

Career & Education

Even with COVID-19 challenges, Navy hits FY-20 retention benchmarks.

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SIXTIETH YEAR NO. 36

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2020

ARMY K9 AND HANDLER HONORED FOR DISCOVERING IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES IN SYRIA

by Chad Garland,
Stars and Stripes

An Army canine earned rare military honors this month after discovering a cache of explosives in Syria while deployed as part of the U.S.-led mission to defeat the Islamic State.

Fritz, a 4.5-year-old military working dog who joined the kennels at Fort Carson, Colo., in September 2018, was awarded an Army Commendation Medal with "C" device for the achievement under combat conditions, military photos showed.

His handler, Sgt. Michael A. Ramirez with the 1st Brigade Combat team, 25th Infantry Division, who joined the Army K9 program in 2014, earned the same award, said Staff Sgt. Lewis Frederick, military working dog program manager for Operation Inherent Resolve.

The pair were on patrol with a route clearance company and civil affairs team in late November when civilians notified them of "enemy remnants of war" in an open field, Frederick said in a written response to questions from *Stars and Stripes*.

"While clearing a lane to get to the [remnants], MWD Fritz veered to an area outside of the field, where he showed recognizable change of behavior near a mound of bushes, which resulted in the location of [an explosives]



Fritz, a military working dog, and his handler Sgt. Michael Ramirez received Army Commendation Medals in December for discovering a cache of unexploded bombs in Syria. Courtesy photo.

cache," Frederick said.

It's the first "known" time a working dog and handler have made such a find since 2018, he said. After the mission, Fritz received extra attention from his handler and extra time with a toy, Frederick said.

On Dec. 18, Inherent Resolve posted a photo on Twitter showing Brig. Gen. Larry Q. Burriss Jr. presenting Fritz's award certificate to Ramirez. Photos also show the ARCOM pinned to Fritz's collar.

"For exceptionally meritorious achievement," the certificate states. "Military Working Dog Fritz's unique abilities were vital to the accomplishment of the security and force protection mission."

The Army Commendation Medal, created in December 1945, is awarded to service members who distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement or service of the same degree as the Bronze Star Medal. It may be awarded when the operational requirements for the

Bronze Star, such as heroism in combat with an armed enemy, are not fully met.

It's uncommon for an Army canine to receive such an award, Frederick said, and there's no official regulation that makes pups eligible to receive awards.

He could not say how many honorary commendation medals have been awarded to military working dogs while they were deployed under Inherent Resolve, which began in late 2014. But at least one dog deployed

to Djibouti in 2018 and one that served in Iraq before 2014 earned commendation medals for their overseas duties, a review of photos and statements published to the military's photo repository.

It seems more common for the animals to receive medals upon retirement as recognition for their years of service - at least two retiring Navy bomb-sniffing dogs received such awards this year, and five of their Army and Air Force counterparts have been similarly honored since

2017, a DVIDS search found.

Outside of the military, organizations such as the United States War Dogs Association and the British veterinary charity People's Dispensary for Sick Animals have also established honors that recognize working dogs.

In addition to sniffing out explosives, dogs like Fritz provide a psychological and physical deterrent while on patrol with their handlers, Inherent Resolve said in a statement e-mailed to *Stars and Stripes*.

Pay for some will decrease to cover Social Security deferrals

by David Vergun, DOD News

At the end of this month, the 2020 Social Security tax deferral will end.

Beginning in January, the 6.2 percent Social Security tax withholdings will again be deducted, and there will be an additional deduction for the deferred 2020 Social Security tax collection that has been in effect since September.

Most service members and Defense Department civilians have had their Social Security taxes deferred. That money will now be automatically deducted from paychecks beginning in January until the amount that has been deferred is collected by April 30.

Social Security taxes were withheld for service members whose monthly rate of basic pay was less than \$8,666.66 and for civilians whose wage per pay period was less than \$4,000.

Those who are unsure whether or not their Social Security was deferred should check their past and current Leave and Earnings Statements on the MyPay website. On the Leave and Earnings Statement, there is a deduction labeled OASDI - which stands for Old Age, Survivors and Disability Insurance - or FICA-Social Security, which stands for Federal Insurance Contributions Act. OASDI and FICA-Social Security are other names for Social Security. If no money was deducted for OASDI or FICA-Social Security, then that tax was deferred. see **Deferrals, page 2**

JANUARY HOLIDAYS, OBSERVANCES AND LESSER-KNOWN THEMES

Adopt A Rescued Bird Month
Bath Safety Month
Be Kind to Food Servers
Birth Defects Month
Black Diamond Month
Book Blitz Month
California Dried Plum
Digestive Month
Celebration of Life Month
Cervical Health Awareness
Children Impacted By
Parent's Cancer Month
Clap 4 Health Month

Financial Wellness Month
Get A Balanced Life Month
Get Organized Month
Int'l Brain Teaser Month
Int'l Change Your Stars
Int'l Child-Centered Divorce
Int'l Creativity Month
Int'l New Years Resolutions
Month for Businesses
Int'l Quality of Life Month
Int'l Wayfinding Month
Int'l Wealth Mentality Month
Learn to Ski and Snowboard

Menudo Month
Nat'l Be On-Purpose Month
Nat'l Braille Literacy Month
Nat'l Cheesy Sock Month
Nat'l Clean Up Your
Computer Month
Nat'l Codependency
Awareness Month
Nat'l Conscience Month
Nat'l Glaucoma Awareness
Nat'l Hot Tea Month
Nat'l Mail Order Gardening
Nat'l Mentoring Month

Nat'l Personal Self-Defense
Awareness Month
Nat'l Personal Trainer
Awareness Month
Nat'l Polka Music Month
Nat'l Poverty in America
Awareness Month
Nat'l Radon Action Month
Nat'l Skating Month
Nat'l Soup Month
Nat'l Slavery and Human
Trafficking Prevention
Nat'l Stalking Awareness

Nat'l Sunday Supper Month
Nat'l Volunteer Blood Donor
Oatmeal Month
Self-help Group
Awareness Month
Self-Love Month
Shape Up US Month
Teen Driving Awareness
Train Your Dog Month
Thyroid Awareness Month
Unchain A Dog Month
Walk Your Pet Month
Worldwide Rising Star

Some Weekly Holidays
Diet Resolution Week: 1-7
Silent Record Week: 1-7
Someday We'll Laugh About
This Week: 2-8
National Personal Trainer
Awareness Week: 2-9
Home Office Safety and
Security Week: 3-9
Nat'l Folic Acid Awareness
Week: 3-9 Dating & Life
Coaches Recognition Week:
3-9

Deferrals

continued from page 1

To determine how much you owe, look at the August LES to see what amount of Social Security was deducted and then multiply that by the four months of the deferrals to get an approximate amount.

Another method for determining how much is owed is to multiply 6.2 percent times the amount of basic pay received from September through December. Divide that amount by four to determine how much per month will be collected in addition to the normal Social Security deductions per month.

The 2020 Social Security taxes deferred will be collected from the Jan. 1 to April 30 pay periods.

