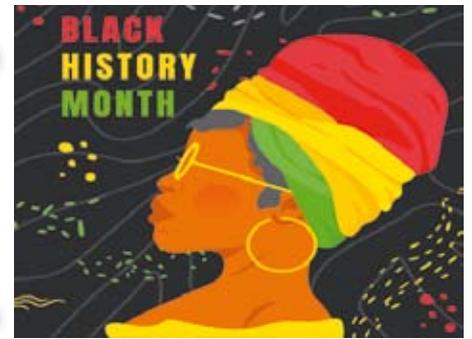


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COMMEMORATION CEREMONY World War II veteran Joe Landry, right, who fought in the Battle of the Bulge, places a wreath at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Va., Jan. 25, 2024. The wreath-laying was part of a ceremony to commemorate the battle's 79th anniversary. U.S. Army photo by Elizabeth Fraser

Cruiser captain bullied and struck Sailors before being relieved, Navy investigation finds

by Alison Bath, Stars and Stripes

A Navy captain relieved of command of a San Diego-based cruiser last year battered and bullied Sailors while creating a culture of fear through temper tantrums and public humiliation, according to a service investigation.

Capt. Danielle DeFant's toxic leadership aboard USS *Lake Erie* put the ship's crew at higher risk of an accident, investigators concluded in an Oct. 2, 2023, command report.

A copy of the report was first obtained and posted online by San Diego's KPBS through a Freedom of Information Act request.

DeFant made some Sailors feel as if they were "walking on eggshells" and caused many of the nearly 50 officers assigned to the ship's wardroom to fear giving her bad news, according to the report.

"There is clear evidence that Captain DeFant's recurrent, counterproductive behaviors have had adverse effects on subordinates and the command, and have had destructive effects on her crew," the report stated.

DeFant, whose Navy career spans more than 30 years, was fired Oct. 12. She subsequently was transferred to commander, Naval Surface Force, Pacific Fleet.

Such headquarters reassignments are common while the Navy determines whether an officer relieved of duty for loss of confidence in their ability to command will remain in the service.

DeFant was fired 10 days after the 25-page investigation report was sent to Rear Adm. Christopher Alexander, commander of Carrier Strike Group 9.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2024-01-30/navy-toxic-defant-lake-erie-12841876.html>

Navy warships to be repaired at Japanese shipyards, ambassador says

STARS AND STRIPES - The Navy plans to send some of its vessels to Japanese shipyards for maintenance to reduce the time it takes them to return to service, the U.S. ambassador to Japan announced recently. U.S. warships are already maintained and repaired in Japan at U.S. Navy installations like Yokosuka or Sasebo Naval Base, but ships are also routinely sent back to the United States for overhauls, upgrades and major repairs. The process can take months or even years to complete. Eliminating that lengthy process and exploring alternatives is more critical than ever, Ambassador Rahm Emanuel told reporters at Yokosuka. "We know that China watches which ships are coming in and out — it's not a secret; they know what's happening," and China evaluates the United States' deterrence level in the region based on that, he said outside of the base's ship-repair facility.

7th Fleet destroyer transits Taiwan Strait

TAIWAN STRAIT - USS *John Finn* (DDG 113) conducted a Taiwan Strait transit on Jan. 24 through waters where high-seas freedoms of navigation and overflight apply in accordance with international law. The ship transited through a corridor in the Strait that is beyond the territorial sea of any coastal State. *John Finn*'s transit through the Taiwan Strait demonstrates the United States' commitment to upholding freedom of navigation for all nations as a principle. No member of the international community should be intimidated or coerced into giving up their rights and freedoms. The United States military flies, sails and operates anywhere international law allows.

PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARD DISCHARGE CLAIMS

On September 27, 2022, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia determined veterans of the Navy and Marine Corps whose final

Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) occurred between September 12, 2016 and June 11, 2018 and who did not receive a medical retirement through the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) may be entitled to a remedial PEB.

In accordance with the District Court's ruling, the Department of the Navy has established a Class Action Review Board (CARB) as a remedial PEB process for those impacted. To that end, the CARB is reissuing PEB findings for those identified

as class members over the next 12-18 months.

If class members don't want further review of their PEB case, no action is required. If no review is requested, there will be no impact to your current status and benefits, to include your VA benefits. Inquiries about the CARB or general information about the CARB may be directed to a CARB Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer at peb_peblo_comms.fct@navy.mil or (202) 685-6436.

For class members desiring

legal advice or counsel regarding the Torres CARB, a Government attorney is available for advice and counsel, free of charge, through the Department of the Navy's Office of the Judge Advocate General, Disability Evaluation System Counsel Program (DESCP). The DESCP may be reached at DESCP_TorresUnit@us.navy.mil or (202) 875-1198.

For additional information and the latest updates about the CARB, visit the CARB website: <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/mra/CORB/Pages/CARB.aspx>.



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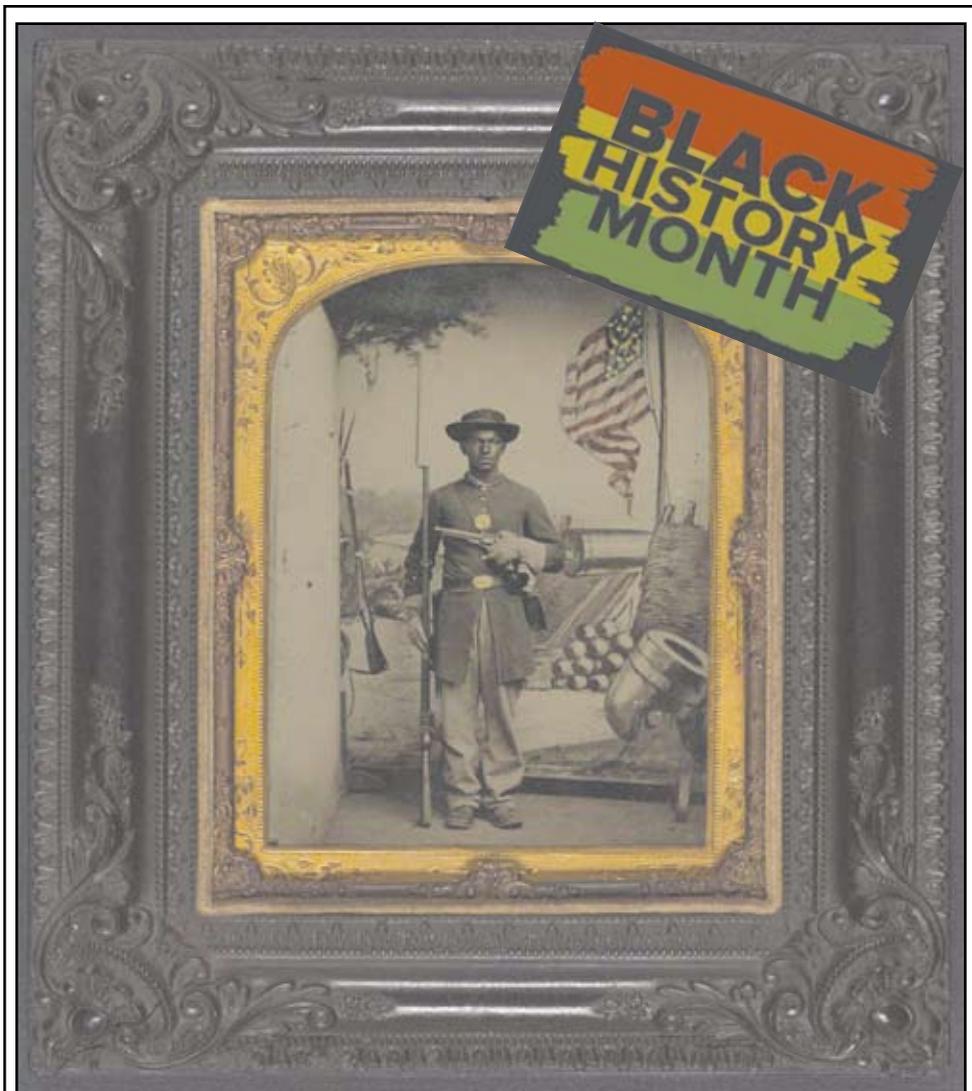
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Army Reserve soldiers from Fort Moore killed in drone attack at Jordan base

