

Career Advice

CPOs adapt to virtual advancement readiness reviews, prepare for return to normalcy.

See page 6

AutoMatters & More



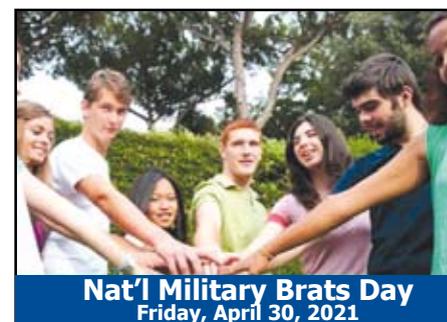
Best car color for resale value + O-Cedar EASYWRING has a go-pedal. See page 9

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Nat'l Military Brats Day
Friday, April 30, 2021

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SIXTY-FIRST YEAR NO. 1
THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

NAVY SAFETY CENTER LAUNCHES ANNUAL 101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER SAFETY CAMPAIGN

NORFOLK, Va. - Summer is almost upon us and it is, once again, time for the Naval Safety Center's (NAVSAFECEN) annual 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign.

Summer is almost upon us and it is, once again, time for the Naval Safety Center's (NAVSAFECEN) annual 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign. Summer is the longest vacation period of the year.

Summer is the longest vacation period of the year. As the restrictions of COVID-19 begin to relax across the globe in compliance with country, state and military base guidelines, there will be an increase in people who are out enjoying the sunshine and warm weather, swimming, boating, playing and traveling.

"There is no doubt the past year has been hard as COVID-19 forced us to adapt to a new way of life as we continued to meet our operational commitments across the Navy and Marine Corps during a global pandemic," said Rear Adm F. R. Luchtman, Commander, Naval Safety Center.

FOR RESOURCES ON SAFETY AWARENESS, VISIT THE NAVAL SAFETY CENTER'S WEBSITE, [HTTPS://NAVSAFECEN.NAVY.MIL.](https://navsafecen.navy.mil)

101 CRITICAL DAYS OF SUMMER

Playing it Safe is Fun

Summer is almost upon us and it is, once again, time for the Naval Safety Center's annual 101 Critical Days of Summer safety campaign. Navy graphic by Ken Goss

While there is a light at the end of the tunnel, it's crucial that we maintain our resiliency and Warrior Toughness. Warrior Toughness refers to the ability to: 1) Fight after sustaining a hit; 2) Perform under pressure; and 3) Endure the long slow grind.

"As we get closer to summer, it's critical that we acknowledge the ways we have been affected

by the pandemic. We want everyone to get out and enjoy their summer, but we also want you to stay safe, and make good decisions while engaging in summer activities," said Luchtman.

The 101 Critical Days of Summer campaign provides critical information to raise awareness and assist in mitigating the risks associated with the most

common off-duty mishaps. The campaign launches at the start of Memorial Weekend and runs through the end of Labor Day weekend. During this time, the Navy and Marine Corps mishap and fatality rates have historically spiked. Each year from fiscal years (FY) 2016 - 2020, the Department of the Navy lost an average of five Sailors and nine Marines in off-duty mishaps.

Between May 22 and Sept. 15 of last year, the Navy and Marine Corps experienced nine fatalities - two from private motor vehicles, two motorcycle fatalities, one drowning mishap and one light civil aircraft crash. Three service members also lost their lives in pedestrian-related mishaps.

The campaign's goal is to ensure Sailors and Marines are aware of the risks associated with summertime activities and take appropriate precautions to

minimize those risks while on and off duty.

"Mishaps are typically more common as the weather gets warmer," said NAVSAFECEN Command Master Chief, Jimmy Hailey. "Therefore, it is especially important to emphasize safety as we enter into the summer months. Providing this safety information will enable our Sailors to make better-educated choices and decisions when engaging in summer-related activities this year."

Fire Scout crashes after hitting USS Charleston

SAN DIEGO - An unmanned helicopter crashed into the side of USS *Charleston* (LCS 18) after taking off from the ship around 3:40 p.m., April 26.

No one was injured, and the littoral combat ship continued to safely operate after the incident involving the MQ-8B Fire Scout vertical take-off and landing tactical unmanned aerial vehicle (VTUAV).

The Fire Scout - 31.7 feet long and nearly 10 feet tall - fell into the sea and wasn't recovered. The mishap damaged a safety net on the ship and struck the hull. Damage to the ship is being assessed, but appears limited to an area above the waterline. *Charleston* continues operations in the Western Pacific.

The cause of the mishap is under investigation.

The Fire Scout was assigned to Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 21 based out of Naval Air Station North Island and was assigned to *Charleston* as part of its current mission.

MAY IS MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH -- THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE!

Nat'l Military Appreciation Month recognizes and shows appreciation to the Armed Forces of the United States of America.

May 1 - Loyalty Day A day set aside for American citizens to reaffirm their loyalty to the United States and to recognize the heritage of American freedom.

May 1 - Silver Star Service Banner Day A day set aside to honor our wounded, ill, and dying military personnel by

participating in flying a Silver Star Banner.

May 6 - Nat'l Day of Prayer Nat'l Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation.

May 7 - Military Spouse Appreciation Day A day set aside to acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of the spouses of the Armed Forces.

Celebrating Military Appreciation Month!

2nd Saturday through 3rd Sunday in May: Armed Forces Week

May 8 - VE (Victory in Europe) Day A day which marks the anniversary of the Allies' victory in Europe during World War II on May 8, 1945.

May 9 - Mother's Day

May 13 - Children of Fallen Patriots Day A day to honor the families our fallen heroes have left behind - especially their

children. It's a reminder to the community of our obligation to support the families of fallen patriots.

May 15 - Armed Forces Day pays tribute to men and women who serve in the Armed Forces.

May 31 - Memorial Day (Decoration Day) A day set aside to commemorate all who have died in military service.

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MAY 2021

HONOR, COURAGE & COMMITMENT

Unmanned battle problem missile launch integrates manned and unmanned systems

The Navy launched a missile at a long-range target successfully as a part of Unmanned Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 21 off the coast of San Diego, April 25.

Destroyer USS *John Finn* (DDG-113) launched the Extended Range Active Missile (SM-6), striking a target well beyond the line of sight.

Integrated manned and unmanned systems established a track for the launch.

“The missile shoot was definitely challenging but ultimately incredibly rewarding. We were able to see our team’s planning efforts culminate in yesterday’s successful shoot,” said Lt. Cmdr. Ryan Doyle, UxS IBP 21 lead live-fire planner. “This entire exercise was a great opportunity to get staff exercise planners, program designers and most importantly Sailors to work together and integrate multiple unmanned capabilities that are tactically relevant in many areas of the world today.”

The missile launch comes at the conclusion of UxS IBP 21. “The integrated capabilities demonstrated this week are tactically crucial to improve our warfighting advantage,” said Capt. T.J. Zerr, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 21.

“Unmanned technologies are being rapidly integrated into the Fleet for use, and our gained advantage is in the integration and collaboration between manned and unmanned capabilities tailored to the particular situation and phase of conflict.”

UxS IBP 21 is a U.S. Pacific Fleet exercise, executed by U.S. 3rd Fleet, designed to integrate manned and unmanned capabilities into operational scenarios to generate warfighting advantages. The week-long event involves surface, subsurface, and aerial unmanned assets, operating with littoral combat ships, guided-missile destroyers, guided-missile cruisers, submarines and helicopter squadrons.