For Reservist or National Guard who perform only intermittent duty from January to April 2021, collections may not be split evenly across pay periods. DFAS will collect 6 percent of net available pay each pay period. Collections may be extended past April 30, 2021, if the member doesn't earn enough pay to collect the 2020 deferred taxes before that date.

Those who are preparing to separate or retire before the deferred Social Security tax is



collected are still responsible for repaying the taxes. The unpaid balance will be collected from your final paycheck or a letter will be mailed with instructions for repayment.

The 2020 Internal Revenue Service W-2 Wage and Tax Statements will be issued in January. A W-2c Corrected Wages and Tax Statement that includes the collection of deferred Social Security taxes in 2021 will be issued for those whose Social Security taxes have been deferred.

However, receiving a W-2c does not change the deadlines established by the IRS for filing 2020 income tax returns.

Need help figuring out what to do?

Service members and retirees should contact their nearest installation Military and Family Support Center for more information.

Service members and their families may also contact Military OneSource, <https://militaryonesource.mil>, for financial counseling and tax consultation support up to 365 days post-separation and retirement.

Other information for service members, DOD civilians and retirees is available at <https://www.dfas.mil/taxes/Social-Security-Deferral/>.

The IRS is also a good source of information:

- Tax Deferral Implementation: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/guidance-issued-to-implement-presidential-memorandum-deferring-certain-employee-social-security-tax-withholding>.

- W-2 Reporting: <https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/form-w-2-reporting-of-employee-social-security-tax-deferred-under-notice-2020-65>.

Navy challenges Vietnamese claims to seas around resort island in South China Sea

by Caitlin Doornbos,

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan - USS *John S. McCain* conducted a freedom-of-navigation operation in the South China Sea on Dec. 24, the second such mission in a week, according to the Navy's 7th Fleet.

The destroyer was sent to challenge Vietnam's "excessive maritime claims" in the Con Dao Islands, about 150 miles south of Ho Chi Minh City, 7th Fleet said in a statement the same day.

The Con Dao archipelago is made up of 16 islands, most of which are uninhabited, according to Vietnam-guide.com. The

INTERNATIONAL LAW RECOGNIZES A NATION'S TERRITORIAL WATERS EXTEND UP TO 12 NAUTICAL MILES FROM ITS COASTS.

main island, Con Son, is home to several beach resorts and fishing villages.

"The ship conducted normal operations within Vietnam's claimed territorial seas to challenge excessive maritime claims and preserve access and navigational freedoms consistent with international law," the 7th Fleet



Navigator Lt. j.g. Daniel Feeney, left, and Quartermaster 2nd Class Asah Favors review USS John S. McCain's course in the South China Sea on Dec. 22. Navy photo by Markus Castaneda

said in the statement.

Vietnam asserts that its territorial waters extend to the Con Daos, but a 1983 State Department report stated that at more than 50 nautical miles away from mainland Vietnam, the islands are not close enough to be considered a baseline for its territorial waters.

International law recognizes a nation's territorial waters extend up to 12 nautical miles from its coasts.

The operation was meant to "preserve access and navigational freedoms consistent with international law," according to the statement.

John S. McCain on Dec. 22

had steamed through the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, another freedom-of-navigation operation. Vietnam lays claim to some of the Spratlys, along with China, the Philippines, Taiwan, Malaysia and Brunei.

The mission Thursday was at least the eighth time this year that the Navy has sent a warship to challenge maritime claims in the South and East China seas.

Most targeted Chinese claims in the region, which Secretary of State Mike Pompeo formally rejected as "completely unlawful" in July.

McCain also conducted a freedom-of-navigation operation in the Sea of Japan on Nov. 24, challenging Russia's claims to Peter the Great Bay. Following the Nov. 24 and Dec. 22 operations, the Russians and Chinese said their militaries had chased *McCain* from those respective areas, claims the U.S. Navy dismissed.

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National Military

Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard release maritime strategy

WASHINGTON - The Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard released a new tri-service maritime strategy Dec. 17, entitled Advantage at Sea.

The document provides strategic guidance on how the sea services will prevail in day-to-day competition, crisis, and conflict over the next decade. It also directs the services to deepen tri-service integration, aggressively pursue force modernization, and continue robust cooperation with allies and partners.

“Our integrated Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard must maintain clear-eyed resolve to compete with, deter, and, if necessary, defeat our adversaries while we accelerate development of a modernized, integrated all-domain naval force for the future,” wrote Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael M. Gilday, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. David H. Berger, and Coast Guard Commandant Adm. Karl L. Schultz in the strategy’s forward. “Our actions in this decade will shape the maritime balance of power for the rest of this century.”

Advantage at Sea places particular focus on China and Russia



Courtesy photo

due to their increasing maritime aggressiveness, demonstrated intent to dominate key international waters and clear desire to remake the international order in their favor.

“China’s and Russia’s revisionist approaches in the maritime environment threaten U.S. interests, undermine alliances and partnerships, and degrade the free and open international order,” the document states. “Moreover,



China’s and Russia’s aggressive naval growth and modernization are eroding U.S. military advantages.”

The strategy also emphasizes the maritime domain is integral not only to America’s security and prosperity but to those of all nations. The oceans connect global markets, provide essential resources, and link societies and businesses. Shared interests create opportunities for greater cooperation with allies and partners.

“As Sailors, we are on the leading edge of Great Power Competition each and every day,” said Gilday. “Sea control, power projection and the capability to dominate the oceans must be our primary focus. Our forces must be ready today, and ready tomorrow, to defend our nation’s interests against potential adversaries at any time. This strategy helps us do exactly that.”

The strategy directs the Services to pursue an agile and aggressive approach to force mod-

ernization and experimentation. The future fleet will combine legacy assets with new, smaller ships, lighter amphibious ships, modernized aircraft, expanded logistics, resilient space capabilities, and optionally manned and unmanned platforms. To succeed in a dynamic operating environment, the Services will also invest in warfighter development, delivering innovative training and education to ensure our Sailors, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen remain the world’s premier naval force.

Advantage at Sea also reflects the dual roles of the Service Chiefs: advising on the employment of forces in day-to-day competition, crisis and conflict, and developing a modernized future force that deters potential adversaries and advances and defends U.S. interests.

“The Marine Corps is conducting a sweeping force design transformation to fulfill our role as the nation’s expeditionary force-in-readiness while simultaneously modernizing the force in accordance with the operating environment described in the National Defense Strategy and the tri-Service maritime strategy. We must embrace new ways of operating within the concepts

of integrated U.S. naval power to deter future adversaries and generate better strategic choices,” said Berger.

As the Services pursue greater integration, to include training and education; capabilities and networks; plans, exercises, and experiments; analysis and wargaming; investments and innovation; and force design, Advantage at Sea states they will collaborate with allies and partners to build capability, enhance interoperability, and generate unity of effort. Alongside allies and partners, the Services will be able to establish sea denial and sea control where and when needed, project power, and hold critical adversary targets at risk.

