

The Meat & Potatoes of Life
Columnist Lisa Smith Molinari looks at life from military family perspective. This week ... Christmas in a box. **See page 7**

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SIXTIETH YEAR NO. 35
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2020



NMCS D RECEIVES FIRST SHIPMENT OF VACCINE

by Petty Officer 3rd Class
Jacob L. Greenberg

Naval Medical Center San Diego received its first shipment of coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines Dec. 14, 2020. The vaccines are from the American pharmaceutical corporation Pfizer and are administered in a two-dose series.

"I'm very excited and proud that NMCS D is among the first [COVID-19] vaccine sites in the world," said Navy Cmdr. Jason Rice, NMCS D's director of public health and public health emergency officer. "I'm grateful that we have the opportunity to participate in such a historic public health event that will have a profound impact on the health of our staff and the Department of Defense family we serve."

The DOD COVID-19 vaccine distribution and administration plan will implement a phased, standardized and coordinated strategy for prioritizing, distrib-

uting and administering COVID-19 vaccines to protect our people, maintain readiness and support the national COVID-19 response. The Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention vaccine allocation data have informed the deliberate development of the DOD's feasible and scalable distribution and administration plan.

"For several weeks, our public health and material management teams have been working very hard to prepare for this event to ensure that we would be able to safely and effectively receive, store, handle and administer the vaccine," Rice said. "It has certainly been a challenge, given the unique requirements of this particular vaccine and the compressed timeline for its rollout. Our team has done an outstanding job in preparing to execute this mission, and we're excited to be a part of this critical, public health response effort."



First doses of COVID-19 vaccine arrive at Naval Medical Center San Diego. 14. Photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Vernishi R. Vaughn-Lucas

NMCS D is coordinating with regional installation leadership to vaccinate volunteering first responders, such as frontline health care workers, emergency management service personnel and security forces.

see **Vaccine**, page 6

ARAMADA SENT TO SOMALIA TO RELOCATE TROOPS AND GEAR

by John Vandiver,
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany - A U.S. aircraft carrier group and a Marine expeditionary unit have joined a naval seabase off the coast of Somalia in a display of force as the military moves forward with efforts to remove 700 troops from the country.

The *Makin Island* Amphibious Ready Group and thousands of embarked Marines and Sailors from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Group add "significant combat capability" to help protect U.S. forces as they transit in the region, Air Force Maj. Gen. Dagvin Anderson said in a statement Dec. 22.

Anderson commands the newly formed Joint Task Force - Quartz, which was set up by U.S. Africa Command to over-

see the repositioning of U.S. forces in eastern Africa. And as of Monday, aircraft carrier USS *Nimitz* and its escorts also were operating off the coast of Somalia, *USNI News* reported, citing defense officials.

The U.S. military is in the process of pulling most of its 700 troops in Somalia following a Defense Department directive. While AFRICOM has declined to detail where forces will be relocated, it has said most troops will head to locations in eastern Africa.

Neighboring Djibouti, home to the military's main hub in Africa, and Kenya where there is a smaller base, are possible destinations.

AFRICOM says cross-border operation in Somalia, targeting the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab

group, will continue as needed.

"To be clear, the U.S. isn't withdrawing or disengaging from East Africa," AFRICOM's Gen. Stephen Townsend said in a statement Saturday. "We remain committed to helping our African partners build a more secure future. We also remain capable of striking Al-Shabaab at the time and place of our choosing - they should not test us."

Makin Island, which includes an array of support ships, joins the Navy's USS *Hershel "Woody" Williams* off the coast of Somalia. The *Woody*, based out of Souda Bay, Greece, arrived last week.

Makin Island and 15th MEU bring nearly 5,000 Marines and sailors, including aviation and ground combat elements.

Merry Christmas

from the staff at the

Dispatch Newspaper

You can order this "American Santa" Christmas garden flag at Amazon.com.

Acting secretary accepts inclusion board's 15 recommendations

by Jim Garamone,
DOD News

Acting Defense Secretary Chris Miller has accepted all 15 recommendations proposed by the Diversity and Inclusion Board chartered by former Defense Secretary Dr. Mark T. Esper in July.

Miller signed a memo entitled "Actions to Improve Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Inclusion in the U.S. Military" that examined the culture of the military following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

In the memo, Miller called diversity and inclusion in the DOD "moral imperatives." Miller - and Esper - stressed the need for all service members to be treated with dignity and respect. Service members from different backgrounds and cultures bring a wealth of experiences to the U.S. military and that needs to be encouraged.

"To strengthen diversity and inclusion across the Department of Defense, the Board analyzed data, reviewed literature, crowd-sourced feedback, and listened to personal experiences," said Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett, who chaired the board. "Our analysis generated 15 recommendations to empower each individual to fulfill his or her maximum potential."

Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Ramón Colón-López and Matthew Donovan, the under-secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, assisted Barrett. The board - representatives from all services - evaluated diversity and inclusion policies, programs and processes; reviewed industry best practices; and assessed pertinent data and reports, DOD officials said.

The first recommendation is for military recruiting content



to reflect the current and future racial, ethnic and gender demographics of the United States.

The second recommendation deals with the dearth of diversity at the higher levels of the military. The recommendation calls for the department to develop a data-driven accessions and retention strategy. The deadline for the DOD to develop this strategy is March 31.

The third recommendation looks to increase the diversity of the officer corps itself. It recommends the DOD expand sponsorship of programs and initiatives to increase the available pool of qualified applicants for

ROTC enrollments, scholarships and commissions from students enrolled at minority-serving institutions. These institutions include historically Black colleges and universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, tribal colleges and universities, and institutions serving Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The board calls for a thorough review of DOD aptitude tests to ensure they do not adversely impact diversity. The DOD will develop plans for a rigorous and thorough assessment of all aptitude tests currently administered. The goal of this assessment will be to analyze, identify and remove - as applicable - "barriers

that adversely impact diversity while retaining rigorous screening processes necessary to access a high-quality force," the board recommends.

The board also wants the military to evaluate demographic trends in performance evaluations.

The DOD is also looking to provide diverse pools for nominative positions. These positions are often the road to senior ranks in the department. The board wants to ensure all service members are represented.

The board also wants the department to:

- Establish a Diversity and Inclusion Center of Excellence at the Defense EO Management Institute at Patrick AFB, Fla.
- Offer internships in science, technology, engineering and mathematics as part of the Junior ROTC program.
- Develop an organizational governance structure between diversity and inclusion and equal opportunity offices.
- Develop a diversity and inclusion mobile app and website.
- Include diversity and inclusion instruction in all professional military education curricula.
- Increase promotion selection transparency.

The board recommends prohibiting all extremist or hate-

group activities. While this is already the case, the board wants DOD to look for ways to strengthen prohibitions against extremist or hate group activity.

In conjunction with this, the board wants to update the Uniform Code of Military Justice to address extremist activity.

"The board's recommendations, and the department's measures to implement them, are important and positive steps toward ensuring diversity and inclusion," said Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle with the Office of Force Resiliency for the undersecretary of defense. "Enduring culture change requires commitment from every level of leadership and from every service member to capitalize on this momentum. Success requires constant vigilance. These recommendations start us off, but dedication to this on a force-wide scale will ensure we achieve our goal of a more diverse and inclusive force."

"Collectively, we must eliminate potential bias, prejudice and racism in our military," Miller wrote. "Our ability to maintain a lethal and ready force depends on it. These actions will bolster existing diversity and inclusion efforts and pave the way towards new methods of enhancing opportunity and strengthening our nation's defense."



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Navy breaks record with 13th transit through Taiwan Strait this year

by Caitlin Doornbos,
Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan - The Navy on Saturday broke its record for the number of times it has sent a warship through the Taiwan Strait a single year, according to Yokosuka-based 7th Fleet Dec. 19.

USS *Mustin* steamed through the contested waterway separating Taiwan from mainland China on Saturday "in accordance with international law," 7th Fleet spokesman Lt. Joe Keiley said by e-mail.

"The ship's transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the U.S. commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific," Keiley said in his email. "The United States military will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows."

The transit was the Navy's 13th this year, passing the service's previous record of 12 set in 2016. It made nine such trips last year, three in 2018 and five in 2017. Before Saturday, the Navy's most recent sail

through the strait happened Nov. 22 by USS *Barry*.

The number of Navy trips through the strait has increased along with tensions between the U.S. and China in the South and East China seas. Strain with China over Taiwan has grown after the U.S. this month approved a \$280 million sale of advanced military communications equipment to Taiwan.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Zheng Zeguang said the sale "seriously violated the basic norms of international relations, seriously interfered in China's domestic politics, seriously damaged China-U.S. relations, are arrogant, unreasonable and vile," according to a Dec. 8 report by *The Associated Press*.