Destroyer *John Finn* launches a missile during Pacific Fleet’s Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem April 25. Navy photo by Boatswain’s Mate Seaman Clark Lappert

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DOD working to mitigate climate change effects on installations

by David Vergun,
DOD News

In recent years, wildfires impacted the Defense Department's ability to conduct training on installations on the West Coast while hurricanes adversely affected installations along the East Coast, said a Defense Department official, attributing the severity of the storms and the wildfires, in large part, to climate change.

Richard Kidd, deputy assistant secretary of defense for environment and energy resilience, discussed what the Defense Department is doing in the face of these threats to its installations.

The department has taken steps to build resilience across a number of systems, including the power grid and the water supply, he said. Other approaches include building seawalls and locating facilities to higher ground. Many adaptations to increase resilience to climate change also help reduce the emission of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming, such as using renewable energy.

To help the department better understand climate change threats to installations worldwide, the DOD developed a climate assessment tool in 2020, he said. This tool will supply much of the required informa-

tion to fulfill new climate-related tasks laid out in recent executive orders and congressional requirements.

The developer of the tool, the Army Corps of Engineers, has

unique expertise in modeling the effects of climate change on coastlines and rivers, he said.

In addition, the department has a range of partnerships with a variety of stakeholders across

the public and private sectors to identify and implement the best solutions to address climate change, he said.

"Some of our most important partnerships are with the com-

munities that surround our installations in terms of building community-level resilience," he said, referring to energy, water and natural surroundings.

The DOD also partners with other government agencies to address climate change, including the Energy Department and the National Oceanic and

Atmospheric Administration.

"Going forward, we're going to have to embed climate change as a consideration in all that we do. All of our resource allocation decision-making activities, our policies, and our strategies must include a climate change dimension," Kidd said.

Booze, a strip club and a major gone missing: How a 101st Airborne unit went off the rails in Poland

by John Vandiver,
Stars and Stripes

STUTTGART, Germany - A U.S. Army Apache helicopter unit's planned visit to World War II sites in Poland devolved into a drunken escapade at an off-limits strip club, leading to the suspected drugging of a battalion executive officer who went missing and wasn't found until the next day, an Army investigation found.

The incident involving the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade's "No Mercy" battalion during its recent deployment to Europe now has multiple officers facing the possible end of their military careers.

"The command took immediate and appropriate adverse action against the leaders involved," Col. Joseph Buccino, spokesman for the 18th Airborne Corps, said in a statement. "Some officers are facing further administrative actions to determine whether they will continue to serve in the Army."

A command investigation report obtained by Stars and Stripes details how taxpayer dollars were spent on a trip that was supposed to be about improving "unit cohesion and morale," but ended in scandal as rumors of the battalion's deeds swirled through the brigade in the months that followed.

The September trip to the coastal city of Gdansk

marks the latest findings of wrongdoing in an Army unit carrying out a rotational mission in Europe.

Earlier this month, the Army fired Col. Michael Schoenfeldt as commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, for bullying and toxic leadership during the Fort Hood group's deployment to Europe.

The Army probe into the incident in Poland also revealed broader concerns about potentially compromised combat readiness due to a pilot being incapacitated during the trip, as well as perception within the unit of special treatment that undermined morale.

"These issues included perceived preferential treatment for pilots over other personnel, and for officers over NCOs/Soldiers, as well as the way incidents were treated by the chain of command," the Dec. 3 Army 15-6 investigation report said.

A 15-6 investigation is typically a commander-driven probe that can lead to administrative punishment or a court-martial following a recommendation from an investigating officer.

Drugged, bitten and lost

About 40 members of the "No Mercy" 1st Battalion, led by Lt. Col. Matthew Fix, took part in the two-day trip to Gdansk. The unit, part of the

see 'No Mercy', page 4

Army

- Army wants robots, sensors to make infantry platoons 10 times better
- White Fort Jackson Soldier charged in altercation with a Black man to be prosecuted in civilian courts
- Pepper-sprayed Army officer makes first public comments since traffic-stop video release
- Billion-dollar Army housing project begins next week at five bases

Navy

- Light amphibious warships face survivability questions
- Navy uses amphibious assault ship USS America as a test center

Marine Corps

- For the first time, women become Marines at San Diego recruit depot
- Marines need volunteers to help them reassess body standards

Air Force

- Entire B-1B bomber fleet grounded over fuel pump filter housing problem
- AC-130J Ghost rider flies close-air support at Exercise Balikatan, a first

National Guard

- Demolition, explosives facility planned at Vermont National Guard site
- California Guard members feared fighter jet would be ordered to frighten protesters



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10 facts about women in the military

(StatePoint) American women have been making military history for centuries. Their service to the United States stretches back to the country's very beginning, when many cared for wounded Revolutionary War soldiers. Since then, women have blazed countless trails within the military — from the first to enlist during World War I to those filling combat roles today.

Here are 10 facts about the many contributions women have made to the U.S. military.

1. Although not officially enlisted at first, women have served in the U.S. Army since 1775. In the 18th century, women tended to the wounded, washed and mended clothing, and cooked for male troops.

2. After the Civil War, Dr. Mary E. Walker was awarded the Medal of Honor for her work as a contract surgeon in the Union Army.

3. In 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt established the Navy Nurse Corps. The first 20 women of the Corps were known as "The Sacred Twenty."

4. Women were officially allowed to join the U.S. military during last two years of World War I, and 33,000 of them signed up to work as nurses and in other support roles. More than 400 nurses died serving America during the Great War.

5. During WWII, hundreds of women participated in the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) program. These pioneer



Photo by 2nd Lt. Margaret Burneske

female pilots helped test and ferry military aircraft around the country and were led by Jacqueline Cochran, the first woman to break the sound barrier.

6. Navy Rear Adm. Grace Hopper was one of the first and most influential computer programmers. Hopper played an important role in the development of the COBOL programming language and helped shape how programmers code today.

7. Women were allowed to begin attending the four service academies in 1976. Four years later, the first 54 female students graduated from these academies.

8. In 1998, Cmdr. Maureen A.

Farren became the first woman to lead a combatant ship, the USS Mount Vernon.

9. Adm. Michelle Howard (Ret.) made history in 2014 when she became the first four-star woman in Navy history. Howard served as commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe before retiring in 2017.

10. In 2016, Capt. Kristen Griest became the first female Army infantry officer in the nation's history. A year earlier, Griest and Lt. Shaye Haver were also the first women to graduate from the Army's famed Ranger School.

Visit [USO.org/Stories](https://www.usni.org/Stories) to learn more about the legacy of women in the United States military.

'No Mercy'

continued from page 3

101st Airborne Division based out of Fort Campbell, Ky., was responsible for carrying out a wide range of missions during its nine-month rotation in Europe providing airpower along NATO's eastern and southern flanks.

The Army 15-6, which was based on interviews with numerous soldiers, detailed the chain of events this way:

At the end of the first day, the team gathered for dinner at The Legendary White Rabbit Saloon and celebrated their sergeant major's 40th birthday. Some soldiers bounced between the White Rabbit and other establishments, including a karaoke bar. By the end of the evening, many were "heavily intoxicated" and returned to their hotels around midnight, the report said.

At that time, an unspecified number of soldiers, including battalion executive officer Maj. Matthew Conner, went to Club Obsession in Gdansk's city center.

Reviews of the club by various online travel sites warn of a sketchy scene where drinks get spiked with narcotics and woozy patrons get scammed out of thousands of dollars.

A warrant officer told the Army's investigator that during the ride back to Powidz, Poland,

at the conclusion of the trip, Conner described the events at the strip club in similar terms. Fix, the battalion commander, was driving the car.

Conner said that he received multiple lap dances and that strippers "bit his nipples to keep him awake, and repeatedly had his credit card swiped," the report stated. Conner then showed the soldiers in the car multiple receipts, which added up to 50,000 — it wasn't clear whether the sum was in dollars or Polish zloty, which would amount to about \$13,000.

