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VICE ADMIRAL SEEKING EARLIER NAVY RETIREMENT

Request comes amid new round of firings; Senate hearing looms

BY CARL PRINE

The Navy's head of surface forces, Vice Adm. Tom Rowden, wants to speed up his retirement several months as the military branch responds to repeated warship collisions in the Western Pacific.

Word of Rowden's request broke at the same time the Navy announced a round of new firings of commanders in the West Pacific

led to the deaths of 17 sailors.

In an email sent Thursday, shortly after a long meeting with Pacific Fleet commander Adm. Scott Swift, Rowden asked Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson to let him retire earlier than planned — around April instead of in the summer.

As commander of the Coronado-based Naval Surface



Tom Rowden

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SENATE OKs \$700 BILLION PENTAGON SPENDING BILL

Measure bolsters missile defense in response to North Korean threat



US AIR FORCE REUTERS

The Senate defense bill allots \$10.6 billion for 94 Joint Strike Fighter aircraft.

BY RICHARD LARDNER

WASHINGTON

The Senate has overwhelmingly approved a sweeping defense policy bill that would pump \$700 billion into the military, putting the U.S. armed forces on track for a budget greater than at any time during the decade-plus wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Senators passed the legislation by an 89-8 vote Monday. The measure authorizes \$700 billion in military spending for the fiscal year that begins Oct. 1, expands U.S. missile defenses in re-

sponse to North Korea's growing hostility and refuses to allow excess military bases to be closed.

The 1,215-page measure defies a number of White House objections, but President Donald Trump hasn't threatened to veto the measure. The bill helps him honor a pledge to rebuild an American military that he said had become depleted on former President Barack Obama's watch; the House has already adopted a similar version.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and other national se-

SEE DEFENSE • A5

IBM GIVES UCSD \$10M TO FIND WAYS TO DETECT MEMORY LOSS

BY GARY ROBBINS

IBM has given UC San Diego a \$10 million contract to search for ways to preserve people's ability to think and remember things clearly to help seniors live in their own homes late into life, perhaps until they die.

The money is aimed at a problem that trips up many older adults — mild cognitive impairment, or MCI, a condition that can make it difficult to remember simple things like a name, and how do basic tasks like balance a checkbook.

UC San Diego will try to make it easier to detect MCI, whose symptoms can be hard to distinguish from natural declines in thinking and memory that are a part of aging.

Scientists are focusing on it because the condition can lead to serious forms of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease.

"If you can detect it in time, there are ways to dramatically slow MCI down," said

SEE IBM • A8



K.C. ALFRED U-T

A worker cleans the inside of a trolley at the San Diego Metropolitan Transit System rail yard on Monday to try to prevent the further spread of hepatitis A. The outbreak in San Diego County has killed 16 people.

TEENS TAKING SLOWER PATH TO ADULthood, STUDIES SHOW

SDSU professor cites rise of smartphones as among factors

BY BRADLEY J. FIKES

Adolescents are taking longer to become adults than previous generations, according to a new study that cites the rise of smartphones, safer environments and even a declining birthrate as factors.

Teens are delaying adulthood milestones such as working, going out without their parents, driving, dating, having sex and drinking alcohol, according to four decades of surveys reviewed for the study, led by San Diego State University psychology professor Jean M. Twenge.

Today's 18-year-olds exhibit similar milestone behaviors as did 15-year-olds in the late 1970s, Twenge said. Moreover, they're mostly doing this voluntarily — parents aren't imposing this delayed independence.

The spread of smartphones, which allow teens to socialize from the safety of their homes, is part of the explanation,

SEE TEENS • A6



Jean M. Twenge

HEPATITIS OUTBREAK HARD TO TRACE

Many strains of virus A identified; first patient treated months before surge in cases

BY PAUL SISSON

Even though the group of viruses that have killed 16 people in San Diego County have unique genetic signatures, experts are not holding out hope that they will be able to trace the region's hepatitis A outbreak to a single point of origin.

That's because the first patient known to be part of the outbreak was a homeless person who was cared for in November 2016, about

four months before it was clear to the county Health and Human Services Agency that an outbreak was under way.

Dr. Eric McDonald, director of the county's Epidemiology and Immunization Services Branch, said that the individual had long ago been released and has not reappeared as the outbreak has intensified. Today, genetic testing performed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified 13 strains of the hepatitis A virus in samples col-

lected from infected patients.

"This group is unique in the sense that, before it was sequenced in our outbreak, it had not been seen before," said McDonald.

All, he added, are in the 1B genetic subtype that researchers have found most commonly circulates in the Mediterranean, South Africa and Turkey. In North America, Europe, China, Japan and Thailand a different subtype, 1A, dominates.

SEE HEPATITIS • A10

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Refugee gives City Heights a big hand



KARLA PETERSON

San Diego's City Heights neighborhood struggles with crime and poverty and a shortage of everything from parks to doctors. But for 22-year-old resident Jhaga Mahat, the biggest challenge of living in City Heights is getting people to see it the way he does.

"When I tell people I live here,

they say it's a ghetto and there are a lot of gangs here. But for me, City Heights is not like that," said Mahat, who came to San Diego in 2011 from a refugee camp in Nepal.

"When I got here, I saw a lot of diverse people, and I was kind of glad, because it felt like I was still at home. City Heights is more peaceful than people say, and I just want to improve the neighborhood. I want people to see the good side."

With giving back on his mind and able hands at the ready, Mahat has become the go-to volunteer for

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NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

City Heights volunteer Jhaga Mahat came to San Diego in 2011 from a refugee camp in Nepal.

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