

# BATA EACON

Issue 10

June 22, 2020



USS Oak Hill conducts  
operations in the Black Sea

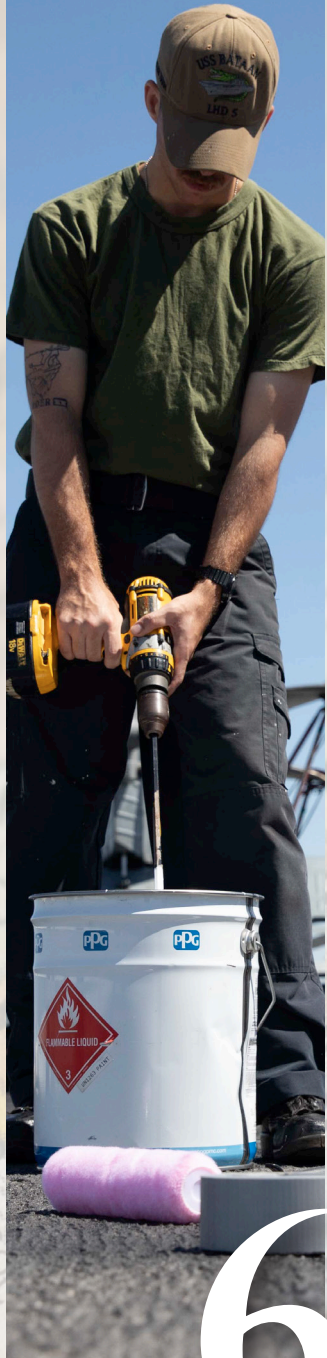
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The official magazine for the Bataan Amphibious Ready Group

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Gunner's Mate 3rd Class Ethan Hunt, assigned to the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), plays the guitar and sings during a talent competition on the ship's flight deck, May 24, 2020. Photo by MC2 Lyle Wilkie



# BLACK SEA

## USS Oak Hill en route to the Black Sea

Story by Bataan Amphibious Ready Group Public Affairs, Photos by MC3 Griffin Kersting

Above:

The NMS Regina Maria transits the Black Sea alongside the Harpers Ferry-class amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), June 19, 2020.

The dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) began its northbound transit into the Black Sea, June 18, to conduct maritime security operations and strengthen relationships with region partners and allies.

Oak Hill will join the guided-missile

destroyer USS Porter (DDG 78), which entered the Black Sea on June 17. This is the fourth visit by a U.S. Navy ship in 2020. Prior to its current operations, Porter operated in the Black Sea in April.

Oak Hill is deployed as part of the Bataan Amphibious Ready

Group (ARG), along with amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) and amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), which are operating in the Mediterranean Sea.

Embarked aboard the ARG ships are the Marines of the 26th Marine Expeditionary

Unit (MEU) and personnel from Assault Craft Unit (ACU) 2, who can deploy a landing craft utility (LCU) vessel from the well deck of Oak Hill to transport more than 300 Marines – or a combination of Marines, vehicles and heavy equipment – ashore.

“Oak Hill’s operations alongside Porter in the Black Sea represent another opportunity for us to enhance maritime

security and expand interoperability at sea with regional partners,” said Capt. Lance Leshner, Commodore of the Bataan ARG. “Oak Hill’s arrival introduces the Navy-Marine Corps team’s dynamic ship-to-shore and crisis response capability to the Black Sea for the first time this year, providing additional mission flexibility for U.S. 6th Fleet commanders in our continued efforts to

reinforce security and stability in the region.”

The U.S. Navy routinely operates in the Black Sea consistent with international law, including the Montreux Convention.

During Porter’s previous operations in the Black Sea, the ship conducted maneuvering operations with the Romanian frigate Regina Maria (F222). Porter, forward-deployed to Naval Station Rota,

Spain, is conducting naval operations in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of operations in support of U.S. national security interests in Europe.

U.S. 6th Fleet, headquartered in Naples, Italy, conducts the full spectrum of joint and naval operations, often in concert with allied and interagency partners, in order to advance U.S. national interests and security and stability in Europe and Africa.



