



# NPS IN THE NEWS

## Weekly Media Report -Dec. 1-7, 2020

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### RESEARCH:

#### 1. [Future Advantage: CRUSER Funds FY21 Robotics and Autonomous Systems Research](#)

([NPS.edu 1 Dec 20](#))

([Navy.mil 1 Dec 20](#))

([Military Spot 2 Dec 20](#)) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Nathan K. Serpico

Key to the nation's future advantage in autonomous systems, the Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS)

Consortium of Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research (CRUSER) approved FY21 funding for novel research in robotics and autonomous systems through its Seed Research Program. This program provides NPS faculty and researchers with funding intended to "seed" important research projects devoted to advancing autonomous solutions from the NPS campus.

#### 2. [NPS Researchers, Marines Explore the Trust Factor in Human-Machine Teaming](#)

([NPS.edu 1 Dec 20](#))

([Navy.mil 1 Dec 20](#))

([Marines.mil 7 Dec 20](#)) ... Javier Chagoya

Trust in autonomous systems to do what they are designed to do, and meant to do, is paramount before these systems can be confidently employed as an operational capability. In an era of Great Power Competition, where those who can field autonomous capabilities the fastest will have a distinct advantage, researchers at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) are exploring many of the fundamentals of autonomous systems, especially in the trust and confidence arena.

### FACULTY:

#### 3. [Is Egypt's Army Adapting to Growing Regional and Domestic Threats?](#)

([The Africa Report 3 Dec 20](#)) ... Loza Seleskie

The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) training schedule has been quite busy these past few years. Once a conventional army, it is now undergoing drastic change under the leadership of President Fattah al-Sisi as it responds to shifting dynamics across the region as well as its own internal and external threats. How is the EAF's military strategy evolving in this context? How is it affecting alliances?... But while the Egyptian military was previously "equipped to fight a major land battle", it is now adapting to new challenges with "special operations, air mobility, reconnaissance and surveillance platforms" says **Robert Springborg, a retired professor of national security affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School**.

#### 4. [In Iran, Assassination Shock Spurs Calls to Rethink Security](#)

([The Christian Science Monitor 3 Dec 20](#)) ... Scott Peterson

The assassination outside Tehran last week of the scientist reputed to be the "father" of Iran's nuclear program has exposed deep vulnerabilities in Iran's security and intelligence. But it's just the latest in a chain of breaches... "The truth of the matter is that there are people inside the regime that are likely leaking this information," says **Afshon Ostovar, an expert at the Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California.

"They've got a leaky ship, and I think that's the scariest issue for them, because there's no clean way to deal with that."

## 5. [Sand Mining at the Cemex Plant in Marina Ends Ahead of Deadline](#)

(*Monterey County Weekly* 3 Dec 20) ... Asaf Shalev

Occupying part of the beach in Marina for decades, the last coastal sand mine in the United States has ceased operations, according to officials at the California Coastal Commission.

Cemex, a multinational company based in Mexico, notified the commission in mid-October that it had stopped mining sand at its Marina dredge pond, fulfilling the central requirement of a 2017 settlement agreement two-and-a-half months before the deadline of Dec. 31.

... Biala recalls her involvement with a "small cadre of key activists who interacted with many state organizations," highlighting representatives from Surfrider and Save Our Shores. But she reserves the special credit for **Edward Thornton, a retired professor of oceanography at the Naval Postgraduate School**. "Ed gave us the scientific evidence to be able to assert that the Cemex plant was the direct cause of [Monterey Bay] erosion rates," she says.

## ALUMNI:

### 6. [Lancaster County Military News: Dec. 1, 2020](#)

(*Lancaster Online* 1 Dec 20)

The Easyriders of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 37 held a change of command ceremony Nov. 20, 2020, in Hangar 103 on Marine Corps Base Hawaii in Kaneohe Bay. United States Navy Cmdr. Matthew L. Martin, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, of Manheim, relieved Cmdr. Daniel M. Martins as the 37th commanding officer of HSM-37 since its establishment in 1975.

### 7. [Governor Abbott Appoints Three to Texas Radiation Advisory Board](#)

(*The Gilmer Mirror* 1 Dec 20)

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Charles Cavnor, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, to the Texas Radiation Advisory Board for a term set to expire on April 16, 2025.

### 8. [How Mark Kelly Might Shake Up the Senate's Power Balance](#)

(*E&E News* 2 Dec 20) ... Geof Koss

After campaigning as an independent problem solver, Arizona Democrat Mark Kelly, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, is poised to get a head start on his pledge to fix a "broken" political system in Washington.

The former astronaut, 56, is set to be sworn in today to the seat once held by a personal hero — the late Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). Both were Navy pilots and combat veterans.

### 9. [NJ Native Mark Kelly Sworn in as Arizona's Senator](#)

(*NJToday.net* 2 Dec 20) ... Amanda Rapace

Democrat Mark Kelly, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, was sworn in to the Senate on Wednesday, marking the first time in more than 67 years that Arizona will have two Democratic senators.

### 10. [US Begins Bahrain Strategic Dialogue; Solidifies Abraham Accords and Regional Isolation of Iran](#)

(*Kurdistan24.net* 2 Dec 20) ... Laurie Mylroie

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Bahraini Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, launched a US-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue with a virtual meeting on Tuesday.

The event follows the start of the Strategic Dialogue between the US and the United Arab Emirates a little over a month ago.

### 11. [Retired USMC Major Jim Haney is a No-Nonsense Guy with a Heart of Gold](#)

(*The Observer News* 3 Dec 20) ... Lois Kindle

The life of Jim Haney, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, has been all about service.



A Sun City Center resident since 2005, he volunteers his time and efforts to just about every group or effort having to do with veterans or the military.

## 12. [USAMMDA Team Members Join COVID-19 Joint Acquisition Task Force: Take on Strategic National Stockpile Readiness](#)

(DIVDS 3 Dec 20) ... Ashley Force

Earlier this year, when word started spreading about a distant and potentially deadly novel coronavirus, our country prepared for the worst. When the virus reached the United States, it spread rapidly. Yet, our hospitals were prepared with the medical supplies they needed to properly treat patients, at least in the beginning. However, after several months, our Nation was using up its Strategic National Stockpile at a rapid rate. The national stockpile includes critical items necessary to provide care to patients, such as medical supplies, personal protective equipment, and drugs, such as steroids and pain medicine.

