

# ALLHANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE NAVY

JUNE 2018



# TOP NEWS

## NAVY UPDATES PACT PROGRAM

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy updated the Professional Apprenticeship Career Track (PACT) program policy in NAVADMIN 118/18, released May 14.

The NAVADMIN announced comprehensive policy and process changes to the enlisted PACT program outlined in Military Personnel Manual 1306-611. The changes were made to provide PACT Sailors with the ability to plan for their future career in the Navy and to reduce unplanned losses for fleet manning.

Effective 1 June 2018, PACT Sailors will be designated based on their selection of a prioritized job in a rating for which they are qualified. Enlisted Community Managers (ECM) will begin to designate PACT Sailors, starting with those who have been enrolled in the program the longest.

Twelve months prior to a PACT Sailor's projected rotation date (PRD),

they may begin the designation and assignment negotiation process.

Commands will continue to use the Career Waypoints-PACT (C-WAY-PACT) designation module for PACT Sailor applications.


Once designated, eligible PACT Sailors may be eligible for Selective Reenlistment Bonus (SRB). The latest SRB NAVADMIN outlines the SRB eligibility requirements.

PACT Sailors willing to volunteer for additional obligated service (OBLISERV) to complete the sea tour for their new rating, or for a minimum of 24 months of additional sea time, whichever is greater, may be authorized immediate advancement to E4, with commanding officer approval.

Command leadership and PACT Sailors are required to ensure training records and qualifications are up-to-date to facilitate the order negotiation process.



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew Riggs

PACT Sailors interested in expanding their available conversion opportunities should contact their command career counselor for information about additional Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) testing opportunities. 

## NAVY APPROVES MORE TUITION ASSISTANCE SEMESTER HOURS AND RAISES FUNDING CAP

From Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

The Navy announced changes to Tuition Assistance (TA) program May 21 in NAVADMIN 127/18, lifting the fiscal year limit of 16 semester hours and allowing Sailors to use TA up to the Department of Defense's (DoD) fiscal year funding cap of \$4,500, effective June 1, 2018.

These changes are designed to expand Sailors' professional development opportunities, enhance degree completion and support Sailor 2025 initiatives to retain the best and brightest talent.

TA will continue to be paid up to the current DoD limits of \$250 per semester hour, \$166.67 per quarter hour or \$16.67 per clock hour. Tuition


exceeding these limits, in addition to fees, book and instructional materials, will continue to be the Sailor's responsibility.

Education counselors at the Navy College Virtual Education Center (NCVEC) and overseas Navy College Offices are available to discuss Sailors' goals and to help maximize their TA benefits.

The requirement that Sailors attain a "C" or better for undergraduate courses and a "B" or better for graduate courses remains in effect. Reimbursement will be required from those not attaining these grades.

Sailors who have already reached

the former fiscal year limit and have paid for courses using other benefits or their own funds are not eligible for any type of refund or retroactive payment. They may, however, have additional courses funded up to new funding cap.

Sailors are encouraged to review their education plans to take full advantage of this expanded TA authority as well as other opportunities to earn college credit, such as College Level Exam Program (CLEP) and DSST® exams offered through the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Services (DANTES), which can further stretch their TA dollars. 



6 | 2018

### ALL HANDS MAGAZINE PDF OF THE NAVY

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
The Honorable Richard V. Spencer

CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
Adm. John M. Richardson

NAVY CHIEF OF INFORMATION, ACTING  
Capt. Gregory L. Hicks

#### DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY

DIVISION OFFICER  
LT Ricky Rodriguez

SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISOR,  
Gray Team-Navy Media  
MCCS(SW/AW/SG) Josh Thompson

LEADING CHIEF PETTY OFFICER  
MCC(SW/AW) Ryan Tabios

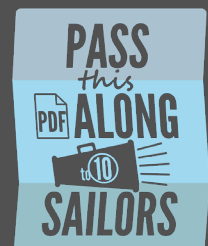
EDITOR  
MC3 Taylor Stinson

All Hands Number 6, 2018 is published by the Defense Media Activity, Navy Production Department, 6700 Taylor Avenue, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland 20755.

ON FRONT COVER: Medal of Honor recipient retired Master Chief Special Warfare Operator (SEAL) Britt Slabinski stands on the stage during his induction ceremony into the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon Auditorium. (U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Paul L. Archer/Released)

ON BACK COVER: Sailors and Marines assigned to Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Fleet Week New York render honors as they pass the Freedom Tower, One World Trade Center, aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS Arlington (LPD 24) during the Parade of Ships marking the beginning of Fleet Week New York (FWNY) 2018. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Heather Atherton/Released)

OUR MISSION IS SHARING THE NAVY STORY



# TOP NEWS CONT.

## DRIVERS TAKE NOTICE IT'S SPRING, MOTORCYCLISTS ARE ON THE ROAD

With warmer weather comes an increase in motorcyclists hitting the road, often catching drivers by surprise.

