



CONGRATS

☀️ NAS Meridian's newly frocked Petty Officers:

AC3 Martina Alvesdeoliveira
AC3 Trentan Barlow
MA3 Roni Clevenger
MA3 Hunter Dressler
AC3 Jacob Hatch
MA3 Leilani Martinez
AC3 Riley Pfeiffer
MA3 Carter Riggerbach
MA3 Jessica True
AC2 Matthew Adams
MA2 Dylan Egidi
ABE2 Alexander Elam
ABH2 Tariq Graham
MA2 Aldric Hicks
MA2 Shane Ortlieb
AC2 Veronica Suarezaviles

NEWS BYTES

~ Click ~

Scramble as last Mississippi abortion clinic shuts its doors

~ Click ~

US to diversify infant formula industry to avoid shortages

~ Click ~

Joey Chestnut is champ again in July 4 hot dog contest

~ Click ~

Browns finally trade Mayfield, send quarterback to Panthers

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Mussel survey conducted on NAS Meridian

Special to the Skyline

Recently biologists with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service were onboard Naval Air Station Meridian to document mussel species present in streams on the installation as part of implementing the Sikes Act and per the corresponding Navy instruction.

Biologists from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified and collected specimens from Ponta Creek, one of NAS Meridian's largest drainages. The survey project was coordinated by Jeff Mangrum, wildlife biologist with the Public Works Environmental Division.

Freshwater mussels are mollusks found throughout North

America in streams, rivers, and lakes. Adult mussels inhabit streambeds where they filter water to obtain food and oxygen. These natural filter feeders are commonly used as indicators of water quality conditions because they are sensitive to changes in water flow, water pollution, sedimentation, and invasive species. Significant declines in freshwater mussel populations throughout the United States have led to the designation of multiple species of mussels as endangered, threatened, or rare.

The biologists determined that no such endangered or threatened mussels were found during this survey onboard NAS Meridian.



Photo by Jeff Mangrum

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service biologists examine different types of mussel species presents in streams onboard NAS Meridian.

NCIS Agent of the Year



Submitted photo

Omar Lopez, director of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), presents Special Agent Brandy M. Nettles with the 2021 Special Agent of the Year for Criminal Operations on June 23, during a ceremony in Quantico, Virginia. Nettles is the NCIS Resident Unit special agent covering Meridian, Hattiesburg, Jackson and most of Alabama. Nettles collaborated with federal, state and local law enforcement and worked undercover while online to identify and track the distribution of child pornography for Operation Silent Intruder, the first Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Operation hosted by a federal agency. She coordinated with NCIS polygraph, technical services and cyber personnel; and built a team of 70 law enforcement members from across South Carolina. Her work drove 11 arrest, including that of an active duty service member who received a bad conduct discharge and was required to register as a sex offender. Collectively, Special Agent Nettles' work led to the arrest of 110 predators. Nettles has served five years in the NCIS.

SECDEF honors Soldiers who were presented Medals of Honor

By David Vergun

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and Army leaders today honored six Medal of Honor recipients at an induction ceremony for the Pentagon's Hall of Heroes.

Recognized for their heroism were: retired Army Maj. John J. Duffy, former Army Spc. 5 Dennis M. Fujii, deceased Army Staff Sgt. Edward N. Kaneshiro, former Army Spc. 5 Dwight Birdwell, retired Army Col. Ralph Puckett Jr., and Army Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne.

"Today we etch these soldiers' names into the Hall of Heroes, to honor their deeds and to remember why American warriors fight. We honor these heroes because they represent the very best of us. And we honor these heroes to inspire future generations," Austin said at the ceremony held at Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, Virginia.

"May we all find the courage to live up to the examples that they have set. May we all find the commitment to serve and defend our republic, and may we all find the dedication and duty to our democracy that these heroes have shown," he added.

Austin described the soldiers' acts of valor to those assembled:

Staff Sgt. Edward N. Kaneshiro

A soldier poses in a garden-like setting outside a building. In December 1966, Kaneshiro was serving in South Vietnam as an infantry squad leader.

