

HIGH YEAR TENURE ADJUSTED DOWNWARD FOR ACTIVE DUTY AND FULL-TIME SUPPORT E-5'S

Effective 1 July 2005, active duty and FTS E-5 personnel with less than ten years active service will fall under the new HYT rule of 14 years. Those affected personnel with over ten years of active service on 12 July 2005 will fall under the previous HYT rule of 20 years. Certain waiver provisions apply. The full Navy policy on E-5 HYT adjustment may be reviewed in NAVADMIN 056/05.

USS SPRUANCE IS DECOMMISSIONED

After 30 years of service to the fleet, the *USS SPRUANCE* was decommissioned during a ceremony at Mayport Naval Station.

Assigned to Destroyer Squadron 24, the *USS SPRUANCE* was the lead ship of 31 *SPRUANCE* class destroyers. The ship was built by Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, MS, and was commissioned on 20 Sept. 1975. The ship is named after ADM Raymond A. Spruance who had a long and distinguished Naval career that culminated in his appointment as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, in 1945. ADM Spruance later became president of the Naval War College and held that post until his retirement on 1 July 1948.

Called to the colors once again in 1952, ADM Spruance served as U.S. ambassador to the Philippines until the spring of 1955. He then returned home to Pebble Beach, CA, where he lived until his death on 13 Dec. 1969. For nearly three decades, the *USS SPRUANCE* played a major role in operations in the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean and Mediterranean seas, the Arabian Gulf, and European waters.

Operation Restore Democracy in Haiti, Operation Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Iraqi Freedom are among the many actions in which the ship participated.

BUSH NAMES BASE-CLOSING PANEL MEMBERS

President Bush has launched the politically accented process of deciding which military bases around the country soon might be closed to save money.

Bush formally nominated the nine members of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission, including former Veterans Affairs Secretary and San Diegan Anthony J. Principi, whom Bush has nominated to serve as chairman. When it appeared that these nominations might get stalled in the Senate, he made the recess appointments during Congress' Easter break. The nine commissioners will include four retired senior military officers; two former members of Congress; two former cabinet secretaries; and a former weapons research and testing official.

California has suffered the most from the previous four closure rounds and still has many bases at risk. Bush appointed a second Californian to the commission, Philip Coyle, of Los Angeles, the former director of Operational Test and Evaluation in the Defense Department and now a senior advisor to the Center for Defense Information.

Also appointed were: Former Rep. James H. Bilbray, D-Nevada, who served on the House Armed Services and Intelligence Committees and in the Army Reserve; Retired ADM Harold W. Gehman, Jr., of Virginia, whose last duty was as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic and as the Commander of the U.S. Joint Forces Command; Former Rep. James V. Hansen, R-Utah, who had served on the Armed Services Committee and in the Navy; Retired Army Gen. James T. Hill, of Florida, whose last duty was as Commander of the U.S. Southern Command; Retired Army LT General Claude M. Kicklighter, of Georgia, who was an assistant secretary at VA after leaving the Army; Samuel Knox Skinner of Illinois, who was White House Chief of Staff and then Secretary of Transportation for former President George H. W. Bush; and, Retired Air Force Brig. Gen. Sue Ellen Turner, of Texas, whose last post was as director of nursing services for the Air Force.

NAVY TO SINK RETIRED CARRIER AMERICA

The Navy plans to sink the retired carrier *AMERICA* to the bottom of the Atlantic in explosive tests this spring, an end that is difficult to swallow for some who served onboard the ship

which was based in Norfolk during its 31-year career.

The Navy says the effort, which will cost \$22 million, will provide valuable data for the next generation of aircraft carriers, which are now in development. Since no warship of this size has ever been sunk, no hard information on how well a supercarrier can survive battle damage exists. Since its decommissioning in 1996, the *AMERICA* has been moored with dozens of other inactive warships at a Navy yard in Philadelphia.

NAVY PLANS TO RETIRE CARRIER EARLY

The Navy announced that it plans to retire the *JOHN F. KENNEDY* aircraft carrier as early as June 2005, leaving Congress little time if it wants to block a plan that would reduce the U.S. carrier fleet to its smallest size in at least a half-century.

The 37-year-old *KENNEDY*, based in Mayport, FL, would leave the fleet as early as June to begin the lengthy process of decommissioning. The early retirement, which comes 13 years ahead of schedule, would leave the fleet with 11 carriers, its smallest number since at least 1951.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LIVING WILLS

So far, about 25 percent of American adults have one. A living will usually authorizes providing, withholding, or withdrawing procedures that would prolong the life of someone in a terminal condition. Physicians and their patients should address such issues when a patient is healthy. People who avoid the topic because they fear a loss of control should be aware they can change their minds at any time and revise their wills. The crucial element is discussing the contents of a will with relatives, close friends, and one's physician. Let the world know what your desires would be if you should ever be in a persistent vegetative state. It is especially important to provide copies of the will to one's physician, relatives, and anyone having health-care power of attorney. It is normally the policy to honor the directions in a patient's living will unless such requests are judged illegal or immoral. ♣