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ARMED FORCES DISPATCH

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SIXTY-SIXTH YEAR NO. 20
NOVEMBER 8, 2026



SOUTHWESTERN JAM **Navy Musician 3rd Class David Ott, guitar instrumentalist assigned to Navy Band Southwest (NBSW), performs with NBSW's Popular Music Group, the Destroyers, at Southwestern College Performing Arts Center during Fleet Week San Diego 2026 in Chula Vista, Nov. 1, 2026. U.S. Navy photo by MCSN Vanessa Astorga Granado**

FORTRESS AMERICA TO CHANGE THE WAY MILITARY BASES OPERATE

by Scott Sutherland
staff writer

In his 'State of the Force' address on Sept. 30, Secretary of War Pete Hegseth announced a series of DOW initiatives, including FORTRESS AMERICA.

Hegseth said the Fortress America strategy calls for "every American military installation to eventually run under its own power, hardening every installation on American soil against intrusion and bringing critical supply chains home."

"No matter the circumstance, this department will have the power, the equipment and the supplies you need to take the fight to the enemy.?… The Department of War will be the insurance policy for the entire nation," said Hegseth.

The Pentagon's plans are for bases to operate for at least 90 days without outside support as it prepares for the possibility of a major war that could cripple power grids, disrupt supply chains and threaten critical infrastructure on American soil.



Secretary of War Pete Hegseth at the State of the Force address Sept. 30. DOW photo by Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Eric Brann

"We don't want to rely on standard civilian municipal infrastructure to run our national defense. We just simply can't. It's an intolerable risk," Pentagon chief spokesperson Sean Parnell told *FOX News* recently.

Across Navy Region Southwest, which is comprised of naval shore installations in California, Arizona, and Nevada, its Force Protection Program could align with FORTRESS. According to NRSW's mission statement, they provide law enforcement, physical security and antiterrorism to protect and defend assets, personnel and information in support of the fleet and family.

Similar to FORTRESS AMERICA is the Navy's plan to test powering Naval Station Norfolk using energy exported from a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, according to the American Nuclear Society.

Key details of the power-exporting test includes using aircraft carrier USS *Gerald R. Ford*, equipped with two A1B nuclear reactors. As announced by Secretary of the Navy Hung Cao, the initial ship-to-shore power export test is scheduled to take place later in 2026. The pilot program aims to prove that nuclear carriers can act as mobile or emergency power stations to supply shore installations, support mission assurance, and maintain energy resilience if a base's primary grid or power source is compromised.

see **FORTRESS, page 2**

November military observances and events

Military Family Month: Honors the sacrifices, support, and dedication of U.S. military families.

Warrior Care Month: Focuses on the physical and mental care, recovery, and transition of wounded, ill, and injured service members.

Fleet Week San Diego 2026: November 1-15. Fleet Week San Diego is brings together military and civilian communities and is FREE TO THE PUBLIC - and it's happening across San Diego! Join us for ship tours, live entertainment, family-friendly activities, and interactive experiences at multiple locations citywide. From ship tours and athletic competitions to STEM education programs and family activities, each event celebrates the dedication and service of our Armed Forces while creating lasting memories and strengthening the bond between our military and the community we proudly serve. fleetweeksandiego.org



Marine Corps Birthday: Tuesday, November 10, 2026. Celebrates the founding of the United States Marine Corps in 1775. **Veterans Day:** Wednesday, November 11, 2026. A federal holiday honoring all American military veterans who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

San Diego Veterans Day Parade: The largest Veterans Day parade on the West Coast returns on Wednesday, November 11, 2026, from 10-11:30am. Organized by the USS Midway Museum and sponsored by Verizon, the procession marches along Harbor Drive right in front of the County Administration Building. The 2026 parade features marching bands, historic military units, and vintage vehicles, with a special tribute commemorating the 35th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm.



