



WINGSPAN



Richardson assumes role as CNO

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Tourney golfers take to the greens

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Navy preps for 240th birthday

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NASCC community gathers in remembrance of 9/11 attacks, honor first responders

Story & photos by Eric Lobsinger
NASCC Public Affairs Office

Navy Air Station Corpus Christi community members gathered together Sept. 11 at Fire Station 1 during a National Day of Service and Remembrance ceremony.

The event honored the memory of those who lost their lives 14 years ago during the 9/11 attacks on our home soil.

During the gathering, the group recalled the sacrifices of their fellow Americans, in particular, those of first responders—the firefighters, paramedics, police officers, emergency technicians, and service members.

Lt. Ray Aranda, from NASCC Fire and Emergency Services, recited the key events of that day.

“At 8:46 a.m.,” he said, “Flight 11, with 92 people aboard and bound to Los Angeles, crashes into the North World Trade Center, between the 93rd and the 99th floors.

“At 9:03 a.m., Flight 175, with 65 people aboard and also bound to Los Angeles, strikes the South Tower between the 75th and the 85th floors.

“At 9:37 a.m., Flight 77, with 64 people aboard and also bound for Los Angeles, crashes into the western façade of the Pentagon in Washington, killing 125 military and civilian personnel inside the building.

see Remembrance on page 6



Jason Krause, assistant chief of training, Navy Air Station Corpus Christi Fire and Emergency Services, speaks with NASCC community members during a National Day of Service and Remembrance ceremony

Sept. 11 at Fire Station 1. The ceremony served to honor the memory of those who lost their lives 14 years ago during the 9/11 attacks and to recognize the services of first responders.

Vietnam vets share their stories, continue to serve today

Editor's note: This is one in a series of stories honoring our community's veterans. They have done everything asked of them in their mission to serve our country. As a tribute and to honor their legacy, we will share their stories.

By Fifi Kieschnick
Public Affairs Officer

Jose Armijo and J.J. De La Cerda both served our country in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Now they serve their brethren-in-arms at the Coastal Bend Veterans State Cemetery.

They say they are honored to still be serving veterans and their family members.

Armijo joined the U.S. Marine Corps after high school.

The youngest of seven, Armijo said growing up he heard stories about his family members who had served.

“My uncle and his two sons served during World War II. The oldest son went into the Navy,” Armijo said. “He got a Purple Heart because his foot was blown off when he was serving in the Pacific.

“His younger brother went into the Army and he was awarded the Silver Star for having captured 127 Germans single-handedly.”

Armijo said that his cousins grew up in Beeville where German immigrants had settled. Living there, they learned the German



Jose Armijo (left) and J.J. De La Cerda

see Veterans on page 8

Captain's Column



Capt. Steve Banta
Commanding Officer



We are kicking off the season of giving with the annual Coastal Bend Area Combined Federal Campaign!

The Coastal Bend CFC drive begins Oct. 5 and runs through Nov. 20. I'm pleased to announce that my co-chair this year is Col. Garner Pogue, commander, Corpus Christi Army Depot. This year's NASCC CFC representative is ADC Piero Centeno, 961-3719.

The mission of the CFC is "to promote and support philanthropy through a program that is employee focused, cost-efficient, and effective in providing all federal employees the opportunity to improve the quality of life for all."

During the campaign, our goal is 100 percent contact of all Military and Civilian

federal government employees in the South Texas Coastal Bend area. We want to provide everyone with an opportunity to financially support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

Many of the organizations that can be supported are local non-profits, so you can make a difference right here in the South Texas area!

CFC was established in 1964 by Executive Order to provide a single, unified annual campaign that provides an efficient means of soliciting contributions which could be made through payroll deduction. It's a meaningful way for us to reach out and touch the lives of



those who need our help, to help improve our community, and to help create a better world.

CFC is also designed to protect us from frequent requests for donations throughout the year. Except for the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society fund drive, and emergency disaster appeals, the CFC is the only human health and welfare fund-raising effort permitted for our military and civilian federal employees.

One of the greatest advantages of donating through CFC is that you can set up your contribution to be deducted in installments directly from your paycheck. The payroll deductions will begin the first pay period in January 2016, and continue throughout the year. You have complete control over how much you give, and to which organization.

