomber fire, investigation finds
- Army's parental leave policy will mirror private sector more closely
- Fort Sill commander suspended, but Army won't say why



- Fort Polk battalion commander relieved amid criminal investigation
- Hundreds more soldiers kicked off Tricare in yet another IT blunder

Navy

- Navy replaces troubled part on Ford carrier after test cancellation
- 3 Navy warships, FBI now hunting for wreckage of Chinese spy balloon off South Carolina
- US destroyer operating near the Black Sea for first time since Russia invaded Ukraine
- Surface Navy brass holding 'sustainment summits' to fix ship maintenance issues
- The Pentagon saw a warship boondoggle. Congress saw jobs.

Marine Corps

- They'll never be forgotten now: Marine C-130 fallen get new memorial
- Marine veteran gets 5 years for assaulting police at Capitol riot

Air Force

- Air Force removes deputy chief of chaplains from post after 'pattern of shortfalls'
- B-1s join F-22s and S. Korean F-35s, in latest bomber task force mission
- Air Force cadet died of blood clot in lung, autopsy finds
- They handled nuclear missiles. Now they're getting cancer.

Coast Guard

- Man wanted for leaving a dead fish at 'The Goonies' house saved by Coast Guard in daring rescue
- Coast Guard probing deaths, injuries of Americans on vessels in Antarctic waters

National Guard

- Hill staffer also serves in the National Guard
- Chicago native makes history, becomes highest-ranking person of color in Illinois National Guard

Your Military

- New disabled veterans priorities, and how MREs are made

Veterans

- US military members suing 3M seek dismissal of subsidiary's bankruptcy
- Two former Marines share a football rivalry and a kidney in Super Bowl LVII
- Vets unemployment improves, national jobless rate lowest since 1969

Places of Worship

Bethany Lutheran Church

Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod
2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd., Ocean Beach 92107
(Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building)
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(619)222-7291 LivingWaterSD7@gmail.com

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www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org

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"Love God, Love People, Serve the World"
Sunday Bible Classes for all ages 9am
Sunday Worship 10am
4292 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 Email: cvoffice@canyonview.org
(Near corner of Balboa Ave. & Clairemont Dr.)
www.canyonview.org (858) 273-5140

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www.gotoChrist.com or (858) 549-2479

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Jim W. Baize, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com
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Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook
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Live Stream: 12:30pm on "Moministries" free church app
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Career and Education

DAF announces overseas spouse direct-hire authority pilot program

ARLINGTON, Va.- Civilian spouses of service members assigned outside the U.S. may now have an easier time finding employment.

The Department of the Air Force has implemented a direct-hire authority pilot program for locations outside the U.S. authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act of FY22. This authority enables officials to quickly hire qualifying spouses for certain positions on a temporary basis. The pilot program is available for overseas positions as determined by the hiring officials; previously, military spouses could only be selected from competitive hiring procedures.

Direct-hire authority enables an agency to hire any qualified applicant through an expedited hiring process that eliminates many of the traditional steps, including consideration of competitive rankings and ratings.

"We recognize that spouse employment is a fundamental quality of life issue for our Airmen and Guardians, especially for families in overseas locations," said John Carbone, director of civilian force management, Air Force Manpower, Personnel and Services.

"We're hoping having access to this new hiring authority will open up greater employment opportunities for spouses, which in turn will positively impact military retention, the financial wellbeing of the family, and Department of the Air Force readiness."

The positions must be permanently located overseas, under the general schedule or federal wage system, and GS-15 and below and equivalent.

Additionally, spouses must be on the service member's permanent change of duty station orders at government expense, within the local community area of the duty location and reside with the service member.

The initial employment appointment will not exceed two years and can be extended in two-year increments for no more than a total of six years. The appointments will end when the service member transfers back to the U.S. or to another overseas assignment. They may also end due to divorce, death of the sponsor or upon the sponsor's retirement or separation from active duty.

Spouses interested in applying for civil service employment can visit the Air Force Civilian Service site to search for jobs being filled using the direct-hire authority process. Additionally, local civilian personnel offices can provide assistance and information.

Hot Jobs: Air Force Civilian Service has jobs that allow us to fast-track the hiring process through different types of Direct Hire Authorities. These mission-critical positions offer us the flexibility to hire like the private sector—with a stream-lined application, and we can make job offers on the spot. Check out current opportunities at <https://afciviliancareers.com/find-a-job/> and search for your next dream job. These positions are being filled using expedited hiring authorities and can close at any time. Apply Now!

Fleet training experts, certification leaders hold offsite on readiness

Navy commands responsible for training and certification of deploying naval forces gathered during a synchronization offsite to coordinate efforts at the Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific headquarters recently.

Leaders and subject matter experts from Carrier Strike Group 4, CSG-15, Naval Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center, Naval Information Warfighting Development Center, Afloat Training Group Pacific and ATG Atlantic gathered to engage in high-level discussions and planning.

Rear Adm. Joseph Cahill, commander, CSG-15, hosted the offsite and emphasized the significance of bringing so much world-class expertise together in one location. "It's about how we build force cohesion faster," said Cahill. "Threat-based, risk-informed, data-driven- that's the approach we take to train the fleet. The close coordination between coasts ensures we develop teams ready to solve complex problems as they operate forward, visible, and ready for the nation."