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA), National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) and the Naval Safety Center are encouraging all motorists to share the road and watch for motorcyclists.

Motorcycles are some of the smallest vehicles on our roads and are frequently hidden in a vehicle's blind spot or blending with traffic. Drivers can successfully interact with motorcyclists by being alert and taking extra time to look twice for motorcyclists. The majority of multi-vehicle motorcycle crashes are generally caused when other drivers don't see the motorcyclist.

Service members should also be aware of the risks associated with riding a motorcycle. Always make yourself as visible as possible,

stay out of blind spots, use DOT-compliant motorcycle helmets, and stay vigilant.

According to NHTSA data, in 2016 there were 5,286 motorcyclists killed in motor vehicle crashes in the United States, 12 of whom were Navy shipmates. While the national numbers have not been released for 2017, the Navy recorded 21 Sailors died in motorcycle crashes during fiscal year 2017.

### TIPS FOR SAFER ROADS

- Drivers should allow a following distance of 3-4 seconds behind a motorcycle to allow enough reaction time on the road.

- All motorists should always use turn signals for every turn or lane change.

- Drivers should also show extra caution at intersections. Crashes often occur when a driver fails to see a motorcyclist approaching an intersection; turning left in front of the motorcycles path.

- Drivers should never try to share a lane with a motorcycle. Always

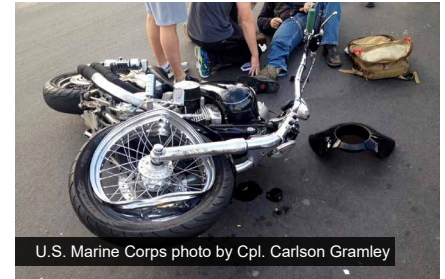
give a motorcycle the full lane's width.

- Motorcyclists should practice operational risk management and never split or share a lane with a motor vehicle.


- Motorcyclists should avoid riding in poor weather, but sometimes it occurs unexpectedly. All motorists should take extra care and be more observant during periods of inclement weather.

- Use your vehicle's rear-view and side-view mirrors properly to help eliminate blind spots where small vehicles like motorcycles can be missed. Motorcyclists should position their motorcycles to avoid being in a driver's blind spot.

- Motorcyclists can improve visibility by applying reflective materials motorcycles and by keeping headlights on at all times to improve the chances of being seen by other drivers.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Carlson Gramley

The Naval Safety Center encourages drivers to be aware of their surroundings and watch for motorcyclists, not only during the spring and summer months, but throughout the year. Motorcyclists should obey the rules of the road and always practice good safety measures to ensure they are more visible to other motorists. Reducing crashes is a shared responsibility for drivers and motorcyclists alike. Safe riding and cooperation from all motorists can help reduce the number of incidents. 

## NAVY PROVIDES FIRST 'GOLDEN TICKETS' UNDER NEW TARGETED REENTRY PROGRAM

From Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

The first set of Golden and Silver Tickets have been issued to 16 Sailors under the new Targeted Reentry Program (TRP), Navy leaders said May 22.

"We had 17 applicants and 16 were approved with 12 awarded a Golden Ticket and four awarded a Silver Ticket," said Capt. Dave Whitehead, director, Military Community Management.

Tickets allow for a streamlined reentry process to the Navy for active duty and Full-Time Support (FTS) Sailors who are leaving the Navy and who decide not to affiliate with the Ready Reserve. Golden Ticket holders are guaranteed a streamlined return within one year of release, should they return to active duty. Silver Ticket holders are afforded a streamlined

return for up to two years, but are subject to the needs of the Navy and community management approval. Golden Tickets not used in the first year become a Silver Ticket for a second year.

"The Navy makes a significant investment in educating and training our Sailors," Whitehead said. "That, coupled with their leadership experience, makes them highly valuable to the Navy. Providing an opportunity to preserve this talent at critical career transition points increase our return on investment while giving our former Sailors an easier choice to return to Service."


The TRP was designed to assist commanders in retaining superior performers who otherwise intend to

fully separate from the Navy. Prior to separation, COs can nominate Sailors for participation in the program. The community managers at the Bureau of Naval Personnel manage the nominations and make a determination on which Sailors are approved for participation and which receive Golden or Silver Tickets. Separating personnel have the final decision in whether or not they want to participate in the program.