Mustin's sail came a day after Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin, during a press conference Friday, called on the U.S. to "focus on cooperation to manage differences and bring China-U.S. relations back to the right track so as to bring more benefits to the people of both countries and the world."

Space Force leader to become 8th member of Joint Chiefs

by Jim Garamone,
DOD News

The Joint Chiefs of Staff will grow by one member when Space Force Gen. John Raymond joins the highest-ranking military, deliberative body in the Defense Department on Dec. 20.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark Milley inducted Raymond, the chief of space operations, into the Joint Chiefs of Staff at a ceremony on Dec. 11. He becomes an official member of the body on the same day the Space Force celebrates its first anniversary as an official service branch.

The law stated that the chief of space operations would become a member of the Joint Chiefs a year after it was signed. "But under your leadership and under [the] leadership [of] the vice chairman, you said 'We're not going to wait!,' and you've treated me like a member ever since [the law was signed]," Raymond said during the ceremony at the Pentagon. "I can't thank you enough. I can't thank my teammates enough. It's a real privilege to sit at this table."

The induction of Raymond points to the growing importance of space in American life. It also highlights the increased importance of the domain to the military. "We recognize it clearly as a warfighting domain. And we also know that we, the United States, we've got to maintain capabilities in that domain if we are going to continue to deter great power war," Milley said during the ceremony. "This is an incredibly important organization for the United States military and for the country. And it's really important what we're doing today, which is [to] induct you as an official member into the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

The Space Force is a separate service under the Department of the Air Force. It will grow to about 20,000 members with most coming from the Air Force, but with other services also providing personnel. The Air Force will provide all the services the new force needs, allowing the space professionals to concentrate on their missions.

"How fitting: The Chief of Space Operations is now officially a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in keeping with the pivotal role of space in national defense," said Air Force Secretary Barbara Barrett. "Incomparable Gen. Jay Raymond is building an agile, innovative and bold Space Force. With the other chiefs, Gen. Raymond will offer his best military advice to the president, National Security Council, Homeland Security Council and defense secretary as they implement the National Defense Strategy."

The members are the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the vice chairman, the Army chief of staff, the commandant of the Marine Corps, the chief of naval operations, the Air Force chief of staff, the chief of the National Guard Bureau and, now, the chief of space operations.

Spotlight: National Defense Strategy

The body has grown and changed since it was formed out of the destruction of World War II. When formed, the Joint Chiefs were the chairman, the Army chief of staff, the chief of naval operations and the Air Force chief. The commandant of the Marine Corps was included when issues pertaining to the Marine Corps were discussed by the chiefs but he was not a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said David Crist, Joint Staff historian.

Through the Berlin blockade, the Korean War, the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the Vietnam War and its aftermath, the body remained the same. The first personnel change came in 1978 when the Marine Corps commandant became a full-fledged member of the body.

In 1986, came the Goldwater-Nichols Act. It would be hard to understate the legislation's effects on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The legislation increased the visibility, responsibilities and reach of the chairman and added the office of the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It changed the way the Joint Staff was manned and stressed the importance of joint duty for military officers and personnel.

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DoD logistics leader ready to ship vaccine to overseas locations, Navy fleet

by Beth Reece,
Defense Logistics Agency

With the first COVID-19 vaccine already in the arms of some health care workers, the Defense Logistics Agency is ready to ship doses for Defense Department employees outside the continental U.S. and the deployed U.S. Navy Fleet.

DLA has spent months working with Operation Warp Speed and Defense Health Agency officials to refine its plan for delivering the vaccine as it becomes available from manufacturers. The agency already has well-defined, cold-chain management practices and has delivered the annual flu vaccine for 20 years.

“We’ve been doing all along with the flu vaccine, and DLA has had great success getting that to DOD employees around the world,” Army Col. Anthony Bostick, who leads DLA’s Operation Warp Speed operational

hasn’t been asked to distribute the minus 80-degree Celsius vaccine but has developed initial plans to provide support if necessary, Bostick added.

DLA Distribution manages



planning team, said.

The agency has increased refrigerated storage space and can maintain almost 19 million doses of the 2-to-8-degree Celsius vaccine and 4.6 million of the minus 20-degree Celsius vaccine ahead of shipping products to customers. The agency

six U.S.-based and four overseas centers capable of handling cold-chain items and began training additional employees in cold-chain management processes in June, Bob Garrettson of DLA Distribution’s special commodities team said.

“We’ve been involved in very detailed, intense planning with DHA and other key players to make sure there’s a coordinated response that gets the vaccine exactly where it’s needed, and we have contingency plans in place in case they’re needed,” he said.

Dana Dallas, DLA troop support’s cold chain program manager, helps create policy for managing temperature-sensitive medical material throughout DOD. She works with DLA distribution to establish packaging and handling procedures that follow manufacturer guidelines.

“We have temperature-monitoring devices in all of our cold-chain shipments, so we can do quality analysis for any incidences on cold-chain material during either distribution or post-receipt, such as refrigerator malfunctions,” she said.

Shipments from U.S.-based

Army to widen scope of legal counsel program for victims of sexual assault

by Joseph Lacdan,
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - The Army looks to expand its Special Victims’ Counsel program this fiscal year, as the need for legal counsel and victim representation increased at some installations.

SVCs are uniformed lawyers who serve under the Army’s Office of The Judge Advocate General who provide victims of an alleged sex-related offense with counsel throughout the legal process. SVCs advocate for victims’ rights following a sexual assault where a Soldier is the alleged perpetrator, providing clients access to legal representation that victims of non-military sexual assaults typically don’t have.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 extended the SVC program’s pool of potential clients. In accordance with the act, since Dec. 1, military services must provide legal counsel to help victims of domestic violence offenses. The SVC program now provides

centers typically remain cold for up to five days, Garrettson added. Many shipments destined for overseas customers will be cross-docked at other DLA Distribution centers where material handlers will refresh packaging components to maintain cold temperatures. The agency is also coordinating with customers

to ensure they’re available to receive the vaccine upon arrival, Garrettson continued.

DLA has been involved in the nation’s pandemic response since February and has provided over \$2.5 billion in items ranging from face masks and ventilators to test kits.

SVCs. The Army will further increase SVC authorizations by an additional 17 in fiscal 2022.

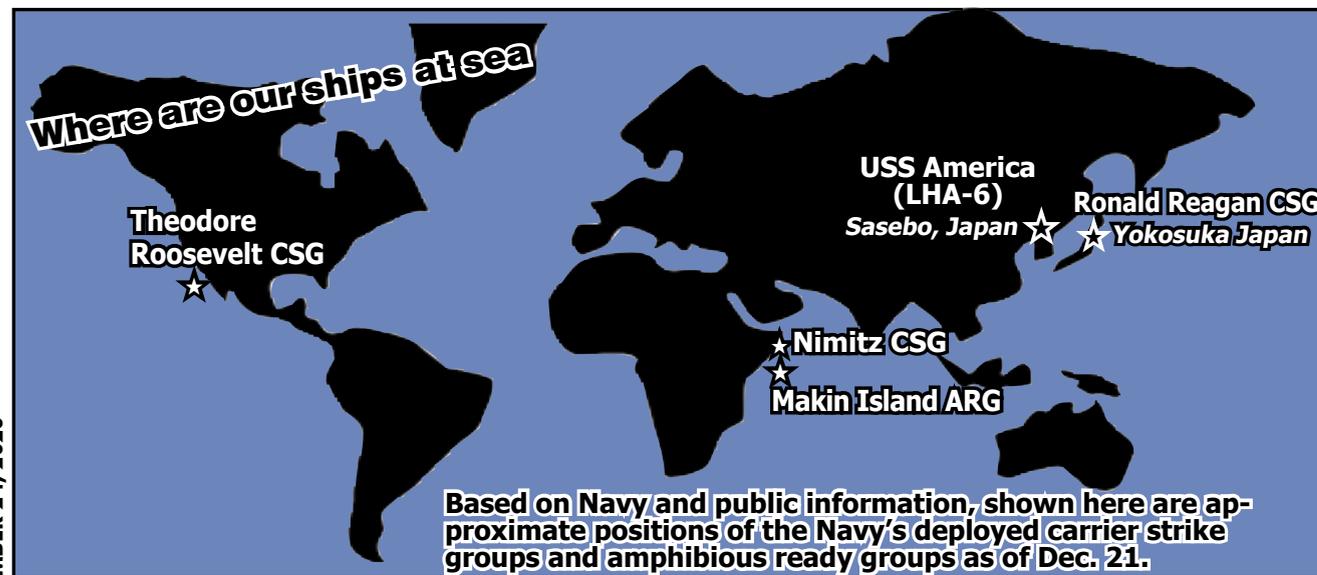
As the national spotlight falls see **Army, page 7**

