

NEWS

BYTES

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Mississippi school district reopens after March 24 tornado

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Train derailment in Alabama not toxic, Norfolk Southern says

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Save the date: One year until total solar eclipse sweeps US

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County seeks cash for land to expand Arlington cemetery

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TikTok & security risks

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Nissen named Exceptional SARC of the Year

From NAS Meridian Public Affairs

NAS Meridian's Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC) Jennifer Nissen has been selected as Navy Region Southeast's nominee for the 2023 Liz Blanc Exceptional SARC of the Year.

"To receive this nomination from an organization I admire so much makes me unbelievably happy and grateful," Nissen said. "It is not about an individual accomplishment or individual award but recognizing that the SAPR program helps so many people in various ways, and it takes everyone to make that happen."

Nissen provides exceptional quality response to victims of sexual as-

sault. Her relentless efforts ensure victim's needs and wishes were met by corroboratively addressing safety, security, resources, and creating a climate of victim empowerment.

She ensures all commands complete training requirements and tracks over 30 victim advocates in her area of responsibility -- which includes NAS Meridian and Reserve Center's in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Bessemer, Alabama.

Naval Technical Training Center Meridian's Commanding Officer CDR Karen Teague said Nissen effectively led her command through all of the Navy's newest SAPR policy changes to include training over 805 staff and students and seven VAs over the last six months.

"Ms. Nissen has handled multiple sensitive and unique cases with the utmost professionalism, poise, and empathy," Teague said. "Her phenomenal bedside manner ensured volatile information was delivered between commands, agencies, victims, and their families with dignity and ensured all parties' questions were answered in order to provide victims the attention they needed."

In addition to her daily duties, Nissen was able to complete three weeks of Mind Body Mental Fitness-Train the Trainer to become a certified master trainer. She now incorporates this training for her victim advocates and command staff training.

● **SARC, page 2**



NISSEN



New 'Tiger Jet'



Training Squadron 9 Commanding Officer CDR Jim "Rad" Anderson, left, joins Tim Hagan, John Clayton, Tony McMahan, Mickey Burrage, Rich Gable, and LCDR Scott Hook, at the unveiling of aircraft 109 -- The "Tiger Jet", April 7. The jet, which took about three weeks to paint, was designed by LCDR Hook, CSO for Training Air Wing 1, and painted by the group from of painters and scrapers from V2X contractors (formerly Vertex). Not pictured is painter Leo Winford.

Photo by Penny Randall

Royal Navy Commodore visits TW-1



Photo by MC2 Molly Crawford

Commodore Nick Walker, Deputy Director of Royal Navy Aviation, visited Training Air Wing One, April 13. He spoke with two British instructor pilots and the three student aviators currently training with Training Squadron Nine onboard NAS Meridian. Commodore Walker previously spent three years in the United States, embedded within the U.S. Navy's Air Warfare Division, OPNAV N98, in the Pentagon, and in the British Naval Staff in the Embassy.

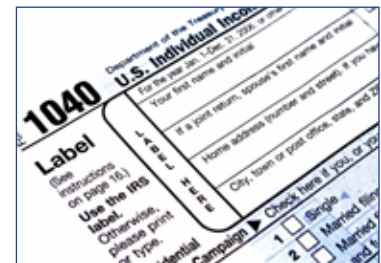
Last-minute tax tips: Changes and resources for military members

By Karen Jowers
Military Times

The good news about filing your tax return this year is that it may be a simpler process, according to the Defense Department's tax counsel.

For example, since there weren't any economic stimulus checks in 2022, you don't have to worry about tax rules related to that. And service members don't need to concern themselves with tax forms they received from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service related to Social Security withholding.

Some benefits, deductions and credits that were available in the past few years because of the pandemic have gone away or reverted back to pre-COVID levels, said Susan Mitchell, DoD tax counsel and executive director of the Armed Forces Tax Council. For example, the child tax credit is lower than it was in 2021, and both the child and dependent care credit and the earned income tax credit revert back to pre-COVID levels.