VANC Community Veterans Day Oceanside: The Veterans Association of North County (VANC) in Oceanside hosts its annual community Veterans Day ceremony on Wednesday, November 11, 2026, from 10-11:30am. Every year this is a special time to show gratitude to those who served our country. Don't miss the opportunity to hear a powerful message this Veterans Day from Keynote Speaker CWO3 Chip Dykes (Ret.), United States Marine Corps, coupled with a performance from Singer Eve Nasby, and thoughtful words from Chaplain Edwin Handley LT USN, Lpd25. Lunch will immediately follow the ceremony. Please RSVP to ensure we have a seat for you. www.vanc.me/veterans-day

Escondido VetFest & Parade: Hosted by the American Legion Post 149, this community-focused North County tradition takes place in downtown Escondido. The celebration kicks off with a patriotic parade down Grand Avenue from 9:30-11am, featuring local marching bands and military displays. The route culminates at the American Legion Hall with a public Backyard BBQ and formal ceremony lasting until 4pm. 230 E Park Ave, Escondido, 92025.(760) 745-1159.

Veterans Day Lunch Coronado VFW Post 2422: Hosting its traditional Veterans Day Lunch from 11am-2pm (or until supplies run out) on Wednesday, November 11, 2026. 557 Orange Ave, Coronado. (619) 435-6917.

Veterans Day at Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial: ***Saturday, November 7***, 2026 at 11am. Two and a half centuries of valor bounded by an allegiance to freedom. Free and open to the

See November military observances page 6

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FLEET WEEK SCHEDULE
PAGE 2

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Engineers at NSWC Corona design 3D-printable EOD safety clip

by Staff Sgt. Joaquin Duran
NSWC Corona Division

EDITOR'S NOTE: Read the full story at https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/4637694/.

The Close Combat Engineering Team within Naval Surface Warfare Center Corona Division developed an advanced manufactured, 3D-printed safety device designed to save the lives of service members responsible for explosive ordnance disposal.

Engineering Technician Samuel Larter and Engineer Darren Mansour created the Submunition Clip, a low cost, printable safety device that will prevent accidental detonations during EOD procedures. The innovation earned the team a Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) Excellence in Safety Award for fiscal year 2025. The safety clip was recently filed for a provisional patent with the U.S.Patent and Trademark Office. This opens up opportunities to work freely with industry and license production to companies.

By mitigating the extreme operational risks associated with unexploded ordnance, the submunition clip directly protects the joint force's most critical asset: the warfighter. The submunition clip works by mechanically locking the submunition's arming components in place, which prevents detonation. It provides a modernized solution to the time-consuming legacy procedure, which immobilizes the firing pin with epoxy or plaster, requires large amounts of expensive materials, and does not guarantee complete neutralization.

"I had the idea about something that could clip on the munition and keep it from moving," Larter said. "Then we had a group of new engineers come in a couple of years ago, and I explained it to Darren Mansour. Darren said, 'I could do that,' and he did."

FORTRESS
continued from page 1

NAS North Island is the major hub for three homeported carriers - USS *Carl Vinson,* USS *Theodore Roosevelt* and USS *Ronald Reagan* - all capable of making self-sufficient, ship-to-shore capabilities. All three have two A4W nuclear reactors.

The Pentagon is preparing U.S. military bases to keep operating for at least 90 days without outside support as it prepares for the possibility of a major war that could cripple power grids, disrupt supply chains and threaten critical infrastructure on American soil.

The new requirement is part of FORTRESS, a broader military initiative aimed at ensuring American forces can continue fighting even if the civilian systems they depend on are disrupted, according to documents

"We don't want to rely on standard civilian municipal infrastructure to run our national defense. We just simply can't. It's an intolerable risk," Pentagon chief spokesperson Sean Parnell told *FOX News.*

With the current turmoil in the Middle East, it's good to have a plan for the American homeland.

EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Top 5
*Record deployment for destroyer USS *Spruance* casts doubt over Navy maintenance
*Senior U.S. general fired, accused of leaking classified information
*Pentagon treating military base freezer malfunctions as suspected cyberattack, officials say
*Air Force again requires flu vaccine for select personnel

Army
*Army pilots are trying virtual reality to stay more alert in flight

Navy
*Navy wants more visible role for drone boats as one deploys for the first time
*Long deployments to be Navy standard for next couple years, MCPON, CNO say

Air Force
*Air Force rolls out free Wi-Fi in dormitories

Defense Industry
*New tactical comms system for U.S. ground troops aims to break network silos
*At pivotal summit, Canadian-European security cooperation is a central focus
*Destinus' monthly output tops Europe's pre-war annual cruise missile production
*In Arctic, U.S. Army researchers test camo that could adapt to changing landscapes

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Visit this page of our website to watch fun videos about our different teams and participants:
https://www.midway.org/contact/volunteer-opportunities/





Man On The Street

What's a red flag for you?



