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The One Navy-Marine Corps Team: Strategic Guidance articulates Del Toro’s vision to build, train and equip the Naval Forces to deter, and if necessary win conflicts and wars in support of the defense strategy and national security priorities. “We have to make the right investments today so that we have the right capabilities tomorrow to deter and defeat any adversary,” said Del Toro. “We must act with urgency now as we rise to meet unprecedented challenges, and it’s this sense of urgency that’s the driving force behind the strategic guidance for the Department.”

Del Toro’s top priorities – maintaining maritime dominance, empowering our people and strengthening strategic partnerships – build on Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III’s vision of integrated deterrence, with an agile and ready force.

“Maximizing the Navy and Marine Corps maritime dominance in an era of strategic competition will define the Department’s mission for the next several years,” said Del Toro. “Our global economy, and the self-determination of free nations everywhere, especially in the Indo-Pacific, depends on sea power.”

The strategic guidance also builds on Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger’s Force Design 2030 to modernize the expeditionary posture of the Marine Corps and implements Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Mike Gilday’s Navigation Plan to expand our fleet capabilities for distributed operations.

“Implementation of this guidance is critical,” added Del Toro. “Building the future capability we need to compete globally while taking care of our Sailors, Marines and military personnel requires a fully integrated Navy and Marine Corps team.”
With COVID-19 vaccines now mandatory for all military members, the Navy has announced plans to start processing for discharge of those who refuse vaccination without a pending or approved exemption.

The Navy's mandate began at the end of August after the release of the Secretary of Defense memo instructing military departments to enact the new vaccination requirement for DoD uniformed personnel who are not medically or administratively exempt. With the release of ALNAV 062/21 and NAVADMIN 190/21, all service members were given 90 days to comply.

Now, NAVADMIN 225/21, released Oct. 13, sets a deadline for all active-duty Sailors to be fully vaccinated by Nov. 28, while those in the selected reserve have until Dec. 28. The message also outlines the consequences for failing to comply.

This deadline makes Nov. 14 and Dec. 14 the final days active and selected reserve, respectively, can receive the second of the two required shots for a two-dose vaccine or the single dose of a one-dose vaccine, and complete the 14-day waiting period required to achieve full vaccination.

Sailors must be prepared to execute their mission at all times, in places throughout the world, including where vaccination rates are low and disease transmission is high. Immunizations are of paramount importance to protecting the health of the force and the warfighting readiness of the Fleet.

"To date, over 98 percent of active-duty U.S. Navy service members have met our readiness responsibility by completing or initiating a COVID-19 vaccination series, ensuring the continued readiness of our worldwide deployable Navy," said Adm. William Lescher, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, in the message.

The Navy's policy goal is to achieve a fully vaccinated force against the persistent and lethal threat of COVID-19. "Tragically, there have been 164 deaths within the Navy family due to COVID-19, far exceeding the combined total of all other health or mishap related injuries and deaths over the same time period," wrote Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the Chief of Naval Personnel. Of those, he noted, 144 were not immunized. The vaccination status of the remaining 20 remains undetermined.

To oversee the administrative discharge process for those refusing the vaccine, the Navy established the COVID Consolidated Disposition Authority (CCDA). This, Lescher wrote, will "ensure a fair and consistent process" for separation determinations.

The Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) is the CCDA for the administrative separation processing of Navy service members, with the Chief of Navy Reserve (CNR) providing support to the CCDA for cases involving Navy service members in the Selected Reserve. The Vice Chief of Naval Operations retains authority for non-judicial punishment and courts-martial.

Administrative actions may begin as soon as a Navy service member meets the definition of "refusing the vaccine", which is a Navy service member who received a lawful order to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, is not or will not be fully vaccinated on the date required by the order, and does not have a pending or approved exemption request.

Effective immediately upon the release of the message, commanders shall not allow Sailors refusing the vaccine to promote or advance, reenlist, or execute orders, with the exception of separation orders, until the CCDA has completed disposition of their case. Transfer orders may be canceled by Navy Personnel Command.

For officers and enlisted serving in Navy leadership roles refusing the vaccine, they will be notified immediately in writing that they have five days to either begin a vaccination series or request an exemption before being relieved and have detachment for cause initiated.

Senior leaders are members of command triads and those key staff positions, including any flag officer or flag officer select, regardless of their current billet. A complete list of these positions is found in the message.

With COVID-19 vaccination now mandatory, commanders, commanding officers, or officers in charge, with the concurrence of the first flag officer in the chain of command, are authorized to temporarily reassign Navy service members who refuse the COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of exemption status, based on operational readiness or mission requirements.