by **Corey Dickstein**
Stars and Stripes

ATLANTA - The three U.S. service members killed in a suicide drone strike in Jordan were Army reservists from Georgia, the Pentagon said Jan. 29.

Army Sgt. William Jerome Rivers, Spc. Kennedy Ladon Sanders, and Spc. Breonna Alexandria Moffett were killed in the strike on the small northeast Jordan base known as Tower 22, according to the Pentagon. The Soldiers were assigned to the 718th Engineer Company, 926th Engineer Battalion from the 926th Engineer Brigade based at Fort Moore, Ga.

Rivers, 46, was from Carrollton, Ga. Sanders, 24, was from Waycross, Ga.; and Moffett, 23, was from Savannah, Ga. Pentagon officials said the Soldiers were killed when the attack drone struck their container housing quarters early Sunday morning. Pentagon officials on Monday said an Iran-backed militia was responsible for the drone strike.

Pentagon spokeswoman Sabrina Singh declined to say specifically which militia launched the drone but said it was one backed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite unit of Iran's armed forces that

supports terrorist groups and anti-American militants in Iraq and Syria.

Singh vowed a response "in a time and place of our choosing" Jan. 29 at the Pentagon. She said the United States holds Iran responsible for the Sunday attack and some 150 other assaults on U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria since Oct. 7, when Hamas militants attack Israelis, launching a new war in Gaza and raising tensions across the Middle East.

"We know that Iran is behind it," Singh said. "Iran continues to arm and equip these groups to launch these attacks, and we will continue to hold them responsible. ... They fund and train and support and equip these militias that operate in Iraq and Syria."

Iran denied involvement in the Sunday attack.

"Resistance groups in the region do not take orders from

the Islamic Republic of Iran," Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani said Monday, according to Bloomberg news.

An investigation was ongoing into how the drone was able to evade U.S. air defenses used to protect forces on the Jordanian base, Singh said. At least 40 other American service members were injured in the strike, she said. That number could rise as troops are evaluated for injuries, including traumatic brain injuries, Singh added.

In Sanders hometown of Waycross in southeast Georgia on Monday, officials ordered flags to be flown at half-staff in her honor. "The City [of Waycross] is deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Kennedy Ladon Sanders, who gave her life in service to our country," the Waycross government wrote in a statement. "We offer our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends during this difficult time."



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STREAMLIGHT

Battle looming between AI and Counter-AI, says official

by David Vergun
DOD News

The Defense Department is just at the start of using artificial intelligence. Peer competitors are as well, said Jude R. Sunderbruch, executive director of the DOD Cyber Crime Center, who spoke Jan. 25 at the Google Defense Forum.

Sunderbruch predicted that in the future, there will be a battle between AI and counter-AI, which will lead to the question: "What is the truth in front of us?"

"I would not hesitate to call it an arms race but a strategic competition when it comes to artificial intelligence," he said.

Sunderbruch said the United States is well positioned to advance in the AI space.

"I'm feeling very confident about betting on the creativity of the United States and our partnerships between the government, industry, academia and small startups," he said.

The near-term goal is to figure out how to use the currently existing AI tools and to figure out how to apply them to information

that the government has layered with other information that is out there, he said, as well as training the AI models with a variety of useful information.

In another near-term goal, the department is probably going to be able to apply some of the AI tools for threat analysis, and also to look at vulnerabilities, he said.

"I think a lot of those capabilities will be able to be applied to actually testing our systems, both in the government as well as the defense industrial base to see how secure they are," Sunderbruch said.

Sunderbruch also predicted that there will someday be "a confluence between quantum and AI, which will be a real game-changer."

Army Col. Richard Leach, intelligence director, Defense

an analyst reading hundreds or thousands of reports every day, he said.

"Let AI identify key pieces of information and maybe do some of the basic analysis. Let the analysts focus on the hard problem set so they're not wasting time, resources and people," Leach said.

"Adversaries are trying to get past our boundaries and our securities every day. They're moving at 'lightspeed.' They're on fiber optic networks. They're able to bounce from one VPS [virtual private server] to another in an instant, so utilizing AI to try to get ahead of that is going to be essential," he said, referring

to virtual private servers.

Using AI to help in understanding the environment is important, he said. The environment is changing every day. Every time somebody changes their network, updates their patches or reconfigures the network, they change the environment and the battlespace, he said.