"Double parking. 'Hey, how'd you get your license?'"
Katherine Dunn
Guam

"When someone's out of character."
Rodolfo Gallardo
Harlingen, Texas





"Disrespecting your parents. I immediately correct my children."
Archibald Manuel
Quezon, The Philippines

"Lack of patience and negativity."
Alma Ramirez
San Diego





"A lack of communication."
Carlos Arriago
San Diego

Defending freedom, from the flight deck to the ballot box

by War.gov

Sailors aboard aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* voted during a voting rodeo event held in the ship's library last month.

Navy Chaplain (Lt.) Steven Matkins, the U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's voting assistance officer, organized the event for the Sailors currently deployed to the 5th Fleet AOR.



A Sailor aboard aircraft carrier *George Washington* casts his ballot during a voting rodeo while deployed on Oct. 12. U.S. Navy photo

"We have Sailors from all backgrounds working as a team, and oftentimes, we're so far away from home, we think things don't affect us," Matkins said. "When you give people the opportunity to vote, you see how much we really care about things back home."

Capt. Nicholas DeLeo, the ship's commanderr, said casting a ballot means participating in something far greater than self.

"The opportunity to vote while deployed … is profound. It allows our Sailors to directly exercise the very rights and freedoms they have sworn to defend," he said. "No matter how far from home, every Sailor can still participate in our nation's elections — a powerful reminder that those who safeguard our republic are never excluded from it."

Regardless of location or mission demands, DeLeo said the Sailors recognize voting as a fundamental civic duty that directly shapes our nation's future, their forward-deployed operations and their own careers.

Seaman Gavin Naab, a ship's information systems technician, voted for the first time during the election rodeo. He said he was genuinely excited to participate in the democratic process.

"Your ballot can directly affect the policies enacted both at home and abroad, which has the power to alter the trajectory of your career, international affairs and history as a whole," Naab said.

U.S., Colombia launch Exercise Southern Vanguard

DORAL, Fla. - The 41st iteration of Southern Vanguard 2027 is began in Colombia on Nov. 2. The exercise, which is scheduled to run until mid-November, will bring together approximately 800 participants, including about 350 U.S. military personnel and over 400 soldiers from the Colombian Army. Pre-exercise activities will begin Oct. 30 with an aeromedical evacuation scenario from Colombia's Tolemaida military base to its Cavalry School in Bogotá. The objective if this initial scenario is to test the immediate care and first aid skills employed by medical-specialty Soldiers from both armies while treating personnel with simulated, mine-related injuries.

Colorado NG rescues more than 40 amid flooding

CENTENNIAL, Colo. - After being activated for flooding in southwest Colorado, the Colorado National Guard helped save 40 people, 16 dogs and many cats trapped by floodwaters that washed out roads. After Gov. Jared Polis verbally declared a disaster emergency, more than 100 Colorado National Guard members mobilized to support Archuleta County authorities, providing aviation and ground search-and-rescue assistance.Colorado National Guard members also helped deliver supplies to support civilian efforts in southwest Archuleta County and conducted "knock and talks" and route reconnaissance to ensure people are safe.

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Gillaspie relieves Kloppel as commander of Maritime Expeditionary Security Group One

Lt. Erin Wiley, MESG-1

IMPERIAL BEACH – Maritime Expeditionary Security Group (MESG) 1 welcomed its newest commander during a change-of-command ceremony on the Outlying Landing Field Oct. 29 here.

Capt. Mark Gillaspie relieved Capt. Jedidiah Kloppel in front of family, friends and MESG-1 Sailors at the ceremony.

