SHIFT COLORS

The Newsletter for Navy Retirees

Volume 68 Issue #1 | Navy Personnel Command | Spring-Summer 2022

As a retiree, you're still an important part of the Navy-Marine Corps Team

SECNAV Navy and Marine Corps Retiree Council

As a Navy or Marine Corps retiree, you're recognized as an individual with a continuing military status. You're part of the Total Force and are entitled to certain rights, benefits, and privileges. You're also subject to responsibilities arising from these entitlements.

You remain a vital part of the Navy-Marine Corps team.

To be a contributing member of the team, you need to know about changing programs and policies. That's where the Department of the Navy's Retired Activities Program comes in. It provides an avenue to ensure the relationships between retirees and the Navy and Marine Corps are reinforced and mutually beneficial. It helps keep you informed. The program consists of four principal elements:

- Navy and Marine Corps Retiree Council,
- Retiree Seminars/Retiree Appreciation Days,
- Retired Activities Offices (RAOs)/Retired Liaison Offices (RLOs), and
- Shift Colors (Navy) and Semper Fidelis (USMC) newsletters for retirees.

The Navy and Marine Corps Retiree Council considers issues of major importance to military retirees and their family members. It facilitates interaction between Department of Navy leadership and the Navy-Marine Corps retiree community and facilitates participation in other aspects of the Retired Activities Program.

The Retiree Council is currently co-chaired by retired Marine Lt. Gen. Pete Osman and retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Herdt. Retired Navy Capt. Martin Menez is the Council Chief of Staff.

Council members may review the effectiveness of current programs and policies affecting retirees and make recommendations concerning improve-

See **RATINGS,** page 3

"Many thanks to Shift Colors for this opportunity to address my shipmates.

It's important for all to realize that your representatives on the Secretary of the Navy's Retiree Council have shown tremendous dedication, perseverance, and creativity during the pandemic. We have been forced to conduct all our meetings virtually to include our annual weeklong meeting in 2020. In spite of the IT challenges, your Retiree Council has been able to continue its work, generating quality products while addressing many issues of great importance to our retired community. We were forced to suspend our activities for 10 months during the Secretary of Defense's Zero-based Review of all Boards and Councils, but once reactivated, we hit the ground running.

MCPON Herdt and I briefed the new Assistant Secretary of the Navy on our proposed way ahead and immediately conducted a quarterly meeting of the Council. We are looking forward to our annual week-long gathering in Washington in August where we will continue to address issues of importance to you and your families."

Lt. Gen. Pete Osman

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SECNAV RETIREE COUNCIL

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Deputy Chief of Naval Personnel; Commander, Navy Personnel Cmd:
Rear Adm. Alvin Holsey

NPC Public Affairs Officer:
Lt. Cmdr.. Rick Chernitzer

Editor:
Gene H. Hughes

Shift Colors, the newsletter for Navy Retirees (NAVPERS 15886), is published in accordance with Department of the Navy (DON) Publication and Printing Regulations. The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication is necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the DON.

Send correspondence to:
Navy Personnel Command
Shift Colors
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055

E-mail:
MILL_ShiftColors@navy.mil

COUNCIL from Page 1

MCPON James Herdt

"The members of the SECNAV Retiree Council consider it a n honor and privilege to represent all Department of the Navy retirees in surfacing and addressing the issues important to retirees. We welcome all input on those issues, look forward to exploring the facts surrounding them and, if warranted, addressing them to the chain of command."

ments to benefits, privileges, assistance, quality of life, morale, and any other matters relating to retired personnel.

The Retiree Council reflects the breadth of the Navy and Marine Corps retired community, including retired enlisted and officers from the Navy and Marine Corps' active and Reserve components. Retiree Council members reflect special interests such as medical, legal, and wounded, ill, and injured.

In addition to a yearly multi-day conference, the Council meets briefly on a quarterly basis. The Council currently has three committees: Health Affairs, Outreach/Overseas, and Compensation. Council committees identify issues affecting Navy and Marine Corps retirees and their families, then submit point papers to the Secretary detailing the issues and suggesting solutions.

Watch for Retiree Council announcements and other news in upcoming editions of *Shift Colors* and *Semper Fidelis*.

For more information about the Retiree Council and how to apply, click here.

For detailed information, refer to SECNAV Instruction 5420.169K, Department of the Navy Retired Activities Program.

Your concerns and issues are very important to us. If you have questions, issues or ideas for the Navy and Marine Corps Retiree Council, you can contact your nearest Navy Retired Activities Office (RAO), located on page 22 of this magazine.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryre Arciaga

Chief Gunner's Mate Watie Alberty IV, from Poland, Ohio, fires a .50-caliber machine gun during a live-fire exercise aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Milius (DDG 69).

RETIREE SEMINAR/APPRECATION DAY EVENTS FY 22

NAS Jacksonville, FL
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, April 2, 7:30 a.m.
NAS Jacksonville Dewey's
1919 Enterprise Ave.,
Jacksonville, FL 32212
POC: (904) 542-5745
Email: jaxs_nas_raojax@navy.mil

NSA Mid-South, TN
Virtual Retiree Seminar
Frida, June 24, 8 a.m.
To receive your invitaiton,
call (901) 874-5075 or write to
Alexander Young

NAS Lemoore, CA
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, May 14, 8 a.m.
MWR Movie Theater,
Bldg. 822 Hancock Circle
POC: (559) 998-4524

NAS Whidbey Island, WA
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, July 30, 9 a.m.
1080 W Ault Field Road #138,
Oak Harbor
POCs: rick.helwick@navy.mil
william.d.conley@navy.mil

Air National Guard Base, Selfridge, MI
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, Sept. 17, 8 a.m.
Dining Facility, Bldg. 164,
43156 Wagner Street
POC: selfrao@yahoo.com

NOSC, Minneapolis, MN
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, Oct. 15, 7:30 a.m.
Treasure Island Resort
and Casino, Welch
POC: metrojrad@gmail.com

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New myPay account keeps Gray Area Retirees informed, connected between final drill, pay

Submitted by DFAS

Navy Reserve Gray Area Retirees: there is a new avenue to stay connected and informed between the time you stop drilling and the time you start receiving retired pay.

It's a new kind of myPay account especially for Military Gray Area Retirees.

Who are Gray Area Retirees?

Gray Area Retirees are members who served in the Reserves or Guard and qualified for retired pay, have retired from their service (stopped drilling), but are not yet at the age where they can start receiving retired pay. The time between their retirement from the service and the date when they are eligible to begin receiving retired pay is the "gray area." The "gray area" applies even if the member is in the Retired Reserve.

A Guard or Reserve member is generally not eligible to start receiving retired pay until they reach age 60. However, some periods of active duty or active service can reduce the age requirement below 60 years of age (Reduced Age Retirement). The earliest age that a Gray Area Retiree can start receiving reduced age retired pay is age 50.

The New Gray Area "Future Retiree" myPay Account

If you are a Gray Area Retiree who uses your new myPay account to keep your contact information updated, you will benefit from receiving important information from the Navy and from DFAS, such as news about changes in laws or policies that impact your retirement benefits, reminders about applying for retired pay, and this newsletter.

Plus, when you have current contact information in your new myPay account, when DFAS receives your completed application for retired pay, DFAS will send email status notifications to you: when we receive the application, when we begin working on the application, and when we complete it. Note: Gray Area Sailors should always work with their Branch of Service to complete their retired pay application.

In the new basic Gray Area "Future Retiree" myPay account, you can confirm or update your email address and your mailing address. And when you apply for retired pay, you can also use it to make sure your direct deposit information is current.

If you are a Navy Gray Area aka Retired Reservist, and need more information about how to apply for your retired pay and benefits, please consider attending an upcoming Reserve Retirement Waypoint event, hosted by Navy Personnel Command. Upcoming events include April 27, June 21, and Sept. 20.

In addition to these events , outreach events will also be conducted in person for the FY22 Retirement Awareness Workshop at NSA Mid-South in Millington, Tennessee, May 3-5; and for the Reserve Retirement Counseling Session during the drill weekend at NRC Quincy, Massachusetts, July 9-10 2022.