Commanding officers must identify those refusing the vaccine and verify that the Sailors have an initial counseling NAVPERS 1070/13, or "Page 13". Within thirty days of a Navy service member refusing the vaccine, reporting seniors must submit a special evaluation or fitness report. In addition to documenting failure to comply with individual medical readiness responsibilities, the report shall document other facts as appropriate, including any misconduct related to UCMJ Art. 92.

Commands are required to report Sailors refusing the vaccine to Commander, Navy Personnel Command. Rules differ depending on whether the member is an E-6 and above or officer, or an E-5 and below. Information on reporting procedures for each, along with points of contact, are available in the NAVADMIN.

For Navy service members refusing the vaccine, the CCDA also retains the authority for administrative processes regarding removal of warfare qualifications, additional qualification designations (AQD), Navy Enlisted Classifications (NEC), or sub-specialties, except in cases where removal authority is otherwise authorized by law or Executive Order. The CCDA may also seek recoupment of applicable bonuses, special and incentive pays, and the cost of training and education for service members refusing the vaccine.

Those separated only for vaccine refusal will receive no lower than a general discharge under honorable conditions. This type of discharge could result in the loss of some veterans' benefits.

Navy service members who started terminal leave on or before the applicable deadlines are administratively exempted from vaccine requirements.

Sailors seeking an exemption to the vaccine mandate can apply for medical reasons or a religious accommodation. Details on how to apply for each are available in NAVADMIN 190/21.

Complete information on the administrative ramifications of vaccine refusal can be found in NAVADMIN 195/21. Information on the Navy's COVID-19 policy is in ALNAV 062/21 and NAVADMIN 190/21.
The world’s largest multinational operational experimentation event, combining manned and unmanned systems, recently delivered a series of world firsts as Allied Navies worked together to exploit cutting edge technology in an exercise off the Portuguese coast.

The exercise, known as Robotic Experimentation and Prototyping Augmented by Maritime Unmanned Systems (REP(MUS)), was hosted by the Portuguese Navy and took place in the North Atlantic Portuguese Exercise Areas, ending Sept. 24.

In February 2019, by invitation of the Portuguese Head of Delegation, the MUSI Steering Board embraced REP(MUS) as its flagship exercise for Operational Experimentation activities. They joined in partnership with other lead coordinators, University of Porto, and the NATO Center for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE). The scope of the exercise continues to advance and evolve in order to keep pace with the technologies and systems that are deployed and developed.

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Some 15 NATO allies and partners participated in REP(MUS) 21, along with multiple organizations and commands within the NATO structure and from the host nation Portugal. The exercise set the stage to deliver several groundbreaking exercise objectives, including the development and evaluation of operational concepts involving manned/unmanned teaming, exploiting MUS capabilities to enhance maritime situational awareness and the evaluation of a variety of MUS payloads and associated communication networks across all domains. More importantly and the most impressive, the exercise pushed the boundaries of interoperability between Allied Maritime Unmanned Systems.

“AT REP(MUS) 21, we demonstrated the force multiplying effect that can be achieved when multinational systems are not only interoperable but also Interchangeable (I2I), paving the way for combined operations with conventional and unmanned allied forces in the future,” said Andrea R. Bell-Miller, Program Executive Office Unmanned and Small Combatants (PEO USC), U.S. Head of Delegation to the NATO MUSI and REP(MUS) 21 USA Exercise Director. “This was achieved through the integration of two C2 systems, the United States Common Control System (CCS) and the United Kingdom’s MAPLE UxS C2 system. Some of the hallmark accomplishments include dynamic re-tasking and shared use of multi-national UxS resources across distributed C2 nodes at sea (USNS Carson City) and ashore (Maritime Operations Centre, PO Naval Base Troia), this enabled agile transfer of tactical control (TACON) between nations – a world first!”

This handover and seamless coordination between missions and national control systems will greatly enhance the agility and capability of Allied Maritime Forces in the future. The flexibility I2I provides to commanders will increase concentration of force, range and persistence where it is needed most. Ms. Bell-Miller, as U.S. Head of Delegation and USA Exercise Director, led the I2I efforts from planning to execution.

The REP(MUS) exercise is a hotbed of innovation and this was proven once more in 2021 as participants put new and emerging concepts to the test in a variety of operational environments and warfare areas. Among these participants were members of the NATO Maritime Unmanned Systems Coordination Cell and units and personnel from U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet.

“It was so pleasing to see that despite the planning challenges posed by the pandemic, the lead nations were still able to deliver world firsts in the sphere of maritime unmanned systems operations,” said Sean Trevethan, Director of the Coordination Cell.

