TOP NEWS

A MESSAGE FROM FLEET MASTER CHIEF RUSSELL SMITH

By Fleet Master Chief Russell Smith

Shipmates,

At the request of the Chief of Naval Operations, I have now temporarily assumed the duties of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. I’m humbled to have been chosen to take on the important charge of maintaining the form and function of the office until the CNO can conduct a thorough search and make a thoughtful decision on who will best advocate for the nearly 270,000 Enlisted Sailors in our Navy.

Judging from what I’ve seen on social media and heard on the deck plates, the issues that brought this have stirred some emotional responses. It’s vital we maintain the integrity of the office and what it stands for -- advocating on behalf of our Sailors and their families.

Our Navy is a learning organization that is constantly growing and evolving. As an institution we are strong enough to absorb this challenge, but we must visibly lead through it if we are to come out stronger on the other side. With that I say thank you for your faith, support and well wishes as we keep charging to make this happen. This is the beginning of the next chapter for this historic office. Our goal is to provide authentic, transparent communication and a seamless transition.

Continued success for our Sailors is a truly collaborative effort. Together we will continue to execute the plans and initiatives important to our Navy’s future and maintain our focus on warfighting readiness without missing a beat.

Thank you in advance for your patience, professionalism and support -- together we’ll steer this ship through these seas.

Very Respectfully,

FLTCM (SW/IW/AW) Russell Smith

RESTORATION OF SERTS POLICY

From Navy Personnel Command

Effective immediately this NAVADMIN announces the restoration of the Sailor Early Return to Sea (SERTS) policy to reduce the number of sea duty vacancies for pay grades E4-E9.

The purpose of this policy is to fill critical skill requirements at sea by transferring a limited number of Sailors from their shore duty assignment earlier than their projected rotation date (PRD).

Enlisted rating detailers will fill high priority E4-E9 sea duty requirements by using the authorized transfer window of -6/+6 months from the PRD of a Sailor. Navy Personnel Command (NPC) will identify SERTS candidates from the criteria listed below:

1. Sailors who have completed at least 18-23 months of shore duty will be considered for SERTS. However, they will not transfer prior to completion of 24 months in their shore assignment.
2. Length of time on shore
3. Current or frocked pay grade
4. Fleet experience
5. Navy enlisted classification codes (NEC) held
6. Type of previous sea duty
7. Remaining obligated service

NPC will consider the potential impacts on the shore duty command and balance it against at-sea priorities. Sailors assigned to Special Program duties such as recruit division commanders, recruiters, brig duty, and instructors will not be considered for SERTS.

In addition to a candidate filling a billet in current pay grade, candidates may also be selected to fill vacant requirements within their pay band: Supervisor (E7-E9), Journeyman (E5-E6), and Apprentice (E1-E4).

Very Respectfully,

FLTCM (SW/IW/AW) Russell Smith
A LETHAL FLEET STARTS WITH BASIC TRAINING
A glimpse at how Navy bootcamp is developing tough, more qualified Sailors

As a growing Navy, it’s more important than ever to have qualified Sailors reporting to the Fleet. From the minute a new shipmate checks aboard they become part of the team, and there are certain expectations from day one. No, it’s not just knowing your berthing compartment location or how to find the galley. It’s being able to perform those critical skills and core competencies that increase lethality and readiness - damage control, firefighting, watchstanding and seamanship.

How is the Navy doing this? Over the past 9 months, Recruit Training Command (RTC) has implemented a hands-on learning curriculum specifically designed to train recruits on these warfighting skills, which has dramatically improved the quality of recruits graduating from RTC - producing more qualified Sailors, who are ready to join their team in the Fleet.

These realistic training experiences are designed to train recruits “how we fight,” and to use these critical skills under acute stress in a controlled environment. This helps prepare them for the operational rigors at sea, and to better manage service-related stress to become tougher, more capable Sailors before they reach the Fleet.

Every day during their eight weeks of basic training, recruits prepare for real challenges in the Fleet. They stand watch around-the-clock, run surprise man-overboard drills in the middle of the night, practice firefighting, damage control and seamanship reps and sets in their berthing lab spaces, and get tested as individuals and a team on the USS Marlinspike and USS Chief practical skill trainers.