“As the only military service in the Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Coast Guard provides unique multi-mission and intelligence capabilities to complement the ability of our Marines and Navy to protect our national interests when necessary and deliver lethality across the globe,” said Schultz. “Our hallmark is working daily with partner agencies, sister sea services, and international navies and coast guards to counter maritime coercion and uphold the rules-based order – partnerships work.”

Army

- New in 2021: The Army Combat Fitness Test
- Army is gearing up for a laser Stryker shoot-off

Navy

- New in 2021: Will you be getting orders to an Arctic base?
- New in 2021: When will Sailors get the COVID vaccine?

Air Force

- New in 2021: Sky-high retention under COVID leads to Air Force career changes and slashed bonuses
- New in 2021: Advanced Battle Management System testing begins
- West Virginia Air Guardsman dies responding to structure fire

Marine Corps

- New in 2021: Will 2021 see Marines hunting for subs?
- New in 2021: CH-53K looking to initial operational test in 2021
- New in 2021: The Corps is going to get smaller (Marine Corps Times) Starting next year, the Marine Corps is going to get smaller, with even larger manpower cuts planned for the future.

National Guard

- Wisconsin Air National Guard resumes F-16 flights after crash
- Louisiana airport to be site of new National Guard center
- Pandemic and unrest fuel the biggest National Guard mobilization since World War II

Pay & Benefits

- New in 2021: Your military paycheck is about to get smaller
- New in 2021 Things: Curbside pickup coming to more commissaries



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Marines use sensor buoys to better understand ocean battlespace

by Warren Duffie Jr.,
Office of Naval Research

During the recent 2020 Trident Warrior exercise, Office of Naval Research-funded scientists dropped sensor buoys to study underwater conditions.

Flying several thousand feet above the Pacific Ocean, an air crew and a scientist from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution tossed cylindrical floats from a U.S. Marine Corps MV-22 Osprey aircraft. Packed with data-gathering sensors to measure underwater conditions, the floats fell fast before orange parachutes opened to ease splashdown.

The action marked the first time such sensor-laden profiling floats, also called buoys, were deployed from a Marine Corps aircraft. This will increase naval knowledge of the ocean battlespace—including the littorals (areas of water close to shoreline), which are crucial to expeditionary and amphibious operations.

The Office of Naval Research (ONR) sponsored the effort, which involved Woods Hole and the Naval Oceanographic Office and occurred during this year's Trident Warrior, a large-scale fleet exercise conducted by the Navy and Marine Corps to test technology and tactics.

NAVO collects global oceanographic and meteorological data to create ocean-prediction models to support naval operations.

"Deployment of these floats creates a more vivid picture of how the ocean and atmosphere interact, including wind speed

and water temperature and salinity," said Dr. Scott Harper, a program officer in ONR's Ocean Battlespace and Expeditionary Access Department. "They're critical for compiling an abundance of data for the most up-to-date prediction models."

When dropped, the floats—which contain sophisticated scientific instruments—sink to a predetermined depth, rise to the surface, transmit data via satellite to NAVO and descend again. They do this repeatedly over multiple months.

Dr. Steven Jayne, a Woods Hole senior scientist, oversaw the float deployment, which originally was supposed to occur during this summer's Rim of the Pacific exercise—RIMPAC—the world's largest international maritime warfare exercise. Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, RIMPAC dramatically scaled down its scope, and Jayne and his team had to wait until Trident Warrior in the fall to conduct their research.

AFOSR awards 17 quantum research grants

ARLINGTON, Va. - The Air Force Research Laboratory's Air Force Office of Scientific Research recently awarded 17 quantum information science grants, with a focus on basic research, to scientists and engineers at institutions around the globe. These awards were fast-tracked following a three-day virtual pitch competition held during the Million Dollar International Quantum U Tech Accelerator.

The Innovare Advancement Center, at Rome, N.Y., hosted the event with funding provided by AFRL's Information Directorate, AFOSR, the Office of Naval Research, and additional support provided by the Griffiss Institute, New York State Technology Enterprise Corporation, and SUNY Research Foundation.

"AFOSR has a long history of collaborating with academia and industry on breakthrough science critical to the future of the Air Force and Space Force capabilities," said Dr. Shery Welsh, AFOSR director. "We are thrilled to have supported the competition as it served as a perfect entry point for us to find talented, entrepreneurial, and energetic researchers dedicated to finding creative solutions that go beyond the classical Quantum Information Sciencesystems."



LAKE MURNER, GERMANY
Dec. 20, 2020

Army Reserve Sgt. Daniel J. Friedberg, left, a mass communication specialist with 7th Mission Support Command, recites the Oath of Enlistment officiated by Army Reserve Maj. Joseph Bush, public affairs officer with 7th MSC, during an underwater reenlistment ceremony. Photo by Walter Drechsler

The Air Force's 48th Fighter Wing received its first shipment of COVID-19 vaccinations at. The U.S. government has purchased the vaccines and is making them available to Department of Defense for distribution and administration to DoD personnel. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jessi Monte



ROYAL AIR FORCE LAKENHEATH, ENGLAND
Dec. 27, 2020



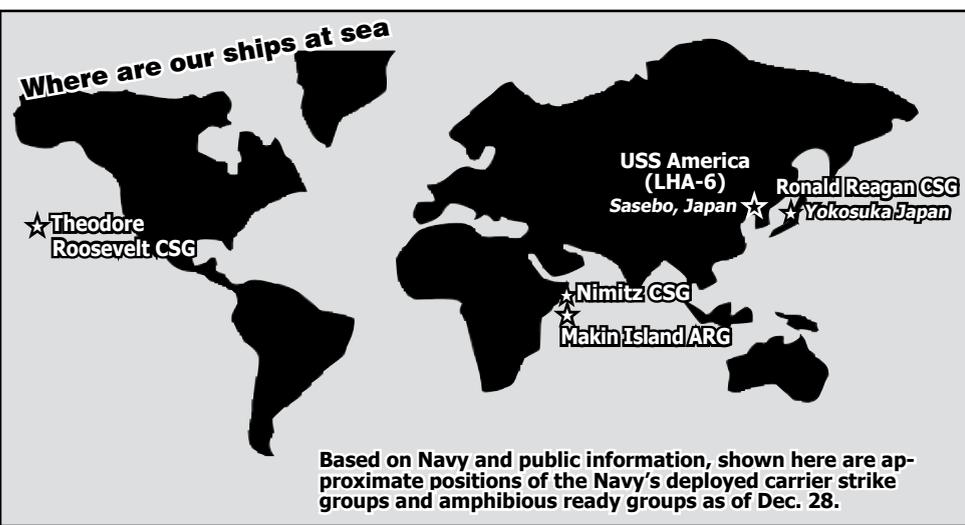
OAHU, HAWAII
Dec. 21, 2020

Marine Corps Capt. Brendon Connor, a pilot assigned to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 268, flies his MV-22 Osprey. VMM-268 flew a fleet of eight Ospreys to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam to be loaded for transport for the unit's upcoming integrated training exercise. Photo by Cpl. Jacob Wilson

An Air Force armament systems technician assigned to the 380th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron performs final inspections on munitions armed to an Fighting Falcon. Armament specialists ensure munitions are properly loaded onto aircraft. Photo by Senior Airman Bryan Guthrie



AL DHAFRA AIR BASE, UAE
Dec. 16, 2020



**Total Navy Battle Force: 297
Ships Underway**

Deployed Ships Underway: 49
Non-deployed Ships Underway: 1
Total Ships Underway: 50

Ships Deployed by Fleet

Fleet Forces: 0 3rd Fleet: 6
4th Fleet: 4 5th Fleet: 21
6th Fleet: 16 7th Fleet: 51
Total: 98

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Logistic Specialist 1st Class David Kerley reenlists aboard USS Constitution. Navy photo by Hospital Corpsman Seaman Katrina Mastrolia

Even with COVID-19 challenges, Navy hits FY-20 retention benchmarks

by MC1 Mark D. Faram
WASHINGTON - The Navy is defying the odds - in a year where COVID-19 caused rippling effects worldwide, the Navy has again exceeded retention benchmarks in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020.