Members who are awarded a ticket are transferred into Standby Reserve-Inactive status for the two-year life of their tickets. This Reserve status requires no drilling, members will earn no pay, and will not be eligible for promotion or advancement, health care, retirement points,

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance, and other benefits. Those who return to active duty through TRP will return in the same rank/rate/designator they held prior to separation, but date of rank and time in grade adjustments will be made.

### TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR TRP SAILORS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

- Be in pay grades O-3, O-4 or E-4 to E-6 with no more than 14 years of service.
- Medically fit for separation and must have passed their most recent physical fitness assessment.
- Not in a Failure of Selection status.
- Have no adverse/criminal/civil convictions including court-martial and non-judicial punishment. 

## PRESIDENT TRUMP AWARDED MEDAL OF HONOR TO RETIRED NAVY SEAL FOR HEROIC ACTIONS IN AFGHANISTAN

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Paul L. Archer



U.S. Navy photos by MC1 Raymond D. Diaz III

On May 24, retired Master Chief Petty Officer (SEAL), Britt Slabinski became the 12th living service member to be awarded the Medal of Honor for bravery displayed in Afghanistan.

President Donald J. Trump presented Slabinski with the medal during a White House ceremony for his actions while leading a team under heavy effective enemy fire in an attempt to rescue teammate Petty Officer First Class Neil Roberts during Operation Anaconda in 2002.

During the ceremony, Trump praised Slabinski and his heroic actions.

"Today we induct a new name into the world's most exclusive gathering of heroes," said Trump, "Britt Slabinski is a special man and truly brave person."

"Through your actions you demonstrated that there is no love more pure and no courage more great than the love and courage that burns in the heart of American patriots. We are free because warriors like you are willing to give their sweat, their blood, and if they have to, their lives for our great nation. It's my tremendous privilege to present to you the congressional Medal of Honor," added Trump.

The president also welcomed members of Slabinski's family and friends to view the ceremony and receive a personal tour of the Oval Office.

Slabinski was awarded the Medal

of Honor for the following actions:

In the early morning of March 4, 2002, then-Senior Chief Slabinski led a reconnaissance team to its assigned area atop Takur Ghar, a 10,000-foot snow-covered mountain in Afghanistan. An

enemy rocket-propelled grenade attack on the insertion helicopter caused Roberts to fall onto the enemy-infested mountaintop below, and forced the damaged helicopter to crash land in the valley below. Fully aware of the risks, a numerically superior and well-entrenched enemy force, and approaching daylight, Slabinski made the decision to lead the remainder of his element on a rescue back to the mountaintop. Slabinski's team, despite heavy incoming enemy fire, was subsequently successfully inserted on top of Takur Ghar. Slabinski, without regard for his own life, charged directly toward the enemy strongpoint. He and a teammate assaulted and cleared one enemy bunker at close range. The enemy then unleashed a hail of machine gun fire from a second hardened position 20 meters away. Slabinski exposed himself to enemy fire on three sides, and then moved forward to silence the second position. With bullets piercing his clothing, he repeatedly charged into deadly fire to personally engage the enemy bunker with direct rifle fire, hand grenades and a grenade launcher on the surrounding enemy positions. Facing mounting casualties and low on ammunition, the situation became untenable. Slabinski skillfully maneuvered his team across open terrain, directing them out of effective

enemy fire over the mountainside.

Slabinski maneuvered his team to a more defensible position, directed danger-close air support on the enemy, requested reinforcements and directed the medical care of his rapidly deteriorating wounded teammates, all while continuing to defend his position. When approaching daylight and accurate enemy mortar fire forced the team to maneuver further down the sheer mountainside, Slabinski carried a seriously wounded teammate through waist-deep snow, and led an arduous trek across precipitous terrain while calling in fires on enemies engaging the team from the surrounding ridges. Throughout the next 14 hours, he stabilized the casualties and continued the fight against the enemy until the mountain top could be secured and his team was extracted.

The Medal of Honor is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their own lives above and beyond the call of duty while:

- engaged in an action against an enemy of the United States;
- engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force; or
- serving with friendly foreign forces


engaged in an armed conflict against an opposing armed force in which the United States is not a belligerent party.

Slabinski's Medal of Honor is an upgrade of the Navy Cross that he was previously awarded for these actions.

Former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter directed the military departments to review all Service Cross and Silver Star recommendations for actions since Sept. 11, 2001, to ensure service members who performed valorously were appropriately recognized.

