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Surface Force commander discusses state of the force. ... Feeling walked on? Change your language.

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THURSDAY, JULY 29, 2021

## NAVY INSTITUTES FIRE-SAFETY COMPLIANCE CHECKS AFTER SAN DIEGO-BASED USS BONHOMME RICHARD BLAZE LAST YEAR

by Wyatt Olson,  
Stars and Stripes

The Navy has hired a cadre of fire marshals to evaluate fire-fighting training and protocols in ports and shipyards in response to the devastating fire last year aboard USS *Bonhomme Richard*, the commander of Naval Surface Forces said July 22.

“They’re out there, ensuring that the waterfront maintenance people, along with the private contractor, and the ship’s crew are doing their proper safety inspection,” Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener said during a conference call with reporters.

The amphibious assault ship was undergoing maintenance at Naval Base San Diego when it caught fire July 12, 2020. The blaze seared through 11 of the ship’s 14 decks, destroyed its forward mast and damaged the superstructure before being put out four days later.

More than 60 Sailors and civilians were treated for minor injuries, such as smoke inhalation.

The Navy announced in December that the ship, only 22 years in service, would be scrapped because repair would be too expensive.



Firefighters combat a blaze aboard USS *Bonhomme Richard* at Naval Base San Diego last July 14. Navy photo by Jessica Paulauskas

The Navy has not made public several investigations into the blaze.

A Navy spokesman told the *San Diego Union-Tribune* last week that a command investigation into the circumstances surrounding the fire has been completed and is being reviewed by Navy leaders. A criminal investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service is still ongoing, Navy spokesman Lt. Andrew DeGarmo told the

newspaper.

Kitchener was asked last Thursday what changes the Navy had made, even as the investigations remain in flux. The service first reviewed fire-safety compliance at all levels, from ships to regional maintenance centers, he said.

“We went through and we found that, in some cases, maybe we weren’t doing as well as we should,” he said. “We’re pretty

good at firefighting at sea and all those procedures, but when we got to the industrial environment it was, OK, looks like we need to kind of make sure there’s a little bit of education.”

The newly hired fire marshals have been tasked with making waterfront spot checks for compliance, Kitchener said. He did not say how many had been hired.

“Their job is to go out, evalu-

ate the training that the ships are doing to fight fires in the industrial environment, because it is different [than at sea],” he said.

Those inspections found that “high-end fire detection systems” on ships are sometimes taken offline during certain points of the maintenance process, Kitchener said.

“We wanted to make sure

there were no gaps or if we were going to bring them [offline] that we had some scenario to back them up,” he said.

The Navy has also added training at its premier “schoolhouse” at Naval Station Newport, R.I., designed to educate officers heading out to commands about special considerations for environments such as shipyards, Kitchener said.

## VA implements coronavirus vaccine mandate for medical staff

by Nikki Wentling, Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs announced July 26 that it will require its hundreds of thousands of medical workers to receive coronavirus vaccines.

The department is the first federal agency to implement a vaccine mandate. Employees have until Sept. 20 to be fully vaccinated, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said in a statement.

“Whenever a veteran or VA employee sets foot into a VA facility, they deserve to know that we have done everything in our power to protect them from [the coronavirus],” McDonough said. “With this mandate, we can once again make — and keep — that fundamental promise.”

President Joe Biden confirmed news of the mandate while speaking in the Oval Office, where he was meeting Monday with Mustafa al-Kadhimi, Iraq’s prime minister.

“Veterans Affairs is going to, in fact, require that all doctors working in facilities are going to have to be vaccinated,” Biden said.

The new mandate applies to all Title 38 employees, which includes VA physicians, dentists, podiatrists, optometrists, registered nurses, physician assistants and chiropractors, as well as medical workers who visit VA facilities.

As of Monday, 300,099 department employees were vaccinated  
see **Mandate, page 5**

## FROM THE TRADITIONAL TO THE BIZARRE, AUGUST’S OBSERVANCES

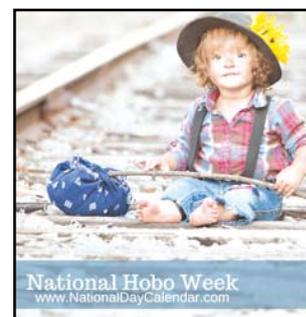
### MONTHLY OBSERVANCES

American Adventures  
American Artists  
Appreciation  
American Indian Heritage  
American History Essay Contest (8/1 - 12/15)  
Arrr-gust: International Pirate Month  
Black Business Month  
Boomers Making A Difference  
Bystander Awareness  
Cataract Awareness  
Children’s Eye Health & Safety Month  
Child Support Awareness  
Clear The Shelters Month  
Family Fun Month

Get Ready for Kindergarten  
Golf Month  
Happiness Happens Month  
MedicAlert Awareness  
Motor Sports Awareness  
Nat’l Breastfeeding Month  
Nat’l Catfish Month  
Nat’l Crayon Collection  
Nat’l Goat Cheese Month  
Nat’l Immunization Awareness  
Nat’l Panini Month  
Nat’l Picnic Month  
Nat’l Political Affiliation  
Discrimination Awareness  
Nat’l Minority Donor Awareness  
Nat’l Read A Romance Novel  
Nat’l Spinal Muscular  
Atrophy Awareness Month

Nat’l Traffic Awareness  
Nat’l Truancy Prevention  
Nat’l Water Quality Month  
Nat’l Wellness Month  
Nat’l Win With Civility  
Neurosurgery Outreach  
Peach Month  
Psoriasis Action Month  
Read-A-Romance Month  
Rye Month  
Tomboy Tools Month  
What Will Be Your Legacy  
World Mutt-i-grees Rescue  
**WEEKLY OBSERVANCES**  
Assistance Dog Week: 1-7  
Happiness Happens: 1-7  
Int’l Clown Week: 1-7  
Nat’l Cleanse Your Skin: 1-7

Nat’l Minority Donor Awareness Week: 1-7  
Int’l Psychic Week: 1-7  
Simplify Your Life Week: 1-7  
Nat’l Exercise With Your Child Week: 1-7  
Knights of Columbus Family Week: 1-7  
Nat’l Farmers’ Market: 1-7  
Nat’l Health Center: 1-7  
Stop on Red Week: 1-7  
Gold Panning Week: 2-7  
Nat’l Hunting Week: 2-8  
Single Working Women’s Week: 2-8  
Nat’l Environmental Services Week: 2-20  
Rock for Life Week: 4-7



Int’l Tree Climbing Days: 6-8  
Sturgis Rally: 6-15  
Nat’l Motorcycle Week: 8-14  
Feeding Pets of the Homeless Week: 8-14  
Nat’l Resurrect Romance: 8-14

Weird Contest Week: 8-14  
Safe and Sound: 9-15  
U.S. Amateur Golf: 9-15  
Numismatic Week (World’s Fair of Money): 10-14  
Elvis Week: 11-17  
Nat’l Hobo Week: 12-15  
Nat’l Aviation Week: 15-21  
Nat’l Chef’s Appreciation: 15-21  
Minority Enterprise Development Week: 18-24  
Nat’l Little League: 19-29  
Brake Safety Week: 22-28  
Nat’l Composites: 23-27  
Nat’l Safe at Home: 23-27  
World Water Week: 23-27  
Paralympic Games: 24-9/5  
Be Kind To Humankind: 25-31

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## Austin administers speedy swearing-in for DOD's new Indo-Pacific policy guru

by Jim Garamone, DOD News

At 614 miles per hour, it may have been the fastest oath ceremony for an assistant secretary of defense ever as Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III administered the oath of office to Ely Ratner aboard an Air Force E-4B headed to Singapore July 25.

