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Vehicle maintenance plans during COVID-19 - Things to consider. **See page 9**

Health & Fitness

Covid 19 vaccine delivery dry run taking place.



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USS BONHOMME RICHARD EXTENSIVE DAMAGE AFTER CATASTROPHIC FIRE TOO EXPENSIVE TO REPAIR

by Caitlin M. Kenney,
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - USS Bonhomme Richard will not return to sea after the Navy determined that the damage it sustained from a fire in July was too extensive and restoration deemed too expensive, the service announced Nov. 30.

"We did not come to this decision lightly," Navy Secretary Kenneth Braithwaite said in a prepared statement. "Following an extensive material assessment in which various courses of action were considered and evaluated, we came to the conclusion that it is not fiscally responsible to restore her."

The 22-year-old *Bonhomme Richard*, a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship, was undergoing maintenance at Naval Base San Diego when the fire started July 12. The fire burned through 11 of its 14 decks, destroying the ship's forward mast, and damaging its superstructure before it was extinguished July 16. About 40 Sailors and 23 civilians were treated for minor injuries, such as heat exhaustion and smoke inhalation.

How the fire started is still unknown, however Navy officials at the time believed it began in the cargo hold where supplies



Port of San Diego Harbor Police Department boats combat a fire on board USS Bonhomme Richard at Naval Base San Diego July 12. Navy photo by Christina Ross

for the maintenance work being conducted on the ship were stored at the time.

"This fire probably couldn't have been in a worse point on the ship in terms of its source that allowed it to spread up elevator shafts as an example, up exhaust stacks as an example, to take that fire up into the superstructure and then forward," Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, said about the fire a day after it was put out.

In an e-mail to senior naval leaders soon after Gilday's visit to the ship, he wrote that sections of the flight deck were warped and bulging and firefighters told him that they had faced 1,200-degree heat, zero visibility and multiple explosions on the ship. Wind from the bay and the explosions allowed the fire to spread and become more intense, he said.

Gilday praised the work of Sailors in his letter, some of whom

went aboard the ship eight times to fight the fire.

"They had experienced the intense, inferno-like heat, the dark smoke that obscured view of teammates by their side, and the explosions - the latter had to be like a mine field ... unknown when and where, and how severe, those blasts might be. Some had been knocked down by these blasts - some, more than once - but they got up, refocused

and reattacked."

All investigations into the fire are still ongoing, according to the Navy's statement Monday.

The Navy's assessment of the damage concluded it would cost more than \$3 billion to restore the ship and five to seven years for construction to be completed. The service also considered rebuilding the ship for other purposes but again determined the \$1 billion cost, which could build a new hospital ship or command and control ship, was too much.

"Although it saddens me that it is not cost effective to bring her back, I know this ship's legacy will continue to live on through

the brave men and women who fought so hard to save her, as well as the sailors and Marines who served aboard her during her 22-year history," Braithwaite said.

When the ship will be dismantled has not been decided, according to the Navy. However before that, the service plans to remove systems and components from *Bonhomme Richard* to be used by other ships.

The cost of decommissioning the ship will be about \$30 million and will take up to a year, according to Rear Adm. Eric Ver Hage in a news report. Ver Hage is the commander of Navy Regional Maintenance Center.

DoD's housing satisfaction survey begins soon

W. Jordan Gillis, assistant secretary of defense for sustainment and the Defense Department's chief housing officer, is inviting DoD housing residents to participate in the department's annual housing satisfaction survey, which is scheduled to launch in December. Each year, DoD, working through the military departments, surveys current residents of government-owned, government-leased, or privatized family housing and current residents of privatized unaccompanied housing. The goal is to obtain feedback regarding their living experience. Survey participation is voluntary, and Gillis encourages residents to share their views about their current housing, resident services and community amenities. According to Gillis, "Resident feedback is important to help the department improve the quality of housing and customer care available to residents."

DINNER FOR A STRANGER TURNS HEADS IN GREENLAND

by Chad Garland,
Stars and Stripes

Little did anyone expect a junior Coast Guard member's simple act of kindness would become a highlight of summer exercises in the Arctic.

The captains of cutters *Tahoma* and *Campbell* could have declined to take Seaman Kate Kilroy, who had not yet attended an occupational school or earned a job-specific rate, on an 85-day mission to the polar region to document their patrols and exercises with allies. But they "decided to take the chance" on the enthusiastic non-rate, Coast

Guard District 1 said in a recent statement.

By the end of the summer, they were happy they did.

While *Campbell* was at port in Greenland's capital city of Nuuk, Kilroy visited a diner, where she saw a stranger sitting alone and bought him a meal, just as she would have done in the small North Carolina town of Apex, outside Raleigh, where she was raised.

"It's just something I do," she said. "I grew up in a family that routinely gives to others."

The stranger turned out to be Greenland's prime minister, Kim

Kielsen.

"We had a nice conversation," Kilroy said. "I was in the right place at the right time, doing what I do. That's all."

After their conversation, Kielsen visited *Campbell* and met the crew in September. He also gave the cutter's commanding officer, Capt. Thomas Crane, a driving tour of Nuuk.

Kilroy's chance encounter "directly strengthened our nation's position in an increasingly competitive Arctic domain through relationship building," Crane said.

"We could not have been

happier with her performance," he said, calling Kilroy "a true shipmate."

Formerly a hospitality and customer service worker, Kilroy joined the Coast Guard in late October 2018. Her "infectiously positive attitude" and natural photography skills helped earn her assignments with the public affairs team at the Base Portsmouth, Va., and eventually the opportunity in August to cover the Maine-based cutters' Arctic patrols.

The vessels took part in exercises with Canadian, French and Danish forces and other

agencies, as well as the U.S. Navy's 2nd Fleet. *Campbell*, which became the first 270-foot medium endurance cutter to earn the Arctic Service Medal, also served as a research and development platform.

During the deployment, Kilroy went out on small boats, joined the helicopter crew of an embarked MH-65 Dolphin and captured images of operations in Eternity Fjord and Disko Bay, home to one of the world's most active iceberg-producing glaciers.

Last week, she "took over" the Coast Guard's Instagram

account to share photos she took during the Arctic deployment.

"Kilroy's imagery reminds us that people - not ships and aircraft - are behind all these global partnerships," the Coast Guard said.

In a note of thanks, the U.S. Consulate called Kilroy's outreach the unplanned pinnacle of the Coast Guard's 2020 summer activities with Greenland and Denmark, the service said.

She was awarded a Coast Guard Achievement Medal and is now on her way to earning the public affairs specialist rating, the service said.