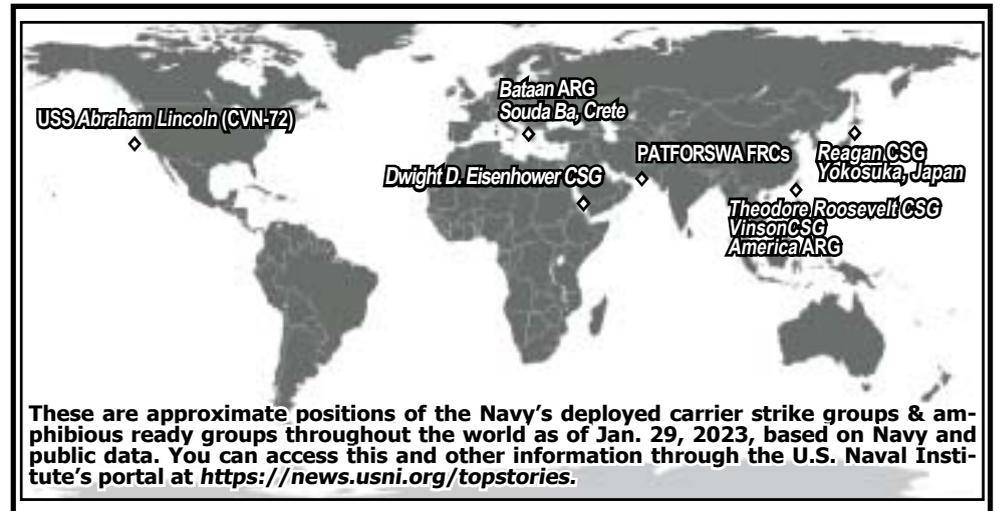
A pilot instructs students from the University of California, San Diego in an MQ-9 simulator at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., Feb 17, 2023. U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Pagan

Information Systems Agency, who also participated on the same panel, addressed the role of AI in helping to sort through the "tsunami of data" coming in that needs to be processed, analyzed and provided to decision makers.

Three people are seated on a stage. One of them, holding a microphone, is speaking to the audience.

There's a need for AI to sort through all the data in looking for adversary threats instead of

Total Battle Force	Deployed	Underway
292 (USS 232, USNS 60)	106 (USS 74, USNS 32)	73 (48 Deployed, 25 Local)



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EARLY BIRD BRIEF

Army

- Army ROTC instructor who pleaded guilty to hiding camera in changing room gets reprimand
- Army widens investigation into doctor charged in one of the largest sexual abuse cases in service history
- Arctic-focused Army unit joins forces with Japanese Soldiers on Hokkaido
- JBLM deserter convicted in absentia for unspecified crimes has been arrested
- Nolanville PD investigating shooting that killed Fort Cavazos Soldier, sent another to hospital

Navy

- USS *Carney* shoots down missile in first attack on Navy since October
- Navy launches website to help track progress of Red Hill cleanup
- Amid high-tech talk, U.S and European navy chiefs bemoan the people problem
- Fired Navy Captain created 'toxic' climate, grabbed and struck crew on duty
- Shipyard veterans may have been exposed to cancer-causing radioactive materials. The Navy has not told them.

Marine Corps

- Marine helicopter sustains damage during ground transport
- Marine Corps' Japan-based force gets new 3-star leader

Air Force

- B-1B bombers and 250 airmen temporarily moving from South Dakota to Texas following crash

Space Force

- Space Force selects vendors for suborbital launch services

Coast Guard

- Cutter *Confidence* returns to Florida homeport after 60-day deployment

National Guard

- Guard officer deployed to border reprimanded after assault guilty plea

DOD official discusses challenges, solutions to recruiting all-volunteer force

by David Vergun

Over the last 15 years, the recruiting rate of the all-volunteer force has been declining, said Stephanie Miller, deputy assistant secretary of defense for military personnel policy.

Those with an interest in serving and qualification rates are hovering near all-time lows, she said Jan. 29 at the Institute for Defense Analysis in Alexandria, Va.

Previous tried-and-true methods—such as an increased number of recruiters, bonus authority and increased marketing and advertising—have not necessarily resulted in the gains seen previously during challenging times, she said.

Miller said defense leaders are asking how the military can connect with and motivate this new generation to serve. Is it through: intangible benefits of service, such as the opportunities for leadership and travel; a sense of belonging and community pride; selfless service to a greater cause; and pay and benefits that greatly exceed the market value of commensurate civilian work.

Miller said many believe the most expeditious way to address the recruiting crisis is by making the tangible benefits of service worth more than any perceived hardship or risk.

She said if funding for personnel is increased, decisions must be made about whether they will be across

the pay scale, targeted to bonus money, or an increase in quality-of-life programs like housing and child care.

An increase in personnel funding would eat into costs for training, education and future readiness, Miller noted.

Current military marketing and advertising strongly aligns to what young people report they're looking for: purpose, passion, connection. But marketing and advertising can only do so much, she said.

Miller said she thinks that influencers, such as educators and parents, need to become more attuned to the benefits of serving.

Too many educators falsely see the military as an alternative to

college or an option of last resort, she said.

"We need to reframe that narrative such that Americans understand that military service is a pathway to greater education and opportunity for those who may be less inclined to pursue college, initially, after graduation from high school," Miller said.

Miller said she's optimistic about the future of the all-volunteer force. Measures and metrics of recruiting are improving, such as new contracts being written by recruiters and improvements in marketing and advertising incentives. But "climbing out of that deep hole is going to take a long time."

February's list of monthlong observances

Nat'l Cancer Prevention Month
 American Heart Month
 Nat'l Cherry Month
 Celebration of Chocolate
 African American History
 Grapefruit Month
 Great American Pie Month
 Fabulous Florida Strawberry
 Nat'l Snack Food Month
 Nat'l Children's Dental Health
 Canned Food Month
 Nat'l Hot Breakfast Month
 Sweet Potato Month
 Bake for Family Fun Month
 Berry Fresh Month
 Nat'l Fasting February
 Nat'l Teen Dating Violence
 Awareness & Prevention
 Nat'l Self-Check Month
 Creative Romance Month

Nat'l Enrolled Agents Month
 Nat'l Heart Healthy Month
 Nat'l Age-Related Macular
 Degeneration & Low Vision
 Awareness Month
 Barley Month
 Nat'l Potato Lovers Month
 Nat'l Therapeutic Recreation
 Date Your Mate Month
 Exotic Vegetables & Star
 Fruit Month
 Nat'l Spay / Neuter Month
 Nat'l Wedding Month
 Career & Technical Education
 28 Days of Black Cosplay
 Furmint February
 Kids ENT Health Month
 Body Awareness Month
 Int'l Brownie Camera Days
 Nat'l Fondue Month

Nat'l Avocado and Banana
 Turner Syndrome Awareness
 Goat Yoga Month
 Nat'l Cat Health Month
 Marijuana Awareness Month
 Nat'l Condom Month
 Safer Sex Awareness Month
 Ectodermal Dysplasias
 Awareness Month
 Eisenmenger Syndrome
 Awareness Month
 Fit February
 Gum Disease Awareness
 Information Governance
 "From Africa to Virginia"
 Adopt a Rescued Rabbit
 An Affair to Remember
 Aromatic Writing Month
 Beat the Heat Month
 Declutter for a Cause Month