Discussions included exercise design; fleet-specific training requirements; live, virtual, constructive (LVC) training tactics; and overall structure for assessments leading to individual units' and strike groups' pre-deployment certifications.

"This effort demonstrates the value we place in building cohesion in our global navy," said Cahill. "These synchronization efforts between CSG-4 and 15 enable us to standardize the training presentations in the warfighter development process."

Rear Adm. Jeffrey "Caesar" Czerewko, commander, CSG-4, stressed how synchronization events encourage necessary dialogue to improve processes and help build a foundation for lethality.

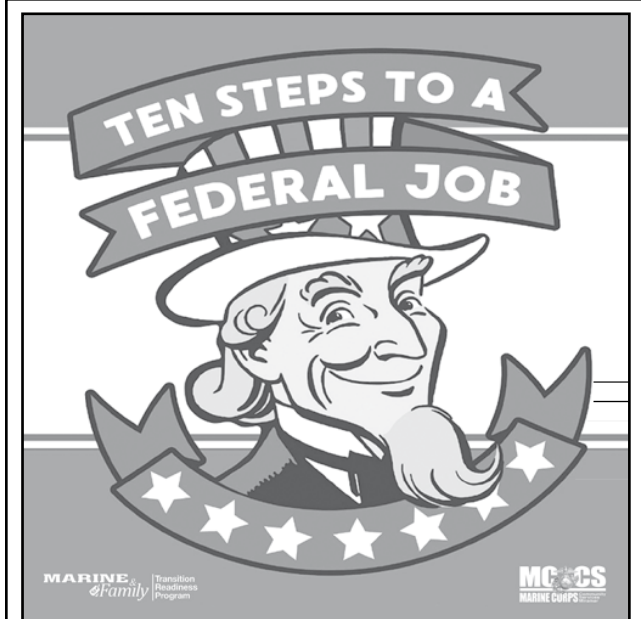
"There will be no doubt that deploying forces are at the highest state of readiness and lethality," said Czerewko. "Our staffs have an obligation to coach, mentor, train and assess naval forces to deter and win decisively."

Effective root cause analysis was another topic addressed by Capt. Matthew Wellman, CSG-4's lead for warfighting development. He said that CSG-4 and 15 assessors will work with each training audience to incentivize critical self-assessment and allow training audiences to identify and correct the barriers to optimum performance.

"Our goal is to foster learning organizations that can execute missions with maximum lethality and survivability in the midst of uncertainty by balancing acceptable levels of risk and employing mission command," said Wellman. "We are updating our assessment methodology to focus on continuous improvement vice just achieving a passing grade."

The event also established a platform for historians from Naval History and Heritage Command (NHHC) to share historically relevant perspectives from World War II, the Korean War, and the evolution of geography in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations.

"Generational learning is critical to ensure we do not repeat the shortfalls of the past," said Lori Whitmire, NHHC historian. "As a contemporary historian, I tend to look at the now and how the past may impact our decision making and thought processes today. As CSG-4 and 15 refine exercise design, it is critical to take the past into account as we prepare for the future."



USAJOBS presents a '10 Steps to a Federal Job' workshop March 8 at The Hub aboard Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

The workshop, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m., will help you navigate USAJOBS, providing tips on how to create effective federal resumes. Visit www.MiramarTRS.Eventbrite.com to register for the March workshop. This is an in-person class. You must have a DoD ID card to attend this event. Active duty, Guard/Reservists, retired military, military spouses/dependents, and federal employees with base access are welcome.

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Bye-bye bombs: USS *Tripoli* offloads ammunition

by MC2 Malcolm Kelley
USS *Tripoli* (LHA 7)

PACIFIC OCEAN - Sailors aboard amphibious assault carrier USS *Tripoli* (LHA 7) completed an ammunition offload recently.

Tripoli's Air and Weapons Departments worked with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 23 to transport approximately 1.9 million pounds of ordnance from *Tripoli* to Fallbrook Naval Weapons Station.

After wrapping up the ship's maiden deployment in November of 2022, *Tripoli* still had to remove unspent ammunition, which required the crew to go underway once again, said



Sailors attach a pallet of ammunition to a Sea Hawk helicopter on amphibious assault carrier *Tripoli*. US Navy photo by MC2 Malcolm Kelley

Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class Johnanthony Campbell, from Cincinnati, Ohio.

"There aren't piers equipped to deal with that much ord-

nance, which is why we're using helicopters carry it off instead of going pierside," said Campbell.

Aviation Ordnanceman 2nd Class Dasia Lewis, a Selma, Alabama native, said Aviation Ordnancemen loaded ammunition onto cargo elevators in the magazines and transported it to the flight deck, where it could be attached to a helicopter and flown off.

"Everything from weapons department's side of things went really smoothly," Lewis said.

On the flight deck, Sailors from *Tripoli*'s air department attached pallets of ammunition to the undersides of MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopters as they hovered over the flight deck. After one pallet was flown off, another helicopter would swoop in within minutes to take the next.