The poster for the Hallmark movie, *USS Christmas*, which was largely filmed on the aircraft carrier Yorktown. Courtesy photo

Hallmark releases Navy-themed 'USS Christmas' movie

by Gina Harkins

A Navy fighter pilot who goes by the call sign "Grinch" and whose hair is a bit too long is at the center of a new Hallmark holiday movie that will premiere over Thanksgiving weekend.

on the World War II-era aircraft carrier Yorktown, takes place during Christmas time in Norfolk, Va., and features a family tiger cruise.

"We were incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to film on board the awe-inspiring aircraft carrier," Ron Del Rio, senior manager of network program publicity at Crown Media family networks, said in a statement.

"... We were also able to partner with the USO, an organization that does such amazing work, and really gave the movie an authentic look and feel."

The movie stars Trevor Donovan as Lt. Billy Jenkins. Donovan starred in the teen drama "90210," and appears alongside Jen Lilley of "Days of Our Lives," who plays Maddie Johnson, a Norfolk-based reporter and Navy sister who's on the ship during a holiday tiger cruise.

Promo materials describe Donovan's character as career-focused with a chip on his shoulder. In classic Hallmark-movie style, he's seen in the trailer telling Lilley's character that Christmas is "overrated."

Parts of the new Hallmark holiday movie "USS Christmas" were filmed aboard the aircraft carrier Yorktown, which is the centerpiece of the Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum. Service members were used as extras.

The next showings are Dec. 4 and Dec. 6, and will run frequently after that. Visit <https://www.hallmarkmoviesandmysteries.com/uss-christmas> for showtimes.

Army

- ✓Special Forces veteran builds robot sparring partner
- ✓Former Soldier provided support to terrorist group, prosecutors say
- ✓New M240 machine gun suppressor gets rave reviews from Army maneuver in test

Navy

- ✓Another Fire Scout drone suffers mishap
- ✓Navy installations tightening COVID-19 restrictions
- ✓Submarine force changing training, acquisition to focus on warfare against sophisticated adversary

Air Force

- ✓The Bone just got badder: Air Force flies external cruise missile on B-1
- ✓Air Force, Space Force select 520 for chief master sergeant
- ✓Airman who died while surfing on Okinawa served with Kadena's munitions squadron

Marine Corps

- ✓Marine's identity stolen hundreds of times to scam ladies looking for love
- ✓Marine Corps on the hunt for a kamikaze drone swarm to back up grunts on the battlefield



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DOD transition outreach to Biden-Harris team begins

by Jim Garamone,
DOD News

The Defense Department is working to ensure the transition to the administration of President-elect Joe Biden is a smooth one, Pentagon officials said Nov. 24.

Last night, the General Services Administration signed

have a DOD policy that guides our actions during transition activities," he said.

The paperwork from the GSA administrator also made certain post-election resources available to the Biden-Harris transition team. "The head of the Biden-Harris transition team did reach out to me personally last night," Muir said. "We had a conversation via email and we had our first meeting this morning."

Members of the Biden-Harris agency

review team will receive office space in the Pentagon and briefings from military and civilian leaders. "We're looking forward to continuing the process with the Biden-Harris transition team in the near future, and throughout the transition period," Muir said.

The DOD is a huge department and it changes. The transition team has provided the Biden-Harris team with interim transition books, with primers detailing the organizational

paperwork that allowed government employees to speak with members of the Biden-Harris transition office.

Tom Muir, the director of Washington Headquarters Services, will lead the DOD transition effort.

Muir said in a Pentagon press conference that he is operating under the Presidential Transition Act of 1963, and that the department has been preparing for transition since June. "We

Army now testing recruits for sickle cell trait

by Thomas Brading,
Army News Service

FORT EUSTIS, Va. -- The Army has started testing recruits for sickle cell trait, or SCT, to identify at-risk Soldiers, as the service plans to screen all Soldiers within a year, according to a U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command medical officer.

Earlier this month, the screening push kicked off to both give Army leaders an idea of how SCT has impacted the ranks, and to help Soldiers combat the lifelong ailment, said Maj. Sean Donohue, command surgeon at TRADOC's Center for Initial Military Training.

"On the enlisted side, recruits [at basic combat training] are now tested as part of their initial screening exam," Donohue

structures, budget, missions and charters of the department.

This includes the military departments, the Joint Staff, the National Guard Bureau and the Office of the Secretary of Defense components. "It is a very detailed, elaborate and deliberate system [for transition]," Muir said.

said. The SCT tests are grouped in "with a variety of other blood samples as part of initial processing."

Since Nov. 2, roughly 2% of recruits have been diagnosed with the blood disorder, he said, a number on par with the national average.

Having SCT is not a deal-breaker for military service, or any military occupational specialty, Donohue stressed. Instead, the diagnosis is the first step in giving Soldiers the care and support they need.

If a recruit's bloodwork is marked for carrying SCT, the next step would be meeting with a health care provider, he said. From there, they would receive additional counseling to educate them on the condition.

Contact between the department and the Biden-Harris transition team will grow. "Those will be daily discussions moving forward likely, and will be responsive to the requirements, while ensuring that we implement the national defense strategy of the United States during this time of vulnerability for a nation," Muir said.

By discovering SCT early on, it could help Army officials better distinguish "the difference between someone who may look like they have a heat-related injury from someone who has [SCT]," he said.

Along with testing, TRADOC officials are producing preventative health training materials.

"We've been doing this at our Drill Sergeant Academy, in particular, and educating them on what exertional collapse re-

lated to sickle cell looks like," Donohue said.

Starting this fiscal year, identifying SCT symptoms will be part of the Army's heat-related illness prevention training that recruits receive when they enter the force. In addition, the testing phase will extend beyond basic training.

Continue reading this story on the Army Newsstand, at <https://www.army.mil/arnews>.

“We have a DOD policy that guides our actions during transition activities.”

USS John S. McCain conducts Freedom of Navigation Operation

PETER THE GREAT BAY - Destroyer USS *John S. McCain* asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the vicinity of Peter the Great Bay in the Sea of Japan Nov. 24.

This freedom of navigation operation ("FONOP") upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea recognized in international law by challenging Russia's excessive maritime claims.

In 1984, the U.S.S.R declared a system of straight baselines along its coasts, including a straight baseline enclosing Peter the Great Bay as claimed internal waters. This 106-nautical mile (nm) closing line is inconsistent with the rules of international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention to enclose the waters of a bay. By drawing this closing line, the U.S.S.R. attempted to claim more internal waters - and territorial sea farther from shore - than it is entitled to claim under international law. Russia has continued the U.S.S.R. claim. By conducting this operation, the United States demonstrated that these waters are not Russia's territorial sea and that the United States does not acquiesce in Russia's claim that Peter the Great is a "historic bay" under international law.

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Survey provides insights into spouse satisfaction with military life

Many key indicators of well-being among active-duty military spouses have improved or held steady since 2017, according to the newly released Survey of Active Duty Spouses. The survey measured spouse satisfaction from 2017-2019.