The basics

The deadline for filing, or to file an extension, and pay your taxes, is Tuesday, April 18. (The 15th falls on a Saturday and Monday the 17th is Emancipation Day in some jurisdictions.) There are also some longstanding tax filing extensions available for certain service members. If stationed outside the U.S. and Puerto Rico, troops can qualify for an automatic two-month extension until June 15, both for filing and paying taxes that are due. This extension is designed to help troops overseas who may have trouble getting all the documents they need.

● **Taxes, page 4**

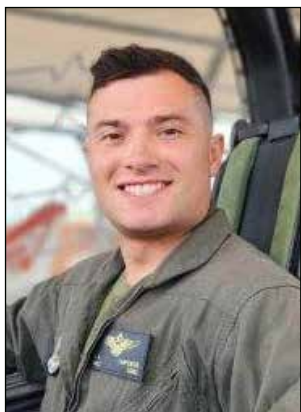
Four aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in March pinning ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony March 31 onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

Four naval aviators received their "Wings of Gold" during the ceremony. The naval aviator designation ceremony is not prescribed specifically by U.S. Navy regulations, but has emerged as an honored product of the rich heritage of naval tradition. It marks the culmination of nearly two years of specialized training, which has prepared these officers for the rigorous demands of aerial combat and carrier operations -- earning each the title of "Naval Aviator" and the right to wear the coveted "Wings of Gold."



LTJG Charles Beck



1STLT Greg Carpenter



1STLT Louis Kocina



LTJG John Schneider

Golden Stick



Photo by MC2 Molly Crawford

Laura Carmichael, left, representative from the Mississippi Council of the Navy League presents 1STLT Craig Kocina, with the Golden Stick award during a winging ceremony in the chapel onboard NAS Meridian, March 31. The Golden Stick is presented to the student with the highest composite score during flight training.

Cobra Gold 23: Humanitarian efforts make a difference

Lance Cpl. Samantha Rodriguez

1st Marine Aircraft Wing

"This has been my home for almost 35 years, and I grew too scared to live in it anymore when the roof started to collapse eight years ago from termites," said Miss Bunnam Inprom, a 61-year-old Chanthaburi native.

With Inprom's roof being destroyed by termites, the multinational team of service members from Thailand, South Korea and U.S. offered their hand to restore her home. It was full of dirt and debris since it didn't have a roof anymore. Royal Thai Marines, Republic of Korea Marines and Sailors, and U.S. Marines got to work and swept out the leaves and dust from Inprom's living room, then moved on to metal construction to install the new support beams and the roof frame.

U.S. Marines with Marine Wing Support Squadron 171 and MWSS-172 were working with the combined forces to construct an elementary school in Ban Bo Fai Mai, Chanthaburi, Kingdom of Thailand for Exercise Cobra Gold. The site was no more than a few miles down the road from Inprom's home.

"We got involved through the U.S. Army's Civil Affairs team that reached out, and gave us contacts within the village," said 1st Lt. Matthew Stevenson, a combat engineering officer with MWSS-171 and officer in charge of the aforementioned construction site. "We had the building materials, we had the Marines, and we had the time."

The combined forces had excess materials and hopped on the next truck out to Inprom's home. They carried welded metal beams to replace every termite ridden beam and climbed on metal rods to install a frame for Inprom's roof.

"I was just happy to help in any way that I could. Hearing

the owner's story made me think that no matter what happens to you, people will always be there to help you."

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kyra Lozada, a metal worker with MWSS-171

For the last eight years, Inprom's home has been uninhabitable. She decided to move in with her son and her grandchildren next door. She describes the fear that crept into her bones once she noticed how the roof gradually caved in over time.

"I thought my home was going to crush me," said Inprom. "I built this home with my husband 35 years ago, he passed away three years ago."

Inprom and her neighbors gathered daily to watch the combined force of more than 20 service members work on her roof. They offered cold refreshments, and prepared traditional Thai food for the service members working on the project.

"I was just happy to help in any way that I could," said U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kyra Lozada, a metal worker with MWSS-171. "Hearing the owner's story made me think that no matter what happens to you, people will always be there to help you."