Conner "also expressed a belief that the champagne he had been given at the club had been laced/drugged," the report said.

Fix didn't report to higher headquarters the suspected drugging of Conner, who was still sick the following day, the report said. None of the witnesses mentioned Fix attending the strip club, according to the investigation.

Conner, a pilot, was "so severely impaired by the incident that he cancelled all of his flights for the next week because he 'just did not feel right' and it took days for him to feel normal again," the report said.

Neither Fix nor Conner responded to requests for comment from *Stars and Stripes*.

It's unclear how the night at the strip club ended, but by morning no one in the battalion knew where Conner was.

'Lapses in judgment and leadership'

After partying into the early morning hours, no one could make contact with Conner, who wasn't in his room at the IBB Hotel Dlugi Targ, the investigation report said.

That's when Fix and Sgt. Maj. Ronnie Winberry organized a search party, calling on all staff ride attendees to meet in the city center and retrace their steps from the night before.

Continue reading this story at <https://www.stripes.com/news>.

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- Theodore Roosevelt CSG
- USS Essex (LHD-2)
- USS Kearsarge (LHD-3)
- USS Gerald Ford (CVN-78)
- Eisenhower CSG
- Iwo Jima ARG (Rota, Spain)
- America ESG (Sasebo, Japan)
- Ronald Reagan CSG (Yokosuka Japan)
- Makin Island ARG

These are approximate positions of the Navy's deployed carrier strike groups & amphibious ready groups throughout the world as of April 26, 2021, based on Navy and public data. You can access this and other information through the U.S. Naval Institute's portal at <https://news.usni.org/topstories>.

4 www.armedforcesdispatch.com THURSDAY, APRIL 29, 2021

Places of Worship

<p>Bethany Lutheran Church Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod 2051 Sunset Cliffs Blvd, Ocean Beach 92107 (Parking lot off the Alley - North of the building) Worship 10:30am Sundays Bible Class, Wednesdays 10am (619)222-7291 LivingWaterSD7@gmail.com</p>	<p>Christ Community Church Helping people love God and each other! Services Onsite or Online Sundays 8:30 & 10:30am Children's Ministries for All Kids! Small Groups for Teens & Adults of All Ages! 9535 Kearny Villa Rd., Mira Mesa 92126; Located just off Miramar Rd. & I-15 www.gotoChrist.com or (858) 549-2479</p>	<p>Living Water Lutheran Church Meeting at Green Flash Brewery Gathering Room 6550 Mira Mesa Blvd. (Entrance Directly in back - off Sequence Dr.) Worship 8:45am (858)792-7691 LivingWaterSD7@gmail.com Pastor: Rev. Steven Duescher</p>
<p>Bayview Church Attract... Assimilate... Activate 6134 Pastor Timothy J. Winters St., San Diego 92114 (619) 262-8384 Sunday 6:45am, 8:30am, 11am Worship Service Studies in Christian Living (formerly known as Sunday School) Tuesday & Thursday 6pm, Wednesday 5:30pm & Saturday 9am www.bayviewbc.org info@bayviewbc.org</p>	<p>First Baptist Church of Coronado "Reach Up, Reach Out, Reach Our World" Jim W. Baize, Pastor www.fbcoronado.com Sunday Adult Bible Study 8:45am, Sunday Worship Service 10am Meeting in person and online on YouTube or Facebook FB: First Baptist Church of Coronado email: secretary@fbcoronado.com 445 C Ave., Coronado, CA 92118 (619) 435-6588</p>	<p>Military Outreach Ministries Int'l Church "Transforming the World, One Person at a Time" Dr. Dennis Eley, Jr. Th.D., MBA dennis@militaryoutreachministries.org Sunday Worship Service (in-person) 12pm to 2pm 7997 Paradise Valley Rd, S.D., CA 92139 619-773-6032 Live Stream: 12:30pm-1:30pm on "Moministries" free church app Or www.militaryoutreachministries.org click on 'live stream' blue button</p>
<p>Canyon View Church of Christ "Love God, Love People, Serve the World" Sunday Bible Classes for all ages 9am Sunday Worship 10am 4292 Balboa Ave., San Diego, CA 92117 Email: cvoffice@canyonview.org (Near corner of Balboa Ave & Clairemont Dr) www.canyonview.org (858) 273-5140</p>	<p>La Jolla Lutheran Church "We Follow Jesus" Sunday 9:30am Worship and Sunday School Wednesday 6:30pm Bible Study 7111 La Jolla Blvd., La Jolla, CA 92037 (858) 454-6459 LaJollaLutheranChurch.com</p>	<p>Mt. Moriah Christian Church "Purpose Driven" Gospel Church Multi-Cultural, Non-Denominational Services on Sunday at 9am and 11am Near Miramar Base 7055 Carroll Rd., San Diego CA 92121 (858) 695-9692 www.mtmoriahcc.org</p>
<p>St. Luke's Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. We thank you for your service!</p>	<p>St. Luke's Lutheran Church 5150 Wilson Ave., La Mesa, CA 91942 Phone: (619) 463-6633 website: www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org Worship: 9am Pastor: Mark Menacher, PhD. We thank you for your service!</p>	

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Medal of Honor Spotlight: Army Pfc. Milton A. Lee

by Katie Lange,
DOD News



Army Private 1st Class Milton Arthur Lee joined the service during the height of the Vietnam conflict when he was only 18. He didn't make it home, but his bravery and dedication saved the lives of several men in his platoon. For that, he was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Lee was born Feb. 28, 1949, in Shreveport, La., where his parents lived. However, for reasons that are unclear, he and his brother, Ken, grew up with his grandparents in San Antonio. Lee was a member of the Youth for Christ, Harlandale Christian Church and the Young Republicans.

After graduating from Harlandale High School in 1967, Lee enlisted in the Army. He trained at Fort Campbell with the 101st Airborne Division and was eventually assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry, 1st Brigade.

Army Pfc. Milton A. Lee mans the phone as a radio operator during operations in Vietnam in 1968. Photo courtesy of Congressional Medal of Honor Society

January 1968 as the Tet Offensive was beginning. His unit was one that saw extensive combat during the war.

On April 26, 1968, Lee was with Company C near Phu Bai, an Army and Marine Corps base near the Central Vietnam coast. He was serving as the radio telephone operator with 3rd Platoon, the company's lead element, when they were fired on by North Vietnamese soldiers hidden in well-concealed bunkers.

ed about 50 percent of the platoon, so the remaining men quickly moved to help the wounded and reorganize. Lee, however, pushed through the heavy gunfire to reach wounded soldiers who were trapped and needed first aid.

Once his unit reorganized, they pushed forward to assault the enemy bunkers. Lee stayed in close radio contact with the company commander to relay clear, precise orders to his platoon leader.

As Lee was moving forward toward the bunkers, he saw four enemy soldiers preparing to ambush his platoon's lead element, which hadn't noticed them. Without hesitating, Lee handed off his radio and charged toward the concealed enemy soldiers. Single-handedly, he overran their position, killing all of the enemy soldiers while capturing four automatic weapons and a rocket launcher.

Lee pushed on to attack an-

other enemy position despite a heavy barrage of gunfire. The 18-year-old suffered serious injuries, but he continued his attack, crawling forward so he could provide accurate cover fire for his platoon, which was able to get into place and overrun that second position. It wasn't until they were in the clear that Lee stopped firing. Soon after, he died from his injuries.

