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NAVY CHRISTENS 1ST SHIP IN LEWIS-CLASS FLEET OILER PROGRAM; PELOSI PRINCIPAL SPEAKER

SAN DIEGO - Future USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the first ship in the Navy's John Lewis-class fleet oiler program, was christened July 17 during a ceremony in San Diego.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Ca.), served as the principal speaker at the ceremony.

"As House Speaker, I'm deeply honored to lead this Congressional delegation of many friends of our beloved late Congressman John Lewis to honor his beautiful and saintly life," said Pelosi. "John Lewis was a warrior for freedom and, as a titan of the civil rights movement, his courage and goodness helped transformed our nation. In the halls of the Capitol, he was fearless in his pursuit of a more perfect union, whether fighting to defend voting rights, end anti-LGBTQ discrimination or respect the dignity and worth of every person."

The ship's sponsor, Alfre Woodard Spencer, then spoke about the ship's namesake.

"John Lewis lives in the unalterable truths he spoke to power," said Spencer. "John Lewis lives in all those spaces where people reach out their hands to pull others up to the



The official party at the commissioning ceremony in San Diego for future USNS John Lewis (T-AO 205), the Navy's first John Lewis-class replenishment oiler. Photo courtesy General Dynamics NASSCO

lives that they deserve. And now he lives in the name and the embodiment of this mighty sailing vessel and its mission of fortifying and sustaining those who have committed themselves to the service of our nation."

Following her remarks, Spencer christened the ship with the traditional champagne bottle break alongside the hull.

Additional remarks were provided by Navy representatives, Marcus Tyner, nephew of the ship's namesake, and Dave Carver, president of General Dynamics NASSCO.

"The christening ceremony today takes on a very special meaning, for it marks the one-year anniversary, to the day, of John Lewis' passing," said

Carver. "Just as its namesake, this majestic vessel will be instrumental in shaping the future of our Nation. The shipbuilders of NASSCO are proud to ensure Congressman John Lewis' legacy will live on in this ship."

Former Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, declared the John Lewis-class of oilers be

named after leaders who fought for civil and human rights. The class and the first ship honors Congressman and American civil rights leader John Lewis.

In 2016, General Dynamics NASSCO was awarded the contract by the Navy for the detailed design and construction of the next generation of fleet oilers, (T-AO 205), previously known as TAO(X). The contract

called for the design and construction of six 742-foot-long oilers with a full load displacement of 49,850 tons.

Designed to transfer fuel to carrier strike group ships operating at sea, the oilers have the capacity to carry 157,000 barrels of oil, a significant dry cargo capacity, aviation capability and up to a speed of 20 knots.

New 'Navy Mayor' in town as Rear Adm. Barnett arrives

In a change of command ceremony on Friday, July 16, Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett assumed command of Navy Region Southwest from Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar.

On Saturday, July 17, Barnett joined the christening ceremony for USNS John Lewis, the first of a new class (T-AO) of Navy replenishment oilers being built at NASSCO shipyard.

Navy Region Southwest is one of eleven current naval regions responsible to Commander, Navy Installations Command for the operation and management of Naval shore installations in California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico.

Barnett most recently served



Rear Adm. Stephen Barnett

as commander Navy Region Northwest in Washington state. In the past he was the commanding officer at Naval Base Coronado.

Bolivar has been here since March 2019 and is retiring after 40 years of service.

NB SAN DIEGO OMBUDSMAN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE BEST

by Krishna Jackson,
Naval Base San Diego

The Navy announced the selection of Naval Base San Diego's ombudsman, Deidra Jaskowiak as the shore 2021 Mrs. Sybil Stockdale Ombudsman of the Year July 6, 2021.

"These volunteers exemplify the spirit of Mrs. Sybil Stockdale who supported the families of Prisoners of War during her husband, Vice Adm. James Bond Stockdale's internment in Southeast Asia," announced the Navy in a message to the fleet. "This award recognizes those who serve as inspirational

Ombudsmen and embody the ideals of volunteer service and commitment to Navy Sailors and their families."

"It was an honor and privilege to be recognized and represent our San Diego area ombudsmen," said Jaskowiak, a native of Monterey, Calif.

Navy ombudsmen are trained volunteers selected by a unit's commanding officer to advocate for and provide information to Navy families. Jaskowiak has served as the Naval Base San Diego (NBSD) ombudsman since 2019 and was recently selected by Commander, Navy Region

Southwest (CNRSW) to be their ombudsman.

In May 2021 Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC), selected Jaskowiak as CNIC Ombudsman of the Year, which led to her selection as the Navy's top shore ombudsman with the 2021 Mrs. Sybil Stockdale award.

Vice Adm. Yancy Lindsey, Commander, CNIC, invited Jaskowiak to join him as a guest on his weekly live video broadcast during his visit to San Diego July 14, 2021. Lindsey was in town to meet with local commanders and attend the CNRSW change

of command. Jaskowiak shared the table with Lindsey and Master-at-Arms Chief (select) Erin K. Ripley, CNIC's Sailor of the year and fellow NBSD team member.

"I've had the opportunity for about 45 minutes to chat with these two amazing people and leaders," said Lindsey as he introduced Ripley and Jaskowiak. Lindsey, as the host, asked questions to help viewers learn more about why they were selected to represent the Navy. He asked Jaskowiak how she became involved with the Navy.

"I married my Sailor," she

said. "I met him while I was on vacation here in San Diego, we got married and that was 20 years ago."

Jaskowiak and her husband, Chief Petty Officer Paul Jaskowiak have two kids and have lived in San Diego for the past eight years. CNRSW is the sixth command she will have supported since she started volunteering to support military families.

"I absolutely love this job," she said. "It's been great meeting new people and helping out families and Sailors however I can," she said.

During her time with NBSD,

Jaskowiak was an active part of ship homecomings and deployments. "The opportunity to stand pierside at farewells and homecomings is such a sacred experience," she said. "To be there in support to the tenant command ombudsman unifies the ship to base connection."

She's excited to be taking on a new challenge as the ombudsman for the Southwest region but says she is going to miss being NBSD's ombudsman.

"The team at Naval Base San Diego has been like a family, that is why I will miss them," she said.

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DOD officials testify on fixed-wing tactical, training aircraft programs

by Terri Moon Cronk,
DOD News

For the Defense Department to properly test the systems it intends to buy against expected threats, the DOD must invest now to create a robust test and evaluation infrastructure with live and synthetic environments that is equipped with cutting-edge tools and staffed by people with deep expertise, a DOD official said.

Raymond O'Toole Jr., acting director of operational test and evaluation, testified July 14 before a House Armed Services Committee panel about the DOD's fiscal year 2022 budget request for fixed-wing tactical and training aircraft programs.

