



November 9, 2023



# Great Lakes Bulletin

Serving the Quarterdeck of the Navy for 105 Years

## NS Great Lakes Passes RASS

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Great Lakes, Illinois  
Your Navy in the Midwest

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By Petty Officer 2nd Class Madison Williams, NS Great Lakes Public Affairs

GREAT LAKES, Ill. (Nov. 2, 2023) -- Naval Station Great Lakes Security Forces participated in a Regional Assessment (RASS), Oct. 30 through Nov. 3, with a team from Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic reviewing all aspects of the installation's security force and emergency response operations.

RASS is part of Commander Navy Installation Command's (CNIC) Navy security force shore assessment and certification cycle.

During the weeklong assessment, the CNRMA team took a look at all aspects of security training and reviewed any corrections recommended by CNIC during the Command Assessment of Readiness and Training (CART) inspection.

The NS Great Lakes installation training team (ITT), led by Installation Training Officer Terry Lanners, conducted an active shooter drill that evaluated response, containment and recovery operations with a unified incident command post that included security, fire, and medical personnel.

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The weeklong assessment was a demanding time for members of NS Great Lakes' security department, training teams, emergency management and other emergency first responders.

"Exercises like this one give us the opportunity to review our plans and response procedures and assess them," said Lanners "It went very well. We validated our plans and procedures while ensuring our responses are effective."



Naval Station Great Lakes (NSGL) Security Forces participated in a Regional Assessment (RASS), with a team from Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic (CNRMA) reviewing all aspects of the installation's security force and emergency response operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Gas Turbine Systems Technician-Mechanical 2nd Class Madison Williams)

## VA's List of Veterans Day Discounts

By VA.gov

Veterans Day 2023 is Saturday, Nov. 11. This Veterans Day discounts list will continue to be updated as the VA learns of more nationally available Veterans Day discounts, meals or other ways businesses and organizations want to give back to Veterans.

These Veterans Day and year-round discounts, free meals and other programs are being shared so that Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors are aware of all resources available to them. Offers are subject to change and may not be available in all locations. Verify with the organization offering. Link: <https://news.va.gov/125193/2023-veterans-day-discounts-free-meals/>

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

For 248 years, Marines have earned a reputation as the most disciplined and lethal warfighters in the world. This legacy of honor, courage, and commitment passed on to us was paid for in sweat, blood, and sacrifice. From Belleau Wood to Inchon and Tarawa to Sangin, Marines have stepped forward to defend our Constitution when others either could not or would not. Our history is filled with heroes like Chief Warrant Officer 4 Hershel "Woody" Williams, Private First Class Hector Cafferata Jr., Sergeant Major Dan Daly, and thousands of others who performed acts of bravery which went unseen in the heat of battle. We stand on the shoulders of these Marines, and we owe it to them to earn our title "Marine" each and every day.

Marines have given, and have been willing to give, their lives for Country and Corps in every fight our Nation has entered. Our actions turned back the tide of tyranny in Europe during the Great War, defeated fascism in Asia during World War II, fought for democracy in Korea and Vietnam, and offered the hope of self-determination in the Middle East. We go to war whenever our Nation calls, and in the interwar periods we train, we prepare, and we innovate. We have chosen a life of service and sacrifice — an honorable life that has meaning. We sacrifice so our fellow citizens don't have to, and we seek nothing in return but a chance to be first to fight. Most will never understand why we choose to attack when others do not, why we revel in being covered in mud, why we snap to attention when "The Marines' Hymn" is played, or why we say, "Ooh Rah." We understand it,

and this message is for us, for the Marines.

As Marines, we live on a war footing because someone must. This means that we ruthlessly adhere to our standards of excellence — Marine standards — as we know this will best prepare us for the wars of the future. Our high standards are a prerequisite of professional warfighting, and how we keep our honor clean in the cauldron of combat. They prepare us for the most difficult mission there is: fighting from and returning to the sea. Most importantly they shape our unique Marine culture which is respected at home and across the globe.