The 2019 survey looked at spouse attitudes and experiences in the areas of military support and benefits, deployment and reintegration, education and employment, and spouse and child well-being.

Areas that improved or held steady from the 2017 survey include general health and well-being, financial stability, marital satisfaction, and positive child behaviors.

The survey also identified key opportunities for the Department of Defense to improve spouse satisfaction in the areas of personal stress support, as well as support for employment and deployment-related challenges.

“Our program and policy teams rely on insights from this important, recurring research study, which uses stratified sampling and weighting to produce results that create a reliable depiction of the experience faced by military spouses,” said Under Secretary of Defense for Person-

nel and Readiness Matthew P. Donovan.

“This supports our ability to adjust, improve, and initi-

Let there be light: 725 AMS finds creative solution to lighting problem

Since Sept. 18, 1947, the Air Force has directed decades of focus on gaining and maintaining air superiority. The climate of such an enduring task relies greatly on the shoulders of our current force and begs to wonder, how can we get better, be better and maintain dominance?

Today, Airmen are seasoned and bred to identify inefficiencies, innovate and tackle problem sets in pursuit of excellence. Often, and even more so at Naval Station Rota, there’s a reminder of how allies, partners and sister services are the key ingredients toward a better future.

Under the command of Lt. Col. Ryan Herman, the 725 Air Mobility Squadron (AMS) launched its first ever Spark Tank event. These events challenge Airmen to present innovative ideas to a panel of leaders and decision makers. Highlighting potential grassroots solutions to problems front-line workers experience allows for resources to be awarded to these ideas.

Themes emerged: old processes, digitalization, obsolescence issues and wasted man hours. One idea, presented by Tech. Sgt. Mitch Tindal, highlighted the fading support for a vital piece of equipment flightline mechanics depend on, the FL-1D flood light cart. This diesel-powered generator has been the backbone of mobile lighting and accessory power generation for flightline workers for decades. Aerospace Group Equipment personnel are charged with maintaining this asset.

Tindal described shortages for refurbished parts, fuel consumption costs and the consistent man hours necessary to maintain each of Rota’s 20 units. His solution: begin replacing these units with renewable energy (solar and wind). His presentation ended with presenting three separate commercial units averaging \$30k per unit and estimated long-term savings.

One of the many benefits of Spark Tank events is the ability for

ate policies and programs that meet the needs of our military spouses.”

The Department of Defense

survey, conducted every two years, is the leading source of information about military spouses based on feedback from a representative cross-section

of spouses. The data is used to analyze issues, programs, and services, and identify key opportunities to better support military spouses.

the panel to interact with the presenter and iterate on the spot. Senior Technical Advisor Marcus Carrion engaged with Tindal and asked, “Is the problem with the unit entirely or just the diesel motor and generator?” Tindal said the main problems stemmed from the components; not the chassis, frame and shell. Alas, the innovative idea was born. Instead of purchasing new \$30,000 units, the panel approved the use of squadron innovation funding to prototype a solar/LED conversion using the existing frame, chassis and shell.

Tindal and Carrion began listing requirements and assembling a team. As the Air Force Engineering & Technical Services representative, Carrion had established a long-standing relationship with a local engineering think tank named GECEI Group. The local company quickly began working with the team to understand the complexities of the innovative endeavor.

Over the course of six months, the team removed all the problematic and environmentally impactful components and retrofitted the cart with state-of-the-art components. The motor and generator bay was modified to house twelve maintenance-free batteries, the gas tank was replaced with electronics and electrical panel, an automatic cooling system and digital display. The incandescent light bulbs were replaced with high powered LED light assemblies and the cart was fitted with two sets of retractable articulating solar panels to generate the necessary clean power to charge the batteries. After construction was complete, the unit was sent to Ferris for its make-over paint job.

The collaboration led to the successful prototyping of the FL-1D light cart, with no reduction of capability. The cart is capable of storing enough power to provide 16 hours of 75,000 lumens uninterrupted. The unit comes with 120V and 220V outlets for accessory power supplies. A low battery sensing system was installed and illuminates two exterior indicators to notify users when battery storage is less than one-third percent along with an audible warning.

“The participation of military spouses is critical in providing the DOD with the insights needed to deliver on its priority to help military families thrive,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy Kim Joiner.

“It is with their feedback that we can make adjustments and introduce new programs to enhance support for military families.”

For important information about the military community, including survey results, infographics, research reports, and demographic profiles, visit Military OneSource.

Military Community and Family Policy is directly responsible for establishing and overseeing quality-of-life policies and programs that help our guardians of country, their families, and survivors be well and mission-ready.

Military OneSource is the gateway to programs and services that support the everyday needs of the 5.2 million service members and immediate family members of the military community. These Department of Defense services can be accessed 24/7/365 around the world.

Veterans News

One person’s generosity helps homeless veterans, needy families

by Scott Sutherland,
Staff writer

From stuffed animals to food, Vista resident Jeffrey Olsen has delivered plenty of happiness to local people in need.

For 32 years, the veterans rights activist and humanitarian estimates that he’s served the abused, the dying, the disabled, the homeless, military families, and wounded warriors. “I’ve helped over 52,000 people in three decades,” said Olsen.

He added to that staggering number Nov. 30 when he donat-

ed 320 items - mostly sweaters, jackets and coats - to the Armed Services YMCA San Diego. He found a great bargain at a local retail store, not for used clothing but for new items.

“I bought new jackets and sweaters at a discount rate,” he said. “The jackets retailed for \$120, but I got them for \$6.88. The total retail value of the items was \$16,000.”

According to Anna Breese, director of community relations at ASYMCA San Diego, the donations are mostly for military families in the San Diego area.

“Two hundred of these will be distributed at ASYMCA to active-duty military families during our neighborhood food distribution at Bayview Hills Dec. 10,” said Breese, and 100 will be given to Veterans Village San Diego to support homeless veterans. The jackets will only

Ask Rusty - No simple answer to question on when to claim benefits

by Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I’m almost 59 and hope to retire from working soon. Should I take Social Security as soon as possible, or wait for the maximum amount? Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead: I’m afraid there’s no simple answer to your question, except “it depends.” It depends on your health; it depends on your need for the money when you retire; and it depends on your life expectancy. Plus, your marital status may also influence your decision on when to claim.

First of all, you cannot claim your Social Security retirement benefit until you are at least 62 years old. But if you claim at 62 your benefit will be cut by 30% from what it would be if you waited until your full retirement age (67). You actually have an 8-year window starting at age 62

and lasting until age 70 to claim your Social Security benefit. The earlier in that window you claim, the smaller your benefit will be. And the longer you wait to claim (up to age 70), the higher your benefit will be.