Slabinski, a native of Northampton, Massachusetts, joined the Navy in September 1988. After graduating from Radioman Class "A" School in San Diego, he completed the Basic Underwater Demolition/SEAL course in January 1990. He retired in June 2014 as the director of Naval Special Warfare Safety Assurance and Analysis Program after more than 25 years of service.

Throughout his career, Slabinski was assigned to both West and East Coast SEAL teams and completed nine overseas deployments and 15 combat tours.

Master Chief Slabinski has previously been awarded the Navy Cross; the Navy and Marine Corps Medal; five Bronze Star Medals with Combat "V" device; two Combat Action Ribbons; two Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals; the Defense Meritorious Service Medal; the Meritorious Service Medal; the Joint Service Commendation Medal; the Joint Service Achievement Medal; and eight Good Conduct Medals. 



# EXTREME WEATHER AND DISASTER

Emergencies occur, often with little to no warning. By planning and building a response kit, you can be better prepared for almost any emergency.

Build a kit for your workplace, vehicle and home. Make sure to constantly evaluate your kit and their relevance to the threats in your area.

PREPAREDNESS EMPOWERS YOU. ARE YOU READY?

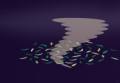
FLOODING



HURRICANE



TORNADO



Tsunami



BLIZZARD



HEATWAVE



FIRE



EARTHQUAKE



LAVA



## Let's "Kit" Started



### H2O

One gallon per person per day



### BATTERY POWERED RADIO AND BATTERIES OR HAND-CRANKED RADIO.

Make sure to pack extra batteries for other battery operated items.



### MUSTER WITH NFAAS

You can get the NFAAS app on your phone and easily account for you and your family members.



### NONPERISHABLE FOOD

Don't forget a can opener and utensils to eat it with.



### \$100

In local currency, small denomination bills



### SPECIAL NEEDS

Such as wheel chair, batteries and other medical equipment supplies.



### FIRST AID KIT

Medical care is important. Remember to pack medication you or a family may need for medical conditions or allergic reactions.



### TOOLS

Used to shut off utilities



### SLEEPING GEAR

For each person.



### DUST MASK

for every member of the household to help filter air.



### PET FOOD & SUPPLIES

Don't forget about your pet if you own one.



### HATS AND GLOVES

To keep warm or to protect your head from the sun.



### FLASHLIGHT

Per every two members of the household.



### MAP & EMERGENCY FAMILY PLAN

Where should your family go in case of an evacuation or separation?



### MATCHES

Stored in a waterproof container.



### PERSONAL SANITATION SUPPLIES

Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste gargage bags and plastic ties.



### PERSONAL & FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Printed or electronic copies of important documents housed in a fire box or on a durable storage device.



### DISINFECTANT

To sanitize and disinfect.

# PCS

## the *Moving Game*



Getting from point "A" to point "B."

### The Game...

One of the benefits of military life is the unique opportunity to experience life in different parts of the country and the world.

A Permanent Change of Station (PCS) is an invitation to a new adventure--where you have the chance to live in diverse cultures and environments. With the help of your installation's relocation specialist, you can seize the opportunity and master your move with these basics.

Unlike temporary travel assignments, permanent change of station (PCS) is a long-term assignment, generally two-four years. Moves inside the continental United States are known as **CONUS** and moves outside the continental United States is known as **OCONUS**. These are typically overseas moves, but OCONUS also includes Alaska, Hawaii and U.S. territories.

The military can manage your PCS through teams of packers and movers. Your Household goods typically are moved via a government carrier.

If you prefer, you may be able to choose a personally procured move (PPM)-also known as a do-it-yourself (DITY).

-The DITY process can be complicated but can save you money. You can move your household goods yourself and collect an incentive payment of up to 95 percent of the government's estimate to move them.

-You can do a personally procured move when you have PCS orders; a temporary duty assignment; face separation or retirement or assignment to, from or between government quarters.

-You can choose a "partial DITY." This reimburses you for moving some of your own items while allowing military-hired movers to do the rest.

Moving outside the continental U.S. can be the adventure of a lifetime. These moves involve more planning and logistics.

### How to play...

You can manage your move by going online to Military OneSource and using the "Plan My Move," tab which provides information on benefits & entitlements, points of contact, checklists, planning tools and more.

Let Military OneSource professionals help you with relocation assistance referrals, and help with housing, transportation, and information on education and employment in your new location so you can focus on your exciting new adventure. Learn more about the moving benefits and resources available to you by talking to your friends for advice and reaching out for assistance at [www.militaryonesource.com](http://www.militaryonesource.com).



