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HOW TO BEST ADVANCE THE MILITARY'S MISSION DOD RELEASES FIRST DEPARTMENTWIDE SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

by C. Todd Lopez

On Aug. 15, the Defense Department released a policy that for the first time spells out, from the highest levels of the defense community, how DOD military and civilian personnel should use official social media accounts to best advance the mission of the U.S. military and further instill trust in the credibility of the DOD.

DOD Instruction 5400.17, titled "Official Use of Social Media for Public Affairs Purposes," provides principles for social media use within DOD, direction regarding records management procedures for social media accounts, and guidance to ensure personal social media accounts are not misrepresented or misinterpreted as official accounts.

While some of the military services and other agencies published social media policies years ago, DODI 5400.17 is the department's first instruction that provided Pentagon-level, departmentwide guidance that specifically addresses the use of social media. The DOD chief information officer previously issued DODI 8170.01, "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," to provide broad policy guidance on the secure and appropriate use of social media. The new policy specifically addresses public affairs uses and responsibilities.



The Defense Department released a new policy that, for the first time, spells out how military and civilian personnel must use social media to best advance the mission of the U.S. military and to avoid pitfalls that could damage the department's credibility. US Air Force photo by Patrick Buffett

"It's long overdue," Andy Oare, director of digital media for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said. "There have been efforts in the past to do this, but in an organization of this size and magnitude, you need to fully coordinate and ensure all viewpoints are heard and represented. We wanted to make sure the services were collaborators from the very beginning."

Because social media changes rapidly, Oare said policies that

the department may have started developing in the past but had never finalized would quickly show their age. That won't happen with the newly published instruction, and he stressed that this policy will be continually refined and updated based on the evolving social media landscape.

"We'll work across the department to be agile and responsive in our day-to-day operations as we implement this policy and

update it where and when we should," Oare said.

"Social media has an effect on every one of our service members, civilians, contractors and their families - whether they run an official account or have never heard of Twitter," Oare said. "We owe it to all of them to have one central policy that provides a clearly articulated standard of operation and accountability."

The DOD social media policy

applies to Office of the Secretary of Defense personnel, the military departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the combatant commands, and other DOD offices and agencies. In some cases, this means the new policy will supersede preexisting social media policies, but close coordination throughout its development ensured that all perspectives were considered and integrated.

"We deliberately wrote it in

Pacific Dragon '22 concludes

KAUAI, Hawaii - Forces from the Royal Australian Navy, Royal Canadian Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, Republic of Korea Navy, U.S. Missile Defense Agency, and U.S. Navy successfully conducted Pacific Dragon 2022, a recurring biennial multinational air and missile defense exercise, from August 5-15 in Hawaii at Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands (PMRF) and off the coast of Kauai.

PD22 was the first iteration of exercise Pacific Dragon that included a live fire intercept of a short range ballistic missile using a Standard Missile 3 (SM-3) Block IA.

Assets that participated in PD22 included HMAS Sydney (DDG 42), HMAS Supply (A 195), HMCS Vancouver (FFH 331), JS Haguro (DDG 180), ROKS Sejong the Great (DDG 991), San Diego-based USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG 62), USS *William P. Lawrence* (DDG 110), and Pacific Missile Range Facility Barking Sands.

Pacific Dragon is a biennial exercise designed to improve tactical and technical coordination and interoperability concerning regional air and missile defense capability.

Third Fleet operates naval forces in the Indo-Pacific and provides the realistic, relevant training necessary to execute our Navy's role, in support of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the joint force, across the full spectrum of military operations—from combat operations to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. U.S. 3rd Fleet works together with our Allies and partners to advance freedom of navigation, the rule of law, and other principles that underpin security and a free and open Indo-Pacific.



Airmen guide an F-35A Lightning II ejection seat onto a cart at Luke Air Force Base, Ariz., Jan. 11, 2018. US Air Force photo by Caleb Worrel

AIR FORCE HAS FULL F-35 FLEET BACK AFTER EJECTION SEAT PROBLEMS

by Kyle Alvarez
Stars and Stripes

All of the Air Force's F-35A Lightning IIs have returned to service, roughly three weeks after concerns over faulty ejection seats grounded most of them, the service said.

Air Combat Command made the shutdown decision in late July amid similar moves by other services in response to problems with cartridge-actuated devices in the ejection seats. A CAD is an explosive component used to

launch the seat out of the cockpit in cases of emergency.

There was "little to no impact" on F-35 operations during the shutdown, Alexi Worley, an Air Combat Command spokeswoman, told *Stars and Stripes* on Tuesday.

The Air Force inspected 706 cartridges, which came from 349 F-35s as well as additional supply, Worley said Monday, according to *Air Force Times*. Four cartridges were found to be suspect and replaced, she said.

The first military to ground planes over the ejection seat issue was Britain's. On July 22, the Royal Air Force halted flights involving Red Arrows and Typhoon fighter jets, U.K. news agencies reported.

The shutdown for the U.S. began July 27, when the Navy and the Marine Corps started grounding several planes that use U.K. ejection seats manufactured by the British company Martin-Baker.

The 19th Air Force's Air Edu-

cation and Training command followed suit shortly thereafter, grounding nearly 300 of its training planes, which also use Martin-Baker's CADs in their ejection seats. The command has since returned to flying the planes following inspections.

Steve Roberts, Martin-Baker's head of business development, told news website The Aviationist last month that an anomaly had been discovered in an F-35 cartridge at Hill Air Force Base, Utah, in April.

Things to do around town
Guided nature walk, Encinitas Cruise Night, Padres vs Nationals, Cars & Coffee, Movies in the Park

See page 10

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AutoMatters & More
Car club fun in the summer.
See pages 9

SURFOR dedicates Mariner Skills Training Center Pacific

by Karli Yeager

Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Forces, inaugurated the Mariner Skills Training Center Pacific (MSTCPAC) during a ribbon cutting ceremony onboard Naval Base San Diego, Aug. 15.

MSTCPAC was dedicated to Capt. (retired) Bud Weeks, a legendary naval officer and teacher in the Surface Warfare community with more than 40 years of experience as a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO) and mariner skills instructor.

"As we reflect upon all that Bud's done for the Surface Force, I can think of no name better suited to adorn this building than that of Captain Bud Weeks," said Vice Adm. Roy Kitchener, Commander, Naval Surface Forces. "Weeks Hall will always reflect a once in a generation surface warfare officer's, and now our, unbreakable commitment to providing Sailors with the tools, methods, and experience essential for prudent, professional seamanship – the unshakable foundation of our warfighting ability."

As a result of the Vice Chief of Naval Operations (VCNO) Surface Force Comprehensive Review, Surface Warfare Schools Command (SWSC) received direction to establish and develop comprehensive mariner training centers to provide the skills and knowledge required to correct and improve upon deficiencies cited in the comprehensive review.

"We're very excited about this building," said Navigation, Seamanship, and Shiphandling (NSS) Director Bud Weeks at SWSC. "We've come a long way in improving the way we train Sailors for sea."