Ratner, who is now the assistant secretary of defense for Indo-Pacific security affairs, had helmed DOD's China Task Force.

The Senate approved Ratner's nomination July 22. Senators also approved Heidi Shyu as undersecretary of defense for research and engineering; Gina Ortiz Jones as undersecretary of the Air Force; Meredith Berger as assistant secretary of the Navy for energy, installations, and environment; Shawn Skelly as assistant secretary of defense for readiness; and Caroline Krass as DOD's general counsel.

"These deeply qualified public servants represent decades of combined expertise and leadership in national security and defense policy, and I am grateful for their willingness to serve the country at this critical

time," Austin said in a written statement.

Austin swore in Ratner in the press room of the so-called "doomsday plane." The 747-derivative was flying at 30,000 feet at N 52.22, W 168.05, according to the crew. The aircraft had left Fairbanks, Alaska, earlier in the day.

Austin welcomed Ratner to the job and said the new assistant secretary had "fire in his eyes and energy in his belly." The secretary praised Ratner for his work leading the China Task Force, saying it had helped define the situation between the United States and China.

While there have been many re-enlistments aboard the E-4B, this may have been the first swearing in of an assistant defense secretary aboard the aircraft.

## Climate change has national security implications, DOD official says

by David Vergun, DOD News

Understanding and dealing with climate change is important to national security and, therefore, to the Defense Department, the senior climate advisor to the defense secretary said.

"Climate change effects are real and they are significant," he said. "Climate change is going to cost us in resources and readiness; and the reality is that it already is," Joe Bryan today told the Congressional Clean Energy EXPO and Policy Forum.

Bryan cited some examples: •As the Arctic warms up, competition for resources and influence in that region is heating up.

•Extended drought in Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador is driving migration north to the United States' southern border.

•Water resources are at risk in the Middle East due to extended drought and extreme heat conditions that threaten regional security and prosperity.

•Stronger hurricanes and typhoons, flooding, droughts, heat waves and wildfires are adversely affecting military operations and exercises at home and abroad at an increasing and alarming rate.

In response to climate change, DOD is working to become more energy efficient and independent, Bryan said.

For instance, some bases are becoming more energy efficient by bringing energy storage and distributed generation inside the installations, using energy derived from landfill gas and solar, he said.

About two-thirds to three-fourths of DOD energy is consumed by systems like airplanes and ships, not facilities on installations, he noted.

"We know that we're not going to get a free pass to push fuel into theater; so we can't be aggressive enough in reducing operational energy demand," he said about the need to ship fuel overseas to power planes, ships and vehicles.

Bryan cited several ways DOD



Members of the 52nd Civil Engineer Squadron from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany, work with German first responders and community members to deliver sandbags to the town of Binsfeld, Germany, July 14, 2021. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Warren Spearman

is reducing operational energy demand, including deploying hybrid-electric tactical vehicles,

making engine improvements on ships so less fuel is consumed and reducing airplane drag to improve fuel efficiency.

"These investments are a priority because they're great for the mission — and they're quite good for the climate, as well," he said.

President Joe Biden has made domestic production of lithium-ion batteries a priority, said Bryan. That investment is closely tied to electric vehicle deployment in the federal vehicle fleet, including DOD's vehicles. "The commercial EV [electric vehicle] industry is actually critical to DOD capability. The scale and shift to electrical transportation is massive and fast," he said.

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# DOD focuses on aspirational challenges in future warfighting

by David Vergun, DOD News  
To deter China and Russia from possible future aggression, the Defense Department has come up with a concept known as “expanded maneuver,” the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff said July 26.

Speaking at the National Defense Industrial Association’s Emerging Technologies Insti-

within expanded maneuver.

The first involves contested logistics. The last time logistics from the U.S. to overseas locations were contested was World War II in the Pacific and European theaters of operation, he said.

Logistics is really difficult to do in a contested environ-

our entire logistics approach because of it,” he said.

Joint fires is the second functional battle area. In the joint warfighting concept, fires come from all domains and from all services with no restrictions, Hyten said.

The idea for this concept is that the adversary can’t figure out where fires are coming from, and they have no way to defend themselves against that, he said.

“That’s a purely aspirational requirement, but I hope everybody can see that if you could do that you would change the equation on any future battlefield,” he said.

“Now, you have to figure out what is affordable, what is practical, what can you do, where can you bring it from, who can have it. All those kinds of things you have to be able to work out but you should never limit yourself as you begin a concept with what you don’t think you can do. So, fires need to come from everywhere, all domains, all services, kinetic and non-kinetic,” he said.

The third element is joint all-domain command and control. Command and control links everything together and allows a commander to understand exactly what’s going on in the battlespace, he said.

Data has to flow everywhere, he said. “The goal is to be fully connected to a combat cloud that has all information that you can access at any time, any place ... to be able to act quickly on that.”

However, access to data might be denied in a threat environment, he said.

## Food insecurity DoD official: ‘A readiness, national security issue’

by Terri Moon Cronk, DOD News

Readiness in the U.S. armed forces comprises many factors, but “food insecurity” impacts physical and mental health, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for Military Community and Family Policy said in a virtual panel discussion at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Patricia Montes Barron discussed “Food Security in the Military: What We Know and Why It Matters,” at CSIS July 27. The Department of Agriculture defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. Those serving on active duty, in the military reserves or in the National Guard experienced food insecurity at double the national average in recent months, according to nationwide surveys. And anecdotal evidence points to heightened rates of food insecurity among U.S. veterans

“So, you have to figure out how to operate once again with mission command — things that we learned as young lieutenants — how to operate with real centralized control but decentralized execution when you’re disconnected.”

The fourth is information advantage. This involves con-

necting systems and people seamlessly with each other and enabling interoperability across the joint force and with allies and partners, he said.

The Joint Requirements Oversight Council is heavily invested and involved in making this all work and enabling the services to move faster in that direction, he said.



