



# The Journal

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June 29, 2017

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# CNO Adm. John Richardson Statement on Recent Trip to Japan



PHOTO BY MC2 RICHARD L.J. GOURLEY

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson, center right, Vice Adm. Joseph Aucoin, top right, commander U.S. 7th Fleet, and Rear Adm. Greg Fenton, commander of Naval Forces Japan, meet with Adm. Yutaka Murakawa, chief of staff, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), Vice Adm. Kazuki Yamashita, commander-in-chief, Self-Defense Fleet, and Rear Adm. Kazutoshi Miyazato, chief, Yokosuka Coast Guard office. The meeting was to thank the JMSDF and Japanese Coast Guard for their response and assistance after a serious collision involving the guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and a merchant vessel June 17. The incident is under investigation.

## From Office of the Chief of Naval Operations

On Tuesday MCPON (Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy) and I visited Japan where we attended the outbound dignified transfer of our seven fallen shipmates and spent time with [USS] Fitzgerald Sailors and families.

The outpouring of support by the Yokosuka and broader community has been stunning. Everything from toothpaste and uniforms to financial assistance has been offered and we are very grateful to all who are helping this team get back to fighting trim.

We also met with supporting teams that were critical to the effort — the Yokosuka Port Operations, tug crews, divers and workers who were absolutely essential to recovering the ship. An amazingly selfless team of American and Japanese workers who made such a difference.

Very important was the chance to visit the leaders from the

Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force and Japanese Coast Guard. I personally thanked them for their assistance. Our partnership with the Japanese is very strong and growing stronger. They were deeply sorry for the losses suffered.

Our immediate focus is to do all we can to properly recognize our fallen shipmates, take care of the Fitz family and begin to put the ship back together.

There are multiple U.S. and Japanese investigations underway to determine the facts of the collision. Our goal is to learn all we can to prevent future accidents from occurring. This process will unfold as quickly as possible, but it's important to get this right. We need to protect the integrity of those proceedings. Speculation, rumors, hearsay or second guessing won't be helpful. Let the investigations run their courses.

Again, thanks to all for the thoughts and prayers and offers of support. It is good to see the Navy Team come together to help Fitz and others move forward.

## Bethesda Notebook

**WRNMMC Change of Authority**

A Change of Authority Ceremony for Walter Reed National Military Medical Center is scheduled for June 30 at 10 a.m. in Memorial Auditorium. During the ceremony, WRNMMC's outgoing director, Army Col. Michael S. Heimall, will retire after more than 30 years of service, and incoming director, Navy Capt. (Dr.) Mark A. Kobelja, will assume the helm of the medical center. All are invited to attend.

**WRNMMC Blood Drive**

A Walter Reed National Military Medical Center Blood Drive is scheduled for July 5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Building 9, first floor. Appointments can be made online at [militarydonor.com](http://militarydonor.com) using the sponsor code CMS.

**TeamSTEPPS Training**

The two-day TeamSTEPPS train-the-trainer course will be July 6-7 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. TeamSTEPPS is designed to improve patient outcomes by improving communication and teamwork skills. To register for the courses or for more information, contact Hospital Education and Training (HEAT) at [classregistration@health.mil](mailto:classregistration@health.mil), or call 301-319-5209.

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## Naval Support Activity Bethesda

Commanding Officer: Capt. Marvin L. Jones  
Public Affairs Officer: Jeremy Brooks  
Public Affairs Office: 301-295-1803

### Journal Staff

Managing Editor MC2 William Phillips  
WRNMMC Editor Bernard Little  
  
Writers MC2 Kevin Cunningham  
Andrew Damstedt  
Kalila Fleming  
Megan Garcia  
Joseph Nieves  
AJ Simmons

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# Military Kids Use Virtual, Augmented Reality to ‘STEMulate’ Learning

By Sarah Marshall  
USU External Affairs

Donning high-tech virtual and augmented reality simulators, while testing out revolutionary modular prosthetic limbs and interacting with experts in the field of science, technology, engineering, and math, a group of about 23 middle school-aged military children had a chance to learn inspiring and exciting lessons during a two-day workshop June 3-4 at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU).