Lee's actions saved the lives of the lead element of his platoon, which couldn't have taken out those key enemy defensive positions without him. For that, he was quickly nominated and approved for the Medal of Honor.

Lee's body was returned home and buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio.

On April 7, 1970, less than a year after his death, Lee's grandmother accepted the nation's highest honor on his behalf. President Richard M. Nixon presented it to her during a White House ceremony.

Lee's name is well-known at Fort Campbell, the home of the 101st Airborne Division for which he fought. A post recreation center was dedicated to him in the early 1970s. More recently, in 2013, a center that helps soldiers transition back to civilian life was named in his honor.

VA San Diego having vaccination event in Chula Vista

VA San Diego is holding a one-day COVID-19 vaccination event in the South Bay, Saturday, May 1st, from 8 a.m. - 3:45 p.m. at the Chula Vista VA Community Clinic, 353 H Street, Chula Vista, CA, 91910.

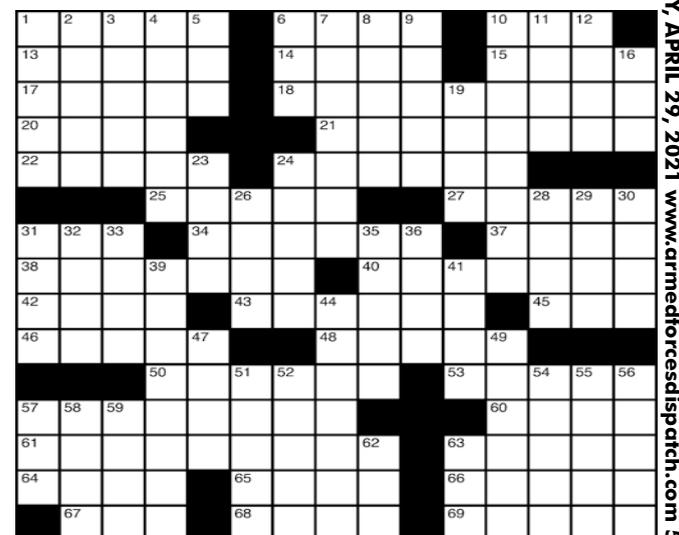
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Veterans already enrolled for VA health care may use VA's online appointment scheduling tool (<https://www.va.gov/health-care/schedule-view-va-appointments/>) or call (858) 642-3810. All others must pre-register on VA's sign up page. Please allow for 24-48 hours to process your registration before calling to schedule an appointment at (858) 642-3810.

For latest updates on VA San Diego's COVID-19 vaccinations, scheduling and more, please visit the VA's vaccine information page, <https://www.sandiego.va.gov/services/covid-19-vaccines.asp>.

Crossword Puzzle

- Across**
- 1 Egyptian god with an ibis head
 - 6 One who crosses the line
 - 10 Blight-stricken tree
 - 13 "Donnie Brasco" actress Anne
 - 14 Flap
 - 15 Corp. leaders
 - 17 Lay to rest
 - 18 With 42-Across, part of a psychologist's battery
 - 20 Seven-time Wimbledon winner
 - 21 Wisconsin city on the Mississippi
 - 22 HDTV part, for short
 - 24 They may be civil
 - 25 Singing stars
 - 27 "60 Minutes" regular
 - 31 Strong brew
 - 34 Deadly
 - 37 West Point team
 - 38 Prom adornment
 - 40 Hear about
 - 42 See 18-Across
 - 43 Stella __: Belgian beer
 - 45 D'Ysseldorf direction
 - 46 Hard work
 - 48 Bridge seats
 - 50 __ Zee: Hudson River area
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Total Navy Battle Force: 296 Ships underway
 Deployed ships underway: 54
 Non-deployed ships underway: 29
 Total ships underway: 83
Ships deployed by fleet
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 4th Fleet: 2 5th Fleet: 18
 6th Fleet: 19 7th Fleet: 54
 Total: 102

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CPOs adapt to virtual advancement readiness reviews *Prepare for return to normalcy*

by Cheryl Dengler

PENSACOLA, Fla. - During the global pandemic, select Chief Petty Officers from around the globe adapted to a virtual process of reviewing and developing Navy-wide advancement examinations—though a return to normalcy is on the horizon.

Customarily held in Pensacola, Florida, Advancement Exam Readiness Reviews (AERRs) bring together fleet subject matter experts (FSMEs) consisting of chiefs, senior chiefs and master chiefs from fleet and shore-based commands to review and develop the rating examination material from which enlisted advancement exams are created.

Like other businesses and organizations in the past year, the Navy Advancement Center (NAC) adapted in-person essential events to a fully virtual format to counter the COVID-19 threat.

“The virtual Advancement Exam Readiness Review (AERR) process has allowed us to continue to produce valid and current enlisted advancement exams,” said Marionette Marks, an exam development branch head. “We are able to use the expertise



Kimberly Kiesau, a team leader with Navy Advancement Center, hosts a virtual Advancement Examination Readiness Review (AERR) for the Master-at-Arms rating while teleworking, Apr. 14. Navy photo.

and experience of FSMEs to accomplish small chunks of the enlisted advancement exam process in order to continue meeting the promotion goals needed to support fleet readiness.”

The Master-at-Arms (MA) AERR, held virtually in April 2021, allowed E-7 through E-9 FSMEs selected by the rating

sponsor to successfully update examination materials for the MA rating.

“At first I was apprehensive to take on such a daunting task through virtual collaboration, but it worked quite well,” said Senior Chief Master-at-Arms Christopher Butler. “Of course, nothing can replace the face-

to-face interaction and networking that comes with this type of event, but we still had a great time with it and more importantly, got the job done so our rate has relevant, accurate and challenging advancement exams.”

Senior Chief Master-at-Arms Colt Ward believes the AERR was a gratifying experience for many reasons.

“Being a part of the advancement exam development is a rewarding experience,” said Ward. “You get to provide direct input to your future reliefs, ensuring they are asked the relevant questions for their rate, while keeping abreast on the updates to publications.”

NAC hopes to return to some degree of normal AERR operations in the coming months as health protection measures improve and more FMSEs get the COVID-19 vaccine.

“While the virtual process has enabled Navy Advancement Center the ability to meet the immediate needs of our rating

exams, the face-to-face AERR just can’t be beat in providing the rating’s FSMEs the forum to come together as a professional team, consulting each other on a grand scale regarding each rating’s occupational material,” said Patti Gibson, exam development division head.

“We look forward to hosting AERRs again, with an initial goal of prioritizing those ratings that were not able to fully leverage the virtual process.”

Once selected, FSMEs will participate in an AERR for one or two weeks. AERR work includes validating exam reference materials, reviewing questions and their statistical outcomes from recent exam administrations, writing new questions to keep exam banks current and relevant, as well as planning content to reflect the right combination of questions at each paygrade, covering all topics and subtopics as specified in the rating occupational standards.

Navy chiefs on active duty, full-time support, and Reservists on active duty for special work

are encouraged to take part in the process by reaching out to their respective type commander (TYCOM) or rating sponsor point of contact (POC) for application information.

A list of these POCs, along with an annual AERR schedule and eligibility requirements are located on the AERR webpage on MyNavy Portal. Senior enlisted personnel interested in applying should go to: <https://www.mnp.navy.mil/group/advancement-and-promotion/aerr?>

As part of the MyNavy HR Force Development team, Naval Education and Training Professional Development Center (NETPDC) provides products and services that enable and enhance education, training, career development and personnel advancement throughout the Navy.

Primary elements of the command include the voluntary education department, the NAC and the resources management department.

Additional information about NETPDC can be found at <https://www.netc.navy.mil/NETPDC>.