As your designated coworkers begin to solicit for donations, they will provide you with donation slips and information about all the organizations available to support.

During last year's CFC drive, our goal of 100 percent contact resulted in raising more than \$837,000! We look forward to another successful fund drive this year.

Thanks in advance for your generous support!

Chaplain's Message



Sunday School

Lt. Cmdr. Stephen Wame
Command Chaplain

that includes: video, Bible stories, activities and crafts.

Adults and children gather at the end of service for fellowship. Also, First Sunday potlucks, donuts, fruit, pies and more are enjoyed each Sunday after Worship.

Catholic Services include gathering the children after opening rites, prayers and hymns to receive lectionary lessons and blessing from Father John. They then gather in St. Joseph Hall to participate in the "Children's Liturgy of the Word."

Prayer begins their liturgy, followed by the same readings as adult Mass, a homily approved by Father John involving interactive discussion, hymns that tie into the readings, a profession of faith, and prayers of the faithful to complete it. Once this has concluded, they return with leaders to the chapel and rejoin their families for the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

In addition to the Children's Liturgy during Mass, CCD classes are being offered – they began earlier this month. Anyone interested in registering their children may still do so through the Chaplain's Office.

These programs not only give parents a break so they can fully participate in Services, but keep children involved and excited about coming to Church.

Why not come to Church this Sunday and check out these programs for yourself? The Catholic Mass begins at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. with CCD from 10-11 a.m. Protestant Service begins at 10 a.m. All Services are about an hour in length.

Worship Services

CATHOLIC WORSHIP SERVICE

Base Catholic Chapel
Daily Mass Mon-Thurs & 1st Fri: 11:30 a.m.
Sunday Mass: 9 & 11 a.m.

PROTESTANT WORSHIP SERVICE

Base Protestant Chapel
Sunday Service: 10 a.m.

JEWISH WORSHIP SERVICE

Congregation Beth Israel, 4402 Saratoga Blvd.
For worship service times, call 857-8181

ISLAMIC WORSHIP SERVICE

Islamic Society of South Texas, 7341 McArdle Rd.
For worship service times, call 992-8550

Have you ever used the excuse for not attending church: my children just won't sit still?

I am glad to say that we have the remedy.

Education is among one of the top priorities when raising children, and religious education is essential to spiritual development. The Protestant and Catholic communities have recently begun this year's "Sunday School" programs.

Protestant Chapel Services begin Sundays at 10 a.m. After the offering, children are dismissed from services to continue learning at a level that they can enjoy. A "Veggie Tales" learning curriculum is used

Gold Star Mothers, Family Day ceremony to be held at Sherrill Park

A Gold Star Mothers and Family Day Ceremony will be held Saturday, Sept. 26, at 10 a.m., at Sherrill Park. The ceremony, hosted by the Corpus Christi Veterans Band, honors those who lost their lives in the line-of-duty.

In 1936, Congress officially designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mothers Day." It's derived from the American custom that developed during World War I of families hanging a banner or flag from the

window of their homes with a colored star to denote a family member serving in the armed forces. A blue star meant the service member was still living, but a gold star meant a family member had been killed in the line of duty.

In 2012, Gold Star Mothers Day was formally expanded to include Gold Star Families. This year, Sept. 27 has been officially proclaimed as Gold Star Mothers and Family Day.

This day is intended to honor the family

members who have experienced the pain of losing their service member in the line of duty. Mothers and family members who've lost a loved one while serving in the military can be identified by the wearing a gold-star pin.

For more information about the Navy Gold Star Program, contact Corcynthia Williams at 961-1675, or visit www.navygoldstar.com or www.facebook.com/navygoldstar.

Wingspan

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Comments, letters, or suggestions should be sent via e-mail to: nascc-pao@navy.mil.

To advertise in the *Wingspan*, contact *The Port Lavaca Wave* at afrench@plwave.com or (361) 746-4341.

Capt. Steve Banta
Commanding Officer

Fifi Kieschnick
Public Affairs Officer

Eric Lobsinger
Editor



This paper is published for people like Orlando Mendiola, a Corpus Christi native, who is a food service specialist at the Flight Deck. Mendiola has been working at Morale, Welfare and Recreation for 3.5 months.