The workshop was recently launched by the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) through a grant from the Office of Naval Research (ONR) and is referred to as CONVEY—Connecting STEM Outreach Now Using VIE Education for Youth. VIE, or Virtual Integrative Environment, was developed by APL as a training platform to help amputees adapt to using advanced brain-controlled prosthetic devices. Led by prosthetic experts from USU and APL, CONVEY was established for children of military service members to help them gain a deeper understanding of the healing process of an amputee, while learning about science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics. The workshop was also designed to cultivate an emotional connection unique to these children in hopes of motivating them to pursue STEM careers.

Working in pairs, the students played interactive games that taught them about STEM topics, including physiology, human anatomy, the brain, nervous system and muscular system. Wearing the Hololens and Oculus Rift—virtual and augmented reality headsets—they were able to “see” a virtual brain in front of themselves, and examine each of its lobes and functions. They tried on Myo armbands—devices that allowed them to control the APL’s Modular Prosthetic Limb as well as virtual prosthetic limbs to better understand a new and developing technology helping amputees gain independence. The students also explored electronics by using circuits, along with lights, motors, and buzzers,



PHOTO BY SHARON HOLLAND

**A group of about 23 middle school-aged military children had a chance to learn inspiring and exciting lessons, using virtual and augmented reality, during a two-day workshop this month at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.**

bringing them to life by connecting LEDs or battery packs that ran currents through modeling clay. The workshop culminated in a lively and entertaining virtual-reality competition, which also helped evaluate what they had learned.

Lucille Kistner, one of the students who participated in the workshop, was particularly excited about using the virtual and augmented reality equipment because it allowed her to “feel what it’s like to have a bionic arm or prosthetic arm,” she said. She explained how the Myo band allowed her to maneuver a virtual arm while playing ping pong, and as the virtual arm responded to her muscle movements, she could hit the ball back and forth.

“It’s all related to your brain, so that’s cool,” she said.

Lucille is interested in a career in the field of science, she added, and is inspired by how this technology will help make a difference for so many people.

“It was really fun,” added Noah Hutchinson, another student who participated in the workshop.

He enjoyed wearing the Myo armband, too, experiencing for himself how the device responds to muscle movements. He was also inspired by how this technology will help amputees do more independently, and therefore have a better future.

Dr. Paul Pasquina, professor and chair of USU’s Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and chief of Rehabilitation Medicine at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, helped organize the workshop. Having been a leader in the field of prosthetics and amputee care for nearly two decades, sees great promise in the STEM workshop.

“While there have been significant advances in medical, surgical and rehabilitative care over the past decade, the challenges that our patients and families continue to face are constant reminders that more work is needed,” Pasquina said. “It is our hope that the CONVEY workshop will inspire future generations of scientists from a broad field of disciplines to help solve some of these challenges and contribute to an improved quality of life, not only for our men and women in uniform, but for society as a whole.”

Dwight Carr, APL STEM program manager, added that CONVEY is also designed to use the virtual training platform to enhance each child’s understanding of how STEM concepts are being used to help individuals gain independence, mobility, and human interaction with loved ones.

“It’s an engaging and interactive way to expand the use of the technology, while helping both the service members and their families,” Carr said.

Dr. Peter Squire, program officer in ONR’s Human Performance Training and Education office, added it’s important to be thinking, now, about the capabilities that will be needed in the future, while building the workforce of the future.

“This is a good opportunity to understand how science impacts prosthetics, to better understand the way they use science, and to think about what things you can do today that may impact folks tomorrow,” Squire said.

## Corneal Crosslinking Procedure Performed at WRNMMC for First Time

By AJ Simmons  
WRNMMC Command Communications

The Department of Refractive Surgery at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) performed its first corneal crosslinking procedure on May 19, making it one of just three military treatment facilities to offer the procedure to service members and their families.

