



The Journal

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October 26, 2017

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U.S. Navy photo by MC2 William Phillips



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Deadline for Retirement System Training Fast Approaching



PHOTO BY MCI KEVIN O'BRIEN

Reserve Force Master Chief C.J. Mitchell is piped ashore after his retirement ceremony at the U.S. Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Sailors eligible to opt-in to the new Blended Retirement System (BRS) will receive a letter from the Navy to complete their mandatory training by Dec. 31, if they have not yet done so.

BRS training is mandatory and provides Sailors with information that compares the benefits of the current retirement system and of BRS. Once the decision to enroll in BRS is made, it is irrevocable.

Commands must ensure all of their Sailors have completed the required training and documented the training through Fleet Management and Planning System (FLTMPS). Training is available on Navy eLearning at www.nel.navy.mil and Joint Knowledge Online at <https://jkodirect.jten.mil/> or may be conducted face-to-face using the OSD syllabus.

Navy is also sending letters to all active and Reserve Sailors eligible to opt-in notifying them that

they may enroll in BRS starting Jan. 1, through their Defense Finance and Accounting Service myPay account.

Sailors are opt-in eligible if they are an active component member and will have fewer than 12 years of service as of Dec. 31, or are a Reserve component member, to include Full Time Support personnel, and will have fewer than 4,320 points as of Dec. 31.

There is no automatic enrollment into BRS for opt-in eligible sailors. Sailors will remain under the current retirement plan unless they choose to enroll in BRS.

New Sailors who first join the Navy on or after Jan. 1, will be automatically enrolled in BRS.

Sailors who have questions about eligibility for BRS should talk with their Command Career Counselor or Command Financial Specialist.

More information on BRS can be found on the Navy BRS webpage at go.usa.gov/xnYVh.

Bethesda Notebook

Warrior Care Month Opening Ceremony

The Warrior Care Month Opening is Oct. 27 at 9 a.m. in Memorial Auditorium. This event will serve as the Warrior Care Month kick-off event in order for Soldiers to inform external and internal audiences about the programs and initiatives being provided through the Warrior Care and Transition Program and future improvements to the program.

NPDS Seeking Root Canal Patients

The Endodontics Department at the Naval Postgraduate Dental School is accepting new patients in need of root canal treatment by our residents. Patients authorized to be treated in our facility are active duty military, military retirees, and eligible family members (priority will be given to active duty personnel). A written referral for root canal treatment from your dentist may be required before treatment is started. Permanent fillings or crowns required following the root canal will be the patient's responsibility. Please contact the NPDS Endodontics front desk at 301-295-0077 or 301-295-1830.

Fleet, Family Support Center

The Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) on Naval Support Activity Bethesda offers programs intended to assist service members and their families with military life. FFSC's workshops and seminars include job search strategies for military spouses, federal resume writing, time management, credit management, consumer financial awareness, interview skills, pre-deployment briefings, return and reunion briefings, and more. For information, call 301-319-4087, or visit FFSC in Building 11, first floor.

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PHOTOS BY ANDREW DAMSTEDT

Navy Lodge Bethesda employees play traditional Peruvian flute music and sing traditional songs as a part of Diversity Day Oct. 18

Navy Lodge Celebrates Employees' Cultures

By Andrew Damstedt
The Journal

Navy Lodge Bethesda employees celebrated a variety of cultures at the Navy Lodge Bethesda's 6th annual Diversity Event Oct. 18.

The event allows employees to share their cultural background and related experiences with co-workers. Some countries represented by Navy Lodge Bethesda staff are Cameroon, Chile, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Guatemala, Peru, Philippines, and the United States.

The lobby was filled with smells of ethnic food, the sounds of traditional Peruvian flute music and the sights of employees dancing as guests joined in on the fun.

"The staff is so excited because they're all from different places," said Nicole Nnoko, Navy Lodge Bethesda assistant general manager. "Being accepted for who you are is such a good feeling because you can

bring something to the table and that's what diversity is all about."

Naval Support Activity Bethesda Commanding Officer Capt. Marvin L. Jones said he enjoyed coming to this event every year, not just to taste the food from the represented cultures but to thank the employees for their hard work and dedication.

"You all go out of your way to make (guests) feel welcome, make them feel special, to make their visit memorable," Jones said. "I thank you so much for doing that. As we celebrate your diversity, I really love to see how we take our differences and we make them work for us; how we take our differences and we make them strengths."

He said he was grateful for the diversity on the installation.

"I'm grateful that everyone on this installation doesn't look like me, doesn't think like me because that would make us one-dimensional," he said. "We are a multifaceted country that welcomes everyone."



Naval Support Activity Bethesda Commanding Officer Marvin L. Jones helps cut a cake with Navy Lodge Bethesda Interim Manager Pamela Kimball and Assistant Manager Nicole Nnoko for Navy Lodge Bethesda's Diversity Day.



MWR Hosts Fall Fest

Photos by MC2 William Phillips
NSAB Public Affairs

Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) hosted a Fall Fest at the MWR Sports Complex Oct. 21. Many children and adults dressed as some of their favorite characters at the festival, which included food, games, face and gourd painting, a petting zoo and more.





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**Photos by MC2 William Phillips
NSAB Public Affairs**

Naval Support Activity Bethesda's (NSAB) Fleet and Family Support Center held a Domestic Violence Awareness Month softball game at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Sports Complex Oct. 18. The event was part of a series of events going on throughout Domestic Violence Awareness Month on NSAB.