**Army Spc. Xiong Zheng, a nodal network systems operator-maintainer with America’s First Corps in Washington, sets up an internet connection on board a Joint Network Node to be used for various events as part of Exercise Forager 21 at Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, July 15. Army photo by Spc. Richard Carlisi**

tute, Air Force Gen. John E. Hyten said expanded maneuver involves understanding how adversaries can operate in all domains and how to stop them while protecting DOD and coalition forces, he said, noting there are four functional battle areas

ment, he said. Fuel, munitions and other materiel doesn’t just show up magically on a remote Pacific island.

“Contested logistics has been an area of rich study, rich conversation, and we’re changing



**Food service line. Courtesy photo**

during the COVID-19 pandemic, reports show.

Barron said her office has been hard at work since April to develop a plan for the Defense Department that everybody can wrap their arms around. “We’ve also started to work with the USDA, and we’ve just gotten approval to work with the Census Bureau on a military family focus panel,” she added.

Food insecurity is one of Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin’s III high priorities, she said. “He wants to make sure we’re addressing this and getting to it as quickly as we can ... [via] Congressional interest, as well as discussions with [the White House’s initiative] Joining Forces,” she noted.

“We’re gathering data and analyzing relevant statistics, which are going to help us better scope the problem,” Barron said. “And while my office is taking the lead, we can’t do this alone. We need all of DOD and other federal agencies to work together with us.”

Trained members of the Military Family Life Counselor Program will help with assessment tools to assist MC&FP in determining if people counselors deal with need nutritional support, she said, adding that the DOD Federal Financial Readiness Office is

also developing an assessment tool and will work closely with MC&FP to make sure families know what financial resources are available.

Barron said proper nutrition is vital for readiness and national security. “[If] you’re not getting nutritious food, you’re not feeding your body and you’re not feeding your mind to do the very best that you can do,” she said.

“[We’re] asking our service members and their families to basically go where they need to go live, give up jobs for spouses,” Barron said. “[And] we ask an awful lot of our families, and especially our children who have to move from place to place. Shouldn’t we provide them with the very best care that we can? A military family should not have any challenges with food. ... We have a plethora of resources; we just need to make sure that our families are aware of them and can take advantage of them.”

She said food insecurity is an individual experience, but it’s also a family, community and national experience, too. “And if you’re not at your best, if you’re worried that your family isn’t getting enough to eat or if you’re worried your family isn’t getting the right types of things to eat, that can really impact the overall presence of service members trying to do their jobs and their missions.”

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## VA announces new options to help veterans avoid foreclosure

WASHINGTON - The Department of Veterans Affairs is offering a new COVID-19 Refund Modification option to assist veterans who require a significant reduction in their monthly mortgage payments because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In some cases, veterans can receive a 20 percent payment reduction - in others, the reduction can be even larger.

This new option is part of the of Biden-Harris administration's expanded, government-wide ef-

fort to help homeowners retain their homes as they weather the economic challenges resulting from the ongoing pandemic.

Under the COVID-19 Refund Modification, VA can purchase a veteran's past due payments

and amounts of unpaid principal, depending on how much assistance is necessary, subject to certain limits. Loan servicers also modify the loan. These efforts help ensure that the veteran can afford future mortgage payments.

"The COVID-19 Refund Modification provides Veterans a lasting and affordable solution to keeping their homes and avoiding foreclosure," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "As our country recovers and rebuilds from the economic devastation brought on by the pandemic, VA and the Biden-Harris administration continue to make every effort to help veterans keep a roof over their head as they get back on their feet."

an's deferred indebtedness from a COVID-19 Refund Modification will be established as a junior lien. The junior lien will not accrue interest; will not require monthly payments; and will only become due when the property is sold, the guaranteed loan is paid off, or the guaranteed loan is refinanced.

Veterans can get a COVID-related forbearance through Sept. 30, 2021.

To learn more about this new option visit VA's Home Loan Program or call 877-827-3702.

### Mandate

continued from page 1

against the virus. The department employs about 378,000 people, including 367,000 full-time health care professionals.

Since the start of the pandemic, 146 VA workers have died from the coronavirus. Four employees — all of whom were unvaccinated — died in recent weeks. Three of the deaths were attributed to the coronavirus "delta" variant.

The World Health Organization said the delta variant is the most transmissible of the variants identified during the pandemic, and cases are on the rise in the United States. The VA reported 3,787 active cases of the coronavirus Monday, up nearly 200 percent from earlier in the summer. Overall, 12,679 VA patients have died of the virus since the start of the pandemic.

The VA said Monday that there was an outbreak of the virus among unvaccinated em-

ployees and trainees at a VA law enforcement training center.

Shortly before the VA issued its mandate Monday, 57 groups representing doctors, nurses and other health care workers issued a joint letter, calling for mandatory vaccinations of all health care workers in the U.S.

"Universal vaccination of health care workers is the single most important step health care institutions can do to stop the spread of [the coronavirus]," Georges Benjamin, executive director of the American Public Health Association, said in a statement. "It is essential for protecting the health of their workers, the safety of their patients and ultimately the health of their communities."

As cases of the delta variant began to increase last month, McDonough said he was considering a vaccine mandate. At the time, he had just issued a policy offering employees take a half day off from work in exchange for getting vaccinated.

McDonough said then that he had the authority to mandate employees to receive vaccines, but he first wanted to see the outcome of the new policy.

The VA does not have specific data on the numbers of employees vaccinated by location. Anecdotally, McDonough said VA facilities with the highest rates of employee vaccination were about 85 percent vaccinated. That includes the Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System in New Orleans, which was an epicenter of the virus early in the pandemic.

On the lower side, fewer than 60 percent of staff at some VA facilities were vaccinated, including the St. Cloud VA Health Care System in Minnesota.

"My goal has been that by August, we're in a position to provide more care and benefits than before the pandemic," McDonough said in June. "Our ability to do that is enhanced by getting more of our personnel vaccinated."

AMVETS, a national veterans organization, praised the mandate, calling it a "bold, important step" to improve veterans' safety. Joe Chenelly, the group's executive director, said the organization has heard from vets who're choosing to go without health care for fear of getting infected with the coronavirus at a VA hospital or clinic.

"Every VA employee coming into contact with a veteran should be expected to take every measure possible to ensure they are not endangering veterans who are in VA facilities," he said.

However, Chenelly said he was also concerned about the mandate leading to more staff vacancies across the VA health care system. The workforce grew by 2.6 percent in 2020, but the department still had about 28,000 vacancies in May, according to publicly available data.

It was unclear Monday about how the department would handle cases in which employees refused to get vaccinated.

Like with VA's COVID-19 partial claim option, the veter-



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## Feeling walked on? Change your language

by Dr. Daneen Skube,  
Tribune Content Agency

*Q: I feel used and disrespected by my manager and co-workers. I work hard long hours and they often forget to even invite me to important meetings. I think the only solution is to quit. Is there an effective way to work with people that take advantage of me and are disrespectful?*

A: Yes, if you want to change your circumstances start by changing your language. Instead of talking about the behavior of others consider changing the behavior you are doing that makes it easy for people to disrespect you.

