RANDY S. GROSSMAN Acting United States Attorney Janet A. Cabral Assistant U.S. Attorney California Bar No. 168900 Office of the U.S. Attorney 880 Front Street, Room 6293 4 San Diego, CA 92101 5 Tel: (619) 546-8715 Fax: (619) 546-7751 Email: Janet.Cabral@usdoj.gov 6 7 Attorneys for the United States 8 9 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 10 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA 11 12 Case No.: 21cv640-WQH(KSC) 13 DENNIS M. BUCKOVETZ, Plaintiff, 14 ANSWER TO COMPLAINT 15 V. 16 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY, **17** Defendant. 18 19 20 21 Defendant, the U.S. Department of the Navy, answers the numbered paragraphs of 22 Plaintiff's Complaint as follows: 23 1. Answering Paragraph 1, Defendant admits that Plaintiff purports to bring this action 24 under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), 5 U.S.C. § 552 et seq. As to all remaining allegations, this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background 25 **26** information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which

response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should

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be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein.

2. Answering Paragraph 2, such paragraph contains a statement of the relief sought by Plaintiff and therefore is one to which no response is required. To the extent an answer is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.

# **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

- 3. Answering Paragraph 3, Defendant alleges the allegations contained in this Paragraph are assertions of jurisdictional basis which present legal conclusions and questions of law to be determined solely by the court, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.
- 4. Answering Paragraph 4, Defendant admits venue is proper in this district. Defendant denies, however, that there is more than one Plaintiff in this case. Former Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this action. *See* ECF No. 11.

# **PARTIES**

- 5. Answering Paragraph 5, Defendant alleges that it is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein contained, and based thereon, denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 6. Answering Paragraph 6, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary. To the extent an answer is required, Defendant alleges that it is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations therein contained, and based thereon, denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 7. Answering Paragraph 7, Defendant alleges that the allegations contained in this Paragraph are legal conclusions and/or assertions of jurisdictional basis which present legal conclusions and questions of law to be determined solely by the court, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is required, each, all, and every allegation in said

paragraph is denied.

## FACTUAL BACKGROUND

- 8. Answering Paragraph 8, Defendant admits the allegations contained therein.
- 9. Answering Paragraph 9, Defendant admits that MCCS is a non-appropriated fund ("NAF") government entity within the Department of Defense ("DoD"), and that MCCS's purpose is to operate programs that support and enhance the operational readiness, war fighting capabilities, and quality of life for Marines, their families, and military retirees. Except as expressly admitted, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 10. Answering Paragraph 10, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 11. Answering Paragraph 11, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 12. Answering Paragraph 12, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule

12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 13. Answering Paragraph 13, Defendant admits that, at the relevant time, General Amos was Commandant of the Marine Corps, but denies that he was found guilty of unlawful command influence. Defendant alleges the remainder of this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 14. Answering Paragraph 14, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 15. Answering Paragraph 15, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 16. Answering Paragraph 16, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact

pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 17. Answering Paragraph 17, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 18. Answering Paragraph 18, Defendant admits that the Recruit Training Regiment (RTR) is the largest command at the MCRD. Defendant alleges that the remainder of this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 19. Answering Paragraph 19, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
  - 20. Answering Paragraph 20, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's

characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 21. Answering Paragraph 21, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 22. Answering Paragraph 22, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 23. Answering Paragraph 23, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
  - 24. Answering Paragraph 24, Defendant admits the allegations contained in paragraph

- 25. Answering Paragraph 25, Defendant alleges that the first sentence of Paragraph 25 are Plaintiff's characterization of the facts and conclusions of law to which no response is required. To the extent a response is required, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein. Regarding the remainder of Paragraph 25, Defendant admits the allegations contained therein to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 26. Answering Paragraph 26, Defendant admits that Plaintiff submitted the subject FOIA request in January 2015, and admits the allegations contained in Paragraph 26 to the extent supported by the document cited, which is the best evidence of its contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 27. Answering Paragraph 27, Defendant admits that the 2015 FOIA Request was referred in part to MCCS Headquarters in Quanitco, VA. Otherwise, Defendant is without knowledge of information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained therein, and based thereon, denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation.
- 28. Answering Paragraph 28, Defendant admits that in March 2015, it provided records responsive to the 2015 Request by producing 319 pages of records containing 384 individual emails. To the extent Plaintiff cites these documents for the remainder of Paragraph 28, Defendant admits to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 29. Answering Paragraph 29, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact

pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 30. Answering Paragraph 30, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 31. Answering Paragraph 31, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 32. Answering Paragraph 32, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 33. Answering Paragraph 33, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact

pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 34. Answering Paragraph 34, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 35. Answering Paragraph 35, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 36. Answering Paragraph 36, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 37. Answering Paragraph 37, Defendant asserts that the allegations contained in this Paragraph are legal conclusions, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer

is required, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein.

- 38. Answering Paragraph 38, Defendant alleges that it is without knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained therein, and based thereon, denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation. Additionally, the allegations contained in this Paragraph include legal conclusions, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.
- 39. Answering Paragraph 39, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 40. Answering Paragraph 40, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 41. Answering Paragraph 41, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information

sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.

- 42. Answering Paragraph 42, Defendant alleges this Paragraph contains Plaintiff's characterization of alleged background information. These are not allegations of fact pertinent to this FOIA action to which response is required. To the extent a response is deemed required, these allegations should be stricken from the Complaint pursuant to Rule 12(f) as immaterial. To the extent not stricken, Defendant denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation contained therein for lack of knowledge or information sufficient to form a belief as to their truth.
- 43. Answering Paragraph 43, Defendant admits that in November 2015, MCCS provided records responsive to the 2015 Request. To the extent Plaintiff cites these documents for the remainder of Paragraph 43, Defendant admits the allegations to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 44. Answering Paragraph 44, Defendant admits the allegations to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 45. Answering Paragraph 45, Defendant admits the allegations to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 46. Answering Paragraph 46, Defendant admits the allegations to the extent supported by the documents cited, which are the best evidence of their contents. Otherwise, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all, and every allegation contained therein.
- 47. Answering Paragraph 47, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all and every allegation contained therein.