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Local Military



Ship sponsors Virginia Munford, Pickett Wilson and Louisa Dixon officially christen guided missile destroyer Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123). Photo by Derek Fountain

Navy christens destroyer Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123)

PASCAGOULA, Miss. - The Navy and Huntington Ingalls christened guided missile destroyer Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee (DDG 123) April 24.

"The christening of Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee is a significant milestone that brings our 34th destroyer one step closer to being introduced into the fleet," Ingalls Shipbuilding President Kari Wilkinson said. "In these ever-changing times, the significance of what we do has never been more important. We are exceedingly proud of our shipbuilders for their tenacity and perseverance, and look forward to continuing Ingalls' legacy of building quality ships with respect and pride."

Recently retired Ingalls Shipbuilding President Brian Cuccias returned to host the christening, which was originally scheduled to occur in 2020 but was postponed due to restrictions surrounding the pandemic.

"I'm honored to host this christening and give a final salute to the hardworking men and women who build freedom in this shipyard every day," Cuccias said. "Lenah Sutcliffe

Higbee's distinguished legacy will remain steadfast with the christening of this great ship, as will the unparalleled craftsmanship of the men and women of Ingalls Shipbuilding."

DDG 123 is named in honor of Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee, the first woman to receive the Navy Cross. Higbee joined the Navy in October 1908 as part of the newly established Navy Nurse Corps, a group of women who would become known as "The Sacred Twenty," and became the second superintendent of the Navy Nurse Corps.

"This christening is a signal event in the life of a warship deeply engrained in naval tradition when a ship officially bears the name it will carry during its time in the fleet," said Ray Mabus, the 75th Secretary of the Navy, the keynote speaker. "The story and the legacy of Lenah Higbee, and what she represents, will live on for decades around the world through this ship's voyages and through the lives of the crew who sail aboard her."

DDG 123 sponsors are Louisa Dixon, Virginia Munford and Pickett Wilson, three women

who played an important role during Mabus' term as governor of Mississippi. Munford spoke on behalf of the three sponsors. "As we help dedicate this ship for service, let us all join together in the fervent hope and prayer that Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee's primary mission will be to preserve the peace for future generations," Munford said.

Rear Adm. Cynthia Kuehner, commander of the Naval Medical Forces Support Command, spoke on behalf of the chief of naval operations.

"I know that USS Lenah Sutcliffe Higbee will protect and defend our nation with the same zeal, courage and valiant resolve of the Navy nurse for whom she is named," Kuehner said.

"Superintendent Higbee's legacy is a heroic account of a fearless pioneer, a leader among men and women, an advocate and an agent for necessary change, a visionary, a teacher, a scholar, a scientist, an author, an innovator, a strategist. A Navy nurse."

The ship will be based in San Diego.

SeaWorld offers free admission for military members, veterans and their families

Now through June 27, SeaWorld is offering free admission for military veterans and their families to its SeaWorld Orlando, SeaWorld San Antonio, and SeaWorld San Diego parks.

Since its launch in 2005, more than 10 million guests - active-duty military members, veterans, and their families - have enjoyed the company's parks for free through the Waves of Honor program. Park Ambassadors are honored to welcome America's heroes to enjoy thrilling at-

tractions and amazing animal exhibits with detailed health and safety measures in place, including limited capacity, physical distancing, enhanced cleaning and sanitization, temperature checks, and face covering requirements.

U.S. military veterans and retirees must register their complimentary single-day ticket(s) for themselves and up to three dependents online at www.WavesofHonor.com before May 16. After registering, all tickets must be redeemed by June 27.

As an added thank you, veterans and active military service members can also purchase up to six additional tickets at 50 percent off.

Service members and their direct dependents must have a valid active military ID to participate. This offer is part of SeaWorld Parks & Entertainment's longstanding Waves of Honor program, which salutes active-duty military members, veterans, and their families by offering special pricing and promotions throughout the year.

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SECNAV meets with Project Overmatch experts; Discusses way ahead for connected future Fleet

by Elisha Gamboa,
NAVWAR

Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas W. Harker met with leaders and key innovators in San Diego April 21, for an update on Project Overmatch, a high priority initiative focused on ensuring operationally relevant data is available at the tactical edge, when and where required.

During the visit, hosted at Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific, NAVWAR Commander Rear Adm. Doug Small briefed Harker on his team's progress to speed the delivery of advanced capabilities in support of Project Overmatch.

"Great Power Competition has reemerged as the central challenge to U.S. security and prosperity," said Harker. "The importance and necessity for the requirements and capabilities being developed through Project Overmatch are essential to the success of our Navy and Marine Corps' future efforts.

"I enjoyed the time spent at NAVWAR and NIWC Pacific, speaking with service members and civilians, gaining first-hand insight into

current and future efforts for this project."

Stood up on Oct. 1, 2020, Project Overmatch aims to connect platforms, weapons, and sensors in a robust Naval Operational Architecture that integrates with Joint All-Domain Command and Control. It will develop the networks, infrastructure, data architectures, and analytic tools to connect manned and unmanned distributed forces and enable the delivery of synchronized effects from every axis and every domain.

"We were given a complex set of challenges," said Small. "I'm proud this incredible team was able to demonstrate to our Navy Secretary how we are meeting those challenges at the blistering pace required."

The Project Overmatch team is working across System Commands, Warfare Centers, the other armed services as well as a consortium of industry expertise, both defense, and commercial, to effectively exploit modern innovations like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and information and networking technologies for improved force readiness worldwide.

This includes the NAVWAR-developed Overmatch Software Armory, a cloud-enabled digital environment using industry-standard development, security and operation (DevSecOps) principles that brings the rapid delivery of software capability to the fleet.

"By implementing DevSecOps we get the benefit of commercial best practices that improve the quality and security of software," said Delores Washburn, NIWC Pacific chief engineer and Overmatch infrastructure lead.

"Furthermore, it's an important catalyst for modernizing our legacy processes that tend to slow us down and we are already seeing big dividends in new modern ways to deliver capability to the Fleet."

Harker is one of many high profile Navy leaders who have visited the command in recent months for updates on Project Overmatch. Moving forward, NAVWAR will continue to support the high-priority Navy initiative to deliver a more lethal, better-connected fleet of the future.

Local Environmental Stewards

by David Vergun,
DOD News

The Defense Department announced the winners of the 2021 Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards April 22.

The awards recognize installations, teams and individuals for their accomplishments in innovative and cost-effective environmental management strategies that support mission readiness.

On tackling the climate change

crisis, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said: "We will elevate climate as a national security priority, integrating climate considerations into the department's policies, strategies and partner engagements.

"Three priorities - defending the nation, taking care of our people and succeeding through teamwork - will guide our efforts," he added.

In 2021, the DOD selected eight winners from 27 nominees, including Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation, Camp Pendleton, and Cultural



Students from the Comprehensive Environmental Training and Education Program at Camp Pendleton put on hazardous materials suits. Marine Corps photo

Resources Management, Small Installation, Naval Base Point Loma.

Environmental Quality, Industrial Installation: Marine Corps Air Station Camp Pendleton - Partnered with the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office to remove vegetation obstructions in the runway clear zone. By re-scoping the project and conducting a new, streamlined National Environmental Policy Act environmental assessment, the installation lowered the project's cost from \$20 million to \$7.8 million.

Cultural Resources Management, Small Installation: Naval Base Point Loma - Rehabilitated the Post Exchange and Gymna-

sium Building 158, a premier historic structure. Contractors, historic buildings architects, design managers and construction managers worked closely with the Cultural Resources Management program staff to retain the historic building's character and features while providing a modern workspace for the new occupant, Naval Base Point Loma's Security Department.