For instance, don't sit passively hoping important meeting invites will arrive. Be proactive on inquiring and expressing your interest and intention to be present at these meetings. You may also just walk down the hall (once we are back in office) and show up.

If you feel slighted and nurse

your wounds you'll feel bad and fail to fix the problem. Often when we're upset our language details a long list of complaints about how others are acting. What we may not consider is the way our behavior (or lack thereof) invites the exact behavior we're upset about.

When we complain about others we are not owning the power we actually have to influence

### INTERPERSONAL EDGE:

our surroundings. When you're persistent about important meeting invitations without being combative the meeting invites are more likely to come.

Be careful not to speak and act in ways they punish people for what you describe as taking advantage of you or being disrespectful. Instead start behaving in a way that doesn't give room for people to take advantage.

Be willing to disappoint your

co-workers, gently decline requests, and don't volunteer to burn yourself out. If we closely examine situations where we feel walked on we start to see where we're contributing by laying down so others can walk on us.

If our language focuses all our consciousness on the bad behavior of others there's no attention left to consider how we

set up the conditions we later complain about. The power we each possess lies in what we say and do not in changing what others say and do.

Your self-sacrifice in life and work will never be rewarded. In truth no one can give us enough to make up for doing things we resent but agree to. If you're committed to being a "nice" person you may find it painful to turn down requests. Perhaps you need to practice becoming more comfortable with others being disappointed.

We can easily see how many demands other people make of us. We can see how they have come to expect us to give too much. We may have a tougher time seeing how we have trained people around us to expect us to

act in these ways.

Since we were the ones who trained people on what to expect in the first place we're also the ones that can change the way we're training co-workers and management. Changing language from complaint to a consciousness of our contribution is the first step in reclaiming our power.

The last word(s)

*Q: I've heard power in the workplace is shifting from employers to employees. Is it true that finally employees have new authority in being able to get what they want from employers?*

A: Yes, an unexpected outcome of the pandemic is power has indeed shifted to employees. However, as with all power make sure you use it to influence and not to intimidate or your efforts will backfire.

*Daneen Skube is an executive coach, trainer, therapist and speaker. She's the author of "Interpersonal Edge: Breakthrough Tools for Talking to Anyone, Anywhere, About Anything" (Hay House, 2006). You can contact Dr. Skube at [www.interpersonaledge.com](http://www.interpersonaledge.com) or 1420 NW Gilman Blvd., #2845, Issaquah, WA 98027. Sorry, no personal replies.*

## Surface Force commander discusses state of the force

by MC2 Lauren Deal

WASHINGTON - Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, commander, Naval Surface Forces, discussed the state of the surface force and his four priorities for the next year during a media roundtable at the Pentagon, July 22.

"We remain challenged with the number of missions and requirements that we have and the number of ships we apply those to," said Kitchener.

To address this readiness challenge, Kitchener said his goal is to make more ships ready for tasking by finishing maintenance availabilities on time and focusing on Sailor self-sufficiency to increase a ship's ability to finish planned and unplanned repairs.

Recent Surface Force Training and Readiness Manual revisions give commanding officers more opportunities for at-sea proficiency training, increasing the efficiency of the basic phase training cycle. Additionally, the accelerated certification of afloat team training capitalizes on at-sea time, allowing ships the opportunity to demonstrate their proficiency for evaluation while providing flexibility and more time to train at sea.

Kitchener also discussed the professional development of surface warriors. As a learning organization and one that fosters a culture of excellence, he is committed to instilling an ethos of lifelong learning across the force.

"As we develop our officers, we need a continuous program of assessment," Kitchener said. He emphasized that this doesn't just include tactics and maritime skills, but overall career development.

On the enlisted side, he pointed to the modernization of enlisted Surface Warfare training providing engineering, combat systems, navigation, and damage control training for surface enlisted ratings. An example is improvements to the quartermaster rating which includes an eight-week "A" school and Voyage Management System (VMS) training course, a three-week journeyman-level course, and a robust, master-level, five-week assistant navigator course.

Kitchener then spoke about warfighting.

He wants to maintain, create, and continue to build a competitive mindset where commanding officers understand the mission and are able to take calculated risks. Kitchener also discussed proactive training and integration of new technologies such as unmanned systems.

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# Local Military



## COAST GUARD BREAKS GROUND ON NEW AIR STATION IN VENTURA

Coast Guard and construction dignitaries, including Vice Adm. Michael McAllister (fourth from left), Coast Guard Pacific Area commander, and Sam Abutaleb (fifth from left), vice president of Whiting-Turner Construction, participate in ground breaking ceremony for the Coast Guard Air Station Ventura, July 27. Coast Guard photo by Petty Officer 1st Class Richard W. Brahm

SAN PEDRO - The Coast Guard helicopter crews flying out of rented space at the naval base at Point Mugu will finally get a permanent home as ground broke July 27 for their new facility.

The \$53 million Coast Guard Air Station Ventura is scheduled to include a 48,000 square-foot hangar and a 12,200 square-foot administration and berthing facility at Naval Base Ventura County in Point Mugu.

Four MH-65 Dolphin helicopters and 82 personnel are slated to be stationed at the air station when it opens for operations in August 2023.

"We're excited to break ground to re-establish a permanent air station," said Vice Adm. Michael F. McAllister, commander U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area. "The new air station in Ventura will enhance critical mission capabilities, allowing us to better serve this critical area."

Previously, the Coast Guard operated Air Station Los Ange-

les out of the Los Angeles International Airport for more than five decades until it lost its lease in May 2016. The Coast Guard officially closed the air station and shifted aviation operations to a Forward Operating Base (FOB) located at Naval Base

**"WE'RE EXCITED TO BREAK GROUND TO RE-ESTABLISH A PERMANENT AIR STATION. THE NEW AIR STATION IN VENTURA WILL ENHANCE CRITICAL MISSION CAPABILITIES, ALLOWING US TO BETTER SERVE THIS CRITICAL AREA."**

- VICE ADM. MICHAEL F. MCALLISTER

Ventura County supported by Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco.

The Point Mugu FOB operates out of a leased hangar facility and leased berthing space from the Navy. Currently, 13 permanent service members and approximately 11 rotating crewmembers from San Francisco fly two MH-65 Dolphin helicopters out of Point Mugu.

Coast Guard operations are scheduled to shift from the FOB to the new facilities of Air Sta-

tion Ventura upon the facility's completion.