"I think the most challenging part of the offload was

working with the helicopters," Lewis said. "It did take a while to get the ammo from the ship to shore, but you can't sacrifice safety for speed."

Transporting cargo with fast-moving helicopters might look hazardous to the untrained eye, but the process followed stringent planning, rules and guidelines, Campbell said.

"It looks chaotic, but there's actually a specific order that Fallbrook has to receive the ammo. Each day is set up for a certain kind of ordnance group, and we have to sling it a certain way to offload it."

Offloading the ammunition was the last major evolution the crew aboard *Tripoli* had to accomplish before entering a planned 12-month maintenance availability.

Tripoli is an America-class amphibious assault carrier homeported in San Diego. For more information about *Tripoli*, head to the command's Facebook (www.facebook.com/usstripoli) and Instagram (www.instagram.com/officialusstripoli) pages.



CAMP PENDLETON (Feb. 17, 2023) - Marine Maj. Gen. Benjamin T. Watson, the commanding general of 1st Marine Division, adds a battle streamer to the division's unit colors during a ceremony honoring the division's 82nd anniversary here. Marines and Sailors celebrated the 82nd anniversary of the 1st Marine Division with a battle colors rededication ceremony. Each battle streamer represented a different award from campaigns ranging from World War II to Operation Enduring Freedom. "Their stories and their legacy are woven into the very fabric of that battle color," said Watson, of the Marines who fought in those past campaigns. "They are representative of all our Marines and sailors who made the ultimate sacrifice over 82 years." US Marine Corps Photo by Lance Cpl. Brayden Daniel

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CNATT Unit North Island targets partnership, readiness of their flight line neighbors through open house event

by Chief Petty Officer
Ralph Mejia

NAVAL AIR STATION NORTH ISLAND - Center for Naval Aviation Technical Training Unit North Island (CNATTU NI) TRIAD hit the deck plates of CNATTU NI with neighboring Helicopter Sea Combat Wing (HSC) commodore and squadron commanding officers recently.

After coordinating with the wing's maintenance officer, squadron commanding officers were excited for an opportunity to see what CNATTU NI facilities and training assets had to offer.

CNATTU NI TRIAD started the tour by providing an overview presentation of all the type/model/series, aviation ordnance, aviation maintenance and administration courses offered by CNATTU NI and its learning site.

Walking tours of the facilities were then conducted by Chief Warrant Officer Pawel Miko, CNATTU NI training officer. The walking tours showcased the immense number of hands-on trainers available to build students' skillsets needed

within the squadrons. These trainers are not only limited to students in the school house, but also available to any squadron personnel who need refresher training to review specialized technical aspects of the skills required in the fleet for MH-60S and MH-60R aircraft.

Overall this was an excellent opportunity to build knowledge of what CNATTU NI offers to

Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class Seanmichael Owens, H-60 instructor and instructor evaluator coordinator, gives a briefing on the H-60 AT sierra trainer. US Navy photo



support the maintenance effort on the flight line and waterfront.

Lt. Cmdr. Christopher Vandorn, readiness officer for HSC WINGPAC, took advantage of

the opportunity CNATTU NI team provided.

"I cannot express how valuable these trainers are here at CNATTU North Island," Vandorn said. "When our Sailors attend training here, they get to experience those uncommon failures and scenarios that are not often repaired and can take that knowledge back to the wing. I could not pass up the

opportunity to see first-hand, the valuable services that CNATTU North Island provides the junior and senior Sailors of the flight line and more importantly, the Fleet."

Vandorn added that he came away with some valuable information, and a better understanding of CNATTU North Island's mission to support fleet readiness.



ABOARD USS MIGUEL KEITH (Jan. 29, 2023) - Members 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit conduct visit, board, search, and seizure training in the Philippine Sea. VBSS training refines Marines' skills in maritime interdiction operations by incorporating real world scenarios. US Marine Corps by Sgt. Andrew King

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San Diego's naval hospital honors women physicians



Lt. Cmdr. Jasmine Scott, left, and Lt. Laura Mourafetis (R), Naval Medical Center San Diego's orthopedic surgery residents. US Navy photo

At Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS), there's a good chance that a beneficiary will be treated at some point by women physicians who have trained and aspired to be among the highest qualified providers Navy Medicine can offer.

However, it wasn't always like that.

Feb. 3 was National Women Physician Day and at NMCS it

is also a day to reflect on how far medicine has come along. Such progress within the medical field is intrinsically tied to the broader progress that has transformed the fabric of our society.

"Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell is a lesser known pioneering figure in medical history," said Lt. Cmdr. Ashley Voss, NMCS staff psychiatrist. "Dr. Blackwell is our nation's first woman to earn a medical degree in 1849. At that time most colleges

reportedly reject her application for admission."

However, Blackwell persevered and committed herself to medicine no matter what obstacles were thrown at her.

Blackwell also supported the Union warfighter during the Civil War. Capitalizing on the opportunity to demonstrate the value of women in providing health care, Blackwell founded the Women's Central Association of Relief (WCAR) on April 25, 1861.