Recruits face a final crucible at Battle Stations-21 aboard USS Trayer (BST-21), where they spend more than 12-hours battling sensory overload, compartments full of smoke, blaring alarms, low visibility, and disorienting flashes while they race to save the ship from fire, flooding, mass casualties, and many other surprises designed to test their mettle.

Recruits must rely on their training and pass Battle Stations-21 with a combined individual and team score of at least 80%, or risk training remediation that impacts their graduation date or chance of successfully completing basic training.

Why is the Navy doing this? Because the Fleet needs and expects Sailors trained to hit the deckplates running. RTC routinely solicits feedback from Fleet stakeholders, and has partnered with the Leadership Mess to incorporate a more hands-on learning curriculum to meet the needs of the growing Fleet. By having better qualified Sailors right out of basic training, the operational burden on commands is reduced and allows for more advanced training at follow-on schools and Fleet trainers.

Focusing on these skills during the Sailors development process, builds a stronger foundation for Naval service, producing tough, more qualified Sailors, ready to stand watch, and increases operational flexibility in the Fleet.

What’s next? The Navy is exploring the possibility of building new training facilities that would qualify all recruits in level-1 firefighting, damage control and small arms before graduating basic training. Stay tuned for updates.

NAVY RELEASES NEW PARENTAL LEAVE PROGRAM
From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Navy announced the establishment of the Military Parental Leave Program in NAVADMIN 151/18, released June 21. The new program increases parental leave and combines current family leave policies into one. The Military Parental Leave Program also aligns the Navy with recently released Department of Defense guidance pertaining to changes about parental leave.

Under the new program, parental leave for the secondary caregiver increases from 10 days to 14 days, and consolidates Adoption Leave MILPERSMAN 1050-420, Paternity Leave MILPERSMAN 1050-430 and Maternity Leave MILPERSMAN 1050-435 into the Military Leave Program MILPERSMAN 1050-415 that will be published at a later date. The program applies to all active duty Sailors. Reserve Sailors who are performing active duties, or mobilized more than 12 continuous months, and are the parents of a qualifying birth or adoption on or after Dec. 23, 2016 are also eligible.

The three family leave categories under the Military Parental Leave Program are:
• Maternity Convalescent Leave is a six-week (42 days), non-chargeable leave period for the parent who gives birth or is designated with primary responsibility for caring for the child or children following a birth or adoption.
• Secondary Caregiver Leave is a two-week (14 days) non-chargeable leave period for the parent not designated with primary responsibility for caring for the child following a birth or adoption.
• Primary Caregiver Leave is a six-week (42 days) non-chargeable leave period for the parent who gives birth or is designated with primary responsibility for caring for the child or children following a birth or adoption.

Details about the leave periods are described in NAVADMIN 151/18. Based on a command’s readiness requirements, members on or within three months of a deployment will normally have to defer executing Primary and Secondary Caregiver Leave until return of the deployment. Commanding Officers, in extenuating circumstances and where operational requirements allow, may authorize members to take parental leave.

Navy’s parental leave program supports Sailor 2025’s goal of removing obstacles that negatively influence a Sailor’s decision to stay Navy when they are looking to start or raise a family.

Sailor 2025 is the Navy’s program to more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward and retain the force of tomorrow. It consists of approximately 45 living, breathing initiatives and is built on a framework of three pillars - a modern personnel system, a career learning continuum and career readiness.
The Rim of the Pacific Exercise is the world’s largest maritime exercise. It happens right on our doorstep once every two years. The Navy’s 26th RIMPAC started June 29, hosted by Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet and led by Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet.

We welcomed visiting ships and participants from 26 nations who are bringing 25,000 personnel to Hawaii -- to the best homeport and duty station in the world. What better place to come together in peace to build cooperation than Pearl Harbor!