### Orders in hand...

#### Time to roll!

Always read your orders entirely and make note of the PCS instructions included within them.

- Meet with your Transportation office
- Contact the Family Center at your new location
- Notify housing of your move date
- Meet with your finance office

Use the PCS Moving Checklist available in the PCS Guide on Military OneSource.com

One of the first steps to a proper move is to familiarize yourself with the moving process.





**CARD #1**  
 Get your PCS as soon as possible to get your orders. The processing process takes time so get it done early.

**CARD #2**  
 Visit your installations local transportation office or Personal Property office to receive a relocation briefing.

**CARD #3**  
 You can manage your move by going online to [MilitaryOneSource.com](http://MilitaryOneSource.com) and using the "Plan My Move," tab which provides information on benefits & entitlements, points of contact, checklists, planning tools and more.

**CARD #4**  
 Good planning with a Do it yourself (DITY) move may result in a profit! Cha-Ching! Contact your Personal Property Transportation Office.

**CARD #6**  
 Be Reachable. Moves go smoother when you are easy to contact. Provide: personal email, work email, cellphone or work number.

**CARD #7**  
 Do not schedule a pickup for the day you are to close on the sale or purchase of a home or on the day you must vacate a rental. Allow time for unforeseen changes.

**CARD #9**  
 Keep all hard copy and electronic records of your move details. Take photos of your documents as a back up.

**CARD #8**  
 Service members must keep all shipments within their weight allowance or pay to ship excess weight. Sort through household goods and set aside items you want to put up for sale.

**DRAW CARD #6**

**DRAW CARD #7**

**DRAW CARD #8**

**DRAW CARD #9**

# ON THE HORIZON

## THE NAVY'S NEW PERFORMANCE EVALUATION SYSTEM

From Chief of Naval Personnel



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Pyoung K. Yi

Can you believe the U.S. Navy has been using the same performance evaluation process since 1996? That's 22 years... that's when the Macarena dance song hit the airwaves and the first Mission Impossible movie played on the silver screen. The current performance evaluation system has served our Navy well, but as with many things, it's time to move on, embrace progress and technology. So as part of the Manpower,

Personnel, Training and Education (MPT &E) transformation efforts here at the Chief of Naval Personnel, the time has come to say fair winds and following seas to our current performance evaluation system, and hail a new one.


During numerous visits and focus groups with the Fleet since 2015, Sailors made it clear they wanted something new, innovative, realistic, and user-friendly. NOT an evaluation process that's time consuming. Based on Fleet inputs, we started reimagining what a new system could look like and how to build it. Leveraging human behavioral science, new technology, and enhanced analytic methodology, we developed a

prototype system that compares a Sailor to an established standard vice their peers, emphasizes performance over tenure, and provides frequent feedback that includes input from seniors, peers and subordinates alike.

In 2017, team CNP took the prototype for a test drive. Here's a sample of the prototype features: uses a web-based application to eliminate paper documentation and provide mobile device access in the future, gives Sailors the opportunity for more frequent feedback through an online tool to provide robust coaching sessions, develops specific standards and desired skills for each warfare community, called 'competencies', eliminates the P, MP, and EP scales and shifts to a nine-point grading scale to accurately capture performance, character, leadership and potential.

We compared the results from the new

prototype system with the old, made a few tweaks, and will conduct a third round of testing this year, involving up to 10,000 participants. Once these tests are complete and analyzed, we will further refine and modify the system. Why... because we want to get it right the first time!

The MPT&E Transformation IT architecture for this new performance evaluation system is in development. This is a dynamic undertaking requiring coordination with the development and deployment schedules of many other transformation projects, such as the future pay and personnel system and the future source of authoritative data. Our goal is to pilot the multi-rater counseling feature with up to 10,000 Sailors later this year with a medium scale counseling pilot planned for March 2019. This phased or agile approach will help us ensure it is a useful tool for the Fleet. 

## CNP TALKS BRILLIANT ON THE BASICS II

From Chief of Naval Personnel



U.S. Navy photos by MC3 Kyle Hafer

The Navy Personnel team is committed to increasing the Navy's personnel end strength to man the Nation the Nation Needs. The below is an excerpt from a podcast with Vice Adm. Robert Burke where he discusses growing the Navy, retention and how deckplate leaders at all levels can contribute to encouraging our Sailors and their families to 'Stay Navy'.