With support from MSTCPAC, the Surface Warfare community increased junior officer shiphandling simulator hours threefold. \$805 million was invested to modernize San Diego's MSTC as well as another training center located in Norfolk, Va.

The training center houses 10 navigation, seamanship, and shiphandling trainer simulators, 30 conning officer virtual environment simulators, one bridge wing simulator, two full mission bridge simulators, two full mission bridge and combat information center simulators, and 14 electronic classrooms.

MSTCPAC was established on October 1, 2020 and its mission is "to ready sea-bound warriors to serve on surface combatants possessing the shiphandling and navigation skills to fulfill the Navy's mission of maintaining global maritime superiority.

New test lab to deliver agile, government-owned testing solutions

Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific

A new, state-of-the-art Navy/Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) Naval Enterprise Networks (NEN) Baseline Lab achieved full operational capability in June 2022 after six years of planning and development, representing an operational paradigm shift from a contractor-owned and -operated test infrastructure to a fully government-owned structure that enables rapid end-to-end testing in like-live environments.

The Naval Information Warfare Center (NIWC) Pacific Naval Enterprise Networks team, in conjunction with the Program Executive Office, Digital and Enterprise Services (PEO DES) and Next Generation Enterprise Network Service, Management, Integration and Transport contractor team, successfully established the enterprise networks test and validation lab onboard NIWC Pacific's Topside facility. The NMCI/NEN Baseline Lab is the result of a six-year collaboration initiated by Naval Information Warfare Systems Command Chief Information Officer, Tonya Nishio and PEO DES's Ruth Youngs Lew, program executive officer.

"Establishing a fully integrated NEN lab at a government facility is a critical component of naval network transformation; providing continuity, improved agility, accelerated innovation, enhanced security and significant cost avoidance," said Nishio. "The collaborative design and operations provide a win-win solution for the government and the NEN contractor and enable needed innovation cell activities across the program."

NMCI, one of the largest intranets in the world, is the base systems network the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps use for secure communications among more than 700,000 Sailors, Marines and civilians globally.

Within this test lab, NIWC Pacific engineers can conduct independent tests and validation of NMCI solutions prior to deployment, circumventing potential contracting delays and ensuring testing occurs in the most up-to-date operational environments. This means getting proven solutions into the hands of warfighters more quickly, in line with the goal outlined in the 2022 Chief of Naval Operations Navigation Plan to deploy modernized systems at the speed of innovation.

Refer to <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/427315/niwc-pacific-new-test-lab-deliver-agile-government-owned-testing-solutions> to continue reading this story and to view photos.

DOD NEWSROOM IMAGES OF THE WEEK



Houston Texans football player Terrence Brooks asks Soldiers to sign his jersey as part of Salute to Service day at the team's training camp in Houston Aug. 9, 2022. US Army photo by Spc. Khalan Moore



Navy Seaman Natae Yanez performs maintenance on a life raft aboard USS Bataan amphibious assault ship in Norfolk, Va., July 30, 2022. US Navy photo

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The nation's ground-based midcourse defense system is tested at Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., March 25, 2019. Official photo



**CONTINUED
DEVELOPMENT
OF THE GMD
PROGRAM IS
THE TOP
PRIORITY FOR
MISSILE
DEFENSE
AGENCY," SAID
VICE ADM. JON
A HILL.**

DoD policy

continued from page 1

the new policy offers guidance to department personnel who generate content on official social media platforms to ensure responsible use of the medium, key elements to consider when establishing a new presence or expanding into new platforms, and on the authority to close unused accounts.

"If social media is mismanaged or mishandled, the U.S. government's reputation with the American public; relationships with interagency, international, state, local and tribal entities; military operations; and reputation for a high ethical and

Midcourse defense, Guam, hypersonics lead issues at Missile Defense Agency

by C. Todd Lopez
DOD News

Last year, the Missile Defense Agency awarded contracts to Northrop Grumman and Lockheed Martin to advance development of its next generation interceptor, or NGI program - a key component of its ground-based midcourse defense, or GMD, system. Both companies have said they are on track to deliver faster than what the government initially asked, according to the director of the Missile Defense Agency.

"I will tell you both companies are saying they can get to first emplacement earlier than the government reference schedule of 2028," said Navy Vice Adm. Jon A. Hill, during a virtual discussion last Friday with Defense News. "I will tell you that there is a long road between now and then. And so, we'll just keep on path. Both are performing very well. Two different designs, both incorporating multiple kill vehicles - that's where the threat drives us."

The GMD is a part of the U.S. ballistic missile defense system, which is meant to engage and destroy limited intermediate- and long-range ballistic missile

threats in space. Part of the GMD are ground-based interceptors, which are the missiles that engage and destroy incoming threats to the United States. The NGIs will be advanced interceptors designed to protect the nation against intercontinental ballistic missile attack from rogue nations.

Continued development of the GMD program is the top priority for MDA, said Hill. Also on his list of priorities are the defense of Guam and countering the threat posed by hypersonic missiles.

On Guam, the MDA is working with the Army on the initial steps of placing missile defense capabilities on the island, Hill said. Plans for that system are included in the president's 2023 budget submittal.

"The nice thing about PB23, it does lay down the basic architecture of the systems that will go on to Guam," Hill said. "The department did fund us at a level that allows us to start environmental impact surveys. That allows us to do the sighting work."

Last week, MDA finished a "sighting summit" and was able to visit each site in Guam which

Pacific Air Forces provide aid through Pacific Angel

Pacific Air Forces Public Affairs

JOINT BASE PEARL HARBOR-HICKAM - The U.S. deployed an Air Force Expeditionary Medical Support and health response team to Subang Air Base, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia to promote interoperability of regional military, interagency and civilian emergency response and disaster management experts as part of Pacific Angel 22-2, now through Aug. 19. More than 75 Airmen from various Pacific Air Forces units and a C-130 from the 374th Airlift Wing are conducting medical health services outreach, engineering civic action programs, search and rescue exercises, mobile medical clinic operations (Expeditionary Medicine), and subject matter expert exchanges with the Royal Malaysian Air Force and multinational civilian and military participants. The objectives for Pacific Angel 22 are to facilitate military, civilian, and non-governmental organization cooperation and to enhance interoperability between the U.S. Air Force and the Royal Malaysian Air Force, U.S. Agency for International Development, and others.

has been proposed as a location for elements of missile defense there, Hill said.

"It's not final, but we have a very good feel for at least technically and operationally where things should go in order for it to function as a system," he said.

The MDA is working closely with the Army on the defense of Guam, Hill said. The MDA, he said, has funding in PB23 for both ballistic missile defense capability and hypersonic missile defense capability, while the Army has funding for cruise missile defense.

"What's great is both systems kind of have a crossover in what they can do," he said. "And so the integration of those into a command suite with command-and-control battle management on top of it is the basic architecture."