“Donations like the one we received from Jeffrey Olsen are incredibly important for our military families, especially during the holiday season,” she said, “Receiving a new, warm, and

quality sweater or jacket makes for one less thing they have to purchase over the holidays. Since these clothing items are brand new, they can also make excellent gifts, which helps families save money and use it elsewhere, such as putting food on the table.”

At age 70, your benefit will reach maximum at 24% more than it would be at age 67, and 76% more than it will be at age 62. Essentially, if you are in good health, don’t urgently need the money earlier, and expect to enjoy at least “average” longevity (about 85 for a man your age today), you will not only get a much higher monthly benefit, but also collect much more in cumulative lifetime benefits by waiting until age 70 (or as long as you can) to claim. Of course, no one knows how long they will live, but there are online tools which can assist you

with estimating your life expectancy. One relatively simple and user friendly tool is available from Social Security at this link: <https://www.ssa.gov/oact/population/longevity.html>.

Conversely, if you are not in good health and don’t expect at least average longevity, or if you urgently need the money when you retire from working, claiming earlier may also be a prudent choice. If you are married and you predecease your wife, her survivor benefit will be based upon the benefit amount you are actually receiving, so by waiting to get a higher benefit for yourself you are also enhancing your wife’s eventual benefit as your widow, should you pass before her.

Be aware too that, should you

Veterans Village of San Diego has been serving military veterans since 1981, with emphasis on helping those who served in overcoming homelessness and related challenges. VVSD provides annual services to more than 3,000 military vets
see **Olsen, page 8**

decide to go back to work, until you reach age 67 you’ll be subject to Social Security’s “earnings test” which limits how much you can earn before Social Security takes back some of your benefits (the 2021 limit is \$18,960 and if that were exceeded, they’d take back benefits equal to half of the amount it was exceeded by). The earnings limit changes annually but goes away at your full retirement age.

So, these are the things you should consider in deciding when in that 8-year window to claim your benefits. I cannot directly answer your question for you, but I hope the above gives you what’s needed to make an informed decision on when to claim your Social Security benefits.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance.

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Relief at last!

Dr. Daneen Skube,
Tribune Content Agency

Q: I keep reading about pandemic fatigue and I've got it! The future looks like a dark difficult slog. When you look at our current social, economic, and political circumstances how optimistic do you feel about us turning any corners?

A: I'm optimistic that our darkest days in and out of our workplaces will be fading as this year ends. We have some

INTERPERSONAL EDGE:

certainty about who is leading our country and a top priority with the new administration will be handling both COVID-19 and the economy.

The three central issues we are facing are: 1) COVID-19. 2) The economy struggling due to COVID-19. 3) And social unrest made worse by #1 and #2.

By scientifically and medically tackling COVID-19 most of our adversities are bound to improve. By the end of December we'll have a good guess on a start for distribution of a vaccine. The infrastructure for distribution is already in place.

A Biden administration will also likely get smart, medical, scientific, and economic advisers together and do what these experts recommend. When human beings chose polarization and distraction by ego or hatred we suffer. When we unify and bring our collective wisdom to the table we're capable of miracles.

I recently watched a Netflix documentary, "Inside Bill's Brain," discussing Bill Gates. Gates tackles any problem with the idea that, "the difficult takes a long time and the impossible just a little longer." He doesn't back down from huge problems. He starts by reading everything on a topic, then gathers the smartest people to discuss the problem. Watching these group discussions on fire with brilliant thinking shows what's possible through cooperation.

There's no lack of agreement among us that our species faces unprecedented problems not limited to COVID-19. However, many of us never learned the interpersonal skills to collaborate.

The old saying, "United we stand, divided we fall," has never been more true. No you cannot make anyone else collaborate but you can look at your own biases, judgments, and potential to demonize those that disagree with you.

In my corporate consulting, I find the people most in conflict with each other are also the people that together can see a problem comprehensively. People in conflict are often both right. When they put their perspectives together innovation and productivity is the result.

My corporate clients often praise my brilliant problem solving but the truth is all I do is get their interpersonal skills on track so they can solve their

own problems. I make sure the interpersonal behaviors that are getting in the way of problem solving are replaced with effective skills.

There's an old folk tale describing heaven and hell. There are two rooms. In each there's a bubbling cauldron of soup. In each room, the people gathered around the cauldron have wooden spoons too long to feed themselves. In heaven, the people solve the problem by feeding each other. In hell, the people fight to get the spoon into their own mouths and are starving.

I think 2021 gives us the opportunity to start feeding each

other, to refuse to let kindness be a casualty of fear, and to see the "we" in the word "me." In all selfishness if you want to be well you have to work to leave each person you meet better than you found them. The path forward requires all of us working together and that is perhaps the most "unprecedented" potential achievement we've ever accomplished as a species.

As Martin Luther King Jr. concisely observed, "I have decided to stick with love, hate is too great a burden to bear." Turns out using love as a verb in actionable cooperation may be the choice and skill that saves us all.

The last word(s)

Q: Do you think the work world will return to normal?

A: No, I think the events of 2020 will leave us, and our workplaces permanently changed.

Daneen Skube is an executive coach, trainer, therapist and speaker. You can contact here at www.interpersonaledge.com or 1420 NW Gilman Blvd., #2845, Issaquah, WA 98027.

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Chief of Navy Reserve releases "Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions 2020" to the Reserve Force; Focuses on warfighting readiness

Vice Adm. John Mustin, chief of Navy Reserve, released the "Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions 2020" to the Reserve Force, Nov. 24.

The Fighting Instructions reaffirm the Navy Reserve's strategic direction in alignment with the National Defense Strategy, while accounting for recent global events and Navy organizational changes to rapidly move the Navy Reserve forward. The Fighting Instructions also share Mustin's singular priority after his first 100 days.

"We're focused unambiguously on warfighting readiness. It is my number one and only priority - period. We will generate the combat power and critical strategic depth that the Navy requires to prevail in conflict in an era of great power competition. That is our job, and why the Navy Reserve exists. All else is secondary," Mustin said.

The new direction focuses the Navy Reserve's efforts to achieve warfighting readiness by transforming the way it designs, trains and mobilizes the Force.

DESIGN THE FORCE identifies warfighting capabilities that are best suited for the reserve component. This effort will ensure all capabilities residing in the RC provide a clear benefit to the Navy.

TRAIN THE FORCE focuses training and all time spent in uniform preparing Sailors for their mobilization billets, in addition to the more traditional unit training requirements which are the cost of being a Reserve member.

MOBILIZE THE FORCE requires developing and employing mobilization processes based on the MOB-to-Billet design in order to expedite activation of RC forces in times of need.

"As a Navy Reserve, we have much to be proud of. Every day, our Sailors are doing superb work in every domain and in every theatre on the planet, and our Navy is stronger as a result," said Mustin. "Achieving strategic depth and improving warfighting readiness requires us to build on the hard work completed so far with a sense of urgency. I'm excited by the work ahead. It'll be challenging, but in the end, our Navy Reserve will be warfighting ready on Day One.

