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Great Lakes Bulletin

Serving the Quarterdeck of the Navy for 105 Years

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Great Lakes, Illinois
Your Navy in the Midwest

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Winter Comes with Unique Safety Hazards



Story and photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Madison Williams,
Naval Station Great Lakes Public Affairs

GREAT LAKES, IL. - The Naval Station Great Lakes safety department works to keep Sailors and civilians safe day-in and day-out. In preparation for the holiday season, Ross Johnson, NSGL safety and occupational health manager, arranged a safety stand down to brief all hands on key winter and holiday safety risks on Nov. 14 at Ross Theater on mainside.

Capt. Steve Yargosz, NS Great Lakes commanding officer, delivered opening remarks and was followed by a variety of presenters who spoke on topics such as distracted and buzzed driving, weather hazards, suicide prevention, personal financial management and holiday fire safety.

According to the Naval Safety Command, the fall and winter seasons come with their own unique safety hazards. Some activities, such as driving, are even more hazardous due to shifts in the weather and increases in rain and snow. Other hazards de-

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rive from activities that spike during the fall and winter months, such as bonfires, holiday gatherings, winter sports and using ladders to clean gutters or string holiday lights.

“Winter brings its own challenges that demand extra precautions for your safety, year round, all the time, when you do those activities that you like to do or have to do whether at work or at play,” said Johnson. “The top three safety issues/concerns and mishaps that plague Naval Station Great Lakes are slips, trips, falls, sprains and strains and electrical hazards.”

Special guest Dr. Jonlee Anderlee of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration put on a live demonstration of the dangers of drunk driving. Using goggles that simulated heightened blood alcohol levels, he asked volunteers Billy Learsch, NS Great Lakes unaccompanied housing, and Cmdr. Terry Traweek, NS Great Lakes executive officer, to walk a straight line and simulate driving under the influence on a tricycle.

“When you’re buzzed, you drive different. If something makes you feel different, you drive different,” said Anderlee.

Willie Ramsey, NS Great Lakes emergency management officer,

spoke about winter storms. “Don’t leave home without a fully charged mobile phone, car charger and an emergency supplies kit in your car,” said Ramsey.

Lt. Cmdr. Eric Brown, NS Great Lakes Chaplain, briefed on the Navy Suicide Prevention Program. He talked about stressors that are unique to the Navy, including unpredictability in the job, long hours, warrior pride, sleep deprivation and other factors. Helping a suicidal person means following “ACT”—Ask, Care, Treat. “Don’t leave a suicidal person alone,” Brown said. “Take them to a chaplain, medical, the command or call 9-1-1.”

Ed Sanderson, a work and family life consultant from NS Great Lakes Fleet and Family Support Center, focused on personal finances during the holidays and how to manage a reasonable budget.

Paul Gray, NS Great Lakes Fire and Emergency Services fire chief, provided useful holiday season fire safety tips.

“I’ve been through several safety trainings and by far and this is one of the best safety trainings I’ve been to. The safety team kept all 231 participants very engaged, on topic and on point,” said Yargosz in his closing remarks.

Team Navy: MCPON Honea and I wish you a very Happy Thanksgiving!

By ADM L. M. Franchetti, Chief of Naval Operations

This week, Americans around the world are celebrating this very important holiday. No matter the location, Americans will gather with family and friends, break bread at the table, and give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy as a Nation. Each of you - Sailor and civilian alike - underwrite many of those blessings, safeguarding our security and prosperity on the high seas.

Right now, our Navy-Marine Corps team operates forward around the world and around the clock, providing options, flexibility, and decision space to our Nation's leaders. They operate at the point of friction with our competitors and the point of friendship with our allies and partners in all domains from seabed to space.

And, right now, they are responding to crises, deterring would-

be adversaries, safeguarding the world's sea lines of communication, and strengthening our maritime partnerships. Together with our Marine Corps teammates, we are ready to fight and win

today if called. No Navy in the world can build, train, and deploy such a lethal combat-credible force. And, no Navy team can do what you do.

During this Thanksgiving holiday, take time to reflect on our shared success, communicate our Navy story to our families, friends, and communities, and give thanks for our shipmates who are currently standing the watch. Take pride in all that we do and take care of yourself and each other. Because of you, our Navy is the preeminent fighting force on the seas.

I am grateful for each and every one of you. Your Navy and Na-

tion are proud of you. MCPON and I are honored to serve alongside you. Please enjoy a wonderful and well-deserved Thanksgiving holiday - we'll see you in the Fleet!