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Portrait of an Artist

A photograph of a woman, Norma Lasher, smiling in her art studio. She is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a necklace. Behind her is an easel with a painting of a landscape. The studio is filled with art supplies and framed pictures.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
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EXTRAORDINARY STORIES BEYOND THE FRONT LINE

Norma Lasher found her love for art overseas during one of her more than 35 family moves while her husband, Wendall Lasher was serving in the United States Air Force. Those journeys inspire much of the beautiful artwork that fills her apartment and now graces our halls. Hers is but one chapter in our amazing collection of patriots and heroes.

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PHOTO BY LT. CMDR. YOLANDA GILLEN

Religious Program Specialist Seaman Recruit Michael Sency, far left, and Religious Program Specialist Seaman Kenneth Lindsay complete Navy e-learning courses at the newly built Religious Program Specialist "A" School at Fort Jackson.

Navy e-Learning Updates Web Address

From Naval Education and Training Command Public Affairs

Direct access to the online Navy e-Learning (NeL) management system website will be available at a new web address beginning Oct. 23.

The direct NeL link of <https://learning.nel.navy.mil> is available 24/7 and will take Sailors directly to the 'My Learning' and 'Course Catalog' tabs of the NeL learning management system after logging on.

Although direct access to NeL is available through the internet, a Common Access Card (CAC) is still required for NeL login. Courses on NeL have been standardized to run using the Internet Explorer browser.

Sailors depend on NeL to help advance their careers and stay current with training requirements. Courses range from general military training to specific training for individual units. The site also contains an individual's training history where completion certificates can be obtained. To find certificates for completed courses, click on the 'Open My Training History' link located above the 'Show Individual Courses' and 'Show Curricula' tabs.

Trainees using NeL complete over five million online courses a year, from a comprehensive catalog of 12,500 distance learning courses. The Naval Education and Training Command relies on NeL for use in schoolhouses for individual skills and skill refresher training.

To access NeL through a link on My Navy Portal (MNP), select the "Professional Resources" drop-down menu, then "Navy e-learning Online Courses."

Users will need to update their saved bookmark to the new NeL URL.



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In cooperation with the Medical Center, the Society also provides assistance with treatment, education, research activities, travel and lodging, and hospital staff support. Since the Walter Reed Society's inception in 1996, the Medical Center and hundreds of service members and their families have received over \$2.2 million in assistance.

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Comfort Welcomes Newest Arrival

By MC1 Ernest Scott
Navy Public Affairs Support Element East

The sound of two bells rang through the passageways of the Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) as the announcement passed over the ship's one main circuit.

"Sara Victoria Llull Rodriguez, born this day Oct. 14, arriving!"

With Comfort underway in the vicinity of San Juan, Puerto Rico, providing medical assistance throughout a region devastated by Hurricane Maria, the birth of Sara aboard the ship was a reminder of the work to be done but also hope for the future of the island.

"I never thought that our special moment would happen here on this ship," said Francisco Llull Vera, Sara's father. "Everyone has been so helpful and gentle while caring for our baby. I hope this opens the door for those who still need help to seek out the Comfort."

At 6 pounds 8 ounces, Sara may be small, but her presence is mighty. Her birth on Comfort gained the attention of Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello who said this has been a bit of good news that has gone across the island. Capt. Kevin Robinson, Comfort's mission commander, said the special occasion is one felt throughout the ship.

"I think the birth of that little girl has reinvigorated the crew," said Robinson.

One of Comfort's primary missions is to provide full hospital services to support U.S. disaster relief

and humanitarian operations worldwide. Although fully equipped, capable and ready to support, Sara's delivery came to many as a welcome surprise.

"We stood up the labor and delivery ward prior to getting underway," said Lt. Karri Washbon, a labor and delivery nurse aboard Comfort who assisted with Sara's birth. "We expected to see a lot of patients, but we weren't sure how often we'd get to utilize this aspect. With every birth there is a unique story and we are glad to be a part of their experience. Now everyone just wants to see the baby!"

While more than 800 medical personnel and support staff aboard Comfort want to greet their newest "shipmate," Sara's 6-year-old brother Alonzo and 4-year-old sister Sofia, who are currently staying with family ashore in Puerto Rico, anxiously await her return.

"They are so excited to meet her," said Tania Rodriguez Ramos, Sara's mother. "I got the chance to call my family and let them know that I am ok and that the baby is healthy and happy. It's a huge blessing for Sara to be here; I owe everything to the doctors and nurses and everyone on board."

The last birth aboard Comfort occurred Jan. 21, 2010, while the ship was providing humanitarian relief in support of Operation Unified Response following a 7.0 magnitude earthquake that caused severe damage in Haiti.

Recognizing the rarity of the situation, Comfort's current Ship's Master Roger Gwinn ceremoniously renamed one of the ship's two small boat tenders the Sara Victoria.

"We wanted to do something special, the crew has taken to the baby as one of our own," said Gwinn.



PHOTO BY MC1 ERNEST R. SCOTT

Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello holds the first child born aboard the U.S. Navy hospital ship USNS Comfort (T-AH 20) in more than seven years.

"As she goes forward in life, we hope she carries Comfort with her."

As of Oct. 15, Comfort has delivered more than 10 tons of food and water, 21,000 liters of oxygen and treated more than 100 patients to relieve pressure on the Puerto Rican health system.

Comfort is currently underway operating in the vicinity of San Juan to provide medical services with additional visits being planned around the island. The U.S. Health and Human Services and Puerto Rico Department of Health representatives are prioritizing patients at each stop prior to Comfort's arrival. The Department of Defense is supporting the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the lead federal agency, in helping those affected by Hurricane Maria to minimize suffering and is one component of the overall whole-of-government response effort.

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Outdoor Patio, Bldg. 62 |
| 11/3 | 11 am-2 pm | Luncheon: Russia
Warrior Café, Bldg. 62 |
| 11/7 | 11 am-12:30 pm | Navy Online Library Info Session FREE
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