U.S. Sixth Fleet and units and personnel from Sixth Fleet Task Forces also brought enhanced capability and capacity to Portugal.

“U.S. Sixth Fleet’s participation in REP(MUS) 21 with the USNS Carson City (T-EPF-7) provided an at sea command and control node to integrate and demonstrate unmanned systems,” said Anthony Constable, Office of Naval Research Global Science Advisor, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa/U.S. Sixth Fleet. “The crew of Carson City, along with elements of Commander, Task Force 68, practiced executing UUV mission sets and interacting with other unmanned systems throughout the maritime domain, including systems belonging to NATO allies and partners.”

PED (USC) provides the Navy with the design, development, build, maintenance and modernization of unmanned maritime systems, mine warfare systems and small surface combatants.

U.S. Sixth Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts full spectrum joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.
Naval forces from Australia, Japan, the U.K., and the U.S. joined together in multinational Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) 2021 to conduct naval training in the eastern Indian Ocean, Oct. 15-18.

During the multinational exercise, four Indo-Pacific navies, to include the Royal British Navy (RN), Royal Australian Navy (RAN), Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF), and U.S. Navy engaged in enhanced planning, advanced maritime communication operations, anti-submarine warfare operations, air warfare operations, live-fire gunnery events, replenishments-at-sea, cross-deck flight operations, and maritime interception operations.

"MPX is high-end, multi-domain maritime training at its finest," said Rear Adm. Dan Martin, commanding officer, Carrier Strike Group 1 (CSG 1). "All four participating nations have enduring interests in the security, stability, and well-being of the Indo-Pacific region. We will continue to fine-tune our collective assets - speed, precision, lethality - in order to maximize our warfighting proficiency with our regional trusted partners."

Elements of the Royal Australian, British, Japanese, and American maritime forces routinely operate together in the Indo-Pacific, fostering a cooperative approach toward regional security and stability. This exercise brings multiple allies and partners together to strengthen interoperability and increase operations in the Indian Ocean region.

"The U.S. Navy routinely conducts integrated training operations with its international partners to demonstrate our commitment and investment in the Indo-Pacific region," said Capt. Gilbert Clark, commodore, Destroyer Squadron 17 (DESRON 1). "In addition to preserving rules-based international order in the global maritime commons, the U.S. Navy's unwavering pledge to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific is critical to international trade and commerce."

CSG 1 recently conducted a variety of bilateral exercises with the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and tri-carrier operations with the Royal Navy's H.M.S Queen Elizabeth (R08) and U.S. Navy's Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76). "Multilateral and bilateral exercises demonstrate our steadfast pledge to our partners and our collective desire to maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific," said Capt. P. Scott Miller, commanding officer, USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70). "The closer we train together, the more quickly and easily we can come together when our combined forces are needed."

"Our ongoing cooperation with Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States further strengthens our professional mariner relationships and enhance our interoperability," said Cmdr. Antony Pisani, commanding officer, HMCS Ballarat. "Both Ballarat and Sirius have spent significant time deployed to the region this year and Maritime Partnership Exercise adds to the list of excellent navy-to-navy activities we've enjoyed with the United States."

CSG 1 is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations. This marks the first time that a CSG is deployed in the 7th Fleet area of operations with the Air Wing of the Future (AWOTF), including the first operational deployment for both the F-35C Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter and Navy CMV-22B Osprey.

CSG 1 provides a combat-ready force to protect and defend the collective maritime interests of the U.S. and its regional allies and partners. Collectively, the VINCSG consists of more than 7,000 Sailors, capable of carrying out a wide variety of missions around the globe.

For more news from CSG 1, visit dvids.

Naval Information Warfare Systems Command (NAVWAR) Fleet Readiness Directorate's Cybersecurity Office (FRD 300) has successfully delivered cyber baselines to 125 U.S. Navy ships, with a goal to deliver the modern, web-based application across all 180 ships by fiscal year 2023, decreasing cybersecurity vulnerabilities Navy-wide.

In recent years, the Department of Defense (DoD) has become increasingly reliant on information technology (IT) systems and networks to conduct military operations and perform critical functions. To ensure the security of these systems, the cyber baseline certifies ship systems comply with DoD and Department of Navy (DoN) cybersecurity requirements during ships' availability, or scheduled modernization, before deployment.

The cyber baseline offers a searchable, easy-to-use platform-specific record of all Navy networks, including hosted and connected, aloft and ashore systems. This enables the ability to independently manage a ship's IT capabilities and maintain a ship's cyber readiness throughout the platform lifecycle.