● MOH, page 4

Sweden, Finland move closer to NATO membership

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

During a ceremony in Brussels, NATO ambassadors today signed the accession protocols that will move Finland and Sweden a step closer to joining the alliance.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said it was a historic day "for Finland, for Sweden, for NATO and for Euro-Atlantic security."

The accession protocols now move to the alliance's 30 member nations for national ratification according to the procedures of the various nations. In the United States, this means the Senate will have to approve the addition of those countries to the Washington Treaty of 1949.

Finland and Sweden will make strong and important contributions to our alliance."

For decades, Sweden and Finland were content to work with NATO, but

not become members of the defensive alliance. But Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine in February shifted the ground in Europe, and those nations – both historically neutral – petitioned to join NATO. At last week's NATO summit in Madrid, allied leaders agreed to invite Finland and Sweden to join the alliance.

"Finland and Sweden will make strong and important contributions to our alliance," Stoltenberg said after the ceremony.

He noted that years of training and exercising together has increased the interoperability of Finnish and Swedish forces with NATO, and the nations share the same values as the other members of the alliance.

"I commend all allies for moving so quickly in accepting Finland and Sweden's applications for membership, and I want to thank Turkey, Finland and Sweden for their constructive approach," the secretary general said. "The trilateral agreement they signed at the Madrid summit made today possible."

[Read more, click here](#)

Eleven aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in June pinning ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony June 24 onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

Eleven 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."



1ST LT Curtis Berry



LT Spencer Erjavec



1ST LT Allan Flack

Golden Stick



Photo by Adam Prince

Roger Burke, left, President of the Mississippi Council of the Navy League presents 1ST LT Allan Flack with the Golden Stick award during a winging ceremony in the Chapel onboard NAS Meridian, June 24.



ENS Arnaud Guérite



LTJG Keegan Hilmer



ENS Sebastien Lanino



ENS Alexandre Muscat



ENS Clement Parvin



LTJG Thomas Waldo



LTJG Nicholas Watson



LTJG Gilbert Wright

Varner Reenlistment



Photo by Adam Prince

CDR Jon Settlemoir, right, NAS Meridian command chaplain, presents a Certificate of Reenlistment to RP2 Alexander Varner during a reenlistment ceremony at Lake Martha onboard NAS Meridian, June 30.



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- 1:30 PM : Afternoon Flight
- 5:30 PM : Winners & Raffles Announced

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Local Happenings

JULY

Every Monday and Wednesday through Aug. 3 - Summer Kids Movies at Golden Ticket Cinema in Uptown Meridian Mall from 10 a.m.-noon. special admission prices. Call 601-282-5030.

11 - Magic Monday at the Mississippi Children's Museum-Meridian from 9 a.m-5 p.m. More information go to www.mcmmeridian.org

16: Red Hills Horse Show at 10 a.m. at the Lauderdale County Agri-Center. Judges events start at 10 a.m.; Speed events begin at 2 p.m. Admission varies; call Sedera at 601-562-5715.

21: Third Thursday in Downtown from 5-8 p.m. Live Music, Food Trucks, Beverages and Art Exhibitors in Dumont Plaza, Downtown Meridian. Call 601-693-2787.

23: Boz Scaggs at 7:30 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center. It's appropriate that Boz Scaggs' new album is *Out of the Blues*, since the blues is what first sparked his five-decade musical career. Tickets range from \$55 to \$125; call 601-696-2200.

30: CowKids Youth Rodeo All day event at the Lauderdale County Agri-Center. Cowkids Youth Rodeo, Inc. is a ministry based, non profit organization set out to provide youth with the best opportunity to transform into responsible adults through participating in the sport of rodeo, and all it has to offer at an affordable cost. fees vary; contact cowkidsyouthrodeo@gmail.com.

Segar Cemetery Clean Up



Photo by Lauren Laboy

Public Works employee Richie McKee recently led a group of Marines from Marine Aviation Training Support Squadron One to cleanup Segar Cemetery. The cemetery grounds had been severely overgrown and grave markers were completely hidden by overgrown grass and debris over time. It took more than 10 hours of work in 100 degree weather, removing several trees, woody plants, branches, multiple bags of garbage and waist-high grass to overhaul the grounds.