Each year since 1962, the Secretary of Defense Environmental Awards have honored service members and civilians across DOD. The nominees' achievements include significant strides to conserve the nation's natural and cultural resources; protect human health; to name a few.

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This week's snapshots

PACIFIC OCEAN (April 21, 2021) - An MQ-9 Sea Guardian unmanned maritime surveillance aircraft system flies over littoral combat ship USS Coronado during Pacific Fleet's Unmanned Systems Integrated Battle Problem (UxS IBP) 21. Navy photo by MCC Shannon Renfroe



SAN DIEGO (April 26, 2021) - Sailors and civilians with the NAVSUP FLC San Diego Industrial Support Department wear jeans on National Denim Day in support of victims of sexual assault. Denim Day campaign was originally triggered after a ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped her rapist remove them, thereby implying consent. April is Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month. Navy photo



West Coast Seabees building immunities to fight COVID-19

by Petty Officer 2nd Class Michael Schutt

PORT HUENEME - As of April 19, all DoD-eligible and authorized adults are now able to make an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine at their local Military Treatment Facility. However, some still wrestle with the decision on whether to receive their vaccine or not.

Several West Coast Seabees shared their thoughts on why they want the vaccine and, in some cases, why they changed their mind. Many Sailors were skeptical of the vaccine due to how quickly it was created.

Lt. Charlotte Schalles, Naval Construction Group 1's only pregnant Sailor to receive the vaccine, decided to get the vaccine after learning of the proven, increased risk of negative side effects on the vascular system if she contracted COVID-19.

Schalles wanted to share the vaccines antibodies with her new baby.

"I understand that the vaccination of any type is an incredibly personal decision, and I respect everyone's individual choice. I believe that by becoming vaccinated, I am giving my baby the best shot they can have at avoiding a COVID infection,"

said Schalles.

At 31 weeks pregnant and with the advice of her doctors, Schalles chose to get the vaccine as soon as it was available. According to the CDC, there are



Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Brandon Chorny, assigned to Naval Medical Center San Diego (NMCS), prepares a single coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine at Naval Base Point Loma. Navy photo by MC2 Erwin Jacob V. Miciano

no proven adverse side effects to women who are pregnant, their babies or women who wish to become pregnant.

"I was planning on deferring the vaccine, because of all the unknowns and a good deal of misinformation being spread on the internet. Once I took a logical, statistical look at the risks of vaccination vs. the risks of COVID, I was able to see that for me personally, the risks of the vaccine

were far less than the risks of contracting COVID. I truly feel that I am doing what is best for my health and my unborn baby's health," said Schalles.

Yeoman 2nd Class Camille Harrington, assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, was a firm believer in the science and process it takes to create a safe and effective vaccine. Still, she chose to defer inoculation.

"I was a little weary of injecting something into my body that I felt was rushed," she said.

Ultimately, the turning point for Harrington was family. They reminded her that the nature of her job, as a service member, inherently puts her at risk.

"I did explain to them the strict guidelines we service members must follow and how I never went out and put myself at unnecessary risk," said Harrington. "With the

move from Health Protection Condition (HPCON) Charlie to HPCON Bravo, I wanted to be able to do the things that we've been deprived of for so long."

With the safety and health protocols now in place, Harrington chose to receive the vaccine to help mitigate the risk to her family and others and start enjoying more activities with the peace of mind that she would be protected.

"I'm okay with my decision, so if or when the pandemic is truly under control, then I would feel like it was worth it and I did my part," she added.

Builder 2nd Class Chance Freeman, from NMCSB-3, also chose to receive his vaccine because of family. Similarly to Harrington, Freeman was initially hesitant with the unknowns, misleading information and varying opinions and viewpoints.

"People were saying all these crazy things, and I didn't really know what to believe, which made me almost afraid to take it. Speaking with my family changed my mind. I ended up considering that if more people get the vaccine, it will help things start to open up faster and get our lives back to normal, which is what we all want," said Freeman.

Dirt in the hand is worth two in the bush

"If only, money grew on trees," I grumbled, stooping to crawl under our hedges. I knew weeding and mulching the 150-foot row of privets that grows along the border of our property would take all day and render me unable to move without shooting back pains. But someone had to do it.

My husband of 27 years, Francis, was cutting the grass with a brand new, fire-engine-red lawnmower he'd just purchased the day before. I hadn't thought it necessary, but he said the old mower just couldn't cut it. I'd heard enough of his sod stories, and besides, as long as he was doing yard work, he could buy himself a bright red tuxedo to match, for all I cared.

Yard work had always been a turf war between Francis and I. It all started when we bought our first house back in 1998. I soon learned that he had no intention of doing anything except mowing grass and raking leaves.

He felt that all other necessary yard details, such as trimming shrubs, weeding beds, edging sidewalks, aerating, thatching, reseeding, controlling grubs, fertilizing, mulching beds, and cleaning gutters were my responsibility. And with him on deployment or work-related travel much of the time, management of the house and yard was left up to me anyway.

Thanks to PCS moves and base housing, Francis was saved from yard responsibilities for the next three tours of duty. Those eleven years only served to reinforce his belief that yard work was mulch ado about nothing.

In 2017, Francis retired from

the Navy, and we bought another house. It was built in 1891, needed work, and was surrounded by an overgrown hedgerow and a badly neglected yard filled with vines, weeds, rotted dog houses, buried engine parts, broken yard ornaments,

The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by Lisa Smith Molinari

swamp maples, and stumps. To Francis, every clod has a silver lining, so he envisioned sunny weekend afternoons leisurely mowing the lawn or raking a few leaves. After two, definitely no more than three, hours of satisfying hard work, he'd sit on our porch with a cold beverage admiring his grassroots effort.

Of course, Francis didn't pay any mind to weed pulling, rock lugging, limb cutting, dirt hauling, hedge trimming, drop-spreading, thatching, aerating, fertilizing and mulching. I could have nagged Francis, but I preferred lawn and order to marital hegemony. We could've paid someone else, but we'd need a hedge fund. There's no such thing as free mulch, so I did the deed myself, dirt cheap.

I crawled under the 150-foot hedgerow commando-style, pulling and scraping, foot by foot, throwing handfuls of weeds, ivy, vines, and windblown bits of trash out of the beds. With branches wapping me in the face, I hedged my beds that

I could spread the mulch without losing an eye.

Reaching the halfway point, I emerged only to hit the bathroom (I nearly soiled my plants). Summoning the courage to press on, I crossed myself, said a few lines from the Apostles Weed, and crawled back under the bushes — but where was Francis? I'd hoped he might help me after he finished mowing. He was nowhere to be found.

Three hours later, I reached the last hedge, when my husband appeared. I stood up, groaning like I'd fought the lawn and the lawn won.

"Whoa!" Francis said, "You're looking a bit rough around the hedges."

"Well, at least I don't have a re-seeding hare line," I growled, with a big chip on my shoulder. "Were you napping?" I asked, noticing sheet marks on his cheek. Just then, our neighbor appeared in the street.

"Hey Mel, did you see my new lawn mower?" Francis said.

"Did the old one break?" Mel asked.

"Naw. But the new one — she's a beaut. Cutting hedge technology. Done mowing in no time flat!"

I had dirt on my husband, but couldn't bring myself to tell Mel that Francis was napping while his wife worked her grass off. All in all, he was a good husband.

"You do nice work, hon," Francis said, bringing cold beverages out to the porch. "Mulch appreciated." I said, dropping my weary body into an Adirondack chair. I was bushed.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Yellow & Orange Car Colors - Best for Resale? - According to veteran automotive journalist Mark Vaughn writing in Autoweek's Daily Drive on April 28, 2021, and citing an article by Julie Blackley on iSeeCars.com, yellow, beige and orange used cars depreciate less overall than silver, white and black used cars (in that order), with yellow topping the list by a wide margin, and orange third. Lowest on the list of 13 colors is gold. I guess that means my orange Mazda Miata was a good choice. Thanks Mark!