"I believe that it was inevitable that women would integrate with the military to support the warfighter," said Voss. "More than 150 years later, women in today's military are serving, defending, and still supporting the warfighter."

Even after the Civil War, the battle for women to integrate in medicine continued for decades; however, as we look back at the battles and wars fought since, it is indisputable the value, competence, and devotion to duty that women physicians have brought to the fight.

"I couldn't be more proud than to serve in our nation's military today," said Lt. Cmdr. Jasmine Scott, NMCS orthopedic surgery resident. "The inclusivity and respect afforded to women physicians is second to none. We as women physicians are fortunate to live and serve in this era that Dr. Blackwell may have so desired for us, but had no way of seeing it come to fruition in

Hospital corpsman named Naval Medical Forces Pacific headquarters 2022 Sailor of the Year

by Grady Fontana
Naval Medical Forces Pacific

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Rebecca Clark from headquarters, Naval Medical Forces Pacific, was named the winner of the Chief Yeoman Latoya Calvin Leadership Award and NMFP Headquarters Sailor of the Year (SOY) for 2022, during an all-hands meeting and awards presentation at NMFP, Naval Base San Diego, recently.

Clark will now compete at the NMFP Region SOY in April for the top spot against all Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Commands, and Naval Medical Research Center SOY winners in the NMFP area of responsibility.

"First and foremost, it's an honor to be selected as NMFP SOY," said Clark. "I see myself as a direct reflection of my chain of command, NMFP's leaders, and my junior Sailors. These Sailors work very hard every day to carry out tasks and projects that we are

responsible for as a team. They strive to be the best Sailors this Navy has to offer and I hope that I make them proud in representing them in the upcoming regional SOY board."

Blackwell left a lasting and impactful legacy on many thanks to her valiant pursuit of something she was deeply committed to. That legacy lives on with female physicians.

Astounding accomplishments don't come easy. In Blackwell's case up to 29 colleges rejected her application for admission as a result of being a woman. Yet, when she graduated she was the first in her class.

"Medical-related TV shows and movies present a very glamorous approach to medicine, and even when they try to shed a realistic light on us, the reality is that becoming a physician is filled with challenges, highs, and lows," said Scott.

"Dr. Blackwell reminds us that we get to pursue our dreams within the reasonable encapsulation of modern day challenges and for that we are indebted to her for charging through the barriers of exclusion at a time when it was socially acceptable to do so, and in fact, I would say, socially expected."

"We would be remiss if we solely stopped at acknowledging how Navy Medicine provides a safe and supportive environment for women physicians," said Lt. Laura Mourafetis, NMCS orthopedic surgery resident. "They do so for all, and for that, and for the opportunity to serve our patients, we will continue to show up and deliver the best possible health care."



MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO (Feb. 3, 2023) - Marine Corps Capt. Mylen Morales takes over command of Echo Company, 2nd Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, here. Female officers began to be assigned to recruit training companies as series commanders at MCRD San Diego in 2020, and Morales is the first ever to be appointed to command an entire training company. US Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Grace J. Kindred



NAVAL BASE POINT LOMA (Feb. 3, 2023) - First Lady Dr. Jill Biden serves dessert to Sailors and their families during a dinner with the crew of littoral combat ship Gabrielle Giffords. US Navy photo by MC2 Claire M. DuBois



SOUTH CHINA SEA (Feb. 2, 2023) - Sailors combat a simulated casualty during a general quarters drill aboard aircraft carrier Nimitz. US Navy photo by MC2 David Rowe



MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO (Feb. 3, 2023) - A Marine with India Company, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion, descends the rappel tower here. The 60-foot rappel tower gives an opportunity for new Marines to instill confidence in themselves. US Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Tyler W. Abbott

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□ Navy Pharmacy News

Navy pharmacies at Naval Medical Center San Diego, Naval Base San Diego's NEX and MCAS Miramar MCDSD may experience increase wait times due to system updates, now through Feb. 14. Consider using the resources listed above for new prescriptions.

Of note, NMCS's pharmacy isn't a refill processing center or pick up site. For all refill requests, call the AudioCare at (619) 532-8400. For Q-ANYWHERE, text "get in line" to 833-286-1979 and follow all prompts.

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Medal of Honor Spotlight: Army Sgt. 1st Class Eugene Ashley, Jr.

by **Katie Lange**
DOD News

Army Sgt. 1st Class Eugene Ashley Jr.'s bravery was integral in rescuing Special Forces troops during the Battle of Lang Vei, which marked the first enemy use of tanks in the Vietnam War. Ashley, a Green Beret, never made it home from the war, but his determination earned him unending respect and the Medal of Honor.

After high school graduation, Ashley was wary of going into a dead-end job, so on Dec. 7, 1950, he joined the Army.

Since the Korean War was in progress, Ashley was initially sent to serve there with the 187th Regimental Combat Team. In the years after he returned, he served in many capacities, including as an infantryman, ambulance driver, anti-aircraft ammunition handler and as a specialist in heavy weapons and parachute repair. He also served as a cavalry and armored battle group squad leader, as well as a company sergeant.

Ashley was in the 82nd Airborne Division when he volunteered to join the Special Forces. After training, he was assigned

to Company C of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces.