Most recently, FRD 300 successfully delivered cyber baselines to USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) and USS Paul Hamilton (DDG 60). This accomplishment expands on the success of USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76) delivery in April 2020 during a challenging, compressed delivery timeline, while forward deployed in Japan. The Lincoln and Hamilton crews continue to demonstrate how this integrated approach to delivering cyber-ready platforms enables ship's IT technicians to maintain their cyber readiness year after year.

Following the cyber baseline delivery, Lincoln achieved 100% adherence to cybersecurity technical standards for all 29 command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C4I) systems and Hamilton achieved 100% adherence for all 16 C4I systems.

"Our goal is to deliver perfect, sustain perfect, be cyber-ready always," said FRD 300 Director Duane Phillips. "The delivery of the cyber baselines has allowed us to reach an historic all time low in cybersecurity vulnerabilities, through identifying capability risks during a ship's availability and assuring a cyber-ready platform prior to workups. The end-to-end approach confirms all systems comply with DoD and DoN requirements and are approved to meet cyber security technical authority standards now and into the future."

Ensuring cyber readiness is a cross-organizational effort that involves NAVWAR Headquarters, NAVWAR's Program Executive Offices (PEOs) and Naval Information Warfare Centers (NIWC) Pacific and Atlantic working together to support the delivery of cyber-ready platforms. Additionally, FRD 300 partners with Type Command (TYCOM) Communications and Information Systems Directorate (N6) and the Information Warfare Training Group (WFTG) to identify barriers and provide solutions to sustain cyber readiness across the fleet.

FRD 300 works directly with the fleet to rapidly address operational challenges, improve maintenance processes and isolate cyber threats to ensure ships are cyber-ready and prepared to meet all mission requirements. For example, FRD 300 provides a combination of both in-person and distance training to ensure Sailors can operate and maintain the advanced C4I systems in today's dynamic cyber environment in accordance with established standards.

"This training empowers our Sailors to maintain their defensive posture while operating in challenging missions," said Phillips.
ANNUAL TUITION ASSISTANCE CAPS INCREASED THIS YEAR

From MyNavyHR

The Navy has increased tuition assistance benefits, allowing qualified Sailors to now use up to 18 semester credit hours annually, up from the previously allowed 12. It’s an expansion of the benefit that Sailors have long asked for and goes into effect on Oct. 1, according to NAVADMIN 214/21 released Sept. 28.

Along with this expanded credit cap comes a list of new eligibility requirements that tighten up who can use Navy Tuition Assistance (TA) and when.

“We are committed to ensuring fully qualified Sailors can take advantage of this increased education opportunity in a manner that reinforces our commitment to professionalism, warfighting, and retention,” wrote Vice Adm. John B. Nowell, Jr., the chief of naval personnel in the message. “Operational readiness remains our top priority. As always, commanding officers may establish benchmark qualifications for Sailors and officers under their command, and manage off-duty education pursuit, based on current or anticipated operational commitments.”

Though the credit limit has been increased, Sailors can only use TA to fund two courses each quarter of the fiscal year.

Both enlisted Sailors and officers must have individual trait marks of 3.0 or greater on their most recent observed evaluation or fitness report and can have no non-judicial punishments or court martial in the past twelve months, an increase of six months from previous policy.

Minimum time in service also increases from two to three years.

There will be no “grandfather” clause for this rule, meaning Sailors who started using TA or NCPACE at two years of service must now wait until reaching the three-year service mark before being eligible again.

Active duty enlisted Sailors under 16 years of service and reservists whose active duty orders must have 12 months or more remaining on their current enlistment or extension as of the course start date.

Reservists on one-year orders will no longer be eligible for TA.

The 12-month policy is intended to more closely align the retention aspect of TA with that of the statutory two-year officer service obligation for using the program.

Officers, with the exception of limited duty and chief warrant officers, become eligible upon promotion to O-3. Complete details on the new policies can be found in NAVADMIN 214/21.

NAVY COLLEGE PROGRAM GOES VIRTUAL - WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

From MyNavyHR

The Navy College Program announced a complete transition to virtual education services for Sailors across the globe beginning Oct. 1, 2021.

The transition will shift Sailor counseling from brick-and-mortar Navy College Offices (NCOs) to the Navy College Virtual Education Center (NCVEC) as the one-stop-shop for Sailors pursuing personal and professional development opportunities.

This virtual model proved successful in 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic closed the doors on many OCONUS NCOs.

Throughout 2020 and 2021, Sailors turned to the NCVEC for virtual education counseling and Tuition Assistance (TA) support.

The NCVEC provides call-in and live chat with counselors during scheduled hours, and Sailors can use the automated Chatbot function on the Navy College website, leave a question or request a counselor call them back using issue Tracker in MyNavy Education.