Jay Wang, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus and product manager for USAMMDA's Warfighter Health, Performance and Evacuation Project Management Office, served as the product manager for the CRRT group and technical lead for the pharmaceuticals group from May to September 2020.

## UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

**December 18:** [Fall Quarter Graduation](#)

**December 25:** Christmas Day

**January 1:** New Year's Day

## **RESEARCH:**

### **Future Advantage: CRUSER Funds FY21 Robotics and Autonomous Systems Research**

(NPS.edu 1 Dec 20)

(Navy.mil 1 Dec 20) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Nathan K. Serpico

Key to the nation's future advantage in autonomous systems, the Naval Postgraduate School's (NPS) Consortium of Robotics and Unmanned Systems Education and Research (CRUSER) approved FY21 funding for novel research in robotics and autonomous systems through its Seed Research Program. This program provides NPS faculty and researchers with funding intended to "seed" important research projects devoted to advancing autonomous solutions from the NPS campus.

Established in 2011, CRUSER supports the Navy's goals and objectives in developing maritime applications of robotics, automation and unmanned systems as well as shaping the next generation of naval officers through education, research, concept generation and experimentation. Aiding in these goals, the CRUSER Seed Research Program supports research toward the maritime application of robotics and autonomy thereby fostering a rich, relevant research opportunity for faculty and students.

According to CRUSER Associate Director Dr. Carl Oros, the Seed Research Program is a key component of how CRUSER fosters an environment for students, faculty and staff to collaborate, both internally and externally, with the common goal of developing and fielding unmanned systems across the Department of the Navy.

"CRUSER views the [robotics and autonomous systems] field as inherently transdisciplinary and CRUSER-sponsored research spans disciplines from physics, engineering, computer science, cognitive science, as well as the other human-social implications of autonomy involving ethics, trust, law, policy and acquisitions," said Oros. "This seed research funding helps NPS researchers working on a variety of challenging problems associated with integrating [robotics and autonomous systems] in naval tactical and operational concepts.

"Our motto is 'from technical to ethical, from concept generation to experimentation,'" Oros added.

The critical research areas include advancement of acoustic sensing, swarming, autonomous behaviors and navigation, C2 architectures, human-machine teaming and trust, counter unmanned aerial systems, and meteorological research to improve unmanned systems sensors and weapons systems.

Each year, research proposals are submitted by NPS faculty based on research themes related to the Warfare Innovation Continuum (WIC) workshops, with this year's themes evolving through discussions with CRUSER's funding sponsor, the Office of Naval Research. A selection committee, comprised of the CRUSER Director and previous directors, the NPS Dean of Research, and NPS senior military service representatives and multiple warfighting chairs then meet to discuss and provide input for selecting the top funding priorities.

While CRUSER is able to provide significant funding to projects across campus, not all proposal submissions are able to receive funding so a selection process must take place. This year alone, there were 44 proposals received requesting more than \$7 million in funding; much more than CRUSER is able to support.

"This made the selection process extremely challenging as we were not able to fund all of the great research taking place on campus," stated Oros.

The current fiscal year funding will provide financial support for a variety of robotics and autonomous systems projects that aim to address key warfighter challenges, including understanding the ethics involved with these various capabilities.

"The on-going focus on autonomous multi-vehicle systems implicitly requires consideration of not only technical and operational aspects of these systems, but also the legal and ethical aspects," noted seed funding recipient Navy Cmdr. Kathleen Giles, NPS Permanent Military Professor in the Systems Engineering Department.

Along with the development of these robotic and autonomous systems, operating these vehicles to their full capabilities is multifaceted with both the autonomous system and their human operator needing to work in a cohesive manner.

This human-machine interaction is just one of the multiple aspects that Giles and her team will be addressing during their experimentation.

In order to progress in the technical and ethical domains of robotics and autonomous systems, collaboration is essential. A few groups are using a collaborative effort between NPS faculty and research partners from other academic institutions, such as University of Alabama – Huntsville and Arizona State University. The most integral collaboration, however, will occur between field disciplines.

“The nature of human-robot interaction is inherently multidisciplinary,” said Assistant Professor Robert Semmens, also a funding recipient from NPS’ Systems Engineering Department. “On the technology side, you need engineers and computer scientists to make the system work and make the capability even come around. On the human side, it calls for psychology and human factors. Further, there are the broader sociological and ethical considerations that surround the interaction between the human and the technology.”

According to Oros, CRUSER will continue advocating for robotics and autonomous systems education and research on campus and is always looking for collaborative stakeholders to advance the Secretary of the Navy’s autonomous systems goals.

“I’m glad that CRUSER exists,” noted Semmens. “I think it’s a great asset to our research base to have an organization that is supporting us. It’s certainly advantageous for the faculty and principal investigators, but also for the students. And it makes sure our work is relevant to the force.”

“We are very thankful to receive the seed funding from CRUSER,” echoed Giles. “Having their support of unmanned systems research is extremely valuable for small NPS research teams, especially as they shift their research into new areas. It promotes cross-campus and cross-agency collaboration and allows research teams to develop their work toward topics desirable to larger DOD sponsors.”

<https://nps.edu/-/future-advantage-cruser-funds-fy21-robotics-and-autonomous-systems-research>

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2431660/naval-postgraduate-school-funds-new-research-in-robotics-autonomous-systems/>

<http://www.militaryspot.com/news/navy-funds-new-research-robotics-autonomous-systems>

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## NPS Researchers, Marines Explore the Trust Factor in Human-Machine Teaming

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Trust in autonomous systems to do what they are designed to do, and meant to do, is paramount before these systems can be confidently employed as an operational capability. In an era of Great Power Competition, where those who can field autonomous capabilities the fastest will have a distinct advantage, researchers at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) are exploring many of the fundamentals of autonomous systems, especially in the trust and confidence arena.

On the eve of the COVID-19 pandemic, NPS researchers conducted a novel experiment with an autonomous robot in a simulated environment – with real Marines – seeking to understand just how confident the Marines were in the robot to complete its tasks in a combat environment.

The NPS research team, comprised of Assistant Professor Mollie McGuire, Research Associate Christian Fitzpatrick and NPS student Marine Corps Maj. Dan Yurkovich, traveled to Camp Lejeune, N.C., to research Yurkovich’s thesis, titled “Human-Machine Teaming,” using Camp Lajeune’s Combat Town Range and nearby Marines from the Advanced Infantry Training Battalion (AITB) as part of a testbed. This research was directly responsive to the Marine Corp’s 2018 Science and Technology Strategic Plan which has a key objective to pursue advanced robotic systems to support ground maneuvers.