At some point, Ashley met and married his wife, Barbara. They had five children before he was sent to Vietnam in January 1968, just as North Vietnam's Tet Offensive was beginning.

By February, Ashley was serving as a senior advisor in the 5th SFG's Detachment A-101 at Special Forces Camp Lang Vei in the northwest corner of South Vietnam. Located about a mile from the Laos border and 8 kilometers west of the U.S. Marine base at Khe Sanh, the camp was established in December 1966 as an outpost where Ashley's detachment could train and equip locally recruited Vietnamese soldiers.

According to an Army Center of Military History publication by late Army Col. John A. Cash, the enemy infiltrated Lang Vei in May 1967, so the camp was moved further west that September. From that time on, the area became battered by North Vietnamese and Viet Cong artillery fire, including on Feb. 6, 1968.

That night, shortly after mid-

night, North Vietnamese troops drove Soviet-built tanks into the camp's outskirts, marking the first time the enemy had used tanks in combat. According to an Army Special Warfare Center publication, "although the [Lang Vei] team radioed for help, they could not convince anyone in Khe Sanh ... that tanks were indeed 'in the wire.'" Cash said that Khe Sanh's leaders denied several requests for help because they were concerned about ground relief forces being ambushed, as well as assaults via helicopter not being helpful "because it was dark and the enemy had armor."

To the Green Berets and few local soldiers who were willing to fight, that meant they were on their own. And because the camp didn't have adequate anti-tank weapons, the tanks were able to breach the camp's inner perimeter, trapping several U.S. soldiers, most of whom were inside the camp's command bunker.

Ashley happened to be at the old camp further east as the attack unfolded. Since the enemy had chosen to leave that area largely unscathed, he immediately began coordinating a defense that included high-explosive



Sgt. 1st Class Eugene Ashley Jr. was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for valorous actions near Lang Vei, South Vietnam, Feb. 6-7, 1968. US Army photo

and illumination mortar rounds. When communications were lost with the main camp, the 36-year-old assumed the additional responsibility of directing air strikes and artillery support.

Ashley was also put in charge of a small assault force that included two other American soldiers, Sgt. Richard H. Allen and Spc. 4 Joel Johnson, and local friendly personnel. Their mission: to rescue the men trapped inside the main camp. Unfortunately, the local soldiers

refused to go into the camp to fight until daybreak.

When dawn finally came, Ashley led that team on five intense assaults against the enemy. Each time, he put himself in the direct line of fire of grenades, machine guns and automatic weapons, and he had to dodge several booby-trapped satchel charges. He also continued to call for more air strikes. Each attempt diverted the enemy's attention away from the trapped men in the command bunker.

Eventually, Ashley was hit by machine-gun fire that tore through the right side of his chest and went through the radio on his back. It was a serious wound, but he was only 30 yards from the command bunker, so he refused to give up.

Shortly after 11 a.m., Ashley adjusted air strikes one more time so they would come down nearly on top of his unit. The move forced the enemy to withdraw and carved an escape path for the men trapped in the bunker.

As that was happening, Ashley lost consciousness. According to Cash, Johnson and Allen managed to drag him out of the line of fire and, with help from some

local soldiers, carried him back to an area of relative safety. When a Jeep arrived, they loaded Ashley into it and drove off. Unfortunately, when the Jeep stopped and Allen jumped out in search of bandages, Cash reported that "an enemy artillery round burst nearby, killing Ashley and knocking Johnson unconscious."

By the end of the battle, Lang Vei was lost to the enemy. Of the 24 Americans stationed at the camp, 10 were killed or missing, including Ashley, and 11 more were wounded.

Ashley's valor and his disregard for his own safety inspired the men around him. According to an Army Special Warfare Center publication, many of his fellow soldiers considered him a fatherly type of man, and they said that without his steadfast commitment that day, there likely would have been no survivors.

For paying the ultimate sacrifice, the Medal of Honor was posthumously bestowed upon Ashley. His family received it from Vice President Spiro Agnew during a Dec. 2, 1969, ceremony in Washington. Two other men who gave their lives in Vietnam -- Army Staff Sgt. Clifford Sims and Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Terrence Graves -- were also honored with the medal that day.

Another year of yo-yo dieting?

Mark my words: If Super Bowl Sunday doesn't do it to me, Fat Tuesday certainly will. I'll break my New Years' resolutions to diet and exercise. Even if I start out the year with the best intentions, along the way, something always goes wrong.

Every year, after I emerge bulging and gassy from the holidays, I resolve to lose ten pounds once and for all. And every year, something -- a special occasion, a football game, a heart-shaped box of chocolates -- sabotages my plans.

Once I fall off my self-imposed wagon, all hell breaks loose. With all-or-nothing mentality, I decide to "complete the cheat," with a self-destructive binge that usually lasts for days. If I'm lucky, I'll hit rock bottom and become so disgusted with myself, I'll ironically pull myself out of the abyss.