BATARG >



SUEZ  
CANAL



*Clockwise from top left:*

Seaman Amiyus Mapson, assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51) sanitizes hand rails, June 15, 2020. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting

The amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD-5) travels through the Suez Canal, June 15, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.

Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handling) 3rd Class Tyler Jones, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), prepares to paint the flight deck, June 15, 2020. Photo by MC2 Angus Beckles.

Religious Programs Specialist 2nd Class John Sykes, assigned to the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), looks through binoculars as the ship transits the Suez Canal, June 15, 2020. Photo by MC3 Griffin Kersting.

The Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, including, from left to left, the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12), the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), and the amphibious dock landing ship USS Oak Hill (LSD 51), transits through the Suez Canal, June 15, 2020. Photo by MC2 Lyle Wilkie.



# CHANGE OF COMMAND



*Clockwise from top left:*

Capt. Gregory Leland, the outgoing commanding officer of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), crosses through rainbow sideboys after a change of command ceremony, June 16, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Capt. Bryan Carmichael, commanding officer of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), salutes outgoing commanding officer Capt. Gregory Leland on the flight deck after a change of command ceremony, June 16, 2020. Photo by MC1 Kathryn Macdonald.

Sailors and Marines assemble on the flight deck of amphibious assault ship USS Bataan's (LHD 5) for change of command ceremony, June 16, 2020. Photo by MC2 Angus Beckles.

Capt. Gregory Leland, the outgoing commanding officer of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), pilots an MH-60S Sea Hawk, assigned to the Dragon Whales of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 28, after a change of command ceremony, June 16, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Capt. Gregory Leland, commanding officer of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), gives a speech during a change of command ceremony on the flight deck June 16, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.

Capt. Gregory Leland, commanding officer of the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5) gives a speech during a change of command ceremony on the flight deck, June 16, 2020. Photo by MCSA Darren Newell.





# Like father, like son

BM2 Gabriel Santillan follows in his father's footsteps

*Story and photos by MC2 Lyle Wilkie*

Every Sailor has a story for why they joined the Navy and what inspires them to be in the service. For one Sailor aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21), it is a family affair.

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Gabriel Santillan enlisted after growing up hearing stories from both his mother and father, who is a retired boatswain.

"A big influence in joining the Navy was my parents talking about their experiences with the military and how they enjoyed it," said Gabriel Santillan. "On one hand I had my mom, who served five years and did it for college. On the other I have my father, who did 25 years and made it a career. They said whether it's for a career or not, serving will benefit me in more ways than one and that I wouldn't regret it."

After telling old naval stories to their son, Santillan's parents had assumed he may have been persuaded to go down a different career path. They soon realized he honed in on their positive experiences and life lessons.

"I was initially surprised by his decision to enlist in the United States Navy," said Chief Warrant Officer (Ret.) Javier Santillan, his father. "I've shared numerous experiences with my son about my tours while on active duty and I assumed after describing the intense training cycles and scheduled deployments, he would be discouraged to enlist. Instead he internalized my personal advice and lessons learned, pushing forward to join the United States Navy. I'm extremely proud about his decision to enlist, as most people aren't willing or able to make the sacrifices required, in order to be successful in such a structured work environment."

These experiences helped to guide Santillan through boot camp and aboard the New York while deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations.

*cont.*

Boatswain's Mate 2nd Class Gabriel Santillan, assigned to the New York, watches as supplies moves from the dry cargo and ammunition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE 12) to the New York during a replenishment-at-sea, May 5, 2020.



*Then BM3 Gabriel Santillan, from San Diego, gives a safety brief to Sailors prior to sea-and-anchor detail aboard the New York, July 12, 2019.*



“Before I even left for boot camp, he informed me about the challenges and how I would be pushed,” said Gabriel. “He talked about his experiences and things he did and why he loved being a boatswain’s mate.”

The same passion for the boatswain rate that the senior Santillan had is already evident in his son.