Shortly after the culmination of Exercise Cobra Gold, the Royal Thai Marines with Construction Co. Combat Engineer completed Inprom's roof. She moved out of her son's home, and refurbished her living area with furniture, clothes, and other personal belongings.

The Marine Corps continues to train in its primary war-fighting functions, but exercises like Cobra Gold provide unique opportunities to help others in need. This type of support enables citizens like Inprom to be able to live in her own home again. The Marine Corps is not just a fighting organization, it's a melting pot of Marines from all corners of the United States eager to help those in need.

Naval Air Station Meridian's Earth Day Celebration
Come join us on April 20 at 9:00 am, in front of Public Works, as we go out and clean-up around base in the green spaces and forested areas. For details call 601-679-2918.

Earth Day is a global celebration each year encouraging education and stewardship of the planet's natural resources. Whether in a backyard, neighborhood green spaces, or forested area there are opportunities for everyone to discover and enjoy the physical and psychological benefits that come with spending time outdoors.

Mississippi Council of the Navy League
Presents
Wings & Tails 2023
May 2nd
Social Hour 5:30
Dinner 6:30
(Shrimp, potatoes, corn, catfish & chicken wings)
Key Brothers Hangar
Meridian Airport
\$25 per person in advance/\$30 at the gate
TICKETS available from any NAVY LEAGUE BOARD MEMBER or at the GATE
Hosted by
Fly Meridian Fly Home
MERIDIAN REGIONAL AIRPORT
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MITCHELL DISTRIBUTING
ICE PLANT

• SARC

"Ms. Nissen's passion for, and belief in, the SAPR program is why she is outstanding choice and representative of the Liz Blanc award," said LT Zachary Meisler, NAS Meridian's Staff Judge Advocate. "She hasn't just been great at her job - she has changed lives and brought help and closure to people who might never have found those things."

Nissen has served as the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator of Naval Air Station Meridian since September 2020. Prior to

that, she served as a Uniformed Victim Advocate for four years while she was on active duty in the U.S. Marine Corps.

She also brings experience and professional connections to NAS Meridian through volunteerism at the local rape crisis center and hospitals. Nissen has worked hand-in-hand with the local rape crises center, Wesley House, and is the driving force for coordination within the local Lauderdale County Sexual Assault Response Team (SART). She served on the committee for the

Take A Stand Gala "Light Up The Dark" event for Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month 2022. Over 200 people attended from the local community and military community.

Nissen received her Bachelor of Arts degree in criminology in 2020 and her Master of Business Administration in 2022. She is currently working on her Ph.D at Mississippi State University. Nissen is a D-SAACP Credentialed Advocate with the National Organization for Victim Assistance.

The Skyline ~ Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.

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Hotlines & Helpful Numbers

SAPR Victim Assistance: 601-604-3037
SAPR Civilian Victim Assistance: 601-486-3122
SARC: 601-481-4274
SAFE Helpline: 877-995-5247
Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255
Military OneSource: 800-342-9647
CEAP (DoN Civilian): 844-366-2327
EAP (NAF Civilian): 800-932-0034
FFSC Meridian: 601-679-2360
Chaplain: 601-604-2015
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Local Happenings

APRIL

13: Tig Notaro at 7:30 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center
Comedian, writer, public radio contributor, podcaster, frequent talk show guest and actress, Tig Notaro returns to her native state. Born in Jackson and raised in Pass Christian, Notaro wrote, produced, and starred in "One Mississippi," a semiautobiographical comedy series on Amazon. Call 601-483-9810 for ticket information.

21-22: Threefoot Festival Friday 5-10 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.-4 p.m. in downtown Meridian. It's back! Last year's Threefoot Festival was bigger and better than ever. This year promises even more family friendly fun. Call 601-917-4664; free to the public.

27: Earth's Bounty + The MAX: NightMarket from 5- 8 p.m. at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience. The MAX and Earth's Bounty invite you to Night Market and to celebrate The MAX's five year anniversary. Stop by The MAX for great food and drink, artisans, farm vendors, food trucks, children's activities, music and more. Free to the public; call 601-581-1550, ext 35.