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- 48. Answering Paragraph 48, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all and every allegation contained therein.
  - 49. Answering Paragraph 49, Defendant admits the allegations.
  - 50. Answering Paragraph 50, Defendant admits the allegations.
- 51. Answering Paragraph 51, Defendant alleges that it is without knowledge of information sufficient to form a belief as to the truth of the allegations contained therein, and based thereon, denies generally and specifically each, all, and every allegation.
  - 52. Answering Paragraph 52, Defendant admits the allegations.
- 53. Answering Paragraph 53, Defendant alleges that the allegations contained in this Paragraph are legal conclusions to be determined by the court, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.
- 54. Answering Paragraph 54, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 55. Answering Paragraph 55, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 56. Answering Paragraph 56, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 57. Answering Paragraph 57, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 58. Answering Paragraph 58, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 59. Answering Paragraph 59, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 60. Answering Paragraph 60, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 61. Answering Paragraph 61, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.

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- 62. Answering Paragraph 62, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
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- 63. Answering Paragraph 63, Defendant admits the allegations.
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- 64. Answering Paragraph 64, Defendant admits the allegations.
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- 65. Answering Paragraph 64, Defendant admits the allegations.
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- 66. Answering Paragraph 66, Defendant realleges Paragraphs 1 65 of its Answers to Paragraphs 1 - 65 of Plaintiffs' Complaint, and by this reference incorporates them herein
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- as though set forth in full. 67. Answering Paragraph 67, Defendant asserts that the allegations contained in this

Paragraph are legal conclusions, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer

- is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.
- 68. Answering Paragraph 68, Defendant asserts that the allegations contained in this Paragraph are legal conclusions, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer
- is required, each, all, and every allegation in said paragraph is denied.
  - 69. Answering Paragraph 69, Defendant asserts that the allegations contained in this
- Paragraph are legal conclusions, to which no answer is required. To the extent an answer
- is required, Defendant denies that Plaintiff is entitled to the requested relief. Defendant has
- conducted a reasonable search and has produced all responsive records.
- 70. Answering Paragraph 70, Defendant realleges Paragraphs 1-69 of its Answers to
- Paragraphs 1 69 of Plaintiffs' Complaint, and by this reference incorporates them herein
- as though set forth in full.
- 71. Answering Paragraph 71, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case
- [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 72. Answering Paragraph 72, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case
- [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
- 73. Answering Paragraph 73, Plaintiff Lynne Bird has dismissed her claims in this case
- [see ECF No. 11] such that no response is necessary.
  - 74. The remainder of Plaintiffs' Complaint represents a Prayer for Relief to which no

response is required. To the extent an answer is required, Defendant denies generally and specifically, each, all and every allegation contained therein, and Defendant denies that Plaintiff is entitled to any relief.

## **AFFIRMATIVE DEFENSES**

All allegations not specifically admitted, denied, or modified, are hereby denied. Defendant also alleges the following as affirmative defenses:

- 1. The Court lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action.
- 2. Plaintiff's claims are moot and there is no effective relief this Court can provide.
- 3. Plaintiff's Complaint fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted.
- 4. Defendant complied with FOIA by conducting searches reasonably calculated to uncover all relevant documents.
- 5. At all times alleged in the Complaint, Defendant acted with good faith, with justification, with due diligence, and pursuant to authority.

WHEREFORE, Defendant prays that Plaintiff take nothing by reason of his suit herein, that judgment be rendered in favor of Defendant, for costs of suit herein incurred, and for such other and further relief as this Court may deem proper.

DATED: October 21, 2021 Respectfully submitted,

RANDY S. GROSSMAN Acting United States Attorney

Janet A. Cabral
Janet A. Cabral
Assistant U.S. Attorney
Attorneys for Defendant

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From: <a href="mailto:efile\_information@casd.uscourts.gov">efile\_information@casd.uscourts.gov</a>

Subject: Activity in Case 3:21-cv-00640-WQH-KSC Buckovetz et al v. The Department of the Navy Answer to Complaint

**Date:** Thursday, October 21, 2021 9:08:58 AM

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#### **U.S. District Court**

#### Southern District of California

### **Notice of Electronic Filing**

The following transaction was entered by Cabral, Janet on 10/21/2021 at 9:07 AM PDT and

filed on 10/21/2021

Case Name: Buckovetz et al v. The Department of the Navy

Case Number: 3:21-cv-00640-WQH-KSC

Filer: The Department of the Navy

**Document Number: 17** 

**Docket Text:** 

ANSWER to [1] Complaint, by The Department of the Navy.(Cabral, Janet)

#### 3:21-cv-00640-WQH-KSC Notice has been electronically mailed to:

U S Attorney CV Efile.dkt.civ@usdoj.gov

Janet A Cabral Janet.Cabral@usdoj.gov, brenda.seyler@usdoj.gov, caseview.ecf@usdoj.gov, efile.dkt.civ@usdoj.gov, efile.dkt.gcl@usdoj.gov

Travis John Anderson tanderson@sheppardmullin.com, jejackson@sheppardmullin.com, jkeeping@sheppardmullin.com, SeTaylor@sheppardmullin.com

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98f3ac1761b8b23c97072d80f17a9a95fd501210b195f48ac5c41f9cf62690d]]