The experiment put the robot in an urban environment in the Combat Town Range, calling for the robot to conduct room clearing, which is one of the most common of tasks in an urban warfare environment, but also one of the most dangerous.

For the experiment, the researchers employed the 310 Small Unmanned Ground Vehicle (SUGV), a man-portable robot intended for use by soldiers, combat engineers and mobile explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technicians to gather data for situational awareness in critical conditions. The Marines interfaced with the robot through a virtual gaming environment, created by NPS' Modeling Virtual Environments and Simulations Institute, where they "trained" the robot in its specific room clearing tasks and could then evaluate its effectiveness in accomplishing them from a "safe room" nearby.

"The experiment aimed to see if introducing and training with the robot in a virtual environment would aid in developing trust with the actual robot," said McGuire, who served as thesis advisor. "The experiment explored ways to develop trust in robotic teammates in a more efficient manner by using virtual environments instead of having Marines spend hours training with the robot itself."

McGuire noted that the objective was then to see if the Marines that "trained" the robot within the gaming environment had higher trust in the actual robot due to the potential forming of a "team dynamic" between man and machine – the robot learning human preferences, and the human learning robot capabilities.

"The young Marines in our experiment had a high level of technical competence especially in the understanding of machine learning," said Fitzpatrick. "Some Marines [had questions about] our processes in the transfer of gaming data to the robot which indicated they were closely observing us as we were observing them."

According to Fitzpatrick, the team was able to collect good data across a range of measurements.

"Gauging human-robot interaction with actual users was invaluable," said Fitzpatrick. "Our conclusion was that if Marines are involved in the development and integration process from the start, they would trust the unmanned capability to a greater extent when using them during real-world operations."

McGuire explained that if this trend continues, it might suggest a positive relationship between training time and trust development between humans and their robot teammates.

Yurkovich recently discovered that his original sponsor for this project, the Office of Naval Research, has incorporated some of his results into larger projects. He noted that other researchers are exploring the concept of rehearsals in virtual environment and how it transfers to live execution.

The experimentation appears to be promising as developers and researchers are evolving models to a next generation virtual environment game play and further resolving it to the real-world, he added.

<https://nps.edu/-/nps-researchers-marines-explore-the-trust-factor-in-human-machine-teaming>

<https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2435883/researchers-marines-explore-trust-in-human-machine-teams/>

<https://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2437025/nps-researchers-marines-explore-the-trust-factor-in-human-machine-teaming/>

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## FACULTY:

### Is Egypt's Army Adapting to Growing Regional and Domestic Threats?

(*The Africa Report* 3 Dec 20) ... Loza Seleskie

The Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) training schedule has been quite busy these past few years. Once a conventional army, it is now undergoing drastic change under the leadership of President Fattah al-Sisi as it responds to shifting dynamics across the region as well as its own internal and external threats. How is the EAF's military strategy evolving in this context? How is it affecting alliances?

What is being witnessed today in Egypt is in large part linked to the Arab Spring. The Muslim Brotherhood's rise to power during the former and short-lived presidency of Mohamed Morsi' has deeply affected the domestic and regional balance.

## Changing dynamics

### Egypt – Gulf states

Deposed by General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in 2013, the Brotherhood was banned by court order and labelled a terrorist organisation, leading to the exile of many.

Fleeing the violent crackdown, the Brotherhood leaders such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, considered to be the group's spiritual leader, found refuge and support in Qatar and Turkey. Both countries' leaderships have ideological leanings with the Brotherhood.

That has been a major source of tension with the Sisi administration that culminated in the Qatar diplomatic relations in 2017.

The UAE and Saudi regimes fear another Arab Spring and see the Muslim Brotherhood as the driving force behind any drastic change in the region. That fear has in turn helped to shape alliances among the Egypt – UAE – Saudi front against the Turkey – Qatar – Iran entente.

### Egypt – US

Washington's absence of support for Mubarak (a long-standing ally) during the popular uprising in 2011 created a dent in the trust between the two countries.

Since Sisi came to power, his administration has been looking “to broaden and diversify its foreign strategic relationships, partly to demonstrate that it is not wholly dependent on the US, but especially at this time to deepen ties with countries with which it shares hostility or at least suspicion, [as in the case] of Turkey” says Yezid Sayigh, a senior fellow at the Malcolm H. Kerr Carnegie Middle East Center.

## Military reform

As new regional dynamics emerge, so do new threats.

On the domestic front, the instability of the Northern Sinai region since 2011 has intensified in the past seven years. The ousting of Mohamed Morsi and economic difficulties have made the terrain ripe for terrorism.

The country's percentage of arms imports jumped by 215 in the period 2013 to 2017.<sup>f</sup> This boost in arms purchases has pushed Egypt to be the third largest importer in the world of military weapons and equipment.

But while the Egyptian military was previously “equipped to fight a major land battle”, it is now adapting to new challenges with “special operations, air mobility, reconnaissance and surveillance platforms” says **Robert Springborg, a retired professor of national security affairs from the Naval Postgraduate School**.

### On the training front, Egypt has increased:

- Military drills and mainly joint operations (nine between July 2019 and December 2020).
- Exercises with navies from the region (UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain, Sudan) and global powers (US, Russia, UK, France, Greece and Cyprus).

However, a few exceptions were noted in November this year:

- A multi ground-air training with regional allies (Sword of Arabs)
- An air training exercise with Sudan (Nile's Eagles-1)

Nile's Eagles was the first joint training session held since the ousting of longtime ruler Omar al-Bashir. The training exercise came on the heels of Washington's announcement that Khartoum would be taken off its terrorist list.

Egypt's current naval force-focused strategy also includes efforts to secure the strategic Suez Canal by hosting the biggest military base in the Red Sea at Bérénice.

An increased Egyptian naval capacity is also to the benefit of the EU. Two joint trainings have been conducted in the Mediterranean since July 2020. The growing closeness appears to be creating an “Egypt-EU alliance to counter what is perceived as an aggressive expansion of Turkey in the Mediterranean,” Alex Issa, a research Associate in International relations at Sciences Po, tells *The Africa Report*.

### **Joint venture**

Another growing headache for Egypt has been its shared border with Libya. Although the conflict has been ongoing since 2011, both Sisi’s administration and Russia’s President Vladimir Putin are backing General Khalifa Haftar, who heads the Libyan National Army (LNA) in the east of the country over the internationally-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA).