Richardson relieves Greenert as CNO

From Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON – Adm. John Richardson relieved Adm. Jonathan Greenert as the Chief of Naval Operations in a ceremony, Sept. 18, at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md.

Richardson became the 31st CNO, the Navy's most senior officer and, as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a principle advisor to the Secretary of the Navy, Secretary of the Defense and the President.

The Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, spoke to mark the significance of the event.

"We are here today to mark the change of command in one of the most storied, most historic and iconic posts in our military or any military—the Chief of Naval Operations," said Mabus. "This job has been held by Leahy and King and Nimitz and Burke and Zumwalt—the very title implies action. It's the Chief of Naval Operations."

Mabus added, "It is fitting that this ceremony takes place here at the Naval Academy, where the Navy legacy and legend for both our outgoing and incoming CNO began."

Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, the senior Pentagon official in attendance, presided over the event. Carter spoke of the Navy's many accomplishments during Greenert's tenure.

"With Adm. Greenert standing the watch, America's Sailors and Marines have been where it matters, when it matters – rebalancing to the Asia-Pacific, where much of America's future will be written; reinforcing our long-standing NATO allies; supporting our forces ashore in the turbulent Middle East; and providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief the world over, in a way that only America can and does do," said Carter.

Before concluding, Carter's remarks turned to the future, adding "Continuing and building on all this work will be critical going forward, and Adm. John Richardson was a clear choice to carry it out."

During the ceremony, Richardson took the podium to thank Greenert and his wife Darleen.

"To have the chance to work with Adm. Greenert - to have he and Darleen as friends and mentors, is like being an immediate family member."

The new CNO briefly discussed his world view and the optimism he has for the future.

"I think that deep in our guts we sense a shift in the world, and we sense that once again it will be vitally important to protect our interests on the seas," said Richardson.

"As an American and as your CNO, I am very optimistic. Because this is exactly the environment in which Americans thrive, and we will thrive."

In his farewell speech, Greenert, after four years as CNO and 40 years of honorable service as a Naval officer, thanked those who served with him during his tenure, his friends, family and the men and women serving in the U.S. Navy.

"People are this country's asymmetric advantage," said Greenert. "We talk a lot about the Sailors, but it's also the civilians-It's also the families. It's great American willing to do the job. They are our advantage."

Greenert also praised his successor.

"Challenges remain, but we have the right team," said Greenert. "Adm. Richardson has all that it takes, but he also



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert is relieved by Adm. John Richardson at a change of office ceremony held at the U.S. Naval Academy. (U.S. Navy photo by MCS1 Nathan Laird)

has what it takes, and that is Dana [his wife], and they are ready to meet those challenges."

Richardson's full biography can be viewed here.

The Office of the Chief of Naval Operations has established the following social media accounts for Sailors and citizens to communicate with and get information from the new CNO:

- Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/CNORichardson>)
- Twitter (<http://twitter.com/CNORichardson>)
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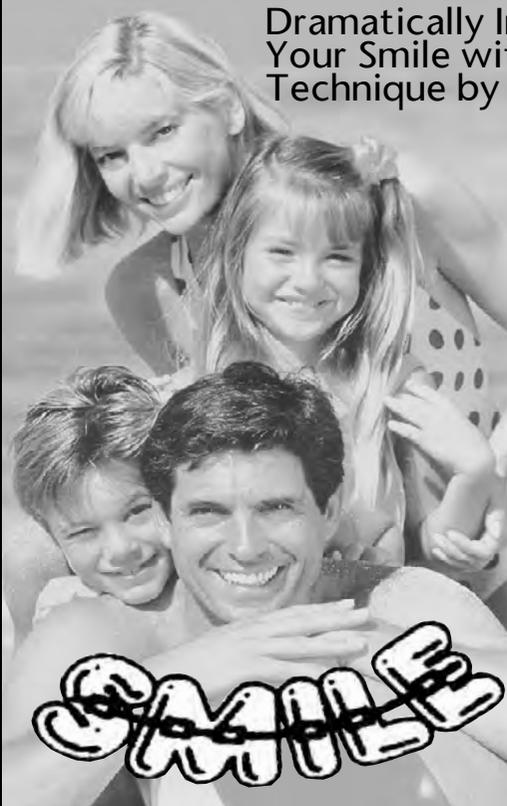
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Six new chief petty officers join the khaki ranks during a pinning ceremony Sept. 16 at Wings Auditorium. Pinned during the ceremony were MAC Samantha Carpenter, OSC Georgina Bijarro, MAC Mark Greer, AOC Gerardo Rios, AMEC Ruperto Cadena Jr., and HMC Daniel Gunn.