"DOD's mission success and national security reflect the quality of the operational test and evaluation we perform," he said. "A large number of new and complex technologies are in the development and acquisition pipeline, and our adversaries continue to advance their capabilities."

The F-35 Lightning II's Block 4 program is now underway, O'Toole said. He also said the existing development process - known as continuous capability development and

delivery - is supposed to deliver a new, tested and verified increment of software every six months. "However, each increment has been flawed, more flawed than expected," he said. "Further, software changes in-



An Air Force F-35A pilot from Hill Air Force Base, Utah, prepares to participate in a flying course at Los Llanos Air Base in Spain, June 10, 2019. Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Evan Parker

tended to add new capabilities or fix deficiencies have instead introduced stability problems that adversely affected certain existing F-35 functionality."

O'Toole told the panel he is "cautiously hopeful" that the program office's decision to move to a 12-month software cycle will mitigate some of those issues; however, there

remains concern that the ability to conduct adequate testing and evaluation is now at a crossroads.

"Simply put, we cannot determine the system's combat cred-

ibility nor thoroughly prepare our warfighters if our test and training capabilities are not kept up to date," O'Toole said.

Joseph Nogueira, acting director of cost assessment and program evaluation, answered three questions from the panel on CAPE.

First, in support of the fiscal

2022 budget request, CAPE conducted several analytic efforts assessing the capability, capacity and readiness of the DOD's tactical aircraft, he said. "To support major defense acquisition program

milestones, CAPE generated independent cost estimates for the F-15 Eagle[s] Passive Active-warning and Survivability System Program and the next generation jammer low- and mid-band programs."

CAPE also oversaw the joint tactical air synthetic training, analysis of alternatives and the Air Force's and Navy's

next-generation air dominance analysis of alternatives, he said. CAPE also conducted other internal analyses directed by DOD leadership to investigate tactical air survivability, lethality, overall affordability and novel concepts of operations to support combatant commander needs.

Second, as part of the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act, Congress tasked CAPE with completing analyses on the service acquisition strategies for sixth-generation aircraft and a non-advocate review of the Air Force's digital century series business case.

Both studies are underway, and CAPE is engaged in detailed discussions with the program offices, contractors and other stakeholders to gain the necessary data and insight to inform the department's evolving acquisition, he noted. "The digital century series business case review should

be completed in August, and I expect to send it to you shortly thereafter," he said.

Third, Nogueira said, there are a number of analytical efforts underway across the DOD to determine the appropriate balance of sixth-, fifth- and fourth-generation capabilities.

The Joint Staff, in coordination with combatant commands, is leading the DOD's thinking on how tactical air should be employed in a future conflict.

Additionally, "the Air Force and Navy are conducting tactical air studies focused on assessing both near- and long-term requirements," he said.

"The results of these efforts will inform the National Defense Strategy and decisions to be captured in the President's fiscal year 2023 budget submission and associated Future Years Defense Program," Nogueira said.

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Fort Lee chosen as first stop in U.S. for relocating Afghans under Operation Allies Refuge

by C. Todd Lopez,
DOD News

Over the weekend the State Department asked the Defense Department to provide a loca-

tion where it could temporarily house as many as 2,500 Afghan citizens as part of the "Operation Allies Refuge" program.

"We have recommended, based on this initial request for assistance, the use of Fort Lee, in Virginia, as a temporary host installation," Pentagon Press Secretary John F. Kirby said during a briefing today at the Pentagon.

For 20 years in Afghanistan, Afghan nationals lent assistance to U.S. military operations there. With operations in that country closing out by the end of August, the U.S. government has made plans to move those civilians and their families to other locations.

"This initial group of [special immigrant visa] applicants would be able to, while at Fort Lee ... safely complete the final steps of the SIV process, such as final medical screenings and

final administrative requirements," Kirby said. "These initial relocation movements — the first that are under Operation Allies Refuge — will again reaffirm America's commitment to those who have helped us and to whom we owe so much."

This initial group of Afghans — about 700 Afghan citizens who participated in helping the U.S. military and 1,800 family members — are in the final stages of the SIV process, and are expected to stay at Fort Lee for just a few days before being resettled elsewhere in the United States, Kirby said.

At Fort Lee, the Army will provide food and housing for both individuals and families. The Army will also provide medical care if it is needed. Kirby also said that all those coming to the U.S. will be medically screened before boarding planes to the U.S. and will also have already undergone an SIV-related security vetting process.

Right now there are no requests to find more space for additional Afghans under the Operation Allies Refuge program, but Kirby said if and when those requests do come, the department is ready.

"We're mindful of the large number that are in the SIV program right now at various stages and we have said all along that DOD will contribute to the interagency effort ... to help in

the relocation efforts of all those in the SIV program that are interested and eligible to come to the U.S.," Kirby said. "Clearly, we are planning for greater num-

bers than just this initial 2,500." Kirby said that additional DOD supporting locations may be needed, and that the department is examining other options.

Total Navy Battle Force: 297
Ships underway
 Deployed ships underway: 59
 Non-deployed ships underway: 34
Total ships underway: 83
Ships deployed by fleet

Fleet Forces: 1	3rd Fleet: 3
4th Fleet: 3	5th Fleet: 21
6th Fleet: 14	7th Fleet: 56
Total: 98	



Current and former members of 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division gather at Fort Drum, N.Y., in October 2018 to commemorate the participation of the 10th Mountain Division in the Battle of Mogadishu. The Army announced on July 2 that 60 soldiers who fought in the battle will receive upgraded awards. Army photo by Matthew Pargett

Army to upgrade 60 medals for 'Black Hawk Down' Soldiers

by Corey Dickstein, Stars and Stripes

Sixty American Soldiers who fought in the infamous Battle of Mogadishu will receive upgraded awards later this year for their valorous efforts 28 years ago in the brutal running battle through the streets of Somalia's capital, the Army announced.

Army Special Operations Command officials will award 58 Silver Stars and two Distinguished Flying Crosses to Soldiers who fought in that hours-long battle. The decision to upgrade the medals follows a review of awards ordered in 2020 by former Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, service officials said Friday. The Oct. 3, 1993, battle was immortalized in Mark Bowden's best-selling 1999 book "Black Hawk Down" and its 2001 adaptation to film by director Ridley Scott.

The recipients of the awards will receive their upgraded medals in ceremonies hosted by the units that they were assigned to at the time of the battle, said Bonita Riddley, a USASOC spokeswoman. Riddley declined to provide the names of the soldiers whose awards will be upgraded or the units in which they served.

"We're not releasing any specifics as there are still many particulars to be worked through as well," she said Friday.

