Volume 62, Number 2

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January 25, 2024

News Bytes

~ Click here ~

A third 'Top Gun' movie in the works

~ Click here ~

Navy IDs two SEALs who died during sea mission off Somalia

~ Click here ~

U.S. Air Force fighter pilot crowned Miss America

~ Click here ~

Embiid sets 76er's franchise record with 70 points

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NAS Meridian's SAC earns important reaccreditation

From Staff Reports

NAS Meridian's School Age Care (SAC) Program recently earned reaccreditation from the National Council on Accreditation.

Reaccreditation demonstrates that NAS Meridian SAC program successfully implements high performance standards and, as such, is delivering the highest quality services to its children, youth and families.

"The accreditation is needed as a required compliance to show we are adhering to standards for School Age Care Before/Afterschool Programs," said Coretta Barnett, youth center director. "Also, it shows we are providing the highest quality care for our military and civilian families.

In addition, SAC did not receive any out of compliance ratings in any of the fundamental practice or core standards. Congratulations on this amazing achievement.

"It's very surreal as I can be the biggest critic when it comes to self-evaluation and wanting to score the highest standards when it comes to scoring for accreditations," said Barnett. "Although, it should come as no surprise because we all work great as team and always excel for the highest quality care to be provided."

Barnett stressed the importance of the support she receives from her supervisor, Erica White.

● SAC, page 2



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Coretta Barnett, youth center director, helps a student build an air-powered car at the School Aged Care Program (SAC) onboard NAS Meridian. SAC offers before and after school care for military children -- kindergarten through sixth grade.

MLK Ceremony



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Retired Navy Chaplain, Rev. Melvin J. Hendricks, originally from Montgomery, Alabama, and former command chaplain for NAS Meridian, speaks at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration in the Navy Reserve Center, Jan. 18. MLK Day has been observed as a national day of service on the third Monday of January each year since it's first celebration in 1986.

Reeves calls special session for \$10 billion economic development project

By Bobby Harrison

Mississippi Today

The Mississippi Legislature will go into special session called by Gov. Tate Reeves for the second time in eight days to consider the approval of a major economic development project.

Reeves is asking legislators in a Thursday special session to approve an incentive package to lure a major company to build two "hyperscale data centers" in Madison County just north of the city of Jackson. Reeves said the sites will be seven miles and 20 miles from downtown Jackson.

The unnamed company, "one of the 20 largest in the world," Reeves said, has committed to investing \$10 billion in building the data centers and to employing 1,000 workers earning at least 125% of the average state wage. Reeves said the project would represent the single largest capital investment in state history — four times larger than the previous largest capital investment.

The governor said he could not announce the company until after the incentive package is passed. But online behemoth Amazon has been opening similar data centers in other regions of the country, and SuperTalk reported Tuesday that the company was Amazon Web Services. Reeves indicated the company chose Mississippi for this particular project that was planned for a location ...

Read more, click here

NAS Meridian hosts 5th Annual Disabled Veterans Hunt



The fifth annual Disabled Veterans Hunt was held at Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian, Mississippi, Jan. 13-14, 2024. Hunters drawn for the hunt traveled from Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Guides who volunteered their time were from Mississippi, Florida, and California. Participants in the weekend hunt harvested 14 deer. The Disabled Veterans' Hunt provided a time for comradery and was a significant morale booster for the disabled veteran hunters, as well as the active and retired military personnel who volunteered their time to assist with serving as guides, transporting deer, and cleaning and processing harvested deer. Contributions to feed participants during the event were provided by the NAS Meridian First Class Petty Officer Association, NAS Meridian Chief Petty Officers Association, NAS Meridian Commissary, Subway on the installation, Punishers LEMC Mississippi Freedom Chapter, and VFW Post 3036 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. The Fallen Outdoors Mississippi Team provided funds for lodging the participants. Blue Dog Tracking supplied blinds for the hunt and tracking services.

Submitted photo

NAS Meridian Sailors of the Quarter



MA1 Joshua Johnson

Sailor of the Quarter Security/Command Investigator



AC2 Sean Greeley

Junior Sailor of the Quarter
Air Operations



MA3 Nicolas Ramirez

Blue Jacket of the Quarter Security

NAS Meridian Civilians of the Quarter



Mark Nixon

Senior Civilian of the Quarter Fire & Emergency Services



Brittney Butchee

Junior Civilian of the Quarter Fleet & Family Support Center



Capt. Jason Yeske

Civilian Supervisor of the Quarter Security

• SAC

"Due to her guidance and constant positive feedback, it feels like an honor to receive this...," said Barnett. "Also, SAC wouldn't be where it is without the awesome staff!"

