



THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON DC 20350-1000

April 3, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: SECNAV VECTOR 18

One of my early heroes growing up in Cleveland, Ohio was Bob Feller. Feller was an all-time great pitcher for the Cleveland Indians. Even though his last game in the major leagues happened four years before I was born, his career had sustained its legendary status among Cleveland Indians fans, and across the broad spectrum of baseball aficionados, throughout my entire childhood and beyond. Feller was a baseball prodigy, a young right handed pitcher with a devastating, unhittable fastball. He was signed by Cleveland out of the small town of Van Meter, Iowa in 1936 at the age of 17, and in his pitching debut with the Indians he struck out 15 batters. Over the next several years he became one of the most dominant pitchers in baseball. Then came December 7, 1941.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on that “day of infamy” changed the trajectory of Feller’s life and baseball career, as it did for our entire nation. Two days after Pearl Harbor, Feller left the Indians, and joined OUR team, the United States Navy. He served with honor for the next 3+ years, passing up the prime years of his baseball career in service to our Navy and our nation. He left the Navy in 1945 as a highly decorated Chief Petty Officer and returned to the Indians where he went on to win the World Series in 1948, and then played in another one in 1954.

When asked whether he had any second thoughts about putting off his baseball career to join the Navy fight in World War II Bob Feller was characteristically blunt and honest:

“A lot of folks say that had I not missed those almost 4 seasons to World War II during what was probably my physical prime I might have had 370 or even 400 wins. But I have no regrets. None at all. I did what any American could and should do: serve his country in its time of need. The world’s time of need.”

In the midst of this global pandemic, both uniformed Americans and civilians alike find themselves confined to quarters, sheltering in place as the virus blooms through our cities and towns. Many of you in the Navy and Marine Corps team continue to safely navigate the contagion, operating at the forward edge of freedom in the air and on or below the sea, throughout the world. As Americans, we are all being asked, as Bob Feller said and did, “to serve our country in its time of need” in ways that may not comport to the plans we had envisioned for our lives and careers. But, serve we must.

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In this crisis, America is recognizing what you do for the nation. It was hard to miss the great pride, and relief, of New Yorkers and Los Angelinos when the USNS COMFORT and USNS MERCY entered their harbors, pulled into piers alongside those renowned cities, and began to render aid this week. It is telling that within 24 hours of the call going out for reservists to staff the COMFORT and MERCY, we received over 200 requests to volunteer. The ability to rapidly provide support to these missions is not only a testament to the continual training and mobilization readiness efforts of the Navy Reserve, but also the motivated responses from citizen-Sailors from around the country.

Most of the time, our sea services are out of sight and unknown to many of our fellow citizens. Not today. National security imperatives like freedom of navigation of the seas, geopolitical balancing from international waters, and defensive depth provided by a long grey line of American sovereign ships, deployed thousands of miles forward from our shores are not often top of mind. Today, however, your presence is comforting the nation and you can be proud.

Although the MERCY and COMFORT are the most visible signs of our Navy and Marine Corps team responding to this crisis, there is so much more that we are actually doing to harness our agility and commitment to our fellow citizens throughout this country. What we are demonstrating is that our team is much broader than the people we see on active duty. We are a part of an expansive “naval service ecosystem” consisting of active duty Sailors and Marines, reservists, Department of Defense civilians, contractors, shipbuilders, aircraft manufacturers, suppliers, and more.

Here is just a short list of some of things this ecosystem is contributing today in this struggle against Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19):

- We are deploying Expeditionary Medical Facilities (EMFs), which are mobile hospitals designed for austere and challenging environments. They have full resuscitation and emergency stabilizing surgery capabilities, as well as selected specialty care providers, with over 400 Selected Reserve Sailors ready to deploy in addition to active-duty personnel – in total, more than 550 highly qualified medical professionals in each EMF. This week we split one of these EMFs into two teams and sent one half to Dallas and the other to New Orleans.
- Marine Corps Systems Command and Naval Information Warfare Center Pacific teamed to assist the University of California San Diego Medical Center with designing parts for 3D printing capabilities which enable the simultaneous ventilation of multiple patients.
- Commander, Naval Air Force Reserve squadrons and aviators have worked around the clock, helping transport personnel and equipment across the globe. The Navy Air Logistics Office has been pivotal in the prioritization of thousands of missions. For

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example, they have transported critical test kits from San Diego to Guam in support of COVID-19 response efforts, and moved graduates from Recruit Training Command Great Lakes to their follow-on assignments in the fleet.