Dog Training Education
 Feline Fix by Five Month
 Int'l Boost Self Esteem
 Int'l Expect Success Month
 Int'l Friendship Month
 Int'l Hoof Care Month
 Int'l Prenatal Infection Prevention
 Jobs in Golf Month
 Library Lovers Month
 Love the Bus Month
 Marfan Syndrome Awareness
 Nat'l Bird Feeding Month
 Nat'l Care About Your Indoor Air
 Nat'l Embroidery Month
 Nat'l Laugh-Friendly Month
 Nat'l Mend a Broken Heart
 Nat'l Parent Leadership
 Nat'l Patient Recognition
 Nat'l Pet Dental Health
 Nat'l Prevent a Litter Month



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Federal grant of \$75 million awarded to Chesterton Elementary School in the Point Loma Naval Base area

With 52 percent of its students coming from military families, Chesterton Elementary School was recently notified by the Department of Defense that they'll receive a \$78,188,733 federal grant to replace the current Chesterton Elementary School in Naval Base Point Loma area.

The grant is the federal share of a larger \$97,735,917 project. The project will address facility capacity and condition deficiencies that placed Morris Hill Elementary School as the 45th school on the 2019 Deputy Secretary of Defense "Public Schools on Military Installations Priority List" (Priority List). Upon completion, Chesterton Elementary School will serve up to 611 students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

Funding for this grant is provided under the Department's Public Schools on Military Installations Program. In making these funds available, the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation must give priority

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consideration to military installations that have schools with the most serious capacity and facility condition deficiencies, as determined by the Priority List.

A multi-disciplined Federal Evaluation Team, with representatives from the Assistant Secretaries of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation reviewed the school project to ensure the award appropriately addresses the noted capacity and facility condition deficiencies.

In correcting the identified facility condition and capacity issues at Chesterton Elementary

School, this grant keeps faith with service members, improves the quality of education for defense-connected students, aids in the recruitment and retention of vital skills at Naval Base Point

Loma, and enhances partnerships between the communities and the installation.

In a statement from San Diego Unified School District, Chesterton is an academically high performing school, where the student population is rich with diversity. Approximately 21 percent of its students are from multilingual homes, and about 52 percent are from military families, living within Chesterton military housing, through the Voluntary Enrollment Exchange Program and School Choice Program, over 200 students choose to attend Chesterton, further enhancing our school's cultural diversity.

FLEET AND FAMILY SUPPORT PROGRAMS

FFSC Partial Class Schedule - Feb-Mar 2024

If you're interested in attending one of these classes, call the Centralized Scheduling Center at 866-923-6478. Legend: (V) Virtual (IP) In Person (NBSD) Naval Base San Diego (NBPL) Naval Base Point Loma (NBC) Naval Base Coronado (KMB) Kearny Mesa Branch (GVB) Gateway Village Branch (VSM) Village at Serra Mesa Branch (BVH) Bayview Hills Branch

Career Services

Finding Federal Employment

Wednesday, February 21 | 1300 - 1500 | NBPL (IP)

Wednesday, March 6 | 0900 - 1100 | NBSD (IP)

Capstone

Friday, February 23 | 0800 - 1130 | KMB (IP)

Friday, March 15 | 0800 - 1130 | KMB (IP)

Job Search Strategies

Wednesday, February 14 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

Wednesday, February 14 | 1330 - 1530 | KMB (IP)

Wednesday, March 6 | 1300 - 1500 | NBPL (IP)

Wednesday, March 13 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

Resume Writing

Wednesday, February 14 | 1300 - 1500 | NBPL (IP)

Wednesday, February 21 | 0900 - 1030 | NBSD (IP)

Thursday, February 22 | 1330 - 1530 | VSM (IP)

FFSC Job Fair

A great opportunity for transition Sailors, retirees, and spouses to network with over 70 employers looking for your skills! Bring copies of your resume and come dressed to impress.

Wednesday, March 20 | TBA

How to Work a Job Fair

Thursday, March 14 | 0900 - 1000 | NBC (IP)

Spouse Employment, Empowerment and Development

Monday, February 26 | 1300 - 1500 | KMB (IP)



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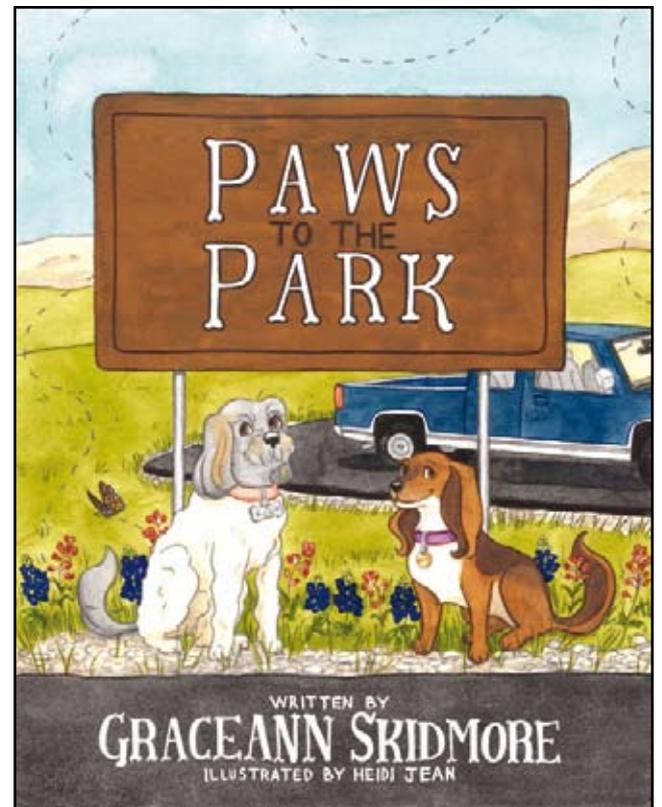
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CPen spouse pens second book 'Paws To The Park'; Order now on Amazon

The book is a short story based on the adventures of puppy dog friends Dixie and Ruby. Dixie is a sassy little Dachshund, and Ruby is a Maltipoo. They are always getting into new things together. This short story explores the day Dixie and Ruby have at the park, the animals they encounter, the fun they have together, and the joy of companionship.

"Paws To The Park" is GraceAnn's second children's book. She has also written, "Wings Away, A Tale Of Friendship" which was released in July of this year.

GraceAnn was born and raised in Corpus Christi, TX. GraceAnn is a proud Texan with a deep appreciation for southern charm. She holds a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business and an MBA from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Currently working in the tech industry GraceAnn resides in Southern California with her husband who serves in the United States Marine Corps.