For more information, visit Retirement Transition Outreach at the MyNavyHR website here.
or email pers-9_RTO@us.navy.mil.

If you used myPay when you were drilling, you know it's accessible online from your computer's web browser. However, you might not know that myPay is now more mobile-friendly. That means it's easier to manage your account using the web browser on your connected device, like your smartphone or tablet. There's also a new feature to help you keep your account secure, two-factor authentication.

How to Access a Gray Area Future Retiree myPay Account

DFAS has a helpful downloadable Gray Area Future Retiree myPay Login Tips PDF with specific instructions at: https://www.dfas.mil/grayarea.

Get Connected and Informed

Log in to your new myPay account and confirm/update your contact information so you can get connected and informed.

DFAS also has a special webpage with information for Gray Area Retirees on their website here.

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Navy photo by Michael Williams

Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School (NAVSCIATTS) students from Estonia, Germany, Poland, and Romania participate in a Patrol Craft Officer Riverine (PCOR) training exercise on the Pearl River, near the John C. Stennis Space Center, Mississippi. The seven-week course of instruction is designed to provide international students – 13,000 students from 120 partner nations to date – with the knowledge and skills to operate a PCOR.

Need a new ID card? Here are some helpful tips

Beginning in the summer of 2021, DoD began issuing Uniformed Service Identification (USID) cards with indefinite expiration dates to dependent spouses and other eligible individuals at age 65 (previously age 75). This issuance does not impact cards issued with indefinite expiration dates before 2021.

If you are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS), your eligibility can be verified, and the card can be issued at the nearest military ID card issuing office.

The easiest way to make an appointment is by going to the ID Card Office Online (RAPIDS) website. The site has an ID Card Office Locator where you can plug in your zip code and find the closest office to you. Many offices are not answering their phones, so it's best to make an appointment online.

If you cannot find an available appointment, you may need to widen your search radius and look further out. Some offices also have walk-in hours.

Beneficiaries should apply for a new card when the existing card is 90 days short of expiration. Many locations have a sizable backlog, so make an appointment well in advance.

The Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification Card transitions the current ID card to plastic cardstock with enhanced security features. ID card issuance facilities will issue Next Gen USID cards to those with expiring ID cards.

Individuals with older cards that have an indefinite expiration date (INDEF) may exchange those cards for Next Gen USID cards at their convenience by following the instructions in the section ***How do I Get a New ID Card*** .

Individuals with older cards that have an expiration date should follow the regular replacement process, applying for a new ID within 90 days of expiration. Cards will not be reissued solely for the purpose of upgrading to Next Gen.

To renew your card, bring two forms of ID. One must be an unexpired, federal- or state-issued photo ID. If you are disabled or have an incapacitated dependent and cannot get to an card office, you may be able obtain a new card by mail from the nearest ID card office.

Locate your nearest ID card office by using the RAPIDS site locator.

Retired Activities Office volunteers needed

Retired Activities Offices are made up of retired volunteers from all services, including surviving spouses. Their charter is to coordinate, establish and staff an office on an active duty, Reserve or Guard base, through command channels, that will assist retirees and surviving spouses with myriad actions.

These actions include serving as an information center for TRICARE, base services, etc.; offering referrals for financial assistance and pay matters; counseling active-duty personnel nearing retirement.

Another major activity involves working with base agencies to set up Retiree Appreciation Day events offering briefings by different agencies on respective services, tax preparation and advice (at selected locations), staff judge advocate assistance, base tours, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, etc.

If you find that you have some extra time on your hands and would like to get involved in a worthwhile activity, contact your nearest RAO and volunteer, they can all use some help. For contact information, see page 22.

A new day for 'Old Ironsides'

Navy's oldest serving warship has its first woman commander

Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Grant G. Grady

YARMOUTH, Mass. – Cmdr. B.J. Farrell, 77th commanding officer of USS Constitution, waves to the crowd during Cape Cod's St. Patrick's Day Parade. Farrell became Old Ironsides' first woman to serve as the ship's commanding officer in the ship's 224 years.

By MC2 Grant Grady
USS Constitution Public Affairs Office

BOSTON – Cmdr. Billie Farrell relieved Cmdr. John Benda as commanding officer of USS Constitution during a Jan. 21 change of command ceremony.

Cmdr. Farrell became Old Ironsides' 77th commanding officer and the first woman to serve as the ship's commanding officer in the ship's 224 years of history, dating back to 1797.

"There is a picture floating around of me standing next to this remarkable ship back in 1998," said Farrell. "I could never have imagined that 24 years later that I'd be here today taking command of Old Ironsides. USS Constitution serves as a living piece of history. She can be visited and experienced firsthand, connecting us to those who had a vision of what this country and government would be. She is also a somber reminder of those service members that gave the ultimate sacrifice on her decks to create the nation we know today."

Farrell previously served as the executive officer aboard the Ticonderoga-class guided missile cruiser USS Vicksburg (CG 69).

She is a native of Paducah, Kentucky, and a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the University of Arkansas.

As USS Constitution's crew welcomed Farrell's historic achievement, they said farewell to the ship's 76th commanding officer, and local Dedham, Massachusetts, native.

"I know the crew is in great hands with Commander Farrell," said Benda. "This historic barrier is long overdue to be broken. I cannot think of a better candidate to serve as USS Constitution's first female commanding officer. I look forward to watching what she and the crew accomplish in the next few years."

He served as USS Constitution's executive officer from 2017 to 2019 before taking command of Old Ironsides in 2019.

Benda's next command will be teaching at the U.S. Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island.

The first female commissioned officer to serve aboard USS Constitution was Lt. Cmdr. Claire V. Bloom, who served as executive officer and led the historic 1997 sail, the first time Old Ironsides sailed under her own power since 1881.

The first female crew member was Rosemarie Lanam, an enlisted Sailor, who joined USS Constitution's crew in 1986. Today women comprise more than one third of the 80-person crew.

USS Constitution is the world's oldest commissioned warship afloat and played a crucial role in the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812, actively defending sea lanes from 1797 to 1855.

The active-duty Sailors stationed aboard USS Constitution provide free tours and offer public visitation as they support the ship's mission of promoting the Navy's history and maritime heritage and raising awareness of the importance of a sustained naval presence.

USS Constitution was undefeated in battle and destroyed or captured 33 opponents.

The ship earned the nickname of Old Ironsides during the war of 1812 when British cannonballs were seen bouncing off the ship's wooden hull.

https://www.navy.mil/uss-constitution/

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Corpsman serves on COVID's front lines

Story and photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kegan Kay

Hospitalman Hector Conde, a San Antonio, Texas native attached to U.S. Naval Medial Readiness and Training Command Sigonella, prepares an COVID-19 booster vaccination.

In this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, first responders and those fighting on the medical battleground have earned well-deserved recognition for their efforts.

Hospitalman (HN) Hector Conde, a San Antonio, Texas native, is one such hero, serving as an active duty Sailor in the immunization department of U.S. Navy Medicine and Readiness Training Command Sigonella at Naval Air Station Sigonella.

"The best part of my job is being exposed to medicine and the knowledge [the medical] providers and experienced corpsman provide to new corpsman," explained Conde. "Once you have learned your job, there are responsibilities and a sense of pride no other rate can compare to. My role makes me proud to be a corpsman."

Conde joined the Navy in August 2017 to help financially support his family, acting as a father figure to his siblings.

"I wanted to give them the best chance of accomplishing their dreams of going to college and becoming what they dreamt of when we were in poverty," he said.

With a smile on his face, Conde proudly explained that his younger brother is now attending law school and already has two law firms already scouting him once he graduates. His younger sister has started attending school to become a registered nurse.

Along with his co-worker, HN Nolan Shepherd, a Beloit, Wis. native, Conde works tirelessly, providing immunizations and vaccines for everybody, from infants all the way to the oldest members of the Sigonella community. He sometimes sees up to 80 patients in a single day.

Since his arrival to the command in August 2020, in addition to providing regular pediatric well-child vaccines, Conde has been an integral part in the success of the various shot exercises to provide COVID-19 vaccines and seasonal immunizations to not just the Sigonella community, but to 5th and 6th Fleets as well.