For development of the glide phase interceptor, of GPI program, part of a defense against hypersonic missiles, the MDA in early 2021 initially chose three contractors to compete on the design. In June, the MDA narrowed it down to just two companies, Northrop Grumman and Raytheon, said Hill.

"We developed the glide phase interceptor concept because

when you look at that threat, its vulnerability occurs in the glide phase," Hill said. "It's through its ballistic boost, or its through its launch or it's coming up as a cruise missile. But when it's in that glide phase, that's where it does broad maneuvers, that's where it's bleeding off heat, [and] that is where it's the most vulnerable. And you can track it,

and you can see it and you can develop fire control on it. And we know that we can do that now. So what we're missing is that weapon."

Hill said following winnowing the selection from three companies to two, MDA is on path to a system requirements review later this year for GPI.

Army

- Soldiers at Fort Bragg still living in barracks deemed unsafe as Army leaders search for new housing
- First live rounds of Army's hypersonic weapon coming in 'roughly' 6 months
- Thousands living on Hawaii Army base urged to slash electricity use due to grid failure



- Army jumpmaster breaks down viral video of German paratrooper landing on someone's balcony
- Family of murdered Fort Hood Soldier Vanessa Guillen files \$35M lawsuit against US Army

Navy

- HII set to install first hypersonic missiles on USS Zumwalt, USS Michael Monsoor during repair period
- First woman to command aircraft carrier recounts milestone deployment
- Opposition builds against plan to turn Naval Academy park on Chesapeake Bay into golf course
- Man arrested after stealing Humvee from Navy amphibious base

Marine Corps

- The continued campaign to free journalist and Marine vet Austin Tice
- Brother of Marine killed in Afghanistan withdrawal commits suicide at memorial for fallen service member
- Okinawa prefecture sues Tokyo in latest bid to halt construction on Marine Corps runway

Air Force

- Air Force tests a new way to help survivors of violence, harassment
- Combat rescue helicopter cuts trigger cost overrun, Air Force says
- Advanced aircraft engine industrial base could 'collapse' if tech doesn't transition: USAF official
- Air Force is shuttering a pair of critical programs that trained foreign air forces in Afghanistan and beyond
- New cost estimate to upgrade and operate boneyard-bound F-22s due in September
- Air Force Secretary says branch is finally starting to fix its decrepit computers

National Guard

- Year-round health insurance for National Guard proves elusive
- National Guard Soldier raped unconscious woman in Wilkes-Barre, police say

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USS Ronald Reagan maintains ‘peace through strength’

By Petty Officer 2nd Class
Askia Collins

PHILIPPINE SEA - Sailors aboard the Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* maintain the ship's warfighting readiness and the lethality of its embarked Carrier Air Wing 5, while operating in the Philippine Sea, Aug. 13.

“Whether there’s an increase, or an increased perception, of activity by belligerent or coercive nations in the region, the mission of the United States Navy has not changed, nor has our posture or presence here in the Indo-Pacific,” said Rear Adm. Michael Donnelly, commander, Task

Force (CTF) 70/Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 5. “It all goes to the core of our purpose, and that is aligned with our partners and allies who have like-minded values and understanding of international norms.”

Currently operating in the Philippine Sea in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region, *Ronald Reagan* has a crew of 4,900 Sailors. “As forward deployed Sailors, all of us on board *Ronald Reagan* take our motto of ‘Peace through Strength’ to heart,” said Capt. Fred Goldhammer, the carrier’s commanding officer. “Everything that we do on board ‘War-



fighting prowess that those who would otherwise threaten peace in our region understand without any ambiguity that today is not the day they dare pick a fight.”

Sailors working in the ship’s combat direction center (CDC) can quickly coordinate and execute a wide variety of offensive and defensive capabilities.

“I oversee the employment of defense systems, such as [rolling airframe missiles] and [close-in weapons systems] in the event we need to defend the ship,” said Lt. Patrick Ryan, an Air Defense Weapons Coordinator (ADWC) in *Ronald Reagan*’s CDC, from Guilderland, N.Y. “We simulate missiles being fired at us and execute our pre-planned responses. We also coordinate with [Carrier Air Wing 5] to execute the air plan, coordinating our offensive and defensive assets.”

Ryan, along with *Ronald Reagan* and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 5, can perform their roles during the day or night. They see to it that the safety and security of the aircraft carrier and its operators are air tight.

“Being an ADWC is important,” he said. “In the event of an actual exchange, we expect to be highly targeted, so we and

CLASSROOM VISIT



KOROR, PALAU (July 19, 2022) - Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Omar Machado, a member of the U.S. Pacific Fleet Band, interacts with children during a Pacific Partnership outreach event at the Koror Elementary School here. US Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Drace Wilson

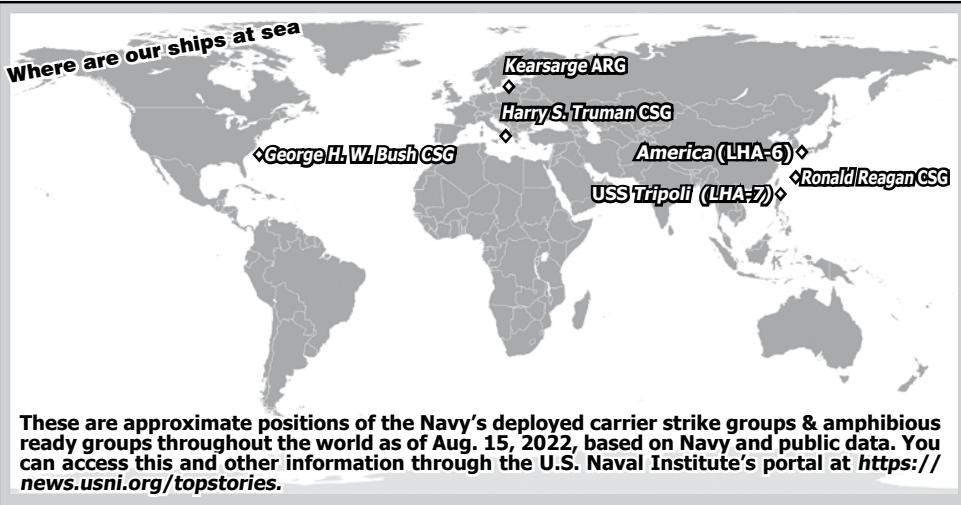
the combat team need to be at the top of our game to carry out the fight.”

Planning and coordinating aircraft operations is another key aspect in maintaining offensive warfighting readiness capabilities. *Ronald Reagan*’s air department ensures that all squadrons in CVW-5 can carry out their mission smoothly and effectively.

“Monitoring the launch and recovery of aircraft, briefing pilots, making the air plans, and updating alert conditions are just a few of the many things we do here,” said Air Traffic Controller 1st Class Tremane Dunlap Lowery, from San Diego, carrier air traffic control center (CATCC) leading petty officer. “You don’t have to get ready when you stay ready. What we do on a daily basis prepares us to

stay ready for any circumstance, no matter how severe.”