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Jeffrey Olsen (l) and Phillip Sammuli, vice president of Development for the ASYMCA San Diego, with donated jacket and sweater. Courtesy photo

Olsen

continued from page 4 throughout San Diego County.

Veterans homelessness is a particular passion for Olsen. His father Robert served as a Marine in the Korean War, catapulting the junior Olsen to helping out whenever he can with veterans issues, including health care.

"I want to encourage homeless veterans," he said. "I met one man, who was injured in battle, and he goes to the VA hospital 3-4 times a week, but the VA brought him down to 20 percent disability. A lot of vets say, 'that's all I'm worth is 20 percent.' I encourage them to fight for their rights. When they fight in war or conflicts, a lot of them give up on life. They need to fight for themselves, even after war"

Besides assisting homeless vets, he makes the lives of fam-

ilies with terminally children better through his generosity. His humanitarian work during Christmas time, especially toys to hospitalized kids, has been a staple for him for years. "I carry a lot of the spirit in me from those kids who passed away when I do my humanitarian work."

He said a lot of his work stems from family tradition, referring to his grandmother who would "fix food for families and for kids on the street" during the Great Depression.

He's not quite sure how the sports world found out about his altruism, but on his 30th anniversary of compassionate giving, he received autographed photos from ex-NFL quarterbacks Joe Montana and Eli Manning.

Throughout the years, many people have benefited from Jeffrey Olsen's unselfish gestures of kindness. Many years are sure to follow.

Microgrid test bed begins battery testing for large adaptive and transportable energy storage project

by Sarah MacMillan

PORT HUENEME - The Naval facilities command here has received two, 250kW - 4-hour batteries to undergo testing at a microgrid test bed.

The two batteries are part of the larger adaptive and transportable microgrid with energy storage project - also known as the northern battery project - operated by Naval Surface Warfare Center - Port Hueneme Division, and contracted by Electric Power Research Institute.

Sponsored by the California Energy Commission and the Office of the Secretary of Defense Environmental Security Technology Certification Program, the northern battery project will demonstrate and deploy standardized, renewable-based, resilient, and highly penetrable distributed energy resources, with the goal of providing a safe, controllable and reproducible microgrid.

Engineering and Expeditionary Warfare Center's Microgrid Test Bed offers industry partners the ability to test and validate the performance of renewable, alternative energy and storage technologies in a real world simulated environment. The microgrid test bed also provides the NAVFAC enterprise a unique capability to validate the per-

formance of various renewable energy storage devices, no mat-

ployments (many of which are unstandardized and do not offer



A basic layout of a microgrid test bed. Courtesy photo

ter the generation, and address performance gaps in knowledge and experience with designing, operating and controlling the installation of microgrids.

The northern battery project is scheduled to provide data-driven solutions to the many challenges associated with microgrid de-

the technical complexity to support customized projects), and to support the reliability of military database server farms, which require a large amount of power to

run and keep the collection of computers cool.

The two batteries will be integrated with a 500kWac (kilowatt alternating current) photovoltaic carport - or solar carport canopy with solar panels attached - currently under development by NAVFAC Southwest through a

utility energy service contract with Southern California Edison. The integration will provide smooth power during solar outages and fluctuations; provide emergency power during local blackout events; reduce electricity supply costs; optimize electric vehicle charging stations; reduce diesel unit emissions; and improve the overall power supply resiliency and reliability.

Battery testing will document commercially available technologies and deployment strategies to make microgrid technology standardized and deployable at more contested military installations. If the testing succeeds, the enhancements from the northern battery project will dramatically increase deployment opportunities at U.S. military bases over the next 10 years.

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CPOs bring Thanksgiving to Sailors, families

SAN DIEGO - Southwest Regional Maintenance Center (SWRMC) Chief Petty Officers' Association (CPOA) members delivered Thanksgiving meals to Sailors and their families on Nov. 20.

"The effort of our CPOA to ensure our SWRMC Sailors and their families are taken care of during this Thanksgiving season exemplifies the values of the SWRMC Team," said Capt. David Hart, SWRMC's commanding officer.

"It has been a tough year and it is more important than ever that we are taking care of each other."

The idea for this program stemmed from the desire to provide assistance to Sailors who might need some extra help this season. It is the job of chiefs to ensure their junior Sailors are taken care of and, with the added stress of the holiday season during the current pandemic, the CPOA knew there was a need for help.

Partnering with a local grocery store, the CPOA, SWRMC's officer wardroom, and chief petty officer selectees delivered Thanksgiving meal kits to 61 families the weekend before Thanksgiving ensuring those

families had a holiday meal to enjoy together. Each holiday meal box includes a whole turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes and gravy, and vegetable sides to feed a family of 6 to 8 people.

"The meal kits were donated through our local Vons supermarket from donations made by shoppers at checkout," said Senior Chief John Shubert. "For every dollar donated, the Food Bank provides traditional holiday meals to local military families and families facing hardships. The CPOA was also able to purchase additional meal kits to make sure every family was

Region Legal Service Office (RLSO) Southwest

RLSO SW supports the operational readiness of Navy commands and Sailors in the Southwestern U.S. by providing responsive, timely and accurate legal guidance, support services and training in the areas of military justice, administrative law and legal assistance.

Legal assistance is available for consumer/financial affairs,

cared for this Thanksgiving."

This is SWRMC's first year participating in the fundraiser.

"It is important that as an organization we are not only supporting the Fleet, but we are also supporting each other," added Hart.

SWRMC is meeting its mission to provide superior ship maintenance, modernization, technical support, and training for the Pacific Fleet.

For more on SWRMC, visit <https://www.navsea.navy.mil/Home/RMC/SWRMC>.

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COVID-19 UPDATE

For the health and safety of clients, staff, and attorneys, the Region Legal Service Office Southwest offices will provide remote services only until further notice. Walk-in services aren't available at this time. Call contact your local office for assistance scheduling a remote appointment.



Sailors and Marines create their own holiday cards during an MWR program event aboard *Makin Island* amphibious assault ship. *Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group* and the 15th MEU are training at sea. Navy photo by MC3 Aaron Sperle

Capt. Eric Anduze, commanding officer aircraft carrier *Theodore Roosevelt*, uses the shipboard announcing system to address the ship's crew before their Thanksgiving meal. Navy photo by MC2 Kyle Hafer



SAN DIEGO
Nov. 26, 2020



Lt. Gen. Charles Chiarotti, right, installations and logistics deputy commandant, tours warehouse facilities at Marine Logistics Base with a group from First Force Storage Battalion. Photo by Sgt. Jack Adamyk

Lt. Col. Juliet Calvin, CO of 1st Network Battalion, Marine Corps Cyberspace Operations Group, uncovers the American flag during a ceremony. The battalion provides security, operations, and protection Marine Corps Enterprise Network west division. Photo by Lance Cpl. Andrew Cortez



CAMP PENDLETON
Nov. 20, 2020

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

I've never understood the thrill of camping out, standing in long lines, and elbowing fellow shoppers on Black Friday, just to get a few bucks off of an Insta-Pot or Nintendo Switch. Frankly, I'd rather stick a hot poker in my eye than fight the holiday crowds the day after Thanksgiving, when I'm usually sucking leftover turkey from my teeth and watching old movies.