The battle broke out as American special operators — primarily members of the Army's elite 75th Ranger Regiment and 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment-Delta, or Delta Force — set out to capture two top lieutenants of warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid, who was responsible for attacks on U.N. peace-keeping troops working to end civil war in Somalia. After the special operators, dubbed Task Force Ranger, nabbed Aidid's aides, militants attacked the

troops and shot down two MH-60 Black Hawk helicopters with rocket-propelled grenades.

Eighteen American troops died in the ensuing 18-hour battle, including three of the four pilots in the downed Black Hawk. The fourth pilot was captured and later released. Two Delta Force operators - Master Sgt. Gary Gordon and Sgt. 1st Class Randy Shughart - were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions to secure the site of one of the Black Hawk crashes to recover survivors.

Both operators died in the battle.

In all, 73 U.S. troops were injured in the fight, according to the Army. The botched mission left a long-lasting mark on American foreign policy after television news broadcast images of an American Soldier's body dragged through Mogadishu's streets as locals cheered.

The defense secretary at the time, Les Aspin, would resign his post in wake of the battle. Ultimately, former President Bill Clinton elected to end the mission to capture Aidid, called Operation Gothic Serpent, and he removed all U.S. forces from Somalia by March 1994. U.S. troops would not return to the country until 2007.

The Silver Star is the third-highest award for battlefield heroics. The Distinguished Flying Cross recognizes heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial flight.



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Vets can request a correction to military records through a review board

by Terri Moon Cronk,
DOD News

The Defense Department wants to make sure its veterans know they can apply to correct inaccuracies or injustices in their military records, including an upgrade in discharge, officials for the DOD's legal policy office said.

"Veterans who believe they have suffered an inequity or injustice warranting a correction to their service record or who believe their discharge was unjust, erroneous or warrants an upgrade are encouraged to apply," said Christa Specht, director of the Office of Legal Policy.

For example, veterans who received less than honorable discharges can file an application to request their military records be changed as long as they provide justifiable supplemental information for approval by their military department's Board for Correction of Military/Naval Records or Discharge Review Board.

Further more, applications to a military department review board that allege a veteran

suffered from a mental health condition, post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, sexual assault or sexual harassment while on duty, will be reviewed using a "liberal consideration" standard, according to a May 26 memorandum from the acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness.

Also, on Feb. 19, 2021, the department directed the secretaries of the military departments to identify and examine the records of any service member who was involuntarily separated, discharged, or denied reenlistment or continuation of service in accordance with the prior administration's policies relating to gender identity. The military departments issued supplemental guidance to their respective Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records for review of service members' records so that, where appropriate, individuals who meet current accession standards and are otherwise eligible are offered an opportunity to rejoin the military.

The boards can also grant relief based on clemency, Specht said, noting that those who got

out of the military with a less than honorable discharge might still have positive accomplishments or evidence of good conduct to provide a review board in support of an upgrade. This may include indications of rehabilitation such as a long job history, absence of additional misconduct, character references, or proof of extensive volunteer work.

One incentive for veterans to request an upgrade to their discharge is so they can qualify for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits, such as the GI Bill and VA mortgages, said Margarete Ashmore, deputy director of the DOD's legal policy office.

How to request a change

Veterans who want to ask for discharge upgrades, reconsiderations of previously denied upgrades, or corrections to other military records should fill out the appropriate form and return it to their service's review board at the address listed on the form. Links to the forms can be found at the end of this article.

- For discharges fewer than 15 years ago, veterans should complete DD Form 293.

- For discharges more than 15 years ago or in cases already

considered for upgrade and denied by a military department Discharge Review Board, veterans should complete DD Form 149.

- For corrections of records other than discharges, veterans should complete the DD Form 149.

If a veteran is unsure how or where to apply for a discharge upgrade or correction, the VA, in partnership with the DOD, provides resources that can be used to help with applications and provide personal instructions in response to a few questions on the public website.

Essential information to include in applications

Veterans should include the following information:

- Explain why the discharge or other record was unjust or erroneous: How is it connected to or resulting from unjust policies, a physical or mental health condition related to military service, or some other explainable or justifiable circumstance?

- Provide support, where applicable, for key facts. If a veteran has a relevant medical diagnosis, for example, it

would be helpful to include medical records that reflect that diagnosis.

- Submit copies of applicable service records.

Specht emphasized that the more information a veteran provides, the easier it is for the review boards to understand the circumstances of the correction being sought.

Personnel records for veterans who served after 1997 should be accessible online and are usually retrievable within hours of a request through the Defense Personnel Records

Information Retrieval System (DPRIS).

To obtain a personnel record from DPRIS, visit the website, select "Individual Veteran Access" on the left side, and follow the instructions. Veterans must register for access and verify their mailing address before requesting records.

Those who served before 1997 or for whom electronic records are not available from DPRIS can request their records from the National Archives' National Personnel Records Center using the eVetRecs website.

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Helping service members and spouses land post-military careers

(StatePoint) Navigating the job market is tricky for any job seeker. For transitioning U.S. service members and military spouses, finding one's professional footing can be even more challenging.

From frequent relocations and childcare considerations to bias on the part of potential employers, transitioning service members and military spouses face many hurdles that can adversely impact their civilian careers.

According to U.S. Government sources including the Department of Veterans Affairs, an estimated 200,000-plus service members transition from the military to civilian life each year. Currently, 650,000-plus military spouses are in a state of transition. To improve their career prospects, advocates stress the importance of mentorship.

"Military life teaches discipline, strong work ethic, teamwork, communication skills and adaptability, all of which are highly valued by employers," says Christopher Plamp, senior vice president of operations, programs and entertainment at the United Service Organizations (USO). "This employment shortfall is not a reflection of



The military community faces numerous obstacles in fulfilling their career goals in the civilian workforce. However, new mentorship resources can help close the employment opportunity gap. Photo courtesy of USO

lack of talent, skill or drive. It's largely a matter of connecting the military community with civilian job opportunities."

As part of its mission to strengthen America's military service members, the nonprofit USO recently partnered with Veterati, a digital mentorship platform for the military community, to launch the USO Mentorship offering. In a rapidly changing world where 80 percent of new jobs come from a personal

connection, this resource is networking transitioning service members and military spouses with volunteer mentors in their industry of interest.

These mentors are successful professionals who provide critical career guidance on interviewing skills, career paths, personal branding and building a professional network.

Within its Pathfinder Transition Program, the USO also sup-

ports professional development in the military community, in addition to this mentorship offering. USO Transition Specialists help create individualized plans focusing on employment, education, financial readiness

and increased access to relevant veterans' benefits in their communities. The USO also hosts career-focused webinars and live workshops on topics such as mastering LinkedIn, building a federal resume and pursuing

higher education.

To learn more about military spouses, the military-civilian transition or how to volunteer as a Veterati mentor, visit uso.org/mentorship.