HMC Daniel Gunn (pictured left) salutes as he is piped to the side during the ceremony. AOC Gerardo Rios (pictured right) stands at attention as family members and friends pin on his new rank and present his new headgear. (U.S. Navy photos by Eric Lobsinger)



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NAVFAC proudly building on 173-year Navy heritage

WASHINGTON – Naval Facilities Engineering Command recently marked 173 years of providing facilities engineering expertise to support the mission readiness of Navy and Marine Corps commanders.

In 1842, Secretary of the Navy Abel P. Upshur officially established NAVFAC's predecessor, the Bureau of Naval Yards and Docks, to execute the design, construction and maintenance of Navy yards and a few other shore stations around the eastern seaboard of the United States. Eventually the Bureau and its responsibilities would grow into the global enterprise known as NAVFAC, which was officially established in May 1966.

"Our history is something I am very proud of," said NAVFAC Commander and Chief of Civil Engineers Rear Adm. Kate Gregory. "Our heritage is sustained today by an exceptional group of NAVFAC civilians, Civil Engineer Corps officers and Seabees, who are on the job around the clock, building and maintaining sustainable facilities around the world."

With 13 major commands located in the United States, Europe and Japan, NAVFAC's support is visible on practically every Navy and Marine Corps installation around the globe. Nearly every pier, runway, road, utility plant, gymnasium, barracks, child development center, or other shore facility has been constructed or acquired by NAVFAC.

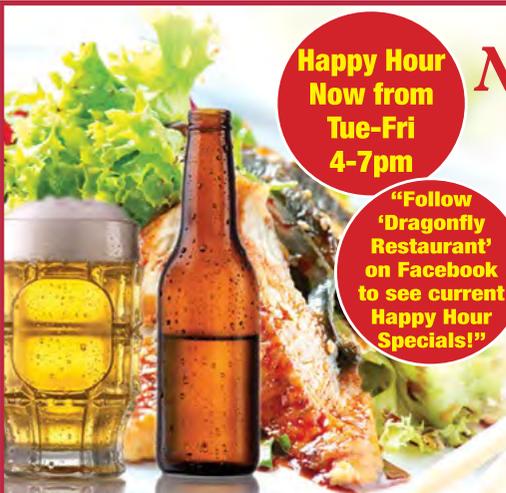
The command's worldwide team of

planning, construction, facilities services and acquisition subject matter experts executed approximately 39,000 separate contract actions in fiscal year 2014 totaling \$8.2 billion, including nearly \$2 billion in military construction support for the Navy, Marine Corps and other federal agencies.

Part of this construction effort consisted of military construction projects in support of strategic combatant command missions at forward operating areas. Other construction projects supported the introduction of new Navy/Marine Corps weapons platforms and helped sustain critical operations around the world.

Awarding small business contracts also played an important role in NAVFAC's acquisition strategy. For the third consecutive year, the command exceeded all Navy small business targets, setting record achievements in Small Business, Small Disadvantaged Business and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business through more than \$3.5 billion in contracts awarded to small businesses.

In support of the Anti-Terrorism Force Protection ashore program, NAVFAC executed various contract actions to field or sustain 900 systems, with more than 60,000 components, which increased the security posture at various locations worldwide, while enhancing the overall safety of personnel and service members.



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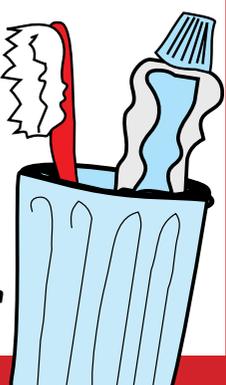
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Remembrance from page 1

“At 9:59 a.m., 55 minutes after Flight 175 hits the South Tower, it begins to collapse.