The news was announced last week in NAVADMIN 337/20, a message that gave commands their new marching orders to nail down next year's Retention Excellence Award.

Sailors in their first 10 years of service - Zones A and B - stuck around at reenlistment rates of 69 and 76 percent, respectively,

well above the 57 and 67 retention percent benchmarks set at each level.

Zone C, those in the 10 to 14 year window, achieved a reenlistment rate of 85 percent, exceeding the 82 percent retention benchmark.

The Navy tracks retention behavior through its Navy Retention Monitoring System, the official Navy retention data repository. The Navy also uses the system to help identify commands who meet the annual requirements for the Retention Excellence Award (REA).

"Building upon the retention gains in the last few years, the Navy remains committed to retaining the right talent and experience in the right pay grades and ratings," wrote Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the Navy's chief of naval personnel, in the message.

Along with FY-20 success comes the news that the Navy's targets for FY-21 will remain the same as those set for this past year.

As a result, the Navy-wide goals for Zones A, B, and C will again be 57, 67, and 82 percent, respectively. Also, the Zone A attrition target remains at 4.5 percent or less. Commands that meet or exceed these FY-21 retention and attrition benchmarks will be eligible for next year's Retention Excellence Award, the message says.

Sustained high retention often comes with some unintended consequences. Nowell noted in the message that as the Navy has grown in recent years, "some enlisted ratings have become overmanned, creating imbalances in the fleet." He is calling for commands to help the Navy keep talented Sailors, even if it means encouraging them to change ratings. It's a move that can mean better community health for the Navy and in turn, increased advancement opportunities for Sailors.

"As we move into FY-21, the Navy will make a concerted effort to provide balanced enlisted ratings and improve community-rating health across the Fleet," Nowell wrote.

"Leadership and engagement at every level is needed to sustain our level of retention, with a renewed focus on strengthening undermanned ratings and providing for expanded career progression opportunities for our Sailors."

The power of preferences

by Dr. Daneen Skube,
Tribune Content Agency

Q: I had reached the end of my rope with this pandemic three months ago and know we're not at the end yet. What tools or strategies do you teach clients to stay productive when your get up and go has got up and left?

A: My first strategy is to grieve the loss of your expectations. When what we expect cannot happen we don't just get over it. We have to hold a funeral for our previous expectations. Then we can work on giving up our entitlements at work and instead have preferences.

The Buddhist traditions do an excellent job outlining the power and effectiveness of giving up our entitlements. An entitlement is something we believe reality owes us. When reality doesn't agree we usually get mad.

To the extent that we walk around with entitlements we

sign ourselves up for grumpy misery. We feel deprived by our circumstances or others that what we wanted is not happening.

I recommend all my clients work on shifting entitlements to preferences. Preferences are what you'd like to have happen but know you are not entitled to having. When your preference doesn't occur you'll find it easier to yell, "plot twist," and make a new plan. If we have entitlements we cannot tack when the wind changes. If you have preferences, when the wind changes you are able to adjust your sails and continue toward your goals.

A huge problem with entitlements is how upset we get that people or situations are not behaving according to our expectations. When we approach people with this angry, blaming attitude nobody wants to help us.

A simple example happened see **Power, page 8**

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Now through January 4, 2021 Lease a new 2021 Outback for \$249/Month on a 36-Month Lease (Standard Base trim, code MDB-01). \$2,499 due at lease signing. \$0 security deposit. Effective 12/18/2020 through 01/04/2021. 10,000 miles per year. Tier 1 Credit Needed to Qualify. Vin # L3142868

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It's official: Female CO will command aircraft carrier for first time

SAN DIEGO - The Navy announced Dec. 18 that Capt. Amy Bauernschmidt will assume command of USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72) marking the first time a female commanding officer will lead the crew of one of the Navy's 11 nuclear-powered aircraft carriers.

Bauernschmidt will take command of *Lincoln* this summer,

upon completion of the nuclear power, aviation, and leadership training required of aircraft carrier COs.

"I'm incredibly honored and humbled to be selected," said Bauernschmidt. "I love leading Sailors and I take that responsibility extremely seriously."

Bauernschmidt was also the

first woman to serve as the executive officer aboard an aircraft carrier, a position she held from September 2016 to January 2019, also on the *Lincoln*.

Bauernschmidt is a native of Milwaukee, Wisc., and graduated from the Naval Academy in May 1994, the first graduating class in which women were allowed to serve aboard combat-

ant ships and aircraft. She was designated as a Naval Aviator in 1996 and served with several helicopter squadrons throughout her career.

She has previously commanded the "Spartans" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70 and amphibious transport dock USS *San Diego* (LPD-22).



PACIFIC OCEAN
Dec. 18, 2020

Aviation Structural Mechanic 3rd Class Arattakhan Khammany conducts maintenance on a Sea Hawk helicopter assigned to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 75 in the hangar bay Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier. Theodore Roosevelt is underway conducting routine operations in the 3rd Fleet area of operations. Navy photo by MC3 Terence Deleon Guerrero

Theodore Roosevelt Strike Group completes SUSTEX, deploys

The Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group completed their sustainment exercise and began a deployment Dec. 23.

"Our Sailors worked incredibly hard to make sure we set sail with a healthy, capable, and ready crew," said Capt. Eric Anduze, Theodore Roosevelt's commanding officer. "Our success is a testament to the professionalism and dedication of our team and the support of our families and loved ones. Our Sailors and their families represent the best of this great nation and I'm unbelievably proud to be a part of the best team, on the best ship, in the best navy in the world."

"We are at the highest state of readiness to support America's

interests around the world at a moment's notice."

SUSTEX is an integrated and comprehensive exercise designed to test the strike group's ability to compete and win in a high-end fight.

"Completing SUSTEX confirmed that Carrier Strike Group Nine is ready to sail west to preserve freedom of the seas, deter aggression, and if necessary, win against any competitor," said Rear Adm. Doug Verissimo, Commander, Carrier Strike Group Nine. "The entire strike group team came together during a challenging time to train and ultimately prove that it is ready to answer any call. From long-range strike, to information warfare, to air defense, to

surface and subsurface warfare, the strike group proved it is a combat-credible force capable of controlling the seas in conflict, preserving maritime security, and extending American influence during peacetime."