Spotlight: Operation Warp Speed

“In some aspects, storage and distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine is pretty similar to what

Total Navy Battle Force: 297
Ships Underway
Deployed Ships Underway: 45
Non-deployed Ships Underway: 23
Total Ships Underway: 58
Ships Deployed by Fleet

Fleet Forces: 0	3rd Fleet: 1
4th Fleet: 4	5th Fleet: 20
6th Fleet: 16	7th Fleet: 53
Total: 94	



Army

- ◆ Top enlisted Soldier at Fort Hood suspended amid investigation into alleged ‘unprofessional language’
- ◆ Commander of Ranger training battalion relieved over ‘derogatory comments’
- ◆ Army is going all-in on its souped-up new M1 Abrams tank
- ◆ Unit held a gingerbread house competition to stop sexual assault for some reason
- ◆ Soldiers spot car accident from the air, land helicopter to aid injured man in Bavaria
- ◆ Army plans next steps for Iron Dome missile defense

Navy

- ◆ Chief charged with trying to record female service members in private area in Bahrain
- ◆ Sailors with COVID-19 replaced aboard USS Essex
- ◆ After controversy and brief suspensions, Navy’s official esports team is up and running
- ◆ Navy ends mandatory 6-month limited-duty period for ill, injured Sailors
- ◆ Santa hitchhikes on a Navy training flight to spread some holiday cheer

Air Force

- ◆ Body armor designed for women comes to Wyoming’s F.E. Warren Air Force Base
- ◆ Air Force selects 619 for supplemental promotion
- ◆ Air Force graduates its largest class of female test pilots and engineers in history
- ◆ Air Force opened criminal probe after a Lockheed F-35 grounding

Marine Corps

- ◆ North Carolina Marine saves neighbor, another Marine, by administering CPR
- ◆ Vietnam veteran buried months after dying in nursing home

Space Force

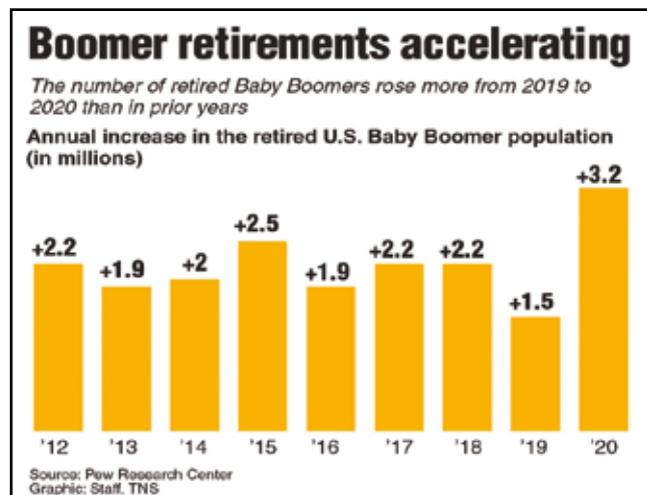
- ◆ Space Force poised to see major growth, new uniforms in 2021
- ◆ Space Force expected to live on past Trump era
- ◆ Space Force general joins Joint Chiefs of Staff



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Armed Forces Dispatch

(619) 280-2985

Published by Western States Weeklies, Inc.
2604 B-280 El Camino Real, Carlsbad, CA 92008
E-mail: editor@navydispatch.com

Publisher.....Sarah Hagerty

The Dispatch is published weekly on Thursdays, by Western States Weeklies, Inc., as a commercial, free-enterprise newspaper. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the Department of the Navy and is in no way associated with the Department of the Navy. The editorial objective of the Dispatch, however, is to promote support for a strong military presence. The opinions and views of writers whose materials appear herein are those of the writers and not the publishers. Appearance of advertising does not constitute endorsement by the Dispatch or Western States Weeklies, Inc. Consumers should make informed decisions when purchasing products and services, and when considering business opportunities, and research before investing. Subscription by mail is \$70 per year to CONUS or FPO address.

Interpersonal Edge: Stop waiting

Dr. Daneen Skube,
Tribune Content Agency

Q: I've been waiting all of 2020 to make changes to my career. I figure nothing important happens in the middle of chaos. Now, with a New Year approaching, can you recommend a strategy to move forward?

A: I'd recommend that if you keep your head in the middle of chaos you'll find unique opportunities. The two core problems during a crisis are 1) Most people freak out. 2) We give up too easily when progress looks impossible.

In over 30 years in counseling, corporate training and executive coaching I realize the main thing I teach clients is an effective problem solving process. The process isn't something my clients learn right away. Clients take time to develop both courage and a repeatable skill set.

I benefit myself, from this skill set. I come to each problem with these tools and a willingness to take risks. I feel pleased with the benefits I get from this two-step approach.

I believe it's true that the difficult takes a long time and the impossible just a little longer. When people tell me what I can't do, I listen, take in data, then thoroughly explore the possibilities.

One of our cockapoos had a leg cancer diagnosis six years ago and vets said amputation was the only option. All the vets told me a three-legged dog could be quite happy. I privately thought a four-legged dog is a lot happier. Knowing that curing cancer is impossible I spent three months reading everything in both human and vet oncology and implemented every protocol I could find.

Three months after diagnosis,

the vet could find no evidence of cancer and my dog is now a happy four-legged dog. Maybe we got lucky, maybe what we did worked, but the impossible is worth trying if you care about a result.

If you've spent 2020 waiting for the virus and chaos to go away, then it's time to stop waiting. Make a list of all the progress you want to make in 2021. Make another list of all the steps you could use to network, market, research, learn skills, and negotiate to lay the groundwork for both the difficult and the impossible.

If people tell you what is impossible, be respectful and listen to their information. Sometimes when people tell us what is impossible and why they also tell us the factors we need to change to achieve success. Go out and see if there are any cracks in the walls people have warned you about

and you may find a way through these barriers.

Lastly, don't be afraid to take a risk, look foolish, or fail. When the surgeon that wanted to amputate my dog's leg asked why I was waiting to amputate I joked, "Well I plan to cure cancer." He laughed and asked my plan. When I described my plan he said, "That's a good plan I'll be interested to see what happens."

The more you detach from your results, the more you focus on the learning as the outcome, the more you'll succeed where others give up. All you need is the right tools and courage.

When others argue for your limits, use data, and explore all the side roads. At the very least, you'll enjoy rich educational journeys along untraveled paths. At the most, you may achieve the impossible even during a crisis.

E4-E6 active duty, FTS results announced from Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy released cycle 248 petty officer advancement results for Active Duty and Full Time Support (FTS) Sailors to advance to E-4, E-5 and E-6 Dec. 18.

To access the results, surf through <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2452857/e4-e6-active-duty-fts-results-announced/> until you find your results.

The last word(s)

Q: I'm so tired of hunkering down. With the vaccine coming do you think it's reasonable to take a few more risks going out into the world?

A: Not unless you're willing to risk the health of yourself and those you love. As a good friend of mine says, "You can do anything for a year," so give yourself the gift of a few more months of safety.

Daneen Skube, Ph.D., executive coach, trainer, therapist and speaker, also appears as the FOX Channel's "Workplace Guru"

each Monday morning. She's the author of "Interpersonal Edge: Breakthrough Tools for Talking to Anyone, Anywhere, About Anything" (Hay House, 2006). You can contact Dr. Skube at www.interpersonaledge.com or 1420 NW Gilman Blvd., #2845, Issaquah, WA 98027. Sorry, no personal replies.



MWR Digital Library: Ancestry, Consumer Reports, auto manuals, eBooks, investment research, teachables, more

Current as of Nov. 30, 2020

Military OneSource provides free, online resources to service members and their families via the morale, welfare and recreation Digital Library. You'll find eBooks and audiobooks on virtually every topic, as well as databases and reference books that can help you learn a new skill, keep kids engaged and help with their homework, or prepare you to land your next job.

The MWR Digital Library is a free resource for service members and their families. Just log in to your Military OneSource account or create a username and password to get started.

Note that the list provided here includes just some of the resources available. The categories are guidelines only. Many of the resources can be useful or entertaining across age groups.

For adults looking to advance their education or career, there are even more resources available through the digital library.

- Ancestry® Library allows you to unlock the story of your family through billions of U.S. and international records.
- Britannica Library offers three sites in one — Children, Young Adults and the Reference Center — where you can conduct research, complete school assignments, work on special projects or explore your unique interests. You can even store your research in your personal My Britannica account.
- Consumer Reports helps you find the best deals, ratings and reviews on thousands of popular consumer items from one of the most respected sources.
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- Fold3 Library Edition is a premier collection of historical U.S. military records and unique military content that brings to life the details of America's military veterans with stories, photos and personal documents from the Revolutionary War through today.
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fers access to full-text medical journals, magazines, reference works and multimedia covering a full range of health-related issues from current diseases and disorders to in-depth coverage of alternative medical practices. Enter the password "1source" if prompted.