Navy Primes for Thanksgiving Festivities

By Matthew Morrison, Naval Supply Systems Command

As Thanksgiving approaches, Navy culinary specialists (CSs) are tirelessly preparing traditional holiday favorites for Sailors deployed around the world.

Sailor morale is a key component to mission success, but it takes on an increased significance during the holiday season. The food CSs prepare during this time of year creates a sense of familiarity among Sailors and has a positive effect on their morale.

"Culinary specialists in our fleets never take a day off and the holidays are no exception," said Navy Food Service Director Cmdr. Brian Bieber.

This year the Navy predicts CSs in their afloat galleys will prepare 85,195 pounds of roast turkey, 39,380 pounds of mashed potatoes,

23,650 pounds of stuffing, 17,600 pounds of sweet potatoes, 9,680 pounds of green bean casserole, 5,335 pounds of cranberry sauce, 3,960 gallons of gravy, and 8,635 assorted pies for Sailors.

Baked ham, corn, and eggnog will also be on the menu.

While Thanksgiving is a time of celebration, Sailors remain focused on the Navy's mission.

All meals offer a variety of food options that collectively meet warfighters' performance requirements.

The Navy's more than 8,000 highly trained CSs play a critical role in Sailor quality of life. An important part of any deployment, CSs prepare food that sustains warfighters whether they're deployed ashore or afloat.

NAVFAC MIDLANT Awards Contract for Architect-Engineer Services for Great Lakes

NORFOLK, VA – Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Mid-Atlantic (NAVFAC MIDLANT) awarded Summer Consultants Inc., McLean, Virginia, a maximum-value \$15 million, firm-fixed-price, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity, architect-engineer contract in support of mechanical, electrical, fire protection, and plumbing engineer and design services primarily in the Great Lakes, Illinois, area of responsibility.

An initial task order is being issued in the amount of \$5,000 to satisfy the minimum guarantee.

Work will be performed in Great Lakes, Illinois, and is expected to be completed by November 2028.

Fiscal year (FY) 2024 operation and maintenance (Navy) funds in the amount of \$5,000 will be obligated at the time of award, which will expire at the end of the current FY.

This contract was competitively procured via the www.sam.gov website, with four offers received.

NAVFAC MIDLANT is the contracting activity. (N40085-24-D-0012).



NAVFAC MIDLANT provides facilities engineering, public works and environmental products and services across an area of responsibility that spans from South Carolina to Maine, as far west as Illinois, and down to Indiana. As an integral member of the Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic team, NAVFAC MIDLANT provides leadership through the Regional Engineer organization to ensure the region's facilities and infrastructure are managed efficiently and effectively.

For additional information about NAVFAC MIDLANT on social media, follow our activities on Facebook at www.facebook.com/navfacmidatlantic and on Instagram @navfacmidatlantic.



Your recreational hub aboard Naval Station Great Lakes!

Check out the latest events and activities from our MWR at www.facebook.com/NavyLifeGL and on their website at 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.



Recruit Training Command Volunteers Turn Out for ASBP Blood Drive

By Alan Nunn, Recruit Training Command Public Affairs

Recruit Training Command (RTC) volunteers provided a lifeline to the front lines during the RTC Blood Drive Nov. 15.

The donation site at the USS Theodore Roosevelt – a Navy recruit barracks – welcomed RTC leadership, Recruit Division Commanders (RDCs), instructors, and civilian staff, who donated 23 units of blood to the Armed Services Blood Program (ASBP).

The ASBP, also known as the military blood program, is the official provider of blood and blood products to the U.S. Armed Forces.

ASBP's mission is to collect, process, store, and transport blood and blood products to ill or injured service members, their families, retirees, and veterans worldwide. ASBP provides 50 percent of blood products to the military at home and abroad.

Locally, the Blood Donor Center, Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Great Lakes, is supported by the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC). Collected blood is processed in a lab located at FHCC. As one of only two blood freezing sites for the Department of Defense, NMRTC Great Lakes Blood Donor Center became the only donor center in ASBP to receive licensure to manufacture pre-storage pooled cryoprecipitate earlier this year.

"RTC continues to be a mission multiplier supporting the Navy Blood Program and the Armed Services Blood Program," said Lt. Cmdr. Mike Collins, the Blood Donor Department Head at NMRTC Great Lakes. "The NMRTC Great Lakes Blood Donor Center would not meet the mission without the relationship we have with RTC. From the fleet to the fleet."

The Navy community at Great Lakes has donated 4,752 units of blood this year. The majority of the more than 5,300 local volunteers who have been screened this year include RTC recruits who have donated 3,672 units of blood in 2023.

"RTC is proud to partner with NMRTC, and the Defense Health Agency, to contribute to this critical life-saving resource," said Capt. Kenneth J. Froberg, Commanding Officer, RTC.