In 2002 I participated in RIMPAC here as executive officer aboard USS Port Royal (CG 73). It was exhilarating, challenging and extremely rewarding, and it happened at a historic time for our Navy and nation: one year after 9/11. Lessons I learned and friendships I forged 16 years ago during RIMPAC 2002 continue to guide me today. At each RIMPAC our Navy trains with friends, partners and colleagues to be capable, adaptive, innovative and ready.

From Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, RIMPAC participants deploy to train at Pacific Missile Range Facility, Barking Sands, and in and around the Hawaiian Islands. The people of Hawaii understand and support our need for realistic training with our partners. RIMPAC offers relevant and realistic training that fosters and sustains cooperative relationships. During RIMPAC in 2002 I learned quickly that when we understand each other we can prevent miscalculations. We can build trust. We can preserve peace and prevent conflict.

History shows us that our former adversaries can become steadfast friends. Japan, Germany and Vietnam are among the participants in RIMPAC 2018.

Our shipmate, retired Chief Boatswain’s Mate Ray Emory, a Pearl Harbor survivor, visited the Pearl Harbor waterfront to see once again where his ship, USS Honolulu, was berthed in Dec. 7, 1941, the day Oahu was attacked.

Chief Emory fought back that day, manning his machine gun, taking on enemy planes. He continued to fight on throughout the War in the Pacific. He and his buddies, with help from the home front, helped create an unprecedented era of peace, stability and prosperity. Victory at the end of World War II was Ray’s finest hour.

Ray, a long-time resident of Hawaii, is leaving Hawaii for the mainland. He said it was his last time to visit Pearl Harbor.

It was my honor to be there and ...
shake his hand and thank him for his service.

Sailors aboard the USS O’Kane, berthed nearby, and Sailors from throughout our waterfront, came to salute and pay tribute to Ray. They manned the rails, formed an honor cordon, saluted and shouted “hip, hip, hooray” to this American hero.

When the call came in 1941, Ray Emory and hundreds of thousands of other young Americans responded. They proved they were capable, adaptive, innovative and ready. Working with Allies and partners they fought to create a better world for our grandparents, parents, ourselves and our families.

We do not take their sacrifice and commitment for granted. We remember.

At this moment in history, in this sacred location, let us -- each of us -- remember the heroes who forged the future. Let us dedicate ourselves to having another exciting, safe and rewarding RIMPAC this summer. Let us commit to superior training, cooperation and readiness, building partnerships, and strengthening friendships.
STAY NAVY

HOW HARD DO YOU WORK? THE NAVY WANTS TO KNOW!

From Chief of Naval Personnel

We have all heard the old adage, “choose your rate, choose your fate.” Our work is definitely not a one size fits all situation, and that is most noticeable at sea. As we have known for years, but now have research to validate, some ratings have greater workload demands while in-port than at sea, and vice versa. Last year, Navy conducted a study aboard in-port DDGs to measure and compare Sailor workloads across all assigned ratings. We found that while the total ship’s workload in-port is less than underway, mainly due to fewer watch requirements, we were also able to evaluate and identify particular ratings whose work actually increased once in-port. Based on the findings, Navy added an additional nine manpower requirements to selected ratings assessed to work greater than 54 hours per in-port week. This study was a crucial first step in starting the in-port workload studies aboard ships to prevent our Sailors from doing more than required.

WHAT IS THE NAVY DOING TO FIX THIS?

More importantly, what does this mean for you? New Navy policy is being implemented to require the completion of in-port ship workload studies across all ship classes. The results of the studies will ensure our manpower requirements match the in-port workload carried out by our Sailors. This year we will conduct an in-port work study of Forward Deployed-Japan CGs and DDGs. Additionally, Navy is now conducting an Operational Afloat Work-week study to better identify how Sailors spend their time during a deployed underway week and what is appropriate for safe and effective operations. This effort, along with the in-port studies, will ensure that the Navy provides an accurate manpower demand signal reflective of the work we ask of our Sailors to perform. This summer, LPD-17 is the first ship class to include a simultaneous (afloat and in-port) assessment. More to follow!