• Gale in Context: Biography includes more than 600,000 biographical entries covering figures from all time periods and areas of study. Reference content is offered alongside videos, audio selections, images and magazine and journal articles from hundreds of major periodicals and newspapers. This resource is continuously updated. Use the code "1source" if prompted.

• Gale Legal Forms offers a wide selection of state-specific and multistate forms across the most popular legal areas -- including real estate contracts, wills, premarital agreements, bankruptcy, divorce and landlord tenant. It also includes a state directory of attorneys and a dictionary of legal definitions explained in laymen's language. Enter the password "1source" if prompted.

• Gale Military and Intelligence provides military personnel access to scholarly journals, magazines and reports covering all aspects of past and present military affairs. Updated annually, this library contains hand-selected content supporting subject areas such as governmental policies, the socioeconomic effects of war and the structure of the armed forces. Enter the password "1source" if prompted.

• Gale Small Business Builder helps readers interested in planning and optimizing their businesses or nonprofit groups. Compiled for aspiring entrepreneurs and those with existing small businesses, it provides a step-by-step process supported by a variety of recognized tools that enable users to produce com-

plete business plans and other documents essential for gaining access to capital and growing their enterprise. Enter the password "1source" if prompted.

• GreenFILE contains well-researched information covering all aspects of human impact on the environment.

• Hobbies and Crafts Reference Center provides creative ideas and detailed how-to instruction on a wide range of hobbies, including ones involving performing arts, science experiments model building and arts and crafts.

• Home Improvement Reference Center includes tips and tricks on how to fix a leaky faucet, install a new fan or plan your outdoor projects. The user-friendly database offers full-text content from leading home improvement magazines, images not found anywhere else online, and nearly 100 videos of popular home repair projects.

• Kanopy provides access to more than 30,000 award-winning films and documentaries anywhere, anytime using any device. To set up an account, click Add Your Library Card and enter the username dod and password dod11978. Set up your own profile from there.

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• Mango Languages is a digital language learning program for learners of all levels, with courses in more than 70 different foreign languages, 21 English language courses and 44 specialty courses. Mango's language-learning methodology is designed to simulate the way people learn a

foreign language when actually immersed in everyday conversation.

• Morningstar Investment Research Center offers information on stocks and mutual funds. Visit the Investment Classroom to hone your investing skills and explore dozens of articles and videos about the stock market.

• National Geographic Archive (1888-1994) provides comprehensive, timely articles and photos documenting life on our planet and beyond. Includes more than 100 years of history told through articles on culture, global events, nature, science, technology, the environment and gripping first-person accounts of exploration and discovery.

• National Geographic Current (1995-present) includes every article of National Geographic magazine since in the mid-1990s. Search the vivid photographs and historic articles as well as engaging videos and detailed maps.

• National Geographic: People, Animals, World provides access to content that attracts, engages and informs students, educators, researchers and general readers. It includes full-text books on travel, science and technology, history and the environment as well as videos, more than 650 maps and 600 downloadable National Geographic images.

• NovelList Plus is a trusted source for expert reading recommendations covering fiction and nonfiction titles.

• O'Reilly Online Learning (previously Safari Books Online) offers access to more than 57,000 eBooks, videos, live learning and interactive coding sandboxes and tutorials.

• PressReader Digital Newspapers provides interactive, digital access to about 7,000 of the world's best newspapers and magazines. Readers can browse articles, photos, advertisements, classifieds and notices in full color.

• Small Engine Repair Reference Center offers hundreds of reference books with original photos and illustrations of engines including motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, boats, outdoor power equipment, tractors and generators.

Teachables provides access to more than 15,000 teacher-created, vetted printables to support instruction. Download activities for pre-K to sixth-grade subjects including math, science, reading comprehension, STEM, writing and beyond. Download printable lesson plans, reading passages, games and puzzles, clip art, bulletin board ideas, teacher supports and skills sheets.

• Teacher Reference Center has indexing and abstracts for more than 270 of the most popular teacher and administrator journals and magazines.

• Universal Class provides lifelong learning courses across more than 30 subject areas, many of which offer continuing education units. More than 500 courses are available, designed and led by professional instructors. Universal Class includes videos, assignments, quizzes, tests and options for social media interaction with other learners. Patrons may take multiple classes and learn at their own pace.

• Unlimited offers eBooks, audiobooks, comic books and online courses for checkout and download (check for device compatibility). When registering to browse and download audiobooks to your home computer or mobile device, use the access code "MOSDOD."

• Wall Street Journal provides coverage of U.S. and world news, politics, arts, culture, lifestyle, sports and health. It's available in print, online and through mobile apps and includes breaking news streams, interactive features, videos and blogs.

• Weiss Financial Ratings offers access to financial literacy tools on retirement planning, home and mortgage, insurance strategies and saving for your child's education.

The MWR Digital Library is an incredible free resource for service members and their families. Just log into your Military OneSource account or create a username and password to get started and enjoy browsing.

Next week we'll highlight some of the offerings for children.

NAVWAR enterprise launches third artificial intelligence prize challenge in series; Increases award to \$750K

by Kara McDermott,
NAVWAR

Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) enterprise announced the launch of its third prize challenge in the Artificial Intelligence Applications to Autonomous Cybersecurity (AI ATAC) Challenge series, with the submission time-frame opening Dec. 10.

The prize challenge, managed by Program Executive Office for Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence and Space Systems' Cybersecurity Program Office, seeks to enhance the Security Operations Center using artificial intelligence and machine learning tools to automate the detection and prevention of advanced persistent threats and other cybersecurity campaign activity.

Current SOC procedures require a tremendous amount of

time and effort to triage alerts, link related logs, perform incident response, and document investigations. Through this AI ATAC Prize Challenge, PMW 130 is soliciting security orchestration and automated response tools that use AI and/or ML to



enhance SOC effectiveness for competitive evaluation.

NAVWAR and PEO C4I and Space Systems have sponsored this prize challenge series to gather insight and participation from nontraditional defense vendors, teams, and individuals. The winning entry will win \$750,000.

"We love prize challenges,"

said NAVWAR Commander RearAdm. Doug Small. "They're a great tool to tap into some incredible diversity of talent, inject a little friendly competition, and learn a lot about solutions, and even problem-framing, we may have never imagined."

The challenge is open to all U.S. citizens and those with permanent residence status. The open period for submissions is through Feb. 12, 2021, with an e-mail indication of intent to participate sent to aiatac.prize.challenge@navy.mil by Jan. 2021. To be considered for the prize, entrants need to provide the following in accordance with the challenge rules:

(1) Submission description whitepaper; (2) Overview and demonstration videos; (3) Corresponding SOAR technology; and (4) • Setup guide.

Similar to the last two challenges in this series, PMW 130 has partnered with Oak Ridge National Laboratory, a Department of Energy laboratory in Tennessee, which will provide their Cybersecurity Operations Research Range facility and their expertise for evaluating the technical solutions.

"This is a critical challenge to improving our SOC operations," said John T. Armantrout, PMW 130 program manager. "The key parts of SOAR are the orchestration and automation pieces - coordinated responses to solve problems, with minimal or no human oversight for each incident. If the tool can detect more quickly using AI or ML, or is smart enough to categorize an issue as benign or malicious without supervision, then the analyst's abilities are enhanced and the systems are safer."

This challenge will measure the performance of these tools based on specific SOAR capability criteria to determine how well they would provide improvements to Navy SOCs across the world.

To learn more about this AI ATAC Challenge, including rules, criteria and eligibility requirements, visit <https://www.challenge.gov/challenge/AI-ATAC-3-challenge/>.

All questions regarding the challenge should be directed to aiatac.prize.challenge@navy.mil.

NAVWAR identifies, develops, delivers and sustains information warfighting capabilities and services that enable naval, joint, coalition and other national missions operating in warfighting domains from seabed to space and through cyberspace. NAVWAR consists of more than 11,000 civilian, active duty and reserve professionals located around the world.

Helicopter squadron Sailor prevents suicide, wins national award

by MC1 Timothy Wilson

The USO presented Aviation Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Lauren Singer the USO Service Member of the Year award at NAS North Island Dec.16.

Singer was recognized for intervening during a suicide



Lauren Singer, left, accepts the USO Servicemember of the Year award for heroism from her CO, Cmdr. Tony Perez. Photo by MC1 Timothy Wilson

attempt on the Coronado Bay Bridge when a man attempted to leap to his death. The award honors America's junior enlisted service members who represent the standards and values of their respective branch of service as demonstrated through acts of heroism or valor.