"HN Conde is a solid and meticulous performer, admirably filling a position usually two paygrades higher than his own," said Lt. j.g. Tiffany Tween, Conde's supervisor. "Conde is a standout junior Sailor whose level of responsibility is above his paygrade and yet he takes it in stride. He is certainly a bright light within the department and hospital as a whole."

Conde considers his mmunizations work ito be the biggest accomplishment in his Navy career so far.

"To become a subject matter expert, I have studied the immunizations literature at home and have memorized everything from name, brands, treatment, intervals, dosages, etc.," stated Conde. "I need to be situationally aware of anything that the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) has passed."

With his professional, calming demeanor and ability to handle responsibilities beyond his paygrade, it is no surprise his command quickly nominated him to be "In the Spotlight." For Conde, he is proud to serve in the U.S. Navy.

"Serving in the Navy means loyalty, strength and dedication," said Conde. "It offers a community that will go through any barrier, obstacle or problem together."

Conde also ensures that he takes time for himself outside of work. He enjoys a wide range of interests, from restoring or modifying vehicles to spending time outdoors fishing and backpacking.

Since being stationed in Sicily, Siracusa Bay has been his favorite place to visit on the island.

"It is peaceful to be in the jetties fishing with the sound of waves and the silence," explained Conde. "It's the chance to be alone in your thoughts and problems so you can have time to problem solve and sharpen your skills as a Sailor as well as a human being all because you have the time to breathe."

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Not getting your Zs? Apnea might be the answer

From the Military Health System

Do you sometimes wake up feeling tired, headachy, or have a sore or dry mouth?

These could be symptoms of obstructive sleep apnea, also known as OSA. It's one of several common sleep disordersKey Sleep Disorders page on the CDC website affecting service members.

Getting proper sleep means sleeping at least seven hours a night and sleeping continuously through the night. Good sleep remains vital to service members' physical and psychological strength and resilience.

"OSA is the most common sleep-related breathing disorder," said Army Lt. Col. (Dr.) Jennifer Creamer, a sleep specialist at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Yet it "remains undiagnosed in most affected men and women."

"It's caused by the repetitive collapse of your upper airway during sleep," she said.

This occurs when your throat muscles relax, blocking your airway while you sleep. That makes it harder to get enough air, which decreases the oxygen levels in your blood, explained Creamer.

Your brain senses your breathing problem and wakes you up briefly throughout the night so you can reopen your airway. Symptoms include loud snoring, choking or gasping. The repeated sleep interruptions can make you feel tired, irritable, or unfocused throughout the day.

"Sleep fragmentation contributes to lighter and less restorative sleep," said Creamer. It can affect your mood, your performance and your quality of life.

Who's At Risk for OSA?

OSA can affect anyone at any age. However, it affects younger men at a higher rate than younger women, Creamer said. Among older people, that gender gap closes. "Sleep apnea increases in women at the time of menopause," she said.

The symptoms for women with OSA are distinct. Women are more likely to have insomnia and less likely to snore or show noticeable pauses in breathing, she explained.

A service member participates in a sleep study at Madigan Army Medical Center, Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington. Sleep technicians connect 26 sensors to patients that measure eye and muscle movements, brain activity, heart rate, and breathing.

Still, several factors can influence a sleep apnea diagnosis, including excessive weight. Other risk factors include advancing age, having a recessed jaw or enlarged tonsils, Creamer added.

Sleep apnea can also be linked with other health problems, such as heart, kidney, and pulmonary diseases; high blood pressure; and stroke, she said. It can also contribute to depression or anxiety.

How Is It Diagnosed?

Health care providers can evaluate people at risk for OSA and order a sleep study to confirm evidence of the disorder. Some sleep studies require a patient to stay overnight in a sleep lab. Home sleep tests are also available.

During an overnight lab study, a technician attaches electrodes to your scalp to record your brain waves. They also monitor your breathing, the oxygen levels in your blood and your heart rate as well as your eye and leg movements during the night.

The home tests use breathing monitors with sensors that track your breathing and oxygen levels. One type has a probe that goes over your finger and the other has probes over your finger, under your nose, and on chest belts.

How Is It Treated?

Depending on each patient, doctors can recommend numerous treatments for mild OSA. Losing weight can be helpful. Another tactic is to change your sleeping position, such as sleeping on your side if your OSA occurs when you sleep on your back, continued Creamer.

Reductions in smoking or alcohol consumption can also reduce OSA, according to the National Institutes of HealthNIH's National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute website on sleep apnea.

Another option is to wear a device over your teeth while you sleep. It fits over your teeth like a retainer to keep your jaw in a forward position and keep your airway open.

For moderate to severe OSA, treatment options include upper airway surgery or Continuous Positive Airway Pressure, known as CPAP, therapy. CPAP machines use a facemask and mild air pressure to keep the airways open.

For more information, or if you're concerned that you may have OSA, see your primary care provider for further evaluation. If you meet criteria, your provider can refer you for a sleep study. Some sleep studies are covered by TRICARE.

https://www.tricare.mil

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Rare cancers could be added to VA service-connected list

From the Veterans Administration

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs intends to propose adding certain rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumed service-connected disabilities in relation to military environmental exposure to particulate matter.

VA determined through a focused review of scientific and medical evidence there is biologic plausibility between airborne hazards, specifically particulate matter, and carcinogenesis of the respiratory tract, and that the unique circumstances of these rare cancers warrant a presumption of service connection.

Based on these findings, VA's Secretary is proposing a rule that will add presumptive service connection for several rare respiratory cancers for certain Veterans. The cancers under consideration include:

Squamous cell carcinoma (larynx).
Squamous cell carcinoma (trachea).
Adenocarcinoma (trachea).
Salivary gland-type tumors (trachea).
Adenosquamous carcinoma (lung).
Large cell carcinoma (lung).
Salivary gland-type tumors (lung).
Sarcomatoid carcinoma (lung).
Typical and atypical carcinoid (lung).

"This is the right decision. The rarity and severity of these illnesses, and the reality that these conditions present a situation where it may not be possible to develop additional evidence prompted us to take this critical action," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "We'll continue to hold ourselves accountable to Veterans to provide more care, more benefits and more services to more Veterans than ever before."

VA intends to focus its rule on the rare respiratory cancers above in Veterans who served any amount of time in the Southwest Asia theater of operations and other locations. VA will invite and consider public comments as part of this process.

Once rulemaking is complete, VA will conduct outreach to impacted veterans and survivors to inform them about potential eligibility.

VA supports women veteran entrepreneurs in how to obtain government contracts

WASHINGTON — Graduates from the Department of Veterans Affairs' Women Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative recently finished the VetBizLadyStart program, paving a way for their future in the federal marketplace.

The inaugural 14-week program, completed in February, provided women transitioning out of the military, tools and resources to manage and grow their small businesses in government contracting.

Training modules and small group discussions were hosted by successful women mentors from the government and commercial sector. The initiative works to bridge the gap between economic disparities by providing disadvantaged populations equal access to contracts

President of WJM Professional Services LLC Veronica Lane, was one of 20 women veterans who participated.

"I am grateful for completing this program and the opportunity to meet with motivated women veterans," said Lane. "My goals were to ramp up and receive four contract awards and apply for an increased line of credit from my business banker — and I was able to accomplish both!"

VA Chief of Staff Tanya Bradsher attended the ceremony. "The graduation marks a step toward fulfilling President Biden's Executive Order Advancing Racial Equity in Underserved Communities," Bradsher said. "What better way to answer the call than a program that brings results for our women veterans, who in turn can use these tools to become successful business contractors, bringing opportunities back to those in their communities."

The EO aims to identify and remove barriers in the federal government that impact the ability of individuals within underserved socioeconomic categories to seek viable economic opportunities.

According to the Small Business Administration, only 15 percent out of 2.5 million veteran-owned business are owned by women veterans. The Women Veteran-Owned Small Business Initiative, part of VA's Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, is focused on using VetBizLadyStart to increase awareness of opportunities for women-owned small businesses to increase these numbers.

VetBizLadyStart is a federally funded program and collaborates with the Women's Business Centers of the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia's Old Dominion University. Entrepreneurship programs are offered through each organization to assist women in preparing for procurement.