Beyond her professional pursuits, GraceAnn is dedicated to military advocacy. During her leisure hours, she finds joy in reading, traveling, crafting, volunteering, and trying new things. Most importantly, she cherishes the precious moments spent with her loved ones, including her treasured companion, Dixie, the miniature Dachshund who plays a central role in this story. GraceAnn decided to write children's books as an outlet for her passion for storytelling. She is expecting her first child in the Spring of 2024 and cannot wait to share her love of literacy with her child.





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USS Antietam departs Yokosuka after nearly 11 years of forward-deployed service

by Petty Officer
2nd Class Askia Collins

YOKOSUKA, Japan - Cruiser USS *Antietam* departed Yokosuka, Japan, Jan. 26 to transit to its new homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, as part of a planned rotation of forces in the Pacific.

Antietam arrived on station at Yokosuka Naval Base from

Naval Station San Diego in February 2013 to support operations within the 7th Fleet area of operations. *Antietam* was homeported in San Diego for 20 years.

Before the cruiser departed for the final time, officers from its sister ship, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force guided-missile destroyer JS Kirishima

(DDG 174), provided the crew of USS *Antietam* a plaque commemorating its time in Japan.

Antietam Sailors ceremonially manned the rails in service dress blue uniforms as the ship left Japanese waters.

"For more than a decade, USS *Antietam* enjoyed being part of the Yokosuka community," said

Capt. Victor Garza, ship's commanding officer. "*Antietam* was at the forefront of our nation's efforts to protect peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific. On behalf of the crew, I want to express my appreciation for our Japanese hosts, who have become our colleagues, friends and family.

"We're proud of the relationships we built with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and with like-minded nations and navies throughout the region."

During its time serving as part of U.S. 7th Fleet, *Antietam* completed numerous missions and patrols, including a 260-day deployment in 2020.

In 2023, the cruiser's last full year as part of America's Forward Deployed Naval Forces-Japan (FDNF-J), *Antietam* sailed nearly 34,000 miles, participated in the largest-ever Exercise Talisman Sabre alongside the Royal

Australian Navy, and visited ports in Vietnam, South Korea, the Philippines and Palau.

Antietam is assigned to Commander, Task Force (CTF) 70, the theater strike warfare commander and theater air and missile defense commander. CTF 70 is forward-deployed to the 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

HISTORY

Antietam is the Navy's 8th Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser and was named for the site of the 1862 Battle of Antietam, Maryland, between Confederate forces under Gen. Robert E. Lee and Union forces under Major Gen. George McClellan, during the American Civil War.

The keel was laid down by the Litton-Ingalls Shipbuilding Corporation at Pascagoula, Miss., on November 15, 1984; launched on February 14, 1986, and christened on April 19. Beverly B. Byron, representative from Maryland's 6th Congressional District, served as sponsor of the ship. Capt. Philip J. Coady, Jr., was the prospective CO.

June 6, 1987 USS *Antietam* was commissioned during a ceremony at Baltimore, Md.

January 8, 1988 *Antietam* commenced a two-month Post Shakedown Availability (PSA) at Todd Shipyard in San Pedro, Calif. Returned to its homeport of Naval Station Long Beach on March 8; Underway for local operations from March 16-25 and April 10-23.

Tails 'n Trails 4K Dog Walk

Saturday,
Feb. 11, 2023
9-11 a.m.
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Camp Pendleton



Join the fun at Lake O'Neill for a fun 4K out and back walk along the Lake. The event includes a dog agility course, doggie hydration stations, and grab 'n go goody bags. The walk provides an event that promotes fitness, a healthy lifestyle, and pet responsibility. <https://pendleton.usmc-mccs.org/activity/d3ed5e49-7dfe-49c7-acd4-1171a6e7f84e>

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Largest of its kind CDC opens at MCAS Miramar

MCAS MIRAMAR - A ribbon cutting ceremony for the newest Child Development Center (CDC) Complex was held here Jan. 25.

The ceremony, which showcased the largest CDC facility in all of Navy Region Southwest, featured remarks from top military leadership to include Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Meredith Berger, Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, Commanding Officer of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, Maj. Gen. Michael Borgschulte, Commander, Navy Region Southwest Rear Admiral Brad Rosen, and Commanding Officer of MCAS Miramar, Col. Marty Bedell.

"Today we are celebrating a true win-win success story," said Rosen. "As you've already heard, this project is the result of an extraordinary partnership that developed based on the shared goal of serving our military families by providing the best possible care for their children."

The complex, consisting of two single-story buildings, MCAS CDC II and MCAS CDC III, occupies more than 62,000 square feet. MCAS CDC II is a 20,000-square-foot facility with a capacity for 146 children. It features 12 classrooms, including five infant rooms, three pre-toddler rooms, two toddler rooms, and two preschool rooms. It will be staffed by 66 employees when at full capacity.



From left to right, Maj. Gen. Michael J. Borgschulte, the commanding general of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing; Col. Thomas M. Bedell, CO of MCAS Miramar; Rear Adm. Brad Rosen, the commander of Navy Region Southwest; Congresswoman Sara Jacobs, the representative of California's 51st District; and Meredith Berger, the assistant secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment, cut the ribbon during the opening ceremony of the Child Development Center on MCAS Miramar. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Jackson Rush

ity. MCAS CDC III is a 42,000 square-foot-facility with a capacity for 306 children. It features 25 classrooms, including 10 infant rooms, six pre-toddler rooms, five toddler rooms, and four preschool rooms. It will be staffed by 123 employees when at full capacity.

"For the last 20 years, Navy Region Southwest managed and operated the child development centers aboard MCAS Miramar," said Rosen. "The Navy and Marine Corps have been working together towards child-care expansion plans to reduce waiting lists and child placement times to 3 months or less."

The CDC Complex is a unique partnership between the Navy

Region Southwest Child and Youth Programs, which manages and operates the CDCs, and the Marine Corps, which maintains the facility. The project was funded by Military Construction P250, which was awarded with special congressional action. Construction was completed in October 2023 despite numerous supply chain challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The CDC Complex is the largest facility of its kind in Navy Region Southwest and is designed to meet the highest standards of quality and safety. It has achieved a LEED Silver certification, which is a green building rating system that recognizes environmentally responsible construction practices.