### What Brilliant on the Basics II is about...

It's really a call to action and a reminder of basic responsibilities of every leader in the Navy. When you think about it, every Sailor is a leader in our Navy. It is focusing on our responsibilities as leaders to care for one another. It is those basics things that we need to do our job, when we arrive at new commands, for career and professional growth, so that we can move on to the next level, take care of our families, go to sea, go off and do our jobs and be successful.

### What you can do as leaders...

This is the first time that we have been growing in nearly a generation. For most Sailors in the Navy, they have

never been in a growing Navy. It's a different environment and you are only just beginning to see the benefits of it. We don't have the capacity to recruit our way into that bigger Navy. We're going to have to also retain at record levels to get ourselves there. We will use SRBs and other incentives to help us get there, but the biggest impact on retention is how we treat each other. The programs that we've offered in Sailor 2025 will certainly be helpful and we will continue to roll those out as fast as we can. We'll continue to improve the services we provide at personnel support detachments

and roll out improvements in the pay and personnel systems quickly. But the deck plate day-to-day interactions with our Sailors are the absolute most important thing. How we treat each other and how we value our people says more about our organization than anything else. 



# MY NAVY CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYMPOSIUM TO VISIT NORFOLK IN JUNE

From Chief of Naval Personnel



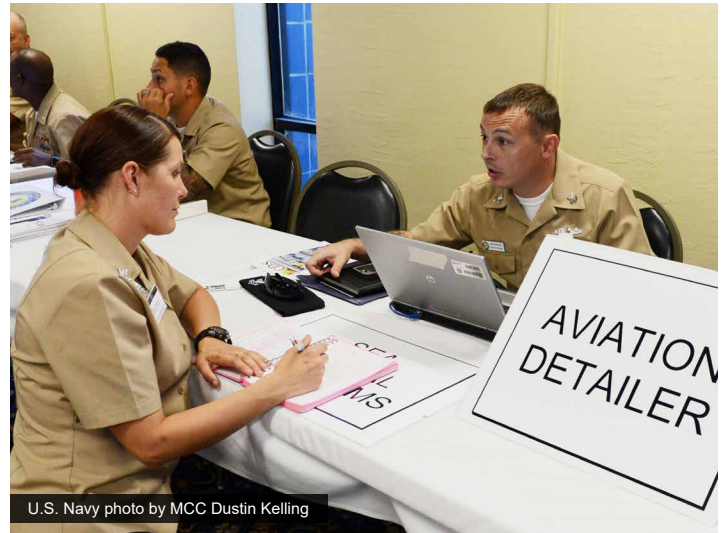
U.S. Navy photo by MC3 Charles Gaddis



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew Riggs



U.S. Navy photo by MC2 Matthew Riggs



U.S. Navy photo by MCC Dustin Kelling

“Take Charge of Your Career!” is the theme of the Sailor-focused My Navy Career Development Symposium (CDS) making its way to Norfolk, June 19 to 21.

Norfolk-area Sailors will have the opportunity to learn how to make the most of the Navy’s Sailor 2025 program, the personnel modernization transformation initiative and how to optimize career opportunities.

Led by Chief of Navy Personnel Vice Adm. Robert Burke, the symposium is scheduled to make three stops throughout the Tidewater area: June 19 at Brashear Conference Center, Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story; June 20 at Aero Theater, Naval Air Station Oceana;

and June 21 at C9 Theater, Naval Station Norfolk.

“We continue to receive good feedback about CDS everywhere we go. Sailors are really excited to play an active role in managing their careers. That is why I look forward to bringing CDS to the largest fleet concentration area in the world. It gives us the chance to reach the most Sailors,” said Burke.

Each stop My Navy CDS makes will be full of opportunities for Sailors. The chief of naval personnel (CNP) will kick off each day with an update on his vision of Sailor 2025 and the all-new Performance Evaluation System.

Following CNP, a host of experts will give short presentations on subjects such as “How Rating Exams Work,”

“How the Navy Chooses Chiefs,” Volunteer Education (VOLED), “Pay and Benefits” and more.

The new, shortened presentation format will highlight key programs but will also allow Sailors to dive into specific topics with subject matter experts in afternoon sessions. Also, CDS representatives will be available throughout the day to answer Sailors’ questions.

After the presentations, a leadership panel hosted by CNP will provide an opportunity for Sailors of all ranks to stand up and ask questions or use a smart phone app that will be available to download on site.

Sailors will also be able to meet face to face with detailers and community

managers to discuss orders and career paths, and ask questions. Chiefs especially are encouraged to bring their Professional Apprenticeship Career Track (PACT) program Sailors to discuss rating assignments. PACT Sailors may potentially leave CDS with a rate.

