

## On Base

### Christmas Parade:

Dec. 9 at 10 a.m. in base housing. Santa will be joining us for the parade. Afterward, come to McCain Rec for arts, crafts, games, free bowling and a holiday movie marathon.

Trees for Troops Christmas trees will be available for active duty members and their dependants (must show ID.)

# Estrada takes helm of VT-9

### From Staff Reports

The “Tigers” of Training Squadron 9 (VT-9) held a change of command ceremony on Friday, Nov. 17, in the hangar onboard Naval Air Station Meridian. CDR Justin Estrada assumed command from CDR James Anderson who has served as the squadron’s leader since August 2022.

Under Anderson’s leadership, VT-9 executed 17,816 training missions completing 17,698 training flight hours in the T-45C Goshawk. This directly resulted in 79 Navy and Marine Corps students earning their coveted “Wings of Gold.” Furthermore, leading from the front, he personally flew more than 1,100 sorties, over half in Basic Fighter and Section Engaged

Maneuvering stages. CDR Anderson is retiring with 20 years of service to the U.S. Navy.

CDR Estrada is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Political Science. After receiving his commission, he earned his designation as a Naval Aviator in 2008 at Naval Air Station Meridian. He then completed initial training for the venerable F/A-18C. His first fleet tour was with the VFA-146 “Blue Diamonds,” where his duties included Avionics/Armament Division officer, NATOPS officer, and Air-to-Surface Weapons and Tactics officer. His tour included Operations Tomodachi, New Dawn and Enduring Freedom in Japan, Iraq and Afghanistan aboard the USS Ronald Reagan (CNV 76).

● VT-9, page 2



Photo by MC2 Molly Crawford-Tice

CDR Justin Estrada, right, incoming commanding officer of Training Squadron (VT) NINE, salutes CAPT Justin Kuch, commodore of Training Air Wing ONE, during a change of command ceremony in the hangar onboard NAS Meridian, Nov. 17. Estrada relieved CDR James Anderson, who retired after 20 years of Naval service.

## NAS Meridian Sailors of the Year



**MA1 Darius Cummings**

Senior Sailor of the Year  
Security



**AC2 Jesse Whitehead**

Junior Sailor of the Year  
Air Operations



**MASN Marc Morin**

Blue Jacket of the Year  
Security

## NAS Meridian Civilians of the Year



**Brian McCrackin**

Senior Civilian of the Year  
Antiterrorism Officer / Security



**Curtis Davis**

Junior Civilian of the Year  
Security



**Marcus Lloyd**

Civilian Supervisor of the Year  
Security



# Navy fills nearly all E-9 billets with new Senior Enlisted Marketplace

By Diana Stancy Correll  
Military Times

The Navy filled nearly all of its master chief petty officer billets this promotion cycle — the first one ever to utilize the Senior Enlisted Marketplace — as the service shifts to billet-based advancement to reduce personnel gaps at sea.

The Senior Enlisted Marketplace, introduced this year, requires senior chief petty officers to apply for and accept orders for a specific job in order to advance to master chief. That's a departure from the previous system, where a selection board voted on who was most eligible and qualified to advance.

"We incentivized the Navy's most experienced enlisted sailors, and gave them the opportunity to stay and advance," Navy



Personnel Command Force Master Chief Bill Houlihan told Navy Times. "And at the same time, we help fill mission-critical billets that require specific training, leadership, experience."

The first cycle of the Senior Enlisted Marketplace, which

kicked off in March and concluded in October, filled more than 140 sea duty billets and 84 billets ashore — a dramatic increase from previous years, Navy Personnel Command told Navy Times.

Prior to implementing the Senior Enlisted Marketplace, the service filled less than 15 master chief petty officer sea-duty billets each cycle. Altogether, the Navy filled 97 percent of the master chief petty officer billets featured on the MyNavy Assignments portal during this year's advancement cycle.

To Houlihan, the uptick means that E-8 sailors delivered and showed they were ready to meet the demands of billet-based advancement.

"They are up to the challenge of leadership and high tempo, high friction, situations, circum-

stances and jobs," Houlihan said. "And when given the opportunity to select those jobs, they jumped at it. That's why the number has increased so much, because we are...telling them, if you want to be a master chief, we want you to be. But we want you to be a master chief in a position where you can have the most impact. And they were all over it."

Although promotion to master chief is now contingent upon whether a sailor qualifies for a specific job, Houlihan said that the selection board aimed to select those who were "best and fully qualified to lead at the level of master chief," and that the board applied the same standard of selection.