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Benefits for burn pit illnesses, hypertension from Agent Orange would be granted under new plan

From Fleet Reserve Association

Nearly all veterans who served in overseas conflicts in the last 31 years would be granted presumptive benefits status for a host of respiratory illness and cancers under a sweeping proposal to be introduced by Senate leaders next week.

In addition, Vietnam veterans who suffer from high blood pressure would be granted the same presumptive status for their disability claims, potentially handing out billions more in payouts to the aging group.

The legislative package, dubbed the True Cost of War Recognition Act, represents the most ambitious attempt so far by Congress to address the long-term health effects of burn pits and other toxic exposure events on veterans who served in wars overseas, both recent and long past. The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman said he wants a comprehensive legislative plan on the issue by the end of May.

Outside groups have successfully lobbied in recent years to broaden the number of illnesses linked to the use of the chemical defoliant Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. But hypertension has remained off the list, in large part because Veterans Affairs officials still have not accepted outside scientific studies that have shown a strong link between the two.

Similarly, advocates for years have complained that Veterans Affairs officials have done too little to react to rising cases of unusual, serious illnesses among veterans who worked near burn pit smoke during overseas deployments, or were exposed to other potential chemical poisoning on missions.

VA leaders in the past have argued that without more scientific backing — both in understanding what contaminants troops were exposed to and what long-term health effects those chemicals have on the human body — they could only offer partial solutions to the problem.

Lawmakers from both the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs officials have vowed to force changes the issues this year. Committee leaders are expected to begin public debate on the new legislation as early as next week, with the hope of committee votes on the idea before Memorial Day.

A copy of the measure obtained by Military Times shows nine new lung illnesses that would be reclassified as presumed connected to burn pit exposure during military service: asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, chronic bronchitis, constrictive bronchiolitis, emphysema, pleuritis, pulmonary fibrosis, interstitial lung disease and sarcoidosis.

In addition, eligible veterans who are diagnosed with any form of respiratory cancer or glioblastoma (brain cancer) would also be granted presumptive benefits status.

Typically, for veterans to receive disability benefits, they must prove that their ailments are directly connected to injuries or illnesses which happened as a direct result of their military service. In toxic exposure cases, that usually means combing through military medical and duty records, some of which have deteriorated or disappeared over the decades.

The presumptive distinction means that veterans only need to show that they contracted one of the illnesses after or during their military service, and that they served in the designated areas and time frames outlined under benefits law.

Under the TCRW Act, that eligible group would include all veterans who served in the following locations:

- Iraq: August 1990 - March 1991, March 2003 - present;
- Afghanistan: September 2001 - present;
- Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar: August 1990 - present;
- in Djibouti, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon and Yemen: September 2001 - present;
- any other area later determined by a federal agency where burn pits were used by the military overseas.

That group contains more than 4 million veterans and counting. More than 223,000 individuals have registered on VA's Open Burn Pit Registry, but outside advocates believe that number likely undercounts the full number of individuals suffering from burn pit related illnesses.

Including hypertension as a presumptive condition for the Agent Orange list is expected to affect around 160,000 veterans. The new legislation also includes an expansion of Agent Orange presumptive status for individuals who served in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, American Samoa and Guam during the 1960s and 1970s

The measure also includes new research by VA on the issue of toxic exposures, to include health trends for post-9/11 veterans and cancer rates among veterans.

Lawmakers have said if they can advance the toxic exposure legislation in both chambers, they are optimistic the entire package could be on the president's desk for final signature by the end of the year. Implementation of the new presumptive rules would likely push any payouts to late 2022 at the earliest.

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VA asks for outdoor experience input

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs seeks input from veterans outdoor recreation groups on how it can facilitate the health and wellness of Veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors through improved access to public lands and other outdoor spaces.

Research shows access to the outdoors may contribute significantly to better health and well-being and VA wants to learn how it can best integrate outdoor experiences into its Whole-Health approach to providing care to Veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors.

"We want to use this opportunity to understand how VA can work closely with Veterans outdoor recreation groups that have been leading the way in using outdoor experiences to help their fellow Veterans heal and stay healthy," said Deputy Assistant Undersecretary for Health for Patient Care Services Maria Llorente, M.D. "We look forward to collaborating with our partners in making outdoor recreation a foundational piece of VA's world-class, Whole-Health-based care."

As part of this request for information, VA is asking individuals, groups and entities involved in providing Veterans outdoor recreation to submit comments, from Feb. 23 to March 25, to help guide the work of strengthening the relationship between VA and managers of public lands, identifying barriers that may prevent Veteran access to public lands to augment delivery of health and wellness services, and making recommendations to address those barriers.

The subject document above has officially published in the Federal Register. The official version of this document, supporting documents and additional information about this document is now available at Federal Register public-inspection 2022-03734 request for information on Veterans outdoor recreation.

Vet dental care act of heart for one-time Sailor

From Disabled American Veterans

U.S. Navy veteran John Macdonald's work to improve the smiles of hundreds of veterans started four years ago, all because of his heart. No, not because of an overwhelming compassion or affection for veterans—although that is certainly part of it—but because of his actual heart.

Macdonald enlisted in the Navy in 1966, and later joined Underwater Demolition Team 11. He served multiple tours in Vietnam before being honorably discharged in 1970, going on to earn his doctorate in kinesiology and managing a Naval Research Office research dive study.

Between racing in triathlons, raising kids and managing his studies, Macdonald moved home to Missouri with his family in the 1990s and ultimately became a dentist. It was there that, after suffering a heart attack, he first came to Disabled American Veterans (DAV) for information about Agent Orange exposure. Benefits advocate Thomas Becker in DAV's office in St. Louis filed a successful claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs on Macdonald's behalf in 2018 for coronary artery disease.

"I would have never been able to do it on my own," Macdonald said of DAV's assistance navigating the claims process.

He became a DAV life member and started attending meetings, where he got to know other veterans and listened to their concerns. One thing in particular struck him: frequent stories about his fellow veterans' dental care difficulties.

Although DAV supports the expansion of the VA dental care benefit under Resolution No. 018, only veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 100 percent, veterans with a service-connected dental condition, former prisoners of war and homeless veterans are currently eligible.

"I just thought it was something disabled veterans should have, and I thought, I can do it," Macdonald said.

John Macdonald and Thomas Becker

Macdonald (left) and benefits advocate Thomas Becker at a meeting for DAV Chapter 1 in St. Louis in December.

He asked DAV Chapter 1 in St. Louis to help offset the costs of the dental work, and in turn, he donated his services, including full or partial dentures, routine teeth cleanings, crowns and dental bridges to veterans.

Macdonald has been running a free dental clinic for service-disabled veterans out of his office in Frontenac, Missouri, for three years. To date, he has provided more than $80,000 in free services to 150 veterans who wouldn't have been able to get any dental care.

John Macdonald at his dentist office in Frontenac, Missouri.

Macdonald said he remembers one veteran who was distraught, having lost all of his teeth before he came for free dentistry work. Having proper dental care can make a difference in someone's life, he said.

The path to service is not always straightforward. In this case, it was Macdonald's heart attack and DAV's subsequent assistance that ignited a fire in him to want to give back, Becker said.

"He's extremely dedicated to helping out people," Becker said. "It's humbling to see him doing something like this—it's awesome."

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Navy Begins Red Hill Shaft Recovery Operations

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Williams-Church

Above, Builder Constructionman Adan Zarate Jr., a Rapid Response Team member assigned to Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303, delivers water samples for testing. Below, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command contractors Will Casuqa, left, and Mana Micah remove the used media from granular activated carbon filtration system for storage and processing in support of Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam's water restoration efforts.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Aiden Campbell

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM, Hawaii – The U.S. Navy began full-scale operation of pumping and granular activated carbon (GAC) filtration of groundwater from the Navy's Red Hill Shaft.

This is a vital step forward in the process for containing and removing contamination within the shaft as part of the Red Hill Shaft Recovery and Monitoring Plan.

The Interagency Drinking Water System Team (IDWST) finalized the plan last week, in consultation with the Hawaii Department of Land and Natural Resources, University of Hawaii, and other community stakeholders. The IDWST includes Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Army and Navy.

The plan includes actions to pump and filter contaminated groundwater from the Navy's Red Hill Shaft to reduce spread of contamination and protect plants and wildlife. It will also help the IDWST better understand movement and contamination of groundwater.