- The Naval Medical Research Center has hundreds of medical professionals deployed worldwide, conducting COVID-19 diagnostic and surveillance testing.
- Navy Facilities Engineering Command is working with the Army Corps of Engineers to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency/Health and Human Services. This includes assessing facilities and developing standardized design concepts for conversion of hotels, arenas, and barracks to hospitals.
- Our Naval University System is providing assistance to broader national emergency effort, from donating laptops to local agencies, to providing scientific research assistance in the Additive Manufacturing of needed masks and other personal protective equipment.
- The Department of the Navy scientists at the Naval Research Laboratory are providing vital technical support in several areas, including fluid mechanics and biotechnology.
- The Defense Industrial Base, besides continuing to support our Navy and Marine Corps team and our larger national critical infrastructure, has also been active in supporting the national response to COVID-19. They have been donating N95 masks and other personal protective equipment, using their 3D printing capabilities to manufacture additional equipment such as face shields, working closely with local businesses to support them where possible, and sharing best practices for the health and safety of the workforce during the crisis.

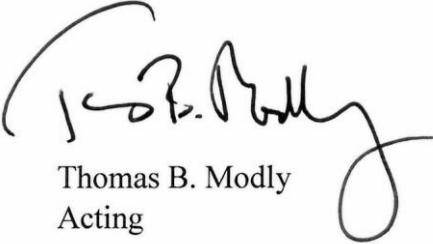
These vignettes tell a larger, more strategic story of who we are as a people. I am confident that we shall look back at these moments as searing in their challenge and full of mourning in our loss, but also we will recall another age in our history when we once again came together for common purpose. Our opportunity to show America what we as a naval service can do for our fellow citizens in need could hardly be clearer. It is up to us to seize it.

My childhood hero, Bob Feller, was born in the thick of the 1918 flu pandemic, and was raised during the polio epidemic that ultimately paralyzed President Franklin D. Roosevelt, so he lived through something similar to what we are all going through today in the midst of a global pandemic. I am certain he would have recognized that the same level of courage, extraordinary action, and sacrifice will be required by each of us to persevere through this crisis. After the war, life continued for Feller. He had his triumphs, albeit on a very different path than

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he imagined. So will each of us. How we respond today, however, may be the one thing we treasure the most about our individual journeys, and the legacy we leave for our country.

Go Navy and Marine Corps! Never, ever give up the ship! And once again, and forever more, Beat Army!



Thomas B. Modly
Acting

SECNAV Vectors are released each Friday to the entire DON. Previous Vectors can be viewed <https://navylive.dodlive.mil/2020/01/02/secnav-vectors/>.

- SECNAV VECTOR 1: Priorities and Near-Term Objectives
- SECNAV VECTOR 2: Unified in Grief, Heroism, and Resolve
- SECNAV VECTOR 3: Make Ford Ready
- SECNAV VECTOR 4: December Honors and Remembrance
- SECNAV VECTOR 5: DON Business Operations Plan
- SECNAV VECTOR 6: Path to a 355 Plus Integrated Naval Force
- SECNAV VECTOR 7: Education for Seapower
- SECNAV VECTOR 8: Partners and Allies
- SECNAV VECTOR 9: Hypersonic Capabilities
- SECNAV VECTOR 10: Sexual Assault Prevention and Response
- SECNAV VECTOR 11: Naval Information Strategy
- SECNAV VECTOR 12: Future Naval Force
- SECNAV VECTOR 13: Naval Education Goals and Pillars
- SECNAV VECTOR 14: Financial Accountability
- SECNAV VECTOR 15: Force Health Protection Guidance for the Department of Navy
- SECNAV VECTOR 16: Agility in a Time of Crisis
- SECNAV VECTOR 17: Don't Give Up the Ship

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