The Navy announced in Nov. 2022 that it would roll out the Senior Enlisted Marketplace in March 2023 to coincide with the

fiscal 2024 senior enlisted advancement cycle for promotion to E-9.

The Senior Enlisted Marketplace screening board conducts reviews of board-eligible E-8s, who then receive access to the marketplace to apply for a qualified billet if they are selected.

Sailors enter one of 10 of the MyNavy Assignment cycles over the course of the next 24 months to apply for jobs in the marketplace that are aligned with their ratings. Detailers then coordinate the billet alignment and match for the sailor's next assignment.

During this initial advancement cycle, 530 screened senior chief petty officers and 66 master chief petty officers applied and filled 225 of 232 priority master chief jobs, according to Navy Personnel Command.

[Read more, click here](#)

## Agencies kick off Giving Tuesday, part of Combined Federal Campaign

By Molly Weisner  
Military Times

Amid the holiday bustle, federal agencies and military leaders are kicking off a day of giving as part of the annual Combined Federal Campaign.

Each year on Giving Tuesday, federal civilian, military, and postal employees and retirees have the opportunity to raise millions of dollars in one day as part of the broader CFC campaign, the workplace donation program of the U.S. federal government.

Last year, the federal community pledged over \$3.4 million to participating charities during the week of Giving Tuesday.

"There are nearly 5,000 participating charities in this year's CFC," said Ann Van Houten, co-chair of the CFC of the National Capital Area, in a statement last year. "That amounts to thousands — maybe millions — of ways the federal community can make a difference and change a life."

The day always falls on the first Tuesday following Thanksgiving, as

a charitable response to Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

"The holidays are fast approaching, and the CFC can help you promote the giving spirit across the country and around the world," said Kiran Ahuja, the director of the Office of Personnel Management. "Giving Tuesday donations that come in [can] often sustain charities through the rest of the year," she says.

### What is the Combined Federal Campaign?

The Combined Federal Campaign is the world's largest annual workplace charity drive. It raised tens of millions of dollars last year for hundreds of nonprofits and more than \$8 billion for charitable causes over the past half century.

It's the only way for nonprofits to reach donors in the federal community.

Throughout its history, the CFC has received voluntary contributions more than half of the federal civilian workforce of about 2.1 million workers each year, on average.

## Navy to make their longest ball run yet to Army-Navy game

By Jonathan Lehrfeld  
Military Times

Boots laced, football secured. Naval Academy midshipmen plan this year to make their longest run with a game ball to the Army-Navy matchup just outside of Boston.

Nearly 200 midshipmen from the sea service school are set to make the trek from the academy in Annapolis, Maryland, to Foxborough, Massachusetts, ahead of the 124th Army-Navy game on Dec. 9.

The roughly 450-mile journey will cross through seven states and begin the Tuesday before the game, Midshipman Andrew Bacilek, the ball run commander, told Military Times. He and other midshipmen, largely from the academy's 13th Company, are set to endure frigid temperatures as they take turns dashing with the pigskin up to New England.

"We're not stopping just because it's a little bit longer," said Bacilek, who is set to make his third ball run this year.

Although the Army-Navy game has been held multiple times outside of its tradition-

al location in Philadelphia, this matchup is believed to mark the furthest run for the midshipmen since the tradition began in the 1980s. They did not reportedly jog cross country to Pasadena, California when the game was played there in 1983.

The runners this year again will split the course, with each taking various 8-to-12-mile legs until their scheduled arrival at Gillette Stadium on the morning of game day.

"We're also the ones driving and navigating and running things behind the scenes, which is something I'd say we take pride in," said Midshipman Will McCrate, executive officer of the ball run.

He, Bacilek and other company leaders needed to think through the logistical challenges of racing along a route the group has not attempted before, including coordinating vans to follow the runners with supplies and connecting with local police and fire stations in the various towns they pass through.

"What drew me to want to participate in this in a leadership role is this is such a unique event," said McCrate.

[Read more, click here](#)

### ● VT-9

His first shore tour was with VT-9 back at NAS Meridian as an instructor pilot where he participated in multiple weapons and carrier qualification detachments. He served as a Schedules Officer and Assistant Operations Officer. In 2014, he was selected as the Training Wing Instructor Pilot of the Year.

Subsequent to his production tour, he served as Flag Aide to Commander Naval Air Warfare Center – Weapons Division located in China Lake, California. He returned to the Fleet as a department head with the VFA-27 "Royal Maces." In Japan, first at Naval Air Facility Atsugi then Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, he made three deployments from 2017 to 2020.

There he earned his qualification as a strike lead and served as the administration, safety, and operations department heads. Following his tour in Japan, he earned his Master's in Defense and Strategic studies in Newport, Rhode Island where he was also selected for promotion and command. He reported to VT-9 as executive officer in August 2022.