Each day, the Navy is pumping up to five million gallons of groundwater from the Red Hill Shaft. This creates a capture zone within the aquifer to reduce the spread of groundwater contamination. To remove contaminants inside the well, the Navy will use skimming pumps and an array of booms and absorbent pads. The Navy's goal is to contain contamination near the shaft and prevent further contamination of the aquifer.

After the water is pumped from the well, it passes through the GAC filtration system before being discharged into Halawa Stream. The purpose of the GAC filtration system is to filter (or clean) the discharged water so it does not pose a threat to human health or the environment. As the water passes through the GAC filtration system, it is closely monitored for contaminants in real time. The Navy will also send water samples to a certified laboratory for testing. The maximum daily amount of water to be discharged into Halawa Stream will be less than one percent of the amount of water in the stream during peak rainwater flow.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Chelsea D. Meiller

Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, center, and General Counsel, Department of the Navy John P. Coffey receive a brief on well operation and recovery initiatives from Capt. Burt Hornyak, commanding officer, Fleet Logistics Center Pearl Harbor.

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) approved a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit Jan. 27, allowing these operations to take place. The permit includes strict requirements to test the water at each step of the GAC filtration system. If contaminant levels exceed acceptable limits, operations will be stopped. DOH staff are be on-site to monitor permit compliance.

The plan also includes Navy commitments to reuse treated water and undertake projects to improve the upper watershed and recharge the aquifer.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Brandon Williams-Church

Ella Vicedomini, a Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command contractor, prepares to test a water sample. The Navy is working closely with the Hawaii Department of Health, the EPA and the U.S. Army to restore safe drinking water to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam housing communities.

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Changes to federal loan forgiveness program will benefit troops, vets and DoD workers

From Fleet Reserve Association

Tens of thousands of troops, veterans and civilian defense workers will see large federal loan debts reduced or erased under changes to the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program recently announced. The move comes amid criticism of the program — designed to provide financial relief to federal workers who make regular payments on their federal loans — for being too cumbersome and unforgiving instead of being a benefit of public service.

In response, the Department of Education announced changes to "restore the promise" of the program and "make it easier for members of the military to get credit toward forgiveness while they serve."

While the loan forgiveness program is not solely focused on service members, they make up a significant portion of program recipients.

Officials said at least 17,000 current troops will benefit from the new rules, but the number could be much higher as staff combs through various loan accounts to see how many of the estimated 550,000 borrowers expected to benefit had some military service.

Under current rules, loan forgiveness recipients must either work full-time at a government job — federal, state, local and military posts are all included — or a not-for-profit, non-partisan organization such as the Peace Corps. It covers individuals who have direct loans or previously consolidated federal student loans and have been paying down the debt for the last 10 years.

The rationale behind the program is to give those public servants financial relief, rather than force them to leave those public service jobs to erase their debts.

But in the past, rules surrounding those repayments required strict monthly guidelines and only covered certain types of loans. Earlier this week, 60 Minutes profiled multiple service members who paid back tens of thousands of dollars over a decade, only to discover at the end that their loan forgiveness applications had been rejected on technicalities.

Education Department officials Wednesday's announcement is designed to prevent that from happening again.

"These changes are important steps toward a better and stronger PSLF program, one that will move away from the current situation in which too few borrowers receive forgiveness, and too many do not receive credit for years of payments they made because of complicated eligibility rules, servicing errors or other technicalities," they said in a statement. Department leaders also promised to devote extra attention to members of the military.

Starting in 2022, staff will match department data with other federal databases to ensure that all federal workers (including troops) automatically qualify for the debt relief. That means those individuals could see their debts suddenly erased, without any work on their part.

"Military service members and other federal employees devote themselves to serving the United States, and we should make it as easy as possible for them to get [financial relief]," the department announcement stated.

The changes also include broadening the types of federal loans previously eligible for forgiveness and relaxing strict monthly repayment rules.

Until now, roughly 16,000 individuals have qualified for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program since it was launched in 2007.

Education Department officials said about 22,000 individuals are expected to benefit from the changes immediately, erasing about $1.74 billion in debt. Another 27,000 will need to certify their employment to get immediate relief. The new rules will be in effect through October 2022, under emergency provisions. However, officials are expected to codify many of the changes over the coming year.

An EA-18G Growler, attached to the "Rooks" of Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 137, flies over the Aegean Sea in support of enhanced air patrols, March 1, in the U.S. Sixth Fleet area of operations.

Photo courtesy of Strike Fighter Squadron 11

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AROUND THE FLEET

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Roberson

Left, Quartermaster 3rd Class Catera Hazley, left, and Quartermaster Seaman Amaiya Williams, assigned to aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush (CVN 77), report the coordinates of the Military Sealift Command replenishment oiler USNS John Lenthall (T-AO 189).

Below, A Naval Special Warfare combatant craft operates at sea near the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ralph Johnson (DDG 114) during integrated training with the 353rd Special Operations Wing and 2nd Bomb Wing.

Bottom right, Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Steve Fenske, assigned to Underwater Construction Team 1 (UCT 1), instructs a New Hampstead High School student on trying on a KM 97 surface-supplied diving helmet during a Savannah Navy Week visit.

Bottom left, U.S. Navy SEALs conduct a High Altitude Low Opening (HALO) operation in support of Arctic Edge 2022 in Deadhorse, Alaska.

Courtesy photo

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Matthew C. Duncker

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Zack Guth

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AROUND THE FLEET

Above, A U.S. Marine, assigned to Combat Logistics Battalion (CLB) 31, sprays the well deck during a truck wash down aboard the San Antonio-class amphibious transport dock ship USS Green Bay (LPD 20)

Right, Aviation Machinist's Mate Airman Yannick Ali, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, assigned to the "Dragonslayers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 11, hoses down an MH-60S Sea Hawk helicopter on the flight deck of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75),

Bottom right, Gunner's Mate 1st Class Bobby Jernigan takes point during a visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) team walkthrough training scenario aboard the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78),

Below, Naval Science Institute Seaman-to-Admiral (NSI/STA21) class 22010 students at Officer Training Command Newport (OTCN), Rhode Island, familiarizes themselves at the Conning Officer Virtual Environment (COVE). The training provides necessary skills to safely maneuver ships. NSI/STA-21 is an eight-week course of intense officer preparation and indoctrination.

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American Red Cross

CRISIS: Red Cross seeks blood product donations

The American Red Cross is facing a national blood crisis – its worst blood shortage in over a decade, posing a concerning risk to patient care. Doctors have been forced to make difficult decisions about who receives blood transfusions and who will need to wait until more products become available. Blood and platelet donations are critically needed to help prevent further delays in vital medical treatments.

Look for your nearest blood facility and make a dontion.

What You Need to Know

Find a Drive.

https://www.redcrossblood.org

Requirements by Type of Donation

To ensure the safety of both patients and donors, these are some of the requirements donors must meet to be eligible to donate blood based on donation type.

To explore a list of eligibility information, got to www.redcrossblood.org/donate-blood/how-to-donate/eligibility-requirements/eligibility-criteria-alphabetical.html

Whole Blood Donation

Donation frequency: Every 56 days, up to six times per year.

You must be in good health and feeling well.

You must be at least 16 years old in most states.

You must weigh at least 110 lbs.

Platelet Donation

Donation frequency: Every 7 days, up to 24 times per year.

You must be in good health and feeling well.

You must be at least 17 years old in most states.

You must weigh at least 110 lbs.

Power Red Donation

Donation frequency: Every 112 days, up to three times per year.

You must be in good health and feeling well.

Male donors must be at least 17 years old in most states, at least 5'1" tall and weigh at least 130 lbs.

Female donors must be at least 19 years old, at least 5'5" tall and weigh at least 150 lbs.

AB Elite Plasma Donation

Donation frequency: Every 28 days, up to 13 times per year.

You must have type AB blood.

You must be in good health and feeling well.

You must be at least 17 years old.

You must weigh at least 110 lbs.