Prior to leaving their respective homeports, more than 5,500 Sailors assigned to the TRCSG completed a pre-deployment sequester with Pacific Fleet guidelines. The purpose of PDS was to reduce the risk of COVID infection among the crew while establishing a covid-free strike group bubble.

The TRCSG returned from a six-month deployment supporting maritime security cooperation efforts and regional stability in the 7th Fleet area of operations in July 2020.

The TRCSG consists of Carrier Strike Group 9, USS *Theodore Roosevelt*, Carrier Air Wing 11, guided-missile cruiser *Bunker Hill*, Destroyer Squadron 23, and guided-missile destroyers *Russell* and *John Finn*.

Theodore Roosevelt's embarked air wing consists of the "Tomcatters" of Strike Fighter Squadron 31, "Golden Warriors" of VFA-87, "Blue Diamonds" of VFA-146, Black Knights" of VFA-154, "Liberty Bells" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron 115, "The Gray Wolves" of Electronic Attack Squadron 142, "Wolf Pack" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 75, "Eightballers" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 8 and "Providers" of Fleet Logistic Support Squadron 30 Detachment 3.



CAMP PENDLETON, Diego
Dec. 24, 2020

In response to the Creek Fire burning near Camp Pendleton, USO San Diego provides Camp Pendleton residents who have been evacuated from their homes with food, water and supplies, and a visit from Santa Claus. USO courtesy photo

Power

continued from page 5

to me recently while attempting to order a French door. For 35 minutes someone either hung up on or me or put me on hold. I finally called the curbside pick up to get a live human and he connected me with Manish Gaiand, an angel in disguise at Lowes. He was amazing, I was grateful, he even walked me to the front of the store opened a register and rang me up. I sang his praises to his management before leaving.

Now what if I decided to be in a bad mood because I was entitled to not having people hang up on me or put me on hold when I was spending a lot of money? What if I had brought that energy into Lowes? Instead I nodded at my preference and sailed into the store delighted I had found good help. My ability to have preferences rather than entitlements made both my day and Manish's day a whole lot happier.

Every day in every situation the people around you can help you or hurt you. You're normal if you have entitlements and the consequences of having them is you alienate the same people that can make your day. Ask yourself if you can shift your entitlements to preferences.

I can guarantee you will not always get your way. What you can guarantee if you can shift to preferences then not getting your way doesn't ruin your day.

Know what you want but hold

that goal lightly ready to change directions when reality blocks your initial wishes. You'll find a delightful Manish Gaiand in your corner of the world waiting to graciously help you achieve your goals.

The last word(s)

Q: I'm working with small kids at home doing remote learning and feel like nobody gets how overwhelming it is to juggle kids and pretend to be fully productive at work. Is anybody out there doing a good job with this?

A: No, any working parent with little kids that is doing well is probably riding a unicorn. There's a joke circling the internet that sums up the pain of working parents, "A husband asks his wife what the first thing she wants to do is after the pandemic. 'Get a babysitter,' the wife replies!"

Daneen Skube, Ph.D., executive coach, trainer, therapist and speaker, also appears as the FOX Channel's "Workplace Guru" each Monday morning. She's the author of "Interpersonal Edge: Breakthrough Tools for Talking to Anyone, Anywhere, About Anything" (Hay House, 2006). You can contact Dr. Skube at www.interpersonaledge.com or 1420 NW Gilman Blvd., #2845, Issaquah, WA 98027. Sorry, no personal replies.

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Sgt. Nolan McShane, shown here firing a .50-caliber rifle. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Adam Dublinske

Marine Corps Sgt. Nolan P. McShane: USO Service Member of the Year

Thousands of outstanding military personnel serve all over the world, but only a select few are chosen for the USO Service Member of the Year Awards.

One junior enlisted service member from each branch - E-5 or below - is honored yearly for an act of valor that goes above and beyond the call of duty. Whether they were saving the lives of their comrades or strangers, these men and women proved their commitment to helping others in times of need. In doing so, they embodied the values for which the Armed Forces stand.

"Their selflessness and bravery - not only during the events they were nominated for but also throughout their everyday lives - epitomize what it means to serve," said Sgt. Maj. Carlton Kent, 16th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps and member of the USO Board of Governors. "We are grateful for them and for all of our service members who sacrifice so much to protect us."

One of those honored was Marine Corps Sgt. Nolan P. McShane, who serves with the 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion based at Camp Pendleton.

McShane was overseeing a live-fire training exercise in Twenty-nine Palms, Calif., with 14 other Marines when one of them was seriously wounded. McShane stayed calm and took control of the chaotic scene. Using his tactical knowledge and leadership skills, he made sure a tourniquet was applied correctly and inspected pressure dressings. His help was critical in stabilizing the injured man before he was airlifted to a local hospital.

Outside of the incident, McShane is known for his charismatic leadership, unwavering commitment to his comrades and his many contributions to his battalion's operational success.



PACIFIC OCEAN
Dec. 22, 2020

Sailors dismantle an inert MK-82 general-purpose bomb during a general quarters drill aboard Theodore Roosevelt aircraft carrier. 'The Big Stick' is underway conducting routine operations in the Third Fleet area of operations. Navy photo by MCSN Deirdre Marsac

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

I've said it before, I'll say it again: I love my ShopVac.

Typically, my love affair with this handy appliance is most intimate during the post-holiday cleanup. When I begin the tedious task of taking the weary decorations down, a veritable minefield of dust bunnies, paper scraps, glitter, forgotten red and green M&Ms and, of course, pine needles is revealed.

I normally find my ShopVac lounging cooly in my laundry room, playing hard-to-get. I tease him out into the kitchen and fondle his attachments, playing the part of the damsel in distress. A particularly handsome upright model with a tall, slim canister and an extra long hose, some might call him a suck up. But, he's always more than willing to rescue me from any threatening disaster. After I plug him in, he dominantly takes charge of the situation, powerfully wielding his raw horsepower.

On any given day, these torrid trysts with my ShopVac are normally very brief encounters. But after the holidays, we often experience prolonged tête-à-têtes, thanks to a few very unfortunate Christmas tree purchases.

After years of living in the south,

Let the needles fall where they may

buying our Christmas trees in dingy strip mall parking lots or resorting to the artificial variety, my Navy family PCSed to leafy, snowy New England. I was excited for the full-on, over the river and through the woods, dashing through the snow, holly-jolly experience. I imagined happy family outings to local "you-cut" tree farms with row upon row of lovely scotch pines and Frazier firs. I figured we'd traipse off into the woods, perhaps while singing our favorite Christmas carols, and find gorgeously fragrant, well-tended trees to perfectly fit our base house's bay window.

However, our first year, we found ourselves in a lumpy field dotted with wildly misshapen spruces and a few other scraggly specimens. We searched the furthest reaches of the field until it was almost dusk. Refusing to give up, we were determined to find our tree that afternoon. As we traipsed the weedy, tangled grove, our standards dwindled with the remaining sunlight.