“Sailors interested in pursuing off-duty educational opportunities will continue to have a wide array of virtual services available to them,” said Navy Voluntary Education (VOLED) Director Lt. Cmdr. Adam Walski. “More importantly, services will not be interrupted for those in need of education assistance or counseling in any location worldwide.”

The NCOs making the transition to virtual services include: Rota, Spain Signenella, Italy, Naples, Italy, Bahrain, Misawa, Japan, Yokosuka, Japan, Atsugi, Japan, Sasebo, Japan, Okinawa, Japan, Guam, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

Academic institutions currently aboard Navy bases, CONUS and OCONUS, will remain in place and continue their current role in providing Sailors with quality education.

Commanders and education services officers can expect to receive the same level of customer service as any Sailor in the world from the Navy College Program.

The TA and Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCFAPE) programs will not change, and all other assistance will be provided by the NCVEC when requested.

Concurrent with the transition to virtual services announcement, the Navy College Program announced an update to the NCVEC phone number.

All NCVECs customers will now use the MyNavy Career Center (MNCC) toll-free number, 1-833-330-MNCC.

The transition to the MNCC toll-free number supports the Chief of Naval Personnel’s transformation efforts to provide a single source for all Navy human resources needs and to provide a worldwide toll-free number for Sailors to have 24/7 access to VOLED services.

“We believe transitioning to the MNCC number will streamline the process for Sailors who are ready to take the next step in their education goals,” said Walski. “Not only will it be part of a one-stop-shop of other services including Navy Cool and USMAP but it will be especially beneficial to our Sailors stationed outside the continental US since they can call any time, at no cost to them.”

After calling the toll-free number, Sailors needing educational services such as TA and NCPACE must select the option for “Training and Education” then “NCVEC.”

For more information on the Navy College Program, click here.
Dear Veteran,

I am happy to help you. I am in 4th grade at Fisher's Landing Elementary. Our school had a special ceremony on Monday. We made cards to give to our Vets. My friend, Josh, and I made some cards for you. We wrote things like, “Thank you for everything you did for our country.” We wanted to help make you smile. We hope you enjoy our card. We will be happy when you get it.

Thank you,

Josh

---

Thank you for your service.

LETTERS TO VETERANS COURTESY OF FISHER’S LANDING ELEMENTARY 4TH GRADE STUDENTS OF MRS. LEIGH ANN WILLIAMS’ CLASS
Veteran’s Day is an opportunity for Americans to honor those who have served in uniform under the flag, which represents the nation and its citizens. There is perhaps no Navy unit that takes more pride in honoring service members, past and present, than the United States Navy Ceremonial Guard.

The Navy Ceremonial Guard was established in 1931 as the official ceremonial unit of the Navy to represent the service with Presidential, Joint Forces, Naval and public ceremonies in the nation’s capital.

“The way in which the ceremonies are conducted and how we conduct ourselves is extremely important at Arlington National Cemetery,” said Command Master Chief Paul McCrory. The standards McCrory and the guardsmen maintain are essential in “representing those that have come before us,” he said, “and those who made the ultimate sacrifice.”

For almost 100 years, each of the four platoons of the Navy Ceremonial Guard has performed a unique role essential to honoring our veterans, their families, and our flag. The Casket Bearers Platoon delivers the remains of fallen Sailors to their final resting place at Arlington, or another veteran’s cemetery.

“Sometimes it’s kind of hard,” he recalled. “Bearers are right there with the family, with the deceased, and you feel all that emotion as you’re folding the flag. It’s a very special thing.”

The movements of the casket bearers during the ceremony are precise, and refined through months of training and performance. “We take a lot of pride in that,” said Rosadorodriguez, “because we do it for the family, and we want it to be special for them.”

Rosadorodriguez participated in the dignified transfer and funeral ceremony of Petty Officer 3rd Class Max Soviak in September. The service was particularly emotional for him.

“The flag represents everybody who’s fought and died and all the hard working American people.”

SEAMAN JEFFREY POWELL
MEMBER OF U.S. NAVY’S CEREMONIAL GUARD

The service members performing in the Navy Ceremonial Guard are all new accession Sailors, having been recruited to join immediately following their graduation from boot camp and putting a two year hold on their Navy career. They train daily on the importance of respecting these traditions, and honoring those fallen veterans they lay to rest.

Though none of the guardsmen serving today will perform those duties more than two years, their fallen shipmates and the flag under which they rest, will receive the honors of these ceremonies and traditions as long as there are those willing to serve a members of the U.S. Navy Ceremonial Guard...