"She absolutely deserves this honor," said Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 14 Commanding Officer Cmdr. Tony Perez. "Her actions could have been a small act of kindness, but her actions were truly lifesaving and her genuine concern and selflessness saved this man's life."

Singer was driving across the Coronado Bay Bridge toward

Coronado when she spotted what she thought was a stranded motorist. When she stopped to inquire if the man standing next to the stopped car needed assistance, she saw the man place a rope around his neck then move toward the rail on the side of the bridge. Singer then grabbed the back of his shirt and pulled him back. When she asked the man what he was doing, he replied, "Today is my day to die."

"That was the most alarming thing. He had made a decision and he was okay with that," said Singer. "I've experienced people in my life that have taken their own [life] so I was in a state of shock. I wasn't thinking. I had to make decisions within seconds."

While holding on to the man, Singer noticed a firearm in his pocket, which she removed from him. She then flagged down another motorist and instructed the driver to lock the weapon in his trunk and notify police. Singer walked the man to her vehicle and continued talking with him until the highway patrol arrived on the scene.

"Even at your worst days, just know that people care," said Singer. "Our purpose, not as an individual but as a group, is to help other people. What are we doing here on this Earth if that is not the case?"

Vaccine

continued from page 1

"Now that we have successfully received the vaccine, we will begin administering it on Dec. 15," Rice said. "In this phase we are prioritizing our highest-risk health care workers and first responders from our local installations. Within phase 1, there are three sub-tiers. Sub-tier 1 consists of health care workers within the emergency department and intensive care unit, as well as local installation emergency medical services, fire and police departments from the six local Navy and Marine Corps installations that we support. Sub-tier 2 recipients include our NMCS D inpatient health care workers, and sub-tier 3 are their outpatient counterparts."

Rice said when NMCS D begins administering the vaccine, they will work to vaccinate sub-tier 1 personnel within 2-3 days, followed by sub-tier 2 and 3 personnel as vaccine supplies from this initial shipment permit.

The implementation of phase

2 will begin when NMCS D receives its next shipment of vaccines from Pfizer.

"We anticipate that shipment arriving in the coming weeks," Rice said. "[That shipment will] cover the second dose for everyone who received their first dose this week, and with the remainder, we will move on to administering dose number one for additional healthcare workers."

The general reception of the vaccine around NMCS D has been positive.

"From my discussion with staff members throughout the command, including talks with leadership all the way down to the deck plates, my sense is that our staff are very receptive and excited about receiving the vaccine," Rice said. "As with any new vaccine or therapeutic that comes out, there will be some confusion and many questions; that is expected. We will have staff on hand to counsel patients and address their questions and concerns."

Rice said, "NMCS D will subsequently move on to vaccinating all active duty and eligible beneficiaries as per the DOD's prioritization schema. When NMCS D moves on to that phase of the rollout, our goal is to ensure that all beneficiaries are well informed about the vaccine. We look forward to continuing the process, beginning with our phase 1 health care providers, moving on to our supported active duty units as well as all of our beneficiaries."

NMCS D and Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton were selected by the DOD's COVID-19 Task Force to receive the first doses of Pfizer's COVID-19 vaccine, based on recommendations from the military services and the U.S. Coast Guard, to best support several criteria to include anticipated supply chain requirements, such as cold and bulk storage facilities, local population of at least 1,000 priority personnel across the military services and sufficient medical personnel to administer vaccines and actively monitor vaccine recipients.

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Front row L-R: Navy Capt. Jeremy Hawker, Director of Nursing Services, Cmdr. Thomas Nipper Director of Surgical Services, Navy Capt. Shelley Perkins, commanding officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Lt. Cmdr. Sarah Frasure OR Nurse Champion for Go Clear, Navy Capt. Sharon House, executive officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Cmdr. Matthew Kuettel Assistant Director of Surgical Services presenting the Go Clear award to the Nurses and Surgical Technologist of Naval Hospitals Main Operating Room. Photo by Felicia Crosson.

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton receives national recognition for ‘Go Clear Award’ in surgery

by Felicia Crosson

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton (NHCP) has announced that it has earned the Go Clear Award™ Gold status, the highest tier! This status has been received for the achievement in eliminating hazardous smoke from its surgical procedures, and is the first Navy Medical Treatment Center to earn such a prestigious award.

The Go Clear Award is presented by the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) to recognize health care

facilities that have committed to providing increased surgical patient and health care worker safety by implementing practices that eliminate smoke caused by the use of lasers and electrosurgery devices during surgery.

NHCP earned its award with 96% completion of comprehensive surgical smoke education and testing, and for providing the medical devices and resources necessary to evacuate surgical smoke during all smoke-generating procedures.

Additionally, the operating

room completed 12 weeks of audits during surgical procedures that yielded 99% compliance of use of a smoke evacuation system.

Surgical smoke is the unwanted by-product of energy-generating devices that are used in 90 percent of all surgeries. Its contents include toxic chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide, viruses, bacteria, blood and cancer cells.

Inhalation and absorption of surgical smoke pose serious

health risks to patients and surgical staff.

Studies compare the inhalation of smoke from vaporized human tissue to the smoke created by cigarettes; the average daily impact of

surgical smoke to the surgical team is equivalent to inhaling 27-30 unfiltered cigarettes.

Today, it is estimated only 50% of health care workers across the U.S. understand the hazards of

smoke exposure.

Aligning with the Commanding Officer’s Philosophy, “Patients are our family and the reason we are here. Be Ready, Be Relevant, Be Resolute.”

I SHOULD ~~PROBABLY~~ GET A RIDE HOME.

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The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

Christmas in a box

red dust permeated everything and sweat began to bead upon stepping out of the showers, Francis was assigned a cargo-box room, which were stacked two levels high. Each box was outfitted with a door, a head, and most-importantly, an air-conditioner — the lap of luxury for Camp Lemonier.

Francis being Francis (an otherwise regular guy who enjoys fruity cocktails, candles and frilly things), I had sent matching “Merlot” items to decorate his cargo box when he moved in — bedding, drapes, shower curtain, rug, bathmat, toothbrush holder, soap dish, and throw pillow.

I’m pretty sure Francis was the only guy on base with a bedskirt.

Between swimming lessons, Scout meetings, and school pick ups, I created Francis’ care package. I imagined his reaction to the things I’d carefully picked and wrapped. A Hickory Farms meat and cheese set. Homemade cookies. Books. Magazines. Movie DVDs. Pajama pants. Slippers. A candle. A tabletop Christmas tree. Tiny frame ornaments, containing photos of me and the kids.

I only wished I could climb into that box myself.

On Christmas Eve morning, I awoke with a jolt. So much still to do. Fold the laundry, defrost the roast, walk the dog, bake cookies, hit Target for last-minute gifts, wrestle the girls into their dresses, go to five-o-clock mass, fill the stockings, wrap the presents... Somewhere between Anna knocking over the Christmas tree and the cranberry pinwheels burning, our computer emitted that familiar

“bleep-bloop” ring.

Francis!

Frantic shouts. Panicked scrambling. Breathless excitement.

“Hello?!” I blurted into our Dell desktop, the kids and my mom gathered around me.

“Honey!” we heard Francis’s voice, and others too. “I’m here in my room with a couple of my buddies having a little party.” Grainy, pixilated images flashed on the screen.

In folding soccer chairs, Francis and two other men sat in olive drab t-shirts, sipping contraband beverages. A cardboard box topped with a spare Merlot pillow case served as their table, upon which lay the Hickory Farms package, the cookies, and the Christmas tree, lighted and adorned with the photo frames I’d sent.

Through the sounds of his rattling air conditioner, Francis described decorating his box for the party and how much he liked the all the gifts I’d sent. “Later, we’re gonna watch ‘Die Hard’ on my laptop.”

“We all miss you, and ...” I was able to say, signaling the kids to wave to Daddy, before the screen froze permanently, “... love you.”

The scenes of my husband, halfway around the world, so grateful for a few simple comforts from home, offered perspective. As I turned away from our computer and resumed the many tasks and events of the holiday, I pondered, “Perhaps, if we had to fit Christmas in a box every year, would we would never take it for granted.”

Army continued from page 4

on Soldier deaths and alleged sexual assaults at Fort Hood, Texas, Col. Lance Hamilton, chief of the SVC program, reminds victims they can access the legal counsel services.

The SVC program has steadily grown since its 2013 inception, serving more than 12,000 victims while providing legal services that include advising victims on their right to protections from the accused, the right to be heard in court and the right not to be excluded from some proceedings.