Wanting to get the whole ordeal over with, we settled on a particularly painful blue spruce that we found down in a gulch at the edge of the farmer's property. No sooner did we hand back the farmer's bowsaw, along with the agreed upon \$35, than needles began to fall from our "fresh" cut tree.

There were needles on our clothes, on the top of our minivan, inside our minivan, on our driveway, on our sidewalk, in our kitchen, down our hallway, across our living room, and scattered on the floor under the bay window. Even after the lights, ornaments and angel were in place, our

"fresh" cut tree continued to drop its sharp foliage, which somehow made its way onto our dog, inside our presents, in our boots, on the bookshelf, imbedded into our oriental rug, and remarkably, into a pot of spaghetti sauce.

By the time the holidays were over, and we took the decorations off our tree, there were more needles on our carpet than attached to the spruce's brittle, curled branches

We finally bid riddance to that most unfortunate tree at the curb outside our base house a few days after New Year's Eve. Not wanting to appear too needy, I wondered whether I should betray my ShopVac, and tackle the mountain of needles with a snow shovel or a bulldozer.

But I was only kidding myself - I knew he was the only one who could deliver the satisfaction I needed. Day after day, night after night, I faithfully rendezvoused with my beloved ShopVac until he found every needle in my haystack.

Thankfully, our family found a better Christmas tree farm the following December. Although this year's fir has managed to die a slower death than that infamously sickly Blue Spruce, I will still sashay off to seek the affectionate assistance of my beloved ShopVac once all the decorations have been taken down.

Along with all the fuzz balls, dog hairs, candy cane bits, peanuts, tinsel, cookie crumbs and, yes, pine needles vacuumed up over the years, my ShopVac has sucked me in for good.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Not driving much during the Coronavirus Pandemic? You MUST read this:

If ever you are not driving your car enough to use a tank of gas in a month or two, you should add a fuel stabilizer to your gas tank to prevent the gas from going bad and eventually causing engine damage, as well as blockages in your car's fuel system.

To minimize my exposure to COVID-19, I've been staying at home. Most of my driving has been for short, infrequent trips to stock up on groceries. Since taking delivery of my new 2021 Toyota RAV4 Prime plug-in hybrid in August, I've mostly been driving using electricity, so recently I contacted Toyota for advice. They recommended that I add an additive called Sta-Bil to my gas tank: <https://www.goldeagle.com/brands/sta-bil/>.

There are two versions of Sta-Bil for automotive use. Sta-Bil Storage protects vehicles that will not be driven for months at a time. It will stabilize the fuel for up to two years.

Sta-Bil 360 Protection is for vehicles that are driven occasionally. It will stabilize fuel for up to a year, and is optimized for automotive fuel that contains ethanol in addition to

Essential COVID protection for your car, plus electronics accessories

gasoline. Each time you refuel, add one ounce per five gallons of gas. Also, keeping your gas tank full if you do not drive very much will minimize the amount of air and damaging water in the tank.

I purchased convenient 10-ounce bottles of Sta-Bil 360 Protection from Amazon. Then I poured the recommended amount into the gas tank of my Toyota and refueled it. Even though it only requires regular grade gasoline, I refueled with premium grade gas in the hope that it might restore a possibly decreased octane level due to aging gas. I also added some to the tank of my Mazda MX-5 Miata.

Innovative CATALYST Cell-phone Cases:

I am a fan of Catalyst cellphone cases. On the rare occasions when I've dropped my phones, Catalyst cases have always protected them well.

Catalyst's Vibe Series case for the iPhone 12 features 10-foot (MIL STD 810G) drop protection, raised edges that protect the screen and camera lenses, and a grippy tactical grip, but what makes it especially stand out from the competition are its patented rotating mute switch, forward audio projection and the Crux four-point attachment system, for attaching not only the included wrist lanyard but also an available shoulder strap, coiled carabiner, ring stand and more: <https://www.catalystlifestyle.com/products/vibe-series-for-iphone-12-pro-max?variant=33096418525293>.

Reliable Anker Power Accessories:

I have trusted Anker power accessories for years, and can honestly say that none have ever failed me. Recently I bought two — one for myself and one to give as a gift, and I asked Anker to send me several more to review.

Especially useful now that the iPhone 12 does not ship with a charger, Anker's Nano offers 20W max output to quickly charge that iPhone, as well as iPads, Apple Watches and AirPods. Charging an iPhone 12 with one is three times faster, compared to the original 5W charger: <https://us.anker.com/pages/uai2020>.

Ideal for travel and everyday use, the Anker PowerPort Cube is a tennis ball-sized, cube-shaped power strip with three USB ports and three AC outlets. With overload protection, fire-retardant exterior and tough, coated power cable, it safely detects connected devices and adjusts voltage output to deliver the correct, high-speed charge: <https://www.anker.com/products/variant/powerport-strip-3-with-3-usb-ports/A2763121>.

The Anker PowerExtend USB-C 3 Capsule is a clever, clutter-reducing, three-sided power strip surge protector with three AC outlets on one side, and two 15W USB-A ports and a 45W, high-speed, PowerIQ 3.0 USB-C port on the other: <https://www.anker.com/products/variant/powerextend-usb-c-3-capsule/A9132121>.

Providing plenty of room to plug in large power blocks, Anker's PowerExtend 12 Strip has dual surge protectors, overload protection, top-tier flame-retardant casing and a flat plug that fits easily behind furniture: <https://www.anker.com/products/variant/powerextend-12-strip/A9191121>.

Fast, Tough and Mini-sized OWC SSD:

Other World Computing (OWC) specializes in worldwide sales and knowledgeable support for the upgrade and expansion of Mac and iOS devices, with their dependable, high quality SSDs, memory, drives, docks, video, audio and much more: <http://www.macsales.com/about>.

The Envoy Pro Elektron SSD provides pocket-sized, crushproof, dustproof, waterproof, plug-and-play and fast (up to 1011MB/s) USB-C data storage, in an aircraft-grade aluminum housing — for Mac, PC and tablet computers. Available capacities range from 240GB to 2.0TB: <https://eshop.macsales.com/item/OWC/ENVPK.5/>.

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Veterans News

U.S. veterans in the Philippines in coronavirus vaccine limbo

by Seth Robson,
Stars and Stripes

A group of U.S. military veterans in the Philippines say they've been left in limbo by the Department of Veterans Affairs, which will only offer the coronavirus vaccine there to its staff and veterans receiving treatment at its clinic in Manila.

Representatives of veteran and retiree organizations in the Philippines wrote to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on behalf of 30,000 veterans living in the Philippines, outlining their concerns about the U.S. government's vaccination plan.

The Philippines has reported nearly 470,000 coronavirus cases with over 9,000 deaths, Nikkei Asia reported Dec. 27.

"It is our understanding that this vaccine will be given to all citizens of the United States free of charge," wrote a group of former service members and members of Veterans of Foreign Wars posts and a veteran support organization in the Philippines.

