

N9 Director's Corner – December 2024 – Final

N9 Director's Corner... I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends and took the time to reflect on the many things you are grateful for. I want to take a moment to reflect on what I am truly thankful. Our mission, our Sailors and their families, and most importantly, each and every one of you. Your dedication, creativity and passion are the heart of what makes our programs so impactful. It is because of you that our Quality of Life Programs continue to evolve, thrive, and provide the support our Navy families deserve.

This season of thankfulness is an opportunity to celebrate our collective achievements and the incredible team behind them. Across every region, installation and program, you put your boots on the ground and led with heart, determination and a shared commitment to excellence. The results speak for themselves. Together, we have reduced workforce attrition, increased professional satisfaction and surpassed our financial goals, all while keeping the focus on building and supporting strong teams.

As I reflect on these accomplishments, I am reminded of a response shared during a recent conversation with one of our team members – the idea that leadership is about empowering people. When we trust our teams, invest in their growth, and align our work with a shared vision, success naturally follows. It is a philosophy I see reflected in every program, every decision and every effort to make our Navy family stronger than ever.

This month is particularly significant as it can be a challenging time for our Sailors and their loved ones. Deployments and separation from family are especially hard during the holidays, and your efforts to bring joy and connection to their lives are nothing short of extraordinary.

Consider just a few examples of the events that highlight your dedication:

- Ballet Hawaii's Angel Program: Offering 700 tickets to EFMP and deployed families for a unique experience of the Nutcracker set in the 1858 Kingdom of Hawaii.
- Operation Santa: An overnight encampment aboard the museum ship USS Missouri (BB-63), complete with crafts, games, meals, and breakfast with Santa for families of deployed Sailors.
- Navy Gold Star Program Holiday Excursions: Events such as the overnight aboard the USS Midway Museum or the Honor and Remember Tree Event in Wyoming, which bring light to families of our fallen heroes.
- Fisher House and Wounded Warrior Initiatives: Providing special meals, events and opportunities for service members and their families to celebrate the season together.

Each of these programs and so much more are a testament to your creativity, collaboration and care. They show the world how our Navy family comes together to ensure that no one feels alone during the holiday season. As you plan and participate in these events, remember that your work makes an incredible difference. Whether it is organizing a remembrance ceremony, preparing meals, setting the stage for tree lightings, or simply lending a listening ear, you are creating memories and traditions that bring comfort and joy to those who need it most.

Let me close by saying how truly thankful I am to serve alongside such a remarkable team. You inspire me daily with your dedication, resilience and innovation. This season, let us continue to be there for our Sailors, their families, and each other. From my family to yours, happy holidays, and thank you for all that you do.

Leslie Gould, CNIC N9