

MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

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Volume 21

Issue 6

DON'T FORGET

- ✦ St. Patrick's Day Fun Run, Mar. 17
- ✦ Become a sponsor workshop, Mar. 21
- ✦ Sundown Marathon, May 26

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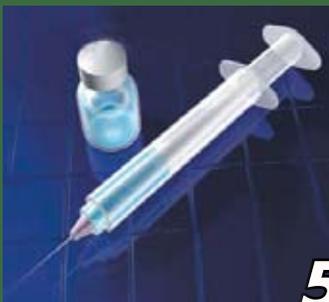
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Urinalysis to begin testing for new prescription medications



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Have you updated your page 2 recently? Emergency data is vital for family readiness



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Flu shots are available at the Medical Aide Station. Get yours now!



NORFOLK (March 5, 2012) Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) the Honorable Ray Mabus announces the 21st century Sailor and Marine initiative to the fleet during an all-hands call aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) at Naval Station Norfolk. Mabus told the audience the initiative was intended to maximize Sailor and Marine personal readiness. U.S. Navy photo by Chief Mass Communication Specialist Sam Shavers.

Secretary of the Navy Announces 21st Century Sailor Initiative

WASHINGTON -- Speaking to the fleet during a worldwide All Hands Call on board USS Bataan (LHD 5) which was televised and web-streamed live to the fleet March 5, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus announced the establishment of the 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative.

The secretary explained that the initiative consolidates a set of objectives and policies, new and existing, to maximize Sailor and Marine personal readiness.

The programs are divided into five categories, or "areas"; readiness, safety, physical fitness, inclusion, and continuum of service.

"The new defense strategy will put increased responsibilities on the Navy and Marine Corps in the years to come," the secretary said. "You are the department's most essential asset, and it is the duty of the department's leadership to do all we can to provide each individual Sailor and Marine with the resources to maintain that resiliency."

Various programs fall under the

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Merlion Star

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Navy Drug Testing Program Expands

PORTSMOUTH, Va. -- Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) announced Feb. 23 that Navy Drug Screening Laboratories (NDSLs) will begin testing for additional prescription medications in May.

"The change is in response to an initiative from the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in November 2010, which recommended expansion of drug testing to include the most common prescription drugs of abuse," said Cheri Baird, deputy Navy drug testing program manager, NMCPHC.

The three NDSLs, located in Great Lakes, Jacksonville, and San Diego, are scheduled to begin testing for additional prescription medications May 1 according to a Jan. 31 DoD message.

"We have a projected implementation date [May 1] for the expansion of our drug testing panel at all DoD drug testing laboratories to include hydrocodone and hydromorphone [both semi-synthetic opioids]. Testing for prescription medications is not new for our program. We currently test for codeine, morphine, oxycodone, oxymorphone, and amphetamines. We will now add two more compounds to our panel," said Baird.

While these semi-synthetic opioids - along with codeine, morphine, oxycodone, and oxymorphone - are often prescribed to relieve pain following an injury, they are potentially highly addictive and their use outside medical supervision can place a service member -- and their ship, squadron or unit -- at risk, according to the message.

Inappropriate prescription drug use occurs when a particular substance is used outside its intended purpose, beyond the prescription time period, in excess of the prescribed dosing regimen or when a service member uses another individual's prescribed medications.

"There were a lot of hurdles to jump in preparation - including method development, method validation, and funding. One of the final hurdles was the 90-day notification to the Forces, which occurred Jan. 31," said Baird.

The May 1 date, set to begin testing for the two additional substances, was designed to provide service members abusing prescription drugs a period to voluntarily seek medical treatment and rehabilitation for themselves on a self-referral basis, prior to the commencement of testing for these controlled substances. Department of Defense and Navy policies indicate that individuals who do not self-refer for treatment and are later identified as positive for controlled substances for which they do not have a valid prescription may be considered in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice for drug misuse or abuse.

NDSL Jacksonville Executive Officer Lt. Cmdr. Matt Jamerson said that the testing procedures represent yet another method the DoD is taking to ensure the health, welfare and unit cohesiveness required to ensure Sailors and other service members are maintaining the highest state of readiness.



Up-to Date Emergency Data Vital for Sailor Family Readiness

MILLINGTON, Tenn. — Off-duty accidents and illnesses were among the leading causes of death for Sailors in calendar year 2011, said a Navy official Mar. 9.

