

Answer: MUSCLE

First, you solve the cryptic clues:

TRIAL - Back home following true test (5) (Lair reversed, following T)
ALTERATION - Aluminum, Tellurium share change (10) (AL + TE + Ration)
KITES - Popular wind toys found in Kawasaki testing (5) (kawasaKI TESting)
ELBOW - Strange bowel joint (5) (bowel anagram)
HOLES - Excavations, bull fighter, exclamation found in high school (5) (Ole in HS)
EASTER EGG - Cardinal direction, unit of energy gains, for example, hidden holiday decoration $(6,3)$ (East + er(e.g.)g)
AWFUL - Atrocious bad grade with university found in leatherworking tool (5) (awl gains F (grade) and U (university))

REVEL - Leak a lost party (5) (reveal (leak) losing a)
TIRES - Unit I respect possesses traction control devices (5) (uniT I RESpect)
ORBIT - Neptune's path: it follows globe (5) (ORB (globe) after IT)
FLOUNDER - Fish struggle (8) (double definition)
FLAIR - Innate ability burst out audibly (5) (flare (burst out) homophone)
IONIC - Circuit board for Ethernet transmission after input/output consisting of charged particles (5) (NIC (Ethernet card) following I/O)
VIALS - Trapped in trivial sized glass containers (5) (triVIAL Sized)
ENTRANCE - Opening delight (8) (double definition)
SPINE - Odd penis part required for humans to stand erect (5) (penis anagram)
STAGGER - Awkward motion stymies first graffiti artist (7) (s +tagger)
ORATE - Different era to speak (5) (era to anagram)
REFUSE - Reject garbage (6) (double definition)
TENNIS - Racket sport: a threatening combination, so to speak (6) (tenace homophone)
BAHTS - Rations of Thai currency originally became a habit to save (5) (first letters of Became A Habit To Save)

YIELDINGLY - Unfortunately dying, I yell obediently (10) (dying I yell anagram)

CIVIL - Gracious chaps lead four near Illinois (5) (c (chaps lead) + IV (four) + IL (Illinois))
LEAST - Vaguely steal smallest amount (5) (steal anagram)
UPSET - Jittery setup succeeded unexpectedly (5) (setup anagram)
ESCAPADES - Advertisement infects, eludes adventures (9) (Ad inside escapes)
Reading the first letter of each answer yields:

## take heart of fives sort by clue

This tells you that you need to take the center letter (heart) of the answers that have five letters and sort them by the first letter of the clue. Notice that the answers that contain five letters each have a clue that starts with a different letter of the alphabet (from A-V). Some letters have no clue, which gives you the word breaks. Doing that gives:

| Clue Letter | Answer | Heart |
| :--- | :--- | :--- |
| A | AWFUL | F |
| B | TRIAL | I |
| C | IONIC | N |
| D | ORATE | A |
| E | HOLES | L |
| F |  |  |
| G | CIVIL | V |
| H |  |  |
| I | FLAIR | A |
| J | UPSET | S |
| K |  |  |
| L | REVEL | V |
| M |  |  |
| N | ORBIT | B |
| O | SPINE | I |
| P | KITES | T |
| Q |  |  |
| R | BAHTS | H |
| S | ELBOW | B |
| T | VIALS | A |
| U | TIRES | R |
| V | LEAST | A |

Reading the hearts, you have:

## FINAL V AS V BIT HBARA

The instruction tells you to take the final five (roman V) letters and convert them to 5-bit encodings.
$H=8=01000$
$B=2=00010$
$A=1=00001$
$R=18=10010$
$A=1=00001$

Together, they form a square which you can overlay with the given square of data:

| 01000 | TMEDR |
| :--- | :--- |
| 00010 | CAPUE |
| 00001 | MNTAS |
| 10010 | CEALT |
| 00001 | OSNDE |

The letters that fall on the 1's, read left to right, give the answer: MUSCLE.
-M---
---U-
$----S$
C--L-
$----E$