“This event is designed to give you, the Sailor, the tools you need to manage your career, and to tell you all about the new programs and opportunities that exist within the Navy that you can use,” said Cmdr. Gabe Gammache, key CDS coordinator at Navy Personnel Command.

Don’t miss your chance to meet with top Navy leaders, including chief of naval personnel, enlisted community managers and detailers. **AH**

# Fish Out of Water



By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Taylor N. Stinson

It was a sunny, mid-spring afternoon in Port Hueneme, California, at the Navy Safe Harbor Wounded Warrior Training Camp. Water splashed loudly as swimmers dove into the pool, the trainer's thunderous voice overpowering the sound of limbs cutting through the water. Rock music played through the speakers, adding to the adrenaline-ridden atmosphere as swimmers pushed their bodies past their limits, and teammates and family members cheered them on. Occasionally, the barks of service dogs rang throughout the open-air swimming pool.

Finally, at the end of training, a large man built like a tank slowly maneuvered out of the pool. He patted his service dog, Liberty Bell, as he swapped his special swimming goggles for sunglasses. His wife handed him his cane, and they walked to a metal picnic bench. A friendly man, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Fry smiled as he greeted everyone alongside his wife, Carrie.

"I've been in the Navy for just over

30 years," he began. "I joined in late 1987 at the ripe age of 17. I enlisted for UDT [underwater demolition team], back in the day, to be an underwater welder."

Fry's drive for adrenaline and adventure was what initially brought him into the Navy. He recalled the Navy's motto back then: "Navy. It's not just a job, it's an adventure." Robert didn't want to be like everyone else from his beach hometown, where everyone surfed. He wanted more.

The fifth week of boot camp, he was given the option to get out under honorable conditions because the Navy was overmanned. Determined to stay, he chose another rating, aviation electronics technician. Then he was pipelined for search-and-rescue, which he knew little about at the time, except for the popular movie, "Top Gun." From there, he remembered, it was a career filled with adventures. From rappel school to combat search-and-rescue and dust-offs with the Army, he had one

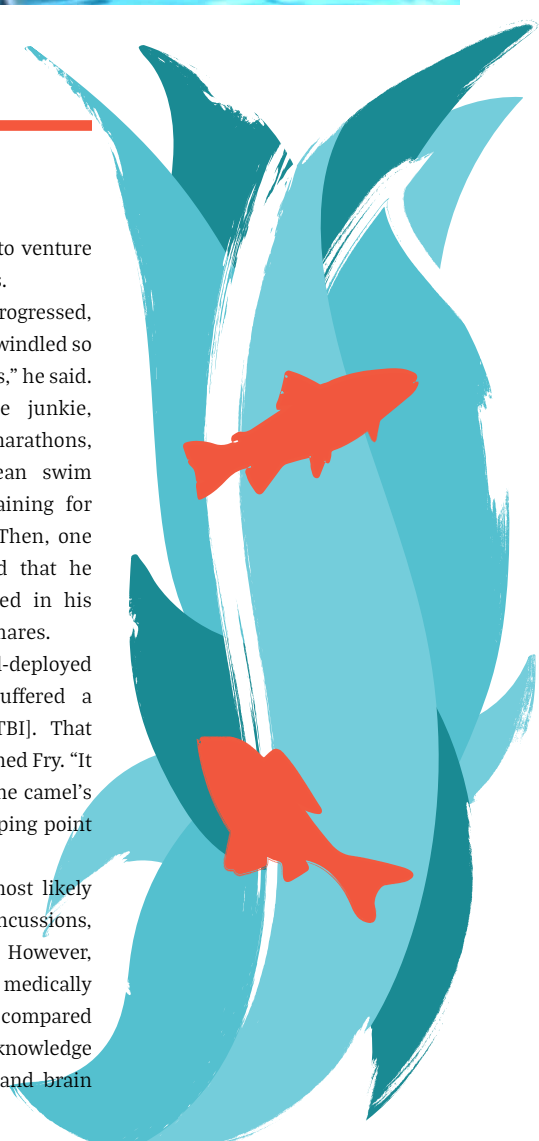
opportunity after another to venture out and see amazing things.

"As my career and time progressed, those adventures kind of dwindled so I took up challenging sports," he said.

A self-styled endurance junkie, Fry participated in marathons, triathlons and open ocean swim competitions. He was training for the Fuji Ultra Marathon. Then, one day, something happened that he could have not anticipated in his wildest dreams - or nightmares.