The School Age Care Program (SAC) offers before and after school care for children enrolled in kindergarten to 6th grade (ages 5-12 years). Meridian School Age Care provides an inclusive environment that is accessible to children with and without disabilities.

Eligibility for the SAC program is available to children of active-duty service members, active reservists, Department of Defense employees and DOD contractors.

Additionally, the SAC provides hourly care, which is care for children paid for by the hour. SAC provides a safe environment where parents who work can drop their children off before work and pick them up afterward. The school bus picks the children up from SAC in the morning, takes them to school and brings them back in the afternoon.

Hours of operation accommodate the local school calendar. During Summer Day Camp, a variety of field trips such as swimming, bowling, hiking, going to the theater, water parks, and much more. The School Age Care Center features multiple large-screen televisions and a collection of musical instruments, as well as a billiards table, arcade machine and a basketball free throw machine. SAC also offers a wide selection of video games and a computer room. For more information on how to register your child, call 601-679-5252.

Jim Harbaugh returning to NFL to coach Chargers

By Joe Reedy Associated Press

Jim Harbaugh was hired as head coach of the Los Angeles Chargers on Wednesday, leaving Michigan after capping his ninth season as coach of college football's winningest program with the school's first national championship since 1997.

Harbaugh signed a five-year deal a person close to the negotiations told The Associated Press. The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the Chargers did not announce the terms.

Harbaugh made the highly anticipated decision to go back to the NFL after a second interview and resume his chase for a Super Bowl that eluded him as a quarterback and coach.

He will be the first former Chargers player to return to the team as head coach. He played for the Bolts in 1999-2000 before retiring following the 2001 season.

What's next for Jim Harbaugh? Michigan coach faces decision on whether to stay or go back to NFL

"My love for Michigan, playing there and com-

ing back to coach there leaves a lasting impact. I'll always be a loyal Wolverine," Harbaugh said in a statement. "I'm remarkably fortunate to have been afforded the privilege of coaching at places where life's journey has created strong personal connections for me. When I played for the Chargers, the Spanos family could not have been more gracious or more welcoming.

"Being back here feels like home, and it's great to see that those things haven't changed."

Harbaugh is the first coach in 26 seasons to win a national title and not return to the school the following season. Nebraska's Tom Osborne retired following the 1997 season after the Cornhuskers split the national title with Michigan.

Los Angeles was looking for a new coach and general manager after Brandon Staley and Tom Telesco were fired on Dec. 15, a day after a 63-21 loss in Las Vegas to the Raiders.

Harbaugh was first asked about possible interest in the Chargers job as his team was preparing for the Rose Bowl, but did comment. He first met with the Chargers on Jan. 15.

Read more, click here

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Local Happenings

FEBRUARY

2: Queen City Friday Night Comedy from 8-11 p.m. at the Temple Theater. Get ready for a hilarious night of laughter at Queen City Friday Night Comedy, where top comedians will tickle your funny bone in person. Visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/queen-city-fridaynight-comedy-tickets-776715626347?aff=oddtdtcreator

9: Love Bug Boogie! from 6-8 p.m. at the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian. This family-friendly Valentine's dance will soon become your favorite heart-day tradition. Bring your little love bugs and prepare to create the sweetest memories! Visit https:// mschildrensmuseum.org/event/love-bug-boogie/

9: Masquerade at Merrehope from 6-8 p.m. at Merrehope. Join us for live entertainment, Mardi Gras surprises and the best King Cake ever. Call 601-483-8439 or email merrehopemeridian@gmail.com

22-25: The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) Thurs-Sat at 7 p.m.; Sun at 2 p.m. at the Meridian Little Theatre. Three madcap men in tights weave their wicked way through all of Shakespeare's comedies, histories, and tragedies in one wild ride that will leave you breathless and helpless with laughter. Call 601-482-6371 or visit http://www.meridianlittletheatre.com/

Area Happenings

FEBRUARY

2: WWE Friday Night SmackDown from 6:45-10:45 p.m. at Legacy Arena, 1898 9th Ave N, Birmingham, AL. Visit https://local.aarp.org/ event/wwe-friday-night-smackdown-2024-02-02-tm-birmingham-al. html

3: Memphis Monster Truck Wars 2024 from 1-5 p.m. at the Agricenter ShowPlace Arena, 105 S Germantown Pkwy, Cordova, TN. Visit https://event.attendstar.com/event/show/memphis-monster- truck-wars-2024/

11: Hamilton from 1-5 p.m. (EST) at the Fox Theatre, 660 Peachtree St NE, Atlanta. Visit https://www.ticketmaster.com/ hamilton-atlanta-02-11-2024/event/Z7r9jZ1AdqFFU

24-25: Mississippi Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show fstarting Saturday at 9 a.m. until Sunday at 4 p.m. at the Mississippi Trade Mart, 1200 Mississippi St, Jackson. Visit https://xpopress.com/show/ profile/1395/mississippi-gem-mineral-fossil-jewelry-show

Navy updates pregnancy policy

The Navy updated its policy to better assign Sailors who become pregnant during sea duty to critical shore duty billets that align with their career path.