The LNA controls access to the country’s major oil sources and strategic locations (Tobruk and Derna ports) over the internationally recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli.

The main point of contention is the oil crescent region, home to most of Libya’s export terminals.

Egypt fears the Turkish-backed GNA’s control over those prime Libyan resources. It therefore has sought to strengthen its support network through its allies including the UAE and Saudi Arabia. Inevitably, military action is one way of solidifying and displaying that support.

Over on the east side of the country, Egypt’s increasingly tense situation with Ethiopia over its Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile continues to raise questions about any military operation.

Going back to its Nile’s Eagles-1 training with Sudan, the joint exercise comes at a time when both Cairo and Khartoum are becoming more weary of Addis Ababa’s growing power through its dam.

But as negotiations drag on and tensions intensify, their joint military exercise “is to be understood in a context of continued normalisation of relations between Israel, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and now Sudan” says Issa. However, he cautions that: “We cannot count on a real alliance [between Egypt and Sudan]. It is one of circumstances”.

There are also disagreements with its Saudi ally regarding Iran (of which Egypt is not as hostile) and Yemen where Egypt’s participation has been “essentially symbolic” adds Mohamed Maher, a researcher for the Washington Institute.

### **Bottom line**

Overall, a policy of boosted investment in the military alone could be a risk. Recent plans to spend \$1.3bn in arms deals with Italy and \$3.5bn with Russia were met by outcry amidst the growing effects of COVID-19.

But recent military operations and renewed exercises do not appear to be stopping Cairo from backing down on regaining its status as a regional military might. Under Sisi’s leadership, the military continues to grow in response to perceived or tangible threats, while the country moves on with social and economic reforms.

<https://www.theafricareport.com/52787/is-egypts-army-adapting-to-growing-regional-and-domestic-threats/>

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### **In Iran, Assassination Shock Spurs Calls to Rethink Security**

(*The Christian Science Monitor* 3 Dec 20) ... Scott Peterson

The assassination outside Tehran last week of the scientist reputed to be the “father” of Iran’s nuclear program has exposed deep vulnerabilities in Iran’s security and intelligence. But it’s just the latest in a chain of breaches.

In August, Israeli operatives in Tehran gunned down Al Qaeda’s second-in-command, Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, a mastermind of the 1998 attacks on U.S. embassies in Africa, reportedly “at the

behest of the United States.” In July, amid a summer of unexplained explosions across Iran, a mysterious fire damaged Iran’s uranium enrichment facility at Natanz.

Amid internal Iranian finger-pointing that has followed the attack on the scientist, analysts say Iran’s intelligence apparatus often appears to be looking for threats in the wrong places.

The “assassination came as a shock, not because [they] didn’t expect it, but exactly because they did expect and prepare for it,” says Maysam Behravesh, a researcher and former intelligence analyst for Iran.

“The truth of the matter is that there are people inside the regime that are likely leaking this information,” says **Afshon Ostovar, an expert at the Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, California. “They’ve got a leaky ship, and I think that’s the scariest issue for them, because there’s no clean way to deal with that.”

<https://www.csmonitor.com/Daily/2020/20201203>

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## Sand Mining at the Cemex Plant in Marina Ends Ahead of Deadline

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Occupying part of the beach in Marina for decades, the last coastal sand mine in the United States has ceased operations, according to officials at the California Coastal Commission.

Cemex, a multinational company based in Mexico, notified the commission in mid-October that it had stopped mining sand at its Marina dredge pond, fulfilling the central requirement of a 2017 settlement agreement two-and-a-half months before the deadline of Dec. 31.

“Cemex has stopped removing sand from the beach environment, allowing sand that is part of the public trust to remain in place,” says Justin Buhr, an analyst with the commission’s enforcement arm. He says the presence of sand is important because it serves as a buffer against sea-level rise and provides habitat for various species. Erosion of the shoreline has been severe: “The area has some of the highest rates of erosion of any section of coastline in the state,” Buhr says. With no more mining, sand could start accumulating again from sediment deposited by the Salinas River. “The beach could actually grow larger,” he says.

Cemex stopped mining ahead of schedule either because it had already reached its quota under the settlement or out of business considerations. Buhr says the company has complied with the agreement, but he cannot disclose how much sand the company removed because the number is considered proprietary. Now, Cemex has three years to remove its sand stockpiles and take action to restore the habitat. Cemex representatives did not respond to a request for comment.

State officials moved to close the Cemex plant after a coalition of scientists, environmental groups and local residents organized a public campaign.

“I am so utterly happy that our shoreline is now safe,” says Kathy Biala, one of the key activists on the issue. Looking back, she hopes credit goes to the proper people. “The dignitaries didn’t know much,” she says. “It was ordinary people who were in touch with the Coastal Commission. They were the unsung heroes.”

Arguably, Biala is now a dignitary herself. She entered public life fighting for the closure of the Cemex plant. Four years later, she was elected to serve on Marina City Council, winning her seat on Nov. 3.

Biala recalls her involvement with a “small cadre of key activists who interacted with many state organizations,” highlighting representatives from Surfrider and Save Our Shores. But she reserves the special credit for **Edward Thornton, a retired professor of oceanography at the Naval Postgraduate School**. “Ed gave us the scientific evidence to be able to assert that the Cemex plant was the direct cause of [Monterey Bay] erosion rates,” she says.

Thornton published a report summarizing the evidence and the history of the site in 2018. He wrote that he learned “it takes a lot of people to make change happen.”

"Passionate scientists and engineers, enlightened and dedicated government agencies... and an involved and educated citizenry came together with a common goal to make a change," he wrote.

[https://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/local\\_news/sand-mining-at-the-cemex-plant-in-marina-ends-ahead-of-deadline/article\\_05c85f08-34fe-11eb-a622-57584938c36e.html](https://www.montereycountyweekly.com/news/local_news/sand-mining-at-the-cemex-plant-in-marina-ends-ahead-of-deadline/article_05c85f08-34fe-11eb-a622-57584938c36e.html)

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## ALUMNI:

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[https://lancasteronline.com/news/community/lancaster-county-military-news-dec-1-2020/article\\_9ebaf470-344d-11eb-84ae-0f50f90c6921.html](https://lancasteronline.com/news/community/lancaster-county-military-news-dec-1-2020/article_9ebaf470-344d-11eb-84ae-0f50f90c6921.html)

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### Governor Abbott Appoints Three to Texas Radiation Advisory Board

(*The Gilmer Mirror* 1 Dec 20)

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Charles Cavnor, a Naval Postgraduate School alumnus, to the Texas Radiation Advisory Board for a term set to expire on April 16, 2025.