PACIFIC OCEAN (Jan. 25, 2024) Sailors secure a simulated man-overboard casualty on a stretcher on the starboard boat davit during a man-overboard drill aboard aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln. The Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group is underway in the U.S. 3rd Fleet area of operations conducting advanced tactical training that increases warfighting capability and tactical proficiency across all domains. U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Eduardo A. Torres

AT SEA (Jan. 17, 2024) Aircraft fly in formation over destroyer USS Sterett during a trilateral exercise. Sterett, assigned to Carrier Strike Group ONE is deployed to the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Charles J. Scudella III





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FEBRUARY 1-15, 2024 www.armedforresdispatch.com 7

First generation legacy: 3rd MAW Marine forges his own path

by Cpl. Daniel Childs
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

CAMP PENDLETON - Marine Corps Cpl. Johnson Truong is an air support operations operator with Marine Air Support Squadron (MASS) 3, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, and a Harrisburg, Pa., native. It is fitting that Truong hails from a city with as much historical significance to the U.S. as Harrisburg. His family legacy was shaped by sacrifice and commitment to a stable life in the United States.

Truong's grandfather, Thanh Truong, is a veteran of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, a branch of the South Vietnamese military which was trained and advised by the U.S. military until the fall of Saigon in 1975, marking the end of the Vietnam War. Thanh Truong endured nearly a decade of captivity as a prisoner of war, held by the Viet Cong.

"If the United States had not given my grandpa the opportunity to come here,

my parents wouldn't have met and I wouldn't even be where I am today," Truong said. "That's why I felt like I had to give back in some type of way, and for me, military service was the way to do it."

Truong's parents moved to Harrisburg from Vietnam after the Vietnam War, looking for a fresh start. Truong is a first generation American and the first Marine in his family.

"I was able to join the military right out of high school," Truong said. "My parents had to work day-in and out to provide me that opportunity."

Truong is training in preparation to deploy as part of Marine Rotational Force—Darwin, a Marine Air-Ground Task Force forward postured in Darwin, Australia. His role as an air support operations operator involves coordinating fire support missions and communicating with ground units to ensure airspace safety.

In December 2023, Truong participated in exercise Steel Knight 23.2, coordinating fire support missions for joint aircraft from the multifunctional air operations center.

"My dedication to coordinating missions aligns seamlessly with my passion for attention to detail," Truong said. "In this high-stakes environment, every aspect requires careful coordination, just like working on cars back home. It's about ensuring every component fits perfectly, whether it's a mechanical system or a complex mission plan."

As Truong embraces his role in the Marine Corps, he says he finds a sense of purpose by remembering his family's sacrifices and in helping others.

"There are a lot of days when I just want to hang it up, but like every service member says, 'when it gets tough, always remember the why,' and one of my 'whys' is my family, and the sweat and tears they faced coming



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Johnson Truong, an air support operations operator with Marine Air Support Squadron 3, Marine Air Control Group 38, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, coordinates fire missions from the Multifunction Air Operations Center in support of Exercise Steel Knight 23.2 at Camp Pendleton. The MAOC provides expeditionary aviation command and control and air surveillance to the Marine Air-Ground Task Force. Steel Knight 23.2 is a three-phase exercise designed to train I Marine Expeditionary Force in the planning, deployment and command and control of a joint force against a peer or near-peer adversary combat force and enhance existing live-fire and maneuver capabilities of the MAGTF. U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Daniel Childs

here," Truong said. "I know every morning, I'm doing something for myself, my family and for the ones that came before me."

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PACIFIC OCEAN (Jan. 25, 2024) Destroyer USS Daniel Inouye (DDG 118) sails behind aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. Theodore Roosevelt flagship of Carrier Strike Group Nine, is underway conducting routine operations in the 7th Fleet area of operations. U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Chris Williamson

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Luminar's lidar-powered automatic emergency steering at CES 2024 - with VIDEO

The major U.S. international auto shows used to be places where over-the-top press conferences and exhibits presented the latest and greatest automotive technology. However, in recent years that has not been the case.

The major auto show that I used to eagerly look forward to covering every year was the LA Auto Show — primarily its press days (called Automobility LA). However, increasingly even before the especially devastating initial years of COVID-19, CES — otherwise known to people the world over as the Consumer Electronics Show — was presenting more and more automotive tech. That makes sense, since CES is all about the latest and greatest consumer tech. Nothing much happened on the show front during COVID, but since then the LA Auto Show has remained a shadow of its previous self, while the auto tech and proliferation of very cool concept cars have exploded at CES.

The driving demonstrations that required a lot of space at CES took place in the spacious parking lots around the Las Vegas Convention Center. Luminar's presented an on-track demo at CES for press and non-press attendees alike. The demonstration, using Luminar's Iris+ LiDAR-powered Proactive Safety, clearly illustrated the difference between cars equipped with Luminar's lidar technology and those without it.

Watch this 45-second VIDEO on the "AutoMatters & More" YouTube Channel: <https://youtu.be/yqkBNlyfMRw>.

According to the company, the system "provides higher-confidence detection, faster and farther than today's most advanced camera and radar powered ADAS systems, and (shows) how new AES capabilities can help avoid collisions at high speeds without driver intervention."

"Luminar's Iris lidar, built from the chip-up, is a high performance, long-range sensor that unlocks safety and autonomy for cars, commercial trucks and more." It incorporates a "single 1550nm fiber laser that enables long ranges with 1,000,000x pulse energy of 905nm while staying eye-safe." The receiver is "the most sensitive, highest dynamic range InGaAs detector in the world when paired with our receiver ASIC. 2 axis scanning mirrors with 120° x 28° FoV, scans only the laser rather than spinning the whole lidar device (and) an in-house custom mixed signal ASIC with better performance for significantly less cost than complex ADC chips. Iris and Iris+ are designed for auto-grade, high-volume manufacturability."

For the demonstration, two vehicles lined up side-by-side, at the start. The first one, equipped with Luminar's lidar-powered tech on-board, sped off down its lane. Once the car got up to speed, a platform carrying a 'pedestrian' (crash test dummy) emerged from behind a parked car. The Luminar lidar-equipped SUV recognized the potentially life-threatening situation and swerved, successfully avoiding the pedestrian.

Then the other vehicle — the one that did not include Luminar's lidar tech — commenced its run down the other lane. On cue, a 'pedestrian' ran out from behind a parked car. This time, however, the result was dramatically different and violent. The pedestrian was struck and run over.

I saw two different vehicles being used as those without the Luminar lidar tech: a Tesla sedan and a Lexus SUV. The collisions between the Tesla and the pedestrian were far more violent, and did considerably more damage to the crash test dummy and the equipment used to move it into harm's way — so much so that I was told that they rarely used the Tesla for the demo.