“I fell in love with the high-risk evolutions and the amount of teamwork it took to make it,” said Gabriel. “It’s not just one person who makes a small boat evolution successful, it’s not a single person who allows a completion of cargo transfer or fuel, and it’s not one person who makes well deck operations. It’s every person from the phone talker to the petty officer in charge and everything in between. It’s the people you tease, joke with, laugh

with, eat with, learn from, and fight with. It’s the people who wake up before the sun and sometimes stay up well into the night with. It’s the people you struggle with, but you struggle together. The evolution might be the thing that pulls people to be a boatswain’s mate, but it’s the people you meet that make you want to stay.” Gabriel moved quickly through the ranks from boatswain’s mate seaman to being recently meritoriously advanced to second class petty officer by the command.

“Santillan came onboard as a seaman who was motivated and willing to learn,” said Boatswain’s Mate 1st Class Daniel Lopez, New York’s deck department leading petty officer. “Since then he has done nothing but impress with his strong work ethic and electric

attitude. He is a complete superstar in deck department.”

Even though Gabriel has already made great strides in his Navy career, he still has an ambitious goal set for himself.

“I am trying to leave New York as a first class petty officer,” said Gabriel Santillan. “After that, I would like to follow in the footsteps of my father and make chief petty officer and one day become a boatswain.”

Gabriel is not the only one who hopes becoming a boatswain is in his future.

“He is the type of Sailor his peers emulate,” said Lopez. “He shines amongst any group he is in. He trains, helps, and pushes everyone around him to excel. Santillan has a world of opportunity ahead of him, I’ve spoken to him about officer programs, but he definitely wants to put on chief. I can

see him as a boatswain someday.”

Whether aboard New York or back at home, Gabriel’s parents and his shipmates agree that they are proud of his accomplishments. “I want him to know that he is my pride and joy,” said Javier Santillan. “I couldn’t be more proud of the man he’s become and I’m excited about what’s yet to come both on a personal and professional level. I want him to know that I love him and often brag to my former shipmates about his accomplishments. Keep pressing forward son: The sky is the limit.”



*Top right, BM2 Gabriel Santillan pictured next to his father, left, in their U.S. Navy boot camp graduation photos, and then BM2 Javier Santillan pictured with Gabriel Santillan. Photos courtesy of Santillan family.*



# NYK's Got Talent

Story and photos by MC2 Lyle Wilkie

Sailors and Marines aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS New York (LPD 21) rallied together in a competitive talent event to help maintain high morale while deployed to the U.S. 5th Fleet area of operations, May 24.

“‘New York’s Got Talent’ is a talent show to showcase the Marines’ and Sailors’ unique talents,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Anknesha Shepherd, “New York’s Got Talent” coordinator. “There were two phases to the competition; the audition phase and the final show.”

During the audition phase, the Sailors and Marines were introduced to the judges and their competition.

“The judging consisted of letting the contestants know what they can improve on going into the finals, what we liked, what could have been different, and included giving a little constructive criticism,” said Yeoman 2nd Class James Oliver, one of the judges.

This was the second integration of “New York’s Got Talent.” The first iteration was held during New York’s recent 2018 deployment.

“I thought it would be really cool to show the ship what modern-day beatboxing is like”, said Fire Controlman 2nd Class Sean Ferguson, one of the contestants. “Not a lot of people know

*Gunner’s Mate 3rd Class Ethan Hunt, assigned to the New York, plays the guitar and sings during a talent competition on the New York’s flight deck, May 24, 2020.*

*Pictured right:*

*From top to bottom, Engineman Fireman Apprentice Shykeem Williams, Seaman Katelyn McClain, and Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class Christopher Smudzinski, all assigned to New York (LPD 21), perform during a talent competition on the New York’s flight deck, May 24, 2020.*

its potential, especially considering I’m still a novice, compared to some people I know.”

One of this year’s competitors was a contestant from the first competition, who was eager for a second chance to win the prize.

“I decided to be a part of the event this year because of the last ‘New York’s Got Talent’”, said Culinary Specialist 2nd Class Nicholas Basone, another competitor. “I was a finalist in the last one and I felt like I should have won.”