By: MCI LaTUNDA HOWARD,
NAVY PERSONNEL COMMAND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

“As service members, we usually remember to update our emergency data prior to a deployment or individual augmentee assignment,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Dana Swope, leading petty officer and licensed mortician, Navy and Marine Corps Mortuary Affairs. “Non-combat related incidents such as car accidents, happen daily so we should get in the practice of verifying our records at a minimum of twice a year.”

Sailors must keep their Record of Emergency Data (DD form 93) and Dependency Application Record of Emergency Data (NAVPERS 1070/602 also known as your Page 2) updated with their primary and secondary next-of-kin upon marriage, divorce, the birth of a child or any other significant life changing event.

During a Page 2 update, Sailors should identify a person authorized to direct disposition (PADD) of the deceased.

“The PADD is the individual the Sailor appoints to oversee arrangements after their death and whom we will take our direction from in fulfilling the Sailor’s final wishes,” said Swope.

According to Swope, the Page 2 and Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (SGLI) forms are among the first documents the Navy will



turn to in the event a Sailor is very seriously injured or dies.

“Unfortunately, we sometimes find out when we need to notify family members of injury or the death of a service member, that the information [in the Page 2 and SGLI] is outdated or incomplete which hampers the notification process,” said Swope. “Not maintaining up-to-date Page 2 information could delay notification to next-of-kin and the distribution of death benefits.”

Also, during a Page 2 update, Sailors should identify three people that they would desire to be bedside should they be injured and

incapacitated.

The Navy has a Bedside program that allows up to three family members to be present at an injured service member’s bedside should the injury be sufficient enough to warrant it.

While illness and death are not the most popular topics to discuss, Swope suggests Sailors address the subject with their loved-ones.

“Sailors can take a great deal of stress off their family by making sure someone knows their final wishes,” said Swope. “When a Sailor or Marine dies, a uniformed Casualty Assistance Calls Officer (CACO) is assigned to contact their family. CACO notifies the family of the death of their service member and they assist the family through the entire process.”

2012 Summer Physical Fitness Assessment

- 24-25 April.....BCA
- 1 May.....Run
- 1 May.....Swim
- 2-3 May.....Elliptical/Bike/Treadmill
- 30 May - 5 June.....Stragglers PFA

For more information contact the command PFA Coordinator at 6750-2468

SECNAV's Worldwide All Hands Call

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readiness area, all of which help ensure we have the most mentally prepared service members and family in department history.

Continued emphasis on the responsible use of alcohol, zero tolerance for drug use, suicide reduction, family and personal preparedness, and financial and family stability all work together to prepare Sailors, Marines and their families for the challenges that they may face and reinforce healthy alternatives on liberty or off-duty. A new initiative will include breathalyzer tests when Sailors stationed onboard ships, submarines and at squadrons report for duty and randomly elsewhere to reduce the occurrence of alcohol related incidents that can end careers and sometimes end lives. This month, the Navy will begin random testing of urine samples for synthetic chemical compounds like Spice.

"We will enable and support our Sailors and their families. I am extremely proud of our people," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jonathan Greenert. "We have a professional and a moral obligation to lead, to train, to equip and to motivate them. Our personnel programs deliver a high return on investment in readiness."

In addition to ensuring the readiness of our Sailors and Marines, the initiative will aim to make the Navy and Marine Corps the safest and most secure force in the department's history. All personnel in the fleet should expect to work in a safe environment, free from harassment or hazards, and when confronted with these, have the resources available to immediately correct the problem.

The Department of the Navy (DoN) continues to work

aggressively to prevent sexual assaults, to support sexual assault victims, and to hold offenders accountable. Part of this effort is implementing new training at multiple levels in both the Navy and Marine Corps.

Every day Sailors and Marines do a great job of managing risks on-duty, proven by FY 2011 being recorded as the safest in terms of operational fatalities. Under the 21st Century Sailor and Marine area of safety, DoN will continue stressing to Sailors and Marines that they should apply the same operational risk management skills to their off-duty activities.

"All leaders must guard against reckless behavior - it jeopardizes the health, safety, and combat readiness of our entire force" said Gen. James F. Amos, commandant of the Marine Corps. "Risk mitigation is one of the best means available as we fight to eliminate senseless and needless loss of life and injury, both on duty and on liberty."