Those totals increased with contributions from RTC military and civilian staff, including Machinist Mate Submarine Auxiliary 1st Class Michael Brown.

"I saw firsthand what it does," said Brown, who estimates he had donated blood more than 25 times. "I did two deployments to Afghanistan, and I volunteered at the



hospital at Bagram, so I gave blood donations. A couple of times, I got called out of my rack to give blood because casualties were coming in. I also know people back home need it. If I'm able to help save a life, I want to, so every time I get the opportunity, I always donate."

When a person donates blood, they donate about a pint (one unit), approximately 10 percent of their total blood volume. According to ASBP statistics, a single trauma victim may require 40 units of blood. Eight units of platelets may be required daily by leukemia patients undergoing treatment, and a single pint of blood can sustain a premature infant's life for two weeks.

To schedule an appointment, go to <https://www.militarydonor.com> for zip code 60088. For more information about the Armed Services Blood Program, visit <https://www.militaryblood.dod.mil> or follow @militaryblood on Facebook and Twitter and @usmilitaryblood on Instagram.

Navy Continuing NAVFIT98A to Provide Fleet Greater Flexibility

By Petty Officer 2nd Class Dallas Snider, Navy Personnel Command

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — The Navy is continuing the availability of NAVFIT98A until December 31, 2025 to provide greater flexibility to commands with limited access to eNavFit.

The decision, announced in NAVADMIN 279/23, incorporated direct feedback from the Fleet and provides more time to fully develop the functionality and accessibility of eNavFit for Fleet-wide implementation.

Access to eNavFit remains open for commands to process Sailor evaluation transactions more efficiently. The rejection rate for evaluations generated and submitted via eNavFit is 19% lower

than through the traditional evaluation system. However, the system continues to undergo necessary programming updates in preparation for additional Fleet testing that will enable greater access and functionality.

Commands that have had success using eNavFit are encouraged to continue using the program to the maximum extent possible. The further use of eNavFit will help reduce administrative burdens, increase familiarization with modernized BUPERS Online document services, and identify any stress points that inhibit full functionality.

For more information on eNavFit, NAVFIT98A and the Navy's evaluation system, read NAVADMIN 279/23 or visit www.MyNavyHR.navy.mil

Service Members Can Now Sign up for Tax-Free Dependent Care Spending Accounts

By C. Todd Lopez, DOD News

With open season for federal benefits now underway, service members can for the first time take advantage of the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account, or DCFSA.

Federal benefits open season runs Nov. 13 through Dec. 11, and eligible service members and civilians who want to sign up for a DCFSA can do so at www.fsafeds.com.

Signing up enables participants to have money from their paychecks diverted to an account that can be used to pay for dependent care services, such as preschool, summer day camp, before- or after-school programs, and child or adult daycare.

Active-component service members along with Active Guard Reserve members on Title 10 orders are eligible to participate.

Eligible service members can contribute as much as \$5,000 a year from their paychecks, via allotment, to the account. That money comes out pretax, which means that a military family that typically reports \$30,000 a year in taxable income, for instance, would instead be able to report \$25,000 in taxable income if they took full advantage of the benefit. That means they will pay less in taxes each year, yielding greater take-home

pay.

The DOD is on track to implement DCFSAs for eligible service members beginning January 1, 2024. Those who would like to participate can sign up during the annual Federal Benefits Open Season, which runs from mid-November to mid-December.

Jennifer Walker, the executive director for the Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account initiative, said as many as 400,000 service members have eligible dependents and will be eligible to take advantage of the benefits provided by the DCFSAs program.

"That includes families who have children who are under the age of 13 or who have a spouse or other tax dependent, regardless of age, who is mentally or physically incapable of self-care," she said.

The program is part of a larger DOD effort to take better care of military service members and their families. In March, the department released the "Strengthening Our Support to Service Members and Their Families" memorandum, which, among other important initiatives, discussed making DCFSAs available to service members.

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That memorandum was signed by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, who said taking care of service members and their families through efforts such as DCFSA is a top priority for the department.

"In recent years, our military community has weathered a number of challenges, but our people have risen to every mission and done it all with extraordinary resilience," Austin wrote in the March 2023 memorandum.

