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-

“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.”
Inside this issue:

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4 New myPay account keeps Gray Area retirees informed
5 Helpful tips for getting that new ID card
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13 troops, vets and DoD workers
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SECNAV RETIREE COUNCIL
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MCPON James Herdt (Co-Chair)
CAPT Martin Menez, USN
Chief of Staff
YNC Eric Wenzel, USN
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1stSgt Ron Christensen, USMC
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CAPT Dorice Favorite, USN
HMCS Raymond Applewhite, USN
HMC Vicki Allen, USN
LtCol Andrew Del Gaudio, USMC

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CAPT Wayne Greenleaf, USN
(Retired)

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(Co-Chair)

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CDR John Patterson, USN
ISCM Tony McMclern, USMC
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In addition to a yearly multi-day con-
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Council committees identify issues affect-
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to the Secretary detailing the issues and
suggesting solutions.

Watch for Retiree Council announce-
ments and other news in upcoming edi-
tions of Shift Colors and Semper Fidelis.

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

For detailed information, refer to SEC-
NAV 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
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your nearest Navy Retired Activities
Office (RAO), located on page 22 of this
magazine.

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

E-mail:
MILL_ShiftColors@navy.mil

RETIREE SEMINAR/APPRECIATION 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: jaks_nas_rajojax@navy.mil

AESS Mid-South, TN
Retiree Appreciation Day
Saturday, April 25, 8 a.m.
Pat Thompson Center
5700 Attu St, Millington, TN 38053
POC: andre.i.toliver@navy.mil

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, 19 Sept. 19, 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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9 Rare cancers might be added to VA service-connected list
10 Possible benefits for burn pit illness, Agent Orange hypertension
11 VA asks for outdoor experience input
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Shift Colors

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Millington, TN 38055

E-mail:
MILL_ShiftColors@navy.mil

RETIREE SEMINAR/APPRECIATION DAY EVENTS FY 22

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Retiree-Appreciation Day
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NAS Jacksonville Dewey’s
1919 Enterprise Ave.,
Jacksonville, FL 32212
POC: (904) 542-5745
Email: jaxs_nas_raojax@navy.mil

NAS Mid-South, TN
Virtual Retiree Seminar
Frida, June 24, 8 a.m.
To receive your invitation,
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

MGySgt Rachel Mickelson, USMC

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HTCS Stan Kurtz, USN
LtCol Marlin Hefli, USMC

E-mail: MILL_ShiftColors@navy.mil

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ryne Arciaga
Chief Gunner’s Mate Watie Alberty IV, from Poland, Ohio, fires a .50-cal-
iber machine gun during a live-fire exercise aboard the Arleigh Burke-
class guided-missile destroyer USS Millis (DDG 69).
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 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 Navy 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 the date when they are eligible to start receiving reduced age retired pay. The time between their retirement from the service and the date when they are eligible to begin receiving 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.

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.

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.

Beginning in the summer of 2021, DoD began issuing Unifed 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 to go 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.

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 ID 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.

Need a new ID card? Here are some helpful tips

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.

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.

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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 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 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.

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In the summer of 2021, the next generation of ID cards will begin issuing with indefinite expiration dates. These cards will replace current USID cards that expire in certain periods after issuance. The following cards will be replaced:

- DoD issued USID cards
- US Citizen and Resident Alien (USCRA) card
- DoD issued DODDS card
- DoD issued USAGMND card
- DoD issued USMAGMND card

Navy photo by Michael Williams
A new day for ‘Old Ironsides’
Navy’s oldest serving warship has its first woman commander

By MC2 Grant Grady
USS Constitution Public Affairs Office


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.

“T’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 crew during its 1981 maiden voyage. At that time Old Ironsides sailed under her own power since 1811.

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 when British cannonballs were seen bouncing off 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/

Corpsman serves on COVID’s front lines
Story and photo by
Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class Kegan Kay

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 everyday, 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 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.”

“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.

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Hospitalman Hector Conde, a San Antonio, Texas native attached to U.S. Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command Sigonella, prepares an COVID-19 booster vaccination.
A new day for ‘Old Ironsides’
Navy’s oldest serving warship has its first woman commander

By MC2 Grant Grady
USS Constitution Public Affairs Office

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 2020 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 1797 sail, the first time Old Ironsides sailed under her own power since 1811.