“At 10:03 a.m., Flight 92, with 44 people aboard bound for San Francisco, [passengers] mount an attempt to retake the plane. In response, hijackers deliberately crash the plane into a field in Somerset County, Pa., killing all 40 passengers and crew aboard.

“And, at 10:10 a.m., the upper floors of the damaged area of the Pentagon collapsed. The collapsed area was about 95 feet at its widest point and 50 feet at its deepest Rescue efforts were led by the military and civilian employees within the building.”

In all, said Aranda, 2,977 people lost their lives that day, which included 246 on the four planes, 2,606 at the twin towers and on the ground, and 125 at the Pentagon, which included 70 military personnel. Of those killed that day, 343 were firefighters, 23 were police officers, 37 port authority police officers, 1,402 employees at Tower One, 614 employees at Tower Two and 614 employees at Cantor Fitzgerald, a marketing investment firm. The attack killed citizens of 115 nations.

As a result of the attack that day, and since the launch of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, more than 4,000 Americans have died, with more than 3,700 killed by hostile fire. Additionally, more than 30,000 service members have been wounded in Iraq or Afghanistan.

And although the ceremony serves as a somber remembrance of that day, Aranda said he prefers to think more about positive impacts the nation’s firefighters and police officers play in the lives of their fellow Americans across the nation.

It’s also a day that should be celebrated, added Capt. Stephen Banta, commanding officer, NAS Corpus Christi.

“Everyone remembers where they were that day,” said Banta. “It’s right to reflect on this day. It is the right thing to do.”

He spoke of his experience 14 years ago when the 9/11 attacks took place.

“I was on deployment, en route to the Persian Gulf,” he said, recalling that there was a television on in the mess, which was unusual. Perhaps it was somewhat surreal for those gathered around the television as they realized their nation was under attack.

“We couldn’t believe what had occurred. Then, when the second plane hit”

Thirty days later, the air wing he deployed with was conducting attacks in Afghanistan.

Banta said his team on NAS Corpus Christi has the important job of ensuring the base is provided the critical support needed to train Navy aviators, whose mission it is to project the nation’s air power overseas in time of need.

“I really appreciate the great job everyone does here,” he concluded.

In closing, Aranda said it’s important for each individual to remember what is important.

“Live each day to the fullest,” said Aranda, “and tell the people you love how much they mean to you—for tomorrow is never promised. God bless our nation and all those who perished.”



(Above) AC1 Laura Perez (right) and ACAR Elizabeth Bequer bow their heads during a moment of prayer at a National Day of Service and Remembrance ceremony Sept. 11 at Fire Station 1. (Below, left) A memorial set up by the fire fighters and emergency personnel from Fire Station 1 honors the memories of those who lost their lives during the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks. (U.S. Navy photos by Eric Lobsinger)



A remembrance display highlights a National Day of Service and Remembrance ceremony as Navy Air Station Corpus Christi community members gathered together Sept. 11 at Fire Station 1.

Fore ...

NASCC golfers 'drive deep' in support of Navy Ball

Story & photos by Eric Lobsinger
NASCC Public Affairs Office

Aspiring golfers from throughout Naval Air Station Corpus Christi gathered together Friday to show off their skills during the NASCC Annual Navy Ball Golf Tournament at the Gulf Winds Golf course.

Although fun, esprit de corps and competition were the call for the day, the event also served to support the Navy Ball.

"Part of the proceeds go toward the Navy Ball, which is held every year at the Catalina Club," said Matt Jones, golf course manager, adding that supporting the Navy Ball makes the event even more special because it supports such a key event for the base.

Earning top bragging rights among the 30 golfers was the team of Josh Pavlischek, Shane Rosenthal, Grant Pelletier and Wes Earhart, who drove their way through the course en route to a closing score of 59. Their next closest competitors came in six shots behind.

For the golfers, it was a great opportunity for getting out and competing with their fellow community members and supporting the NASCC team.

"I just wanted to come out and support them," said retired Master Sgt. Ronald Nash, U.S. Marine Corps. "They always put on a good event, and it helps to raise a little money for the ball. It's pretty awesome that it helps the troops.

"They don't have to pay as much if we come out and do this, which is pretty good."