Sergeant Major Ruiz and I are proud of all that you have done this past year to protect and enhance our reputation as America's best warriors. We hope you know that we will be with you every step of the way as we prepare for the fights ahead. We ask that every Marine - active, reserve, and veteran - honor the legacy of those who went before us by continuing to uphold our high standards.

Protect your fellow Marines and our shared legacy. Happy Birthday Marines!

Semper Fidelis,

*Eric M. Smith*

*General, U.S. Marine Corps*

*Commandant of the Marine Corps*

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## RTC Staff in the Spotlight

**By Petty Officer 2nd Class Stuart Posada,  
U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command**

Meet Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Mercedes Logan! She's a Recruit Division Commander (RDC) at Recruit Training Command (RTC), the Navy's only boot camp.

Her parents moved from Liberia to the United States when she was 9.

"I joined in 2008," she said. "I am a native of Liberia, West Africa, but was raised in New Jersey. I graduated from Ridge High School in Basking Ridge, New Jersey in 2007."

Logan, along with being an RDC, also helps run the Naturalization Program that helps recruits who joined the Navy become U.S. citizens.

"My biggest accomplishment at RTC would be attaining my Master Training Specialist (MTS) certificate in a short period and aiding to run the Naturalization Program to get recruits naturalized," Logan said. "Since I, too was a non-citizen recruit while I was in boot camp, I chose to dedicate my entire Recruit Training Period (RTP) free time to the program, all while working nights at Night of Arrivals (NOA)," Logan added.

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With a full schedule, Logan does not let the pressure get to her.

"I am very goal-oriented, and I thrive from having set goals, working towards them daily, accomplishing them, and setting new ones after," Logan said. "It gives me a sense of purpose and that I am being a productive member of society."

Logan's been on different deployments, overseas and forward deployed. She's gained quite a bit of experience in the Navy. She chose to come back to boot camp to pay it forward.

"The best part of working at RTC is that we are molding the future of the Navy and putting recruits in the fleet, which gives me a sense of pride from any other command I've been to."

It's been almost 15 years since Logan went through boot camp as a recruit, and although a lot has changed, she loves what she does.

"It is rewarding because when recruits graduate, and they tell me, 'Petty Officer, you have changed my life forever. You motivated me to push myself, and you set the example for me to emulate as the Petty Officer that I want to become,'" Logan said.

"Hearing this a lot from different recruits, from divisions, sometimes not even my own, is why I do it. It makes all the long days and early mornings worth it."

Logan feels that by coming to RTC to be an RDC, she is setting herself up for success for the rest of her time.

"I volunteered to come here, and I do not regret it. My two goals, personal and professional, coming here were to get MTS and to make Chief," Logan added. "I've already accomplished one, and if I

can't get the second one done in time, I will be equipped with the tools to accomplish it at my next command."



Boatswain's Mate 1st Class Mercedes Logan, a Recruit Division Commander (RDC) at Recruit Training Command (RTC) in Great Lakes, Illinois. She also works in the Naturalization Program that helps recruits who joined the Navy become U.S. citizens. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Stuart Posada)



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Check out the latest events and activities from our MWR at [www.facebook.com/NavyLifeGL](https://www.facebook.com/NavyLifeGL) and on their website at [www.navylifegl.com](http://www.navylifegl.com).

For tickets and travel, call 847-688-5417

Life changes? Family or financial planning? Reach out to your team at FFSC for classes, resources, counseling, and more!

Fleet and Family Support Center Great Lakes, 525 Farragut Ave, Bldg. 26, 847-688-3603 ex. 100.

[ffr.cnic.navy.mil](http://ffr.cnic.navy.mil)



# Keep Kitchen Safety in Mind During the Holiday Season

**By Randall J. Lowry, Region Fire Prevention  
CNRMA Fire and Emergency Services HQ**

For most, the kitchen is the heart of the home, especially during the holidays. From testing family recipes to decorating cakes and cookies, everyone enjoys being part of the preparations.