For example, later this month it's likely that I'll slip up, lose my motivation, and find myself polishing off a can of Pringles or a sleeve of Thin Mints. If it happens during Lent, I might see this as a sign. Whether Catholic or not, chronic yo-yo dieters see Lent as a lifeline out of the binge behavior promoted by Fat Tuesday.

When this inevitability occurs, I'll probably cross myself and make a Lenten vow to give up junk food until spring. Then, just when I think my double chin is shrinking, something else will happen. The Shamrock Shake will come out. I won't be able to resist eating pizza when my husband or

ders it. I'll find a bag of forgotten holiday peanut M&Ms left in my secret snack hiding place.

Even if I manage to maintain control into the month of March,

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

Easter will begin to creep up on me. How can I manage to stay on track when I'm surrounded by pastel miniatures of every candy I've ever loved? It's entrapment I tell ya!

Furthermore, I know I won't be able to resist grabbing a heaping plateful of ham and scalloped potatoes for Easter dinner, which will most likely send me into another guilt-induced gorge-fest. "Completing the cheat" on Easter, I'll have a slab of heavily-frosted coconut cake, then shamelessly pilfer candy from my own kids' baskets. Again, self-disgust might ensue and my guilt-binge pattern will go on and on.

This yo-yo diet cycle continues throughout the year, bottoming out through the guacamole of Cinco de Mayo, the ice cream of Independence Day, the potato salad of Labor Day, the candy extravaganza of Halloween, the gravy-smothered Thanksgiving, and the egg-nog spiked seasonal smorgasbord of the winter holidays.

Am I too weak to overcome my calendar? As long as peanut butter cups come in heart, egg, pumpkin, and tree shapes, am I doomed to fail? Should I just resign myself to muffin tops and lunch lady arms for the rest of my life?

The rational side of me screams, NO! Fit people I've known in my life enjoy a big slice of wedding cake, or wings and dip on game day, and don't give it another thought. But when many of us indulge, we plunge into a crevasse of guilt and shame that's too hard to climb out of.

To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, we have to be sensible about it. We are human beings after all! We shouldn't make any food off-limits because it will only set us up for splurge sessions later. We should allow ourselves to indulge on special occasions and avoid an all-or-nothing mentality. And if we do "cheat," we must understand that it doesn't give us a license to pig out or be a couch potato all week.

We must keep moving forward.

The key to preventing the calendar from sabotaging my weight and fitness goals is to banish guilt. I can't hate myself for breaking my resolutions. (Note to self: Girl Scout Cookies are here.... Have some and don't stress about it!)

I must realize that I am only human. I'll fall off the wagon every once in a while, and that's okay because I'm in the driver's seat. I'll just climb right back on, stay on course, and resolve to not look at my rear in the rear view mirror.

Compact COSCO cart makes hauling luggage to your hotel room easy

Do you dread hauling luggage from your car to your hotel or motel room, and then back to your car again after your stay? I know that I do, and I've been on the lookout for something to help me for years.

Of course, the easy solution to this age-old problem is to simply drive up to the front entrance of your hotel and ask to have your luggage taken to your room. Instead, I prefer to use self-parking and then take the luggage up to my room myself.

As a photojournalist, I travel with bulky, heavy camera gear. Furthermore, when I cover major trade shows I also bring along several large, empty suitcases and storage containers, which I use to hold the various review samples, literature and other materials that I gather throughout the show. When I check out, I haul all of those suitcases and containers back to my vehicle (a Toyota RAV4 mid-sized SUV).

In the past this has necessitated multiple trips back and forth from the parking structure; through the hotel lobby -- and a massive casino, when I cover trade shows like the Consumer Electronics Show and the SEMA Show, in Las Vegas; into and up the elevator; and along the corridor of my floor to my hotel room. As if the multiple trips were not annoying enough, each piece of luggage -- even if it has wheels, presents its own challenges to move along. Just picture me with outstretched arms, pulling a large, heavy garment bag on one side and a full-sized, similarly heavy suitcase on the other, while wearing a loaded backpack. Now multiply doing something similar for two more trips. Due to the long distance involved from my vehicle to my room, that process could easily take half an hour.

Borrowing a hotel's luggage cart would be a great solution, but hotels understandably frown on agreeing to that -- if they will even do so -- because that leaves them without luggage carts for the porters to use.

I've tried loading multiple pieces of luggage on a light weight, folding dolly that can easily fit into my RAV4, but various shapes and weights of miscellaneous pieces of luggage do not stack easily or securely on a dolly -- at least not my compact, folding one.

I have shopped at Costco (and, before that, Price Club) for decades. They have great prices on a wide variety of merchandise staples that I buy. They also sell more specialized items, but they often are only stocked for a limited time and then they may be gone forever. If I see something I like, I've learned to buy it immediately. Thankfully, Costco has a very liberal return policy.

Very recently I received a sale flyer from Costco Wholesale's Business Center. These locations tend to have more business-oriented merchandise than the regular Costcos. I shop at both. Inside this most recent flyer I discovered the light-weight, flat-foldable, COSCO Shifter XL 2-in-1 hand truck/cart -- now improved with an extendable handle and a longer dolly platform. Better yet, it was being promoted with a \$10-off special price. I rushed over to my nearest Costco Wholesale Business Center and bought one.