Luminar's lidar technology is also a key component in the autonomous racecars (no drivers!) of the Indy Autonomous Challenge (IAC), which exhibited at CES, raced and did a multi-car demo IN THE DARK at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. "Lu-

minar is the exclusive lidar sensor technology sponsor of the Indy Autonomous Challenge." Its 360-degree long-range sensing enables safe autonomy at high speeds on the racetrack. At CES 2024, the IAC announced the "the launch of its Next Gen Autonomous Vehicle Platform, the IAC AV-24." This new "platform and related simulation tools will accelerate the development of AI Drivers capable of operating vehicles safely at speeds greater than 190 mph." Included in its innovations is the "World's First 360-Degree Long Range LiDAR Vision Using 4 Luminar Iris Sensors" (<https://www.indyautonomouschallenge.com/indy-autonomous-challenge-unveils-next-gen-autonomous-vehicle-platform-iac-av-24>).

For more information, visit <https://investors.luminartech.com/news-events/press-releases/detail/78/luminar-at-ces-2024>. See an explanation of the underlying technology of Luminar's automotive lidar at <https://www.luminartech.com/technology>.

To explore a wide variety of content dating back to 2002, with the most photos and the latest text, visit "AutoMatters & More" at <https://automatters.net>. Search by title or topic in the Search Bar in the middle of the Home Page, or click on the blue 'years' boxes and browse.

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Friends, favors, and faux pas

"You're headed to the commissary? Can you pick me up a gallon of milk?" my military spouse friend asked through my flip phone. The request wasn't unreasonable, but this friend was an infamous favor-asker. To her, getting friends to do tasks or errands meant she was smart and resourceful.

"Sure," I mumbled, slapping my Motorola shut, disgusted with myself.

After the bagger loaded my groceries into my minivan at the Oceana Commissary, I headed to Fairfield Elementary for pick ups. On the way, I called my friend about her milk. "I'll give it to you when I see you at school pick ups today," I told her, feeling weak and defeated.

"Oh yeah, I wanted to ask if you could pick up my daughter along with your kids today. Just keep her at your place for a while. I'm sure you don't have anything going on, right? I'm finishing up a mani-pedi at the salon, so I'll just swing by your house when my nails are done. Easy peasy!" she said, as if she was doing me the favor.

An hour later, I gritted my teeth, watching my friend's daughter poke at the water dispenser button on our refrigerator, rapid streams of liquid shooting onto our hardwood kitchen floors. "I told you, we don't do that in this house," I tried to cope with her defiant behavior without losing my mind. She stared right at me, smirking, and poked again.

My friend eventually collected her daughter, and her milk, flashing her shiny nails while I swabbed puddles of water mixed with half-eaten Goldfish crackers and gummy

bears from our kitchen floor like a scullery maid.

My friend wasn't a bad person, she simply asked too much of friends. She was perfectly willing to return favors, should anyone ask. But no one ever did, for fear of the

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

paybacks they'd suffer in return.

The final straw happened one summer, while my husband was deployed in the Mediterranean.

"Hey Lisa," my friend called while I was vacationing with family in North Carolina, "our car's in the shop. Would you mind if we used Francis' Saturn since he's gone?" My husband's car had been sitting idle in the garage for weeks, so why not? I gave her our garage code, and told her where to find the keys.

A few nights later, I was watching a movie with my family in the rental beach house, when the sliding glass door suddenly opened. It was Francis! We all jumped up, wondering why he was there in his cammies!

"Surprise!" he whooped, explaining that a schedule change allowed him to come home for early for R&R. We hugged, kissed, and toasted to celebrate.

After swapping several stories,

Francis remembered something. "Oh yeah, you're never gonna believe this." He told us that, after his flight to Norfolk, he'd taken a taxi to our house, to pick up his Saturn and drive to North Carolina to surprise us. "So, I'm backing the Saturn out of our garage, but at the bottom of the driveway, the engine sputters and dies."

"What?! Is something wrong with the car?" I said, confused, "How'd you get here?"

"Oh no," he continued, "the car's fine. Just out of gas. I had to walk three miles to the gas station and back to get it running again."

It took me a moment to process. "But it had plenty of gas," I muttered, trying to understand. And then, slowly, it hit me. "Are you kidding me? She returned the car on empty?!"

Now Francis was confused. I explained that my favor-asking friend had borrowed his Saturn while we were on vacation. "I should've known!" Francis' lightbulb flashed on, because he knew my friend's reputation well.

I learned that military spouses can't do everything, so there's no shame in asking for help. However, it's important to be as self-sufficient as possible — create a list of babysitters, yard workers, repair people, etc., to pay when needed. Then, tap your military spouse friends for emotional support, companionship, and fun.

I forgave my friend for all those favors she never returned. But I've never forgotten the lessons I learned... and the \$2.78 for that gallon of milk.

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Friday - February 2
 6:00 PM The Iron Claw r
Saturday - February 3
 1:00 PM * LAST SHOWING * Wonka pg
 3:30 PM The Boys in the Boat pg13
 6:00 PM Night Swim pg13
Sunday - February 4
 1:00 PM Migration pg
 3:00 PM The Iron Claw r
Friday, February 9
 6:00 PM The Book of Clarence pg13
Saturday - February 10
 1:00 PM Mean Girls (2024) pg13
 6pm Land of Bad (ADVANCE SCREENING) r
Sunday, February 11
 1:00 PM Migration (LAST SHOWING) pg
 3:00 PM Aquaman/Lost Kingdom (LAST SHOWING) pg

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Thursday - February 1
 5:50 PM Migration pg
 8:00 PM The Color Purple (2023) pg13
Friday - February 2
 5:50 PM Night Swim pg13
 8:00 PM The Iron Claw r
Saturday - February 3
 1:20 PM Migration pg
 3:30 PM Aquaman Lost Kingdom pg13
 6:00 PM The Iron Claw r
Sunday - February 4
 1:00 PM Wonka pg
 3:20 PM Night Swim pg13
Thursday - February 8
 6:00 PM Night Swim pg13
 8:00 PM The Iron Claw r

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Friday, February 2
 6:00 PM - Night Swim (PG-13)
Saturday, February 3
 3pm Aquaman Lost Kingdom (PG-13)
 6:30 PM -The Iron Claw (R)
Sunday, February 4
 12:00 PM - Migration (PG)
 3:00 PM - The Iron Claw (R)

Pendleton Theater and Training Center
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Saturday, February 3
 1:30pm Migration (PG)
 4pm Aquaman/Lost Kingdom (PG13)
Saturday, February 10
 1:30pm Aquaman/Lost Kingdom (PG13)

SOCIAL SECURITY MATTERS

Will my friend's fiancée be entitled to a survivor benefit?