“The procedure is basically hardening and strengthening weakened corneas,” said Army Maj. (Dr.) Paul Houghtaling, an ophthalmologist at WRNMMC who performs the procedure. “We’re using a combination of [ultraviolet light treatments] and riboflavin eye drops to form crosslinks—or more chemical bonds—between the corneal lamellae.”

Houghtaling explained that the procedure is intended for patients diagnosed with keratoconus or post refractive ectasia—two conditions characterized by the weakening and thinning of the clear outer layer of the eye called the cornea.

Keratoconus, often referred to as KC, can cause decreased visual acuity and may even require a corneal transplant in some severe cases, according to Houghtaling. Post refractive ectasia, while very

similar to keratoconus in symptoms, is seen in a small percentage of patients following a refractive eye surgery such as Lasik or Photorefractive Keratectomy (PRK).

Houghtaling explained that corneal crosslinking can halt the thinning of the corneas that is caused by keratoconus or post refractive ectasia by prompting the lamellae (the layered tissue of the cornea) to harden. This hardening, which typically occurs naturally in the corneas as humans enter their 40s or 50s, acts as a reinforcing agent similar in function to a bridge’s structural supports.

The goal of the corneal crosslinking procedure is to stabilize the eye and prevent the corneal deterioration from progressing further, according to Houghtaling. He also elaborated that without crosslinking, some patients might require specialized contact lenses or even a corneal transplant.

Corneal crosslinking, which has been performed in Europe since the early 2000s, received its FDA approval in the United States for treating progressive keratoconus and post refractive ectasia in April and July of 2016, respectively.

Houghtaling emphasized that the procedure stops the thinning and weakening of the corneas, but it does not reverse or cure the damage that has already

been caused. Despite this, Houghtaling has high hopes for the future of corneal crosslinking. “...in the future, the goal would be to do a treatment where we can essentially reverse the damage or to fix the shape of the cornea and then harden it and strengthen it as it is,” he said.

Houghtaling added that earlier detection and a greater understanding of the causes of keratoconus are important steps to be taken in the future of its treatment.

In the immediate future, Houghtaling hopes to establish a referral process that would allow patients’ local eye doctors to determine if they require and are a candidate for corneal crosslinking. He explained that patients who are referred to his department would be assessed on several criteria to determine if they are a candidate. He pointed out that being diagnosed with keratoconus does not necessarily mean that corneal crosslinking is required.

To learn more about corneal crosslinking, keratoconus and post refractive ectasia, visit the WRNMMC Department of Ophthalmology’s webpage at <http://www.wrnmmc.capmed.mil/Health%20Services/Surgery/Surgery/Ophthalmology/SitePages/Home.aspx> or the National Keratoconus Foundation’s site at [www.NKCF.org](http://www.NKCF.org).



# NSAB Hosts Admiral's Cup



Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) hosted the NDW Admiral's Cup soccer tournament June 25. NSAB came up short, losing to Navy Yard finishing the tournament in fourth place.

PHOTOS BY MC2 WILLIAM PHILLIPS

## WRNMMC Performs All Hazards Training

By AJ Simmons  
WRNMMC Command Communications

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) performed its All Hazards Training June 8 outside of the hospital's Emergency Department. The quarterly training, which is part of WRNMMC's ongoing preparedness programs, addressed the plan of action to provide safe emergency care to patients in the event of a radiological contamination incident. Decontamination Program Manager at WRNMMC Matt Sias walked emergency responders and staff through the stations of the training area, explaining the details and purposes of each station. He presented each station in the order that a patient would interact with it in order to demonstrate the process of providing care. The purpose of the training is to ensure that the

emergency response system is safe, effective and efficient, according to Command Emergency Manager Chris Gillette. Gillette explained that by performing the All Hazards Training once a quarter, his department is able to find ways to improve WRNMMC's emergency response methods and ensure the safety of both patients and first receivers in the event of a hazardous incident. He pointed out that by finding ways to improve the response team's efficiency and preparedness, they are able to "rehearse, re-huddle and fix the problem." While the All Hazards Training occurs once a quarter, the Emergency Department performs its own hazardous response training on a smaller scale once a week to remain as prepared as possible, Gillette explained. As a part of the ongoing preparedness programs, All Hazards Training will be performed again next quarter.