The signers include Michael Applegate, who signed as a member of the VFW Pacific Areas Department and American Legion Post 123 in Angeles City, Mark Favreau, who signed as

the director of the U.S. military Retiree Support Services Office in Manila and George Cox, who signed as a member of VFW Post 2485 in Angeles City.

But the VA Manila Regional Benefit Office and Out-Patient Clinic has informed veterans that, by law, it can only administer the coronavirus vaccine to service-connected, disability-rated veterans who are enrolled there as patients. Local VA health care employees will also get the shot, the veterans' letter states.

"This in and of itself is a travesty and a slap in the face to the over thirty-thousand U.S. military veterans/retirees residing here," the veterans wrote. "To add insult to injury, the VA Manila Out-Patient Clinic has no plans to distribute and administer the COVID-19 vaccine to the remaining U.S. military veteran/retiree population at all."

The U.S. Embassy in Manila states on its website that the U.S. government does not plan to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to U.S. citizens overseas. COVID-19 is the respiratory disease caused by the coronavirus.

"We encourage U.S. citizens resident in the Philippines to follow host-country developments

and guidelines for COVID-19 vaccinations," the website states.

The VA has a limited supply of vaccine and will first vaccinate veterans in long-term care facilities and VA health care personnel, according to the VA website.

"After the first 2 groups, we'll begin to offer vaccines to more Veterans who are at high risk of severe illness from COVID-19." The website states. "When more vaccines become available, we plan to offer a free COVID-19 vaccine to all Veterans receiving VA health care who want one."

The VA's initial vaccine distribution sites were chosen based on criteria including freezer availability and the ability to vaccinate a large volume of people quickly, Daniel Gutkoski, manager of the VA's Manila clinic, said in a Dec. 22 e-mail to *Stars and Stripes*.

"There is no set date for when VA Manila Outpatient Clinic will receive the vaccine, but we are prepared and stand ready to accept a vaccine once it becomes available to us," he said.

The VA's goal is to offer the vaccine to eligible veterans receiving care the VA and all employees, he said.

However, Applegate, a retired Navy noncommissioned officer, in a Dec. 22 e-mail to *Stars and Stripes* said he can't enroll at the Manila clinic even though he is rated a disabled veteran because it has no orthopedic doctor there who can treat his foot condition.

"That means I cannot get the U.S. produced COVID-19 vaccine coming from the U.S., which will be administered to only veterans enrolled at the VA Outpatient Clinic Manila," he said. "This affects not only me, but thousands of other veterans living here in the Philippines. Veterans have been kicked to the curb by the U.S. Government after serving our country honorably under arduous, dangerous conditions."

Another signer, John Doulette, a former Marine living in Imus City near Manila, in a Dec. 22 e-mail said it's unfair that disabled veterans in the islands won't get the vaccine if they are denied enrollment at the clinic.

"Given the seriousness of this pandemic, Veterans stateside are being vaccinated at local VA facilities," Doulette said. "Veterans whether service connected or not should also be afforded this vital life-saving vaccine here while residing in the Philippines."

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6	5	4	9	1	8	7	3	2	
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Fleet and Family Support Center information

FFSC is here for you with workshops and events

Fleet and Family Support Centers (NBSD, Bldgs 259, 263, 271) are here on phone, email, social media and webinar to support you "virtually" during the COVID crisis. Even though we are not opening our doors to walk in clients yet, we are one phone call or email away.

To schedule an appointment in NRSW call 1-866-923-6478. We are available Monday-Friday 0730-1630.

Fleet and Family Support Centers provides services such as relocation assistance, new parent support, deployment services, clinical counseling services, financial management counseling, family employment services, family advocacy and the transition assistance programs.

Visit our pages to find out more (<https://sandiego.navylifsw.com/> click on Fleet & Family on light blue bar near the top of the page)

- Career Services
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Congressman-elect Issa's office releases information on military academy nominations

San Marcos, CA — Congressman-Elect Darrell Issa's office released the following important information Monday, concerning Military Academy Nominations for District 50 residents:

"CA-50 residents seeking a nomination to The United States Military Academy, The United States Naval Academy, The United States Air Force Academy, The United States Coast Guard Academy, or The United States Merchant Marine Academy, should email their application to: issaacademynominations@gmail.com

The submission deadline is January 13th.

Because the District has been vacant this year, and only a sitting Congressman can submit nominations, if you submitted an application to the 50th Congressional District staff in 2020, you will need to resend it via the email above.

After Congressman Issa is sworn in on January 3rd, his staff will also be able to assist with further questions."

Darrell Issa is the Congressman-elect for California's 50th Congressional District. The District encompasses the central and northeastern parts of San Diego County and a small part of Riverside County. It includes all or portions of the communities of Fallbrook, San Marcos, Valley Center, Ramona, Escondido, Santee, Lakeside, El Cajon, Temecula and the mountain and desert areas of the San Diego-Imperial County line.

Roy's Sudoku

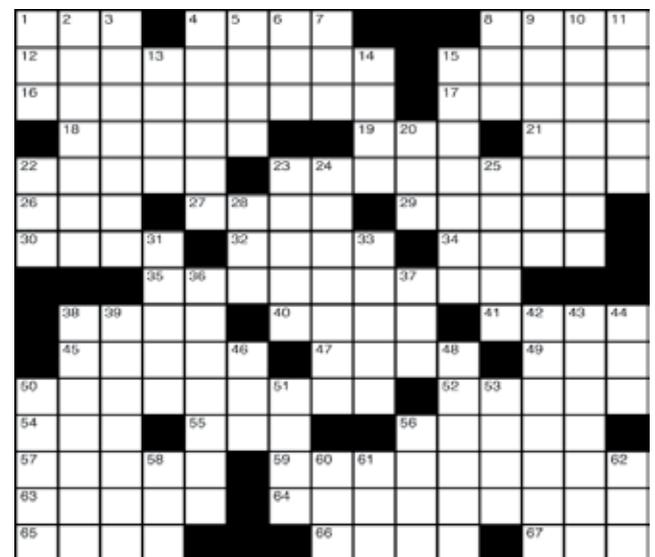
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			4				8		
		3		2	5	9	4		
						7		2	
9			3		4				

Across

- School of thought
- 1972 Kentucky Derby winner
- Ridge
- Landlocked African country
- Sense of balance
- Half of a folk-rock duo
- *Orson Welles' role in "The Third Man"
- Public square
- Court answers
- Org. promoting fluoridation
- State of calm attentiveness
- Fair-haired
- *James T. Kirk player, in recent "Star Trek" films
- Kareem, once
- Deli order
- Police trickery
- Koala's hangout
- Crest container
- "Bus Stop" playwright
- Dollar bill, e.g. ... and what the ends of the answers to starred clues have in common
- Fair-haired
- Landlocked Asian country
- "Elephant Boy" boy
- Jigsaw unit
- Color printer refills
- "What's shakin'?"
- *"Pogo" cartoonist
- Finds the right words, say
- Step into character
- It may need massaging
- Crouch down
- Word with ice or cookie
- *"Damn Yankees!" star
- Wetland birds
- Pushing to the limit
- "Put a tiger in your tank" brand
- Babe in the woods
- LP successors