Charles Cavnor of Little Elm is a Lieutenant, Hazardous Materials Technician, and former Threat Liaison Officer for the Dallas Fire Rescue Department. He is a member of the International Association of Firefighters, Infragard, and the Center for Public Safety Excellence. Additionally, he was a founding member and served as both a HazMat Specialist and HazMat Manager for Texas Task Force 2-Urban Search and Rescue. Cavnor received a Bachelor of Arts and Applied Science in Fire & Emergency Services Administration from Texas A&M University at San Antonio, a **Master of Arts in Homeland Security from the Naval Postgraduate School**, and completed the National Nuclear Security Administration's Preventive Radiological/Nuclear Detection Team Leader and Team Operations courses through training with Counter Terrorism Operations Support.

[http://www.gilmermirror.com/view/full\\_story/27783927/article-Governor-Abbott-Appoints-Three-To-Texas-Radiation-Advisory-Board?instance=home\\_news\\_bullets](http://www.gilmermirror.com/view/full_story/27783927/article-Governor-Abbott-Appoints-Three-To-Texas-Radiation-Advisory-Board?instance=home_news_bullets)

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## How Mark Kelly Might Shake Up the Senate's Power Balance

(E&E News 2 Dec 20) ... Geof Koss

After campaigning as an independent problem solver, Arizona Democrat Mark Kelly is poised to get a head start on his pledge to fix a "broken" political system in Washington.

The former astronaut, 56, is set to be sworn in today to the seat once held by a personal hero — the late Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.). Both were Navy pilots and combat veterans.

"It's a big deal for me," Kelly told *The Arizona Republic* in a postelection interview posted last month.

"I mean, this is — John McCain is somebody that I looked up to when I was a 22-year-old pilot in flight school," he said. "He was the example of how you serve your country under the most challenging circumstances, and he was a hero of mine when I was young, and we often don't get to meet our heroes. I think it's also much less often that you eventually get to call him a friend, and to be elected to his United States Senate seat, that's a very big deal for me."

Kelly's immediate impact in the Senate will be a slight shift in the balance of power: While Republicans will still hold the majority with 52 seats, Democrats will now control 48 seats, complicating the GOP's legislative calculus for an omnibus spending measure and possible COVID-19 relief package during the remaining weeks of the 116th Congress.

Should Democrats win both Jan. 5 Senate runoffs in Georgia and capture the majority in the new Congress, it will be in no small part due to Kelly's 78,000-vote win over incumbent GOP Sen. Martha McSally.

But having been elected to serve out the final two years of McCain's six-year term, Kelly will be on the ballot again in 2022 — ensuring that every move he makes for the next two years will be under the microscope.

### To the stars

Kelly's path to Capitol Hill was an unlikely one.

The son of police officers, Kelly grew up in New Jersey before graduating from the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and later the **Naval Postgraduate School**.

As a Navy pilot, Kelly was twice deployed to the Middle East during the first Gulf War. He flew 39 combat missions as part of Operation Desert Storm.

In 1996, both Kelly and his identical twin brother, Scott, were selected to be astronauts. Five years later, Mark Kelly flew the first of four missions into space aboard the Space Shuttle Endeavour, which he commanded on its final flight.

Kelly has spent more than 50 days in space and lived aboard the International Space Station, where his brother spent a yearlong mission. The twins now have the distinction of being the only siblings to have traveled into space.

Kelly's life was forever changed on Jan. 8, 2011, when his wife, then-Rep. Gabby Giffords (D-Ariz.), was nearly assassinated in a shooting at a constituent event that left six dead.

The following year, Kelly resigned from NASA and the Navy and moved full-time to Arizona to help his wife recover from a traumatic brain injury sustained in the shooting.

Kelly and Giffords founded a nonprofit and super political action committee to curb gun violence, while also co-authoring several books.

"Gabby is the person who taught me about this side of public service, and what it means to use public policy to improve people's lives — and who taught me to never, ever give up," Kelly said during an election night speech.

Kelly announced in 2019 he would challenge McSally to serve out the remainder of McCain's final term. McSally was appointed to the seat on a temporary basis by Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey (R) after losing an earlier Senate race in 2018 to Democrat Kyrsten Sinema.

"I gave it my all, and I left it all on the field," McSally said during an emotional farewell speech last month.



Kelly and McSally sparred throughout the campaign over the Green New Deal, which Kelly said he opposed during an October debate in which he also called it "kind of silly" to phase out fossil fuels (*E&E Daily*, Oct. 7).

He's spoken about personally witnessing the effects of climate change from space, and on his campaign website, Kelly noted the risks of unchecked warming to Arizona's economy, noting the projected increase in 100-degree-Fahrenheit days in Phoenix and the risks to the state's water supplies and public health.

He describes renewable energy as an "opportunity for Arizona," and has suggested that the number of renewable workers in the state could be tripled through "massive investments" in research and development to help make renewables more competitive.

"The only thing stopping us is irresponsible leadership in Washington," states Kelly's website.

### Senate plans

Kelly's campaign did not respond to an interview request, but the senator-elect told *The Arizona Republic* last month that he hopes his committee assignments will reflect his unique background.

"I want my experience as a combat pilot, a veteran, an engineer, an astronaut to be able to help whatever committee I sit on, solve some of these problems we face," he said, adding that he was preparing to make his case to Democratic leaders for panel assignments that will be "focused on Arizona, but also focused on my own personal experiences."

The Armed Services Committee — which McSally sits on — "would make sense for that to be high on the list," Kelly said.

Another committee that McSally is a member of, Energy and Natural Resources, also has a long history of representation by Arizona senators.

Former GOP Sen. Jeff Flake served on the panel for a few years, as did McCain, who during hearings frequently raised the issue of the role of nuclear power in addressing climate change.

Those views were informed by the landmark carbon cap-and-trade bill McCain introduced with former Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) in 2003.

Kelly said he's spoken with McCain's widow, Cindy, about obtaining the desk the legendary senator used for 33 years for his personal office.

Kelly also said he was struck by the intimacy of the Senate chamber, where he and other senators-elect gathered last month for orientation.

After 21 months of campaigning throughout Arizona, he said, "it's sort of abstract, and then within a week, I find myself sitting there on the Senate floor, and that's when it becomes just very, very real that the election is over, and now it's time to get to work."