Keeping fire safety top of mind in the kitchen during this joyous but hectic time is important, especially when there's a lot of activity and people at home. As you start preparing your holiday schedule and organizing that large family feast, remember, by following a few simple safety tips you can enjoy time with your loved ones and keep yourself and your family safer from fire.

Top safety tips

- Stay in the kitchen when you are cooking on the stove top so you can keep an eye on the food.
- Stay in the home when cooking your turkey, and check on it frequently.
- Keep children away from the stove. The stove will be hot and kids should stay three feet away.
- Make sure kids stay away from hot food and liquids. The steam or splash from vegetables, gravy or coffee could cause serious burns.
- Keep knives out of the reach of children.
- Be sure electric cords from an electric knife, coffee maker, plate warmer or mixer are not dangling off the counter within easy reach of a child.
- Keep matches and utility lighters out of the reach of children — up high in a locked cabinet.
- Never leave children alone in room with a lit candle.
- Keep the floor clear so you don't trip over kids, toys, pocketbooks or bags.
- Make sure your smoke alarms are working. Test them by pushing the test button.



The Honorable Erik K. Raven, Under Secretary of the Navy, center, visits USS Theodore Roosevelt at Recruit Training Command (RTC) to tour the Future Sailor Preparatory Course (FSPC) and engage with staff. More than 40,000 recruits train annually at the Navy's only boot camp. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Stuart Posada)

# Expeditionary Medical Facility Great Lakes Holds Decommissioning Ceremony, Establishes Navy Reserve, NMRTC Great Lakes



Navy Capt. Amada Avalos presents the Expeditionary Medical Facility Great Lakes guidon to U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Eric Peterson for historical preservation at the EMF Great Lakes decommissioning ceremony Nov. 4 at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center, North Chicago, Ill. (Photo by Trevor Seela)

## By Jayna Legg, Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center

NORTH CHICAGO, IL. – Most recently they provided pandemic support in New York City, but prior to that, Navy Reservists assigned to Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) Great Lakes deployed all over the world for wide-ranging medical missions to include treating wounded warriors from Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) at the Army's Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany; Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa; Medical Readiness Training Exercises in Central America; and more than a decade of leading the multi-national Northern Lights/Global Medic annual exercises at Ft. McCoy, Wis.

When they gathered at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center Nov. 4; however, the day's mission in North Chicago, Ill. was simultaneously somber and hopeful. EMF Great Lakes leaders – present and former – and sailors were in the audience for the unit's decommissioning ceremony, 26 years after it started as Naval Reserve Hospital Unit Great Lakes. "As each of us transitions to our new commands, know that you take the storied legacy of EMF Great Lakes with you," said EMF Great Lakes Commanding Officer Capt. Amada Avalos during her remarks. "You should be proud of your service with EMF Great Lakes and the contributions you made to our Navy and our nation."

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Guest Speaker Rear Adm. Eric Peterson, deputy director, Medical Forces Atlantic, presided over the ceremony. He said the de-commissioning is the result of Navy Medicine's ongoing "evolution in what we do and how we focus our resources. We must always maintain a forward presence and prioritize the care of the warfighter."

Approximately 500 billets of the former EMF Great Lakes are now assigned to the United States Naval Ship (USNS) Comfort and USNS Mercy, hospital ships that provide afloat acute and emergency medical care for U.S. humanitarian and other missions around the world.

About 120 former EMF Great Lakes sailors, led by Avalos, now have the mission of augmenting Navy Medicine Readiness Training Command (NMRTC) Great Lakes, located at Lovell FHCC. The number of billets for the new NMRTC Great Lakes Reserve unit is 145 but could be increased if needed, according to Avalos.

The Reservists are highly skilled medical professionals in their civilian careers, Avalos said in an interview prior to the ceremony, including but not limited to ER, OR, ICU, acute care and other nurses; specialty doctors and surgeons; clinical psychiatrists; optometrists; dentists; pharmacists; physician assistants; and surgical and laboratory technicians.