The air station's area of responsibility covers 350 nautical miles and stretches from Dana Point to Morro Bay, including the Channel Islands. Missions include 24/7 emergency response, search and rescue, drug and migrant interdiction, law enforcement, and marine and waterways conservation and protection. Coast Guard to break ground on new air station in Ventura

WHO ATTENDED: Vice Adm. Michael McAllister, the Coast Guard Pacific Area commander; Rear Adm. Carola List, the Coast Guard Assistant Commandant for Engineering and Logistics; Armando Gonzalez (representing Congresswoman Brownley); Sam Abutaleb (Whiting Turner Construction); and Capt. Thomas Cooper, the Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco commander; along with other Coast Guard members

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# At sea Demonstration/Formidable Shield Exercise concludes with several firsts

by Latasha Ball

The Port Hueneme division of Naval Surface Warfare Center and its White Sands Missile Range Detachment in New Mexico participated in several missions during the multi-nation At Sea Demonstration/Formidable Shield exercise, held recently at Hebrides Range off Scotland's coast and also Andøya Space Defense in western Norway.

ASD/FS21 was this year's most complex live-fire integrated air and missile defense exercise in the European theater. The live training event consisted of 3,300 personnel from 10 NATO nations, 31 aircraft, and 16 Navy ships from Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, United Kingdom, and

United States.

James "J.C." Connelly, project manager and test officer for ASD/FS21 at the Hebrides Range, said the team, "successfully accomplished all five missions, including several firsts: launches of a GQM-163 Coyote from a 4.3K launcher that WSMR modified for the exercise, and a Pathfinder Zombie, a short-range ballistic missile target also from the U.S."

"These targets were provided by a consortium of U.S. stakeholders including Space and Missile Defense Command, Naval Air Systems Command, Point Mugu, Missile Defense Agency and NSWC PHD," said John Winstead, senior advisor at NSWC PHD's WSMR. "Ad-

ditionally, the U.K. Ministry of Defense provided robust numbers of air breathing targets to complete the multi-warfare event."

In addition, the NSWC PHD and WSMR team launched two missile targets, called Aegis Readiness Assessment Vehicles Group B, during the exercise. The ARAV-B, also known as the T4-B, according to the Missile Defense Agency, is a solid-fuel rocket-based target vehicle that WSMR designed, built and sent to the exercise that emulates ballistic missile

threats, and Connelly said its launch alongside the two other targets is among the team's many noteworthy accomplishments during the exercise.



**Aegis Readiness Assessment Vehicle Group B launches during live-fire training exercise. Photo by U.K. Royal Navy**

the three systems—the ARAV-B, GQM-163 Coyote, and Pathfinder Zombie with differing requirements—all within the concise and expedited schedule was a very successful part of the exercise," Connelly explained. "We integrated very successfully, and for the first time three different launch teams, two different flight safety/ground safety teams and two different meteorological teams into one, producing a seamless and transparent target array."

Jay Breuer, senior target director for suborbital vehicles at the White Sands Detachment, was the senior test director for the two ARAV-B launches during the exercise. He said the intended purpose of the ARAV-B targets was so that the Royal Netherlands Navy could

use them to provide a target for destroyer *Paul Ignatius* to engage.

"The Netherlands detected, tracked our target and provided a cue to USS Paul Ignatius, which then fired a SM-3 Block 1A missile, which resulted in an exo-atmospheric intercept of our medium-range ballistic missile target," Breuer explained. "That's the first time the United States launched a SM-3 missile based on data provided by a Netherlands ship."

The team also handled schedule changes with the ARAV-B during the live event, quickly adapting and executing the planned missions, according to Troy Gammill, NSWC PHD system engineer.

"The ARAV-B launches moved from four days apart on the original schedule to one day of separation due to operational, technical and other requirements," Gammill said. "The NSWC White Sands Missile Range Detachment team was able to safely upload and prepare the second ARAV-B target in one day and successfully launch the second ARAV-B target and meet all requirements."

These exercises open a door of opportunity for the military to actively engage in integrated air and missile defense with allies.

"I would say the overall coordination, buildup and launch of



<b>Total Navy Battle Force: 297</b>	
<b>Ships underway</b>	
Deployed ships underway: 59	Non-deployed ships underway: 34
Total ships underway: 83	
<b>Ships deployed by fleet</b>	
Fleet Forces: 1	3rd Fleet: 3
4th Fleet: 3	5th Fleet: 21
6th Fleet: 14	7th Fleet: 56
Total: 98	

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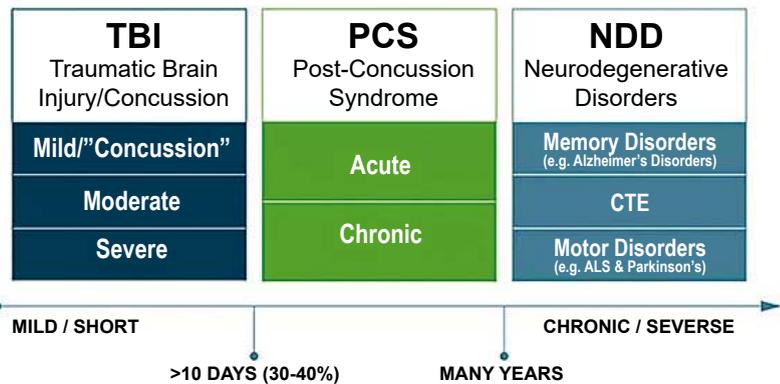
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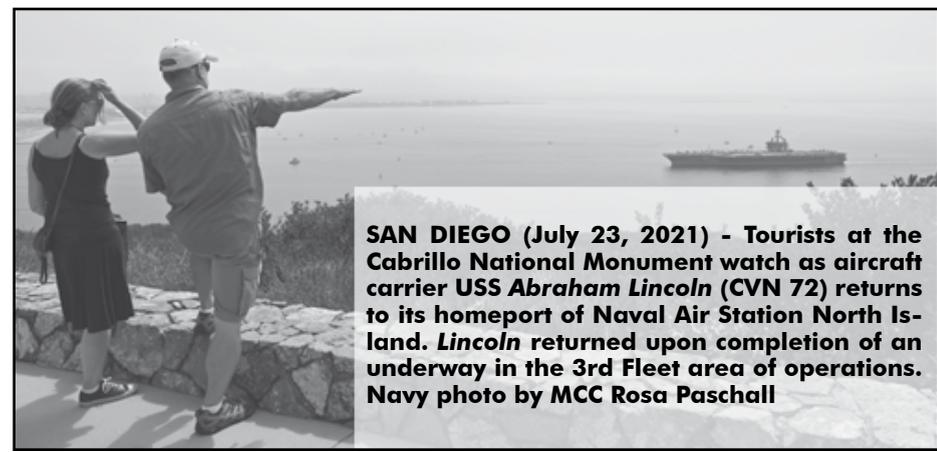
## This week's snapshots



**USS CARL VINSON, at sea (July 21, 2021) - Airman Nicholas Rotelli fires a line throwing adapter aboard Carl Vinson aircraft carrier. Vinson is underway conducting routine operations in the 3rd Fleet. Photo by MCSN Elisha Smith**



**NAB CORONADO (July 16, 2021) - Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Justis Tinoco, a machine gunner with 1st Marine Division, low crawls on the beach during a Scout Swimmer Course here. The Marines learned skills to plan and execute swimmer reconnaissance for a small boat raid company. Photo by Cpl. Jailine L. AliceaSantiago**



**SAN DIEGO (July 23, 2021) - Tourists at the Cabrillo National Monument watch as aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) returns to its homeport of Naval Air Station North Island. Lincoln returned upon completion of an underway in the 3rd Fleet area of operations. Navy photo by MCC Rosa Paschall**

## All for the kids

### Veteran organization hosts back-to-school event

SAN DIEGO - Volunteers with one of the nation's leading veteran nonprofit organizations were in San Diego July 24 filling backpacks with supplies for students in need.

