



@USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

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Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

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Navy Personnel Command Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) -- In an effort to improve support for dual military families, Navy Personnel Command updated the current collocation policy. These changes are reflected in the new MILPERSMAN 1300-1000, which was released on March 12.

Here is what you need to know:

1. Existing policies were primed for review and update.

The Navy realizes how important families are, and when they're not whole it can add stress to a Sailor's life. Collocation of dual-military couples is part of supporting families. It is a priority, along with balancing fleet readiness. The revised policy updates the collocation and distribution procedures and makes orders negotiation less cumbersome.

2. Changes are being made to existing personnel information technology (IT) systems.

Adjustments to personnel IT systems will better identify dual-military families, providing detailers a better means to coordinate collocation during Sailors' orders negotiation window.

3. Instead of opting in, the Sailor can decide to opt out.

In the past, a Sailor had to request collocation during each orders negotiation. Now Sailors will submit a one-time request that will remain in effect until the Sailor tells their detailer otherwise. If a Sailor chooses not to be collocated, they contact their detailer and negotiate appropriate orders.

4. A flag officer review is required when detailers can't collocate dual-military families.

To ensure Navy Personnel Command has done everything possible to accommodate dual-military collocation, the Assistant Commander, Navy Personnel Command for Distribution will review instances where the Navy cannot support collocation for any reason other than when a Sailor chooses to opt out.

5. The Navy is serious about making this work.

The fleet is invested in collocation. For example, the submarine community is currently expanding homeport options for female officers and will be extending options for female enlisted in the future.

To keep the system working properly, the Navy requires Sailors to keep their records updated, especially if there is a change in marital status.

For more information, visit <http://www.npc.navy.mil> and read MILPERSMAN 1300-1000.

For more news from Navy Personnel Command, visit <http://www.navy.mil/local/npc/>.

2.) Navy Funds Autism-Screening App, Hoping For Help with PTSD / 20 MARCH 16 [\[LINK\]](#)

ASSOCIATED PRESS, Jennifer Mcdermott

The Navy is paying for research into an app to screen for autism in the hopes that it could eventually be tweaked to look for signs of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

While developmental and trauma disorders might at first appear strange bedfellows, the researchers and a PTSD expert for the VA say it could be an exciting new direction.

Facial expressions can indicate the presence of autism, PTSD and other disorders. The Autism & Beyond app uses a smartphone camera and an algorithm to read children's facial expressions and assess their emotional responses.

The app, which uses a general algorithm, could be expanded to PTSD to monitor people over time if speech and other signals are taken into account, according to Pedja Neskovic, who oversees the project in the Office of Naval Research.

"It can find patterns, not just in facial expressions but in different kinds of data sets, such as brain signals and speech, and it can be used on a continuous basis," he said. "It's a completely new world."

William Unger, a PTSD expert and clinical psychologist at the Providence VA Medical Center, sees potential for an app to be used to help screen for PTSD if it can prove reliable for a large population over time. It's always good to have additional tools, he said.

"This is a technology in its infancy. You don't know where it will go," he said. "So does this science and this study really then lead to additional questions, additional technological developments which help us to move forward? It very well may. So I'm very excited, even though I'm saying it's very far off from having utility."

M. David Rudd, an expert in suicide prevention and PTSD in military personnel, is skeptical. Rudd said he can't see the extrapolation to PTSD, calling it "a pretty big gap to leap." He worries about an app rendering erroneous results, a concern Unger also expressed.

"It's the introduction of technology where technology is not particularly needed and not particularly useful," said Rudd, president of the University of Memphis. "As a society, this is what we do. It's kind of the medicalization of a problem that's emotional and interpersonal in nature. I just don't get it."

The Navy has been working with the researcher who developed the algorithm for the app, Guillermo Sapiro, for about 20 years, supporting his research on image processing and data analysis. The Navy has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the app, Neskovic said.

PTSD often goes undiagnosed. Patients may not recognize the link between their symptoms and a traumatic event they experienced or may not be willing to talk about that event, while sometimes symptoms are obscured by other issues, according to research published by the American Academy of Family Physicians.

Some veterans don't want to feel like there's something wrong with them and try to cope on their own, Unger said.

The app, as it's designed for autism, shows funny videos designed to make children smile, laugh or express emotions. The way their head, lips, eyes and nose move is recorded, encoded and analyzed with the camera and app. If a child isn't responding, that's also classified.

Duke University is studying whether it's feasible for caregivers to screen kids for autism using a mobile phone at home. The app can be downloaded for free.

Unlike a tool like WebMD, where the user needs to identify their symptoms and know the right questions to ask, the app does the behavior analysis automatically. The user just has to watch the videos, said Sapiro, an electrical engineering professor at Duke. He stressed that the app isn't meant to replace specialists; it's a pre-screening tool.

The institutional review board at Duke approved the research. The initial results show that people are willing to use the app and they're sending high-quality, usable videos, Sapiro added.

Neskovic and Sapiro envision developing a PTSD app within five years. They're investigating whether it could also possibly reveal signs of mild traumatic brain injury and depression.

3.) Navy College Office Closure Could Leave Local Schools to Fill Counseling Gap / 21 MARCH 16 [LINK](#)

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When Juan Torres wanted his associate's degree in the late 1990s, he sought help through a Navy College Office at Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story. He credits the personal mentoring he received for inspiring him to eventually pursue a bachelor's and three master's degrees.

"It's done a lot for me," said Torres, who retired as a master chief in 2008 after 30 years of service and is now pursuing his Ph.D.