Statistically, the most dangerous thing Sailors and Marines do every day is also one of the most common, driving a personal motor vehicle. While there are a number of factors that make this even more dangerous: driving while fatigued, distracted, or under the influence of alcohol or drugs; the good news is that alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities are down across the fleet. The Naval Safety Center has tools and resources available to help train Sailors and Marines - particularly those under the age of 25 who are statistically much more likely to be killed or injured behind the wheel.

While each of the five areas provide important support for department personnel, physical fitness can be viewed having some of the farthest reaching beneficial

effects. Sailors and Marines must be ready to meet the demands of performing in a tactical environment, and physical readiness is a crucial link to ensuring Sailors and Marines are ready to take on the challenges the Navy and Marine Corps faces today, and will face in the future. As part of the 21st Century initiative, Sailors and Marines must maintain the highest level of sustained fitness with the ultimate goal of having the fittest, most deployment-ready force in the history of the Navy and Marine Corps.

"Sound minds and sound bodies are the fundamental elements of successful Sailors and combat readiness," said MCPON (SS/SW) Rick D. West. "The transition from a 'culture of testing' to a 'culture of fitness' means that we deliberately incorporate physical proficiency and holistic health into our daily routines rather than simply doing just enough to get by on tests twice a year. The more we do each day to improve our physical conditioning, the better prepared we are to handle stress, deployments, and unexpected situations.

Sometimes it's difficult to find the time or resources to get in a run or hit the gym, but if leadership and Sailors actively make those things part of their commitment to excellence, the pay-off is significant. We are not a sedentary Force ... we are forward-deployed, we are expeditionary, we are agile ... and we need to be physically ready as Sailors to answer any call at any time."

Additionally, Secretary Mabus is moving the DoN to be smoke-free by choice with a continued education campaign on the hazards of smoking, providing easy access to free cessation tools to every Sailor and Marine trying to quit and

21st Century Sailors

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ending the discounts for cigarettes in Navy Exchanges and Marine Corps Exchanges. Ending the discounts will bring the prices up to 100 percent market price.

Ensuring all personnel, regardless of race or gender, are given every opportunity to excel and succeed is the hallmark of the program's forth area, inclusion. To operate globally, the Department of the Navy will need diversity of ideas, experiences, areas of expertise, and backgrounds to fulfill a variety of missions, while remaining relevant to the American people. Regardless of mission, in the Navy women are permanently assigned to all types of ships, aviation squadrons, afloat staffs, Naval Construction Force units and certain submarine platforms.

There are many areas in which opportunities can be expanded for women to serve and contribute and the Marine Corps is working to identifying those areas.

A new DoN Diversity Office

will be established, with the Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) serving as the DoN's diversity officer. The Diversity Office will leverage, coordinate and formalize ongoing efforts within the Navy and Marine Corps and will include the heads of the Navy Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Marine Corps Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management and the DoN Office of Civilian Diversity as team members.

"Diversity of Thought - Connectedness with America - Diversity is more important than race, ethnicity, or gender," said Sgt. Maj. Micheal P. Barrett, the 17th sergeant major of the Marine Corps. "We are committed to attracting, mentoring and retaining the most talented men and women who bring a diversity of background, culture and skill in service to our nation."

The final area, continuum of service, aims at ensuring Sailors and Marines are provided the most robust transition support in Department history. Whether retraining wounded

warriors or helping achieve civilian credentialing, the department will aim to provide personnel every opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Through each of the areas described in the secretary's address, the 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative will realign many programs throughout the department and focus their combined efforts to ensure all personnel are not only mentally and physically prepared for the future fight, but that they will also have the knowledge, skills and support needed to succeed for the remainder of their lives.

"The 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative is focused on the whole life of the individual and their family's lives. When a Sailor's or Marine's time in the military ends whether it is after four years or forty, we want your productive life to continue and for you to leave in better health, more trained and better educated than when you came in."

Influenza Shots Available At The Medical Aide Station

Don't get caught under the weather this flu season. The MAS currently has flu vaccine available for active duty military and eligible beneficiaries. Roll up your sleeves and help us fight this annual epidemic disease! Please call 6257-4233 to make an appointment to get your immunization.

The MAS is also working with the Naval Medical Research Unit No 2 (NAMRU-2) in

Singapore to identify causes of respiratory illness in our community. If you have a cold or flu, we would like to enroll you in our expat influenza studies. Please stop by the MAS to receive your sample collection kits, information sheets, and digital thermometer. You can also call 9657-6238 or email help@myrunnynose.org to have the kits delivered to you.