Ray Duncan goes for a birdie as two fellow golfers watch intently Friday during the NASCC Annual Navy Ball Golf Tournament 2015 at the Gulf Winds Golf course as members of the NASCC community gathered for a day of fun, competition and support.

For some, enjoying the outdoors and great weather was an added bonus.

"You can't ask for better weather than today—beautiful day!" exclaimed fellow golfer Rick Mata, who works at the Corpus Christi Army Depot.

"I work at CCAD and saw the flyer,

Golfer (left) drives his ball down the fairway while his teammate watches on Friday during the NASCC Annual Navy Ball Golf Tournament 2015 at the Gulf Winds Golf course. Meanwhile, Scottie Green (right) chips onto a nearby green as he and his team shoot for low scores during the tournament.



and we decided we wanted to join in to help the Navy. I think that they are doing a really good job.

"I think all of the branches in the military do good, so I'm doing my little part that I can for them."



And giving back in their own way was important for the competitors.

"I keep supporting the military to pay back the service," said retired Chief Scottie Green, U.S. Navy, who works at CCAD. They served me, so now it's time I serve them. These events are important. Money is in a crunch, so we have to help support our sailors; we have to work to support events like this.

The event was a lot of fun, added retired Maj. Walt Kleine, U.S. Air Force.

"It's great to be here," he said. "I appreciate them putting on this tournament. It's a good day...a little bit of a breeze; it's cool from the humidity...very nice."

And for others, the base, and its mission is truly worth supporting.

"I love this place," chimed in Joe Puente, who also works at CCAD. "I love this place. I love CCAD, and I love my job. It's a good donation to the Navy."

As the tournament reached its conclusion, Jones said he and his team are already looking forward to future events.

"This is the first year that Danny (Torbusch, assistant golf pro) and I are running the tournament," said Jones. "We're looking forward to making it even bigger and better next year."

NASCC will celebrate the Navy's 240th Birthday Ball at the Catalina All Hands Club on Friday, Oct. 9. Ticket prices are: E1-E4, Free, Guest is \$35; E-5-E-6, \$35; E-7 and above, \$40; Non-DoD civilians, \$45.

Those interested in purchasing tickets are invited to visit their unit representatives. Tickets will also be on sale at the Catalina Club daily from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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Veterans from page 1

language. So when his cousin was sent to scout what the enemy was doing, he found himself under the Germans' headquarters. He heard and understood their plans. When they left the building, he came up behind them, pointed his weapon at their leader and told them to surrender, that they were surrounded. Then he marched them back to his unit.

"Their dad, my uncle, said that if his sons were going to war, so was he. He was 41 when he joined," Armijo said. "After that, my older sister's husband, my brother-in-law, went into the Army during the Korean War. He was 17. On his 18th birthday, he was captured and spent 2.5 years as a POW. After his release, he continued serving until he retired from the Army. He also served during Vietnam."

Armijo's brother joined the Marine Corps in 1954. He served two tours in Vietnam and later retired.

"My brother, who is two years older than I am, joined in 1966. Both my brothers served one tour together in Vietnam—they were 10 miles apart. Then finally, I went into the Marine Corps.

"We didn't have another one (serve in the Marines) until my son joined in 1999 – he served 4.5 years in the Marine Corps and is now serving in the National Guard."

Armijo added that after he served three years in the Marine Corps, he got out with intentions of going to mortuary school. He had grown up across the street from a funeral home in downtown San Antonio. And, he even worked there part-time when he was in high school.

He grew up across the street from the morgue and funeral home. He said he started working there because jobs were hard to get and it was a way for him to earn money while he was still in high school. "Once I got involved and was helping families, it was always a good feeling, whenever I was able to help someone."

However, Armijo said he didn't care for the hours they had to work. "I wasn't even married yet, but thought with the hours I would work," he said, "if I'm going to do this, who's going to be with my family? That got me to think about what I really wanted."

He stopped working for the funeral home and began working at Kelly Air Force Base as a computer aide. Forty years later, Armijo retired from civil service. Most of his career was with Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery. "I was selected to be a cemetery representative. I made it my home for the next 33 years retiring as the administrative officer."

Armijo fell into the career field he had always wanted to work in. Then, when he



Jose Armijo

retired from federal service, he was able to be involved with the first Texas state cemetery opening in Killeen. And now, enjoys serving the Coastal Bend community.