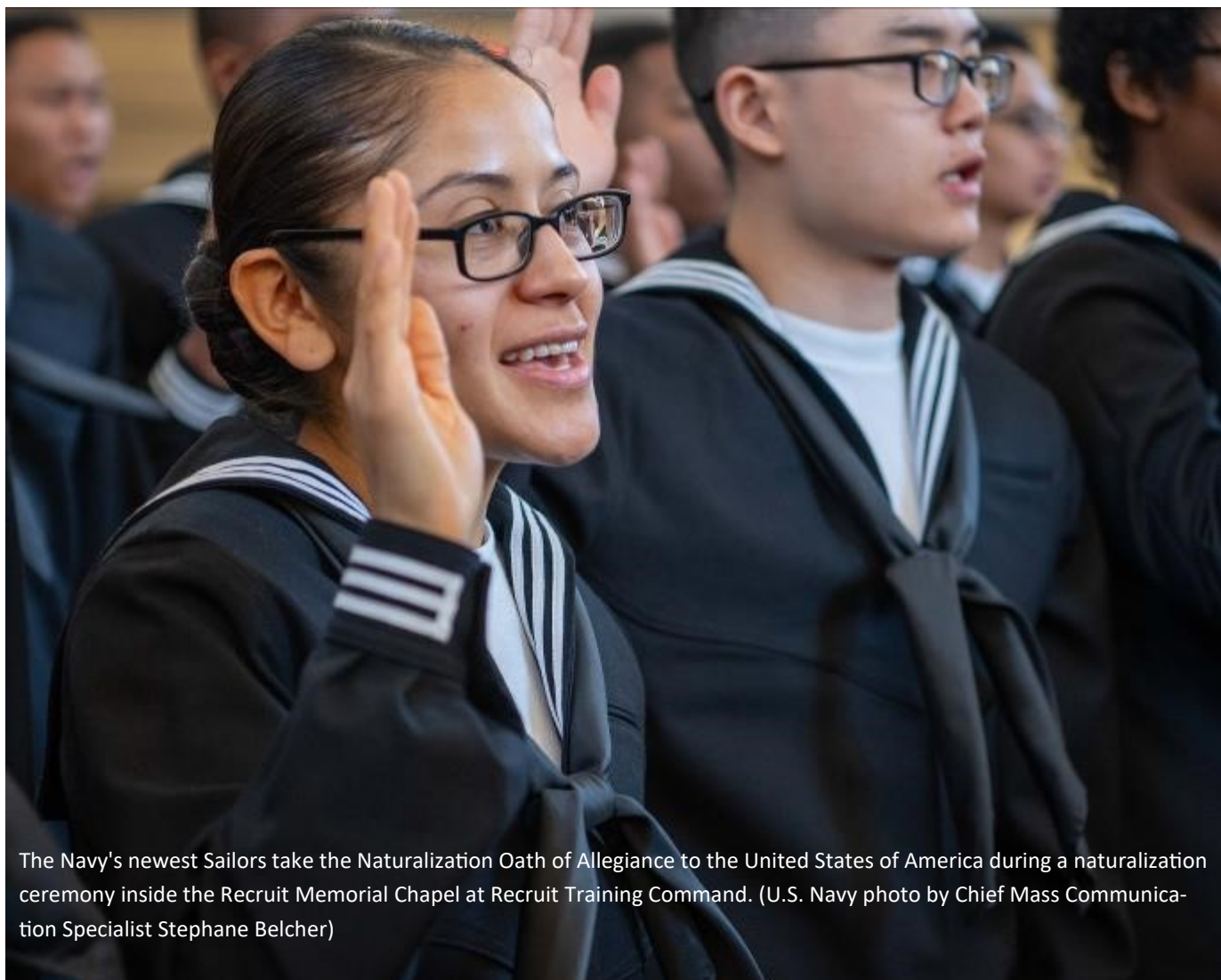
"But it is the department's ongoing moral duty to spare our outstanding people stress and struggle on the home front where we can and to show our service members and civilian employees how much they mean to us with tangible support that makes a genuine difference in their lives," he wrote "The department has, therefore, relentlessly focused on improving

quality of life, and I am very proud of what we've achieved so far."

The DCFSA, like other pretax flexible savings accounts, is a "use or lose" benefit.

According to the DOD's Office of Financial Readiness, the DCFSA plan year mirrors the tax year, Jan. 1 through Dec. 31. After the plan year ends on Dec. 31, enrollees in a DCFSA have until March 15 of the following year to incur eligible expenses. Claims for expenses incurred must be submitted by April 30, the deadline for submitting claims from the previous plan year. Any funds remaining in the account after April 30 of the following year are forfeited.

Military personnel interested in taking advantage of the DCFSA are advised to first talk with a personal financial counselor or tax professional before signing up to participate in the program.



The Navy's newest Sailors take the Naturalization Oath of Allegiance to the United States of America during a naturalization ceremony inside the Recruit Memorial Chapel at Recruit Training Command. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Stephane Belcher)