So when the media reported that Black Friday had been rendered "irrelevant" by the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, I felt vindicated and relieved.

However, I soon learned that Black Friday had not been cancelled after all — it was merely "re-invented." Instead of one day of holiday shopping mania, the consumer mayhem formerly known as Black Friday had been stretched out over October, November and December. The prolonged agony now included online and in-store discounts, incentives for curb-side pick up to avoid delivery delays, and "Health Ambassadors" to monitor occupancy limits and enforce safety protocols.

Oh, joy.

As a woman with beefy upper arms and habit of losing receipts, I am a firm believer in trying on and eyeballing items before buying. I would normally insist on shopping in store, but the pandemic restrictions have forced even me to bend my own

Escaping the holiday shopping vortex

rules. Against my better judgment, I reluctantly tried online shopping to buy my 2020 Christmas gifts.

Once on my laptop, I was sucked in by flashy digital ads promising "Forty-percent off for a limited time!" and "Free shipping with coupon code!" For a moment, I thought that I might actually save money. After creating accounts and accepting cookies that would fill my inbox with countless junk emails for months to come, I filled various online shopping carts with a variety of gifts for my whole family.

"Who knew online shopping would be so easy and affordable!" I thought, just before keying in the first coupon code. I pressed the return key, excited to see my savings, when I suddenly found myself caught in a digital vortex from which there was no escape.

An agonizing two hours later, I had painstakingly discovered that one coupon was for in-store purchases only, three had expired, and although another WAS for online purchases, it only applied IF you used a store credit card, which we didn't have. I tried to avail myself of the advertised military discount, but it only worked on Tuesdays, and then, only if I'd been pre-approved after scanning and uploading a copy of my husband's form DD-214. Monday discounts were for first responders, Wednesdays were for medical workers, Fridays were for left-handed dyslexics, Saturdays were for orphaned red-heads, and Sundays were for polka dancers. Or something like that.

In the end, only the free shipping discount worked, and after completing the transaction, I realized that I'd paid prices that were jacked up to compensate for the complicated Black Friday discount schemes. Feeling defeated, I longed for the pre-Internet holidays of my youth, when gift lists were shorter, shopping was limited to a couple of weeks in December, and people gave simple items that were appreciated.

Back then, we relaxed in our gabardine slacks at home, making thoughtful crafts like macrame owl wall hangings and pencil caddies made from mayonnaise jars stuck with bits of masking tape rubbed with shoe polish. We crocheted awkward sweater vests, made crooked cutting boards in shop class, and fashioned ash trays out of clay. And if we weren't crafty, we went to old-fashioned department stores and bought our loved ones modestly-priced Avon perfumes, English Leather cologne, handkerchiefs, ties, tea towels, record albums, Nerf balls, Slinkys and mood rings.

Ah, the good old days...

On second thought, I hope this doesn't give my family the wrong idea. I may have openly disparaged the evils of Black Friday shopping and extolled the virtues of handmade gifts, but let's be clear: I do NOT want to open a box on Christmas that contains anything made out of macaroni noodles and yam.

If you are looking for a gift for me, I recommend you search online and use a coupon code. Size ten, roomy in the sleeves.

Vehicle maintenance plans during COVID-19 - Things to consider

One major, ongoing expense associated with vehicle ownership is its maintenance. You have limited choices: either maintain it yourself, which requires a high level of expertise and expensive, specialized equipment; or pay someone else to maintain it for you. Most people ultimately choose the latter for new vehicles — in part because they are technically complex and challenging to work on.

In conjunction with your purchase of a new vehicle, your selling dealership will probably offer you the opportunity to purchase a prepaid maintenance plan. They will justify this by explaining to you how, by paying in advance, you will save money when compared to paying for your service appointments as you go. You might think that predicting your eventual savings or deficit would simply be a matter of finding out the cost of each of the services, adding them up and then comparing that total to what the price is for the maintenance contract that you are being offered. However, comparing costs of a maintenance plan versus paying-as-you-go is much more complicated than that, compounded by the coronavirus pandemic/COVID-19.

Maintenance plans are not only contingent upon mileage driven, but also on elapsed time. During COVID-19, many of us have sharply curtailed our driving. I am writing this in early December, 2020. Since purchasing my 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime in mid-August of this year, I have only driven it a total of 726 miles. By contrast, in past years I have driven thousands of miles in the same time period.

My Toyota WARRANTY & MAINTENANCE GUIDE not only

shows the mileages at which service visits are due, but also when they are due by. For example, my first service is due at either 5,000 miles or six months, whichever comes first. I've driven my new vehicle for over three months. With the limited amount of

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

my driving, I might not even drive 1,000 miles in my first six months of vehicle ownership. By that time, I will have to take it in for its first service.

ToyotaCare provides the first two years of scheduled maintenance — plus Roadside Assistance — at no extra charge. Additionally, due to COVID-19, Toyota has extended ToyotaCare by 3,000 miles or three months, so that customers can use the free 25,000-mile service too, even if they have not driven enough miles.

The maximum benefit of the ToyotaCare Plus Premium Prepaid Maintenance Plan would either cover my Toyota vehicle for its first 75,000 miles or by Aug. 23, 2026 (which includes a bonus grace period year to finish using the services or lose them), whichever comes first.

To best determine if a prepaid maintenance plan may save you money, you would need to make an

educated guess about how many of the service visits you are likely to actually take advantage of before your maintenance plan expires. If you do not drive very much and get the services done at the maximum time intervals, you would end up losing some of your prepaid service visits. Each of the 5K, 10K, 15K and 20K services would be done at six-month intervals, and then the 25K service could get done three months later. After that, you could start getting two of the ToyotaCare Plus prepaid maintenance plan service visits per year (30K, 35K, 40K, 45K, 50K, 55K and 60K) until the plan expires, which would leave the 65K, 70K and 75K prepaid service visits unredeemed.

This gets even more complicated. Only "normal factory-scheduled maintenance" is included. Not covered in my RAV4 example are additional items that your dealer might recommend, nor are more frequent service visit intervals due to "Special/Severe Operating Conditions," such as "driving on dirt roads or dusty roads," and/or "driving while towing, using a car-top carrier, or heavy vehicle loading."