NAVADMIN 006/24 announced that Sailors who become pregnant during sea duty will be reassigned to shore duty where they can receive necessary medical care while maintaining their career progression.

"This policy is about taking care of our people," said Commander, Navy Personnel Command Rear Adm. Wayne Baze. "Our Sailors get the care they need, while continuing to serve and employ their skillsets in meaningful jobs -

this is a win-win for our Sailors and the Navy."

Under the new policy, shore duty Sailors who become pregnant within 13 months of their projected rotation date may be extended in their current assignment or moved locally to fill a valid manpower requirement.

When a sea duty command is notified of a Sailor's pregnancy, they must submit a reassignment due to pregnancy and post-partum availability report via Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System for enlisted Sailors and to the community detailer for officers.

-- From PO2 Dallas Snider

Read more, click here

DOD expands pilot program to renew **USID** cards online

As part of an expansion of a Defense Department pilot program that kicked off in February 2023, most Uniformed Services Identification, or USID, card holders can now renew their cards online and receive them in the mail, instead of having to schedule an appointment at an ID card office.

Before this expansion, only sponsors with a common access card could request online renewals, but now most retirees and non-CAC holders are eligible.

The ongoing pilot program allows family members, retirees and others to avoid making appointments at a pass and ID card office. Instead, they can renew USID cards online via the ID Card

Office online, or IDCO, website. It's important to note that the pilot program is for renewal of the USID card only not for the initial issue. Also, the pilot is limited to cardholders within the United States, though expansion to non-US addresses is in the works.

Mike Zarlenga, with the Defense Manpower Data Center, said that DOD currently issues about 4.5 million ID cards each year. About 2.5 million of those are USID cards, and of those, roughly one million are renewals eligible for online renewal. The pilot program, Zarlenga said, is meant to make life easier for family members and retirees.

-- By C. Todd Lopez

Read more, click here

USS Gerald R. Ford returns home after 8-month deployment

The aircraft carrier Gerald R. Ford arrived home in Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia, on Jan. 17 after completing a historic eight-month deployment.

The head of the Gerald R. Ford Carrier Strike Group, the carrier extended 76 days beyond its original deployment schedule, having moved to the Mediterranean Sea on the heels of the Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel by the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

"Though extended, we were the right ship at the right time to answer the call, and our sailors performed admirably." Capt. Rick Burgess, the Ford's commanding officer, said in a release. "Ford sailors honored our namesake's legacies of hard work, integrity, and courage."

While extended, the strike group was tasked with deterrence and supporting NATO allies in the region.

Over the course of 239 days away from Norfolk, "the ship's crew conducted 43 underway replenishments, logged more than 17,826 flight hours and 10,396 sorties, sailed more than 83,476 nautical miles, and safely transferred 20.7 million gallons of fuel with zero mishaps," according to the release.

The Ford has been underway since May. Its strike group consists of ...

-- By Sarah Sicard

Read more, click here

Sale... C

New Price 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-

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

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. grev with racing stripe. \$24k. Call 601-880-3237.

New! For Rent: BD/1.5 BA home 15 min36th Ave. New refrigerator and 2-year old AC & furnace. Call Terrance at 469-318-9769

For Rent: 3 BD/1.5 BA with another room used as a gym. All kitchen appliances included. Large backyard. Address 145 Skyland Drive, Meridian. About 25 minutes to Navy Base. \$900 per month, with \$900 deposit. Available Aug. 1. No pets. Call 601-490-0849

Rent: 3BD/2BD For home near Causeyville Road. Furnished in quiet neighborhood. \$900 per 954-895-5485, month.

0820.

For Rent: Water front home in Dalewood. Spatwo-story home facing the Lake; great for fishing and relaxing. Remodeled kitchen and new appliances. Rent is \$1,800; please call 813-406-9687.

For Sale: 3BD/2BA Home with 2,560 sq. ft. Sits on 1 & 1/2 lots on dead end with privacy woods on 3 sides. Asking \$180,000. Contact: lucindawnichols@gmail. com, call 601-527-7829 or 601-917-6145.