Prosecutors seek justice in criminal cases and their interests often align with the victims. However, in rare cases, their goals more closely converge with those of government or society than the victim. The SVCs focus solely on the victims’ interests, Hamilton said.

In the weeks following a sexual assault, a victim may find the legal proceedings difficult to follow and SVCs often act as a steady guide.

“It’s almost like a foreign language,” said Lt. Col. Elliott Johnson, SVC deputy program manager. “For you to be sitting in a courtroom and you hear a judge, defense attorney, a prosecutor speaking this legal language that is unfamiliar to you, and you kind of want to know what they’re talking about or thinking about your case.”

Upon reporting a sexual assault, Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention program, or SHARP, representatives inform victims of their rights to use SVC services. If a victim chooses to use them, SVCs then explain the military justice processes to victims. They also make victims aware of victims’ right to confer with the prosecuting attorney with the SVC present.

Active-duty Soldiers, Army Reserve and National Guard members in an active-duty or active-duty for training status can request SVC services. Dependents and Army civilians can also access them. The SVC program covers all Army installations, however, not every installation has a full-time, assigned SVC and some must facilitate services to victims remotely or an SVC will travel to smaller, remote installations.

SVCs also coordinate with SHARP to provide the full scope of assistance to victims in coordination with sexual assault response coordinators and victim advocates.

“I think the SVC program is of tremendous value,” Hamilton said. “And it is extremely important to have an SVC, because it gives victims an opportunity to speak with legal specialists who are there on behalf of them.”

Hamilton said new Soldiers get briefed on the SVC program upon in-processing to their new duty station. However, many

Soldiers don’t realize the importance of the services until they suffer a sexual assault themselves.

“You hear about it, but you don’t really comprehend it until sadly you become a victim. And at that point, the emotional trauma that goes with it may overwhelm an individual.”

Other services SVCs provide include consultation on the criminal liability of the accused, consultation and assistance with obtaining any protections offered by civilian and military orders, and eligibility and requirements for available benefits.

To become an SVC, Soldiers must be a licensed lawyer serving as a judge advocate and certified by JAG of the Army. They must attend a 10-day training course where they learn to advise and counsel people who have experienced military sexual trauma or domestic violence as well as courses on victims’ legal rights.

Then they take additional courses on the military legal process including military rules of evidence. Finally, they practice how to interview a victim and take part in role-playing exercises.

Due to pandemic restrictions, students currently take the SVC training course remotely, however, Hamilton said he hopes the course will return to a classroom setting in 2021.



**MARINE CORPS RECRUIT DEPOT SAN DIEGO
DEC. 16, 2020**

A Marine with Drill Instructor School attends a graduation ceremony. During drill instructor school, Marines developed leadership skills, mastered drill, met physical fitness requirements, and learned how to make Marines. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Grace J. Kindred

May Oliva, a clinical nurse, administers a nasopharyngeal swab to test a patient for coronavirus (COVID-19) for the Phase III trial of COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The trial is part of Operation Warp Speed, a national initiative to accelerate the development, production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. NMCS D's mission is to prepare service members to deploy in support of operational forces, deliver high quality healthcare services and shape the future of military medicine through education, training and research. NMCS D employs more than 6,000 active duty military personnel, civilians, and contractors in Southern California to provide patients with world-class care anytime, anywhere.



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Navy photo by MC3 Jake Greenberg

Navy photo by MC3 Jake Greenberg

IWTC San Diego trains fleet Sailors in automated digital network systems

by Lt. Joseph Chua,
SAN DIEGO – Nine fleet Sailors graduated from the Automated Digital Network System course offered at Information Warfare Training Command San Diego, Dec. 18.

The ADNS course provides enlisted personnel training on basic operation, administration, and repair of the ADNS communications suite as well as configuration and troubleshooting of interfaces to other equipment and systems at the journeyman level, allowing the protected exchange of command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, or C4ISR, network data and other systems onboard ships.

The three-week course is particularly beneficial to junior enlisted information systems technicians and those from other communities with limited information technology experience.

“This course helps the students explore the importance of ADNS and its impact on shipboard communications,” offered Electronics Technician 1st Class Christopher Yoshida, an ADNS instructor at IWTC San Diego. “It also gives them the ability to assist in troubleshooting the other shipboard networks by providing Cisco routers and switches and Red Hat Enterprise Linux server knowledge.”

When asked about recommendations for the course, the students praised the equipment and hands-on learning.

“It is one thing to learn about it, but is significantly more beneficial to be able to work in the system itself,” said Information Systems Technician 1st Class Jordan Franklin, a student in the course upon his graduation from the class.

Information Systems Technician 2nd Class Cameron Landis, another graduate added, “I valued the opportunity to dig into the labs and get familiar with the equipment and software.”



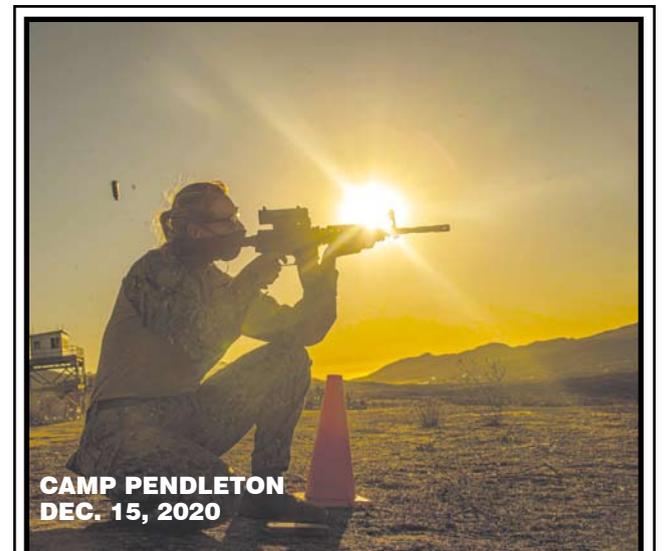
Sailors attending the Automated Digital Network System course work on a facilitated task during the course. IWTC San Diego, as part of the Center for Information Warfare Training, provides a continuum of training to Navy and joint service personnel that prepares them to conduct information warfare across the full spectrum of military operations. Navy photo by Electronics Technician 1st Class Christopher Yoshida

As one of its most in-demand courses, IWTC San Diego facilitates 15 ADNS courses per year, graduating more than 100 students annually. IWTC Virginia Beach also offers the ADNS course for East Coast Sailors.

IWTC San Diego, as part of the Center for Information Warfare Training, provides a continuum of training to Navy and joint service personnel that prepares them to conduct information warfare across the full spectrum of military operations.

With four schoolhouse commands, a detachment, and training sites throughout the United States and Japan, CIWT trains over 22,000 students every year, delivering trained information warfare professionals to the Navy and joint services.

CIWT also offers more than 200 courses for cryptologic technicians, intelligence specialists, information systems technicians, electronics technicians, and officers in the information warfare community.



**CAMP PENDLETON
DEC. 15, 2020**

Electrician's Mate 1st Class Amber Burns, assigned to Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 11, fires an carbine rifle during live-fire qualification exercise, part of unit level training. Navy photo by Chief Boatswain's Mate Nelson Doromal Jr.

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Medal of Honor Spotlight: Marine Corps Cpl. Larry Smedley

by Katie Lange,
DOD News

On the 106th anniversary of Congress authorizing the Medal of Honor for sailors and Marines, young Marine Corps Cpl. Larry Smedley earned it by giving his life to protect his comrades in Vietnam.

Smedley was born on March 4, 1949, in Front Royal, Virginia. When he was young, his family moved him and his two siblings to Georgia before settling in Union Park, Florida, just outside of Orlando.

Smedley's family said he was really interested in the military, so, in 1966, the 17-year-old dropped out of high school and joined the Marine Corps.

Smedley first served as a rifleman and fire team leader

with the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. By July 1967, he was in Vietnam. Two months into his deployment, Smedley was pro-



Marine Corps Cpl. Larry Smedley. Marine Corps photo

moted to corporal and served as a rifleman and squad radioman with Company D, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division.

On the evening of Dec. 21, 1967, Smedley led a six-man

squad to an ambush site at the mouth of an area known as Happy Valley near Phuoc Ninh, west of the vital Da Nang military complex. During the night, they noticed about 100 enemy fighters carrying 122-mm rocket launchers and mortars toward a hill that was within range of the complex.

Realizing the enemy was about to launch an attack on Da Nang, Smedley immediately radioed for a reaction force; he then maneuvered his men to a better position so they could attack the enemy – even though they were outnumbered 15 to 1.