It does sacrifice some capacity for portability. Its load capacity is rated at 300 pounds, whereas my older, larger, and much heavier COSCO 3-in-1 combination cart is rated at 1000 pounds. However, that one is not suitable to take with me on trips.

I can happily report that it was MUCH EASIER hauling luggage back and forth between my vehicle and the motel where I was staying this past weekend, while I covered NASCAR's 2023 Busch Light CLASH at the LA Coliseum. Be on the lookout for that coverage -- with some awesome photos -- in an upcoming AutoMatters & More.

Needless to say, I heartily recommend the COSCO Shifter XL, although be very careful not to pinch your fingers when folding it. Also, I wish it included a protective carrying case. Check it out at COSCO's website: <https://www.coscoproducts.com/collections>.

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Your body's disease defenses: Building and boosting the immune system

Every day while you eat, sleep, work, and play, battles are being fought throughout your body. You rarely feel it. But bacteria, viruses, and other microbes are constantly invading from the outside world.

Your body has a defense system for such invaders. It's called the immune system. Your immune system is made up of trillions of cells and proteins. These are found in your blood and every organ of your body. The immune system learns and changes over your lifetime—even before birth.

Building Your Defenses

You're not born with a fully equipped immune system. Fetuses can produce some immune protection. But before birth, "the vast majority of protection against infection comes from the mother," explains Dr. Whitney Harrington, who studies immune system development at Seattle Children's Research Institute.

Germ-fighting molecules made by the immune system, called antibodies, are transferred to the fetus through the placenta. They can also

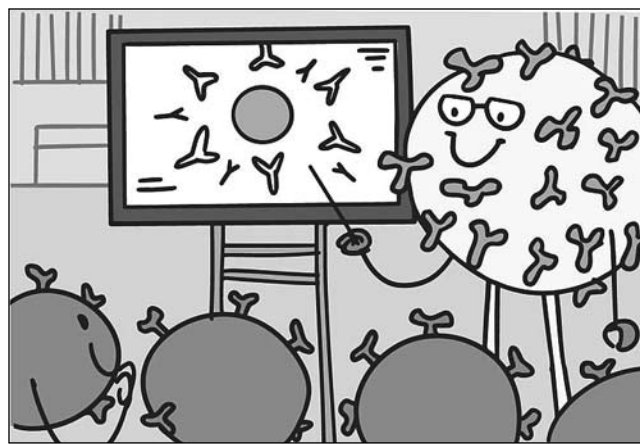
be passed to the baby after birth through breastfeeding. Antibodies stick to germs and stop them from infecting cells.

"The peak risk of severe disease from many infections is under six months of life," says Harrington. That's because the baby's immune system is just starting to develop.

Antibodies that are passed along from the mother can last for many months. They help protect a new baby until their immune system starts to develop.

The immune system builds many lines of defense. The cells of the innate immune system provide an early response to danger. They move through the body looking for signs of damage or infection of other cells. Then they destroy those cells.

Another major defense is called the adaptive immune system. It's activated by signals from the innate immune system and the infectious germs and makes a powerful response. The cells of this system keep a long-term memory of the



germs they fight. They also respond to vaccinations and make all your antibodies.

Researchers have found that, like antibodies, some adaptive immune cells also cross from the mother to the fetus. These cells may start teaching the fetus's immune system about germs the mother has been exposed to.

Harrington and her team have been trying to learn more about these cells. They want to understand when

this transfer happens and to use it to maximize immune protection provided by the mother.

Through infancy and childhood, your immune system matures and continues to build its own disease-fighting cells. Exposure to germs in childhood helps the immune system grow stronger over time, Harrington says.

Protection as You Age

By the time you've reached young adulthood, you've been exposed to

many germs. So your immune system is likely to have a strong response to many infections you encounter.

Vaccines further strengthen your defenses. Vaccines expose your immune system to dead or weakened germs, or just pieces of them. That helps your immune cells learn how to fight these threats and remember them without you getting sick.

Certain vaccines are recommended during pregnancy. These boost protection provided by the mother against deadly diseases during a baby's first months of life. Vaccines are then recommended shortly after birth through adulthood.

Some vaccines require additional shots during adulthood to boost your immune system's memory. And some people—depending on their health, job, or other factors—may need extra vaccines to keep them safe. Keep up with current vaccine recommendations (link is external).

But, like other systems in your body, the immune system can begin to decline as you age. These changes can prevent immune cells from working to the best of their ability.

"With age, immune cells lose their ability to respond rapidly and robustly to infection," says Dr. Ronald Germain, an immune system expert at NIH.

Other parts of your body, such as the heart or lungs, can accumulate wear and tear with age, too. This reduced function puts older adults at greater risk for developing more severe disease from many infections.

Even a bit more damage from an infection can cause an older adult's organs and tissues to not perform their jobs well, Germain says. That's why certain vaccines are especially recommended for people over 50.

Making Better Defenses

Researchers are still learning how to improve immune responses and vaccines. Some microbes are very good at hiding from the immune system. Many avoid detection by

mutating, or changing, so that previously exposed immune cells can no longer recognize them.