“I’m proud of the role I play here on the ship being in supply,” said Logistics Specialist 3rd Class Randy Wells, from Brooklyn, N.Y., assigned to Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 195. “Issuing out parts to keep our combat readiness afloat is an important job ... I’m comfortable being out here doing my part.”



These are approximate positions of the Navy's deployed carrier strike groups & amphibious ready groups throughout the world as of Aug. 15, 2022, based on Navy and public data. You can access this and other information through the U.S. Naval Institute's portal at <https://news.usni.org/topstories>.

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39th Surface Line Week kicks off in San Diego

SAN DIEGO – Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet kicked off the 39th Surface Line Week Pacific competition at Naval Base San Diego Aug. 15.

This is the first time SLW will be held since the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The two-week competition highlights professional and athletic skills while enhancing camaraderie and team building across the Surface Force. About 2,000 Sailors, Marines, and Department of the Navy civilians are expected to participate.

"This annual competition is more than just fun for our Surface Warriors. Surface Line Week provides an excellent opportunity for members of the Surface Warfare community to display their professional skills and receive tactical training," said Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Neher, SLW's project manager.

<u>Ships Underway</u>	
Total Battle Force:	300
(USS 242, USNS 58)	
Deployed ships:	111
(USS 75, USNS 36)	
Non-deployed ships:	94
(Deployed 73, Local 21)	
<u>Ships Deployed by Fleet</u>	
2nd Fleet, 4: 3rd Fleet, 3	
4th Fleet, 3: 5th Fleet, 11	
6th Fleet, 31: 7th Fleet, 59	
Total 111	



In this file photo from Aug. 6, 2018, Sailors race for the finish line during a Surface Line Week sailboat regatta. US Navy photo by MC2 Jacob I. Allison

SLW consists of 15 athletic and seven professional events, such as Damage Control Olympics, Marksmanship, Navigation Olympics, and shiphandling. Activities will culminate with an awards ceremony Aug. 26. Commander, Naval Surface Force, Atlantic Fleet hosted a SLW Aug. 15-26. Overall winner will be recognized during the annual Surface Warrior Ball, Aug. 27.

The Surface Fleet continues to drive toward a culture of excellence that focuses on building readiness and lethality in preparation for tomorrow's high-end fight.

"Surface Line Week helps

to instill toughness and trust in our Sailors as we build the foundation for our culture of excellence," said Neher. "Every command has a competitive edge that they'll bring to every SLW event, and even as the teams compete against each other, they receive mentorship and training that'll be beneficial while at sea."

Participants are active duty, regularly assigned Navy Reserve or other military personnel, and government civilians formally attached to a Navy command. Commands earn points as they compete in the different events to determine large, medium, and small unit winners.

O'Brien becomes first female boss of Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach

by Gregg T. Smith

Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach held a dual change of command ceremony recently at the installation's parade grounds.

Capt. Jessica O'Brien became the first female commanding officer of the Seal Beach Naval base when she relieved Capt. Jason Sherman as boss of both Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach and Navy Munitions Command Pacific, CONUS West Division.

A career surface warfare officer with over 25 years of service, O'Brien brings with her a wealth of experience, from ships of the Pacific Fleet to the Pentagon.

Her previous assignments include operations officer aboard frigate *McClusky*, operations officer and chief staff officer for Amphibious Squadron Three, and executive officer and CO of Beachmaster Unit One, based in Coronado. Most recently, she served as the Deputy Branch Head, Security Cooperation and Posture, for the CNO.

"It's truly an honor to be here and to be in command again,



Official Navy bio photo of Capt. Jessica O'Brien.

and it's great to be back in California," said O'Brien. "This is home and we're thrilled to be joining this great community."

"To the community leaders here today, thank you for your continued support, and I look forward to working with you, building on the relationships we have, and developing new friendships," said O'Brien. "To our Sailors and Navy civilian staff, I am both proud and humbled to be your commanding officer, and to be joining this tremendous team of professionals."

Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach is the Pacific Fleet's premier munitions loading and storage installation.



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NOV 1ST - 13TH, 2022



SEPTEMBER 14, 2022

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See the top four teams compete head-to-head for the right to display the annual Fleet Week Inter-Service Trophy as 26 teams from area military commands participate for prizes in a scramble format.

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Clinical excellence in medicine honored at NMCS

In the delivery of health care, it's been said that a medical encounter between a clinician and patient comes down to one seeking information while the other attempts to convey critical details as to why both parties are seated across from one another.

As with any form of communication, particularly in medicine, critical thinking, experience, education, natural curiosity and compassion go a long way towards the delivery of great health care.

That is why at Naval Medical Center San Diego, 24 senior clinicians received the Master Clinician Award and 39 additional clinicians were recognized as Associate Master Clinicians at the auditorium on Aug. 10 for being outstanding in their profession.

"While it may seem as if we are honoring a large number, when you account for the more than 700 NMCS clinician, we're honoring a small, but significant group of clinicians," said Cmdr. Christine DeForest, emergency medicine physician at NMCS. "The focus is less on the number and more on the impact that these clinicians are having not just on patient interaction through high clinical volume and its ensuing medical

readiness, but also on medical force generation through trainee education and clinical research."

One clinician who embodies the medical center's ideals of a clinician, and who was also recognized at the gathering, is Dr. Laura Marrone, a psychiatric transition program division officer, and Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences assistant professor.

"I believe that the motivation behind those of us honored today comes down to caring so deeply for patients and for valuing our inclusion in a team with a greater vision," said Marrone.

Perhaps there is no better illustration of the caliber that these celebrated clinicians represent as when they can see the broader picture of their medical care. "As a medical community we are trying to support all facets of someone's life and wellness," said Marrone. "It's not that we just love medicine, which we do, but we truly care deeply for our patients and want to see them living their best lives."

Adding to the significance of the occasion, the Master and Associate Master Clinician Award Program is peer-acknowledged.

"Our clinicians who are nominated and receive these awards should take great pride in the fact that it's their peers who are effectively recognizing them," said

Cmdr. Vi Song Tring, NMCS Medical Executive Committee chair. "There is hardly no higher honor as when it's from peer recognition."

USMC General & Special Court-Martial Dispositions

At a special court-martial at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, a military judge convicted Lance Corporal P. Zitron of wrongful use and distribution of a controlled substance and making a false official statement. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to a bad conduct discharge, 100 days of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At an Art. 16 special court-martial at MCAS Miramar, a military judge convicted Sergeant T. J. Rodriguez of violating a lawful general order. The military judge sentenced the accused to 30 days of confinement, forfeiture of \$1,500 pay for one month, and reduction to E-3.

At an Art. 16 special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Private First Class J. S. Lupo of wrongful use of a controlled substance and breaking restriction. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to 58 days of confinement and reduction to E-1.

At a special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Corporal C. H. Miller Jr. of violating a lawful regulation. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to a bad conduct discharge, 4 months of confinement, and reduction to E-1.