DEPLOYMENT IS MONEY IN THE BANK

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael Chen, USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) Public Affairs

Sailors aboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) are earning big while taking advantage of the latest update to the Navy’s Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB) program. A total of 174 SSailors have reenlisted since Harry S. Truman entered the Adriatic Sea, May 30, earning roughly $2.4 million in tax-free SRBs. Additionally, another 173 Sailors are scheduled to reenlist in June. This could increase the final tally to more than $4 million.

The May 14 update, NAVADMIN 119/18, expanded the SRB program by adding 39 skills in 12 ratings and increasing award levels for 135 skills in 48 ratings.

These most recent changes to policy created the possibility for 513 Sailors onboard Truman to potentially reenlist early due to combat zone tax exclusion status,” said Navy Career Counselor 1st Class Jesse Lind.

Because Harry S. Truman operated in a tax-free zone in both May and June, Sailors who reenlist during these months and are eligible for an SRB, are afforded the opportunity to maximize their bonus amount.

“This NAVADMIN is great because it benefits both the Navy and the Sailor. It’s truly a case where everybody wins,” said Navy Career Counselor 1st Class Paige Gustin.

“The Navy gets to keep well-trained and well-qualified Sailors, which helps prevent gap billets and saves the money needed to train another Sailor as a replacement. Ultimately, this helps the ship maintain mission readiness and saves the Navy money by increasing retention rates.”

In addition to the SRB expansion, reenlistment windows were expanded to allow Sailors to reenlist within 180 days of their end of active obligated service, including exceptions to allow up to one calendar year in some cases. These cases include Sailors eligible for combat zone tax exclusion. Sailors who receive an early promote in their most recent periodic evaluation, and Sailors who must meet obligated service requirements for a permanent change of station.

SRB is part of the Navy’s continuing efforts to modernize personnel systems and processes under Sailor 2025. Sailor 2025 is the Navy’s program to improve and modernize personnel management and training systems to more effectively recruit, develop, manage, reward and retain the force of tomorrow. It is focused on empowering Sailors; updating policies, procedures and operating systems; and providing the right training at the right time in the right way to ensure Sailors are ready for the fleet.
Beating the Heat

Counter heat stress

Acclimate!

Hydrate!

Rest & cool down

Trainer Tips

Getting used to the heat may take a while. Expose yourself slowly until your body gets used to the climate. Don’t get overconfident and let your guard down, “stick and move.”

Water is a strong defense, the heat is weak against it. Drink plenty of fluids before and during your match with the heat. Hydrate today for tomorrow.

Here are some symptoms of heat stress: high body temperature, confusion, loss of coordination, hot dry skin, headache and seizure. If you or someone you know experience indicators of heat stress, move to a cool place and drink water.

Rest and cool down from the heat. If you’re in the ring with the heat for two hours, you should rest and cool down for two hours.
The first national flag of the united colonies, the Grand Union flag, was a naval ensign. Then-Lt. John Paul Jones became the first person to raise it above a Continental warship when he hoisted it on the Navy's first flagship, Alfred, Dec. 3, 1775, while she was anchored in Philadelphia on the Delaware River, according to “Our Flag,” by the Government Printing Office. Jones later called it the “flag of Freedom,” and said he “attended it, with veneration, ever since on the ocean.”

Featuring seven red stripes and six white to recognize the 13 colonies, with a British flag in canton (the upper left corner), the Grand Union flag closely matched the flag of the British East India Company. No one knows who designed the American version or why, although a seamstress in Philadelphia named Margaret Manny sewed flags for the Alfred around this time. It would have been easy to sew white stripes on existing red Royal Navy ensigns, and the Sons of Liberty flag already alternated red and white stripes.

Denmark and the Netherlands became the first countries to officially salute the United States, when their ships returned gun salutes from American ships flying Grand Union flags in the Caribbean in the fall of 1776.

Many historians believe the Grand Union flag was also the flag newly appointed Commander-in-Chief Gen. George Washington hoisted on Prospect Hill during the Siege of Boston, Jan. 1, 1776, to a 13-gun salute, both in defiance of a British order to surrender and to honor his reorganized Army. As a result, the standard is also known as the Continental Colors.