<https://www.eenews.net/stories/1063719631>

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### NJ Native Mark Kelly Sworn in as Arizona's Senator

(*NJToday.net* 2 Dec 20) ... Amanda Rapace

Democrat Mark Kelly was sworn in to the Senate on Wednesday, marking the first time in more than 67 years that Arizona will have two Democratic senators.

Kelly, 56, the husband of former congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords (D-Ariz.), defeated Sen. Martha McSally (R) in a special election last month.

The seat was once held by longtime Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who died in 2018. McSally was later appointed to the seat but came up short this year in her race against Kelly, who will be up for a full six-year term in 2022.

Vice President Pence administered the oath to the former astronaut in the Senate chamber, while Arizona's senior senator, Kyrsten Sinema (D), accompanied Kelly and held the Bible. All three wore masks. Republicans and Democrats stood and applauded.



Kelly joins Sinema, a former congresswoman who won election to the Senate in 2018, also defeating McSally.

Kelly's statewide victory in Arizona helped President-elect Joe Biden claim the state, becoming the first Democratic presidential nominee to do so since Bill Clinton in 1996.

The shift to Democrats is a result of a decade of work by Mexican American activists, sweeping demographic change and the consolidation of independent voters offended by President Donald Trump's incompetence and narcissism.

Trump's repeated attacks on McCain prompted the lawmaker's widow, Cindy McCain, to endorse Biden for president.

A naval aviator, Kelly flew combat missions during the Gulf War before being selected as a NASA Space Shuttle pilot in 1996.

He flew his first space mission in 2001 as pilot of STS-108, piloted STS-121 in 2006, and commanded STS-124 in 2008 and STS-134 in 2011, the final mission of Space Shuttle Endeavour.

Mark's identical twin Scott Kelly is also a retired astronaut; they are the only siblings to have both traveled in space.

They are the sons of Richard and Patricia (née McAvoy) Kelly, two retired police officers.

He was born on February 21, 1964, in Orange, New Jersey, and raised in West Orange, New Jersey.

Kelly graduated from Mountain High School in 1982. He received a Bachelor of Science in marine engineering and nautical science from the United States Merchant Marine Academy, graduating with highest honors in 1986. In 1994, he received a Master of Science in aeronautical engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School.

Kelly's wife, then-Arizona Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, was shot and nearly killed in an assassination attempt on January 8, 2011. Six people died in the attack.

After the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting the next year, Giffords and Kelly founded the nonprofit Americans for Responsible Solutions, campaigning for universal background checks and red flag laws before Kelly decided to pursue elected office.

On average, there are over 100 gun deaths each day and 38,000 each year. 61% are suicides, 36% are homicides, 1.4% are shootings by police, and 1.3% are unintentional.

<http://njtoday.net/2020/12/02/nj-native-mark-kelly-sworn-in-as-arizonas-senator/>

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## US Begins Bahrain Strategic Dialogue; Solidifies Abraham Accords and Regional Isolation of Iran

(Kurdistan24.net 2 Dec 20) ... Laurie Mylroie

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Bahraini Foreign Minister, Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani, launched a US-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue with a virtual meeting on Tuesday.

The event follows the start of the Strategic Dialogue between the US and the United Arab Emirates a little over a month ago.

Both Bahrain and the UAE have agreed to normalize relations with Israel in what Washington has dubbed "the Abraham Accords," alluding to the common ancestor of Jews and Muslims.

The first session of the Strategic Dialogue with Bahrain came as the Trump administration seeks to consolidate its achievements in the fields of Arab-Israeli reconciliation, as well as building a regional alliance against Iran.

### Progress with the Abraham Accords

The launch of the US-Bahrain dialogue occurred on the same day as a large Bahraini delegation, led by the Industry, Commerce, and Tourism Minister, Zayed bin Rashid al-Zayani, and consisting of some 40 people, arrived in Israel for two days of discussions on increasing economic cooperation and tourism between the two countries.

Also on Tuesday, Israel's first commercial flight to the UAE took off from Ben Gurion airport, flying to Dubai over Saudi airspace. Saudi permission for the flight was delayed until the last minute but was granted on Monday evening, following Riyadh's earlier agreement to allow non-Israeli carriers to use its airspace to fly to Israel.

The UAE carrier, *flydubai*, began flying directly to Israel on Nov. 26.

Three Israeli airlines are scheduled to operate flights to Dubai, with over 40 such flights per week. Once in the UAE, of course, they will be able to fly on to Asian cities, taking hours off the route, which once required them to skirt Saudi Arabia.

Behind the scenes, Saudi Arabia is supporting the agreements of the two smaller Gulf states to normalize ties with Israel but has been unwilling to do so itself.

Two weeks ago, on Nov. 22, there was an unprecedented meeting in Saudi Arabia among Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), and US Secretary of State Pompeo.

According to the British journalist, David Hearst, long-time Middle East correspondent for *The Guardian* and now editor-in-chief of *Middle East Eye*, Netanyahu pushed for a strike on Iran, while Donald Trump was still in office. However, Pompeo, himself, was non-committal, and MBS was hesitant about such a risky adventure, particularly as he did not think the incoming US President, Joe Biden, would continue Trump's tough position against Iran.

MBS was also unwilling to accede to Pompeo's pressure to normalize ties with Israel, according to Hearst, in significant part because his father, who is still formally the ruler of the country, opposes that step.

### **US-Bahrain Strategic Dialogue**

Both Pompeo and Zayani addressed the media via video conference on Tuesday. Pompeo hailed the long history of US military cooperation with Bahrain, which goes back over 70 years, when Bahrain was still a British protectorate, and the US established a small naval facility there during World War II.

That facility has since grown into the headquarters for the US Navy's Fifth Fleet and its Central Command.

Pompeo stressed the importance of that facility. It "allows us to collaborate across the board, from fighting terrorism to safeguarding the passage of goods in the Gulf, free from Iran's maritime attacks," he said.

Pompeo stressed that Iran was "the number-one threat to Gulf security and to peace-loving people throughout the entire region."

Zayani spoke similarly. "For 70 or 75 years, the Bahrain-US partnership has been a bedrock of Gulf security, and from Bahrain's perspective, we see this role continuing and growing in importance."

"But it will also come under renewed challenge from parties seeking to undermine Middle East stability," Zayani continued. "Primarily, that means Iran, whose malign intent and activities are more blatant than ever."