"In my 33 years at Fort Sam," the 65-year-old said, "it was always great to serve my fellow veterans – especially with the history of my family being in the service. And now to have the opportunity to start a cemetery from the ground up (at the Coastal Bend Veterans State Cemetery), share what I have learned to make this one a successful cemetery, that's very rewarding to me."

He adds that he has a terrific staff who are professional and very dedicated. They are small in number taking care of 54 acres, including opening and closing the graves, doing burials, irrigating the acreage, and setting the headstones.

"I am happy to have been given the opportunity to serve the coastal bend community and to continue to strive to provide them with a national shrine to honor our veterans," Armijo says.

He appreciates the community support as well. High school groups, veterans groups and active-duty personnel volunteer their time helping them to ensure that the site is pristine and veterans' needs are met.

"Past, present and future are here—it's an honor to serve here."

Armijo adds that other organizations involved in accomplishing the cemetery's mission is the Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery Memorial Service Detachment and the Veterans Band of Corpus Christi, led by Ram Chavez.

"These groups of volunteers are com-

see Veterans on page 10

Bravo Zulu



Capt. Re Bynum, commanding officer of the Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center Jacksonville, conducts a reenlistment ceremony with ABF2 John McNeile, Fuels Division, Fleet Logistics Center, Jacksonville Detachment, Corpus Christi. McNeile reenlisted for six years, with orders to USS Green Bay (LPD 20). (Courtesy photos)



Capt. Re Bynum presents a commanding officer's coin to Laura Martinez, a purchasing agent with FLC Corpus Christi, in appreciation of her outstanding work.



Capt. Re Bynum presents his command coins to B.J. Evans (above), a personal property lead counselor, and to Mariana Bocanegra (below), a HAZMIN Center supervisor, both with FLC Corpus Christi, in appreciation of their outstanding work.



Capt. Re Bynum, commanding officer of the Naval Supply Systems Command Fleet Logistics Center Jacksonville, meets with the staff of Fleet Logistics Center, Jacksonville Detachment, Corpus Christ during his recent visit.



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**Upcoming
Community Events**

2015 Military Retiree Appreciation Day

Joint Base San Antonio- Fort Sam Houston will be hosting a Military Retiree Appreciation Day on Saturday, October 3, 2015 from 8 a.m. to noon. The event will be held at Blesse Auditorium, Bldg. 2841. Provided services will include BAMC Health Fair; ID Cards at Bldg. 2263, Room #100, Texas Veterans Commission, South Texas Veterans Affairs, FSH Casualty & Mortuary, FSH National Cemetery, Soldier for Life (TAP), FSH Exchange Services and MOAA - Alamo Chapter. For more information about this event, please call 210-221-9004, 210-671-2728 or 210-652-6880.

TO HAVE YOUR EVENT INCLUDED IN THIS SECTION, EMAIL AFRENCH@PLWAVE.COM. THE DEADLINE TO SUBMIT EVENTS IS 10 A.M. THE FRIDAY BEFORE PUBLICATION. UPCOMING EVENTS ARE PUBLISHED AS SPACE PERMITS THERE ARE NO GUARANTEES AS TO HOW MANY TIMES AN EVENT WILL RUN. QUESTIONS REGARDING EVENTS SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO ASHLEY AT 361-746-4341.

Veterans from page 8

prised of veterans from throughout the Coastal Bend area. They are a group of dedicated individuals, all veterans themselves. They volunteer to provide any veteran buried at the state cemetery military honors, a final salute," he stated.

"This includes all our unaccompanied veterans. In most cases these veterans would have no one attending their burial."

But the cemetery's Memorial Service Detachment ensures that every veteran is provided a dignified service worthy of their service to our country.

J.J. De La Cerda, the cemetery's assistant director, recently sent out an e-mail for volunteers to attend the burial of a veteran who had no family. He said he hoped that there would be about 20 or 30 people to witness man's interment, but about 200 people attended.

De La Cerda was overwhelmed at the community's response. A native of Pharr, Texas, in the Valley, De La Cerda is also a veteran.

"I am one of six children. The first boy, right in the middle. I have three older sisters, a younger brother and a younger sister."