For the full story, here's an Autoweek link: <https://www.autoweek.com/news/industry-news/a36271477/vehicle-depreciation-by-color/?source=nl>.

High Performance O-Cedar EASYWRING - It should come as no surprise to readers that I enjoy automobiles that accelerate quickly when I mash the go-pedal. If only cleaning my house were fun, I might be more inclined to do chores more often.

O-Cedar has come up with something that does indeed make one part of house cleaning somewhat fun. It will turbocharge... wait for it... mopping floors! Just use what I call the 'go-pedal' at one end of the special pail to rev up the O-Cedar Microfiber EASYWRING mop spinner, and away you'll go!

I owe my discovery of this marvelous system to a combination of being stuck at home for over a year,

Best car color for resale value + O-Cedar EASYWRING has a go-pedal

due to COVID-19, and a pressing need to wash my tile floors after demolition and major repairs to the interior of my house, following a small flood.

The demolition and reconstruction work spanned nearly four months. Only a few tiles in my master bathroom needed to be removed to dry out the subfloor under the toilet, but the entire tile floor had to be replaced because the original tiles had long since been out of production and were unavailable. The work left some construction debris and thick dust in my master bathroom and beyond.

Downstairs, part of my kitchen ceiling and a wall had to be demolished, and the exterior wall insulation removed, to dry out the area that had been flooded. When that work and the reconstruction were completed, my kitchen and hallways floors were really dirty.

Over nearly four months, that dirt and the dirt from the master bathroom had been tracked through pretty much my entire house. It needed a deep cleaning, but since I had stopped my house cleaning service over a year earlier, and I was not very keen on having strangers who might have COVID do the cleaning, I decided to do the deep cleaning myself.

I discovered that my foam mop that was in its pail in my laundry room had completely rotted, leaving a pile of green foam fragments at the bottom of the pail. I needed a new mop.

An online search revealed that the O-Cedar Microfiber EASYWRING Spin Mop & Bucket System was pretty popular, so I ordered it on Amazon for only \$29.98.

First you fill the bucket to the indicated maximum fill line with

a combination of water and your favorite general household cleaner. Then, place the microfiber mophead in the water and agitate it up and down, until you get lots of suds.

Now for the fun part. Place the mophead in the wringer, loosely hold the mop handle vertically so that it is free to spin, and start pressing the go-pedal. That thing can really spin! Continue spinning it until the mophead is dry enough to just wet the floor. Every time the mop starts looking dirty, wet it again, spin it and continue. As you mop the floor, work your way backwards towards the entrance to the room. That way you will not have to walk across the wet floor. It dries pretty quickly.

After I was finished mopping all of the tile floors in my house, I poured out the dirty water. You would not believe how much dirt that mop picked up! I was shocked! Afterwards, my floors were nice and clean, and I had a great sense of accomplishment. The microfiber mophead can be machine washed, and replacement mop heads are available.

That go-pedal makes the O-Cedar Microfiber EASYWRING Spin Mop & Bucket System fun to use. It transforms mopping floors into as close to a fun driving experience as I've ever had doing housework. Learn more at: <https://ocedar.com/p/mops/spin-mops/easywring-spin-mop-bucket-system/>

To see photos, visit www.drive-tribe.com, click on the magnifying glass, select "POSTS" and enter "AutoMatters & More #689" in their search bar. Please send your comments to AutoMatters@gmail.com.

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CLASSIFIEDS

Social Security Matters Claim my SS now, switch to spouse benefits later

Dear Rusty: I am 62 and have been a homemaker for much of my adult life. I have a small Social Security account from working years ago. My husband is older; has been the major wage earner and will have a good amount in Social Security when he claims.

I have been told that I should claim my social security now. It's a small amount - about \$475 per month if I claim it now, and \$550 after I'm age 66 - so it's not a life changing difference. But if I claim mine now, when my husband reaches his full retirement age can I switch to claiming spousal benefits on his account? I understand I would no longer get mine, but I'm pretty sure my benefit from him will be a much larger amount.

Signed: Inquiring Homemaker

Dear Inquiring Homemaker: The simple answer to your question is: yes, if you claim your own small benefit now you can later switch to a higher spouse benefit from your husband when he claims his SS. But there are always consequences for claiming SS benefits early. The maximum spousal benefit you can get from your husband is 50% of the benefit amount he is entitled to at his own full retirement age (FRA). But you only get that full 50% if you delay claiming your own Social Security until you reach your own FRA. That doesn't mean you can't claim your own reduced benefit early, but it means that when you later get your spousal benefit it will be less than 50% of your husband's FRA benefit amount. And here's why:

Your spouse benefit, when you receive it, will consist of your own earned benefit plus a spousal boost to bring you to your spousal entitlement. Your spousal boost will be the difference between your FRA benefit amount (regardless of when you claim) and half of your husband's FRA benefit amount, and it will be reduced if you haven't yet reached your FRA when your husband claims. That reduced spousal boost will be added to your own actual benefit (reduced if you claim at 62), which will yield a spouse benefit less than 50% of your husband's FRA benefit.

Said another way, when your husband claims at his FRA, you'll get a reduced spousal boost added to your own already reduced age 62 SS retirement benefit. I can't put this into dollar terms for you without knowing your husband's FRA benefit amount.

FYI, if your age 62 benefit amount is \$475 then your personal benefit amount at your FRA should be about \$670. Essentially, the longer you wait to claim your own SS, the more your spousal benefit will be because the spousal boost will be added to the benefit you're already receiving. Your spousal benefit reaches maximum (which is 50% of your husband's FRA amount) at your FRA but remember that your husband must be collecting his SS for you to claim a spouse benefit.

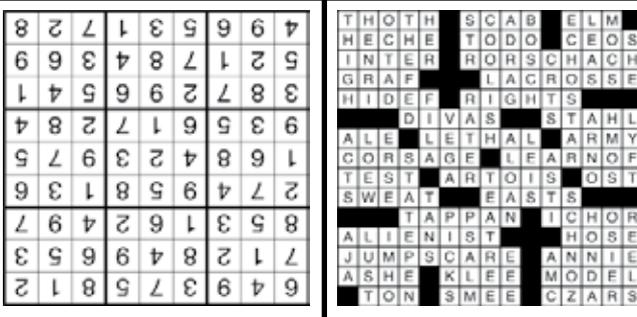
So, here's the bottom line: you can claim your own SS at age 62 but the benefit amount you get will be reduced by 29%. If your husband claims at his FRA, you will get a spousal boost at that time, but the amount of the spousal boost will be reduced because you will not have reached your FRA at that time. The only way you will get the full 50% of your husband's FRA benefit amount is by waiting until your own FRA to claim Social Security. However, since your spousal benefit will be the highest amount available to you, waiting and claiming yours at the same time your husband claims his, would also be a prudent strategy to lessen the "penalty" for claiming your benefits early.

One final caution: Any time SS benefits are claimed early (before FRA) there is an "earnings test" which limits how much can be earned from working before SS takes back some benefits. Please keep this in mind if you should decide to go back to work at any time before you reach your full retirement age.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff. To submit a question, visit our website (amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

Roy's Sudoku

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



'Plant It Forward' goes virtual May 1-8 to celebrate Garden Stewards/Kate Sessions

The Balboa Park Conservancy invites everyone to dig in for a hands-on virtual 'Plant It Forward' event, celebrating the launch of the Garden Stewards volunteer initiative and the legacy of Kate Sessions. From May 1-8, the Conservancy is partnering with SDG&E to present a family-friendly series on climate-friendly garden stewardship to help budding gardeners of all ages "plant it forward" in their own backyard. All 'Plant It Forward' instructional materials will be available free to the public on the Conservancy's website <<https://balboaparkconservancy.org/project/plant-it-forward-2021/>> and social media channels.