For Rent: 2BD/1.5BA

Lauderdale in Dalewood. 2136 sq ft on a .29 acres lot. Beautiful newly renovated single family home.

Call 973-876-5006. 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! For Sale: Husqvarna RZ 4623 Zero Turn Mower, 46 inch cut. \$900. Call 601-616-4242.

Nanny or caregiver services. Call Alice at 679-8112. Has installation access; can take children to school and pick up and available days, nights and weekends.

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.

To submit an item to the "Sale...Or" column, email adam.w.prince.civ@ us.navy.mil. Deadline is the Wednesday prior to publication.

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

Marine Corps' top devil dog fetches another promotion

By Irene Loewenson Marine Corps Times

Chesty XVI has been working hard for a promotion.

The Marine has followed orders to sit at seven of Marine Barracks Washington's parades in 2023, even if he has disobeyed those orders at the other half of the parades, according to his commanding officer, Col. Robert

He has maintained his trim build by chasing after shadows, even if he refuses to attend the Marines' physical fitness test without being coaxed with food.

He has served as the public face of the Marine Corps at the White House, in Congress and at a Naval Academy baseball game. even if attempts to train him to carry the first pitch to home plate had nothing to show for themselves besides several chewed-up baseballs.

Chesty's dogged efforts finally paid off on Wednesday, when the Marine Corps mascot was promoted to lance corporal after 13 months as a private first class.

"It's because of his proven discipline," Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro said in remarks at the ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington.

Del Toro personally changed Chesty, who is 2 years old, into a dress-blues onesie bearing the insignia of a lance corporal. At first, the Navy secretary had some difficulty fitting the uniform over the English bulldog's neck.

"Chesty's been working out his neck size has grown," Del Toro

As Chesty took his first few steps as a lance corporal, he shook himself vigorously.

The bulldog now outranked about a quarter of the Marines in attendance at the standing-roomonly event, Del Toro observed.

The mascot enlisted in the Marine Corps in February 2022 and was promoted to private first class that December. He wears two medals on his uniform: the National Defense Service Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Chesty is in a long line of bulldogs to serve as the official mascot of the service whose members are sometimes referred to as Devil Dogs. The first, Jiggs, enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1922 and attained the rank of sergeant major in two years.

Chesty is the 16th Marine mascot to bear the name in honor of the legendary Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Puller.

Sgt. Scott Rogers, in whose home Chesty resides, said the lance corporal "personifies" the mission of Marine Barracks Washington: to interact with the public and bring joy to people. When Rogers brings Chesty to



Photo by Lance Cpl. Chloe McAfee/Marine Corps

Chesty XVI stands at attention during his promotion ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington, Jan. 17.

work, he said, the other Marines' faces light up.

'Chesty's going to have a high burden for mentoring and leading his junior Marines going forward, so a lot of responsibility is on Chesty's shoulders now," Rogers said. Outside of work, Chesty

- whom Rogers characterized as a "mostly good boy" — likes pizza, belly rubs and playing with the two other dogs in Rogers

When Marine Corps Times asked Chesty for comment, he gave the microphone a few sniffs.

5th Fleet boss: Iran 'directly involved' in Houthi rebel ship attacks

By Jon Gambrell The Associated Press

Iran is "very directly involved" in ship attacks that Yemen's Houthi rebels have carried out during Israel's war against Hamas, the Navy's top Mideast commander told The Associated Press on Monday.

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the head of U.S. 5th Fleet, stopped short of saying Tehran directed individual attacks by the Houthis in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

However, Cooper acknowledged that attacks associated with Iran have expanded from previously threatening just the Persian Gulf and its Strait of Hormuz into waters across the wider Middle East.

'Clearly, the Houthi actions, probably in terms of their attacks on merchant shipping, are the most significant that we've seen in two generations," he told the AP in a telephone interview. "The facts simply are that they're attacking the international community; thus, the international response I think you've seen."

Iran's mission to the United Nations and the Houthi leadership in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, didn't respond to a request for comment. However, the Houthis later claimed to have attacked a U.S.-flagged vessel, something that the 5th Fleet dismissed as "patently false."

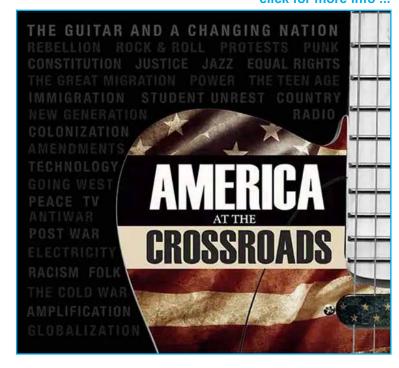
Since November, the Iranian-backed Houthis have launched at least 34 attacks on shipping through the waterways leading up to Egypt's Suez Canal, a vital route for energy and cargo coming from Asia and the Middle East onward to Europe.