The squad quickly drew heavy

machine gun fire, wounding several of the men. At the same time, an enemy grenade exploded, knocking Smedley to the ground and seriously hurting his right foot. He ignored the injuries and struggled to his feet while shouting encouragement to his men.

Smedley then led a charge toward the enemy machine gun emplacement, firing his rifle and throwing grenades until he was again knocked to the ground by enemy fire.

By this point, Smedley was gravely wounded. He was losing a lot of blood and getting weak, but he refused to give up. He

stood up and proceeded to single-handedly attack the machine gun nest, which he managed to destroy. Unfortunately, he was struck a third time by enemy fire and died on the spot.

Smedley's body was returned home, and he was buried with full honors at Arlington National Cemetery.

Although he was only 18 at the time, Smedley managed to inspire his injured comrades into action to thwart the enemy, despite certain death. Those actions earned him the Medal of Honor on June 20, 1969. His family received the medal from President Richard Nixon during

a White House ceremony.

Smedley's home state of Florida has not forgotten him. The Cpl. Larry E. Smedley National Vietnam War Museum (formerly the National Vietnam Veterans War Museum) in Central Florida was renamed in his honor in 2000. In 2004, a nearby section of highway was also named for him.

Various other roads and facilities throughout the country have been named in Smedley's honor. Perhaps the biggest honor, however, came in 2008 when Orange County Public Schools awarded him an honorary diploma.

Ask Rusty - Should a working widow claim now or wait?

by Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: My husband died 13 years ago at age 50. I am now 64, never remarried, and work full time making a healthy income. I have never claimed any of his benefits. What are my best options? Signed: Working Widow

Dear Working Widow: You have several options available as both a widow and a worker entitled to your own Social Security benefit.

1. You could collect a reduced survivor benefit (only) from your deceased husband and allow your own SS benefit to grow to a larger amount. At age 70, your own benefit will be about 29 percent more than it will be at your full retirement age, or FRA, which is 66 years and 4 months (your own benefit stops growing at age 70). If you take your survivor benefit now, since you are claiming it before you reach your FRA it will be reduced by about 11 percent from the amount your husband was eligible to receive at his death. But at your FRA your survivor benefit would reach the maximum of 100 percent of what your husband was eligible for at his death.

2. If your survivor benefit from your husband at your FRA will be more than your own ben-

efit will be at age 70, you should strive to maximize your survivor benefit by waiting until your FRA to claim it. You can find out what your survivor benefit will be by contacting Social Security. They can also tell you what your age 70 benefit will be, but you can get that too by creating your "My Social Security" account, which is easy to do at www.ssa.gov/myaccount.

3. If your own benefit at age 70 will be your highest benefit, you should strive to maximize your personal benefit by claiming your survivor benefit (only) first, as described in 1. above, and delaying the claim for your own benefits until age 70.

But here's a big red flag: since you still work full time at a "healthy income," be aware that if you claim any SS benefit before you have reached your full retirement age, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn before they take away some of your benefits. The earnings limit for 2021 will be \$18,960 (changes annually) and if you are collecting early SS benefits of any type and exceed that limit, they will take back benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the

limit (half of what you exceed the limit by). The earnings test is in effect until you reach your full retirement age, after which there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn while collecting benefits.



So, what is your best option, considering the above? Well, if your earnings from work are substantially more than the annual earnings limit, you may find that you will not receive any benefits, even if you were to claim. That's because they will "take back" benefits by withholding your future Social Security payments until they recover what you owe. For example, if your annual earnings are \$60,000, you would exceed the limit by about \$41,000, which would mean you would need to repay them \$20,500. If your monthly SS benefit was about \$1500 (about average), they would withhold benefits for about 14 months to recover what you owe, meaning you wouldn't be getting any SS benefits while you were earning that much money. Thus, you may find your best option right now is to wait until your FRA to claim any Social Security benefits.

In the interest of full disclosure, there are some nuances

related to the earnings limit. The limit is higher, and the penalty less punitive, in the year you reach your FRA (during the months before you reach your FRA). And while you may gradually recover withheld SS retirement benefits starting at your FRA, survivor benefits withheld before your FRA may not be fully recovered, depending upon how long after your FRA you collect them.

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Congress passes sweeping end-of-year bill

by Nikki Wentling,
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - Congress approved a bill Dec. 16 that increases resources for homeless veterans, creates a Department of Veterans Affairs advisory committee for Native American veterans and mandates that every VA hospital hire a dedicated women's health provider, among dozens of other measures.

The legislative package, which lawmakers described as an end-of-year omnibus bill for veterans, is over 340 pages long and includes numerous provisions for female veterans, Native American veterans, homeless veterans, student veterans, veterans experiencing the effects of toxic exposures and those affected by the coronavirus.

Following Senate's approval, the House passed the bill by voice vote without any objections. It now heads to President Donald Trump's desk for his signature. The vote comes as Congress is wrapping up its 116th legislative session.

"This is the culmination of two years of bipartisan work," Rep. Phil Roe, R-Tenn., said on the House floor. "There's something in this bill for just about every one of our nation's veterans and their loved ones."

The bill is named for Roe, who didn't seek reelection this year, and Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., who resigned from the Senate at the end of 2019. Both men were leaders on the Senate and House veterans' affairs committees.

"I'm proud that one of my last votes of Congress will be in support of this bill, and I'm also humbled it bears my name and that of my friend," Roe said. "Helping to serve my fellow veterans in Congress these past 12 years has been the honor of a lifetime."

In an effort to improve services for women veterans, the bill creates a dedicated Office of Women's Health at VA, provides \$20 million to retrofit VA hospitals with women's health spaces and makes permanent a program to provide childcare at VA facilities, among other measures.

Women are the fastest-growing demographic in the military, with the number using VA health care almost tripling since 2000, from 160,000 to 475,000, according to VA data. Refer to <https://www.stripes.com/news>.

Veterans

◆ 'I hung up and vomited' — Veteran sexual assault survivors say VA's outreach retraumatized them

◆ More than meets the eye at the \$86 million VA health care center



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2	5	6	8	3	9	7	4	1
5	2	9	8	3	7	5	1	6
2	8	7	4	3	5	6	1	9
5	9	3	6	1	7	2	4	8
3	5	2	8	4	6	1	9	7
4	1	8	9	7	2	5	6	3
9	7	6	3	5	1	8	2	4

Navy Life Southwest at Home offers variety of links to help keep you busy

Stuck in the house, schools are closed, and your favorite weekend hobby feels like a distant memory? #NRSWATHome

Although our facilities are closed, Fleet and Family Readiness Support Programs are far from closed to helping our customers adjust to their new normal. Our team of professionals have come up with genius proof ideas to keep yourself, family and loved ones safe and resilient. We challenge you to keep busy while at home.

Visit <https://www.navylifesw.com/at-home> for links to entertain you, help you, educate you and help you stay fit. Watch and exercise video, learn to make pasta jewelry, watch a concert, learn to cook biscuits and gravy. It's all waiting for you online courtesy of MWR and Fleet and Family Services.

Visit MWR on the web for up-to-date information on closures

Attention Guests: Due to COVID precautions many Recreation facilities remain closed. For more information call the facility directly.

Be sure to follow us on social media for more on upcoming offerings while away or visit <https://sandiego.navylifesw.com/>

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Outdoor fitness activities may be available to active duty who register

Fitness facilities remain closed. Select installations and outdoor fitness activities are now open for active duty personnel. Registrations are required. If you are unsure, please call ahead. Visit <https://sandiego.navylifesw.com/fitness/fitness-centers> for information on specific venues and to register.

Attention active duty military single golfers: Sign up on standby list!

Admiral Baker and Sea 'N Air Golf courses now accepting call-in active duty military single standby golfers. If you are a single active duty military wanting to play golf during this challenging time, you can call the golf shops for Admiral Baker (619) 487-0090 or Sea 'N Air (619) 545-9659.

Call the golf shop letting them know you are an active duty single golfer interested in playing golf with other active duty single golfers. Standby information required first name, last name, rank, cell phone and desired tee time. Golf staff will put golfer on the standby list. When the golf shop has a minimum of two active duty golfers on standby for chosen tee time they will call golfers to let them know they may come to the golf course. Tee times will require two-golfer minimum per tee time. At no time are singles placed on the golf course.

Active duty now can get on standby while at the golf course practicing on the driving range or short game areas.

For more information visit <https://sandiego.navylifesw.com/recreation/golf> and click the link for more information.