For more information about the U.S. Navy’s Ceremonial Guard, follow on Facebook.
As the nation takes time to honor the service and sacrifice of veterans, Americans also remember their fighting spirit and thank them for all they gave in their service to the country. We look at their service and their sacrifice and we recognize them for all they gave in their service to the country.

For some veterans, mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder from their service still affect them to this day. With many resources that encourage a healthy work-life balance and resilience in mind, body and soul, there is one treatment out there that is the oldest, and sometimes, the least costly out of all of them.

That treatment is getting up and getting out to the great outdoors.

According to Science.org's Gregory Bratman, PhD, assistant professor at the University of Washington, participating in outdoor activities can improve manageability of life tasks, improve various aspects of cognitive function, memory and attention, improve impulse inhibition and provide a sense of meaning and purpose in life.

An organization that provides veterans the opportunity to get outside and get connected to nature is Triple B Adventures based in San Diego, a non-profit that reconnects veterans together through free outdoor retreats.

"I think Mother Nature offers a challenge that veterans are used to while they're in the military," said Brady Pesola, director of Triple B Adventures and a Marine Corps veteran. "We've all been trained to shoot and do our jobs in a chaotic type of environment, nature can provide that."

Some examples that Pesola suggested are hiking at a high elevation or stalking an elk for 10 miles.

"Those are some of the kind of challenges that I think we, as veterans, crave a lot," said Pesola. "I think it's important for veterans to get outside and fulfill that desire of being dare I say...lethal."

Charles Johnson IV served in the U.S. Marine Corps from 2005-2017. After back-to-back deployments in Ramadi, Iraq and with family challenges, Johnson separated from the military after having a hard time adjusting back to civilian life. He was diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. He found support from the other veterans, friends and fishing.

"It took people being around me to help take that chip off my shoulder," said Johnson. "A friend of mine introduced me to deep sea fishing. Afterwards I was thinking man that was a lot of fun, I missed doing these things."

Johnson was raised as an outdoorsman. Nature wasn't only therapeutic for him but it brought back nostalgia. He grew up with loved ones being together eating the food he caught or killed.

"To me, it means more than Oh I caught a fish," said Johnson. "It's bringing people together and being able to provide for them."

With so many ways to be outside, some veterans use the beach to take a break from the world.

"Surfing is one of the most therapeutic things I've ever done," said Paul Clock, Army veteran. "When I'm out in the ocean, it feels like the world melts away from me."

Clock experienced trauma in his career as an Army Tank Commander. He uses surfing to cope with his trauma and stress.

"I believe that as veterans we need to make time to get out and explore this beautiful planet," said Clock. "Don't spend precious days you have sitting inside stuck in your own head. Get connected with people who care about you... and adventure... and live."

Whether alone or with a group, getting out in nature can heal.

For resources for achieving physical and mental readiness, visit the Fleet and Family Support Program page to get connected.
PHOTOS FROM THE FLEET

The Naval service—forward deployed and capable of both rapid response and sustained operations globally—remains America’s most persistent and versatile instrument of military influence.
Cmdr. James Timothy Uncapher, Military Deputy for the Marine Meteorology Division of the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL), is retiring from the Meteorology and Oceanography (METOC) community after more than 30 years of service. The importance of what he’s helped achieve in the community is significant to who he is.

He is the senior mustang of the METOC program in the Navy and the last O-5 for his designator. He had a major hand in transitioning the same Limited Duty Officer (LDO) program he used into a chief warrant officer (CWO) led program for the future.

Uncapher said the foundation of the LDO/CWO program is selecting candidates with a record of sustained superior performance and experience within one’s rating. He’s speaking of the candidates who have documented skills and characteristics their community requires to be “best and fully qualified”. Once selected and assigned to their first duty station, that officer is required to quickly qualify or requalify in watch positions and immediately begin working towards warfare qualification.

Whether LDO or CWO, a mustang is expected to perform technical and operational duties within designation on day one alongside those officers in the same designator with far more experience and seniority, according to Uncapher.

"Once the designators moved from to an LDO to restricted line officer model, the emphasis of our program and expectations of our mustangs changed drastically," said Uncapher.

Uncapher said in his opinion, the focus was no longer on performing the mission within designation but with the added expectation of rapid completion of education requirements necessary for entry to the Naval Postgraduate School.

Uncapher’s role as the senior mustang included running the LDO/CWO selection season, interview boards and appraisals of packets. He’s shared what lessons were learned and information that was important with the mustangs of the METOC community. He would make sure the community was always aware of what they were looking for in CWOs and leaders. Then he’d interact with detailers and community managers of the METOC community to ensure best requirements for developing CWOs were in place.