Seabees work with Tunisian Naval Engineers

U.S. Navy Seabees assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 (NMCB 133) and Tunisian Navy engineers broke ground on the Phoenix Express 2022 (PE22) Engineer Civic Action Project (ENCAP) in Bizerte, Tunisia on June 3, 2022.

The combined PE22 military engineer team will construct a new 130 square meter, two-room kindergarten building with a bathroom at the local elementary school in the La Pecherie neighborhood of Bizerte, Tunisia.

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The project is part of the annual Phoenix Express exercise hosted in Tunisia that focuses on improving interoperability and increasing

regional stability amongst North Africa nations, and is a testament to the strength of U.S.-Tunisia bilateral cooperation.

The PE22 ENCAP is a vital training opportunity for naval engineers to gain expeditionary construction skills in an austere environment. The kindergarten building constructed by the combined military engineer team will also vastly benefit the La Pecherie community in an important location for maritime operations and exercises in the central Mediterranean Sea.

"This project is a great chance for the Naval Construction Force to build relationships, maintain interoperability with Tunisian Navy engineers, and practice our construction skills," Lt. j.g. Ramses Carranza, officer-in-charge and project manager for the Engineer Civic Action Project. "And in the end, it leaves a tangible safe structure for the local children and the community overall, being able to help others and increase the quality of life of the children is the most rewarding aspect of this project."

-- From U.S. Naval Forces Europe-Africa

[Read more, click here](#)

NAVCENT to Reward Individuals for Tips on Illegal Maritime Activity

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NAVCENT is establishing a program for the first time to reward individuals who voluntarily report information that meets specific criteria under the Department of Defense Rewards Program.

"Launching this program represents another example of our commitment to this region and its security," said Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, commander of NAVCENT, U.S. 5th Fleet and Combined Maritime Forces. "This also enhances our vigilance and supports

counterterrorism efforts, which are essential to safeguarding the free flow of commerce."

NAVCENT could potentially reward a maximum \$100,000 payout for information or nonlethal assistance that supports counterterrorism operations or leads U.S. naval forces to successfully seize illicit cargo such as illegal weapons or narcotics. Rewards can also be non-monetary and include items like boats, vehicles, food or equipment.

U.S. citizens are not eligible for rewards under the program.

Last year, illicit cargo seizures in the Middle East skyrocketed after U.S. and multinational forces increased patrols in the Gulf of Oman and Arabian Sea.

U.S. 5th Fleet warships seized nearly 9,000 illicit weapons, three times the amount seized in 2020. Additionally, the U.S.-led Combined Maritime Forces seized illegal drugs worth \$500 million in street value, a higher amount than the previous four years combined.

-- From NAVCENT Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

Whidbey SAR rescues hiker in Cascade Mountains

A Search and Rescue (SAR) team from Naval Air Station (NAS) Whidbey Island rescued an injured hiker near Colchuck Lake in the Cascade Mountains east of Mount Stuart, Thursday, June 30, 2022.

While on a training mission the NAS Whidbey Island SAR crew received an alert Thursday night to rescue a 28-year-old male with severe head injuries. After a quick refuel and reconfiguration of the aircraft the SAR crew launched on the mission from Ault Field

by 10:25 p.m.

The SAR crew coordinated through the Chelan County Sheriff's office to have the hiking group use white strobe lights to mark their location and they were subsequently found quickly. Two crew members were rappelled to the hiking crew, about 50 yards from the patient's location. After approximately 11 minutes of prep time the patient and crew were hoisted onto the SAR helicopter.

-- From NASWI PAO

[Read more, click here](#)

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HOMES/APARTMENTS

New! For Rent: 1BD/1BA furnished apartment; 12 minutes from the base. Perfect for single Sailors. \$500 per month. Call 601-480-1601.

For Rent: 3BD/2BA home with 1 car garage, all new appliances and flooring. 13 miles from NAS. Rent \$1200, security deposit will be half of 1st month

rent. Move in ready June 1st. Call 757-589-2174.

For Rent: Lake Cabin near NAS Meridian. 1 BD/1 BA; \$700 month. Unfurnished. More info and photos can be viewed at: <https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/851262408853834/>

For Rent: 2BD/1.5BA single family home in Dalewood - fully renovated. Pets allowed. Pet deposit \$300. \$1,300 rent

per month. Call 973-876-5006.