"I was serving forward-deployed over in Japan and I suffered a traumatic brain injury [TBI]. That was the final straw," explained Fry. "It was the straw that broke the camel's back, and that was the tipping point for me and my whole life."

In his early years, Fry most likely suffered from multiple concussions, according to doctors. However, these concussions were medically undocumented because, compared to today, awareness and knowledge surrounding concussions and brain



injuries were limited in the '80s. As a result, his last TBI was devastating.

Carrie, who was with Fry when the incident happened, said, "Initially, we didn't realize how bad it was, so it was a progression with all this. I think, really, when we got to Walter Reed that was the 'oh my' moment for me, realizing our lives were really fixing to change. ... It's kind of a surreal moment when you realize your life is going to be very different than what you envisioned."

Days that were meant to be focused on career and family shifted to rehabilitation and acceptance. For Fry, accepting his situation was one of the hardest challenges he had to confront. A man who once considered himself very physically fit and active, he struggled to understand that he was dealing with not only vision, balance and memory problems, but a condition that would leave him unable to ever drive or even ride a bicycle again.

"It was a shocking moment, was when the doctor said I wasn't going to drive again," he recalled. "You think that's the worst, and the rest starts stacking up and it's tough. And I can tell you there were a lot of dark moments where I was just like, 'That's it. I'm done. I'm out. I don't want to hear another thing that's wrong with me. It's bad enough I have to live with this thing that's wrong with me, but to keep telling me it's just worse and worse?' It just didn't seem fair."

Fry's TBI didn't just affect his wife and children, but also his friends and shipmates, as they too struggled to realize the depth of the situation and wondered how to support someone going through something that is not easy to understand.

"None of your friends want to talk to you; they just don't know how to deal with it," said Fry. "They see somebody who's larger than life, just collapsing under the pressure and they don't know how to help you so they just withdraw, and it leaves you alone and all you have is your family. It's a burden to your family, because they now have all of your bad days."

Fry's doctors suggested rehab and therapy. After several months, Fry met someone who would change his life for the better. Georgia Monsam of Safe Harbor was full of tough love,

which he initially resented. She was also empathetic, but willing to put all of her efforts into getting people back on their feet.

"[I needed] someone to tell me, 'It is what it is. Overcome it. Let's see what we can do to move forward.' And that should be what the hallmark of Safe Harbor is," said Fry. "Getting people to move beyond that point where they just feel kind of hopeless and give them a renewed sense of purpose and give them something new to focus on. Turns out you may be good at something you've never tried."

Monsam knew that adaptive swimming would be the best fit for Fry at the initial Safe Harbor Wounded Warrior Training Camp. He also signed up for cycling, rowing and shooting (pistol). He will compete in the Department of Defense Warrior Games at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, this June.

"I thought I wasn't going to get back into any type of sports," he said. "I lost the ability to ride my regular bicycle because of my balance, and it was just one blow after another. First it was no driving, now I can't ride a regular bike, and then you start walking with a cane. I had no aspirations or thought it was going to happen. Then I went to the Bethesda, Maryland, training camp and I realized adaptive sports is just that, they adapt."

For Fry, adaptive sports meant a one-way ticket getting back into what he loved, swimming, and even finding other sports for which he might have a passion.

"My call sign is 'Fish,'" he explained. "It's been continuity throughout my career, swimming. I've always done it, and it's not hard for me. It's relaxing. It makes me feel normal in the pool, [and] that's where I am very comfortable. I am comfortable underwater or swimming through the water, so I was very, very glad that I made the swim team, and I push myself to the limit every time I get in the water with the coach."

The training camp is not only about Fry pushing himself past what he thought were his body's limitations, but also pushing his teammates to perform to the best of their abilities. For Fry, it's not about winning, but



about representing his Navy in any way he can and making new friends.

"We can pick on each other. It's that same type of camaraderie you have on active duty and that's a [sign] of liking somebody when you have that banter," he laughed. "I need more of it in my life and I think I can speak for everyone on that. We get together and we bond really [quickly], even though we're from all over. So, if I had to pick one thing that they focus on at Safe Harbor, it's that we get more of that, more of that kind of camaraderie. ... It really

doesn't matter what your background in the service was or any of that; we're all the same. It's a neutral playing field; it's comforting and you can let your guard down. It's nice."

Thanks to Safe Harbor, Fry rejoined his Navy family in a new way, got back into the sport he loves and found new shipmates among those who understand his condition. For Carrie, the training camp has helped her as a spouse and caregiver. She also appreciates seeing Fry get back into the things he loved to do. 