At a general court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a panel of members convicted Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class E. A. Maebane of involuntary manslaughter and reckless endangerment. The members sentenced the accused to a dishonorable discharge, 6 years of confinement, total forfeiture of all pay and allowances, and reduction to E-1.

At an Art. 16 special court-martial at Camp Pendleton, a military judge convicted Private First Class E. I. Stowers of wrongful use of a controlled substance. Consistent with the plea agreement, the military judge sentenced the accused to 30 days of confinement and reduction to E-1.

PHOTO GALLERY



■ USS MONTGOMERY

SAN DIEGO (July 29, 2022) - A military child tries out a fire hose during a friends and family event aboard USS Montgomery here. USN photo by Lt. Sam Hardgrove



■ NAS NORTH ISLAND

Naval Air Crewman (Helicopter) 2nd Class Cameron Mullen, from Santa Rosa, Calif., assigned to the "Rapors" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 71, greets his family on the pier in front of aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln on August 11. US Navy photo by MC3 Class Javier Reyes



■ OCEANSIDE

Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton staff conducted drills on August 10, exercising several different capabilities from shelter in place, hazmat decontamination, and mass casualty. These drills allowed the staff to get hands-on medical practice and hone their skills as they worked through various escalating scenarios. Official US Marine Corps photo



■ PHILIPPINE SEA

Marines with Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 262 (Rein.) place a joint light tactical vehicle onto USS Miguel Keith expeditionary mobile base using a Super Stallion during a helicopter support team exercise Aug. 8, 2022. HSTs enable the setup of an expedient drop zone for heavy equipment to be picked up and transported by flight. The 31st MEU is operating aboard ships of the Tripoli Amphibious Ready Group. US Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Kira Ducato

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Career & Education

Future Sailors, prior-service members eligible for bonuses and loan repayment up to \$115,000

MILLINGTON, Tenn. -- Future Sailors and Prior Service Members, either Navy Veterans or Other Services Veterans (NAVETS/OSVETs), are now eligible for enlistment bonuses and loan repayment up to \$115,000, according to a message released by Navy Recruiting Command Aug. 4.

The messages, which an-



nounces the enlistment incentives to attract the highest quality of recruits to fit specific requirements and ensure Fleet readiness, can be found here.

"The maximum current enlistment bonus is \$50,000, and the maximum loan repayment is \$65,000," said Rear Adm. Lex Walker, Commander Navy Recruiting Command. "They are not mutually exclusive, so if a Future Sailor maximizes both,

that adds up to a life-altering \$115,000, and the opportunity to serve in the world's finest Navy."

To qualify for the bonuses, Future Sailors and NAVET/OSVET applicants must be able to ship by Sept. 30, 2022. NAVET/OSVET applicants must enter Active Duty in pay grade E-4 or below, meet specific bonus eligibility, and not have received a bonus in their first enlistment.

NAVETs are applicants whose last tour of active duty or active duty for training was in the Navy or Navy Reserve, have been discharged or released more than 24 hours, and who

completed a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks of AD/ACDTRA. OSVETs are applicants whose last tour of AD/ACDTRA was in a branch of service other than the Navy (Army, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard) meeting the same requirements.

"If you are a Sailor, Marine, Airman, Soldier, Guardian, or Coast-Guardsman who recently separated, this is an opportunity

without precedent," said Walker. "And if you have student loan debt, you could be eligible for the Loan Repayment Program if you ship in any month of any fiscal year while the program remains active."

NAVETs re-accessing into active duty do not attend Navy recruit training but are ordered to Recruit Training Command Great Lakes for in-processing, while OSVETs are not required to attend Navy recruit training but are required to complete a three week Naval Orientation Course at RTC Great Lakes. They must pass the same evolutions a typical recruit at boot camp would finish such as ship handling, live-fire, swim qualifications and firefighting.

The message also has something new for high school seniors. The Active component EB High School includes \$10,000 available for high school seniors who enter the delayed entry program by Oct. 31, 2022, and graduate from High School prior to shipping in July 2023.

For more information on bonuses and the NAVET/OSVET program, visit www.navy.com to find a local recruiter.

Yearn for success? Yearn to learn!

by Dr. Daneen Skube

Tribune Content Agency

Q: I'm a fan of your column and have noticed you often refer to learning, personal growth, and accountability.

INTERPERSONAL EDGE:

What do you think the connection is between these things? How do you recommend your clients develop these capacities? How do you think these qualities affect your success at work?

A: These are great questions that get to the heart of what I teach in corporate settings. Learning requires humility. Personal growth requires acknowledging weaknesses. And accountability gives us the power to use our humility to turn our weaknesses into strengths.

There has been a great deal of research on how to create a "learning" organization at work. Most of these studies fail to focus on the reality that a learning organization has to be composed of individuals eager to learn.

I remember when writing

my book I talked to everyone I met about what they felt they could improve on in their interpersonal relationships. I was surprised that about 40 percent of the people I talked to told me

there was nothing they could improve. I realized these people lacked the power to change.

Emotionally, we usually feel complicated feelings about learning anything as an adult. We make mistakes, experience embarrassment, and struggle with multiple attempts. We also improve with every failure. We learn what doesn't work. We learn how to learn and improve.

The most important skill I gained from my decades of personal therapy is that I approach failure with enthusiasm and curiosity. I know my future successes build on a foundation of failures.

I advise clients to get comfortable with the vastness of what we don't know. Humble people are wide open for help, wisdom, and innovation. Arrogant people are so full of themselves that

they feel there's no room for anything new.

I advise clients to use adversity and problems to teach themselves. Our problems always occur in the presence of the same ingredient -- ourselves. This is self-accountability, and it gives us opportunities to change ourselves and our situation.

Lastly, I advise people to avoid the "hood of victimhood" or a feeling sorry for ourselves, which is a neighborhood of useless suffering. If we cannot see how we ended up in miserable circumstances, it's impossible to get ourselves out of those circumstances.

We are all, as mortal beings, going to experience suffering. The capacity to turn suffering into wisdom requires a yearning to learn and change. The famous English naturalist Charles Darwin observed that animals either adapt or die.

We're all better off experiencing new challenges that inspire us to become better than we were yesterday, than to refuse to adapt, to learn, and suffer with familiar, limiting, and repetitive misery.

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Social Security Matters: Can my wife claim a spouse benefit first?

by Russell Gloor

Certified Social Security Advisor

Dear Rusty: I have been getting Social Security since age 66. My wife turned 62 in June. We are thinking of taking her spouse benefits on my record since it would be higher than hers (we checked online). We began filling

out the application but do not see a way to let them know we want her to receive spouse benefits and not her own. How do we do that? Signed: Trying to Apply

Dear Trying: You don't see that option because your wife doesn't have the option to collect only a

Statement from VA secretary on the signing of the PACT Act

by Denis McDonough

VA Secretary

"The PACT Act is a historic new law that will help VA deliver for millions of Veterans - and their survivors - by empowering us to presumptively provide care and benefits to Vets suffering from more than 20 toxic exposure-related conditions. It will also bring generations of Veterans into VA health care, which will improve Veteran health outcomes across the board.