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! 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

● MOH

While he and his squad were out scouting, they were unaware North Vietnamese forces were planning to ambush their teammates through a concealed trench system. When machine-gun fire erupted, Kaneshiro threw a grenade through the aperture of an enemy bunker, foiling the ambush. Then, he single-handedly destroyed one enemy group after another. Because of his bravery, his platoon was able to withdraw from the village. “

Tragically, just a few months later, Sgt. Kaneshiro was killed in action by enemy fire. I wish that I could personally thank him for his heroism and his selflessness, but it's a profound honor to have his children with us today,” Austin said, noting that Kaneshiro's son John was deployed to Iraq twice during his military service.

Spc. 5 Dwight Birdwell

Birdwell was near Saigon, South Vietnam, when the 1968 Tet Offensive began. His unit was heavily outnumbered when it was attacked, and, almost immediately, his tank commander was critically wounded. That tank was the only thing between Birdwell's fellow soldiers and the enemy. He fired the tank's 90 mm gun and machine gun at enemy positions, even hopping out of the commander's hatch with his M-16 rifle to get a better shot.

Despite being wounded by shrapnel, Birdwell ran through enemy fire to find a defensive position to collect and redistribute ammunition to the remaining defenders. He then led a group past enemy lines and threw hand grenades to prevent the enemy from advancing.

Spc. 5 Dennis M. Fujii

In February 1971, Fujii and others sought to evacuate South Vietnamese military personnel from a battlefield, Aus-

tin said. As they approached, their helicopter took intense fire and crash landed, injuring Fujii. A U.S. helicopter landed nearby and took his crewmates to safety, but Fujii signaled to the pilot to take off because he was taking too much fire to join them.

He was the only American left on the battlefield. Meanwhile, the enemy brought reinforcements and the encampment came under renewed assault. For the next 17 hours, Fujii called in air strikes against nearby enemy positions. When he was finally evacuated, the helicopter crash landed under enemy fire. Fujii waited another two days before reaching safety.

Maj. John J. Duffy

In April 1972, Duffy was a senior advisor to an elite battalion in the South Vietnamese army when he and others were tasked with holding off North Vietnamese forces from overrunning Fire Support Base Charlie. In the early morning hours, Duffy sneaked close to the enemy's anti-aircraft positions and called in airstrikes.

Duffy was wounded by shrapnel, but he refused evacuation, continuing to call in airstrikes from a position exposed to enemy fire. As the enemy closed in, Duffy moved allied soldiers to safer positions.

By the next morning, North Vietnamese forces resumed their attacks and inflicted even more casualties. Duffy organized the evacuation of those who survived. When they reached the exfiltration site, Duffy wouldn't leave until all of his brothers-in-arms were aboard.

Col. Ralph Puckett Jr.

In November 1950 during the battle for Hill 205 in North Korea, then-1st Lt. Puckett was commanding 8th Army Ranger Company. He repeatedly put his life at risk, running across

an open field and courting enemy fire so that his team could spot the Chinese position. As the battle ground on, he was injured by grenade fragments, but he wouldn't leave. Instead, he moved from foxhole to foxhole, redistributing ammunition.

When he was wounded again, he ordered his men to leave him behind. But they refused and brought him out. Puckett demonstrated to his men “that true courage means putting your people first,” Austin said.

Sgt. Maj. Thomas P. Payne

In October 2015, Payne was tasked with leading a raid to free Iraqis taken hostage by jihadists in northern Iraq. His team knew the terrorists had been holding prisoners in two buildings. Payne's team arrived at night, cleared one of those buildings, and freed the hostages inside.

But the second building was under intense enemy fire. The building was burning, and he knew the prisoners would die if they weren't freed. After using bolt cutters to open the door, he plunged into the smoke and the enemy fire even though the building was near collapse.

After freeing the prisoners, the soldiers were ordered to evacuate, but Payne ran back inside to ensure no one was left behind.

In all, 75 men and women prisoners were freed as a result of his actions.

In a White House ceremony, President Joe Biden yesterday awarded Medals of Honor to Duffy, Fujii, Kaneshiro and Birdwell. Kaneshiro was the only one who was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. The other recipients are still living.