On their drill weekends and during annual training, the Reservists will work with NMRTC Great Lakes personnel at Lovell FHCC's main hospital and at its Naval Station Great Lakes (NSGL) branch clinics – one on base and three at Recruit Training Command.

"We will train to be ready on 'Day 1' to augment NMRTC Great Lakes," Avalos said, in the event of a large combat deployment

of NMRTC Great Lakes sailors.

Peterson, who also is the director of the Navy Reserve Nurse Corps, said in an interview, "It's about being able to increase capability to receive casualties from the combat theater(s) and taking care of the warfighters on the back end."

In wartime, the Reservists would help meet an increased need to provide medical care for recovering and convalescing service members back in the United States.

During the Nov. 4 ceremony, Avalos read the official disestablishment order and announced the establishment of Navy Reserve, NMRTC Great Lakes. She went on to accept the unit's guidon, or flag, which she then presented to Peterson for historical preservation.

Vice Chief, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Reserve Policy and Integration, Rear Adm. Pamela Miller, couldn't be at the ceremony but provided a statement that read, in part: "I am very proud of the leadership team and the entire command of EMF Great Lakes as they have continued to press on with training, readiness, and providing support to numerous mission requirements during this challenging time of transition.

"The future is very bright, and this is an exciting time for Navy Reserve Medicine," Miller said. "RC (Reserve Component) NMRTC Great Lakes will play an important part in our future missions. I am extremely proud of the professionalism, can-do attitude, and accomplishments of this team."

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## All Babies Deserve Safe Sleep

**By Rebecca Mollett, LSW, New Parent Support, Naval Station Great Lakes**

In October, the New Parent Support Program at Naval Station Great Lakes hosted a Safe Sleep Event to raise awareness about the importance of safe sleep for babies. Service members and their families learned the ABC's of safe sleep, and steps they can take to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Babies should be placed alone in a safe sleep environment free of blankets, pillows, stuffed animals, and bumper pads. Room-

sharing is recommended but co-sleeping is not safe. Babies should be placed on their Backs for every sleep to reduce the risk of suffocation and rebreathing their expired carbon dioxide. And finally, babies should be put to sleep in a crib, bassinet, or portable play yard with a firm surface and fitted sheet.

Attendees received a generous gift bag of baby items as well as information to help protect their babies well beyond the month of Safe Sleep Awareness.