How to avoid workplace violence

by Dr. Daneen Skube,
Tribune Content Agency

Q: I scan the news and it seems more people than ever are resorting to out of the blue violence. I have a job where I interact a lot with the public and am going to work scared. Are there tools you offer for those of us that work extensively with the public and would like to avoid being the target of violence?

A: Yes, if you want to make it less likely you will be a target of random violence you need to check your ego at the door. Give up needing to be right, power struggles, and demanding understanding or validation from your customers. A customer that is unstable and feels invalidated is much more likely to be a perpetrator of violence at their perceived offender.

You're correct that all over our country random violence is increasing. The problem isn't just that we have access to guns. The problem is that we have a mental health crisis that has been brewing with little relief throughout the pandemic. Mentally unstable people with access to guns are a deadly combination.

Some news events about violence describes attacks that are entirely unprovoked. Like a young mother pumping gas that was beaten up by a stranger. The only thing this woman could have done is to be situationally aware that a weird stranger was approaching her. Dropping the gas pump, jumping into her car, and locking it would have seemed strange but kept her safe.

Any time we're out in public we should be extremely situationally aware. Staring at our phones, listening to music or daydreaming means people that are ill have more room to do us harm. You always want to listen to your gut in public. If anything seems off it is better to leave, or make yourself safe even if you look foolish to others.

When experts evaluate violent events they notice many people would have avoided harm just by creating space between themselves and the attacker, going into a public space, or taking evasive action. You'll get over looking foolish. You may not get over an attack by an unstable person.

Other than unprovoked attacks the most common variable in workplace violence is when we chose to engage in a power struggle. Insulting anyone, demanding compliance, or criticizing customers are not smart actions. If you are engaged with someone in an escalating situation, you're better off paraphrasing their concerns and providing understanding.

Again your gut instincts are your survival instincts. If a customer is escalating and you sense they are mentally unstable, use any excuse necessary to calm them down. Retreat to a safe place and consult with your management. Any manager would rather have a heads up that a customer may be a potential threat than have a crisis unfold.

Some phrases that are helpful when someone is mentally ill include: "You may be right," "I see your point," or "You have every right to be upset." Most mentally ill people are less likely to attack someone that behaves like an ally than someone that acts like an adversary.

In dealing with the public do not assume that everyone you encounter has the same level of mental health as you. In the short run, your ego may take a beating when you feel you are right and you decline an argument but your body will be safer.

The last word(s)

Q: I think my boss is out to get me. Should I confront him about his lack of support?

A: No, if you confront him about being your enemy he will live up to your accusation. Instead use every opportunity to deliver performance that makes him look good and polish your resume if this doesn't work.

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.

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U.S. and Indian navies hold ceremony to commemorate India's first MH-60R

by MC2 Sara Eshleman

SAN DIEGO - The U.S. and Indian navies celebrated a historic milestone when two MH-60R Seahawk helicopters were inducted into the Indian Naval Fleet during a ceremony at Naval Air Station North Island, July 16.

The ceremony is part of an ongoing initiative that also includes comprehensive training for Indian aircrew and maintainers on operating and sustaining the MH-60R. This bilateral initiative serves to strengthen the U.S. and India's enduring friendship and enhance our combined anti-submarine and undersea domain capability.

Indian Ambassador to the United States Taranjit Singh Sandhu spoke at the ceremony and stated "The induction of these all-weather multi-role helicopters is an important milestone in our bilateral defense ties."

During the ceremony, Vice Adm. Ravneet Singh, Indian Navy Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, and Vice Adm. Kenneth Whitesell, Commander, Naval

Air Forces, signed the U.S.-India MH-60R commemorative plaque, which all Indian Navy personnel will also sign upon completion of the MH-60R training program.

"For the Indian Navy, it's really a proud moment," said Vice Adm. Singh. "The induction of the MH-60 helicopter into the Indian Navy is a symbol of the ever-growing global strategic partnership of our two countries and reinforces the common ideologies of our great nations."

The primary mission of the MH-60R is surface and subsurface warfare. The helicopter is also capable of search and rescue operations, vertical replenishments, personnel transport, and medical evacuation operations.

"The MH-60R is a cutting-edge multi-mission aircraft that will significantly enhance our Navy-to-Navy cooperation and strengthen our combined anti-submarine and undersea domain capabilities on the open seas," said Vice Adm. Whitesell. "As was true for the U.S. Navy, these aircraft and their operators will

immediately strengthen their armed forces to deter, counter, and defend against any threat to the international rules-based order that we mutually recognize as critically important to global security."

Over the coming years, the U.S. Navy will help prepare Indian Navy aviators, sensor operators, and maintainers to operate and maintain the MH-60R. Members of the Indian Navy arrived in the United States last month to begin training on the MH-60R; maintenance personnel are currently studying maintenance requirements and procedures at NAS North Island.

The first Indian Navy MH-60R pilots and sensor operators have completed the Naval Aviation Survival Training Program at NAS Pensacola and begun aircrew training with the "Seahawks" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 41.



Vice Adm. Kenneth Whitesell, commander, Naval Air Forces, left, presents the Material Inspection and Receiving Report for first aircraft to Vice Adm. Ravneet Singh, Indian Navy Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, during an acceptance ceremony at Naval Air Station North Island July 16. The Indian Navy inducted its first two MH-60R Seahawks from the U.S. Navy. The Indian Navy will receive a total of 24 MH-60Rs in the contract with the U.S. Navy. Navy photo by MC2 Sara Eshleman

Naval Base Ventura County welcomes new leader

by Ensign Drew Verbis, Naval Base Ventura County

Naval Base Ventura County welcomed its newest leader Capt. Robert "Barr" Kimmach III (right, in photo) while celebrating the retirement of its departing leader Capt. Jeff Chism (left, in photo) at Point Mugu, July 8. Rear Adm. Bette Bolivar, commander, Navy Region Southwest, was the guest speaker and officiated the change of command. "Capt. Chism has taken community engagement to the highest level," said Bolivar. "With Jeff at the helm, this installation excelled, made many accomplishments and exceeded all expectations. His achievements have truly reflected our mission and enabled warfighter readiness. Jeff's vision of Ventura County has been unmatched." "This retirement is an emotional day for me," said Chism. "This job is much bigger than any single contribution." The last assignment for Kimmach III was with 3rd Fleet. "Jeff has setup the NBVC team for success and I hope to retain all the knowledge he has shared," said Kimmach. "Today we honor him during his retirement."



by Winifred Brown

PRESIDIO OF MONTEREY - At times, Presidio of Monterey law enforcement and security personnel who participated in vehicle interdiction training here July 12-14 couldn't help but smile.