Kloppel took command in May 2025. During his tenure as commander, he strengthened MESG-1's ability to generate, train, deploy, and sustain ready maritime expeditionary security forces in support of fleet and combatant commander requirements worldwide in several areas of responsibility. His leadership advanced Navy Reserve integration, improved readiness and maintenance performance, enhanced logistics and fiscal stewardship, expanded intelligence and information-warfare capabilities, and reinforced medical readiness and Sailor support programs. He also guided key force-design initiatives, including the establishment and development of new training and Reserve capabilities, positioning MESG-1 for continued operational success.

Kloppel, from Spearfish, S.D., noted the importance of a strong team dedicated to mission success during his ceremony remarks.

"Serving alongside the Sailors and Civilians of MESG-1 has been a profound privilege and distinct honor," said Kloppel. "I am beyond proud of the professionalism, adaptability, and commitment this team has demonstrated in meeting mission requirements around the world."

Kloppel will continue to serve as chief of staff for Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 3 in San Diego.

Gillaspie, from Dakota City, Neb., assumes command after a successful tour as deputy commander of MESG-1. He thanked Kloppel for his leadership and anticipated his ongoing mission-focused vision for the command.

"I owe many thanks to Capt. Kloppel, as his vision and drive are the main reasons MESG-1 is where it is today," said Capt. Gillaspie. "Moving forward, our focus won't change: we will focus on generating ready forces, taking care of our sailors, and delivering our capabilities wherever the fleet needs us."



Capt. Mark Gillaspie, left, relieves Capt. Jedediah Kloppel as commander of Maritime Expeditionary Security Group One at Naval Outlying Landing Field, Imperial Beach, Oct. 29. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Cyrus Roson

The ceremony was presided over by Rear Adm. Reginald Hendrix, deputy commander, Naval Expeditionary Forces.

"To the proud men and women of Maritime Expeditionary Security Group 1 - the Sailors and civilians who form the tip of the spear for our expeditionary forces - I extend my deepest gratitude," said Hendrix.

"The work you do is difficult, it is demanding, and it is absolutely essential to protecting the Fleet and projecting our nation's strength. We appreciate your steadfast dedication, your professionalism, and your sacrifice."

The Maritime Expeditionary Security Force is a core Navy capability which reinforces blue water lethality by protecting port and harbor infrastructure, securing high value assets, and dominating in the littorals with maritime security operations.





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Coast Guard coordinates rescue of overdue mariner, dog 460 miles off San Diego



Crew members aboard merchant vessel Grand Orion rescue a man and his dog from a sailboat approximately 460 miles off San Diego Oct. 28. U.S. Coast Guard courtesy photo

from Coast Guard SW District

SAN DIEGO - The Coast Guard coordinated the rescue of an overdue 86-year-old man and his dog Oct. 28 following a multi-day search approximately 460 miles off San Diego.

Coast Guard Pacific Area watchstanders received a report on Oct. 24 of an overdue mariner aboard the sailing vessel Willow Wind, while en route from Astoria, Ore., to Pago Pago, American Samoa. The mariner had not been heard from since Aug. 20.

Coast Guard Rescue Coordination Center Alameda received an alert from an emergency position-indicating radio beacon registered to Willow Wind. Watchstanders coordinated the launch of a Coast Guard Air Station Sacramento C-27 Spartan aircrew and diverted an HC-130 Hercules aircrew and the Coast Guard Cutter *Robert Ward*, and requested assistance from nearby vessels.

The Spartan aircrew located the Willow Wind on Oct. 27. The Grand Orion crew rescued the mariner and his dog from the sailboat, which had damaged sails and was left adrift. "We are grateful to the merchant mariners and Coast Guard crews whose coordinated efforts brought this search to a successful conclusion," said Coast Guard Cmdr. Jason Nguyen, Southwest District command center chief.

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Wed, Nov 11, 2026
noon – 4pm

More than a car and motorcycle show, this exciting community event brings together classic cars, custom bikes, live music, local vendors, veterans, and supporters for an afternoon of celebration and purpose. Attendees will enjoy impressive vehicles, great entertainment, and the opportunity to learn how U.S.VETS is helping veterans overcome homelessness and build stable, successful futures. Join us as we honor those who served, celebrate our community, and drive support for veterans in need.