"We at VA are ready to implement the PACT Act and deliver for toxic-exposed Veterans and their survivors. If you think you might be eligible for PACT Act benefits, here's what you need to know:

• You can apply for PACT Act-related benefits now by filing a

claim at VA.

• As President Biden announced at the bill signing, we are making all 23 presumptive conditions in the PACT Act eligible for benefits effective today, August 10.

• You can learn more about the PACT Act by visiting VA.gov/PACT or calling 1-800-MY-VA-411.

"Thank you to all of the veterans, survivors and family members who fought tirelessly to make this day possible, and thank you to President Biden for keeping our nation's promise to those who served. We at VA will stop at nothing to make sure that every Veteran and every survivor gets the PACT Act-related care and benefits they deserve."

Car club fun in the summer

Included in the event was a huge raffle, with raffle prizes worth thousands of dollars. This year the grand prize was a Ceramic Pro Package (\$1,500 value), donated by SD Auto Salon. I really wanted to win that! Other prizes included two Pedego electric bike rentals (\$400 value), green fees for four at Willow Brook Golf Course, Midway Museum tickets (I won two!), portable BBQs and BBQ tool sets, three \$80 Discount Tire certificates, Jafra cosmetics, Pampered Chef gifts, restaurant certificates from Yanni's Bar & Grill, the Cohen Restaurant Group and Rubios, to name a few.

This is a well-attended car show, with no day-of-show registrations. Registered cars are each assigned reserved parking, which can be with the registrant's car club or with the other vehicles in their class.

This is a "people's choice" car show, where visitors and car show participants alike were invited to vote for their favorite vehicles (one ballot per person). Two awards were available to be won in each class, plus sponsor awards and a club participation award. The members of the host Corvette club - Corvette Owners Club of San Diego - didn't compete for this award, which was won by the San Diego Miata Club.

In addition, the 24 class winners from the previous year's Main Street America Car Show were eligible to compete in this year's Gold Class for the Best-of-Show award.

The list of classes reflects the wide variety of foreign and domestic vehicles in the show: pony, sports and muscle cars; Corvettes (of course), Miatas, Ford Thunderbirds, trucks and SUVs, lowriders, street rods and customs.

AutoMatters™ & More



by Jan Wagner

Especially in Southern California, leisure time on weekends often revolves around people and their cars. Since summer in San Diego is almost always accompanied by great weather, organizers can plan outdoor events with confidence.

I belong to a particularly large, active car club called the San Diego Miata Club. We frequently drive our Miatas on runs in the countryside and beyond, but this past weekend many of us entered our Miatas in a car show.

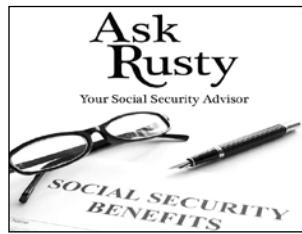
The Main Street America Car Show doesn't play favorites. Hosted by the Corvette Owners Club of San Diego, all makes and models were welcome, and many were represented. The San Diego Miata Club has been participating in this car show for years - so much so that our place on a hill has been nicknamed Miata Mountain.

The location was Embarcadero Marina Park North, on the shoreline of San Diego Bay. Across the bay lies Coronado, the Coronado Bay Bridge, the new Rady Shell at Jacobs Park (an outdoor concert venue) and Navy ships.

This car show served as a charity fund-raiser for the benefit of the San Diego Center for the Blind. The goal was to raise \$25,000.

spousal benefit from you without also claiming her own benefit. That option was eliminated by the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 for anyone born after January 1, 1954. So, if your wife claims

limits how much your wife can earn from working and, if the limit (\$19,560 for 2022) is exceeded, SS will take away benefits equal to \$1 for every \$2 she is over the limit. If her current work earnings are high enough, it could even disqualify her from receiving early SS benefits. The earnings limit lasts until your wife reaches her full retirement age.



any SS benefit now, she will be automatically deemed to be filing for both her own benefit (from her own work record) as well as her spousal benefit from you. She can't delay taking her own benefit when she claims.

Your wife's benefit will consist of her own benefit plus, if she is entitled to one, a "spousal boost" to bring her payment up to her spousal entitlement and, claimed at age 62, both her own benefit and her spousal boost will be reduced. But there are some other factors to consider:

If your wife is still working, she will be subject to Social Security's "earnings test" until she reaches her full retirement age (FRA) of 67. The earnings test

life-expectancy enters the picture. Generally, if your wife is in good health and expects at least average longevity (about 87 for a woman her current age), waiting until the highest available benefit (either her own or her spouse benefit) reaches maximum is usually a prudent choice.

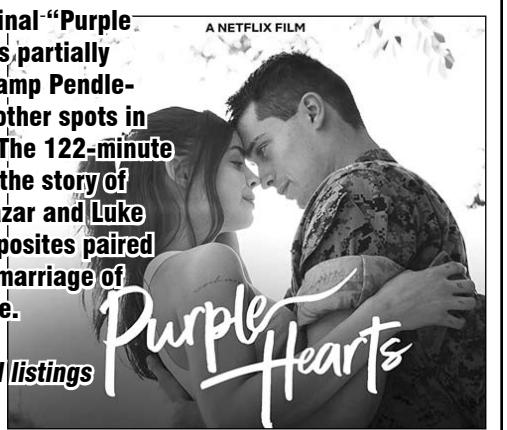
- Your wife's survivor benefit as your widow may be a consideration as well. If her benefit as your survivor will be larger than any other benefit she is entitled to, then claiming her other benefits earlier may be smart. For example, if her benefit as your widow (100 percent of the benefit you were

receiving at your death if claimed at or after her FRA) will be higher than either her maximum spousal benefit or her maximum personal benefit, then her best option may be to claim her retirement and spousal benefits earlier. How much earlier would depend on whether she is working and will exceed the earnings limit before age 67.

As you can see there are a number of factors for your wife to consider before claiming her Social Security, but she cannot claim only her spouse benefit at age 62 and permit her own benefit to continue growing.

Netflix Original "Purple Hearts" was partially filmed at Camp Pendleton and at other spots in California. The 122-minute movie tells the story of Cassie Salazar and Luke Morrow, opposites paired in a phony marriage of convenience.

Check local listings



Finding community requires serving community, sometimes deep fried

I arrived at 8:30 AM, just as four other volunteers were setting up a shade canopy over the deep fat fryer. It was our town's annual "Fool's Rules Regatta," and it was going to be a scorcher.

Leaning my bike against a telephone pole, I noticed that I was the only one wearing my Rotary Club t-shirt and hat, which I'd assumed were required for volunteers. As a newbie in the club, I was prone to making rookie mistakes.