28: Petals and Prosecco at Merrehope from 5-9 p.m. at Merrehope. Demonstration & reception with Dr. Jim DelPrince Horticulture Specialist with MSU Extension and leader of the Master Floral Designer Program. Tickets are \$40; limited seating available; call 601-483-8439.

MAY

5: Full Moon on Fifth from 6-9 p.m. on 5th Street from 22nd to 23rd Avenue in downtown Meridian. String lights and two giant illuminated moons set the mood for a unique block party that you don't want to miss. This laid back event has great food, live music, and a revolving showcase of local art talent. Alcoholic beverages are available, no outside beverages allowed. Free to the public.

6: Rose Hill Storytelling Conference from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Soule Steam Feed Works. Come enjoy a unique event for all Mississippians; a time to mingle and enjoy the hearts of storytellers and storytelling. Keynote speaker: Terrence Roberts; registration deadline is May 1. Admission is \$25; call 601-479-2483.

13: State Games of Mississippi Youth Slow-Pitch Softball begins at 9 a.m. at the Northeast Softball Complex, 730 Newell Road in Meridian. Entry Fee: \$230 - Maximum of 15 players & 2 coaches, \$175 - 6U T-ball. Registration deadline is Tuesday, May 9. Visit our website for more information - stategamesofms.org or call 601-482-0205.

16: The Beach Boys at 7:30 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center. For more than 60 years, The Beach Boys have spread musical sunshine. Their brilliant vocal harmonies convey simple truths through sophisticated, pioneering musical arrangements. Ticket information coming soon; call 601-483-9810.

Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group completes COMPTUEX

The Sailors, ships, squadrons and staffs of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group (GRFCSG) successfully completed composite training unit exercise (COMPTUEX). COMPTUEX, orchestrated by the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 4, is a certification exercise conducted during the integrated phase of the Optimized Fleet Response Plan.

"Throughout COMPTUEX, the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group team demonstrated a learning mindset and focused on continuous improvement," said Rear Adm. Jeffrey "Caesar" Czerewko, commander, CSG-4. "I am confident that this strike group is adaptable, capable and lethal. My staff coaches, mentors, trains and assesses across every mission area and we leveraged the capabilities of the live, virtual, constructive infrastructure to put the CSG-12 team into an intense and realistic month-long scenario. This was the first COMPTUEX assessment with a Ford-class nuclear powered aircraft carrier and this impressive group set the bar high for future ships of the class."

The GRFCSG includes the staffs of Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 12, Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 8 and Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 2. Participating units include Ford-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford (CVN 78), Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Normandy (CG 60), and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyers USS Ramage (DDG 61), USS McFaul (DDG 74) and USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116). CVW-8 squadrons include the "Black Lions" of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 213, the "Tomcatters" of VFA-31, the "Ragin' Bulls" of VFA-37 and the "Golden Warriors" of VFA-87; Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 142; the "Bear Aces" of Airborne Command and Control Squadron (VAW) 124; the "Rawhides" of Fleet Logistics Squadron VRC-40; the "Spartans" of Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron (HSM) 70; and the "Tridents" of Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron (HSC) 9.

-- From Carrier Strike Group 4 and 12 Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, allies conducts Ssang Yong 2023

The Alliance between the United States and Republic of Korea has endured the test of time for 70 years. From unforgiving conditions of Inchon and sub-zero temperatures of the Chosin Reservoir to brutal combat in the jungles of Vietnam, the U.S.-ROK Alliance has been forged through shared struggles of war and a common vision of freedom. Fast forward to present day, the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit and Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group celebrate this Alliance through executing Ssang Yong 2023.

Ssang Yong, meaning "twin dragons," is normally a routine, bilateral exercise between U.S. and ROK Navy and Marine Corps forces, conducted in the Republic of Korea. The last full Ssang Yong was conducted in 2018, which made both amphibious forces eager to be training together again. "Through this training, we were able to confirm once again

the solid Alliance and combined defensive posture of the ROK-U.S. Marine Corps," emphasized Col. An Byung Jin, commanding officer, 7th Battalion, ROK 1st Marine Division.