Puckett was awarded the Medal of Honor in 2021, and Payne received the award in 2020. Neither man was inducted into the Hall of Heroes at the time due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

Barn Owls



Photo by Jeff Mangrum

Public Works Environment Department has been keeping a watchful eye on NAS Meridian's local Barn Owl Family as they have grown from down-covered hatchlings to the more recent flight feathers on fledglings. Barn owls are important predators for keeping rodent populations under control. Owls are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Shooting the Move: PCS season's a gamble

It's that time of year again, when thousands of military families box up their lives and throw the dice. Unfortunately, moving is a gamble. No matter how much you plan and prepare, something always gets lost, stolen or broken. You can only hope that it's that ugly microwave cart that you've always hated.

Our first mover's name was “Rusty,” a swarthy old truck driver, who'd seen many a move. Over lunch, he sat on the hydraulic platform on his rig telling stories. “Even back in my drinkin' days,” he boasted with a mouthful of ham and cheese, “Never had a late delivery. Why, one time after a fifth of Wild Turkey, I drove from Mississippi clear into Texas and had absolutely no recollection of it.”

As we watched him drive off with our priceless belongings, we prayed that he'd stay off the

COLUMN



Molinari

sauce.

The next two moves were without incident, but things began to go awry during our move from England to Virginia. Our English movers were friendly mates, requesting fish, chips and lager for lunch. They ate at our kitchen table with us like one big happy family. At the end of the day we bid them “tarah” with warm smiles, and they drove away with our neatly packed belongings.

Only later did we realize that they'd “nicked” our telly.

With a toddler and a new baby, we bought our first house in Virginia and scheduled a “full unpack.” When the truck arrived (two hours late), I asked the foreman, “We'll cover lunch ... does your crew prefer sandwiches or —”

“We'll take fried chicken, biscuits, gravy, mashed potatoes and sweet tea,” the foreman interrupted. Envisioning disgruntled movers breaking my Polish pottery, I spent a small fortune at the local deli filling their demands.

During lunch, a crew person introduced himself. “Hello Ma'am, I'm Mohammed. Today's Ramadan — would you mind if I found a quiet place to pray somewhere here today?”

“Of course,” I said. “Mi casa es su casa!”

Later that afternoon, my arm was numb

from carrying the baby. Needing a private place to get her down for a nap, I laid down with a blanket and a baby monitor in the spare bedroom's well-ventilated closet, closed the door, and began nursing. Ten minutes later, she'd drifted off to sleep, when I heard the spare bedroom door open, and a rhythmic chant began. Peeking through the closet door slats, I saw Mohammed, kneeling and deep in prayer.

“What should I do?” I thought. “Walk out of this closet and surprise him, or wait it out with the baby?” In the end, my nap-time freedom outweighed Mohammed's sacred privacy.

“Howdy, Mohammed!” I popped my head out of the closet. “I'll just scoot on out of here and leave you in peace. Toodaloo!”

Years later, we were naively hopeful for a problem-free move to Germany. After supplying doughnuts, coffee, lunch, cold drinks, storage bags, markers and tape, I watched out a window in horror. A crew member formed a little hammock with his shirt and filled it with nuts and bolts from our disassembled bicycles. He carried them over to the truck, and threw them into a wooden crate between furniture and boxes.

I ran outside and protested, reminding him of the baggies I gave him for this purpose.

“Trust me Ma'am,” he replied. “When you get to your new place, just shake the paper at the bottom of the crate out. You'll see, all the pieces'll be there.”

Of course, they were not.

Two years after my husband's irreplaceable military Challenge Coin collection was stolen during our move to Florida, we arrived in Rhode Island, home to the Patriarca Mafia Crime Family and its boss, Anthony “Spucky” Spagnola. With the highest percentage of Italian-Americans, the tiniest state's unofficial motto is “I know a guy.” So, it shouldn't have come as a surprise when our moving crew “lost” Francis' expensive cross-training bicycle and our Persian living room rug.

Chances are something will go wrong during PCS moves, so should we stop planning and preparing? Of course not. Take the gamble, but take comfort that one thing's for certain: That ugly microwave cart will always survive.