View the online curriculum to train new Garden Stewards, including a series of mini-video tutorials on native and climate-appropriate plants and other engaging gardening topics. The videos will be posted throughout the first week of May on the 'Plant It Forward' online hub <<https://balboaparkconservancy.org/project/plant-it-forward-2021/>>. Participants are invited to pick up a free narrow leaf milkweed plant or pomegranate sapling at the Balboa Park Visitors Center on select days and times (details below).

At-home participants are encouraged to do their own part through planting native species to attract pollinators, removing invasive species, composting, and using best water conservation practices in their yards.

Plants are available for pickup on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last (limit one plant per household) during the following times at the specified locations:

May 5, 4-6pm, Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama

May 7, 11am-3pm, inside Balboa Park Visitors Center (ask at desk) or at Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama

May 8, 11am-3pm, Conservancy tent in the Plaza de Panama

\$1.05 million, 3.2-acre park becomes County's second bike skills park with trails, jump line and pump track

The 3.2-acre Greg Cox Bike Park is officially open. It is the second bike skills park the County has built with fun for bicycle riders of all ages. Features include beginner and intermediate bike trails, a beginner's zone, a jump line and California's largest modular pump track - a bicycle course of rollers, banked turns and other features that let bikers ride without pedaling. Having built the park, the County will turn operations of the facility over to the City of Chula Vista.

The Greg Cox Bike Park is located in the Otay Valley Regional Park (OVRP). The address of the park is 325-353 Rancho Dr., Chula Vista.

Miramar National Cemetery undergoing make-over; Public may continue to visit graves

Miramar National Cemetery is undergoing a make-over that will greatly improve the appearance of the grounds. The work involves replacement of the turf in areas where the gravestones stand. Workers will re-grade the gravesites and lay new grass.

During the project, the public may continue to visit and place flowers at the graves of their loved ones. For further information, please contact Cemetery Director Greta Hamilton at 858-658-7366.

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Tips on keeping your seasonal allergies in check

best day to be outside.

If you know what pollens you're sensitive to, there are several ways to check pollen counts wherever you live. There's an organization called the National Allergy Bureau that has an online tool that allows you to type in your ZIP code and find out what pollens are in the air, and many local newspapers and television stations also report on pollen counts. It's really all about keeping yourself informed.

You can also tailor when you're going outside. We know, for example, when and where ragweed pollen is really high, it tends to be higher in the morning. Conversely, tree pollen tends to be higher in the evening.

Other practical tips include wearing protective eyewear to prevent allergens from getting in your eyes. If you know that mowing the lawn is a trigger for you, wearing a mask while you're doing that activity can help.

It's unrealistic to never go outdoors. We must go to work, school, things like that. Taking precautions like shutting the windows, changing your clothes, washing your hair, or taking a shower after coming inside can help to minimize bringing those pollens into the house. HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters in your vacuum or air conditioner, or stand-alone HEPA filters can help quite a bit to filter those things out, too.

Allergy medications can help, but there's a difference between over-the-counter and prescription medicine. All the medicines are designed to treat symptoms, but some are better at preventing versus treating acute symptoms. Nasal sprays, for example, do a better job at preventing symptoms from developing in the first place. The key is to start medication one to two weeks before your peak allergy season. If you wait until the symptoms start, it's going to be harder to treat.

Knowing which medications work for you and talking to your primary care provider can help to find a good medication profile to help you get better.

If over-the-counter or prescription medications aren't working, allergy shots are also definitely an option. Allergists can provide allergy shots for patients who have failed treatment with other measures. It's a long process (three to five years), but it's the one tool that we have that's disease-modifying, meaning that we can make your allergies either better or, sometimes, completely go away.

One question that I get sometimes is, "Can I move to a location that doesn't have allergens, so my allergies won't affect me as much?"

Unfortunately, allergens are present pretty much everywhere. You might have different patterns depending on location, but a lot

of it is understanding what your triggers are and finding out what works for you, whether that be avoidance measures or medication.

Nose, I hope this advice helps and you're able to get out there and enjoy the area around your new duty station as the weather warms up. I know I intend to get outside in as much as possible.

It's all about finding a treatment

that works for you, whether that be medication, taking precautions, a mix of both or even allergy shots. The first thing I would do if I were you (if you haven't already) would be to go talk to my primary care physician. They should be able to help you figure out the best course of action.

Keeping you healthy and mission ready is what we're here for. Until next time...take care out there!

Dear Doc: I suffer from horrible allergies every year and I've just changed duty stations to an area that I've been told is especially bad for them in the spring. I've tried over-the-counter meds for years and nothing seems to work. With things starting to bloom, I'm almost afraid to go outside. How can I keep my allergies in check and make sure I can finally enjoy the warm weather in the next few months?

— My Nose Knows (and so do my eyes and throat)

Dear Nose: You're not the only one who suffers from allergies. I've had a few rough springs myself.

There are several ways to minimize the effects of springtime allergies. The easiest thing to do would be to stay inside, but that's obviously not ideal. Not to mention, winter coupled with COVID-19 has had us doing a lot of that lately.

I recently talked to Air Force Lt. Col. (Dr.) Karla Adams, medical director for allergy services at Wilford Hall Ambulatory Surgical Center at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas. She had quite a bit of good advice about what you, as well as your nearest military

treatment facility, may be able to do to make your spring a little more enjoyable.

Allergies to pollens and environmental allergens are pretty common. Some folks can suffer from year-round allergies and other people are very much seasonal in terms of their pattern of allergies, and it's going to depend on what's blooming and the individual and what they're allergic to, as well as their location.

Like I said, we know that this is common and, as a matter of fact, allergies are increasing in the general population. Our goal is to try to prevent symptoms as well as treat symptoms in several different ways. There are a few things you can do.

Try to limit your time outdoors during peak allergy season. If you can stay inside, obviously that's going to help. I realize it's not ideal for everyone to be indoors all the time, so you might think about changing the way you would normally do things. For instance, windy days tend to be worse for outside allergens because pollens are getting stirred up in the air. Given that, you can easily determine that a windy day during peak allergy season is probably not the

Have you heard?

COVID-19 vaccines available at military clinics

All beneficiaries 16 and older are eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine at the following locations: Naval Base San Diego, NAS North Island, Naval Base Point Loma and here at Naval Medical Center San Diego. Vaccines will be administered based on appointment and vaccine availability. Due to high call volume, call times have increased. We encourage you to use our 24-hour scheduler at <https://informatics-stage.health.mil/covax/>. Please have your ID with you when you arrive for your appointment. Continue to monitor www.sandiego.tricare.mil for COVID-19 and vaccination updates and information.

Walk-ups accepted County sites for COVID-19 vaccines

San Diegans wishing to get a COVID-19 shot can now show up at a County-hosted clinic and get vaccinated without an appointment. COVID-19 vaccines are available at no cost to anyone 16 and up who lives or works in San Diego County. People under 18 years of age need parental consent to make an appointment or must be accompanied by a parent or guardian to get vaccinated at a no-appointment site. For more information visit <https://www.countynewscenter.com/>. To make sure you get a shot on a particular date and location, you can make an appointment at www.vaccinationsuperstationsd.com.



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