Ssang Yong 23 participants included ROK Marine Corps, ROK Navy, 13th MEU, Makin Island ARG, 40 Commando Royal Marines, and observers from France, Philippines and Australia. The week and a half long training consisted of live-fire ranges, ROKMC ranger training, comprised of fast roping and repelling, military free-fall exercises, and several subject matter expert exchanges with our ROK counterparts. The main event was an amphibious assault exercise consisting of nine ROK ships alongside the USS Makin Island, USS Anchorage, and USS John P. Murtha, as well as surface and air connectors from both U.S. and ROK amphibious forces.

-- From Capt. Kevin Buss

[Read more, click here](#)

USS Nitze returns from deployment

The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Nitze (DDG 94) returned to its homeport of Naval Station Norfolk, April 5, following an eight-month deployment to the U.S. 5th and 6th Fleet areas of operation.

Nitze deployed July 17, 2022, following completion of a four-week composite training unit exercise with Carrier Strike Group (CSG) 10, George H.W. Bush CSG.

While operating in U.S. 5th Fleet, Nitze and Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Delbert D. Black (DDG 119) recovered two U.S. Saildrone Explorer unmanned surface vehicles captured by an

Iranian ship in the Red Sea.

Cmdr. Katie Jacobson relieved Cmdr. Sam Sareini as commanding officer during a change of command ceremony in the Gulf of Aden, Sept. 28.

Nitze worked with the Yemen Coast Guard to respond to a fire onboard a small motorboat in the Gulf of Aden, Oct. 26, rescuing three Yemeni civilians. Additionally, Nitze worked with the U.S. Air Force to deconflict air space for the President of the United States during a United Nations conference.

-- From MC2 Cryton Vandiesal

[Read more, click here](#)

Sale... Or

BOATS/CAMPERS/TRAILERS

21 foot - 2021 Jayco Travel Camper. Like new; beige & walnut interior and mattress kept in original plastic. Selling to upgrade to larger size - Price is \$15,000 some accessories included. To view or request pics please contact: Gary 601-575-5062.

2018 Mallard M185 Travel Trailer. Sleeps 4 with 1 queen bed/2 bunks.

Easy to tow at 3,575 lbs; only selling because military member is moving overseas. Great living quarters with lake view. Hooked up and ready to live in, including cables, hoses, plus the \$500 towing kit. Asking \$17,000. Call 360-434-3035.

AUTOMOBILES, ETC.

2018 Subaru Outback 2.5 limited, 12k miles; Subaru safety features and warranties included.

Asking \$29k. Call 601-480-5100.

2017 Dodge Challenger, grey with racing stripe. \$24k. Call 601-880-3237.

HOMES/APARTMENTS

For Rent: 2 BD/1 1/2 BA 1100 square foot home in Dalewood with main lake access. Asking \$1300 a month. Email: rosscandeloproperties@gmail.com for information.

For Rent: Lake Cabin

near NAS Meridian. 1 BD/1 BA; \$700 month. Unfurnished. For Rent: 3BD, 2BA home with washer/dryer, wifi, lawn service and water included. \$1500/month. Call 601-917-8594.4.

For Rent: 3BD/2BA private gated home with 2-car garage in West Lauderdale; 15 minutes from the base. Call 601-737-4569 or 601-934-0739.

For Rent: 2BA/1BA on

the water at Dalewood \$600 per month. Call 601-683-6038.

For Sale By Owner: 3BD/3BA brick home with sunroom, large fenced in yard. Convenient to shopping and base. \$139K. Call 601-513-3395 or 601-227-1870.

MISCELLANEOUS

New! Event Space for Rent: Deer Creek Banquet Hall. 6000 sq. ft. indoor with 1600 sq. ft. outdoor

spaces for rent for gatherings and events. Call Reginald at 251-455-1559.

Service for Hire: Dixie Perfect Lawn LLC, lawn care in Meridian. Call 850-376-4499. Military owned company.

To submit an item to the "Sale...Or" column, e-mail adam.prince@navy.mil. Deadline is the Thursday prior to publication.