"You can have someone that’s fully qualified, meets the basic requirements but are they the best fully qualified," explained Uncapher. "I worked with the mustangs and CWOs on several levels to make sure the gouge was public so the chief warrant officers can continue to develop the community that’s ultimately theirs. There will come a time where the only mustangs we have within the METOC are chief warrant officers and there will be a time where we’ll have a chief warrant officer five for the first time ever."

Uncapher said every mustang led the community differently but his personal goal was to equip the METOC personnel with the best and most knowledge available for their success when he retires. This is a testament to the type of person Cmdr. Uncapher is. Now he gets to walk away from a community that has changed and grown under his guidance.

"God gets the glory," said Uncapher. "I did a small part and I am extremely grateful to be in the position I am. I felt the weight of being the best representative of the mustang community that I could and carried the responsibility of being that example."

"He’s one of those guys that loves to help others, and likes to see others succeed," said Command Master Chief Robert Picchi, Naval Information Warfare Training Group – Gulfport. "He’s a go-getter, a good mentor and I think his support for the warrant officer program just showed his lack of selfishness. He saw something that could be more effective."

What Uncapher has done was bridge the gap between scientists and warfighting components at NRL. He was also bridging the gap between the way LDOs were being used, according to Picchi, who was also in the front end of the program’s transition from LDO to CWO led.

"At the time, it was very difficult for the LDOs to maintain the level of expertise that we wanted them to maintain," explained Picchi. "The warrant officers, they’re purely technical and we wanted an extension, basically, of the expertise that lies in the senior first classes or the Chiefs’ Mess."

"Within the oceanographer community, officer manpower was struggling and LDOs always could step into the game, and do the job," said Picchi. "I think we were
looking for someone to step in and be the top person who is that critical watch floor element that we were missing."

Uncapher, being the last O-5 for his designator, realized for the program to transition into the direction it was heading, he had to open the lanes of information available to all mustangs who made the lateral move from unrestricted line officers to restricted line officers and new CWOs.

"I tried to welcome in the new chief warrant officer through random emails," said Uncapher. "I'd give them information to let them know what's expected of a mustang. A lot of time there were previous LDOs I'd be talking to who made the lateral move and they had valuable information. So I wanted to open the aperture to as many mustangs who are now restricted line officers because of the valuable experience and information."

One of those lateral moving, Naval Postgraduate school graduates, is Cmdr. Pearman, who will replace Uncapher as the senior mustang upon retirement. Pearman said he's excited to fill the big shoes left by Uncapher but he can't wait to progress the program as assumes the non-written responsibilities as the senior mustang in the METOC community, which is essentially a mentoring role to help.

"It's always an honor to serve and it's pretty amazing when you come in behind someone that you respected for over 20 years," said Pearman. "I think the program is going where it should and the emphasis is on the right area. Cmdr. Uncapher did a really good job, providing his recommendation and subordinate mentorship to our senior leadership as they were putting together this point. And so right now, I think that we just need to continue pressing ahead."

One area Pearman said he's most excited about is a seminar he and Uncapher had a hand in coordinating. The symposium was designed for the CWOs to come together and figure out what their identity in the program would be. The symposium was a great success and it demonstrated a group of METOC leadership helping the new era take the reins.

"We finally had enough of an inventory to justify bringing them all together and having them come up with their own identity," said Pearman. "Adm. Okon laid out his intent and gave the CWOs commander's guidance. They took ownership over where it is and where they intend to take the Warrant Officer community. My responsibility as a senior mustang is really to just make sure that we're representing the CWOs properly and that we can advise them and the senior METOC leadership accordingly."

Uncapher said the symposium was important because the CWOs would bring a technical savvy to the forefront whereas the LDOs were being driven more into becoming restricted line officers which included more schools and a less hands-on approach.

The METOC community has now turned into a more technical expertise-led program and a new path for the chiefs of the community was laid through the transition of this program. A legacy designator commander spent the past 20 years mentoring and spreading his selfless views to progress the world of naval meteorology and as he retires, those who know him have all agreed that he is what leadership was all about.