On the plus side, my prepaid maintenance plan remains refundable — on a pro-rated basis — until my "Agreement Expiration Date" (Aug. 23, 2025). However, note that this date is a full year before the grace period for using the prepaid service visits ends.

To decide if a prepaid maintenance plan is right for you, try to get estimated prices for the service visits you'll need during that period, read all of the fine print, and negotiate a good price for the maintenance plan.

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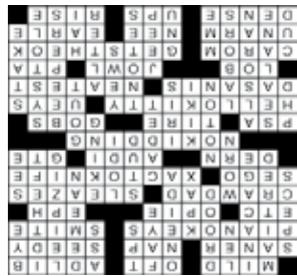
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2	8	1	9	7	3	4	5	6
3	2	8	4	1	9	5	6	7
4	6	9	3	5	7	2	1	8
7	1	5	2	8	6	3	9	4

Resources for pet families from the San Diego Humane Society

Community Pet Pantry, Tuesday-Sunday, 9am-6pm

San Diego Humane Society's Community Pet Pantry provides free pet food to families in need. Community members may come to our El Cajon, Escondido, Oceanside and San Diego campuses six days a week to pick up dry cat or dog food in addition to other supplies as available.

Learn More >> <https://secure.sdhumane.org/site/R?i=stGf5UloHsMjn4UpQTrL3A>

Virtual Pet Loss Support Group, Sat., Dec. 19, 10-11:15am

Family, friends and society don't always understand how drastically the loss of a pet can affect us and can find it difficult to support the grief we often feel. Our Pet Loss Support Group provides an environment where thoughts and emotions can be shared and feelings of grief are understood and validated.

Due to COVID-19, our sessions are virtually hosted on Zoom. The Pet Loss Support Group is open to everyone ages 10 and up and is appropriate for those who have recently lost a pet, are still mourning an old loss, are anticipating the death of a pet or are preparing for euthanasia. Limited spaces are available.

Learn More >> https://secure.sdhumane.org/site/R?i=WGgS3_fsZwViAtrF8caACw

Mobile Adoption Meet & Greet

• Kendra Scott Fashion Valley, 7007 Friars Road, Suite 572, San Diego • Saturday, Dec. 5, 1-3pm.

• Kendra Scott UTC, 4309 La Jolla Village Drive, Suite #2330, San Diego • Saturday, Dec. 19, 1-3pm.

Virtual Scout Programs, Ongoing, \$40 per troop

Join us for a virtual scout program! All programs are 45 minutes and include a live, virtual humane education lesson, including meeting an animal, as well as activities to complete at home. Scouts are also invited to work on their Bronze, Silver and Gold Award projects, as well as complete Eagle Scout projects with us.

Learn More >> <https://secure.sdhumane.org/site/R?i=zPNmzbrT5imX1ayTJ-rbow>

Stadium seats available to purchase

We hope you are as excited as we are about the construction of the new Aztec Stadium that is currently underway! As we look forward to this next chapter, we want you to be able to capture a piece of history from the old stadium as well. Whether you call it San Diego Stadium, Jack Murphy Stadium, Qualcomm Stadium, or SDCCU Stadium, it has been a part of so many wonderful memories for San Diego State and the greater San Diego community. Here are some key details to note:

- The seats are only sold in pairs. Purchases are limited to two (2) pairs (i.e. four (4) seats) per person.
- Seats are \$329 per pair.
- The seats come as-is; riser-mounted. If you'd like to purchase brackets for your seats you can order those from Stadium Seat Depot.
- We cannot accommodate specific seat numbers, but you will have the option to purchase seat numbers to affix to your seats from Stadium Seat Depot.
- Shipping is not available; seats are available for pick-up only and those mid-December pick-up dates will be communicated to you via e-mail. For information visit <https://goaztecs.com/sports/2020/11/19/sdccu-seat-sales.aspx>

Dec. 4-6: 'December Nights' festival offers tasty treats from local food vendors

The City of San Diego is bringing some holiday cheer to residents who are disappointed at the cancellation of the annual December Nights event as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City announced it will host a reimagined version of the popular festival this year at Inspiration Point, across the street from Balboa Park.

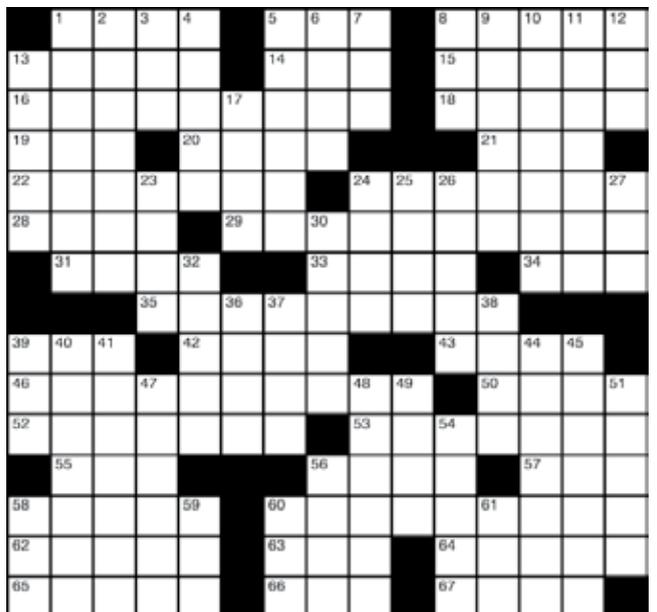
Taste of December Nights brings together a variety of delicious offerings from some of San Diego's most popular food vendors in a convenient, contactless and safe environment. **The three-day event will be held Friday, Dec. 4, through Sunday, Dec. 6, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at Inspiration Point Way.** The first 500 vehicles to arrive each day of the event will receive a commemorative tote bag with giveaway items. Visit <http://www.sandiego.gov/DecemberNights>

Across

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- Stage surprise
- More reasonable
- Give in to jet lag
- Far from posh
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- Whack, biblically
- Space-saving abbr.
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- React to yeast

Down

- Restaurant host
- Like most pet birds
- Writer Deighton
- Dickens' "The Mystery of Edwin ..."
- Upstate New York lake
- Actress Dunaway
- Playfully pranks, for short
- Stubborn equine
- Cut down to size
- German city where Wagner was born
- Crime after a data breach, perhaps
- "See ya"
- Architectural details
- Title planet in a 2001 sci-fi film
- In need of patching
- finder: carpenter's tool
- Wine city near Sacramento
- Just managing, with "out"
- Witness
- Coast Guard Academy student
- "... your life!"
- Dee who sang with Elton
- Spring flower
- Joint ailment
- Prof.'s degree
- Maritime route
- Concession speech deliverer
- Paging gadgets
- Ventricular contraction
- Hercules' 12 challenges
- Low-risk govt. securities
- Evergreens used for archery bows
- Buffy's weapon of choice
- Make changes to
- Wrangler maker
- Bovine chew
- French Mrs.
- Oxlike antelope
- Yokohama yes



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

COVID-19 vaccine delivery dry runs taking place across U.S., general says

by David Vergun

The chief operations officer for Operation Warp Speed discussed how the COVID-19 vaccines will be delivered and administered.