Listings in the "Sale...Or" column are free for anyone who works at NAS Meridian. To include your announcement, email adam.prince@navy.mil

Leaders say TikTok is potential cybersecurity risk to U.S.

By David Vergun

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

TikTok is a “potential threat vector” to the United States, said John F. Plumb, assistant secretary of defense for space policy and principal cyber advisor to the secretary of defense.

TikTok is a social media, video-hosting service owned by the Chinese company ByteDance.

Members of the House Armed Services Committee’s subcommittee on cyber, information technologies and innovation heard testimony from Plumb and Army Gen. Paul M. Nakasone, commander of U.S. Cyber Command, director of the National Security Agency and chief of the Central Security Service.

The problem with TikTok is that a large number of Americans use it, and China may have the ability to direct misinformation through it, as well as collect data from it, said Plumb. The scale and scope of the platform is problematic.

Policy makers need to be aware of these threats, be able to quantify them, and be able to take action against them, he said.

Nakasone said, “If you consider one-third of the adult population receives their news from this app, one-sixth of our children are saying they’re constantly on this app, if you consider that there’s 150 million people every single day that are obviously touching this app, this provides a foreign nation a platform for

information operations, a platform for surveillance, and a concern we have with regards to who controls that data.”

The department has already prohibited the use of TikTok on government phones, the general noted.

“I think the broader discussion obviously rests with the policymakers now. Certainly, this is a piece that our nation has to consider,” he said.

There are going to be other applications like this, and there needs to be a policy in place that balances the ability to share information with protection from adversaries’ ability to conduct surveillance and information operations against the United States, Nakasone said.

The general said there’s a difference between TikTok and American-based social media platforms.

China has already said they’re going to “touch the data at any time they want to touch this data. This concerns me,” Nakasone said.

Plumb said that for decades, China has used its cyber capabilities to steal sensitive information, intellectual property and research from U.S. public- and private-sector institutions, including the defense industrial base.

“Chinese cyber intrusions are the most prolific in the world. In crisis, PRC [China’s] leaders believe that achieving information dominance will enable them to seize and keep the strategic initia-

tive, disrupt our ability to mobilize, to project and sustain the joint force, and to ensure the PRC’s desired end state,” Plumb said, referring to China.

Plumb also testified that Russia engages in persistent, malicious cyber activities to support its global espionage campaigns, steal intellectual property, disrupt critical infrastructure and promote disinformation.

Russia has also demonstrated that it uses cyber as a key component of its wartime strategy, particularly against Ukraine, he said.

Other persistent cyber threats arise from North Korea, Iran and transnational criminal organizations, Plumb said.

“Together, our adversaries use cyberspace to conduct operations against the Department of Defense Information Network and the U.S. homeland. They do this to weaken our allies and partners and to undermine U.S. interests,” Plumb said.

Plumb described actions the department has taken in both defensive and offensive cyberspace. He said the president’s fiscal year 2024 budget request included \$13.5 billion for cyberspace activities, prioritizing investments in cyberspace workforce, operations, research and capabilities.

“Operating in cyberspace today is an essential part of the department’s ability to deter aggression and ensure our nation’s security,” he said.

Navy Region Southeast announces new installation mobile oneapp

from Navy Region Southeast Public Affairs

Navy Region Southeast has recently released their mobile OneApp, which will deliver all the information you need about your installation -- MWR updates, gate closures, CDC information, Condition of Readiness updates, and more -- plus the latest news, alerts, photographs and messages.

Have you ever wanted a mobile app that provides a one-stop-shop for all the information you need about your base?

Navy Region Southeast has recently released their mobile OneApp, which will deliver all the information you need about your installation -- MWR updates, gate closures, CDC information, Condition of Readiness updates, and more -- plus the latest news, alerts, photographs and messages.

Navy Region Southeast is the first region command to make an app available to the



service members, families, DoD civilians, retirees and other interested persons.

“We are excited to bring this new capability to everyone who lives, works and visits our bases in the southeast region. It is vital to reach people in ways convenient for them, and the app will enable us to do that,” said Rear Admiral Wes McCall, Commander Navy Region Southeast. “Everyone has smart phones, and now, with a touch of a button, people can learn more about our installations and our contributions to the national defense.”