The Travis Manion Foundation held their inaugural Back-to-School Character Day at the Wounded Warrior Project facility here. Volunteers asked the public to support the cause by sponsoring a backpack filled with supplies for students in the local community.

TMF Trained veteran mentors lead back-to-school events in more than 30 cities across the country for middle and high school students. This program will provide students with presentations to teach them confidence, character, and leadership, as well as give them the necessary school supplies needed for a successful academic year.

TMF veteran mentors are trained through the Character Does Matter program (<https://www.travismanion.org/back-to-school-character-day>) and



**Photo courtesy of The Travis Manion Foundation.**

impact more than 50,000 youth across the country each year. These mentors teach students courage, integrity, leadership, empathy, teamwork, and service.

Through these Back-to-School Character Day events, veteran mentors will develop meaningful connections with the students by helping them bridge social divides, and equipping them with character, optimism, and the confidence to succeed in school.

Participating students will receive a day of interactive character development lessons, games, and activities. Students will also receive a backpack full of school supplies to start the year. School supplies and fees

for middle schoolers cost nearly \$1,300 per student per year, and 1-in-5 students cannot afford these school supplies necessary for success. Along with this, more than 1-in-3 young people never had a positive role model or mentors. TMF's trained veteran mentors are on a mission to end this disparity.

"Even after they take off the uniform, veterans continue to serve because they are natural leaders within the community," said TMF President Ryan Manion. "I feel tremendous pride knowing that these veteran mentors will not only serve as role models to our next generation, but will also lead an initiative to ensure those students have the proper tools to begin a successful school year."

## I regret what I didn't know about teenagers

I always believed that, despite my various flaws (one eye bulges out more than the other), weaknesses (I'm a bit of a hoarder), and annoying behaviors (I talk too much), I've been a terrific mom. But now that my three children are in their twenties and flying the coop, I'm looking back and wondering, "Maybe I wasn't so great after all?"

Before anyone gets the wrong idea, let me report that all three of our children are doing very well with work, school, independence and friendships. Our children have compassion, character, ambition, moral values, and best of all, great senses of humor. My Navy veteran husband and I couldn't be more proud as their parents.

But as I reflect on their childhoods (as peri-menopausal mothers who are almost empty nesters tend to do), I see that our kids struggled during their teen years. Our son was in his second high school as a junior when we informed him we were moving again. He yelled, "I won't go!" Soon after, we noticed that he had started lying, ignoring classwork, and stuttering. Our middle child experienced nausea when she was stressed, and was diagnosed with anxiety in her teens. As a teen, our happy-go-lucky youngest daughter developed depression.

Our children have overcome their issues with our help, but looking back, I wish I had known more BEFORE their mental health issues surfaced. There were things about teenagers I probably didn't understand, red flags I might've missed, conversations I wish I'd initiated.

"Hindsight is twenty-twenty," they say — whoever "they" are — but they also say, "Knowledge is power." In retrospect, I see that I

was a loving, attentive mother, but I didn't know enough about teenage mental health.

Recently, I "zoomed" (I'm pretty sure that's a verb nowadays) into the Military Child Education Coalition's National Training Seminar, a virtual conference, July 19-21, offering in-

### The Meat & Potatoes of Life



by  
Lisa  
Smith  
Molinari

formative sessions for educators, professionals and parents about educating military children. I multi-tasked while listening some sessions, but on the third day, I found myself drawn into one particular lecture titled, "Mental Health Challenges - Resources for Parents" taught by MCEC's Melanie Douglas, Happy Garner and Louise Webb, along with The Barry Robinson Center's Lisa Howard.

I gobbled the information as fast as the lecturers could present it. Scribbling on our daughter's abandoned notebook, I learned

- why activity and academic schedules can rob adolescent brains of the extra sleep they need for proper growth and maturity;
- why all normal teens exhibit independence seeking behaviors, such as placing less importance on family bonds and more importance on social or peer bonds;
- what factors contribute to mental health issues in teens, such as family history, childhood experiences, surroundings, and inherited

conditions;

- how to identify "red flags" and why it depends upon the context;
- why military teen dependents are at greater risk of developing mental health issues, due to stressors such as relocations, separations, reintegrations, family dynamics, changing schools, worries about money, and the affect of military culture on a teen's sense of belonging;
- how to use the "Wheel of Emotions" and other resources to increase a child's emotional intelligence; and,
- where to find the many mental health support resources available to military families.

WHOA.

It was a deluge of the relevant, necessary, helpful information that I'd been missing, all squished into a one-hour Zoom call. The data, tips and guidance I gleaned from the MCEC National Training Seminar session on teenagers' mental health challenges would have made a difference in how I parented my kids when they were teens.

As I learned in the lecture, mental health problems are the most common disability for teenagers today, and military children are at a significantly increased risk. Adolescent development and teenage mental health is an incredibly complex and important issue. Parents need to arm themselves with information and avail themselves of resources to negotiate this tricky stage of child development.

I regret that I didn't know what I didn't know. I want today's military parents of teens to be armed with the knowledge and resources that I was missing. It could make a difference, and as they say, "Knowledge is power."

### AutoMatters™ & More



**Chuck Kramer**

by Jan Wagner

Recently I covered and participated in the spectacular MAIN STREET AMERICA People's Choice Charity Car Show, in Embarcadero Park North, near Seaport Village. That huge park overlooks the beautiful San Diego waterfront. I will cover the rest of this car show in a future AutoMatters & More column but, while I was there, one car in particular caught my attention.

I photographed it and then moved on, but I just could not get it out of my mind. I was so captivated by it that I felt compelled to learn more about it — and so I did. After the awards presentation, as the show was wrapping up, I returned to this car, where I found the couple that owned it. I spoke to Chuck Kramer (shown in photo, above) for almost an hour before they left.