The start of the "Strategic Dialogue" is to be followed up by the establishment of five working groups from the State Department and the Bahraini Foreign Ministry.

### **Background of Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani**

Zayani represents the emergence of a new, western-educated governing class in the smaller Gulf states, like Bahrain. He is a graduate of Britain's renowned Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and served as a commissioned officer in the Bahrain Defense Force.

As a military officer, Zayani studied at the Air Force Institute of Technology in Dayton, Ohio, where he received a master's degree, and later he received his doctorate from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

The King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, attended secondary school in Britain, before studying at a British Officer Cadet School, and later at the US Army Command and General Staff College, a point noted by Pompeo.

However, they are both significantly older and more experienced than the 35-year-old MBS, sometimes seen as a brash upstart. King Hamad is 70 years old, and Zayani is 66.

<https://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/c6f38ca6-70b5-4e4b-a592-511b217de878>

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## Retired USMC Major Jim Haney is a No-Nonsense Guy with a Heart of Gold

(*The Observer News* 3 Dec 20) ... Lois Kindle

Jim Haney's life has been all about service.

A Sun City Center resident since 2005, he volunteers his time and efforts to just about every group or effort having to do with veterans or the military.

"Jim is a great guy. He's literally either part of or supporting our military organizations in the community," said his friend Bill Hodges, the podcaster of Veterans Corner Radio on 96.3 WSCQ FM Radio. "If I have a question about anything related to veterans, I call him. He's one of my go-to persons, one of my heroes."

"He's the heart of everything military-related and patriotic in our community," said Connie Lesko, of Freedom Plaza's Retired Officers Corp. "He's a great resource leader and encourager, a no-nonsense guy with a heart of gold."

Haney has been a member of the Military Officers Association of America for 25 years and serves as current president of its Sun City Center Chapter. He's been with the Military Order of World Wars for 12 years and is presently the group's Florida department commander.

He is also a member of the Leathernecks, a former Community Association club that's now a group within American Legion Post 246, is a member of the South Hillsborough Chamber of Commerce Military Affairs Committee and has been a registered organ donor since 1964.

"Veterans service and youth development programs are especially important to me," Haney said.

He actively takes part in MOWW's Youth Leadership Conference in Tallahassee each year and supports several JORTC programs on behalf of MOWW, MOAA, the American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America and the Military Family Support Trust.

Beyond that, he's the American Legion's Boys State coordinator and MOWW's scouting coordinator for the Boy Scouts of America Tampa Bay Chapter's Eagle Scouts, Venture Scouts and Quartermaster Sea Scouts programs. And he attends and speaks at the annual Girl Scouts Gold Award Ceremony.

Haney said his involvement is important to him because, when he was in the military, he saw the benefits that resulted from youth involvement in these programs.

"Young officers come in as better leaders, and the same is true even for those who don't go into the military," he said.

Haney's efforts in the community affect people of all ages.

"He's actually an asset to all nonprofit groups in Sun City Center," said Hillsborough County Community Resource Deputy Jeff Merry. "Whenever we need something for events like golf tournaments or toy drives, I can reach out to Jim, and he gets out the troops and find donations and volunteers. I consider him a good friend."

Haney's family roots were firmly planted in military service, an influence that influenced his decision to choose a career in the Marine Corps.

Both of his parents were Marines. His father retired after 20 years at the rank of master sergeant, and his mother served as clerk from 1943 to 1945 during World War II. Haney's only brother went into the Navy.

After high school, Haney attended the Virginia Military Institute, the oldest state-supported military college in the United States, and then joined the USMC Reserve in 1965. He graduated from the institute in 1968 and began a career in the Marines, serving in the Vietnam War as an artillery forward observer from 1969 to 1970.

Two years later, Haney was sent to California to attend the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, where he earned a master's degree in electrical engineering.

"It gave me another specialty and enabled me to work with defense contractors," Haney said.

Retired from the military in 1988, he and his wife, Priscilla, (his wife of 51 years) and their two sons moved from his last duty station in Quantico, Va., to St. Petersburg, where he went to work as an engineering program manager for defense contractor Raytheon Technologies. Haney permanently retired from there in 2007.

<https://www.observernews.net/2020/12/03/good-hearts/>

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## **USAMMDA Team Members Join COVID-19 Joint Acquisition Task Force: Take on Strategic National Stockpile Readiness**

(DIVDS 3 Dec 20) ... Ashley Force

Earlier this year, when word started spreading about a distant and potentially deadly novel coronavirus, our country prepared for the worst. When the virus reached the United States, it spread rapidly. Yet, our hospitals were prepared with the medical supplies they needed to properly treat patients, at least in the beginning. However, after several months, our Nation was using up its Strategic National Stockpile at a rapid rate. The national stockpile includes critical items necessary to provide care to patients, such as medical supplies, personal protective equipment, and drugs, such as steroids and pain medicine.

With the national stockpile decreasing, in March 2020, the Department of Defense established the COVID-19 Joint Acquisition Task Force, or JATF, which was in the Office of the Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment. According to the JATF website, which lists the program's mission and COVID-19 resources, the JATF was formed to support the acquisition execution of the DOD's COVID-19 response to interagency partners such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Health and Human Services and their requests for medical resources. The JATF team served as the single-entry point to the DOD acquisition enterprise for interagency requests for assistance.

HHS partnered with personnel from within the DOD who have expertise in acquisition and contracting support. Program managers supporting the JATF oversaw seven different product groups to focus on replenishing critical supplies: ventilators, N95 masks, screening and diagnostics, personal protective equipment, pharmaceuticals, vaccine delivery, and continuous renal replacement therapy, known as CRRT.

The JATF was made up of about 80 personnel from within the DOD, many from the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command and its various subordinate commands.

"The JATF's impact was defined by its ability to bring together the broad array of acquisition professionals from across DOD, and USAMRDC played an integral and irreplaceable role," said Stacy Cummings, Senior Executive Service, JATF lead, principal deputy assistant secretary of Defense for Acquisition.

In the summer of 2020, the U.S. Army Medical Materiel Development Activity, a subordinate command of USAMRDC, had three team members supporting the JATF mission. These team members recount their experiences working to restock the medical supply shortage.

Jay Wang, product manager for USAMMDA's Warfighter Health, Performance and Evacuation Project Management Office, served as the product manager for the CRRT group and technical lead for the pharmaceuticals group from May to September 2020.