The training focused on vehicle searches, and when par-

ticipants found an item after scouring a vehicle for carefully hidden contraband, their faces lit up.

One of them was Officer Nery Cruz, a PoM security guard who did a deep dive under a steering wheel to uncover a plastic training gun. Not only will the training help him search vehicles

more thoroughly and increase safety at PoM, but it also taught him how use the correct tools and not damage vehicles during searches, he said.

"I found some stuff where we would never, ever think that we would find stuff," Cruz said.

Janice Quenga, PoM antiterrorism officer, said more than

30 law enforcement, security and antiterrorism personnel from PoM and other local agencies, including Fort Hunter Liggett, California State University-Monterey and Naval Support Activity Monterey, participated in the training at the General Stilwell Center.

see Monterey, page 9

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SeaWorld offers free admission to military veterans through Dec. 24

SeaWorld San Diego is offering free tickets to U.S. military veterans for themselves and three guests to visit the park through Dec. 24, 2021.

The veterans offer has been available since April and due to its popularity and the park operating at full capacity, the offer has been extended allowing vets more time to visit. This offer is part of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment's longstanding

Waves of Honor program, which salutes active-duty military members, veterans, and their families by offering special pricing and promotions throughout the year.

Military veterans and retirees must register online at www.WavesofHonor.com in advance and verify their proof of service through the *ID.me* qualification process. SeaWorld works with *ID.me* to provide an online



verification of former military personnel in a secure and privacy-enhancing manner. Once veterans and their guests have

registered online, they can bring their e-tickets directly to the park's entrance turnstiles.

"We hold the men and women that have served in our armed forces in the highest regard and are honored to host them at our parks as our guests," said John Dunlap, SeaWorld San Diego Park President. "As the country is returning to a new normal, we wanted to give our veterans

more time and flexibility to take advantage of this offer and enjoy a day at the park with their families."

Waves of Honor additionally provides any U.S. active-duty military, activated or drilling reservist, or National Guardsman one complimentary admission for themselves and up to three dependents per year to SeaWorld. As an added thank you, veterans and active military ser-

vice members can also purchase up to six additional tickets at 50 percent off. Service members and their direct dependents must have a valid active military ID to participate.

For park hours and to purchase tickets, visit SeaWorldSanDiego.com. Events and times are subject to change. Follow SeaWorld San Diego on Facebook and Instagram for the latest park updates and information.

Lt. Madeline Murphy, a physical therapist assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command



SAN DIEGO
July 14, 2021

San Diego, feeds a mini horse used for therapy in the hospital's courtyard. Cornerstone Therapeutic Riding Center provides those in need with access to horses for therapeutic benefits. Navy photo by MC2 Jake Greenberg



USS VINSON
July 16, 2021

Vice Adm. Steve Koehler, commander, 3rd Fleet, passes through sideboys after arriving aboard Carl Vinson aircraft carrier. Vinson is conducting routine operations Navy photo by MCSN Isaiah Williams

This week's snapshots



PORT HUENEME
July 12, 2021

Builder Constructionman Asante Conorquie, assigned to U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3, disassembles a pre-engineered building (PEB) on board Naval Base Ventura County, Port Hueneme as part of a construction training exercise (CTX). The CTX challenges the Seabees to dismantle and erect a PEB in a prescribed timeframe to prepare them to execute construction tasking during the battalion's upcoming Exercise TURNING POINT, a major combat operations readiness generation exercise designed to support and enable fleet maneuver and logistics. Navy photo by MC1 Michael Lopez



CAMP PENDLETON
JULY 15, 2021

Marines with 3rd Assault Amphibian Battalion enter the Del Mar boat basin during amphibious assault vehicle training. Marines train to be proficient with safety procedures for water operations. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Cameron Rowe

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Qvon Fayson rappels out of a Knight Hawk helicopter during a search and rescue training exercise.



LEMOORE
July 12, 2021

Navy photo by Lily Gebauer

MAY 21 - SEPT 6

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(top) Marine Corps Lt. Col. Jonathan Barr, the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar airfield operations officer, poses for a photo with visiting teachers as part of the Educators' Workshop July 14. (inset) Marines and teachers pose for a group photo. The workshop is a week-long



Marine Corps Recruiting Command program designed to inform high school educators about the benefits and opportunities available during service in the Marine Corps, and allows attendees to return home and provide first-hand experience and knowledge to their students interested in military service. During this iteration of the workshop, the teachers and recruiters from Albuquerque, Dallas, Fort Worth, and San Antonio visited the station. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Raynaldo Ramos

Monterey continued from page 7

The training involved a combination of classroom and hands-on training, and on the second day the class split up into groups to search vehicles. Doors, trunks and hoods open, participants combed through the vehicles looking for simulated guns and drugs. Not content with the insides of the vehicles, they also climbed underneath to see if they could find anything beneath the vehicles.

The training provided personnel with new tactics and techniques, Quenga said, and also helped them improve their skills at finding items such as drugs, guns and explosive devices.

Local municipal organizations participated as well, and Brian George, a K-9 handler from the Santa Cruz Police Department, brought along his K-9 Parker, a narcotics detection dog, so they could improve their search skills.

"I don't get a chance to search a variety of newer cars with experts at hiding stuff, so it just gave [Parker] some hard problems today," George said. "It went well. Four out of four."

Quenga said installation officials hold antiterrorism training annually in commemoration of

National Antiterrorism Awareness Month, which is in August. Last year, however, it was not possible to hold training because of Covid-19.

The 4:20 Group, LLC, a company based in Elberfeld, Ind., taught the training through the Northeast Counterdrug Training Center based in Annville, Penn., said James Eagleson, chief operations officer for the company.

Since the NCTC receives money from Congress to provide counterdrug training throughout the country, the class comes at no cost to the students and they're able to take what they learn back to their agencies, Eagleson said.

"They get hands on training searching cars, trucks, SUVs," Eagleson said. "Today they were exposed to 150 different concealment methods—backs, floors, all kinds of different compartments, and they have to find all of them today. If they don't find all of them, we show them."

The training includes a variety of vehicles from different vehicle manufacturers so personnel can gain a sense of what is standard and what might indicate tampering, Eagleson said.

"These are brand new cars,



Officer Monica Garcia-Gonzalez, a Presidio of Monterey security guard, searches under a vehicle for hidden contraband during vehicle interdiction training July 13. Photo by Winifred Brown

2021, so for the next 10 years of their careers, they're going to see these cars," Eagleson said. "Every year we bring brand new cars, and we show them what's factory, what's not, what's been added, what's been taken away."

The class spans vehicle searches all the way from before traffic

stops to court, Eagleson said.

"It's not just show them one thing and then we leave," Eagleson said. "We want to be well-rounded, so when they leave here, they have a better understanding of what interdiction is, and our target is not just drugs. It's any type of contraband."