Sexual Assault Support for the DoD Community

Live 1-on-1 Help Confidential Worldwide 24/7

Help is just a *Click*,  
*Call or Text* away!

For confidential victim assistance visit [www.SafeHelpline.org](http://www.SafeHelpline.org)

## 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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EEO (NAF): 866-295-0328  
EEO (GS): 904-542-2802

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# Local Happenings

## NOVEMBER

**30: Steel Magnolias** from Nov. 30-Dec. 3 at the Meridian Little Theatre. A beloved Southern story! Concerned with a group of gossipy southern ladies in a small-town beauty parlor. Call 601-482-6371.

## DECEMBER

**2: Mrs. Claus at Railroad Museum** from 9-10 a.m. at the Meridian Railroad Museum. Mrs. Claus will arrive at the Meridian Railroad Museum to offer news from the North Pole. Call 601-479-2483.

**2: Peppermint Pops!** from 7-9 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center. Meridian's most beloved concert will be wrapped in brass this year thanks to the masterful musical gifts of the University of Southern Mississippi Brass Ensemble. Call 601-696-2200.

**3: Pictures with Santa at Merrehope** from 1-4 p.m. at Merrehope. Pictures of your children can be made with Santa at the Victorian Tree at Merrehope by professional photographer, Mark Davis. Call 601-483-8439.

# Area Happenings

## DECEMBER

**8-9: Great Southern Gun & Knife Shows** at the Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St, Jackson, MS. Visit <https://10times.com/great-southern-gun-knifeshows>

**9: Memphis TUBA CHRISTMAS** from 1-2:30 p.m. at the Crosstown Concourse, 1350 Concourse Ave, Memphis, TN. For information, visit [https://wreg.com/community-calendar/?escaped\\_fragment=/show/?start=2020-03-24#!/details/Memphis-TUBACHRISTMAS/12242652/2023-12-09T13](https://wreg.com/community-calendar/?escaped_fragment=/show/?start=2020-03-24#!/details/Memphis-TUBACHRISTMAS/12242652/2023-12-09T13)

**10: Trans-Siberian Orchestra - The Ghosts of Christmas Eve** from 2-6 p.m. at the Gas South Arena, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy, Duluth, GA. Visit <https://www.971theriver.com/fp/trans-siberian-orchestra-ghosts-christmas-eve-best-tso-more-returns-2023/>

**17: Pentatonix: The Most Wonderful Tour Of The Year** from 7-11 p.m. at the Legacy Arena, 1898 9th Ave N, Birmingham, AL. For information, visit <https://www.bjcc.org/upcoming-events/pentatonix-holiday-show/>

## No cuts to Marines' job transition program — for now

In mid-October, a new policy document on the Marine Corps' website caused a stir among Marines preparing to transition to civilian life.

The document, providing direction to the active duty force, announced Marines would be limited to three or four months in SkillBridge — the Defense Department program that allows service members to spend up to six months in civilian internships before leaving active duty. The document was posted on the Corps' online "library" of publicly releasable publications, orders and directives.

But it turns out the document the Marine Corps released was "prema-

ture," and the service hasn't yet made any changes to its policy on SkillBridge, according to Marine spokeswoman Maj. Danielle Phillips.

SkillBridge allows soon-to-be veterans to work or train full-time at civilian workplaces, in a wide variety of fields, during their final months in the military. Meanwhile, they still get compensation and benefits from the military.

On Nov. 1, more than two weeks after the policy document was posted, Marines who handle the SkillBridge programs at each installation received an email letting them know that policy had been rescinded.

-- By Irene Loewenson

[Read more, click here](#)

## Combined Maritime Forces hosts young leaders program

Combined Maritime Forces hosted representatives of the Manama Dialogue Middle East and North Africa Young Leaders' Program at the CMF headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, Nov. 17.

Participants attended a Q&A session with the CMF commander, Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, and other key leaders from CMF as well as the International Maritime Security Construct. Attendees also visited a display of maritime unmanned systems, hosted by Naval Forces Central Command's Task Force 59, the first unmanned and artificial intelligence task force.

"As the largest maritime coalition in

the world, we are invested in promoting maritime security across regional waters," said Cooper. "Bringing young minds together for conversations on these topics allows for a greater multinational engagement within the organization and community."

The event gave these up-and-coming strategic thinkers from across the region a platform to engage with top military leaders. Some of the topics they discussed included the integration and advancement of unmanned systems among regional partners to help ensure the free flow of commerce in vital waterways.