The offices help sailors link up with college degree and technical programs by providing in-person counseling, education planning, testing, tuition assistance and other benefits. A plan to shutter the 20 remaining stateside Navy College Offices, including those at Norfolk Naval Station and Little Creek-Fort Story, could mean the end to the personal touch that meant so much for Torres.

According to the Navy's proposed 2017 budget, only overseas offices would remain open. Sailors seeking assistance here will be steered toward the Navy's Virginia Beach-based Virtual Education Center, which offers online services and counseling via a call center.

Rear Adm. Mike White, who leads the Pensacola, Fla.-based Naval Education and Training Command, called the closure an innovative way to "match what our sailors are doing."

"We want to lead the way," White said.

The number of sailors visiting the offices has dropped in recent years, from 99,340 individual contacts in fiscal 2010 to 61,780 in fiscal 2015. During the same period, the number of contacts with the VEC increased from 5,330 to 24,888, according to Navy data.

White acknowledged some drops in visits may align with the Navy's closure of 20 other offices, which began in 2009. Those closures included offices at Portsmouth Naval Medical Center, Oceana Naval Air Station and the Dam Neck Annex. Little Creek has serviced Dam Neck, while Oceana has been a satellite of it since 2010.

Local visits may tell a more complex story. Norfolk Naval Station's office saw 10,474 unique visitors in fiscal 2011. That number fell to 6,486 in fiscal 2015. Visits at Little Creek increased from 3,018 in fiscal 2010 to 3,874 in fiscal 2015, a possible result of that office's absorption of Dam Neck and Oceana.

The Navy's plan won't affect on-base college programming. The Navy will establish directors in the service's four regional commands to coordinate with schools. Norfolk falls in Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, which includes 20 states from Maine to Virginia and as far west as Wisconsin.

Defense Department spokesman Matthew Allen said the Pentagon is reviewing the Navy's plan.

The closures concern some administrators from colleges that offer on-base courses. Wayne Ivey, director of military services and veterans affairs at Norfolk State University, and Bruce Brunson, executive director of Tidewater Community College's Center for Military and Veteran Education, said on-base counselors from those schools could help fill the gap by steering prospective students to the right program.

Those conversations may even help with recruiting, Brunson said.

"In some ways, it's a good thing because we get more throughput," Brunson said.

Sailors who are determined to continue their education will find a way, said Susan Paulson, Saint Leo University assistant vice president. She worries that losing the personal touch in favor of online and call-in services might be a barrier for those who don't know how college works.

"You've got to keep reaching out to them because they won't reach out to you," Paulson said.

White said his force master chief has been speaking with sailors and has found many are comfortable with using online services. Some sailors never set foot in a college office, he said.

With so many colleges vying for sailors' tuition assistance and GI Bill benefits, retired Capt. Bob Clark said, the Navy may want to keep some on-base counselors in large service areas, such as Norfolk and San Diego. Clark, who commanded Norfolk Naval Station from February 2014 until his retirement in August, now serves as Old Dominion University's director of military activities and special projects.

Clark said he's seen one instance in which a sailor seeking to move to ODU from another program couldn't because the credits weren't transferable. He said he worries that a lack of in-person counseling could mean more sailors finding themselves in similar situations.

"Hopefully, if we were doing more counseling or more one-on-one, some of that could have been avoided," Clark said.

4.) Max Your Chance for E-7: What Sailors Need To Do / 23 MARCH 16

NAVY TIMES, Mark D. Faram

The countdown to this year's chief petty officer selection boards has begun.

The active-duty board convenes June 20 and the reserve board will convene earlier, on May 16.

The active-duty board eligible list was announced on March 11; the Selected Reserve eligible list has yet to be released, as tests are still being processed.

So far, 19,369 of the 30,072 active sailors who took the exam in January have navigated the first hurdle in the CPO selection process and will have their records reviewed by the board, according to Naval Education and Training Command.

What you need to know:

1. Check your status. If you took the test, you can log onto Navy Knowledge Online and find your exam profile sheet by clicking on the Navy Advancement Center's portal link. Check the Navy's math. Remember, right now its active-duty only, reserve results will come in early April.

2. Review your records. Making the board puts anchors within your reach, but there's more work to do to increase your chances.

While on BOL, sailors should also review their personnel summary records parts I, II and III for accuracy.

3. Update your info. If information is missing or new information has yet to be reflected in your online records, you must write a letter to the board and submit the missing documentation. This won't update your permanent records, but it will ensure your complete records will be seen.

For example, a missing evaluation is critical to submit. A significant qualification or award since your last evaluation can also make the difference that earns your anchors.

Instructions on how to submit a letter to the board can be found on NPC's boards website, under active-duty enlisted and general information.

Letters and documents to the board must be received at NPC by May 31 for the active-component board. Reserve correspondence will be due April 25.

4. Making the cut. Only about six in 10 eligible sailors will be viewed by the board.

This means that only first classes with top test scores and eval marks will go before the board, a necessary cut since it takes the panel about four weeks to review the nearly 20,000 sailors.

The only exceptions: eligible first classes with boots on the ground in a combat zone and sailors given time-in-grade waivers by COs to take the test a year early. This year there are 461 sailors who will make the board with such waivers.

Chief candidates are ranked by two factors, performance mark averages and exam scores.

Performance is calculated from the sailor's advancement recommendations within a specified time period set for the exam. The exam standard score is a numerical representation of rating knowledge, compared to peers taking the same exam.

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