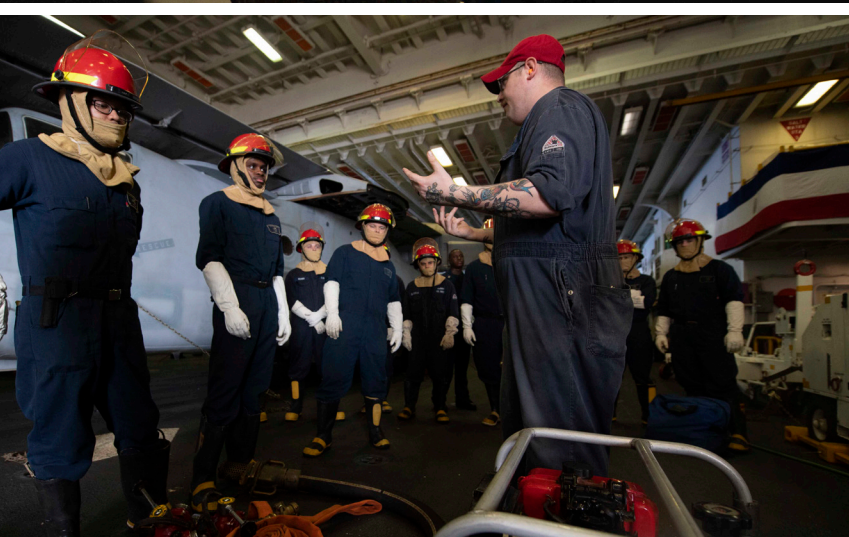
In the final phase, the judges chose a first, second, and third place winner out of the 11 total contestants.

“I was surprised I won because there were so many talented people who came out for this competition,” said Gunner’s Mate 3rd Class Ethan Hunt. “After I heard CS2 Basone, I was sure he won. Everyone in the competition was great and everyone should be recognized who competed in ‘New York’s Got Talent.’”

Despite the inherent competitiveness of the event, some Sailors and Marines felt it was important to remember the goal: Bring everyone together and help maintain high morale.

“It feels good to actually do something myself to help everyone escape for a little bit,” said Engineman 2nd Class Nicholas Gniech, a participant. “That makes me feel pretty good inside.”





*Clockwise from top left:*

Damage Controlman 1st Class Charles Register, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), provides training during a damage control training exercise, June 5, 2020. Photo by MC2 Angus Beckles.

Damage Controlman 2nd Class Hugh Williams, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), provides training during a damage control training exercise, June 5, 2020. Photo by MC2 Angus Beckles.