The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

I'll admit it: I love reality television. Ever since the early days of MTV's "The Real World," "Cops," and "Survivor." I tried others, like "Big Brother," "The Amazing Race," and "The Apprentice." But it wasn't until I stumbled upon reruns of "The Real Housewives of New York" after our family moved back to the states from a tour in Germany, that I found my reality television "spirit animal."

I gobbled up all the "Real Housewives" reruns until I was up to speed with the various franchises filmed in Orange County, N.Y.C., Atlanta, New Jersey, D.C., Beverly Hills, Miami, Potomac, Dallas and Salt Lake City — each featuring women with thick accents, and even thicker make up.

Some say that "The Real Housewives" perpetuate gender stereotypes, blah, blah, blah. I say lighten up. The shows are morally and intellectually bankrupt, but I tune in for entertainment, not self-improvement. The outlandish cast members and ridiculous story lines are nothing like my reality. However, there have been moments during my 23 years as an active duty Navy wife when I detected hints of the caddy drama that's the cornerstone of every Real Housewives franchise. While I haven't witnessed anyone flip a table while screaming, "You prostitution whore!"; I can imagine a Real Housewives show featuring gossipy, judgey military spouses ...

After a car insurance commercial,

Cat fights, gossip girls, and judgey eyes: Who are 'The Real Housewives of the Military'?

four military spouses posing in ball gowns appear on the screen, under a show title, "The Real Housewives of the Military." The camera zooms in on each woman, as she announces her "tagline" over introductory instrumental music.

"You might drive a tank, but ain't nobody rolling over me," quips Army wife Janelle with a petulant grin.

"I may look fragile, but I can hold down the fort," claims Marine wife Angela, flexing a sequined bicep.

"My husband is out to sea, but our family is ship-shape," brags Navy wife Mona, striking a Rosy-the-Riveter pose.

"I'm no stranger to a cockpit, but I'm always on solid ground," cracks Air Force wife Bridget in a sultry voice.

Opening scene: all four women sit around a picnic table at the base housing community playground, chatting while their kids play.

"I swear, if her kids leave their scooters in the cul-de-sac again tonight, I'm calling the ombudsman," whispers Mona about Wendy, who recently moved into the neighborhood.

"Seriously. Just because your husband is deployed for a year doesn't give you the right to make the rest of us pick up your slack," says Bridget, rolling her eyes with dramatic flair.

Just then, Wendy approaches the picnic table and says cheerfully, "Hi guys!" The women plaster smiles on their faces and greet her, while glancing sideways at each other.

"What're you wearing to the military ball this weekend, Wendy?" asks Janelle with an arched eyebrow.

"I'm not sure I can go ... can't find a babysitter," Wendy says, looking back at her three boys swinging and squealing like wild gibbons in a nearby tree.

"Well, Bridget's daughter," starts Angela, but stops short when Bridget kicks her hard under the table. "Uh, never mind. I think she's busy actually," she lies, wincing and rubbing her shin. For a moment, it seems like Wendy wants to sit at the table, but the women quickly spread their elbows, knees and diaper bags to take up as much room as possible.

Feeling rejected, Wendy slinks off to tend to her youngest, who has fallen off the teeter totter. Janelle, Angela, Mona and Bridget turn to each other and snicker.

Cut to breakfast cereal commercial.

This imaginary episode of "The Real Housewives of the Military" may be hypothetical, but it illustrates something important. We may think that we're better than the people we see behaving badly on television, but if the lens was turned on us, what would we see?

In reality, no one is perfect, but as military spouses we should always strive to support each other through our uniquely challenging lives of service and sacrifice. If military spouses had television taglines, I'd like to think ours would be, "Our spouses may wear the uniforms, but we'll always be sisters and brothers in arms."

Movie cars & what's new at Universal Studios Hollywood + A very special announcement

Universal Studios Hollywood

I love Universal Studios Hollywood but, due to its closure for COVID-19, I have not been there in a very long time. I jumped at the chance to return when I was invited to their summer Media Days. By the end of my wonderful, sunny day, I had taken almost 3,000 pictures throughout the park and Universal CityWalk, gotten soaked on "Jurassic World—The Ride," barely escaped the shark from "Jaws" and was utterly exhausted.

There is so much to see and do, including elaborate themed rides, movie and TV sets — and cars, spectacular live shows, a studio tour, tempting dining options, shopping and more — even a waterpark for the kids. One day is not enough! Thankfully, Universal Studios Hollywood is still affordable, offering not only day tickets (for the best prices, buy them online) but also ANNUAL PASSES.

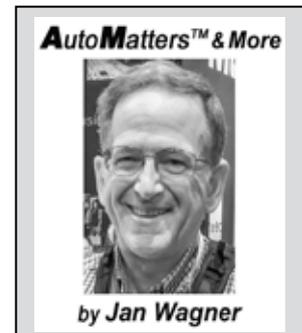
Inspired by the films, "The Secret Life of Pets: Off the Leash!" is a new, family-friendly ride attraction that answers the question: "What are your pets really doing when you're not at home?" To see for yourself, you will begin by walking through their New York City apartment building into their homes, and then take the ride — all while their humans are away.

With live action enabled by technologically-advanced animation and state-of-the-art projection mapping, 64 lovable characters interact with each other and you.

Minimize waiting in line by using their app-based Virtual Line technology — at no extra charge.

Get close to Blue, if you dare, at the Raptor Encounter. Then intensify your Jurassic experience on "Jurassic World—The Ride." Prepare to get very wet — as I experienced first-hand while riding it three times! Spectacularly introduced in this 2019

online video, a rampaging Tyrannosaurus rex sends the terrified casts and crews of several film productions running for their lives through the Universal backlot and out the main entrance, as the dinosaur smashes through it in hot pursuit: <https://youtu.be/FE50XcYnHRE>.



by Jan Wagner

The climax of the ride is a truly epic, animated battle between the huge, hyper-realistic Tyrannosaurus rex and Indominus rex that tower above you in the darkness (which I needed to shoot at 108,000 ISO!), just before you plunge down a giant waterfall in a desperate effort to escape! Sitting at the front, with my Nikon D5 wrapped in part of my poncho, I was thoroughly drenched by a wall of water.

Minion Café is a new place to eat, adjacent to "Despicable Me: Minion Mayhem" and the "Super Silly Fun Land" waterpark.

From 3PM daily, check out NBC Sports Grill & Brew — CityWalk's newest dining establishment. It features high-definition big-screens inside and out, a food menu curated by Universal Studios Hollywood's Executive Chef Marie Grimm, a wide selection of alcoholic beverages, shuffleboard and foosball tables.