March Air Reserve Base
Commissary
15150 6th Street
Riverside, CA 92518

For more information contact Penelope Sachs, Development and Communications Manager, U.S.VETS Inland Empire. 909-361-4832. psachs@usvets.org

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IKEA discount for military

In honor of National Veterans and Military Families Month, this November 1-30, IKEA San Diego, South Bay, and Escondido are offering a special promotion dedicated to military personnel and their families. IKEA Family military members, veterans and their spouses will receive an exclusive 15% discount on in-store purchases by scanning their IKEA Family member card and showing proof military or veteran ID, or proof of military member/veteran status.

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AutumnFest at Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

On Saturday, November 7, celebrate AutumnFest at the top of the Palm Springs Aerial Tramway. This annual event takes place from 11am-3pm at Pines Café and features a three-course German meal accompanied by live music from polka band "Bavarian Stew." Tickets are $46 for adults and $32.50 for children (ages 3-10). Admission includes the three-course meal and tram fare. Info at: www.pstramway.com/autumnfest-2026

Visit our military museums

The Veterans Museum at Balboa Park. The Veterans Museum and Memorial Center is a museum located in historic Balboa Park of San Diego, California. Founded in 1989, it is dedicated to create, maintain, and operate an institution to honor and perpetuate the memories of all men and women who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. http://www.veteranmuseum.org/
Active duty military, Museum Member, Children under 12: Free
Veterans/Seniors: $4 • Adults: $5 • Student ID: $2
2115 Park Blvd, San Diego (Balboa Park) • (619) 239-2300
Hours: Call for current hours (619) 239-2300

MCRD Command Museum & Historical Society. Museum focusing on Marine Corps history from the 19th century to today is also a research library. https://www.mcrdmuseum.org/
Free admission • The Pass and ID Center may issue day passes to visitors who wish to visit the museum and do not posses military ID-call (619) 524-4200 for information on base access.
1600 Hochmuth Ave, San Diego, 92140 • (619) 524-4426.
Hours: Mon 8am-3pm, Tue-Fri 8-4; Family day 8-5:45; Sat 10:30-5, • Closed Sunday

USS Midway Museum. The USS Midway Museum is a maritime museum located in downtown San Diego at Navy Pier. The museum consists of the aircraft carrier Midway. The ship houses an extensive collection of aircraft, many of which were built in So Cal.
FREE for children 3 & under and Active Duty military including reservists (w/valid ID). Adult $39 (ages 13+). Youth $26 (ages 4-12). Veterans (w/ID) $26*Must show ID at entrance. Open daily 10-5, last admission 4pm. https://www.midway.org/

The Ranch House Complex at Camp Pendleton. Listed as the Santa Margarita Ranch House Nat'l Historic Site and as a California State Historical Landmark. Docent-led tours are available by appointment; masks required. Please email your request to: MCBCAMPEN_history@usmc.mil or phone (760)725-5758
The Camp Pendleton Historical Society is a 501(c)3 organization in support of the base's History and Museum's programs. Go to: www.camppendletonhistoricalsociety.org/ for information. Hours: Open Mondays 10am-2pm

THANKS FOR READING THE DISPATCH!

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

I'm still working; Why didn't my benefit amount increase

Dear Rusty: I have been working somewhat consistently since commencing my Social Security benefit income. I've been collecting since my full benefit age of 66, approximately. I'm now 81, and customarily, in about October of each calendar year, Social Security notifies me of additional benefits from my additional work. Not this year.

I earned some $18,000-$19,000 in 2025. SS advised I did not meet some 35-year formula. I thought that formula just applied to the original benefit calculation. Otherwise, one seems cheated given the SS taxes paid on income received after applying for benefits without any consideration for that income. Please advise me.