-- From MC2 Jacob Vernier

[Read more, click here](#)

## U.S. endorses responsible AI measures for global militaries

The United States government is leading global efforts to build strong norms that will promote the responsible military use of artificial intelligence and autonomous systems. Last week, the State Department announced that 47 states have now endorsed the "Political Declaration on Responsible Military Use of Artificial Intelligence and Autonomy" that the government first launched at The Hague on Feb. 16.

AI refers to the ability of machines to perform tasks that would otherwise require human intelligence, such as recognizing patterns, learning from experience, drawing conclusions, making predictions or generating recommendations.

Military AI capabilities includes not

only weapons but also decision support systems that help defense leaders at all levels make better and more timely decisions, from the battlefield to the boardroom, and systems relating to everything from finance, payroll, and accounting, to the recruiting, retention, and promotion of personnel, to collection and fusion of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance data.

"The United States has been a global leader in responsible military use of AI and autonomy, with the Department of Defense championing ethical AI principles and policies on autonomy in weapon systems for over a decade. The political declaration builds on these efforts."

-- By David Vergun, DOD News

[Read more, click here](#)

# Sale... Or

### BOATS/CAMPERS/TRAILERS

**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 601-575-5062.

**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:** 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

**For Rent:** 3BD/2BD home near Causeyville Road. Furnished in quiet neighborhood. \$900 per month. 954-895-5485, 601-692-4048 or 606-571-0820.

**For Rent:** Water front home in Dalewood. Spacious two-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 Home at 3702 Rollins Dr, Lauderdale in Dalewood. 2136 sq ft on a .29 acres lot. Beautiful newly renovated single family home. Call 973-876-5006.

**For Rent:** 2BD/1.5BA

single family home in Dalewood - fully renovated. Fenced in back yard with boat slip & pier. Pets allowed. Pet deposit \$300. \$1,300 rent per month. 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

**Nanny or caregiver services.** Call Alice at 601-934-1866 or 601-679-8112. 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, e-mail [adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil](mailto: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](mailto:adam.w.prince.civ@us.navy.mil)



# VA again found homes for 38K struggling vets in 2023

By Leo Shane III  
Military Times

For the second year in a row, Veterans Affairs officials met their goal of permanently housing 38,000 veterans facing financial problems and uncertain shelter options, department leaders announced on Wednesday.

The news means that department staffers have helped house more than 78,000 homeless veterans since the start of 2022, part of a focused outreach campaign designed to target veterans in most need of immediate help.

In a statement, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said the progress is encouraging but also underscores the challenges facing too many veterans in America today.

“While we met our goals for 2023, we’re not stopping here,” he said. “We’re going to keep pushing — through the end of this calendar year and beyond — until every veteran has a safe, stable place to call home in this country they fought to defend.”

According to the latest estimates from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, about 33,000 veterans across the country are without reliable housing options on any given night. That figure has dropped in recent years.

VA officials said since the start of 2022, department programs have helped nearly 192,000 veterans and family members avoid losing their homes because of financial reasons. They have also seen about 93% of the individuals placed in permanent housing remain in solid financial standing one year later.



Photo by Jeremy Harlan

Veterans Community Project finished the first 13 tiny homes of 50 it plans to build in Kansas City, Missouri.

[Read more, click here](#)

## Iranian drone ‘took unsafe action’ near carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower

By Geoff Ziezulewicz  
Military Times

An Iranian air drone “took unsafe and unprofessional actions” near the aircraft carrier Dwight D. Eisenhower as the ship operated in the Persian Gulf on Tuesday, according to Naval Forces Central Command.

There were no injuries or damages reported.

The ship entered the Persian Gulf Sunday and was “conducting routine flight operations” in international waters when it detected the air drone, which the command said “was visually identified as Iranian.”

“Its closest point of approach to IKE was approximately 1,500 yards,” the command said in a statement Wednesday. “Multiple hails and warnings were ignored by Iran.”

The Iranian action violated safety precautions directing all drones to stay farther than 10 nautical miles away from the carrier, according to NAVCENT.

“This unsafe, unprofessional, and irresponsible behavior by Iran risks U.S. and partner nation lives and needs to cease immediately,” the command said. “U.S. naval forces

remain vigilant and will continue to fly, sail and operate anywhere international law allows while promoting regional maritime security.”

Ike’s encounter comes as the Navy destroyer Carney shot down another Yemen-based drone in the southern Red Sea on Wednesday after the ship deemed the drone to be a threat, a defense official told The Associated Press.

Carney shot down a barrage of missiles and drones last month as well in the Red Sea.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss a military operation not yet made public.