To see many additional photos, visit AutoMatters.net.

A Very Special Announcement — Many Years in the Making!

Since writing my first column about 20 years ago, I intended for "AutoMatters & More" to have its own website where you could see all of the columns (now over 700), complete with my extensive collection of photos — many of which are of people, places and events that are no longer with us.

I embarked upon this ambitious project long ago, carefully choosing a website building program that I thought was likely to be around for many years to come: Microsoft's FrontPage. It was not a particularly easy or user-friendly program for me to learn, and the process to add each column was convoluted and complicated. It took months to accomplish but, eventually, I overcame these and other obstacles. My website went live, for all the world to see, at AutoMatters.net.

My website gained in popularity and its rankings grew. I continued to write new columns and take more photos, adding them to the website. All was going well and as planned — until Microsoft discontinued FrontPage, along with the support necessary to enable it to work with new versions of computer operating systems. Microsoft had killed FrontPage, and with it my website.

Fast-forward to today. Here, in column #701, I am proud to officially announce my brand new "AutoMatters & More" WordPress website, live now at AutoMatters.net. Over 400 of my columns have already been uploaded to there, and more will be added.

To explore AutoMatters.net, simply type a topic in the website's Search Bar, or click on one of the blue "years" buttons below that Search Bar, at the bottom of the Home Page. Welcome!

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CLASSIFIEDS Social Security Matters

Should I claim at 62 or wait?

Dear Rusty: I turn 62 next year, and I am getting different answers to my questions so I hope you can help me. The amount I would collect is different at 67 and 72. If I start to collect Social Security at 62, when I turn 67 will it go up to that amount? And go up again when I turn 72? One person I spoke to said yes it does. The next person I spoke to said no - you get the amount for the age that you start to collect and that's all you get for the rest of your life. Please help me to understand if I should start to collect at 62 or should I wait?

Signed: Confused About When to Claim

Dear Confused: First of all, your Social Security benefit stops growing when you turn 70, so waiting beyond that to claim will only cause you to lose benefits you are entitled to. Essentially you have an 8 year window to claim your Social Security benefits, and the amount you get will be based on the age you claim, relative to your full retirement age (FRA). Your personal FRA is 67, and if you claim at age 62, you'll get 70% of what you would get at your FRA. That reduction is permanent except for Cost of Living Adjustments (COLA) which may occur annually. Whenever you claim, that is the amount you'll get for the rest of your life - it doesn't go up at age 67, or any other later age. But the question of whether you should claim at age 62 or wait longer is more complicated.

If you are still working, you should be aware that claiming at any time before age 67 will mean Social Security's "earning test" will apply. The earnings test sets a limit for how much you can earn from working before SS takes away some of your benefits. For 2021, the earnings limit is \$18,960 (it changes annually) and if that is exceeded SS will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit (we don't yet know what the 2022 limit will be, but it will be slightly more than the 2021 limit). The earnings limit applies until you reach your full retirement age, after which there is no longer a limit to how much you can earn. If you exceed the earnings limit by a substantial amount, you could even be disqualified from receiving any benefits.

Other factors to consider when deciding when to claim are your health and your life expectancy, the urgency of your need for the money, and your marital status. The longer you wait to claim, up to age 70, the more your benefit will be. In fact, if you wait until age 70 to claim, your benefit will be 24% more than it would be at your FRA. But whether to wait beyond your FRA to claim should consider your life expectancy. If, for example, you wait until age 70 to maximize your benefit, you will need to live until at least 83 to break even (average longevity for someone your current age is about 84).

If you are married and have higher lifetime earnings than your spouse, you should be aware that your spouse's benefit as your survivor, should you die first, will be affected by your age when you claim. If you wait and claim at a later age, your spouse's survivor benefit will be more (assuming your spouse's own benefit is smaller). If you claim at an earlier age, your spouse's survivor benefit will be less.

So, as you can see, there's no one simple answer for when you should claim your Social Security benefits. Everyone's personal circumstances are different and deciding when to claim benefits should consider your entire situation, as described above.

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-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Roy's sudoku

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

MOVIES AT THE BASES

Movies & times subject to change. * Indicates last showing
Visit navydispatch.com/entertainment_03movies.htm to find your base theatre information

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143
MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

Friday, July 23
6pm Peter Rabbit 2: Runaway (PG)
9pm Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard (R)
Saturday, July 24
3pm TBD
6pm The Fast Saga (PG-13)

Naval Base Theater - NBSD,
619-556-5568, Bldg. 71
3465 Senn Rd.

FREE entry to the first 375 customers (per showing), no outside food, concessions will be available.
Friday, July 23
6pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)
Saturday, July 24
2:20pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)
6pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)
Sunday, July 25
2pm Spirit Untamed (PG)
3:30pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)

Lowry Theater - NASNI,
619-545-8479
Bldg. 650

Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.
Lowry Theater is a cashless facility. Debit and credit cards accepted only
Friday, July 23
6pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)
Saturday, July 24
6pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)
Sunday, July 25
1pm Peter Rabbit 2: Runaway (PG)

Pendleton Theater and Training Center
Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across from Mainside Center)

Saturday, July 24
1:30pm The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It (R)

Crossword Puzzle

Across

- 1 Story like "Roots"
- 5 K9 Advantix II targets
- 6 Dance that tells a story
- 14 Capturing device
- 15 Cuba ___: rum cocktail
- 16 Former Lacoste sportswear partner
- 17 Taj Mahal city
- 18 5,000 feet, roughly
- 20 Providing post-bath garb to red-breasted singers?
- 22 Keep a roomie awake, maybe
- 23 Letters before an alias
- 24 Window sticker
- 28 Surg. areas
- 30 Chocolate-filled cookie
- 31 Doing poorly in baking class?
- 36 Became the champ
- 37 Farm bleaters
- 38 Like many SSA payment recipients
- 39 Growing dried grapes?
- 44 Mischievous doings
- 45 Jaguar XK-E, e.g.
- 46 Tomato concentrate
- 47 Hope/Crosby film destination
- 50 Make roar, as an engine
- 54 Recording easy putts?
- 57 "That's slightly inaccurate"
- 60 Bluesy James
- 61 Put one ___ on: fool
- 62 Gadget used on an apple
- 63 Ace, as a test
- 64 High roller's rolls
- 65 The ones over there
- 66 Abound (with)