The first female crew member was Rosemarie Lanam, an enlisted Sailor, who joined USS Constitution’s crew in 1966. 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/

Corpsman serves on COVID’s front lines

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

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 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 fulfilling a position usually two paygrades higher than his own," said Lt. j.g. Tiffany Tween, Conde’s supervisor. "Conde is a stand-out 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 immunizations work to 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.

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"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."

USS Constitution Public Affairs Office

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

Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Grant 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.

Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kegan Kay
HOSPITALMAN HECTOR CONDE, a San Antonio, Texas native attached to U.S. Naval Medical Readiness and Training Command Sigonella, prepares an COVID-19 booster vaccination.

Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Grant O. Grady
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 disorders. Key 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. 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 and 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, your ankle, and on a chest belt.

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.

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 Health’s National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute website on sleep apnea.

Another option is to wear a device 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

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 Secretary is proposing a rule that would establish 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).

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 VetBizLadStart 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. "According to VetBizLadStart, we will receive four contract awards and apply for an increased line of credit from my bank," she added.

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 Department of Veterans 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 VetBizLadStart to increase awareness of opportunities for women-owned small businesses to increase these numbers.

VetBizLadStart 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.
Who’s At Risk for OSA?

Not getting your Zs? Apnea might be the answer at the time of menopause, “she said. Good sleep remains vital to service members’ physical and psychological strength and resilience.

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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, she explained. 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.

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“I am grateful for completing this program and the opportunity to meet with motivated women veterans,” said Lane. According to her, they were trained to receive four contract awards and apply for an increased line of credit from my bank — 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. Through the Women Veteran-Owner Small Business Initiative, part of VAs Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, is focused on using VetsBizLadstart to increase awareness of opportunities for women-owned small businesses to increase these numbers.

VetsBizLadstart 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.

Adenocarcinoma (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 South-West Asia theater of operations and other locations. VA invites 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.
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 new legislation as early as next week, with the hope of compressing the issues this year.

Outside groups have successfully lobbed 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 VA leaders in the past have argued that without more 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.

Lawmakers from both the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee chairman said he wants a comprehensive legislative plan on the issue by the end of May. Typically, for veterans to receive disability benefits, they must prove that their ailments are directly connected to 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:

- 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.

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. Congress to pass legislation 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 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 VAs 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

John Macdonald at his dentist office in Frontenac, Missouri.

provided more than $80,000 in free services to 150 veterans who wouldn’t have been able to get any dental care. 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 hard to see him doing something like this—it’s awesome.”
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 assess 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 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 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 committee have vowed to force changes to the issues this year. It’s a change that has 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 VAs world-class, Whole-Health based care.”

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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.

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Vet dental care act of heart for one-time Sailor

U.S. Navy veteran John Macdonald’s work to improve the smiles of hundreds of veterans started four years ago, all because of an overwhelming compassion for affection for veterans—and 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 2004.

“With a 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 assisted navigation 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 challenges.

Although DAV supports the expansion of the VA dental care benefit under Resolution No. 018, only veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 10 percent, veterans with a service-connected dental condition, former prisoners of war and homeless veterans are currently eligible.

John Macdonald at his dentist office in Frontenac, Missouri.

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“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.

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Navy Begins Red Hill Shaft Recovery Operations

Above, Builder Constructionman Adan Zarate Jr., a Rapid Response Team member assigned to Construction Battalion Maintenance Unit (CBMU) 303, delivers water samples to a certified laboratory for testing. Below, Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command contractors Will Cassina, 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.

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

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 forgiving 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 current and former 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.
Navy Begins Red Hill Shaft Recovery Operations


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.

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From Fleet Reserve Association

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

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

Left, Quartermaster 3rd Class Cateria Hazley, left, and Quartermaster Seaman Amiya 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.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Brandon Roberson.

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

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Courtesy photo

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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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 blood product donations and who will need transfusions and who will need.

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 three 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.

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.

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 spottted 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 encoun-
ter 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 sup-
port 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 promo-
tions, 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 prac-
tices to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). These stories help the agency better understand how fraud affects each community. FTC offers informa-
tion and advice for some of these com-
munities, 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.

Imposters posing as Amazon work-

ers tricked people with messages about suspicious activity or unauthorized pur-
chasers 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 tells us what you give help pro-
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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 $5,500, 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 can give you tips to help protect your community. Want more consumer protection news? Read common scams and sign up for email updates.
House Resolution 6990 - To award posthumously a Congressional Gold Medal to Dorena J. Williams 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 Committee, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker.