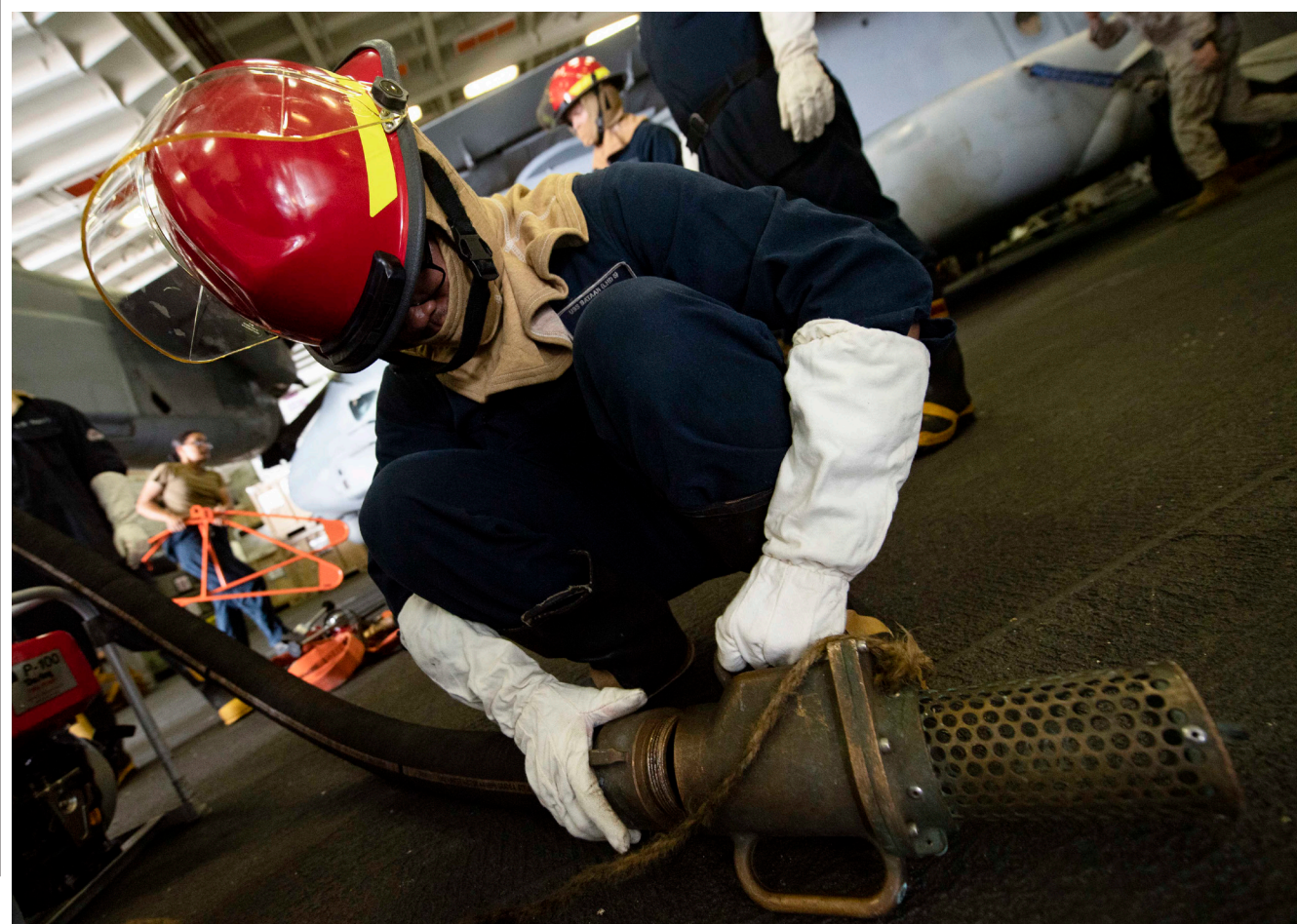
Damage Controlman 2nd Class Hugh Williams, left, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), shows Sailors how to use a portable air supply pack during a rescue-and-assistance drill, June 12, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Fireman JC James Farinas, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), uses a P-100 portable fire pump during a rescue-and-assistance drill, June 12, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Fireman JC James Farinas, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), uses a portable air supply pack during a rescue-and-assistance drill, June 12, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Fireman JC James Farinas, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), uses a P-100 portable fire pump during a rescue-and-assistance drill, June 12, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.

Damage Controlman 1st Class Charles Register, assigned to the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), teaches Sailors how to use a P-100 portable fire pump during a rescue-and-assistance drill, June 12, 2020. Photo by MC2 Anna Van Nuys.



# Naval Air Forces Announces Changes to Enlisted Air Warfare Specialist Program

Story from Commander, Naval Air Forces

Commander, Naval Air Forces (CNAF) today announced changes to the Navy’s Enlisted Air Warfare Specialist (EAWS) program.

The updated COMNAVAIRFORINST 1414.2A instruction requires Sailors to attain in-rating technical qualifications up to the work center supervisor level prior to enrolling in the EAWS program. Combined with previous changes to the OPNAV instruction that eliminated the requirement for Sailors to earn a warfare qualification within 30 months of reporting to a command, the new EAWS program gives Sailors more time to focus on mastering their technical specialty, ultimately resulting in increased expertise across aviation ratings.

“Our readiness depends on having the best maintainers, the best aircrewmen and the most technically proficient Sailors in our squadrons, aboard our aircraft carriers and in our maintenance facilities,” said Vice Adm. DeWolfe H. Miller III, CNAF. The new EAWS requirements will give Naval Aviation forces a stronger technical foundation. After mastering the key fundamentals of their rating, Sailors can then branch out to gain other aviation warfare skillsets and knowledge, becoming a true aviation specialist.”