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Looking at the data: Scams and older consumers

By Lesley Fair,
FTC Consumer & Business Education

The FTC just sent a report to Congress called Protecting Older Consumers 2018-2019. The report suggests steps to take to help protect older consumers from fraud. But the evidence also shows a thing or two everyone else can learn from them. Check out the sometimes surprising findings in this year's report at https://ftc.gov/reports/protecting-older-consumers-2018-2019-report-federal-trade-commission.

Older adults were the least likely of any age group to report losing money to scams. The overwhelming majority of fraud reports filed with the FTC's Consumer Sentinel Network by people 60+ didn't indicate any monetary loss. What's more, consumers in that age group spotted fraud and reported it before losing any money at nearly twice the rate of people between 20 and 59.

What that tells us. Even if they were able to spot scams before losing money, older consumers have heeded the law enforcement call to report fraud. Consumers of all ages can follow their example by reporting their scam stories at ftc.gov/complaint.

But when older consumers experience consumer fraud, their reported financial losses were greater than what younger consumers reported. Compared to 2017 numbers, reported median losses among consumers 60 and over increased, and the increase was particularly large for people 80+.

What that tells us. In addition to ongoing FTC law enforcement, sharing information with older consumers about scams is still very important. Exposed to Scams: What Separates Victims from Non-Victims?, a report from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, and the Stanford Center on Longevity, suggests that people are much less likely to lose money on a scam they encounter if they've heard about it before. So spread the word about scams you hear about in the news or from the FTC.

Even though older consumers are less likely to report losing money to scams, certain scams are more likely to strike them. For example, older adults were more likely than younger consumers to report losing money on tech support scams, prize, sweepstakes & lottery scams, and family & friend impersonation. Phone scams did the most financial damage. And while gift cards became the payment of choice for scammers, wire transfers still take the top spot for total dollars paid.

What that tells us. Rather than general reminders to "be careful," offer older consumers targeted tips about tech support scams, bogus prize promotions, and scammers who impersonate family and friends. In addition, talk to older friends and family about specific strategies for reducing the number of unwanted calls and spotting when a phone fraudster is on the line. And tell older consumers within your circle that if anyone contacts them and insists on payment by a wire transfer or gift card, it's a scam.

Protecting Older Consumers 2018-2019: A Report of the Federal Trade Commission includes details about the cases the FTC has brought to protect older consumers and includes links to new topics in Pass It On, an FTC resource you can use to help educate family and friends about fraud.

Fraud and older adults – what's your story?

by Bridget Small
FTC Consumer Education Specialist

Every year millions of people report fraud, scams, and bad business practices to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). These stories help the agency better understand how fraud affects each community. FTC offers information and advice for some of these communities, and this article will focus on scams having an impact on older adults.

Scammers are using social media for investment, romance, and online shopping scams. More than one in four people who reported losing money to fraud from 2020 - 2021 said it started on social media with an ad, a post, or a message. The most money was lost to investment and romance scams.

Romance scammers pursue people on dating apps and social media with fake tales of love, then demand payments with gift cards, wire transfers, and cryptocurrency. The median reported loss across all romance scam reports was $2,400 last year, but the amount was higher among older adults. People 70 and over reported the highest median losses at $9,000.

Imposters posing as Amazon workers tricked people with messages about suspicious activity or unauthorized purchases on their accounts. Among people age 60 and over who reported the calls in 2020-2021, the median reported loss was $1,500, compared to $814 for people under age 60.

If you spot one of these — or another — scam, please report it to the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov. It's easy to report and the information you give helps protect your community. Want more consumer protection news? Read common scams and sign up for email updates.

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House Resolution 6990 - To award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Doris Miller, in recognition of his acts of valor while a member of the United States Navy during World War II.

Sponsor: Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-MD)
Latest Action: On March 8, referred to the Committee on Financial Services, and in addition to the Committee on House Administration, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

House Resolution 6543 - Restore Veterans' Compensation Act of 2022

Sponsor: Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
Latest Action: Referred to the Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker.
Goal: To amend title 10, United States Code, to eliminate the recoupment of separation pay, special separation benefits, and voluntary separation incentive payments from members of the Armed Forces who subsequently receive disability compensation under laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and to impose limitations on the authority of the Secretary of Defense to recoup such pay from members who receive military retired or retainer pay.

S.952 (also H.R. 2372) - The Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn Pits and Other Toxins Act

Sponsor: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). House bill sponsored by Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA)
Latest Action: Veterans' Affairs Committee hearings held on April 28.
Establishes a presumption of service-connection for specified diseases associated with exposure to burn pits (an area used for burning solid waste in open air without equipment) and other toxins by veterans who were awarded specified medals on or after Aug. 2, 1990. Under a presumption of service-connection, specific conditions diagnosed in certain veterans are presumed to have been caused by the circumstances of military service. Health care benefits and disability compensation may then be awarded.
Under the bill, if the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) receives a written petition to add a disease to the list, it must request a determination by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine as to whether there is a positive association between the exposure to a covered toxin and the occurrence of the disease in humans.
The bill makes disability or death of certain employees from specified diseases compensable as a work injury. Specifically, such employees are those who were employees of the Department of State, the Department of Defense, or an element of the intelligence community on or after Aug. 2, 1990, and carried out job responsibilities for at least 30 days during a contingency operation.

H.R.7109 - To amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to require public lodging establishments to waive minimum age requirements for members of the Armed Forces

Sponsor: Rep. Vicky Hartzler (R-MO)
Latest Action: House - 03/17/2022 Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, and in addition to the Committee on the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned.

H.R.7158 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to enter into contracts and agreements for the payment of care in non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical foster homes for certain veterans who are unable to live independently, and for other purposes.

Sponsor: Rep. Clay Higgins (R-LA) (Introduced 03/18/2022)
Latest Action: Referred to the Veterans' Affairs Committee on March 18.

S.3813 - Veterans Member Business Loan Act

Sponsor: Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Goal: To amend the Federal Credit Union Act to exclude extensions of credit made to veterans from the definition of a member business loan.
Latest Action: Introduced in Senate on March 10, read twice and referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

H.R.511 - To recognize the Memorial, Memorial Garden, and K9 Memorial of the National Navy UDT-SEAL Museum in Fort Pierce, Florida, as the official national memorial, memorial garden, and K9 memorial, respectively, of Navy SEALs and their predecessors.

Sponsor: Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL)
Latest Action: Introduced in House on Aug. 27, 2021 and referred to House Armed Services Committee.

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Blue Angels

BLUE ANGELS 2022 SHOW SCHEDULE

APRIL

2-3 NAS Kingsville, TX
Wings Over South Texas
Website

9-10: JB Charleston, SC
JB Charleston Air Expo
Website

23-24: Vidalia, GA
Vidalia Air Show
Website

30: Vero Beach, FL
Vero Beach Air Show
Website

MAY

1: Vero Beach, FL
Vero Beach Air Show
Website

14-15: Ellsworth AFB, SD
Raider Country Open House
Website

25: USNA, Annapolis, MD
U.S. Naval Academy Air Show
Website

27: USNA, Annapolis, MD
U.S. Naval Academy Fly Over
Website

28-29: Jones Beach, NY
Bethpage Air Show
Website

JUNE

4-5: Eau Claire, WI
Chippewa Valley Air Show
Website

11 · 12: Chesterfield, MO
Spirit of St. Louis Air Show
Website

18 · 19: Millington, TN
Midsouth Air Show
Website

JULY

2-3: Traverse City, MI
National Cherry Festival Air Show
Website

9: Pensacola Beach, FL
Pensacola Beach Air Show

16-17: Ypsilanti, MI
Thunder Over Michigan Air Show
Website

23-24: Milwaukee, WI
Milwaukee Air and Water Show
Website

30-31: Dayton, OH
Dayton Air Show
Website

AUGUST

6-7: Seattle, WA
Boeing SeaFair Air Show
Website

13-14: MCAS Kaneohe Bay, HI
Kaneohe Bay Air Show

20-21: Chicago, IL
Chicago Air and Water Show

SEPTEMBER

3-5: Cleveland, OH
Cleveland National Air Show
Website

10-11: Knoxville, TN
Smoky Mountain Air Show
Website

17-18: NAS Oceana, VA
NAS Oceana Air Show
Website

24-25: MCAS Miramar, CA
MCAS Miramar Air Show
Website

OCTOBER

1-2: Minden, NV
Aviation Roundup Air Show
Website

8-9: San Francisco, CA
San Francisco Fleet Week
Website

22-23: NAS Jacksonville, FL
NAS JAX Air Show
Website

29-30: Houston, TX
Wings Over Houston Air Show
Website

NOVEMBER

5-6: Peachtree City, GA
Atlanta Air Show
Website

11-12: NAS Pensacola, FL
Homecoming Air Show
Website

See you there!