Army Gen. Gustave F. Perna held a press briefing on Operation Warp Speed in Washington, D.C., last week.

Once the Food and Drug Administration authorizes the vaccines from pharmaceutical companies Pfizer and Moderna, they will be distributed to any location in America that the state approves as the provider, he said. Officials are now working with each jurisdiction to plan and then figure out allocation within the states.

For each location, however, there's a minimum delivery requirement of the vaccine, which is 975 doses by Pfizer, and 100 doses by Moderna," he said.

It's important to ensure everyone understands the cold storage, distribution, use and administration process for the vaccines, Perna said.



Army Gen. Gustave F. Perna, chief operations officer for Operation Warp Speed, speaks at a briefing on Operation Warp Speed in Washington, D.C., Nov. 24, 2020.

"I'm very, very confident that we have a solid plan and that we have the ability to observe, watch, monitor, adjust to meet the requirements, as has been specified through the states."

After issuing the initial batch, called the "safety stock," officials will monitor providers to ensure they're following the guidelines, he said. Once there is confidence

that the process is being followed correctly, more vaccines will be made available to them.

For some time, the Defense Department and the Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has been working with the jurisdictions on how to run scenarios to actually determine where to put the allocation of vaccines to the best advantage, he said, adding that they are following Food and Drug Administration and Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply guidance during this process.

"I'm very, very confident that we have a solid plan and that we have the ability to observe, watch, monitor, adjust to meet the requirements, as has been specified through the states," he said.

"We're working on this constantly. We work rehearsals of different scenarios to make sure we're capturing all the nuances of the delivery," he continued. "But each and every week we get stronger. Each week we're one week closer

to distributing the vaccine, we're one week closer to refining to the exactness that we need to have to do this. And I'm very confident in that process."

Perna said it was exciting to watch Pfizer and Moderna go through similar processes to make sure that their product is right from the beginning.

Pfizer is implementing a very aggressive approach to figuring out how to get their product out to the administration sites, he said. They're rehearsing and are running through the actual process of registering products through a jurisdiction. Then they are delivering the product and walking through the administration sites to open boxes and dispense the vaccines. Through this process, they're capturing lessons learned and putting those in training product back sheets, as well as creating training videos.

There are 54 locations where this training is taking place, he said. As Pfizer has worked with those sites "we see growing confidence in everybody [who is] using it. And that has been the story throughout every rehearsal."

The Pfizer vaccine has an ultra-cold storage requirement, Perna noted. This is not necessarily a limiting factor though. Pfizer has created a container, which is augmented with dry ice that maintains the vaccine at the appropriate level



Alifiya Mityukova, a registered nurse, and Roderick Johnson, a research assistant, demonstrate patient screening for the Operation Warp Speed COVID-19 vaccine trial at Brooke Army Medical Center, Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Nov. 16, 2020. BAMC and Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center are participating in the Phase III trial to evaluate the vaccine under development by AstraZeneca as part of a national initiative to accelerate the development, production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics. Photo by Jason W. Edwards, U.S. Army.

for up to 20 days.

Moderna is a different case, he said. Their storage requirement is not as cold—about the temperature of a kitchen freezer, which most pharmacies have. It has greater stability in that it can go into this refrigeration for up to 30 days. Therefore, the Moderna variety will make it easier to get to more rural areas.

Collaboration and planning with

national chain pharmacies CVS and Walgreens has also been done, Perna said.

"We are well on our way to successfully administering both vaccines to the American people in the near future," he said.

Perna was joined at the press briefing by Alex M. Azar II, HHS secretary; and, Dr. Moncef Slaoui, chief advisor for OWS.

DOD responds to uptick in COVID-19 infections

by Jim Garamone, DOD News

There is light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, but DOD—like the United States as a whole—faces some tough times, Pentagon officials said Nov. 24.

Like the rest of the country, DOD has experienced a rise in the number of cases of COVID-19 and commanders are taking steps to stop the spread of the disease, Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Rath Hoffman, said during a press conference.

"We've seen a general uptick in COVID-19 positive cases as we head into the holiday season," he said. "We wanted to take this opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of taking preventive measures to mitigate against the spread of coronavirus, particularly following CDC guidelines."

These guidelines include wearing a mask, washing hands and maintaining a social distance of at least six feet. The DOD will adhere to these standards, Hoffman said. Part of the efforts against the coronavirus is upping protection at the Pentagon, for example, to health condition bravo plus. The move mirrored what many commanders in many bases around the world have done, Hoffman said.

"These changes are based on authorities delegated in March, giving commanders the flexibility to respond in the best interest of their personnel by maintaining mission effectiveness," Hoffman said. "We will of course keep everyone posted on additional force condition level changes."

Hoffman also spoke about the progress in producing a vaccine against the virus that has killed more than 258,000 Americans.

There are now three vaccines that have proven efficacious, and DOD officials are working with Operation Warp Speed to get the vaccines to the people who need them most.

"We are now a significant step closer to ending the COVID-19 pandemic," he said. "And in the coming weeks, Americans will begin to see vaccine distribution far and wide. The department continues to support this whole-of-government response and is immensely proud of the work that has gone into Warp Speed."

The first vaccines—by guidance of the Centers for Disease Control—will go to health care workers, and those particularly vulnerable to coronavirus. Hoffman said DOD officials are still working with CDC experts to determine where service members and their families fit in the priority list.

The mission for DOD with regards to COVID-19 has been stable since the beginning of the pandemic

in February: the protection of the DOD workforce, the continuation of the DOD mission and to support the whole-of-government approach to combating the virus, said Ken Rapuano, the assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and global security.

DOD guidance on extension of maximum telework flexibilities

On Friday, Nov. 27, the DoD released the memo for Extension of Maximum Telework Flexibilities extending the limited exception to policy provided by the USD memorandum on March 8, 2020.

The memo advises DoD Components may allow civilian employees to telework during an emergency (e.g., continuity of operations event, office closure due to adverse or inclement weather, or pandemic health crisis) with a child or other persons requiring care or supervision present at home. Employees must still

account for work and non-work hours during their tours of duty and take appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for time spent away from normal work-related duties (e.g., to care for a child or dependent).

See the memo here: <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Nov/30/2002543421/-1/-1/1/DOD-GUIDANCE-ON-EXTENSION-OF-MAXIMUM-TELEWORK-FLEXIBILITIES.PDF>

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