Roy's Sudoku

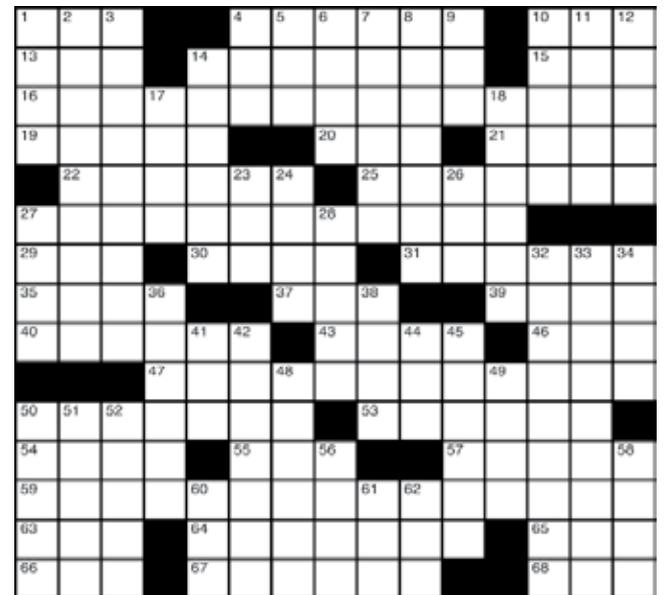
9								
	1						6	
3			8	4	6			7
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	8	7	4		5		1	
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			7	8	3			2
	2						3	
								6

Across

- 1 ___-been: washed-up celeb
- 4 Shared again, as a story
- 10 Samantha Bee's network
- 13 Frequently found in poetry?
- 14 One with a hunger
- 15 Go bad
- 16 Citrus drink in a sea breeze cocktail
- 19 Philosopher Kierkegaard
- 20 Dawn goddess
- 21 Bridal veil trim
- 22 Packed in a slatted box
- 25 Like bath mats
- 27 Frivolous legal entanglement
- 29 Prez on a fiver
- 30 "Cream of" concoction
- 31 Lonely place, so they say
- 35 Former
- 37 Part of rpm
- 39 Actress Russo
- 40 Bury
- 43 Frontier lawman Wyatt
- 46 HBO rival, briefly
- 47 French luxury retailer since 1854
- 50 Gives a hand
- 53 Celebrity socialite
- 54 One who stirs the pot
- 55 Former flier
- 57 "Live" sign
- 59 2011 Dolly Parton single, and what homophonically happens twice in 16-, 27- and 47-Across
- 63 Night before
- 64 Most authentic
- 65 Generation ___
- 66 "Lust for Life" singer Lana ___ Rey
- 67 How theater seating is arranged
- 68 Hurricane center

Down

- 1 Keeps to oneself
- 2 Early form of Latin jazz
- 3 Like the most twinkly sky
- 4 Boxing official
- 5 Musician's asset
- 6 "Can't deny that"
- 7 They might bring you to tears
- 8 Releases from a cage
- 9 Basketball's Erving, familiarly
- 10 Dry run
- 11 Italian lawn bowling game
- 12 Pricey
- 14 Gossipy sorts
- 17 Podded plants
- 18 Coat named for an Irish province
- 23 "Music for Airports" producer Brian
- 24 Bra spec
- 26 Med. research agency
- 27 Tough spot to self-trim hair
- 28 Olympic swords
- 32 Simulated launch site
- 33 Taking a vacation, Brit-style
- 34 Lowly worker
- 36 English "L'chaim!"
- 38 Sitar master Shankar
- 41 Jan. and Feb.
- 42 Words introducing a plot twist
- 44 Road groove
- 45 Hit the buffet in a major way, say
- 48 "Scout's honor!"
- 49 Singer Turner
- 50 Played a part
- 51 Push roughly
- 52 Jason of "How I Met Your Mother"
- 56 Guthrie of folk
- 58 Like avocados ready for guacamole
- 60 Bi- plus one
- 61 Tree with elastic wood
- 62 WWII spy gp.



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To protect mental, physical wellness, stay close from afar

by José A. Álvarez,
County of San Diego

The novel coronavirus pandemic has forced us into isolation and kept us away from family and friends.

That can make for a difficult holiday season, which is usually spent gathering with others and is often the only time some family members see each other.

Mental health experts say it's important to stay connected and reinforcing those relationships can make it easier to get through this challenging time.

"Reach out to your loved ones and do it often," said Luke Bergmann, director of Behavioral Health Services for the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency. "It can help you, and them, feel less lonely and isolated while the stay-at-home order is in place."

Bergmann emphasized that it is particularly important that we not pit our mental health against our public health.

"The most important thing we can do for the community's



long-term mental wellness is to observe public health orders and get this pandemic under control," Bergmann said.

But in the shorter-term, the COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be stressful for people and communities. Bergmann said it's important for people to monitor their physical and mental health and to stay as connected as

possible while staying physically distant.

"We are encouraging everyone to be in contact with their friends and loved ones, but to please do it from afar," he said.

Behavioral Health Services offers the following tips for managing mental wellness while being isolated:

- Pause, take deep breaths and notice how you feel.

- Talk or video chat with people you trust about your feelings and concerns.

- Don't be glued to the radio, TV or other news outlets. Take a break from content that might be upsetting.

- Make time for yourself and unwind. Listen to music and do other activities you enjoy while following the public health guidance.

- Take care of your body and exercise on a regular basis. Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity can help to reduce anxiety and stress.

- Rest and get plenty of sleep. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time, even on weekends.

- Eat healthy and well-balanced meals. Avoid drugs and, if you drink, do it in moderation.

If you or someone you care about are feeling overwhelmed with sadness, depression or anxiety, seek professional help, especially if distress is impacting your daily activities for days or weeks.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, mental health resources and

support are still readily available through County Behavioral Health Services and its many service providers.

You can talk to a trained counselor by calling the County's 24-

hour, multi-lingual Access and Crisis Line at (888) 724-7240. Other resources are available on Behavioral Health Services' COVID-19 Resources for Families, Parents & Caregivers webpage or the It's Up



Operation Warp Speed update: Vaccine has strong roll-out

by Terri Moon Cronk,
DOD News

The COVID-19 vaccine distribution had a strong week last week, with 2.9-million doses initially coming from pharmaceutical company Pfizer. Army Gen. Gustave F. Perna, Operation Warp Speed chief operating officer, said in a media briefing Monday, Dec. 21.

And this week, OWS officials expect about 7.9 million Moderna and Pfizer vaccines to be distributed. Drug-maker Moderna has 5.9-million doses going to 3,400 locations, and 2.1-million Pfizer vaccines are going to 1,000 locations today and tomorrow, Perna said. He added that the vaccines will continue to be ordered on a repetitive basis.

Over the weekend, pharmaceutical company Moderna was granted emergency use authorization for its COVID-19 vaccine by the Food and Drug Administration, and its doses started leaving distribution centers yesterday.

"I look forward to receiving this vaccine myself in the coming days as part of our efforts to demonstrate to Americans that these vaccines are safe and incredibly effective at preventing COVID-19," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II said in the update.

The secretary also emphasized the ongoing importance of virus mitigation measures.

"As we go through the vaccine rollup in the coming months, we have to keep up the good public health steps that we've been recommending for months, like washing our hands, watching our distance and wearing face coverings when we can't watch

our distance," he said. "This is especially important as we go through the holiday season. The vast majority of us remain vulnerable ... to the virus. And we need to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe this holiday season. Thanks to the success of Operation Warp Speed, we've got such a bright future ahead of us. Let's all get there safely."

Perna thanked OWS' industry partners for their Herculean work in getting out the vaccines the first week.

"These industry partners worked all weekend to make sure that vaccines are properly stored, properly packed, properly labeled, and that they're moved into distribution places so that we can deliver them on a regular basis Monday through Friday, as orders occur," the general said.

OWS officials said 20-million

doses of vaccine will be available by the end of the year.

"We feel confident we'll be distributing the end part of that vaccine no later than the first week in January for everybody to have access to [the vaccine]," Perna said.

By the end of next week, some 11 million doses will have been distributed to the American people, he said, adding, "But we have a long way to go. And we want to be better and better every day, every week, every month — to ensure the right vaccine gets to the right place at the right time."

A Moderna trial of the vaccine has also begun in adolescents aged 12 to 18, Dr. Moncef Slaoui, OWS chief advisor said.

Azar added that OWS is about more than vaccine distribution; it is also about COVID-19 thera-

peutics for those who have the virus.

An Army pharmacy technician takes part in an exercise with the COVID-19 vaccine.

"More Americans need to know about the two authorized antibody therapies that OWS supported in development and manufacturing," he said. "These two products help prevent hospitalizations in those patients with the highest risk for severe disease, [and] OWS has allocated more than 400,000 treatment courses to all states and territories with 250,000-plus courses delivered," he added.

"If you have tested positive for COVID-19 and are at risk for severe disease based on your age, weight or underlying health conditions, there may be a therapeutic option that could help you stay out of the hospital," Azar urged.

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