Signed: Feeling Cheated

Dear Feeling Cheated: FYI, your Social Security benefit is always based on the highest 35 years of your lifetime earnings (with your early years' earnings automatically adjusted for inflation). And that formula continues even after you start receiving benefits. Social Security will look at your earnings each year to see if your recent earnings are among your highest. If so, they will automatically recalculate your benefit to give you a higher amount (and pay you retroactively to the first of that year). Apparently, in past years, your more recent earnings were among the highest over your lifetime, which is why you received those notifications in the fall of each previous year saying your benefit was adjusted based upon recent earnings. That you didn't get a similar notification this year, means that your earnings in 2024 were not among the highest over your lifetime, so no adjustment to your monthly benefit was appropriate.

Now, to clarify, those annual notices you received in the past always referred to the preceding year – that is, if you received a notice in October 2024 of a higher SS benefit, that was a result of your 2023 earnings. If you got no such notice in October of 2025, that means that your 2024 income was not among the highest over your lifetime. And your 2025 earnings of $18,000 - $19,000 will likely not be among your lifetime highest either, so you probably won't get a notice next year either.

It's important to understand that your contributions to Social Security (i.e., the SS payroll taxes you pay while working) are not put into a separate account for you - rather, they are used to help pay benefits to all beneficiaries. In other words, just contributing to SS with payroll tax from your work earnings doesn't necessarily mean you get a higher benefit. Your SS benefit is always based upon the 35 years in which you earned the most, including recent years if you continue to work. So, you weren't "cheated" – that is simply how the program works - your SS benefit is always based on your highest 35 years of work earnings, including recent years, with earnings from the early years adjusted for inflation..

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-dvisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

November observances & events

Continued from page 1

public. 250 years ago, a promise was made to a nation. Not to a king. Not to a crown. A promise to a cause: a Constitution, a people, an idea worth protecting. For two and a half centuries, ordinary men and women have kept that promise. This Veterans Day, we honor them all.

Battleship Iowa Veterans Day Bells of Peace: November 11, 11-11:30am. On Veterans Day, Battleship IOWA will join the Bells of Peace observance with 21 tolls honoring America's veterans and commemorating the end of World War I. Home of the National Museum of the Surface Navy. 250 S. Harbor Blvd., Los Angeles (San Pedro), CA 90731. 877-446-9261. Museum Hours: Thurs-Mon: 10am- 5pm. pacificbattleship.com

National Day of the Deployed: October 26, 2026 – Honors active-duty service members currently deployed outside the United States and acknowledges the sacrifices of their families at home.

Navy Day, observed October 27, started in 1922 as a broader public recognition of naval service and was tied to Theodore Roosevelt's birthday

National Memorial & "Running Home" Monument Unveiling Tuesday, October 27, 2026 at noon at Heritage Park, Dana Point, CA. Hosted by the Dana Point 5th Marine Regiment, this event features the national "Remembering Our Fallen" memorial alongside the official premiere unveiling of the new "Running Home" monument.

Military Flight Training USA Summit October 27–28, 2026 in San Antonio, Texas.Focus: Simulation, live-virtual-constructive environments, and pilot readiness. https://www.idga.org/

Check the internet & Facebook for your local VFW or American Legion Post calendars as many of them offer Veterans Day events & specials.

Veterans Crisis Line
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1

Because of your service, we are free.

For 250 years, Americans like you
have stepped up to defend our country,
protecting the promise of America.

This Veterans Day,
USAA honors all who served.

USAA®

usaa.com/veteransday



UMGC HONORS OUR VETERANS FOR THEIR SERVICE

"I came from a family of service. My father was infantry in Vietnam. My grandfather was a pilot in World War II. I grew up in a reality where that was a life path, and I am grateful for my dad and my mom. They never made it feel like it was only for the boys. So, a month after I graduated high school, I enlisted. I would not be where I am in life, without the Army and without my education."

Caitlin B.
BS, Legal Studies
U.S. Army Veteran

This Veterans Day, we at University of Maryland Global Campus (UMGC) wish to express our gratitude to our student veterans and all those who have worn the uniforms of the U.S. military. It is your hard work and dedication that have kept America free and safe. As you continue to exemplify the spirit of service in civilian life, UMGC is honored to serve your education needs.

LEARN MORE AT UMGC.EDU

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AT YOUR SERVICE SINCE 1947

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