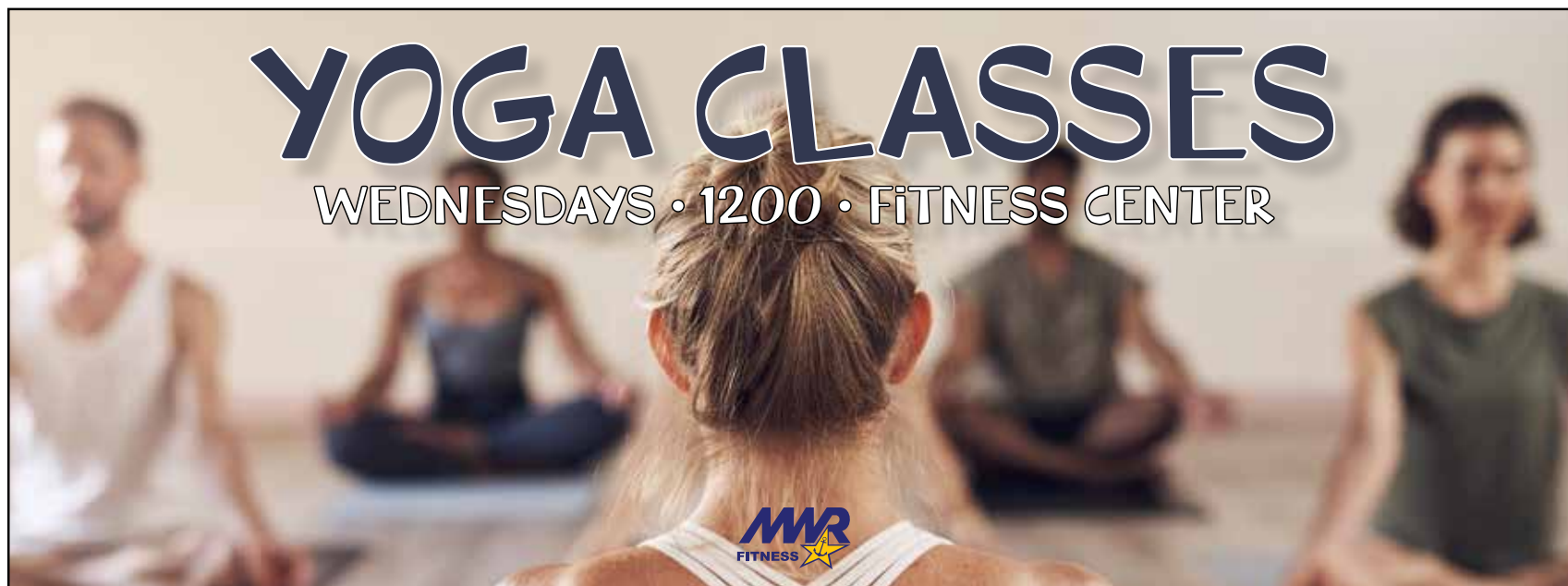
Lisa Smith Molinari's self syndicated columns appear on her blog, www.themeatandpotatoesofflife.com and she recently co-authored *Stories Around the Table: Laughter, Wisdom, and Strength in Military Life* Follow [Lisa@MolinariWrites](mailto:Lisa@MolinariWrites.com).



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JULY 23 • 1030 • ARCHERY RANGE (BEHIND RUDDERS)

THIS TOURNAMENT WILL BE DIVIDED INTO AGE GROUPS: CUB (UNDER 12), YOUTH (12-14), YOUNG ADULT (15-17), ADULT (18-49), SENIOR (50-59), SILVER SENIOR (60-69) AND MASTER SENIOR (70+). PARTICIPANTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A GUARDIAN.

THE TOURNAMENT WILL BEGIN AT 1030. SHOOTERS SHOULD REPORT TO THE MCCAIN RECREATION CENTER 10 MINUTES TO SHOW UP. FULL SIGHT PREVIEW AND PULL ARCHER FEEL AND STRENGTH WHEN USING PERSONAL BOWS & ARROWS (CROSSBOWS ARE NOT ALLOWED), AND EQUIPMENT WHEN HEARD FROM MARK.

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MAGIC SHOW
JULY 27 • 1030 • LIBRARY

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