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REUNIONS

To ensure your reunion has the more exposure, send us your information as soon as details are finalized.

SHIP/STATION	Date	Phone	Email/Web
USS CAIMAN	April 18 – 21	(360) 731-5233	DBFrider@comcast.net
USS FOX (DLG/CG 33)	April 28 - 30	(419) 310-2958	mhare3362@gmail.com www.ussfox.org
USS CONSERVER (ARS 39)	April 27 - May 1	(619) 449-4499	dcwoodworking1@yahoo.com http://www.ussconserver.org
Patrol Squadron 44 (VP 44)	May 2 - 4	(573) 673-8487 (229) 559-7959	ftcbs@gmail.com vp44paxmd@aol.com
Navy Nurse Corps Association	May 4 - 13	Non given	NNCA2022Reunion@nnca.org www.nnca.org/2022-nnca-reunion
USS NICHOLAS (DD 449/FFG-47)	May 23 - 27	(215) 431-4419	email@ussnicolas.org https://ussnicholas.org/?page_id=60
USS RASHER (SS/SSR/AGSS 269)	June 8 – 12	(804) 815-0730	drifterpilot2@gmail.com
USS COGSWELL (DD-651) USS WEDDERBURN (DD-684)	June 14 - 16	(760) 889-2216	secretary@usscogswell.com www.usscogswell.com
USS THOMAS C. HART (DE/FF 1092)	June 21 - 26	(484) 378-2725	dave@neimeyer.org
Patron Four Five (VP 45)	Aug. 17 – 21	(678) 650-7500	poohbearmit@aol.com www.vp45association.org
USS STODDARD (DD 566)	Sept. 14 – 18	(941) 626-1593	keystonewillie@verizon.net
USS HOLDER (DD, DDE 819/DE 401)	Sept. 21 - 24	(831) 458-9062	ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com www.ussholder.com
USS WILTSIE (DD 716)	Sept. 25 - 29	(360) 736-3853	dd716ted@comcast.net
Old Salts & Assorted Spies (Naval Reserve Intelligence Retirees)	Sept. 25 - 29	(720) 301-1318	https://os-as.com/?page_id=1547
REUNIONS FY 2023			
USS CONNOLE (DE/FF 1056)	Oct. 5 - 9	(484) 378-2725	dave@neimeyer.org
USS STICKELL (DD-888)	Oct. 10 - 13	(301) 980-0561	johnfwelch44@gmail.com

See **REUNIONS** next page

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SHIP/STATION	Date	Phone	Email/Web
USS SPIEGEL GROVE (LSD 32)	Oct. 12 -16	Not given	lesd32usn@gmail.com https://kevinflatley.com
USS RICH (DD/DDE 820)	April 25 – 29	(941) 966-1252	shipsoffice@ussrich.org www.ussrich.org
USS SAM RAYBURN (SSBN 635)	May 22 - 27	(228) 623-0451	n5phms@gmail.com www.ssbn635.org

SOLIDARITY OF THE SEA

Left, Operations Specialist 3rd Class Sergei Serghis, from Kerch, Ukraine, operates a radar on the bridge of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). The Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S., allied and partner interests in Europe and Africa.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jack Hoppe

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire DuBois

From July 2021, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, center, and Chargé d'Affaires, Kristina Kvien, right, are shown the bridge of the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Ross (DDG 71) by Vice Adm. Eugene Black, commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, left, during the ship's July 4, 2021 port call in Odessa, Ukraine.

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Retired Activities Office Locator

★ - Office needs volunteers

Navy and Joint RAOs

Arizona
➢ Retired Activities Office
Navy Operational Support Center
14160 W. Marauder St.
Luke AFB, Glendale, AZ 85309
9 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon.-Fri.)
☎ (602) 353-3033
✉ stellareyes@cox.net

California
➢ Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Weapons Station
Code 75H000D
1 Administration Circle
China Lake, CA 93555-6100
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (760) 939-0978
✉ retired activities@mchsi.com

➢ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
966 Franklin Ave., Bldg. 930
Naval Air Station
Lemoore, CA 93246
8 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Thu)
☎ (559) 998-4032
✉ curtis.m.miller1@navy.mil

➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
1000 23rd Ave, Bldg. 1169, Code N93V
Port Hueneme, CA 93043
8 a.m. - 4 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (805) 982-1023
✉ pternahan@gmail.com

➢ Retired Activities Office (Closed)
Naval Amphibious Base
Coronado, CA 92155

➢ Retired Activities Office
Housing Office, Bldg. 587
Moffet Field, CA 94035-0162
9:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. (Tues/Wed/Fri)
☎ (650) 603-8047
✉ bfrench2905@gmail.com

➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Station San Diego
3005 Corbina Alley, Suite 1
San Diego, CA 92136
8:30 - 11:30 a.m. (Mon/Tue/Thurs/Fri)
☎ (619) 556-9752
✉ annanias.rose1@navy.mil

➢ Retired Activities Office
Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach
Bldg. 22, Room 2
Seal Beach, CA 90740-5000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Thu)
9 a.m. - noon (Fri)
☎ (562) 626-7152
✉ RAO-NWSSB@navy.mil
tomckerr@aol.com

Connecticut (& Rhode Island)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Naval Sub Base, New London
Building 83, P.O. Box 93
Groton, CT 06349-5000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (860) 694-3284
✉ paul.f.dillon@navy.mil

Florida
➢ Retired Activities Office
Naval Air Station, Jacksonville
Fleet and Family Support Center
27 Ranger Street
P.O. Box 136
Jacksonville, FL 32212-0136
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Tue-Thu)
☎ (904) 542-5790, Fax: 542-5716
✉ thomas.j.brennan@navy.mil

➢ Milton RAO (Closed)
Refer to NAS Pensacola for issues

➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station Pensacola
151 Ellyson Ave., Bldg. 625
NAS Pensacola, FL 32508-5217
9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (850) 452-5622
✉ marsha.f.williamson1@navy.mil

Hawaii
➢ Retired Activities Office
Military and Family Support Center
4827 Bougainville Drive
Honolulu, HI 96818-3174
8 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (808) 474-0032
✉ mfschawaii@navy.mil

Illinois
➢ Retired Activities Office (Closed)

Maine
(& Portsmouth Shipyard)
➢ Retired Activities Office (★)
62 Pegasus St.
Brunswick, ME 04011
9 a.m. - noon (Mon-Fri)
☎ (207) 841-0582
✉ navyraomevt@gmail.com

Maryland (★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
NSA Annapolis
168 Bennion Rd.
Annapolis, MD 21402
9 - 11 a.m. (Wed.)
☎ (410) 293-2641
✉ marilyn.a.lewis@navy.mil

Massachusetts
➢ Retired Activities Office (Closed)

Michigan (Joint RAO)
➢ Retiree Affairs Office
43156 Wagner Bldg 164
(Dining Facility)
Selfridge ANG Base, MI 40045
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.(Tues. - Fri.)
☎ (586) 239-5580
✉ selfrao@yahoo.com

Minnesota (★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Navy Operational Support Center
5905 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Thu)
☎ (612) 713-4664
✉ corypaulsen@outlook.com

Missouri
➢ Retired Activities Office (Closed)

New Hampshire (★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
Code 866, Bldg. 22
Portsmouth, NH 03804-5000
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (207) 438-1868
✉ pnsyrao@gmail.com

South Carolina (Joint RAO)
(currently no Navy volunteers ★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
103 Hill Blvd., Bldg. 503, Room 122
Joint Base RAO
Charleston, SC 29404
9 a.m. - noon (Mon-Fri)
☎ (901) 874-5195i-

Tennessee (★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Bldg. 456, 1st Floor
NSA Memphis, Code N 763
Millington, TN 38054-5000
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Tue & Thu)
☎ (901) 874-5195
✉ brenda.sherman@navy.mil