Goal: To amend title 10, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Defense 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)

Latest Action: To amend Veterans’ Affairs Committee on March 18.

S.3813 - Veterans Member Business Loan Act

Sponsor: Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

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 Garden, and K9 Memorial, as the official national 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.

H.R.7158 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to require members Civil Relief Act to require veterans from the definition of a member business loan.


13-14: MCAS Miramar, CA

MCAS Miramar Air Show Website

17-18: NAS Oceana, VA

NAS Oceana Air Show Website

24-25: MCAS Miramar, CA

MCAS Miramar Air Show Website

11-12: NAS Pensacola, FL

Pensacola Beach Air Show Website

9: Pensacola Beach, FL

Pensacola Beach Air Show Website

23-24: Vidalia, LA

Vidalia Air Show Website

30: Vero Beach, FL

Vero Beach Air Show Website

16-17: Ypsilanti, MI

Thunder Over Michigan 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

5-6: Peachtree City, GA

Atlanta Air Show Website

11-12: NAS Pensacola, FL

Pensacola Beach Air Show Website

8-9: San Francisco, CA

San Francisco Fleet Week Website

11-12: NAS Pensacola, FL

Pensacola Beach Air Show Website

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

Sponsor: Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

Latest Action: 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.

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Latest Action: Introduced 03/18/2022

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Sponsor: Rep. Brian Mast (R-FL)

Latest Action: Introduced in House on Aug. 27, 2021 and referred to House Armed Services Committee.

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 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


Latest Action: Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearings held on April 28. Under the bill, 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 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.

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)

Latest Action: Introduced 03/18/2022

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, 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

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### SHIP/STATION  |  Date       | Phone             | Email/Web                                
--- | --- | --- | --- 
USS CAIMAN  | April 18 – 21 | (360) 731-5233 | DBFriser@comcast.net                      
USS FOX (DLG/CG 33)  | April 28 - 30 | (419) 310-2958 | nhanr3362@gmail.com, www.ussfox.org      
USS CONSERVER (ARS 39)  | April 27 - May 1 | (619) 449-4499 | dcowdworkingel@yahoo.com, http://www.ussconserver.org 
Patrol Squadron 44 (VP 44)  | May 2 - 4 | (573) 673-8487, (229) 559-7959 | tcbs@gmail.com, yp44paxmd@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@ussnicholas.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)  | 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 | keystonewille@verizon.net                
USS HOLDER (DD, DDE 819/DE 401)  | Sept. 21 - 24 | (831) 458-9062 | usholder_dde819@hotmail.com, www.usholder.com 
USS WILTSIE (DD 716)  | Sept. 25 - 29 | (360) 736-3833 | 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 | johnfwhelch44@gmail.com                   

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### SHIP/STATION  |  Date       | Phone             | Email/Web                                
--- | --- | --- | --- 
USS SPIEGEL GROVE (LSD 32)  | Oct. 12 - 16 | Not given | lesd32usn@gmail.com, https://kevinfatley.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          
USS RASHER (SS/SSR/AGSS 269)  | June 8 – 12 | (804) 815-0730 | drifterpilot2@gmail.com                   
USS COGSWELL (DD-651)  | 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 | keystonewille@verizon.net                
USS HOLDER (DD, DDE 819/DE 401)  | Sept. 21 - 24 | (831) 458-9062 | usholder_dde819@hotmail.com, www.usholder.com 
USS WILTSIE (DD 716)  | Sept. 25 - 29 | (360) 736-3833 | dd716ted@comcast.net                      
Old Salts & Assorted Spies (Naval Reserve Intelligence Retirees)  | Sept. 25 - 29 | (720) 301-1318 | https://os-as.com?page_id=1547            

**REVIEWS FROM PREVIOUS PAGE**

**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 Hoppel

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.

Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire Dubois
**Reunions**

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

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<th>Ship/Station</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USS Caiman</td>
<td>April 18–21</td>
<td>(360) 731-5233</td>
<td><a href="mailto:DBFrieder@comcast.net">DBFrieder@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Fox (DLG/CG 33)</td>
<td>April 28–30</td>
<td>(419) 310-2958</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mhare3362@gmail.com">mhare3362@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Conserver (ARS 39)</td>
<td>Apr 27–May 1</td>
<td>(619) 449-4499</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dwoodworking1@yahoo.com">dwoodworking1@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrol Squadron 44 (VP 44)</td>
<td>May 2–4</td>
<td>(573) 673-8487</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ftcb@gmail.com">ftcb@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navy Nurse Corps Association</td>
<td>May 4–13</td>
<td>(229) 559-7959</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rpf4paxmd@aol.com">rpf4paxmd@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Nicholas (DD 449/FFG-47)</td>
<td>May 23–27</td>
<td>(215) 431-4419</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ussnicholas@smtp.com">ussnicholas@smtp.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Rasher (SS/SSR/AGSS 269)</td>
<td>June 8–12</td>
<td>(804) 815-0730</td>
<td><a href="mailto:drifterpilot2@gmail.com">drifterpilot2@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS CoGswell (DD-651)</td>
<td>June 14–16</td>
<td>(760) 889-2216</td>
<td><a href="mailto:secretary@usscogswell.com">secretary@usscogswell.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Wedderburn (DD-684)</td>
<td>June 21–26</td>
<td>(484) 378-2725</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dave@neimeyer.org">dave@neimeyer.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Thomas C. Hart (DE/FF 1092)</td>
<td>Aug. 17–21</td>
<td>(678) 650-7500</td>
<td><a href="mailto:poohbearmit@aol.com">poohbearmit@aol.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Patron Four Five (VP 45)</td>
<td>Sept. 14–18</td>
<td>(941) 626-1593</td>
<td><a href="mailto:keystoneville@verizon.net">keystoneville@verizon.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Stoddard (DD 566)</td>
<td>Sept. 21–24</td>
<td>(831) 458-9062</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com">ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Holder (DD, DDE 819/DE 401)</td>
<td>Sept. 25–29</td>
<td>(360) 736-3853</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dd716cd@comcast.net">dd716cd@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Wiltie (DD 716)</td>
<td>Sept. 25–29</td>
<td>(720) 301-1318</td>
<td><a href="https://os-as.com/?page_id=1547">https://os-as.com/?page_id=1547</a></td>
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<td>Old Salts &amp; Assorted Spies (Naval Reserve Intelligence Retirees)</td>
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<td>USS Connoise (DE/FF 1056)</td>
<td>Oct. 5–9</td>
<td>(484) 378-2725</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dave@neimeyer.org">dave@neimeyer.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USS Stickell (DD-888)</td>
<td>Oct. 10–13</td>
<td>(301) 980-0561</td>
<td><a href="mailto:johnfuehler44@gmail.com">johnfuehler44@gmail.com</a></td>
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Photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Jack Hoppe

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Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Claire Dubois
Ready Retirement OfficeLocator

Air Force Retiree Services (800) 531-7502; www.retrees.af.mil
Arlington National Cemetery: (703) 670-8000; www.arlingtoncemetery.org
Army Retired Retirement Home: (800) 422-9888; www.armyret.gov
Army & Air Force Exchange Service: (214) 312-2011; www.aafes.com
Army Retired Services: (703) 571-7222; https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement
Burial at Sea Information: (866) 787-0081; www.burialatsea.com
www.va.gov/ ready

Ready Retirement Office Contact Information

VA: www.va.gov
Regional offices: (800) 827-1000 (overseas retreats should contact the American Embassy/consulate), TDD (800) 829-4833
Insurance: VA Regional Office and Insurance Center PO Box 7208 (claims) - ORPO Box 7227 (case) - OCM Box 7787 (payments)
Philadelphia PA 19101 (800) 669-6477; www.insurance.va.gov
Burial information: (800) 827-1000; www.cem.va.gov
Bill info: (888) 442-4585; www.gibil.va.gov

Records: For replacement DD 214, service records, medical records, award information:
Retired prior to 1995: Navy Personnel Command PERS-312
5070 Integrity Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53201
Toll Free: (800) 927-1000 / Fax: (800) 469-6559.

Navy Recreation: www.navynwc.mil
Navy Gateway Inns & Suites: http://nogwsgov
ITC: http://navywr.navpers001miltfnl.html

Sister service retiree publications:
Air Force Airfarbber: www.retrees.af.mil
Army Echoes: https://soldierforlife.army.mil/retirement/echoes
Coast Guard Evening Colors: www.uscg.mil/01/spsncase
Marine Corps' Semper Fidelis: Semper Fidelis
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