● Taxes

Those overseas who can’t file by that extension can request an additional extension, until Oct. 16.

Remember that any taxes due must be paid by that April 18 deadline (or the June 15 deadline, if overseas) or you could be subject to both interest charges and a failure-to-pay penalty, Mitchell said.

Special rules apply for service members deployed to a combat zone. The deadline for filing and paying taxes is generally extended for their period of service in the combat zone plus 180 days after their last day in the combat zone.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The EITC applies to eligible low- and moderate-income workers, subject to certain qualifying rules. The credit could reduce the amount of taxes owed and perhaps increase your refund. There are special EITC rules and considerations for military members who receive nontaxable pay such as a housing allowance or who are stationed outside the United States. For more information, visit the IRS page on the EITC for military members.

This credit is phased out at certain income levels and number of dependents. It is completely phased out for married couples filing jointly with an earned income of \$59,187 or more with three or more children.

You may qualify for the EITC even if you can’t claim children on your tax return. The minimum age for a childless worker to qualify for the credit reverts back to 25, compared to age 19 in 2021. The maximum age of 65 has also been reinstated, after being eliminated for 2021.

Child and dependent credits

Child tax credit: This credit is lower than it was in 2021, when it received a one-year, temporary bump. Tax credits reduce the amount of taxes you owe, dollar for dollar, which is typically better than a deduction, which

reduces the amount of your income that is subject to tax, Mitchell notes.

For tax year 2022, the child tax credit is \$2,000 per child age 16 or younger. It’s also subject to phase out as income rises, starting at \$400,000 for joint filers and \$200,000 for single filers.

Child and dependent care credit: You may be able to claim the child and dependent care credit if you paid for the care of a qualifying individual to enable you — and your spouse, if filing a joint return — to work or actively look for work, according to the IRS. Generally, you may not take this credit if you are married and filing separately. However, see *What’s Your Filing Status?* in IRS Publication 503, *Child and Dependent Care Expenses*, which describes exceptions to the rule.

The amount of the credit is a percentage of the amount of you paid to a provider while you worked or looked for work. That percentage depends on your adjusted gross income, but the maximum credit is 35% of your eligible expenses. There are limits, however.

For 2022, you may claim up to \$3,000 in expenses if you had one qualifying dependent, or \$6,000 if you had two or more. So, when the maximum 35% credit is applied, that puts the top credit at \$1,050 for one child; and \$2,100 (35% of \$6,000) for more than one child. The more you earn, the lower the percentage of employment-related expenses that are allowed. Once your adjusted gross income is over \$43,000, the maximum credit is 20% of your employment-related expenses, according to the IRS.

A number of military spouses are teachers, and the deduction has increased to \$300 for out-of-pocket expenses for supplies, books, COVID-19 protective items or other materials. That’s up from \$250 in 2021.

[Read more, click here](#)

The eternal optimism of spring

My breathing is labored. After a long winter indoors, riding my bike winds me more than usual. But it feels good to be outside, forcing my muscles to move my body through the crisp, cool spring air.

At the top of the hill, I turn down Narragansett Avenue and let momentum propel me toward Dutch Harbor with its sparkling navy blue water, rows of dry-docked sailboats, and boarded-up lobster shack awaiting hungry summer tourists. My wheels spin, and I think of all the places we’ve lived during my husband’s 28-years in the Navy, the places that were deprived of four distinct seasons. The kinds of places that people move to when they retire. Florida, the South, and coastal California.

After my husband’s military retirement, we picked Rhode Island, the kind of place where

it often snows in April and that people make weather-related jokes about. “It’s so cold in New England, Grandpa’s teeth were chattering... in the glass.” “How are things in Rhode ICEland this winter?” “New England has four seasons: Almost Winter, Winter, Still Winter, and three months of Bad Sledding.”

After circling the crushed clam-shell boat yard, I pedal southward, riding through neighborhoods of grey shingled houses overlooking the marsh. Tender blades of new grass paint a verdant wash over the yards. Purple, white and yellow crocuses twitch in the gentle breeze, and smiling young daffodils wave fresh green arms at me.

