A CAREER ROOTED IN RESILIENCE: LCDR MILTON COCHRAN

Coming from a long line of distinguished service members, LCDR Milton Cochran joined Naval Aviation in 2007 as a helicopter pilot and has gone on to become a dedicated mentor, instructor, and leader. “I come from a big military family… so I always knew that I was going into the Navy, and I always knew that I wanted to be a pilot. My uncle, CAPT Donnie Cochran, was the first African American Blue Angel and later became the first [African American] Commanding Officer (CO) of the Blue Angels.”

Outside of his family, LCDR Cochran has forged an impressive career of his own as a Naval Aviator that has included four deployments, an undergraduate degree from Morehouse College, a graduate degree from the Naval Post Graduate School, and membership in the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. “The Navy has always been aligned with what I wanted out of life…and it has given me opportunities to expand academically and professionally over the past 16 years. I have repeatedly been put in situations where I was forced to grow outside my comfort zone and learn how to overcome any initial doubts, frustrations, and challenges.”

Reflecting on pivotal moments during his career, LCDR Cochran acknowledged, “During my first tour, there were a lot of challenges put on me and it was high tempo, but when I spoke to my CO’s they always said, ‘We think you can handle it,’ and I had to hunker down and make it happen. Overcoming those challenges gave me the confidence that I could succeed moving forward.” LCDR Cochran has taken that experience and passed it on to his team, challenging each sailor to dig deep and rise to the occasion - producing confident leaders who can perform under pressure.

In terms of advice for other Navy leaders, LCDR Cochran remarked, “I try to remain approachable and empathetic to all my Sailors. We may have rates and rankings, but Sailors are people, and they make mistakes, too. If you are expecting people to be machines, then you will miss the mark as a leader. Your Sailors must feel comfortable saying, ‘These are the challenges I am facing…’ and you must show your Sailors that you will stop what you are doing and take the time to hear them, and not just their work-related issues but anything else.”

Reflecting on Navy’s ongoing culture shift, LCDR Cochran observed, “The culture within Naval Aviation looks much different than it did when I first started. Nowadays, we have an environment where people feel safe coming out and saying, ‘I’m having issues…’ and they’re not being told to be quiet. The new generation of Sailors is very diverse, which is reflective of the country.” As a leader, LCDR Cochran encourages open and honest discussion in his commands. He practices inclusion of his Sailor’s diverse voices and because of that, has strong teams that are resilient and confident. Naval Aviation is fortunate to continue to have the Cochran family as a part of its leadership.

To nominate a Sailor (active, reserve, or civilian) for the Navigator spotlight please email culturalchampions@navy.mil.

Questions about DEI in the Navy, or resources you can integrate into your Command? Email ALTN_USN_INCLUSION_AND_DIVERSITY@navy.mil.
February is American Heart Health month! One of the most important things you can do for your heart is to learn to eat healthy. Here are a few ways to do that:

- To reduce blood pressure, increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, which provide you more vitamins and minerals such as potassium, magnesium, and calcium. All of these may help reduce your risk of coronary heart disease or stroke.
- To reduce fluid retention around your heart and organs, limit sodium intake to no more than 2300 mg per day, or 1500-2000mg per day for those with high blood pressure. If you need to lower your cholesterol, think about increasing fiber intake from fruits, vegetables and whole grains with a goal of 25-30gms per day (an apple has about 4gms of fiber). This can help push out the bad cholesterol that your body is holding on to and improve not just your heart health but your weight.
- Limit foods high in saturated fats such as bacon, sausage and fatty meats to no more than 7-10% of your diet to reduce build up in your arteries.
- If you are overweight or obese, remember your heart is working much harder than if it had less weight on it - so aim for weight loss of 1-2lb per week to ensure you can protect your heart and live a longer life. One of the best ways of eating is to follow the DASH, or the “Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension,” eating plan.
- Other important tips when making dietary changes for heart health are to reduce alcohol which may increase your blood pressure, increase foods high in omega-3’s such as your fatty fish (salmon, tuna, mackerel and sardines for example), and limit added sugars. If you are looking for ways to start protecting your heart and lose weight use the resources linked in this article to make changes now.

For more questions or to locate a dietitian near you, use the Dietitian Locator on the MyNavy HR website (Navy Nutrition). In addition, commands can request dietitian support outlined in NAVADMIN 160/18.

Creating an Inclusive Culture for Better Mental Health

Feeling a sense of connection with others helps us navigate all kinds of situations. Trusted friends and advisors may help play a role in deescalating our stress during difficult times.