PHOTO BY AJ SIMMONS

Walter Reed National Military Medical Center staff members are briefed on decontamination procedures during an All Hazards Training June 8 outside of the hospital's Emergency Department.



# Fourth of July hours

- **The Child Development Centers I and II** are closed July 4. The CDC 24/7 is open for registered/assigned patrons.
- **The Fitness Center** is open July 1 and 2 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; July 3, 4:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and is closed on July 4. There are no group classes throughout the holiday weekend.
- **The Bowling Center and Tickets and Travel office** are both closed July 4.
- **The Warrior Café** is open July 4 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- **The Liberty Center** is open for its regular hours of 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. July 4.

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# Sumner Says Goodbye to USO Career After 25 Years

By Andrew Damstedt  
The Journal

While her last day as an employee for the USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore (USO-Metro) is July 7, the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda manager said she plans to keep tabs on what's happening at the USO from her new home in rural Virginia.

"I already told them that I'm going to call every day to find out what's going on," said Pauline Sumner. "I will definitely be checking in on them to see how things are going."

She described the change as bittersweet.

"Some days I'm doing okay, then other days, especially when people find out I'm leaving – I told someone last week and his reaction made me cry," she said. "It's really hard because I'm going to the next

chapter of my life, but USO is a part of my soul."

Her first job at the USO was as an executive assistant. She since has worked a variety of roles, such as working with the Wounded Warrior programs, culminating in a 25-year USO-Metro career.

"When I started, we were a staff of 12 [at USO-Metro], and now we are a staff of 46," she said. "When I started you wore a lot of different hats because it was such a small staff. You just learned to have a lot of different responsibilities."

Art programs for Wounded Warriors offered at the USO have been some of her favorite experiences.

"You're able to see service members who are going through a difficult time in their recovery ... there's very

little interaction and then next thing you know they are giving you hugs ... for some, art has saved their lives," she said. "And that is an incredible piece to be a part of."

John Falin, USO-Metro director of center operations, said Sumner will be missed.

"She adds a lot to our organization, she's got not only a big heart, but has a great sense of humor," he said. "She loves to laugh, she loves to cry."

One thing he's noticed is that she develops relationships with those who come to the USO, learning about them personally.

"She's willing to be vulnerable and develop personal relationships and have personal conversations with every person who walks through these doors. She does so because she cares about everyone,"



PHOTO BY ANDREW DAMSTEDT

**Pauline Sumner's last day as USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda manager is July 7. Sumner has worked for the USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore for the past 25 years.**

Falin said. "She really wants the best for every person who comes in here."

Sumner admitted as much, saying a favorite part of her job has been meeting service members and learning about their lives.

"When they come

in, they tell you their milestones and what's going on in their life – if they've got Soldier of the Year, or getting good grades in school, down to their love life," she said. "That's what we're here for is to be that home away from home."

Sumner said she was

constantly impressed by the caliber of USO volunteers from the active duty ones to those who come from the community.

"I love our volunteers here, we have a lot of dedicated volunteers," she said.

Sumner said she has enjoyed her time at the Bethesda USO, starting when they worked their cars before the center was completed in 2014.

Her replacement, Midge Matlock-Williams echoed the sentiment of the USO being a "home away from home" and said she plans to continue making the USO Warrior and Family Center at Bethesda as "warm and loving and friendly as it was under Pauline's leadership."

Matlock-Williams, a retired Army command sergeant major, comes from working as Maryland centers manager for the USO, where she was in charge of the USOs at Baltimore Washington Airport (BWI), Joint Base Andrews and Fort Meade.