The Star-Spangled Banner; the Stars and Stripes; the Red, White and Blue; Old Glory — first adopted June 14, 1777, the American flag has been a symbol of freedom ever since those dark days of revolution. This Fourth of July we take a look at the history of our nation’s flag.
In 1777, after the fledgling country declared its independence, the Continental Congress wanted a new flag, one without a throwback to Britain. The Marine Committee, “Resolved,” June 14, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing new constellation.”

American legend says that this is the flag Washington had asked Betsy Ross to sew the previous year, and that it was Ross who suggested five-point stars. The story is plausible: Ross’ uncle-in-law was George Ross, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and one of the men who gave Ross the commission. She also had connections to Washington and to Robert Morris, who served on the Marine and Maritime Committees, and donated the ship that would become Alfred to the Continental Navy. And records show the Pennsylvania State Navy Board did in fact pay Ross a large sum of money for making flags - “ship’s colours” - in 1777. However, there’s no proof that the flag she sewed was actually the first Stars and Stripes, and because the claim dates from her grandson in the 1870s, most historians are skeptical.

Instead, they point to one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Francis Hopkinson was a member of the Continental Naval Board and a New Jersey congressman, a poet and a lawyer, a musician and a judge, an artist and a civil servant, according to author and flag historian Earl P. Williams Jr. Incidentally, Hopkinson was also treasurer of loans and a consultant for a committee created to design the Great Seal of the United States. In addition, he claimed to have designed the Continental currency and seals for the Admiralty and Treasury boards. A fourth seal, one for the Continental Board of War and Ordnance, is also credited to Hopkinson, but was never adopted.

Those seals are important, for no examples of Hopkinson’s original flag exist, according to Williams. Ased on images and symbols in his heraldic designs, historians believe Hopkinson’s flag featured six-pointed stars in a staggered pattern, although parallel placement became more popular. The version of the flag with the stars in a circle, the one most associated with Ross and pictured in a 1779 portrait of George Washington, was never regularly used, according to “Our Flag.” In fact, the placement of the stars wasn’t standardized until 1912.

In May 1780, Hopkinson wrote to the Continental Admiralty Board, saying that while his designs were “Labour’s of Fancy,” favors he provided to his country free of charge, he would appreciate a “Quarter cask of the public wine” as a reward. His claim was eventually rejected, on the grounds that as a civil servant, Hopkinson had already been paid for his work. Congress also said he hadn’t worked alone, although he remains the only person known to have taken credit for designing the Stars and Stripes. That doesn’t mean, of course, that Betsy Ross couldn’t have sewed it.

As new states joined the union, officials added not only a new star, but a new stripe. In fact, the flag that flew over Fort McHenry in Baltimore and so inspired Francis Scott Key during the War of 1812, the flag immortalized as the Star-Spangled Banner in the future national anthem, featured 15 stars and 15 stripes. But as time went on, and the States continued to grow, this practice began to seem more and more impractical. According to a House of Representatives history, Congress formed a special committee to update the flag in 1817. Recognizing how important such emblems were in identifying ships at sea, the committee turned to a naval hero for advice. Captain Samuel C. Reid, who had served in the regular Navy in the 1790s, commanded the privateer General Armstrong during the War of 1812. General Armstrong arrived in Fayal in the Azores, Portugal, in the fall of 1814, where she encountered a British squadron that was preparing to join the invasion of New Orleans, according to Lt. Cmdr. Benjamin Armstrong in an article for the Naval Institute. Under Reid’s command, General Armstrong repelled several nighttime British attacks and enemy attempts to board via grappling hooks. Sept. 26. Reid knew another attack would probably cost him his ship, however, so to keep her from falling into enemy hands and to save the lives of his crew, he ordered General Armstrong scuttled. The delay he caused the British supposedly forced them to postpone their attack in Louisiana. Then-Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson reportedly thanked Reid for buying him time to complete his defenses. Reid proposed three designs: a “People’s Flag,” for general use with 20 stars forming a larger star and 13 stripes, a “Government Flag” for federal use with stripes and an eagle in the canton and a “Standard of the Union” for celebrations. This version featured four sections: one with stripes, another a star made of smaller stars, the Goddess of Liberty and the eagle.