He said he joined the Marine Corps right out of high school.

"I didn't want to go to college yet," De La Cerda said, "so I decided to go into the service. I researched the military and thought that the Marine Corps was the best challenge for me."

He entered the Marine Corps in 2001 before 9-11 and served four years -- deploying to Iraq twice, first during the 2003 invasion of Iraq and then in 2004 during Operation Phantom Fury."

He left the Marine Corps when they were "flagging" personnel for recruiting duty.

"I didn't want to recruit. I wanted to be a drill instructor," De La Cerda said. "So I decided it was time to get out."

He returned home to Pharr, went to school at the University of Texas-Pan Am.

"I was doing work study at the veteran's cemetery in Mission (Texas) when a position opened up for the office manager. I decided to pursue that."

That was in 2007.

De La Cerda moved to Corpus Christi when the Coastal Bend Veterans State Cemetery opened in 2011.

De La Cerda says he gained a lot serving in the Marine Corps. "I gained a brotherhood. I didn't actually realize it until I got out, how much you are united with your fellow Marines, fellow service members.

"Once you get out, you miss it," he added. "Life changes. In the service, you deploy and you don't think about bills or the stress of civilian life. Later you miss it—the things we saw, the things we did and people we met."



J.J. De La Cerda

What does the 32-year-old tell people about the military?

"I tell them it's going to be hard. An adjustment from civilian life to the military. But if they stick with it, honestly it's worth it."

He added that he grew up as a migrant worker.

"We would travel to northern states and then to a southern one, like New Mexico. Coming from nothing and then having the experience in the Marine Corps has gotten me where I am now," De La Cerda said. "There's no way I would be where I am now without the military. There's no way!"

He loves being a part of the state cemetery. He says he can see the whole picture and the patriotism that comes with serving our country.

"The type of service we provide veterans and families has to be top notch. It has to be second to none. We take care of them."

De La Cerda says he enjoys working with Armijo. "When we put our heads together, we can improve the cemetery. It's great!

We have a lot of respect for the veterans and their families. We thank them for their service."

They both enjoy lightening the burdens of others, knowing they have made a difference serving veterans and their family members.

"We pride ourselves in what we do," De La Cerda said.

"And I appreciate the support of the community," Armijo added. "Allowing us to make a difference."

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Naval Air Station Corpus Christi gears up for Navy Ball

From NASCC Public Affairs

A resolution of the Continental Congress marked the establishment of what is now the U.S. Navy on Oct. 13, 1775. And, today we celebrate 240 years of tradition, honor, courage and commitment.

Naval Air Station Corpus Christi will celebrate with a birthday ball on Oct. 9., at the Catalina All Hands Club.

Doors will open at 6 p.m. and a formal program will begin at 7 p.m. Dinner will be served at 8 p.m., followed by dancing from 9 p.m. to midnight.

Tickets range from free for E-4 and below personnel, to \$45 for non-DoD civilians.

E-5 and E-6 ticket prices are \$35 per person, and \$40 for E-7 and above personnel.

Dinner will include chicken or beef entrée, with salad, rolls green beans, and rice pilaf or mashed potatoes.

Uniform is dinner dress white, or service dress white, with large medals for E-7 and above. E-6 personnel and below uniform is dress white with ribbons or large medals. Civilian dress is cocktail or formal evening attire.

Tickets may be purchased daily at the



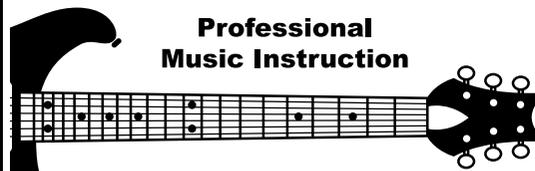
Catalina Club from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., until Oct. 6.

Child care will be available at the Child Development Center for \$4 per child per hour. For information, call the CDC at 961-1165 or 961-1167. Last day to register for child care is Oct. 2.

For more information about the Navy Ball, contact AOC Jasmin Shackelford at 961-1442.

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- FSH Exchange Services
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Hosting "Retiree Appreciation Day Flea Market" on
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HQ.**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THIS EVENT, PLEASE CALL 221-9004, 671-2728 OR 652-6880.**