The Houthis, a Shiite rebel group that's held Sanaa since 2014 and been at war with a Saudi-led coalition backing Yemen's exiled government since 2015, link their attacks to the Israel-Hamas war. However, the ships they've targeted increasingly ...

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The Guitar and a Changing Nation Feb. 10 – May 11, 2024 at The MAX

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Fabulous food: Five favorites to feed any football fan

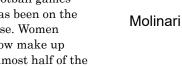
Even in these gender-barrier-breaking times, the vast majority of military spouses (over 90 percent) are still women. Similarly, NFL football remains a

COLUMN

sport. No woman has ever played on an NFL team, although there are more women playing important roles off the football field.

male-dominated

However, the percentage of females watching professional football games has been on the rise. Women now make up almost half of the



NFL viewership. Why are more women watching football? Because husbands like football? Because they like pretty jersey colors? Because women think football players are hot? Because they're "Swifties"?

I must admit, when I attended high school football games as a kid, I went for the hot cocoa. Nowadays, however, I identify as an avid female NFL fan,

characterized by loyal viewing (every Steeler game, without fail), owning team apparel (shirts, hats, Terrible Towels, coffee mugs, flag, charm bracelet, and cowbell), and cheering during play (e.g., fist-pumping obnoxiously while screeching, "C'mon, Watt! Sack 'em!" with a mouthful of cheese curls).

In the end, who cares why people watch NFL games. They just do. With 24 million men and women expected to tune into the conference championships this Sunday, no one can deny football's appeal. Maybe its the food? Everyone loves a big pot of simmering chili with a side of sweet cornbread and a cold beer on game day. Our family must've consumed gallons of the stuff, but here are five other favorite football food recipes I've collected over the years:

1. Sausage Dip. Otherwise known as "Crack in a Crockpot," this is the stuff dreams are made of. In a slow cooker, add a pound of cooked, crumbled hot Italian sausage, two bricks of cream cheese, two cans of Rotel tomatoes. Cook on high until melted and bubbly. Stir. Serve hot with tortilla chips, crackers, veggies, cardboard, roof shingles, whatever. I swear, it's that good.

2. Pepperoni strips. Double the recipe or else you'll resent your own children

for eating your share. Roll one can of crescent roll dough out onto a cookie sheet; brush with beaten egg. Layer with sliced provolone cheese, pepperoni, provolone, and pepperoni — brushing beaten egg over each layer. Top with second roll of crescent dough, brush with egg, and bake 25 minutes at 375 until golden brown. Cut into strips, dip into marinara, and watch the rugrats come

3. Nacho bar. Pedestrian, maybe. But you gotta admit — it's a crowd pleaser. Start with fresh nacho chips from a grocery store deli. Spread them on a cookie sheet and top with good cheese, like crumbled queso fresco or shredded Monterey jack. Bake until cheese melts and serve immediately, with a variety of optional toppings such as spicy crumbled ground beef, shredded chicken, fresh pico de gallo, black beans, sliced lime wedges, guacamole, sour cream, chopped onions, sliced olives, and fresh cilantro. Lest I'm branded a food snob, definitely include queso cheese dip. It might be made of God-knows-what kind of nondairy chemical goop, but it's freaking tasty.

4. Polish Chili. Stupidly easy, this recipe involves sautéing garlic, chopped onions, chopped green peppers, and

sliced Polish kielbasa. Add two big cans of diced tomatoes, two cans of water, and two cans of drained cannelloni (white) beans. Simmer an hour, then ladle into bowls containing a few cooked potato pierogis. Serve with warmed, rustic bread slathered thick with butter. 5. Italian beef sandwiches. Real Chicagoans slow cook beef brisket with a gazillion spices for two days, but I've dumbed the recipe down for us football fans. Sear a beef round or rump roast in a skillet, then cover with dry Italian dressing mix. Plop it in a crockpot with a can of beef broth and more dry dressing mix. Cook on high for 4-5 hours. Slice the beef thinly. Serve au jus on toasted buns with sautéed green pepper slices and giardiniera (pickled Italian relish). Don't tell Chicagoans, but I add sliced provolone to the toasting buns, because football isn't the same without melted cheese.

On game day, let's put our gender roles and individual motivations aside. Men and women can all agree: Watching NFL is fun for every fan, especially when the football food is fabulous.

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.





GAMES BEGIN:

FEBRUARY 5 AT 1730







Navy MWR Meridian