Their car is a 1932 Chevrolet Deluxe Special Sedan. It will be 90 years old next year. "The original price was \$630, but they were only making 79 cents an hour back then. It took like 800 hours, if a person put all his money out, to pay for it back in 1932."

"I had a parts catalog on a '37 pickup. If you wanted windshield wipers: 25 cents. If you wanted an extra mirror or something like that,

## The Kramers' award-winning 1932 Chevrolet Deluxe Special Sedan

that might be \$1.50." We had a good laugh about that.

Speaking of mirrors, in addition to the car's standard accessories, he added such necessities as side-view mirrors — to supplement the mirrors that are strapped onto the tires: "I had to have mirrors that I could see with."

Chuck was careful with the money he spent restoring his car. For example, when he got it the car was all white. The beautiful paint job that you see here now was done at Maaco — a place that has long been known for their affordable auto painting. "See the arm cushions? Lazy Boy rocker."

He replaced or chromed all of the chrome on it. The small, chromed doors on the side of the hood, open one at a time. "They used them a lot in Cadillacs and Buicks, but they only did it two years in Chevrolet. When you close those, they snap closed. You'd better not have your fingers in there. The 1933 has three doors — smaller doors. On the '33 they're actually like a ratchet, so you can close them and set them wherever you want them."

Ever wonder why cars had flower vases like this one has? "You fill the car full of people and things could get a little — unpleasant, so by having the flowers in there, that would supposedly freshen up the air a little bit."

The car had air shocks when he got it. "The stuck out in front — really ugly, so they had to go. I cut them out and put in some regular shocks. It probably had back then what they

called 'knee action shocks.'

The original engine would probably have been a 6-cylinder. "They would probably get up to about 55-60 (mph)."

Have you ever wondered why a car's trunk is called a trunk (except in the UK, where it apparently is called a boot, for some reason which I do not know)? My revelation came after I asked Chuck the following question, while I was standing near the front of this very large, Rolls Royce-looking car: "So what's the trunk like? How big is the trunk space?" Taken by surprise by my question, Chuck replied: "Oh, it just has that trunk in the back. I've never really measured it."

Still not getting the silliness of my question, I went on to ask: "Pretty big?" Chuck replied, while taking me to the rear of the car: "Well here, look at it." As I saw the trunk (and wiped the invisible egg off of my face), I exclaimed: "Oh, it's literally a trunk!!!" It is literally a trunk! I never realized that is where the name of the car trunk came from, did you? We laughed, as I added: "I've got to get a picture of that!"

That's all for now. I look forward to visiting Chuck at his home someday soon, and doing a column about more of his historic car collection.

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

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# Social Security Matters Disability vs survivor benefit

Dear Rusty: I have a question regarding Social Security. I'm 54 and applying for disability. I've had rheumatoid arthritis since I was 19. My son, 16 years old, receives survivor benefits from my deceased ex-husband. We were married for 20 years. I was told by Social Security that my monthly payments, if they found me eligible for disability, would be \$1418 a month. When would I be eligible to collect my ex-husband's Social Security benefit? He made considerably more income over the years and his benefit will be a good deal more than my projected \$1418.

Signed: Disabled Widow

Dear Disabled Widow: Your Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefit is based upon your own lifetime work record up to the point you became disabled. If awarded, the \$1418 amount would be equal to the benefit you would have been entitled to on your own at your full retirement age (FRA) of 67. At your FRA, your SSDI benefit will automatically convert to your SS retirement benefit at the same amount. However, if your SSDI is awarded you will be also eligible to apply for your survivor benefit at any time.

Normally, age 60 is the earliest a survivor benefit can be claimed, but those who are disabled can apply for survivor benefits as early as age 50. Whether to apply for your survivor benefit from your ex-husband this early is a question you should carefully consider, because the amount of your survivor benefit will be reduced by 28.5% if you claim it now. And to be clear, if you have remarried and remain married you are not eligible for a survivor benefit from your deceased ex-husband (even though your minor son is).

Your survivor benefit from your ex-husband will not reach maximum until you have reached your full retirement age. At your FRA you would be entitled to 100% of the benefit your ex-husband was receiving (or entitled to receive) when he died but taken at any age earlier than your FRA your survivor benefit will be permanently reduced. The reduction is 4.75% for each full year earlier than your FRA that the survivor benefit is claimed to a maximum reduction of 28.5%.

So, if your SSDI is awarded you will have a choice - to take your smaller SSDI benefit and allow your survivor benefit to continue to grow, or to take your survivor benefit early and accept the permanent 28.5% reduction to that survivor benefit. You will need to compare those two benefit amounts to decide which course to take. For clarity, you can switch to your higher survivor benefit at any later time, but you shouldn't wait beyond your FRA (when the survivor benefit reaches maximum) to claim it.

## Humane Society waives adoption fees for all adult animals through July 31

San Diego Humane Society is waiving adoption fees for all adult animals through July 31, 2021. The promotion is made possible thanks to the generous support from Keith Guilbault, CEO of Qdoba Mexican Eats.

By finding animals homes, the promotion will create space in the shelter for other animals urgently in need.

San Diego Humane Society currently has 1,539 animals in care. Of those, 466 are available for adoption.

"With so many animals coming through our doors every day, we are really hoping the community

will help us and open their hearts to an animal in need of a home," said San Diego Humane Society Chief Operating Officer Jessica Des Lauriers. "Our adoption counselors are so skilled in matching the right pet with the right family, so if you are thinking about adopting, please come and visit one of our campuses this week."

San Diego Humane Society is open for walk-in adoptions through Sunday from 9am-6pm at its campuses in Escondido, El Cajon, Oceanside and San Diego.

To view animals available for adoption at SD Humane Society, visit sdhumane.org/adopt

## Volunteer at the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society

Volunteer opportunities are available at all Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society (NMCRS) locations. You will receive comprehensive training and mentorship, learn valuable skills, and make a difference in the lives of our active duty service personnel and their family members. NMCRS also reimburses volunteers for some transportation and family member care expenses. For more information, please call 619-767-6800 or visit www.nmcrs.org

July 27  
Korean War Veterans  
Armistice Day

# MOVIES AT THE BASES

Movies & times subject to change. \* Indicates last showing  
Visit navydispatch.com/entertainment\_03movies.htm to find your base theatre information

Naval Base Theater - NBSD, 619-556-5568, Bldg. 71 3465 Senn Rd.

FREE entry to the first 375 customers (per showing), no outside food, concessions will be available.

Friday, July 30  
5:50pm Boss Baby: Family Business (PG)  
8pm The Forever Purge (R)

Saturday, July 31  
3:10pm Boss Baby: Family Business  
6pm F9: The Fast Saga (PG-13)

Sunday, Aug 1  
12:50pm Boss Baby: Family Business  
3:30pm The Forever Purge (R)

Pendleton Theater and Training Center

Bldg 1330 Mainside (Across from Mainside Center)

Saturday, July 31  
1:30pm Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway (PG)

Lowry Theater - NASNI, 619-545-8479 Bldg. 650

Outside food and beverage are NOT permitted: Sales from the snack bar support the movie program.