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, “connectedness and social capital together may protect against suicidal behaviors by decreasing isolation, encouraging adaptive coping behaviors, and by increasing belongingness, personal value, and worth, to help build resilience in the face of adversity.” Connectedness and inclusion go hand-in-hand in creating positive and resilient communities.

Consider these ideas for promoting an inclusive culture and sense of connectedness on the individual level:

Be intentional with your social interactions. Consider the following questions: is the conversation one-sided? Are you actively listening to their responses? Are you showing empathy? How do you think the person is feeling?

Volunteer to coach or mentor someone. Offer to lend your knowledge and expertise to someone looking for growth opportunities. Even if a skill doesn’t immediately come to mind, there are small ways you can support others. You have the power to help others feel recognized and respected. 1 Small ACT is all that may be needed to help someone feel more comfortable.

Share resources. Working together helps build strong communities. Ask others what information they’ve found useful. Nudge friends, family members and peers to access resources that can help improve their well-being.

Checking in on friends, family members and loved ones to ensure open communication and awareness of opportunities to help others in your network promotes a supportive and inclusive culture, and helps you feel more connected and present as well.
BASIC NEEDS ALLOWANCE (BNA)

JOHN M. HUNT, OPNAV N171B FAMILY READINESS PROGRAMS POLICY OFFICE

The BNA program provides a monthly allowance to Sailors whose gross household income and household size place them below 130 percent of Federal Poverty Guidelines for their permanent duty station location. BNA provides additional income to address the difference between gross household income from the previous calendar year and 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for the current CY. BNA is payable to eligible Sailors with dependents who voluntarily apply beginning on or after 23 December 2022.

MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) will conduct monthly BNA screenings. No input from Sailors or commands is required for this screening. The first monthly screening will be completed after the federal poverty guidelines are released for the current CY. MNCC will provide each command with a list of Sailors who have been screened as potentially eligible for BNA via enterprise customer relationship management (eCRM).

Sailors are encouraged to seek assistance during the application process. Personnel available to assist with the application include Command Pay and Personnel Administrators, Personal Financial Managers at the local Fleet and Family Support Center, and their Command Financial Specialists.

NAVADMIN 289/22 announces Navy policy and procedures for the implementation of BNA, and can be found at https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Portals/55/Messages/NAVADMIN/NAV2022/NAV22289.txt?ver=1M4XUoGu-Sv1LnyKwtaMYA%3d%3d.

Frequently asked questions, templates, and other BNA resources can be found here: https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/References/Pay-Benefits/N130C/.

Additionally, DoD has established a BNA resource page with resources for Service members, service providers, and leaders to access to learn more about what BNA is, eligibility requirements, and where within the services to go for information about applying. Please visit https://finred.usalearning.gov/Benefits/BNA.
NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR NATIONAL BLACKS IN GOVERNMENT (BIG) MILITARY MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD

National Blacks In Government (BIG) is one of the Department of Defense (DoD)'s diversity affinity groups and is accepting nominations for National Blacks In Government Military Meritorious Service Award.

The BIG Military Meritorious Service Award honors all military service members or Department of Defense (DoD) civilian employees, men, and women, who have supported the DoD mission, overseas contingency operations, or whose attributes best epitomized the qualities and core values of their respective Military Service and/or DoD Component.

Those interested in submitting for the award should contact Navy Outreach and Engagement coordinator Ms. Wendy Boler at wendy.d.boler.civ@us.navy.mil. Submissions must be made by May 31st.

NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR SPIRIT OF HOPE (SOH), FISHER AWARDS

Navy announced via NAVADMIN 286/22 the call for nominations and the selection process for the annual Spirit of Hope (SOH) Award and Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher Distinguished Civilian Humanitarian Award. The SOH Award is presented to individuals or organizations that embody the core values of Mr. Bob Hope, who gave generously to service members for five decades. The Fisher Award recognizes private sector individuals or organizations that demonstrate exceptional patriotism and humanitarian service for service members of the U.S. Armed Forces or their families as inspired by Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, founders of the Fisher Houses.

Nomination packages are to be submitted to Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education) via command channels and must be received no later than March 17th. Award recipients will be announced via Navy.mil.

MATERNITY UNIFORM PILOT PROGRAM (MPP)

The MPP (NAVADMIN 284/21) launched January 2, 2022 and will conclude September 30, 2026. The program is open to officers and enlisted, Active and Reserve Sailors assigned to CONUS and OCONUS commands. Participation in the program is voluntary and requires command endorsement. Selection for participation will be on a first-come, first-serve basis provided all eligibility requirements are met. More information on the program and eligibility requirements available online.