Active duty, SELRES and FTS Sailors permanently assigned to CVN, LHA and LHD class ships, aviation squadrons, maintenance facilities (Fleet Readiness Centers/Aviation Intermediate

Maintenance Depots) and the Naval Air Warfare Development Center (NAWDC) are eligible to enroll in the program if they meet the following criteria:

- E-5 or senior
- Complete in all in-rating qualifications
- Qualified up to Journeyman/Workcenter Supervisor

Sailors assigned temporarily (TAD) to an aviation command for more than 120 days are eligible if they are qualified as Journeyman/Workcenter Supervisor in their respective rating. Sailors assigned to select support type commands will still be able to qualify through a memorandum of understanding (MOU).

A third-class petty officer (E-4) may enroll with command master chief (CMC) or command senior enlisted leader (CSEL) approval if they have an early promote (EP) on their most recent periodic evaluation and a score of 50 or better on their most recent advancement exam. Sailors in paygrades E-3 and below are not eligible to enroll.

“We want to allow our most junior Sailors the time and opportunity to become technical experts in their trade craft, and provide them the space to focus on their job,” said Force Master Chief Huben Phillips, of Commander, Naval Air Forces Atlantic (CNAL). “The goal is to encourage Sailors to be masters of their craft, who show value by knowing and being

an expert in their job; these are the same Sailors we should be promoting and who we want to keep in our Navy.”

One other notable change in the EAWS instruction governs re-qualification. Platform-specific qualifications do not expire. Once EAWS qualified on a specific aircraft type/model/series, a Sailor no longer must requalify upon reporting to that same type command (for example, VP to VP, CVN to CVN, etc.).

“Data analytics has proven to us that maintaining our technical experts in specific type model series (T/M/S) has a direct impact on increased combat readiness,” said Force Master Chief James Toczcz, of Commander, Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet (CNAP). “By removing the requirement for Sailors to requalify on the same T/M/S, we hope to encourage those experts to remain in their same platform for multiple tours.

“We have made great strides in aviation readiness over the past couple years, and this EAWS program refinement is another step in that direction,”Toczcz continued. “Our message to Sailors is clear: become the very best in your particular rating, which directly impacts your command’s readiness and warfighting effectiveness.”

For more information on the new EAWS program requirements, contact your unit CMC/CSEL or EAWS program coordinator.

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COVID-19

U.S. NAVY

RESPONSE

UPDATED GUIDANCE ON BACK PAGE

# OFF-LIMIT ESTABLISHMENTS, ACTIVITIES DUE TO COVID-19

## NAV NORTH FRAGORD 20-024.013 IN RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

DUE TO THE RECENT INCREASE IN COVID-19 CASES, NEW NAVY RESTRICTIONS HAVE BEEN SET REGARDING OFF-LIMIT ESTABLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR MILITARY MEMBERS. OFF INSTALLATION, SERVICEMEMBERS ARE PROHIBITED FROM VISITING, PATRONIZING, OR ENGAGING IN THE FOLLOWING:

- RECREATIONAL SWIMMING POOLS, GYMS, FITNESS FACILITIES, EXERCISE CLASSES, SAUNAS, SPAS, AND SALONS
- TATTOO/BODY ART/PIERCING PARLORS
- BARBER SHOPS, HAIR OR NAIL SALONS, AND MASSAGE PARLORS
- CINEMAS/THEATERS
- PARTICIPATION IN TEAM/ORGANIZED SPORTS
- DINE-IN RESTAURANTS (TAKE-OUT AUTHORIZED), BARS, NIGHT CLUBS, CASINOS, CONFERENCES, SPORTING EVENTS, CONCERTS, PUBLIC CELEBRATIONS, PARADES, PUBLIC BEACHES, AMUSEMENT PARKS OR OTHER EVENTS DESIGNED TO PROMOTE LARGE GATHERINGS, TO INCLUDE INDOOR RELIGIOUS SERVICES.
- OUTDOOR RECREATION WHERE COMMON USE FACILITIES ARE USED AND IF A MINIMUM OF SIX FEET PHYSICAL DISTANCING CANNOT BE MAINTAINED.
- NON-ESSENTIAL COMMERCIAL RETAIL ESTABLISHMENTS AND SHOPPING MALLS.

**GOVERNMENT CIVILIANS, FAMILY MEMBERS, AND CONTRACT EMPLOYEES  
ARE HIGHLY ENCOURAGED TO AVOID THESE ESTABLISHMENTS AND  
ACTIVITIES.**