Down

- "More or less" suffix
- Desktop item
- "The Big Sleep" private eye
- Most populous Arabian Peninsula city
- Pandora's boxful
- Sundial seven
- PIN point
- End of a soldier's URL
- Jaw-dropping
- Cough drop
- Absurd
- WWII light machine gun
- Class ring number
- Acting fitfully
- Talk smack about
- Deli order
- Pitiless
- Boot stud
- Legendary Hollywood hot dog restaurant
- French summer
- "Snowy" bird
- Black shade
- Houston NBA team
- "Try me"
- Cochise followers
- Instagram overlays
- Like some lions
- Rifle handle
- Good times
- Brain scan inits.
- Step into character
- Fritter away
- They may be drawn
- Country duo Brooks & ...
- Bandleader Artie
- Rock producer Brian
- DOJ division
- Bikini half
- Some NFL linemen



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 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>



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Front row L-R: Navy Capt. Jeremy Hawker, Director of Nursing Services, Cmdr. Thomas Nipper Director of Surgical Services, Navy Capt. Shelley Perkins, commanding officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Lt. Cmdr. Sarah Frasure OR Nurse Champion for Go Clear, Navy

Capt. Sharon House, executive officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton, Cmdr. Matthew Kuettel Assistant Director of Surgical Services presenting the Go Clear award to the Nurses and Surgical Technologist of Naval Hospitals Main Operating Room. Photo: Felicia Crosson.

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton receives national recognition for 'Go Clear Award' in surgery

by Felcia Crosson

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton (NHCP) has announced that it has earned the Go Clear Award™ Gold status, the highest tier! This status has been received for the achievement in eliminating hazardous smoke from its surgical procedures, and is the first Navy Medical Treatment Center to earn such a prestigious award.

The Go Clear Award is presented by the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) to recognize health care facilities that have committed to providing increased surgical patient and health care worker

safety by implementing practices that eliminate smoke caused by the use of lasers and electrosurgery devices during surgery.

NHCP earned its award with 96% completion of comprehensive surgical smoke education and testing, and for providing the medical devices and resources necessary to evacuate surgical smoke during all smoke-generating procedures.

Additionally, the operating room completed 12 weeks of audits during surgical procedures that yielded 99% compliance of use of a smoke evacuation system.

Surgical smoke is the unwanted

by-product of energy-generating devices that are used in 90 percent of all surgeries. Its contents include toxic chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide and carbon monoxide, viruses, bacteria, blood and cancer cells.

Inhalation and absorption of surgical smoke pose serious health risks to patients and surgical staff.

Studies compare the inhalation of smoke from vaporized human tissue to the smoke created by cigarettes; the average daily impact of surgical smoke to the surgical team is equivalent to inhaling 27-30 unfiltered cigarettes.

Today, it is estimated only 50% of health care workers across the U.S. understand the hazards of

smoke exposure.

Aligning with the Commanding Officer's Philosophy, "Patients are

our family and the reason we are here. Be Ready, Be Relevant, Be Resolute."

Protein may reverse age-related memory loss

Exercise is important for your body and your brain at any age. A new study reveals how physical activity may slow the decline in learning and memory as you get older. Researchers looked at the brains of young and old mice. Some had access to a running wheel in their cage, while others did not. The team found changes in the part of the brain called the hippocampus. This area is important for learning and memory. Older mice that were physically active had more brain cells called neurons in the hippo-

campus and made fewer errors on learning and memory tasks. The team then injected older, less active mice with blood plasma from other mice. Older mice given plasma from active mice showed increases in neurons, learning, and memory performance similar to active mice. Researchers linked these brain benefits to a protein called GPLD1. When injected with the gene for GPLD1, older mice performed similarly to the active mice on memory tasks and had more neuron growth. The team

looked at the protein in people, too. Older adults who were more active had higher levels of GPLD1 in their blood than inactive adults. Because GPLD1 is produced in the liver, more research is needed to determine how it works on the brain. This research could lead to ways to treat or protect against age-related decline in the brain. "Through this protein, the liver is responding to physical activity and telling the old brain to get young," says Dr. Saul Villeda, who led the study.

MWR Digital Library: Offerings for children include comics, NatGeo, novels, tutoring, much more

Military OneSource provides free, online resources to service members and their families via the morale, welfare and recreation Digital Library. You'll find eBooks and audiobooks on virtually every topic, as well as databases and reference books that can help you learn a new skill, keep kids engaged and help with their homework, or prepare you to land your next job.

The MWR Digital Library is a free resource for service members and their families. Just log in to your Military OneSource account or create a username and password to get started.

Note that the list provided here includes just some of the resources available. The categories are guidelines only. Many of the resources can be useful or entertaining across age groups.

For children

The digital library offers online resources that can help children learn to read and keep their grades up, research topics for writing assignments or just find a great story for a long afternoon.

- BookFlix pairs classic video storybooks with related nonfiction titles to reinforce early reading skills and develop real-world knowledge.
- Britannica Library offers three sites in one — Children, Young Adults and the Reference Center — where you can conduct research, complete school assign-

ments, work on special projects or explore your unique interests.

You can even store your research in your personal My Britannica account.

- Comics and Graphic Novels offers a free library of comics and graphic novels for all ages.

- Explora Primary features a database

of colorful and fun resources designed to help children in grades K-5 learn about animals, music, health, history, people and places, science, math and sports.

- Gale in Context: Elementary introduces elementary students to database searching with resources featuring age-appropriate, curriculum-related content. Enter the password "1source" if

prompted.

- Gale in Context: Middle School provides reference content to help students complete assignments in literature, science, social studies and history. Offerings include videos, newspapers, magazines and primary sources. Enter the password

"1source" if prompted. • National Geographic Kids provides reputable, authoritative and appropriate content that shows children ages 6-14 the world in a way they've likely never seen it before. National Geographic Kids will take them on adventures in science, nature, culture, archaeology and space. Use the code "1source" if prompted.



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- NoveList K-8 Plus offers recommendations specifically for younger readers, helping them find books that are appropriate for their reading level and interests. Parents, teachers and librarians can also find tools to

use to engage young readers.

- ScienceFlix offers more than 50 complete units of study with more than 6,500 science-related assets in a variety of media, providing students with a better understanding of science concepts and ideas through hands-on projects, videos, multiple text types and interactive features.

- Tutor.com for military children gives kids free access to online tutoring and homework help from live, expert tutors across more than 100 subjects. Tutors can help with a homework assignment or catch your child up on missed concepts and lessons.

- World Book Online offers a collection of resources for all ages and reading levels. Explore content to engage and excite all minds, from prereaders to advanced researchers.

NOTE: Department of Defense Military Community and Family Policy has temporarily expanded program eligibility to Tutor.com beyond Department of Defense Education Activity students and active-duty children to ease academic disruptions due to coronavirus disease 2019. Please visit the site for additional information on eligibility and tutoring support.

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Source: SDMAC Military Economic Impact Study 2019

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