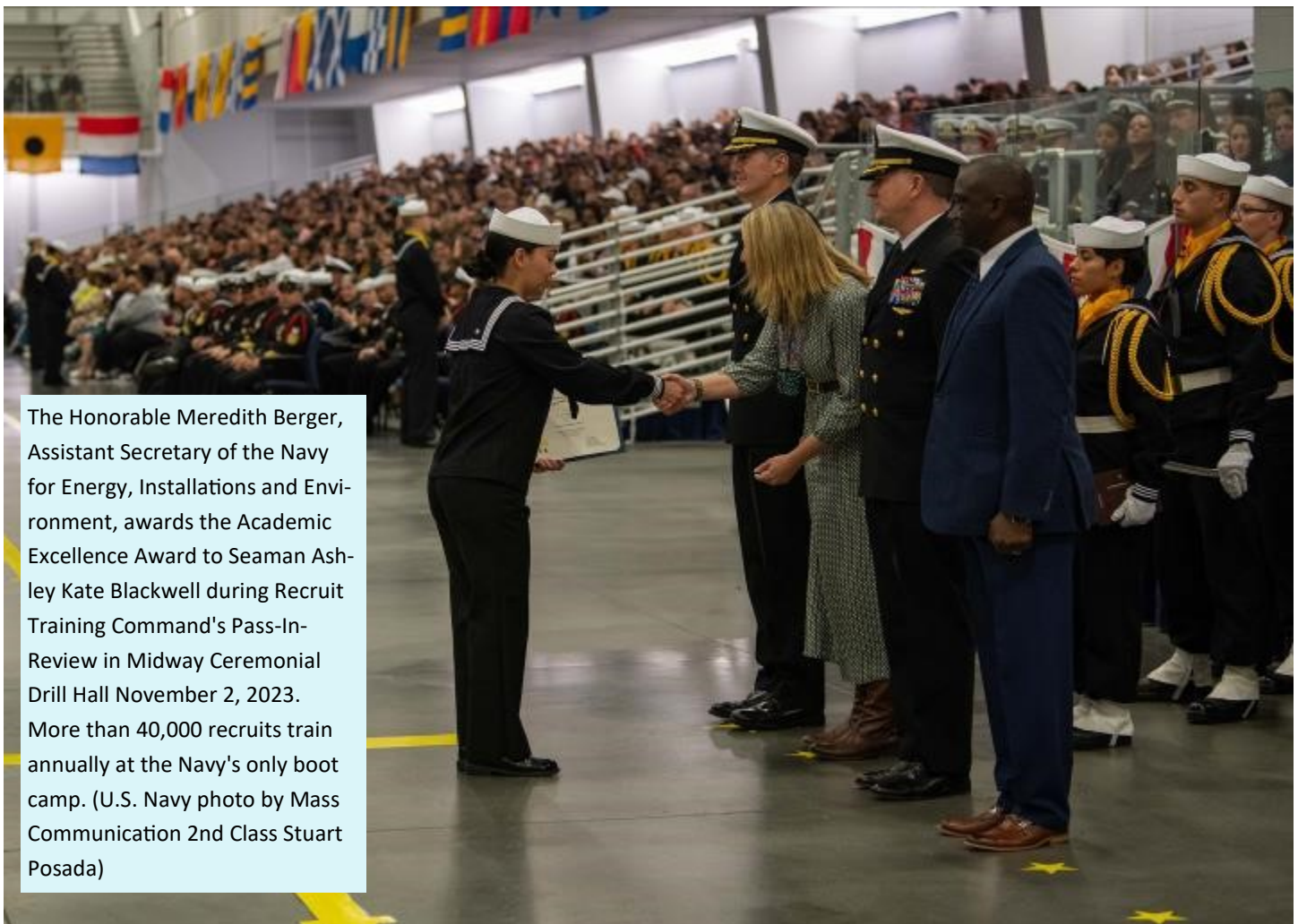
# SECNAV Del Toro Releases One Navy-Marine Corps Team: Advancing Department of the Navy Priorities

WASHINGTON, DC - Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro released his updated strategic guidance recently – One Navy-Marine Corps Team: Advancing Department of the Navy Priorities. The document informs activities within the Department of the Navy to include planning, investments, budgeting, and prioritization of personnel and resources.

“For more than two years, I have had the privilege of serving as your Secretary of the Navy, and I am unbelievably proud of our achievements to date. As we look forward, we will continue to advance our three enduring priorities: Strengthening Maritime Dominance, Building a Culture of Warfighting Excellence, and Enhancing Strategic Partnerships. The future of the Navy hinges on the modernization and readiness of our fleet today. Together,

we strive to build a combined Navy and Marine Corps team that is modern, highly capable, and fearlessly dedicated to our mission of combat-readiness,” said Secretary Del Toro.

On the priorities, Secretary Del Toro added, “We have made smart choices in strengthening our maritime dominance relative to the pacing threat. We are building a culture of warfighting excellence fostering talent and innovation, while taking care to improve the quality of our members’ time in service. Moreover, we are enhancing our strategic partnerships throughout the world, and specifically in the Indo-Pacific. Our objective is clear: we will continue to provide a Navy and Marine Corps that can deter high-end conflict with a rapidly improving peer competitor while simultaneously protecting and advancing the global maritime interests of the Nation.”



The Honorable Meredith Berger, Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations and Environment, awards the Academic Excellence Award to Seaman Ashley Kate Blackwell during Recruit Training Command's Pass-In-Review in Midway Ceremonial Drill Hall November 2, 2023. More than 40,000 recruits train annually at the Navy's only boot camp. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication 2nd Class Stuart Posada)