Virginia
➢ Retired Activities Regional Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
7928 14th St., Suite 102
Norfolk, VA 23505-1219
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Thu, appt only)
☎ (757) 445-4380 Fax: 445-5326
✉ navretactnorva@gmail.com

➢ Retired Activities Office
JEB Little Creek-Fort Story
Fleet and Family Support Center
1450 D Street
Virginia Beach, VA 23521
10 a.m. - 2 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (757) 462-8663
✉ lutherwilliams@cox.net

Washington
➢ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Air Station Whidbey Island
Oak Harbor, WA 98278
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (360) 257-6432
✉ raowhidbeyisland@gmail.com

➢ Retired Activities Office
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Base Kitsap
1099 Tautog Circle
Silverdale, WA 98315
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

➢ Retired Activities Office (★)
Fleet and Family Support Center
Naval Station Everett
13910 45th Ave. NE, Rm. 818
Marysville, WA 98271
10 a.m. - 1 p.m. (Mon-Fri)
☎ (425) 304-3775/3721
✉ francis.franchi@navy.mil

Wisconsin
➢ Retired Activities Office (★)
Navy & Marine Corps Reserve Center
2401 South Lincoln Memorial Dr.
Milwaukee, WI 532017-1999
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon)
☎ (414) 744-9766
✉ riorich64@yahoo.com

Overseas

Rota, Spain (★)
➢ Retired Activities Office
NS Rota Community Support
Bldg. 3293
PSC 819, Box 57
FPO AE 09645-5500
1 - 4 p.m. (Mon/Wed/Fri)
☎ 011-34-956-82-3232
✉ patricia.rios@eu.navy.mil

Independent Retired Coordination Offices (IRCOs)

IRCOs are independent retired activities efforts of interested retirees, not sponsored by the Navy, in areas which are geographically isolated from Navy and Marine Corps commands/installations, but which have a sizeable retired population and share a similar RAO mission and operate in a similar manner.

Florida
➢ Retired Activities Office
VA Lakemont Campus, Rm. 125
2500 Lakemont Ave.
Orlando, FL 32803
☎ (407) 646-4110/4111/4114
✉ rao.orlando@gmail.com

Italy
➢ Retired Activities Office
Via De Amicis No. 16
07024 La Maddalena
O. T. Italy
100-Percent email contact
Civilian working from home
✉ panzanic@Hotmail.com

➢ Retiree Resource
Fleet and Family Support Center
3 - 5 p.m. (Wed only)
☎ 081-811-6372
✉ RSONaples@gmail.com

Subic Bay (Philippine Region)
➢ Retired Activities Office
Subic Bay-Olongapo
No. 34 National Highway
Barrio Barretto 2200
Olongapo City
PSC 517, Box RS
FPO/AP 96517-1000
9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (Mon. - Fri.)
☎ (Office) 011-63-47-222-2314
(24/7 Cell) 639065705335
Fax: 011-63-47-222-2899
✉ Dir@Raosubic.Com

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Ready Reference Contact Information

Air Force Retiree Services: (800) 531-7502; www.retirees.af.mil
Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 607-8000; www.arlingtoncemetery.org
Armed Forces Retirement Home: (800) 422-9988; www.afrh.gov
Army & Air Force Exchange Service: (214) 312-2011; www.aafes.com
Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7232; https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement
Burial at Sea Information: (866) 787-0081;
Combat Related Special Compensation: www.va.gov/resources/combat-related-special-compensation-crsc/
DEERS: (800)-538-9552, Fax: (831) 655-8317; www.tricare.osd.mil/deers
Defense Commissary Agency: www.commissaries.com
DFAS Casualty Assistance Branch: (800) 321-1080 or (216) 522-5955; (For Reporting a Retiree's death, option #1)
Fleet Reserve Association: (703) 683-1400; www.fra.org
Gulf War homepage: www.gulflink.osd.mil
I.D. Cards Benefits and Eligibility: (866) 827-5672;
Internal Revenue Service: (800) 829-1040; www.irs.gov
Marine Corps Retired Affairs: (800) 336-4649; www.usmc.mil
(Hover over "Marine Services" then click on "Retired Services")
Medicare: (800) 633-4227. TTY: (877) 486-2048; www.medicare.gov
Military Officers Assoc. of America: (800) 234-6622; www.moaa.org
National Burial Services: (800) 697-6940
Navy Reserve Personnel Management (PERS 9): (866) 827-5672;
Navy Casualty Assistance: (800) 368-3202
After duty hours call (901) 634-9279 for Casualty Watch Officer
Navy Retired Activities: (833) 330-6622
Email: MILL_RetiredActivities@navy.mil
Navy Retired Activities Offices
Navy Uniform Shop: (800) 368-4088; www.navy-nex.com/uniform
Report the Death of a Retiree: (800) 321-1080
Reserve Component SBP: (866) 827-5672 ask for PERS-912
Retiree Dental — Delta Dental: (888) 838-8737; www.trdp.org
Servicemembers Group Insurance (SGLI): (800) 419-1473; www.insurance.va.gov
Naval Historical Center: (202) 433-2210; www.history.navy.mil
Social Security Administration: (800) 772-1213; www.ssa.gov

Pay/SBP Questions: www.dfas.mil

Pay inquiries and update of pay or SBP records in case of death, divorce or remarriage:
Retiree:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Retirement Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46249-1200
(800) 321-1080 / Fax: (800) 469-6559.
SBP/RSFPP annuitant:
Defense Finance and Accounting Service
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay
8899 E 56th Street
Indianapolis IN 46249-1300
(800) 321-1080 / (800) 469-6559

TRICARE: www.mytricare.com/mtc

TRICARE East: www.humanamilitary.com/beneficiary
AL, AR, CT, DC, DE, IL, IN, KY, FL, GA, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MS, NC, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, RI, SC, TN (except 35 Western zips), TX (except the extreme Western area) VT, VA, WI, and WV
TRICARE West: www.tricare-west.com
AK, AZ, CA, CO, HI, ID, IA (except 82 zips near Rock Island), KS, MO (except St. Louis area), MN, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OR, DE, SW TX, UT, WA, WY some zips in IA, MO, TN
TRICARE Overseas: (888) 777-8343; www.tricare-overseas.com
TRICARE For Life: (866) 773-0404; www.tricare.mil/tfl
TRICARE mail order pharmacy: (877) 363-1303; www.tricare.mil/pharmacy
www.express-scripts.com

VA: www.va.gov

Regional offices: (800) 827-1000 (overseas retirees should contact the American Embassy/consulate), TDD (800) 829-4833
Insurance:
VA Regional Office and Insurance Center
PO Box 7208 (claims inquiries) -ORPO
Box 7327 (loans) -ORPO
Box 7787 (payments)
Philadelphia PA 19101
(800) 669-8477; www.insurance.va.gov
Burial information: (800) 827-1000; www.cem.va.gov
GI Bill: (888) 442-4551; www.gibill.va.gov

Records:

For replacement DD 214s, service records, medical records, award information:
Retired prior to 1995:
www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records
Retired after 1995:
Navy Personnel Command
PERS-312E
5720 Integrity Drive
Millington, TN 38055-3120
Fax requests to: (901) 874-2664
Gray-area reservists: (866) 827-5672

Navy Recreation: www.mwr.navy.mil

Navy Gateway Inns & Suites: http://dodlodging.net
ITT: http://navynwr.org/mwrprgrms/itt.html

Sister service retiree publications:

Air Force *Afterburner:* www.retiree.af.mil

Army *Echoes:* https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/echoes

Coast Guard *Evening Colors:* www.uscg.mil/hq/cg1/psc/ras

Marine Corps' *Semper Fidelis:* Semper Fidelis

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READY OR NOT

ATLANTIC OCEAN (March 3) Ensign Armani Courtney, assigned to the guided-missile destroyer USS The Sullivans (DDG 68), participates in Security Reaction Force-Basic (SRF-B) training, March 3. The Sullivans is deployed to the European theater of operations and participating in a range of maritime activities in support of U.S. 6th Fleet and NATO Allies.

Photo by MC2 Delaney Jensen

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