Dr. Shane Crotty at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology and his team are trying to take advantage of the body's way of keeping up with these changes. They're studying a part of the adaptive immune system called germinal centers. These are areas in the lymph nodes where immune cells go to develop and learn to produce more effective antibodies. Germinal centers form temporarily in response to infection or vaccination. They don't just produce antibodies against the germs that are in your body. They also produce antibodies against different versions (variants) of those germs that you haven't been exposed to. Cells in the germinal centers essentially guess at how the virus may change over time.

"Germinal centers are one of the most amazing things your immune system does," says Crotty. Take the COVID vaccines as an example. The COVID vaccines developed against the original virus caused people to make antibodies that guarded against other variants.

"All the antibodies anybody developed against other variants from vaccination came from germinal centers," Crotty explains.

Germinal centers can last in the body for up to six months. And the longer they're around, the more varied the antibodies they produce.

Crotty and his team are testing if changing the way vaccines are given can help germinal centers last longer. Their recent study tested an experimental HIV vaccine in animals. Researchers gave the vaccine in many small doses over time. This produced antibodies that were more varied and lasted longer than those from the single large vaccine dose.

As researchers continue looking for new ways to protect you from disease, staying current on your vaccines and living a healthy lifestyle are the best ways to boost your defenses. See the *Wise Choices* box for tips.

Study shows COVID-19 can disrupt gut microbes

Microbes live all over your body. These include bacteria, fungi, and viruses. People with COVID-19 often have an imbalance in their gut's microbes. In hospitalized patients, this can lead to serious infections in the blood, called secondary infections. A new study showed that COVID-19 can disrupt the gut's microbes and allow harmful bacteria into the bloodstream.

The researchers first studied mice infected with SARS-CoV-2,

This can lead to serious infections in the blood, called secondary infections

the virus that causes COVID-19. They found that the virus caused changes to the gut lining. Mice with the virus also had fewer types of microbes in their guts.

Next, the team studied the mi-

crobes in stool samples from 96 people with COVID-19. In one of every four samples, a single type of bacteria dominated. Some of these bacteria were resistant to antibiotics, which makes them difficult to kill. The people who had infections in their blood tended to have a less diverse mix of microbes in the gut. The type of bacteria found in their blood was also seen in their gut.

Together, these results suggest that SARS-CoV-2 can upset the balance of gut microbes. This

allows harmful bacteria to thrive in the gut. It also alters the gut lining to let these bacteria more easily spread from the gut to the bloodstream.

"Now that we have uncovered the source of this bacterial imbalance, physicians can better identify those coronavirus patients most at risk of a secondary bloodstream infection," says Dr. Ken Cadwell of New York University, who co-led the study with colleague Dr. Jonas Schluter.

Experimental cat allergy therapy gives more effective relief

Researchers are testing a new way to treat people with allergies. The method uses regular allergy shots plus a lab-made molecule. The molecule blocks substances involved in allergic reactions in the body. For people with cat allergies, the combination therapy gave more effective relief than allergy shots alone.



When you breathe in high amounts of a substance you're allergic to—such as pollen, mold, pet dander, or dust mites—the resulting reactions in the nose are called allergic rhinitis. You may develop a stuffy, runny, and itchy nose as well as sneezing. These problems are caused by the body's disease defenses reacting to something that's harmless for most people.

Some people get allergy shots to reduce these reactions. The shots gradually expose them to higher doses of the substance they're allergic to. This can train the body's defenses not to react when these things are in the air. Unfortunately, allergy shots don't work for every-

one. And the shots usually need to be given for at least three years.

To test the new treatment, an NIH-funded research team studied 121 adults with cat allergies. Some participants received allergy shots alone. Others received the new combination treatment. Treatments lasted nearly a year.

By the time the treatments ended, both groups had improved. But when exposed to cat proteins, those given the experimental combination therapy had fewer symptoms than people given allergy shots alone. A year after the treatments were stopped, the effects from the standard allergy shots started wearing off. But the experimental treatment was still working to reduce symptoms.

Researchers are continuing to study how the treatment works. They also plan to test and see if the approach might help to treat food allergies.

Healthy Living

What's in a pomegranate?

Get beneath the tough exterior and you'll find the pomegranate has tasty meat and seeds.

Tough skin

Spongy, bitter white tissue

Sweet flesh
Slightly acidic, juicy, pink or almost white

Seeds

Contains up to 800; good for use in salads

Nutrition count

For a 3.5 oz. (100 g) serving

Sugar.....17 g
Vitamin C.....6 mg
Potassium.....260 mg

Source: Whole Health M.D., Bouquet of Fruits, TNS Photo Service

Wise Choices How to help your immune system

- Eat a healthy diet.
- Make time for physical activity. Experts recommend that adults get at least two and a half hours of moderate exercise each week.
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get a good night's sleep. Most adults need at least seven hours or more of sleep each night, and kids and teens need even more.
- Quit smoking. Get free help at smokefree.gov, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or text QUIT to 47848.
- Manage stress.
- Limit drinking alcohol.
- Wash your hands often to avoid getting sick. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Stay up to date with the recommended vaccines.

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