The others were struggling to understand how the pop-up canopy worked. This was my opportunity to gain a modicum of respect among the veteran Rotarians. After two decades of managing three kids' sports team obligations, I'd earned an honorary doctorate in shade canopy and folding chair engineering. I jumped into the fray, expertly sliding a corner bracket securely into its slot as if I'd invented the contraption.

With the canopy in place, the fryer oil heating, and more volunteers arriving, I looked for my next task.

Our Rotary Club was running its annual "Dough Boy" concession stand, so there was dough stretching, cooking, sugaring, serving and selling to do. Known elsewhere as fry dough, elephant ears, malasadas, zeppolis, sopapilla, flippers, beignets, beaver tails, buñuelos, and frying saucers, I'd learned that Rhode Islanders love dough boys almost as much as they love clams.

I climbed up into the wooden concession shack next to the canopy to join Pat, the club treasurer's wife, who had short gray hair, wore sensible capri pants, and seemed in charge. Before I

knew what was happening, David the fryer handed me a vat of fresh-fried dough. As instructed, I rolled them in sugar and cinnamon and transferred them to a counter where volunteer runners whisked them away for selling.

Under Pat's stern direction, our group became a well-oiled — and well-sugared — machine.

Soon, "Dough-boys, get yer dough-boys here!" could be heard wafting along the beach, where Rotarians sold to boat-builders and spectators

the meat and potatoes of life



by
Lisa
Smith
Molinari

As a Navy spouse moving with our family every few years, I'd learned that being part of a community didn't happen automatically. Although it sometimes felt like jumping from the frying pan into the fire (or deep fat fryer as it were), I knew I had to put myself out in the community if I hoped to belong to it. Volunteering gave me a sense of purpose and provided the camaraderie I craved.

"You're getting so good at this," I ribbed Dave the fryer, "make the next one look like Mickey Mouse." "Crunchy on the outside! Floppy on the inside!" Win barked to curious people crowding the sidewalks. We frowned at his awkward adjectives, so he edited his sales pitch: "Crispy on the outside, fluffy on the inside!" "Dough boys aren't gluten-free, we charge for our gluten!" wailed the club president, Jeff, while Win, Ted and Jamie roared with laughter.

Soon, a horn blared, alerting the regatta's first heat. Silly, make-shift boats of all shapes and sizes lined up in the sparkling Narragansett Bay. The unrelenting sun blazed, but the gentle ocean breeze offered its cooling mercy. Townspeople and tourists, licking sugar and cinnamon from their fingertips, wandered seaside sidewalks holding children's hands and dog leashes.

My volunteer shift ended when my Rotary Club t-shirt was thoroughly soiled with sweat and sugar. In the end, our club made \$900 and I came home with a bicycle basket filled with warm dough boys.

But the real profit I gained was knowing that I belong.

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THINGS TO DO AROUND TOWN

Encinitas Cruise Night on South Coast Highway 101

from D to K St, Thurs, Aug 18, 5:30-7:30pm. encinitas101.com

Square Dance Convention

19th year in San Diego, Aug 18-20. Handley Hotel. california.usawest.net

SD Padres vs. Washington Nationals

at Petco Park. Thurs-Sun, Aug 18-21. mlb.com/padres

Movies in the Park: Guardians of the Galaxy

at Hollandia Park, Fri, Aug 19, 6:30pm. www.san-marcos.net

Gem Faire

Fri-Sun, Aug 19-21, 10am-5pm. \$7. Scottish Rite Center, 1895 Camino del Rio South, Mission Valley.

Summergrass San Diego Bluegrass Festival

at Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum. Fri-Sun, Aug 19-21. agsem.com

Craft Beer Festival

at SeaWorld San Diego. Aug 19-Sept 11. gaslampquarterlive.com

Gaslamp Quarter Live Thursdays

Neighborhood-wide live music in the heart of SD, Thursdays thru August, 5-8pm. gaslamp.org

Thru Aug 25 Concerts at the Cove

at Fletcher Cove Park, 6-7:45pm. cityofsolanabeach.org

Carlsbad TGIF Concerts in the Park

Every Friday, 6pm, thru Aug. 19. www.carlsbadca.gov

OneRepublic

at NI Credit Union Amphitheatre, Sat, Aug 20, 7pm.

Twainfest

Sat, Aug 20, 11am-6pm. Celebrate literature & culture of 19th Century. Heritage County Park, 2424 Heritage Park Row, SD.

Free Concert in the Park with 'Elvis'

Sat, Aug 20, 5-6:30pm. Free. El Camino Memorial Park, 5600 Car-

roll Canyon Rd, SD.

Piano-monium

Sat, Aug 20 & 27, 4-6pm. Free. Dueling pianos.

Gaslamp Quarter, Fifth Ave & Island.

Brad Paisley

at Pechanga Resort Casino, Sat, Aug 20, 7:30pm.

Hot Wheels Skate Demo Days

Sat, Aug 20, 11am-5pm. Skate clinics, photo opportunities, fingerboarding demos, product giveaways and autograph sessions with Nitro Circus pros. Skate clinics for kids ages 5-16. Admission will be on a first come, first served basis.

Walmart #2494, 2100 Vista Way, Oceanside, 92054

America's Finest City Half Marathon and 5K

Sun, Aug 21. www.inmotionevents.com/event/afc-half

Gipsy Kings

feat. Nicolas Reyes at Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, Sun, Aug 21, 7:30pm. theshell.org

45th Annual World Bodysurfing Championships

at Oceanside Pier. Sat-Sun, Aug 21-22. worldbodysurfing.org

SD Padres vs. Cleveland Guardians

at Petco Park. Tue-Wed, Aug 23-24. mlb.com/padres

Broadway SD presents: Disney's The Lion King

at San Diego Civic Theatre. Aug 24-Sept 11. www.sandiegotheatres.org

Fun Friday Nites

at San Marcos Community Center, Fri, Aug 26, 6-10pm. www.san-marcos.net

1812 Tchaikovsky Spectacular

at The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, Fri, Aug 26, 7:30pm. theshell.org

George Benson and War and The Commodores

at The Rady Shell at Jacobs Park, Sat, Aug 27, 7pm. theshell.org

El Camino Memorial Park, 5600 Car-

ROY'S SUDOKU

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6	1	2	4	3	9	5	7	8

S	R	I

Having kids later in life: Healthy pregnancies as you age

There are many reasons you might wait to have kids. You may want to focus on your career. Or save some money first. About 20% of women in the U.S. now have their first child after age 35.

You may have heard that getting pregnant can be more difficult as you age. Or that it's riskier for both the mom's and the baby's health. While these can be issues when having children later in life, many concerns are manageable.

Getting Pregnant

It can be more difficult to get pregnant with age. There are many reasons for that. One is that fertility decreases as you get older—for both men and women.

Women are born with a set number of eggs. Each month, a woman's ovary releases an egg to be fertilized. This process is called ovulation. But before that, her body recruits many eggs in preparation for this process. A handful of eggs are developed and matured, but usually only one makes it to ovulation.