She's worked for the USO for five years and likes being close to the military again. She said she liked helping with the military flights out of BWI. She enjoys how the community comes together to support service members, recounting how people came together in November during the Salute to Troops to assemble more than 1,200 care packages in an hour.

"It is really neat to see people come together to support our military," she said.

Sumner said it's difficult to put into words her love for the USO, for the service members and the sacrifices they've made.

"This has not been a job for me; it's been a passion serving our troops," Sumner said.

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# Firework Safety Tips From the NSAB Safety Office

By Paul Phillips  
NSAB Safety Manager

- Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
  - Know your fireworks; read the cautionary labels and performance descriptions before igniting.
  - A responsible adult SHOULD supervise all firework activities. Never give fireworks to children.
  - Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Save your alcohol for after the show.
  - Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
  - Light one firework at a time and then quickly move away.
  - Use fireworks OUTDOORS in a clear area; away from buildings and vehicles.
  - Never relight a "dud" firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water.
  - Always have a bucket of water and charged water hose nearby.
  - Never carry fireworks in your POCKET or shoot them into METAL or GLASS containers.
  - Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
  - Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and place in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.
  - Report illegal explosives, like M-80s and quarter sticks, to the fire or police department.
- And let's not forget the safety of our pets!



U.S. NAVY FILE PHOTO BY PO2 LAURIE DEXTER

- Don't bring your pets to a fireworks display, even a small one.
- If fireworks are being used near your home, put your pet in a safe, interior room to avoid exposure to the sound.
- Make sure your pet has an identification tag, in case it runs off during a fireworks display.
- Never shoot fireworks of any kind (consumer fireworks, sparklers, fountains, etc.) near pets.

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## Morale Welfare & Recreation (MWR)

7/8	7 am	<b>Hershey Park Trip</b> Open to all \$46, Liberty Price \$23*
7/9	7:30 am	<b>Day Hike- 4-5 miles round trip</b> Annapolis Rocks, MD (Appalachian Trail) Depart from Bldg. 62 lobby Open to all \$ 10, Liberty Price \$5*
7/9	11 am	<b>Nationals vs. Braves Game</b> Open to all \$50, Liberty Price \$25*
7/14	6 pm	<b>DC IMPROV Comedy Night:</b> <b>John Witherspoon</b> Open to all \$20, Liberty Price \$10*
7/16	11 am	<b>Baltimore Caribbean Carnival</b> Open to all \$20, Liberty Price \$10*
7/23	10 am	<b>Artscape Festival</b> Open to all \$10, Liberty Price \$5*
7/24	11:30 pm	<b>Deadline to register for Wine and Weave</b> Patriot Wall Basket- August 2-details below Open to all \$35, 2 for \$66, Liberty Price \$18*

**REGISTER ONLINE:**  
[Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com](http://Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com)

### Liberty Center, Bldg. 11

\*Liberty patrons include Single Service members E1-E6, WII, NMA & Geo-Bachelors E1-E9

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**6/29 3:30 pm**  
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**7/1 10 am**  
**FREE\* National Zoo**  
[Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com](http://Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com)

**7/4 11 am**  
**FREE\* July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration at JBAB**  
[Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com](http://Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com)

**7/12 6 pm**  
**FREE\* Movie Night**

**7/13 5:30 pm**  
**FREE\* Madden 17 Tournament**

**7/15-29 7 am-12 pm**  
**\$10\* Intro to Archery-3 sessions**  
[Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com](http://Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com)

(\*Liberty Only)

**Wine and Weave: Patriot Wall Basket-Wednesday, August 2**      **4:30 pm-7:30 pm**  
 Open to all with military base access. \$35 Class fee includes instruction, use of tools, and all supplies needed to make the basket. Register with a friend for \$2 off per basket. Liberty Price \$18\*. Register before July 24! You must be 21 with ID to consume alcohol. Don't delay, class size is limited. [Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com](http://Navymwrbethesda.eventbrite.com)

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