Down

- 1 Overhead twinklers
- 2 One of the noble gases
- 3 Actress Greta
- 4 Two that match, as socks
- 5 Flier on a pole
- 6 Heavenly scales
- 7 Kindle download
- 8 Dutch-speaking Caribbean island
- 9 Alien-seeking org.
- 10 "And he ... HE _! ... The Grinch carved the roast-beast!"
- 11 Israeli weapon
- 12 Enthusiastic online "Ha-ha!"
- 13 Beverage suffix
- 19 "___ I don't?": challenging words
- 21 Foam-based ball
- 25 Piled-stones memorial
- 26 Authors Rice and Tyler
- 27 Suffered defeat
- 29 6-Down and 11 others
- 30 Beethoven's love
- 31 Polynesian Disney princess
- 32 Watts and volts
- 33 Rich holiday drink
- 34 Long-nosed fish
- 35 L.A. commuter org.
- 36 Rolled-up sandwich
- 40 Paid tot minders
- 41 Mountaineer's tool
- 42 Lee whom nobody doesn't like
- 43 Sinner's atonement words
- 47 Copier brand
- 48 MC's opening words
- 49 Looks untowardly toward
- 51 Curriculum ___: rA@sumA©
- 52 Loosen, as a knot
- 53 Song of worship
- 55 Treaty
- 56 Spare in a Brit's boot
- 57 Currently
- 58 Egg cells
- 59 Talking stuffed bear of film

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
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9	6	8	8	7	1	9	2	2
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Military Medical Research leads to 18 new cancer drugs, other devices

In just the past year, they've been working on new, high-tech treatments for major health problems like cancer, severe hearing loss and genetic diseases like muscular dystrophy.

While the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, known as CDMRP, is not really a household name that is immediately familiar to many people in the military community, it is well known among medical researchers around the world.

The CDMRP is essentially a Department of Defense funding organization that has been a hub of cutting-edge healthcare innovation financing since the early 1990s and has impacted health care development inside and outside the military for decades.

"Certainly, when CDMRP research leads to Food and Drug Administration-approved treatment, it is a big win for the entire community," said Army Col. Sarah Goldman, CDMRP's director.

"Research from CDMRP's cancer programs alone has led to 18 FDA-approved drugs and devices that are currently being used, as well as significant changes in clinical practice."

Based at Fort Detrick, Maryland, the CDMRP is officially a part of the U.S. Army Futures Command, Medical Research and Development Command.

In just the last year, the FDA approved drugs developed through CDMRP-backed research to treat neurofibromatosis (a genetic disorder of the nervous system); Duchenne muscular dystrophy; and a blood cancer called multiple myeloma.

The CDMRP originated in 1992 via a single Congressional appropriation to encourage novel approaches to breast cancer research. Since then, it's grown to include funding for about 5,000 research projects investigating an array of medical issues.

"Our programs work hard to gather a lot of information to help identify research gaps and determine how to make key investments," Goldman said. "We gather different stakeholders at the table, to include representatives from the DOD. Many of our programs have NIH representation as well as experts from the VA (Veterans Administration) ... really all of the major federal and non-federal research funders. We also include scientists and clinical experts in a particular area, and it's extremely important that we have the consumer perspective at the table. Integrating consumers into CDMRP's panels is one of our hallmarks and their input is absolutely critical."

"Our programs conduct a funding landscape analysis, where we figure out what's been funded so far, and where the gaps are."

Teams then develop strategies on how to fill those research gaps. Certain funding mechanisms seek out "innovative, high-impact, high-risk, and high-gain projects, where we're willing to take a chance on some research" and where other agencies may not be willing to tread, Goldman said.

Some of the research may be exploratory in nature, she said. Sometimes reviewers of the research do not know who the principal investigator is, or even the organization behind it, to avoid bias toward some of the larger,

more well-known performers.

"They can really focus on the idea, and help determine if it's innovative and potentially impactful or not," Goldman said.

In this context, "consumers" could be patients, survivors, family members, or advocates representing an entire community affected by the disease or condition that's being studied.

"Integrating the consumer viewpoint is really one of the central tenets of the CDMRP," said Rebecca Fisher, the organization's deputy director for program management. "It's something that CDMRP pioneered many, many years ago, and I think others are now starting to see the tremendous value in that. We worked with the VA a few years back to share CDMRP approaches to help with their efforts to integrate more veteran input into VA research. Consumers are active in every part of our process."

That includes patients or advocates helping to set strategies, helping with peer and programmatic reviews, and even participating in research projects with investigators. The CDMRP has a training program and a mentoring process for those consumers who participate and provide input.

"CDMRP is not here to fund research for research's sake," said Fisher, who has managed complex biomedical research programs within the DOD for more than 15 years. "We are focused on accelerating solutions that will better people's lives. Even if it's earlier stage work that we're supporting, we're always looking to that horizon and how we can get there faster."

Fisher said that CDMRP-funded

open research awards currently number about 5,000. With so many highly promising areas being studied, it is difficult for her to pick just a handful of the most exciting prospects. But one that was cited by both Fisher and Goldman is a study of the drug known as Ruxolitinib for the possible prevention of breast cancer.

"If this drug is successful, it could have a major impact for women who are diagnosed with early benign breast lesions, when they don't know which ones are actually going to transition to cancers," Fisher explained. "Right now, the current standard of care is an anti-estrogen therapy, which has a lot of side effects and is very difficult, so some women discontinue or don't even take it."

"If you have a better preventative you can offer, it's a sea change in treatment. That's a huge, exciting project that's been developing over many years with different award mechanisms for these investigators through CDMRP's breast cancer program."

There is also a relatively new hearing restoration program underway that is funding pioneering research in treatment of auditory injuries and the restoration of hearing, including novel human 3D stem cell models of the inner ear, Fisher said.

"The inner ear is just really hard to get into and one of only a few organs for which biopsies are not possible," she said. "It's very difficult because of the bone structure around it. Having a way to test the effects of therapeutics on regenerating important sensory cells in the ear and perhaps restore hearing, down the road ... this technological



Michelle Pribble, Naval Medical Center San Diego's lead nuclear medicine technologist, prepares a patient for a positron emission tomography (PET) scan in the hospital's Nuclear Medicine Department Oct. 6. A PET scan is used for revealing or evaluating conditions including brain disorders. Navy photo by Luke Cunningham.

development may open up those avenues. This could be a huge change in this field."

In 2019, the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was awarded to two doctors, Gregg Semenza and William Kaelin, Jr., who previously received funding from the CDMRP. They shared the award with another scientist for discovering how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability. Their work has implications for treating a variety of diseases, including cancer.

"It was so exciting for CDMRP be a part of their journey on to winning the Nobel Prize, and to see how

their research has led to tremendous innovative breakthroughs," Goldman said recently.

Previously, two other scientists who were CDMRP-funded during their careers went on to become Nobel laureates, one in 2008 and another in 2009.

"We have the opportunity to realize a vision for very specific areas of medical research need, and hopefully accelerate the achievement of products and outcomes that will help to improve the lives of service members, veterans, and the American public, and really make a difference," Fisher said.

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