"The challenge was building an entire acquisition strategy and developing a requirement fast enough for the public," said Wang. "People's lives were on the line the longer they went without these products, and that was always on my mind."

Wang was well aware of what a mission like the JATF would entail. In 2014, he managed the Ebola drug and served as the subject matter expert on the DOD HHS Ebola team. Although he knew the JATF

mission would be a challenge, he was eager to help the Nation restore potentially lifesaving medical supplies.

"Hats off to USAMMDA for encouraging product managers like me to support larger efforts like the JATF. USAMMDA understood that the bigger mission as a whole helps everyone," said Wang.

Wang oversees three programs at USAMMDA: the Air Medical Evacuation portfolio, the Transport Telemedicine Systems Medical Hands-free Unified Broadcast, and Interoperable Medical Automated Systems, all of which fall under USAMMDA's Warfighter Health, Performance and Evacuation Project Management Office.

Wang attributes his success in the JATF mission to his 13 years of acquisition training and experience within the DOD. **He earned a master's degree in program management from the Naval Postgraduate School in September 2019.** The support provided to Wang by the DOD and USAMMDA has increased national security through his ability to support the JATF mission. Wang is proud of all he accomplished during the JATF mission:

As product manager for the CRRT, Wang contributed to the rapid acquisition of dialysis systems and dialysis fluids to increase Strategic National Stockpile readiness and increase domestic production of critical medical capabilities to battle COVID-19. He completed market research for CRRT and reviewed over 80 clinical Good Manufacturing Practice companies. He helped develop the CRRT gap analysis and requirement for HHS to identify a possible up to six-million-liter gap of CRRT fluids. He developed the CRRT Acquisition Strategy. He also authored CRRT contracting documents for HHS Strategic National Stockpile to procure up to \$50 million worth of Vendor Managed Inventory of dialysis machines and fluids.

Wang expanded his efforts from the CRRT group to pharmaceuticals. In this product group, he reviewed over 30 Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient white papers resulting in the review of four API proposals to make final recommendations to HHS to increase domestic production of APIs for awards exceeding \$150 million.

Another pharmaceutical review team lead was Major Janessa Moyer, director of Force Sustainment, U.S. Army Medical Materiel Agency, who supported the JATF mission from July through September 2020.

"I was able to work with incredibly intelligent professionals that opened my eyes to different perspectives," said Moyer. "I found it to be not only interesting but also rewarding."

Moyer led a team of HHS professionals in actively managing and evaluating proposals from industry that outlined Key Starting Material capability both in scope and production rates. Key Starting Materials refer to the foundation, or to any substances of defined quality used in the production of pharmaceutical products. Her team reviewed over 30 proposals from industry outlining their production capabilities and capacity for Key Starting Materials required for domestic pharmaceutical production. In their evaluations, they recommended to HHS four full proposals that showed benefit to domestic Key Starting Material production capability and to increase domestic production of Key Starting Materials for awards exceeding \$150 million.

"I appreciated the opportunity to contribute to such an important cause and help address the need for extended capacity and capability within our country," said Moyer.

Moyer has been serving on active duty for 12 years and is a medical logistician with three years of acquisition experience. During her time working for the JATF, Moyer transitioned from USAMMDA where she served as the product manager for the Warfighter Deployed Medical Systems' Medical Modernization PMO, to USAMMA where she serves as the director of Force Sustainment. She says chain of command support was critical in balancing the competing demands for her time and effort.

"I was supported in this endeavor by great leaders who afforded me the flexibility to work this mission along with my daily duties," said Moyer.

Major Victor Zottig, Branch Chief, Regulatory Business Support Office, USAMRDC Office of Regulated Activities, served as a pharmaceutical team lead for the JATF Final Drug Product Fill-Finish Evaluation team from July 15 to September 18, 2020. Zottig helped review and evaluate over 30 white papers from United States domestic pharmaceutical companies. The proposals recommended expanding



their fill-finish capacity to produce the Final Drug Product in specific therapeutic areas in order to support the National Strategic Stockpile and COVID-19 response within 24 months.

"I was proud to play a small role in the overall pandemic response," said Zottig.

Zottig and his team organized and systematically evaluated each proposal independently based on their merit and the established evaluation criteria. The evaluations were consolidated and ranked to provide an overall presentation and recommendation to the JATF leadership. Zottig and his team completed two separate evaluation reviews labeled Spirals, in which the subsequent Spiral called for additional detail from the initial proposal review to go through a second evaluation process. In their evaluations, they recommended to HHS four full proposals to increase domestic production of pharmaceutical fill-finish capabilities, awards exceeding \$150 million.

"The dynamic Final Drug Product Fill-Finish Evaluation team was multi-disciplinary and composed of different Services and departments," said Zottig. "Working jointly with Navy, Air Force, Army, HHS, BARDA, and other organizations I typically do not work with on a daily basis was a unique opportunity and re-affirmed that this effort was a whole-of-government approach. The experience highlighted for me the DOD is well suited to work in a dedicated team environment in order to accomplish difficult jobs or tasks," said Zottig.

During his time supporting the JATF mission, Zottig was in the middle of transitioning from a product management role at USAMMDA to the USAMRDC Office of Regulated Activities.

"I felt honored that the command placed confidence in my ability to assume this role and level of responsibility on the JATF review team," said Zottig.

JATF leaders have recognized participating USAMRDC personnel as a tremendous team of professionals who prioritized the interest of the general public while carrying out their assignments.

"USAMRDC's support to the JATF was absolutely critical to the success of DoD's efforts as part of the interagency pandemic response," said Cummings. "Their subject matter experts are world-class professionals who bring together two very distinct skillsets, combining defense acquisition with medical technology and scientific expertise. This unique combination placed them center-stage in the intersection between the DOD acquisition enterprise and interagency health professionals, and enabled a successful conduit between the two."

In 2021, the JATF will transition from its current status to a more permanent operation. Next year, the JATF will be called the Defense Assisted Acquisition Cell and will operate under the Joint Rapid Acquisition Cell.

The JATF's whole-of-government approach, which utilized a variety of services and organizations, was fundamental to improving our Strategic National Stockpile. It is thanks to the individuals who applied their expertise from their daily responsibilities to contribute to the COVID-19 response that our Nation's medical resource shortage was addressed. Without question, there is no challenge too great for a united force dedicated to the greater good.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/news/384155/usammda-team-members-join-covid-19-joint-acquisition-task-force-take-strategic-national-stockpile-readiness>

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