Rounding a corner, I catch a whiff of something smelly, and think it must be the sprouts of skunk cabbage I see emerging from wet earth and rotting flora in the leafless forest near the marsh. A cold, clear stream runs fast beside the road. Clumps of moss shine emerald in dappled sunlight. Mallard couples gather items for hidden nests of spring ducklings.

Up ahead, I hear a cacophony of chirps, like summer crickets. At this time of year? I quicken my pace, determined to investigate. I stop just past a yellow clapboard farmhouse. Beyond a stacked-stone fence, a spring-fed pond is swollen beyond its banks, flooding the

spiked necklace of baby reeds surrounding it. The water shimmers, reflecting the periwinkle sky above and the promise of new life just below its surface.

The chirping ceases when I approach the stone wall. I stand stock still, listening to huff of my own heavy breathing, and wait. One by one, they begin again, until their high-pitched mating chorus sings. They aren’t summer crickets, they’re spring frogs, invisible to my eyes but crystal clear to my ears.

I carry on toward home, past our local public beach, Mackerel Cove. It’s crescent shoreline is empty but for a few walkers hoping to find well-worn beach glass among the flotsam and jetsam being carried ashore on cold laps of salt water. In two months, sailboats will dot the horizon, lifeguard chairs will reappear, a Del’s Frozen Lemonade truck will open for business, and the beach will buzz with barefoot tourists. For now, it rests, restores and rejuvenates.

Back on Narragansett Avenue, I pass the town’s three churches — Central Baptist, St. Matthew’s and St. Mark, preparing themselves for Easter Sunday, when townspeople will gather to celebrate rebirth. Children will fidget in the pews, anticipating the day’s festivities. When the final song is sung, they’ll burst from the church in search of hidden eggs, foil-cov-

ered chocolates, sticky sugared marshmallows, and jellybeans. The peals of children’s laughter will wind through neighborhoods, hitching a ride on the aroma of roasting hams.

I turn down my street and see the old shingled house we bought five years ago after retiring from active duty military life. Her wide porch welcomes me home. Plopping into a wicker chair, I turn my face to the afternoon sun. I’m warm, maybe even a little sweaty under my jacket, and it’s only 48 degrees. In the five years since military retirement, I’ve become a New Englander alright, the kind of person that experiences a sunny spring day and feels a rush of irrational optimism.

Everything seems eager, expectant, emerging, excited. Grateful for the beauty all around me, I close my eyes and say to God, “Please, don’t let it snow in April!”

Hope springs eternal.

Lisa Smith Molinari’s self syndicated columns appear on her blog, www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com and she recently co-authored *Stories Around the Table: Laughter, Wisdom, and Strength in Military Life Follow Lisa@MolinariWrites*.

COLUMN



Molinari



NAS Meridian, MS • Morale, Welfare and Recreation

Facility Phone Numbers

Fitness Center	679-2379	Library	679-2326	MWR Admin.	679-2551
Liberty Center	679-3760	Rudders Pub & Grill	679-2780	MWR Jobs Line	679-2467
Tickets	679-3773	CDC/CDH	679-2652		
McCain Rec Center	679-2651	SAC	679-5252		
Equipment Rental	679-2609	School Liaison	679-2473		

PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

Registration: April 2nd-May 1

GOED Tournament Starts: May 8th @ 1730

30+ Open Tournament Starts: May 9th @ 1730

Team Meeting: May 4th @ 1500

Scan the QR Code or call (601) 679-2367 to sign up.

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Driving Range
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MWR COMMUNITY RECREATION

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April 15th 1200 Field by SAC

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Nerf Guns will be provided & bunkers will be set up!

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Join us for a movie night with a special waffle bar!

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Purple Up Day

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Help us celebrate Month of the Military Child by wearing purple!!

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FISHING TOURNAMENT

April 22 • 1300
Community Rec Ponds (By Rudders)

Prizes for biggest fish & most fish caught!

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Penguin Story Time

April 26th • 1000
Library

Learn about how cool Penguins are at Story Time in the Andrew Triplett Library

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