Dear Rusty: I have a very good friend who has cancer and will begin chemotherapy this week. He is 71 years old and is currently receiving Social Security benefits. He has been living with his fiancée for a little more than 2 years, but they have been a couple for about 15 years and will be married in the next few weeks. She is 60 years old.

I am concerned about his, and her, future so my questions are:
 • What, if anything, should he and his wife do to ensure that she gets his Social Security benefits?
 • What benefits will she be entitled to, and how soon will she be able to begin receiving them after his death?

Signed: A Friend with Questions

Dear Friend: You are kind to be concerned about your friend and his fiancée. Here's what you need to know:

Social Security goes by state rules when it comes to what is often referred to as "common law marriage." That means that whether your friend's fiancée will receive any benefits as a surviving spouse in a "common law" relationship depends on whether they live in a state which recognizes common law marriage. Most states do not, but state laws have changed over the years and many states which once recognized such unions as "marriage" no longer do. Although they may have "been a couple" for 15 years, if your friend and his fiancée have been living together for only two it is likely only the last two years will count for Social Security benefit purposes. So, whether your friend's fiancée will get anything when your friend dies depends on where they live - unless they get married, in which case the rules are different.

In order for a married widow(er) to receive surviving spouse benefits, the couple must have been married for at least 9 months. If they marry and your friend lives longer than 9 months thereafter, then his wife will be entitled to a surviving spouse benefit from her husband. The amount of his wife's benefit will be based upon the amount your friend is receiving at his death, adjusted for her age when she claims her surviving spouse benefit.

A surviving spouse can claim benefits from the deceased as early as age 60, but those benefits will be reduced for claiming before full retirement age (FRA). Taken at age 60, the wife's benefit would be 71.5% of your friend's SS benefit at his death. The wife need not claim the survivor benefit immediately; she could opt to delay claiming in order to get a higher percentage of the husband's amount. Survivor benefits reach maximum - 100% of the deceased's benefit amount - at the recipient's FRA.

So, if your friend and his fiancée now live in a state which currently recognizes common law marriage (CO, IA, KS, MT, NH, SC, TX, UT, RI, or in the District of Columbia), then your friend's partner will be considered his "wife" and entitled to survivor benefits as normal (the fiancée would need to prove they cohabitate in a marriage-like relationship to claim benefits).

If they do not live in one of those states, but they get married and the marriage lasts for at least 9 months, then the wife will be entitled to normal benefits as a surviving spouse (as described above). But if the couple do not live in one of the above states which recognize "common law" relationships, or if their soon-to-occur marriage doesn't last at least 9 months, or if they do not get married, I'm afraid your friend's partner will not be entitled to any survivor benefits from your friend.

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AI and your health: How computers are helping medicine

There's a lot of talk about artificial intelligence, or AI, these days. AI is everywhere—from virtual assistants to facial recognition software. The technology is even assisting doctors and scientists. So what exactly is AI? And how is it helping advance scientific research?

"AI is basically trying to teach computers to 'think' in the same way as the human brain," says Dr. Despina Kontos, an AI researcher at Columbia University.

One approach to AI uses a process called machine learning. In machine learning, a computer model is built to predict what may happen in the real world. The model is taught to analyze and recognize patterns in a data set. This training enables the model to then make predictions about new data. Some AI programs can also teach themselves to ask new questions and make novel connections between pieces of information.

"Computer models and humans can really work well together to improve human health," explains Dr. Grace C.Y. Peng, an NIH expert on AI in medicine. "Computers are very good at doing calculations at a large scale, but they don't have the intuitive capability that we have. They're powerful, but how helpful they're going to be lies in our hands."

Researchers are exploring ways to harness the power of AI to improve health care. These include assisting with diagnosing and treating medical conditions and delivering care.

Mining Medical Images

One area that AI is already being used daily is medical imaging. Computers help doctors comb through CT and MRI scans for signs of problems like heart disease and cancer.

"AI can look at images very closely, in a way that's much more detailed than we can do with the human eye," Kontos says. That means that the computer may be able to pick up on subtleties that a person might miss.

In medicine, catching early signs of certain diseases can be the difference between life and death. Kontos and her team are testing ways AI can be used to identify women who are at high risk for developing breast cancer. They're using AI to analyze different features in mammograms—X-ray pictures of the breast—such as breast density. Women who have a higher risk of breast cancer can take preventative steps, like more frequent screenings. This approach could help lead to earlier diagnosis and more successful treatment.

The team is also testing whether they can use AI to individualize breast cancer treatment based on imaging results that show how breast tumors are responding. AI may better reveal who needs more intensive treatment, like chemotherapy, and who can safely skip it.

"That way, we could spare women who don't need intensive treatment from unnecessary side effects," Kontos explains.

Connecting People With Care

Over the last year, advanced "chatbots," like ChatGPT, have burst on the scene. These AI programs are designed to have realistic conversations with people. People are starting to use the technology to find health information.

Many chatbots are a form of "generative AI." This type of AI can create new content based on what it learns from analyzing existing data. Such chatbots use what's called large language models, which are trained on huge data sets that are gathered from across the internet. The training teaches them to predict what words are most likely to appear after another.

It may be tempting to ask these tools to answer medical questions. "But these chatbots don't actually understand what you're asking," Peng says. "They're just looking at the phrases and making predictions about what comes next." So it's important to use caution if you're using them to seek health advice.

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"These tools also don't have a lot of context," explains Dr. Ellen Fitzsimmons-Craft, a mental health researcher at Washington University in St. Louis. "They may be able to state something that's the right medical advice in a general sense. But that may not be the right medical advice for you personally."

"We don't always know what information these tools like ChatGPT are trained on," Fitzsimmons-Craft adds. "We don't know if they're getting information from reputable sources or not."

Still, the idea of using chatbots in medicine has promise, explains

Fitzsimmons-Craft. Right now, there is a shortage of health care providers in many fields, including mental health. Chatbots may be able to fill in some gaps.

"Not many people follow through with recommendations provided after a mental health screening," Fitzsimmons-Craft says. "And we don't have enough providers to connect with every one of those people."

Fitzsimmons-Craft and her team are developing a chatbot to help guide people with eating disorders toward seeking care. Their chatbot is made using a rule-based model, with limited AI. Rule-based means

that human experts write entire conversations beforehand. Then, the chatbot picks what to say based on the responses of the person using it.

"Nothing this chatbot says should come as a surprise," Fitzsimmons-Craft explains. "That's in contrast to generative AI, where you have to work a lot harder to build in guardrails."

Her team is now testing their chatbot to see which conversation pieces are the most effective. They'll then test whether it can increase the number of people seeking help after a screening for eating disorders.



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