Lowry Theater is a cashless facility. Debit and credit cards accepted only

Friday, July 30  
6pm The Forever Purge (R)

Saturday, July 31  
6pm Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard (R)

Sunday, Aug 1  
1pm Boss Baby: Family Business (PG)

Bob Hope Theater 577-4143 MCAS Miramar Bldg 2242

Friday, July 30  
6pm The Forever Purge (R)  
9pm In the Heights (PG-13)

Saturday, July 31  
3pm Peter Rabbit 2: Runaway (PG)  
6pm Boss Baby: Family Business (PG)

## Roy's sudoku

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

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## Checking the iron levels in your blood could save your life

by Claudia Sanchez-Bustamante, MHS Communications

It's a condition that can cause fatigue, joint pain, sexual dysfunction and - if left untreated - cancer and organ failure.

It's also most likely to afflict White men over the age of 40, but it's a potential risk for anyone.

The condition, known as Hemochromatosis, results from having excess iron in your blood. It's treatable, but it poses very serious health risks and needs to be diagnosed early and managed aggressively.

Having some iron in your blood is essential for several key body functions, like oxygenating the blood, converting blood sugar to energy, and boosting the immune system, among others.

But too much iron can become toxic and cause organ failure.

There are two main causes of Hemochromatosis. It can be inherited via genetic mutations or people can acquire it over time from drinking too much alcohol, consuming too much iron through their diet, or as a symptom of other blood-related disorders.

And while it can affect men and women equally, men experience symptoms and complications of hemochromatosis more commonly.

"Typically, symptoms in men develop at a younger age compared to women, around 40," said Army Maj. (Dr.) Christian Horn, a gastroenterology and hepatology specialist at the San Antonio Military Medical Center's Department of Gastroenterology in Texas.

"Women are typically protected from early manifestations and com-

plications of hemochromatosis due to iron loss with menses but may start to develop symptoms and complications after menopause."

While there are numerous genetic mutations that can cause a dangerous excess of iron in the blood, the most common gene mutation occurs in the HFE gene, Horn said.

That genetic mutation alters the body's ability to regulate iron absorption. As a result of the overload, the iron begins to deposit in various organs throughout the body, including the liver, pancreas, heart, joints, gonads, brain, and skin, causing dysfunction or abnormalities of those organs, he said.

### Symptoms

Classically, hemochromatosis affects populations of European ancestry at a higher rate than other ethnicities, explained Horn. Still, it has been observed in all ethnicities.

The symptoms of hemochromatosis depend on the amount of iron accumulated in the body. The more iron that accumulates, the more severe the symptoms are likely to be.

As a result, it's possible that younger patients remain asymptomatic because a significant amount of iron has not yet accumulated.

"There is a wide spectrum of possible symptoms from hemochromatosis, including end-stage liver disease (cirrhosis) and liver cancer if not detected before significant liver damage occurs," he said.

The initial symptoms are non-specific and include fatigue, lethargy, and apathy, he furthered. But as the disease

progresses, patients may notice pain in their joints (arthropathy), classically in the knuckles of the index finger and middle finger. It can also cause your skin to turn "bronze," or result in sexual dysfunction (impotence, decreased libido, infertility, or loss of menses).

"Other symptoms include early onset Type 2 diabetes or cardiac irregularities, including arrhythmias and heart failure," said the gastroenterologist. If detected after significant liver damage has occurred, "patients can develop cirrhosis and complications related to this condition, including fluid in the abdomen, confusion or altered mentation, or throwing up blood from the rupture of large veins in the esophagus."

Horn explained iron can also increase the aggressiveness of certain bacterial species, resulting in patients becoming more susceptible to certain bacterial infections.

"Bacteria which are more common with hemochromatosis include Yersinia enterocolitidis, resulting in right lower quadrant abdominal pain, fever, vomiting, and diarrhea, or Vibrio vulnificus (transmitted by eating undercooked seafood), resulting in a severe systemic bacterial infection or severe skin infections," he said.

### Treatment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention say the earlier hemochromatosis is diagnosed, the less likely patients are to develop serious complications, which could cause permanent problems.

Horn emphasized that screening is important because of the number of possible complications that can occur

due to continued, unregulated iron overloads. All it takes is a blood test to determine iron levels.

"If [the test results are] abnormal, a genetic screen can be performed to evaluate for abnormal genes that are associated with the condition," he said.

If the screenings reveal elevated iron levels, patients can start treatment to prevent the major complications of the disease. Occasionally, a liver biopsy may be required to confirm the diagnosis of hemochromatosis and determine the extent of the disease.

Hemochromatosis is curable with a liver transplant, but due to the limited availability of livers for transplantation, this procedure is reserved for patients who have end-stage liver disease or liver cancer, said Horn. "The majority of hemochromatosis patients will need to be treated throughout their life to maintain normal iron levels and prevent complications."

According to the National Institutes of Health, patients diagnosed with hemochromatosis can treat it with regularly scheduled blood removal - known as phlebotomy - as well as changes in diet, and medication to lower the amount of iron in their body.

However, "the first line of treatment for hemochromatosis is phlebotomy," said Horn.

Since almost two-thirds of the body's iron is found in the hemoglobin within red blood cells, removing blood decreases the amount of iron in the body. But patients who are not tolerant to phlebotomy can opt for medications that have the same effect.

"They bind to excess iron in the body and excrete it in the urine or feces," he said.



**Blood donation is a good way for hemochromatosis patients to get excess iron removed from their blood while also helping someone else in need of blood. In the photo, a Marine donates blood at an Armed Services Blood Program Donation Center at the Pentagon. Photo by Defense Media Activity - Marines.**

Additionally, donating blood is a good way to remove excess iron from the body while also providing blood to another individual who could use the blood, said Horn. The Armed Services Blood Program is mission critical and has Joint Blood Program Officers within each Combatant Command to support the global blood mission.

### Effect on readiness

Horn stated that most active-duty service members with hemochromatosis will not have any symptoms when they're young, but older active-duty troops may start to experience symptoms from uncontrolled hemochromatosis.

"When hemochromatosis is identi-

fied in a young soldier, it's important they start treatment as soon as there is evidence of iron overload," said Horn. "This will require multiple sessions of phlebotomy, which may prevent them from deployment, until their iron levels are better controlled."

Since they will continue to require periodic lab tests and phlebotomy sessions every few weeks to months, they will need to be stationed at a base with those capabilities, he said.

"As long as their iron levels are controlled, and they have no evidence of advanced disease related to hemochromatosis, they can be deployed to locations that have laboratory and phlebotomy capabilities," said Horn.

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