"The trust within the leadership is at an all-time high and as the senior mustang getting ready to retire that in itself made all the work the past 4.5 years worth it," said Uncapher. "Being able to see the new mustangs come together as a new community and take ownership of it allowed me to retire feeling like I accomplished what needed to be accomplished as the last commander LDO within our community."
Since 1776, when General George Washington began enlisting Native Americans for his Army, Navy, and Marines, Native Americans have contributed significantly to the defense of our nation. During the Civil War, 20,000 Native Americans served with Union forces both at sea and on the land. During World War I, although ineligible for the draft, 15,000 Native Americans volunteered to fight in the Great War. Although Native Americans have been an integral part of our country long before its birth, Native American veterans weren't awarded citizenship and voting rights until 1919. In 1924, voting rights were extended to all Native Americans after the Snyder Act was passed. In World War II, 44,000 fought with distinction, including 1,910 in the Navy and 874 in the Marines. For the Navy, two Oklahoma Cherokees distinguished themselves. Rear Admiral Joseph J. “Jocko” Clark commanded aircraft carriers and later a task force. Commander Ernest E. Evans was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Samar, Philippines.

Between 10,000 and 15,000 Native Americans fought in the Korean War and more than 42,000 during Vietnam. In 1966, South Carolina Cherokee Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class James E. Williams, while serving at South Vietnam’s Mekong Delta, killed an unknown number of enemy forces while destroying 65 vessels and disrupting an enemy logistic operation. Williams was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the three-hour battle against Viet Cong guerrillas with the two riverine patrol boats he commanded.

In the early 1970s, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt sought to reduce racism and sexism in both the Navy and Marine Corps with Z-Gram #66 (Equal Opportunity) which benefited Native Americans immensely. Rear Admiral Michael L. Holmes and Commander John B. Herrington are notable examples of the new opportunities for Native Americans as a result of Zumwalt’s Z-Gram. Holmes served 32 years as a naval aviator, and Herrington flew for the Navy and later NASA, becoming the first enrolled member of a Native American tribe to fly in space.

As of March 2012, active duty Native American military members numbered 22,248, with over half, 13,511, in the Navy. More than 160,000 Native Americans call themselves veterans today. Approximately, 15,000 active duty, reserve, and civilian members of the Navy’s total force declare themselves Native American or Alaska native. In the twenty-first century, the Navy’s leadership remains strongly committed to diversity.
A SAMPLING OF NAVY THANKSGIVING MENUS THROUGH THE ERAS

From Naval History and Heritage Command

THE U.S. NAVY HAS CELEBRATED THANKSGIVING IN ONE FASHION OR ANOTHER SINCE BEFORE IT BECAME AN OFFICIAL AMERICAN HOLIDAY. ARRAYED BELOW ARE SELECTED NAVY THANKSGIVING MENUS FROM NHHC’S COLLECTIONS THAT SPAN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY. ALTHOUGH SOME DISHES (“MAYONNAISE SALAD” ON BATTLESHIP ARIZONA IN 1917; “BAKED SPICED SPAM À LA CAPITAINE DE VAISSEAU” ON CRUISER AUGUSTA IN 1942) HAVE NOT TRANSCENDED TIME AND POST-DINNER CIGARS AND CIGARETTES HAVE ALSO BEEN LEFT PIERSIDE, ROAST TURKEY, BAKED HAM, AND PUMPKIN PIE HAVE BEEN THE ANCHORS OF NEARLY EVERY THANKSGIVING FEAST AT SEA OR ON SHORE TO THE PRESENT DAY.
My name is Old Glory.

I fly atop the world’s tallest buildings. I stand watch in America's halls of justice. I stand guard majestically over great institutions of learning.

I stand guard with the greatest military power in the world. Look up and see me. I stand for peace, honor, truth and justice. I stand for freedom. I am confident; I am arrogant; I am proud. When I am flown with my fellow banners, my head is a little higher, my colors a little truer. I bow to no one. I am recognized all over the world.

I am worshipped. I am loved and I am feared. I have fought in every battle of every war for more than 200 years: Gettysburg, Shilo, Appomattox, San Juan Hill, the trenches of France, the Argonne Forest, Anzio, Rome, the beaches of Normandy, Guam, Okinawa, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, in the Arabian Gulf, Afghanistan and a score of places long forgotten by all but those who were there with me. I was there.

I have led my soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and guardians. I followed them and watched over them. They loved me. I was on a small hill in Iwo Jima. I was dirty, battle-worn and tired, but my marines and sailors cheered me, and I was proud.

I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of countries that I have helped set free. It does not hurt, for I have been soiled, burned, torn and trampled on the streets of my own country, and when it is by those I have served with in battle, it hurts. But I shall overcome, for I am strong. I have slipped the bonds of earth and from my vantage point on the moon, I stand watch over the uncharted new frontiers of space.

I have been silent witness to all of America's finest hours. But my finest hour comes when I am torn in strips to be used as bandages for my wounded comrades on the field of battle – when I fly at half-mast to honor my service members, and – when I lie in the trembling arms of a grieving parent, at the graveside of a fallen son or daughter.

I am proud. My name is “Old Glory.”

Long may I wave.