Congress approved the simplest design in April 1818, and the committee chairman was “pleased with its form and proportions,” although the large star proved less enduring than the 13 stripes. The Flag Act of 1818 also specified that after the entry of a new state, the updated flag design would become official on the following July 4.

Reid died in 1861. Four U.S. Navy ships – three destroyers and a frigate - have been named in his honor.
Spirituality, wisdom, strength, majesty, freedom: Eagles hold many different meanings among different cultures, throughout history and around the world. In 1782, Congress chose the bald eagle as the United States national bird for its beauty, strength, and long life.

However, eagles haven’t always thrived here in the U.S. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, after World War II, the effects of organo-chlorine pesticides (DDT) severely depleted nest production, and in 1969, bald eagles were listed under the Endangered Species Act. The DDT ban led to increasing populations, and by the late 1970s, there were an estimated 80 eagle pairs nested in the Chesapeake Bay Region.

Bald eagles were finally removed from the endangered and threatened species list in 2007. However, because of their national significance as denoted by Congress, bald and golden eagles remain protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The population is under a 20-year monitoring plan to make sure it remains at sustainable levels, and the Navy is doing its part.

“The Commander, Naval Installations Command (CNIC), funds most of Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River’s natural resource projects,” said Jackie Smith, a natural resources specialist with Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) Public Works. “Projects related to conservation of federally threatened and endangered species usually have the highest priority. Eagles, in this case, are the conservation of a formerly listed species for which monitoring is still required.”

Smith explained that biologists documented the first eagle nest on NAS Pax River, Maryland, in 2006, the second in 2008, and the third in 2014. As a result, CNIC has funded local survey efforts since 2011. Banding was first done in 2015, then in 2017 and again last month.
In fact, biologists from the Center for Conservation Biology at Virginia’s College of William and Mary recently banded four bald eaglets from two separate nests on NAS Pax River.

According to Smith, NAVFAC has a cooperative agreement with the College of William and Mary, which contracts an arborist (tree climber) trained to handle the birds. The arborist climbs the tree and lowers each eaglet to the ground where researchers determine the gender; gather general weight, size and health data; and collect feathers for testing. They then place a band on each leg and return the birds to their nests.

Smith explained that the bands are not just the standard, unique identifiers used by the U.S. Geological Survey. Pax birds also receive colored auxiliary bands that can be easily identified with binoculars, so NAVFAC experts and others can see if a particular eagle is from the Chesapeake Bay area. That is because there are a number of eagles passing through seasonally as they migrate north and south - not all eagles seen on the base are nesting on base.

“Our reasons for surveying and banding here at Pax River are twofold,” said Smith. “The initial purpose was to monitor the nesting success of the species. The data we collect aids our own program, but also feeds back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The other reason goes back to flight operations - we want to know the impact on the eagles from the mission, and then it also allows us to see if the eagles are impacting the flight mission.”

That’s because bird strikes have downed aircraft and cost the Navy millions of dollars each year in man-hours and repairs throughout the fleet. Bird/Animal Aircraft Strike Hazard (BASH) is one of the programs the Navy has implemented to mitigate strike risks at shore facilities. According to BASH, it helps “safeguard air operations assets and flight crews by preventing bird and animal strikes with aircraft.”

“I think it’s important for the Navy as a whole and for Pax to be seen as good stewards of the environment,” said Smith. “We’ve gotten support from unexpected places: local bird groups supporting our base deer hunting program, which isn’t something you would normally expect. … The birders are interested because the habitats that deer might destroy, if their population happens to grow too large, are the same habitats the birds are using for nesting and cover as well.”

The Navy participates in efforts all over the globe to help maintain and conserve natural resources. For example, the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program (REPI) is another one of the many Navy programs that coordinates wildlife and environmental conservation efforts. Although REPI’s primary mission is to protect military readiness, it is used at nearly every naval installation to implement various resource management and conservation programs and coordinate with federal, state and local officials.