"As women age, they're still fertile, but their odds of pregnancy are decreased because they're not making as many good eggs that will fertilize and divide normally and turn out to be an embryo," explains Dr. Alan Decherney, an NIH fertility expert.

After age 30, a woman's fertility

decreases every year. The number and quality of her eggs goes down until she reaches menopause. Menopause usually happens around age 45 to 55. During that time, women stop having their periods and are no longer fertile.

Older men may make fewer sperm or lower-quality sperm. The age-related decline in egg and sperm quality is associated with a higher chance of the child developing certain health conditions. This includes autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, and schizophrenia.

But most healthy women who give birth in their 30s and 40s have healthy babies.

Pregnancy Problems

If you're over 35 and haven't gotten pregnant after trying for six months, talk with your health care provider. You may be experiencing issues with infertility. Infertility is when a couple can't get pregnant or a woman hasn't been able to carry a pregnancy to term.

NIH-funded researchers are studying the causes of infertility for both men and women. There are many reasons for infertility.

"The most common cause of in-



fertility in women is related to ovulation abnormalities," says Dr. Esther Eisenberg, who oversees reproductive medicine and infertility research at NIH.

Many factors influence your ovulation cycle. Being older is one of them. You may not ovulate regularly, or sometimes not at all.

Another cause of infertility is endometriosis. This is a disease in which tissue normally found in the uterus (womb) grows outside it. Endometriosis can cause painful periods, urination, or bowel movements. It accounts for at least a third of infertility in women. It's more common for women in their 30s and 40s.

Fibroids are also more likely as you age. These are abnormal growths made from the uterus's muscle cells. They can grow inside or outside of the wall of the uterus. These growths can

prevent a woman from getting pregnant. Most women get at least one fibroid in their lifetime. But they're most common between the ages of 40 to 50.

Other causes of infertility can be treatments for certain health conditions. "Women who have been treated for cancer might have a reduced number of eggs," Eisenberg says.

"If you've had other conditions that require surgery to remove an ovary or fibroids—in which you've had surgery on the uterus—that might impact your fertility as well."

Seeking Help

"If being able to have a child becomes an issue, there are treatments," Eisenberg says. "The majority of women are able to have a child with help."

Treatments for infertility depend on the cause. Endometriosis and fibroids can be treated with drugs, surgery, and other methods. Medicines can help stimulate ovulation. These are called fertility drugs. Some are taken orally and others are injected.

Other options may be assisted reproductive technologies. Including in vitro fertilization (IVF) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI). These procedures help you get pregnant using different methods of fertilizing an

For a healthy pregnancy

No matter your age, certain things can help you have a healthier pregnancy:

- Talk with your health care provider about your nutrition, medications, and any health conditions. Get prenatal check-ups regularly.
- Take folic acid supplements. Get at least 400 micrograms of folic acid daily.
- Do not use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs such as marijuana.
- Avoid exposure to toxic substances, like lead, radiation, or chemicals called solvents that are used in many workplaces.
- Follow a healthy diet and maintain a healthy weight
- Avoid certain foods that could be dangerous during pregnancy: raw fish, undercooked meat, deli meats, and unpasteurized cheeses
- Get enough physical activity. Talk with your doctor about what's safe for your pregnancy.
- Limit caffeine intake.
- Get regular dental checkups.
- Take steps to prevent infections that can affect your pregnancy.

egg.

Decherney's group studies egg preservation, which involves freezing eggs. It may help some women facing health conditions that can reduce fertility. "But it's expensive," he notes.

Staying Healthy

Infertility isn't the only issue older couples face. "Whether a woman can have a baby as she ages also depends on her health," Decherney says. "The chances of having diabetes or high blood pressure—which are the two major diseases that impact pregnancy—are higher."

Obesity, heart conditions, and cancer can also interfere with a woman's ability to get pregnant

or stay pregnant. They can lower men's fertility, too.

Talk with your health care provider before becoming pregnant. They can help you plan for a safer pregnancy.

Being older when you're pregnant also makes you more likely to experience health problems from being pregnant or giving birth. These include heart disease, infection, bleeding, high blood pressure, and blood clots.

High blood pressure puts pregnant women at higher risk for preeclampsia. Preeclampsia is a serious medical condition that can cause you to go into labor early. It can also lead to death.

The biology of breast milk: Getting a good start on nutrition

You may have heard that breast milk is best. But what makes it so good for babies? Breast milk fills your baby's health needs. Researchers are now learning more about what's in it and how it changes as babies grow.

"Breastfeeding is the gold standard for feeding infants," says Dr. Dan Raiten, an NIH expert on childhood nutrition. Human milk provides nutrients and other compounds that babies need to grow and develop. These include proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals.

Experts recommend that infants drink human milk exclusively for the first six months of life. If possible, they should continue drinking human milk, from the breast or that's been pumped and placed in a bottle, for up to 12 months. Parents can add in other foods starting around six months.

fant bonding process, too.

Human milk also provides infants with protection from germs. A baby's immune system is not yet developed. So they don't have many germ-fighting molecules, called antibodies. Breast milk passes the mother's antibodies to the baby. This helps protect the child from germs until their immune system develops.

Breast milk contains many other biologically active components, too. "Human milk is not just a composite of individual components," Raiten says. "It's an active biological system." The lactating (milk-producing) parent and infant interact and affect one another. That means what's in human milk can change, even over the course of the day.

Take the molecules that regulate your body's biological clocks, or

circadian clocks. Your body has different amounts of these depending on the time of day. They signal when it's time to wake, eat, and sleep. These are passed along to the baby through breast milk.

Researchers are just beginning to understand how milk composition affects babies' short-term and long-term health. To learn more, NIH started the BEGIN project. This project is trying to untangle the biology behind milk production, how milk affects babies' development, and how babies and their environment influence this system.

Some lactating parents don't produce enough milk or may have physical issues that block milk from coming out. Others may be advised against breastfeeding if they're taking certain medications or drugs or when they have certain illnesses.

For those who can't breastfeed, formula is an option. "Formula is based on our best knowledge about the composition of human milk," Raiten says. And that knowledge continues to evolve.

"If you can do it, breastfeeding is the best way to take care of your baby," says Raiten. If you're having trouble, talk with your health care provider.

Getting started with breastfeeding

- Cuddle with your baby skin-to-skin right after giving birth if you are both healthy.
- Breastfeed as soon as possible after giving birth.
- Ask for a lactation consultant at the hospital to help you.
- Ask hospital staff not to give your baby pacifiers, sugar water, or formula, unless medically necessary.
- Let your baby stay in your hospital room all day and night so that you can breastfeed often.
- Try not to give your baby any pacifiers or artificial nipples until they're good at latching on to the breast (usually 3 to 4 weeks old).
- Learn your baby's hunger signs. They may become more alert and active. They may put their hands or fists to their mouth, make sucking motions, look around for the breast, or cry.

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