Earlier this month, another Navy destroyer, the USS Thomas Hudner, shot down a drone that was heading toward the ship as it sailed in the southern Red Sea. It also was near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and it shot down the drone over the water.

The Red Sea, stretching from Egypt’s Suez Canal to the narrow Bab el-Mandeb Strait separating the Arabian Peninsula from Africa, is a key trade route for global shipping and energy supplies. The U.S. Navy has stationed multiple ships in the sea since the start of the Israel-Hamas war on Oct. 7, which has heightened tensions in the region.

## Hide-a-beds, septic tanks, and other holiday traditions

With a tiny snort, you awaken from a bad dream about being tied to a railroad track with a locomotive barreling toward you. You grope in the darkness, relieved to find yourself in a bed, with no threat of being torn to smithereens by an oncoming freight train.

Relieved yet half-conscious, you exhale with a soft grumble, smack your lips, and turn on your side to nuzzle back into your pillow.

“Ouch!” What’s that dull pain across the middle of your back? It dawns on you: “I’m not in my own bed.” You pluck your eyelids open, one after the other, and in the dim early morning light, you take in your surroundings to allow your internal GPS to determine it’s location.

Wood paneling. Burnt sienna sculpted carpeting. Wagon wheel light fixture. Console television. Framed portrait of you in the fourth grade with an enor-

mous split between your two front teeth. And an excruciatingly uncomfortable metal bar pressing against the middle of your back.

Rerouting...

“Oh yeah,” you finally recall, “It’s the holidays. I’m at my mother’s house. In the basement that my parents converted into a family room in 1977. On the old hide-a-bed couch.”

Although you’d rather lay there uncomfortably, reminiscing about growing up in that little brick ranch, nature calls. You slowly roll your aching torso to the edge of the paper-thin mattress, setting off a cacophony of squeaking springs. Standing silently by the brown, orange, and harvest gold plaid couch, you wait until you’re certain your spouse is still asleep, before tip-toeing up the carpeted basement stairs to the bathroom.

Ever since moving out of your childhood home, you’ve enjoyed basic human entitlements such as public drinking and waste water systems. You’ve become accustomed to the ample gush of clear, potable water from faucets, shower heads, and toilet tanks.

But in the one tiny bathroom shared by every living soul in your mother’s crowded house, there are plumbing issues you’ve long since forgotten about.

As you open the door and flick on the noisy Nutone fan light, you spy the coral orange Formica countertops and mint green porcelain that were original to your 1950s childhood home. You step inside, and detect the familiar odor of rotten eggs.

You are about to blame Uncle Eddie, who went overboard on the sausage dip the night before, but then you remember. The sulfur-ey well water is the source of the offending odor, something you were immune to while growing up in that house.

Beside the crocheted tissue box cover is a note from your mother, reminding the family of the limitations of the old well and septic tank: “If it’s brown, flush it down, but if it’s yellow, let it mellow.” You sit on the mint-green commode, leafing through an old National Geographic, wondering how on Earth you grew up this way.

After waiting a minute for the water supply to recover from your flush, you get in the shower. Your pampered hair follicles will have to survive the 79 cent bottle of VO5 Strawberries and Cream shampoo your mother bought at the dollar store. Mid-lather, one of the kids knocks, begging, “I gotta go!”

Ignoring Grammy’s hand-written sign,

she flushes. You yelp, as scalding hot water cascades from the shower head. There’s another knock at the bathroom door, as other family members enter to brush their teeth and use the toilet while you brave water temperature fluctuations behind the frosted glass shower doors.

Eventually, you emerge from the only bathroom, dressed and ready for another day of visiting with family over the holidays. You might get dirty looks from your relatives, who have to wait an hour for the hot water supply to build back up before they can shower. You might have frizzy hair from your mother’s cheap shampoo. And you might suffer a back spasm from sleeping on that damned hide-a-bed.

But you won’t mind because you realize that having family to visit with over the holidays is a blessing. These quirky people brought you into this world and are the reason you’re never really alone. No matter how annoying holiday family visits might seem, when you consider the alternative, you know it’s all relative.

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

### COLUMN



Molinari





## RUN RUN RUDOLPH 5K RACE

**December 7th • 1700 • Fitness Center**

**A 5K EVENT FOR ALL AGES! WEAR YOUR FAVORITE HOLIDAY ATTIRE!  
SIGN UP THE MORNING OF THE RACE TO RECEIVE A T-SHIRT!  
THE TOP 3 MALE & FEMALE FINISHERS WILL BE GIVEN MWR CHALLENGE COINS!**



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CALL (601) 679-2526



## Christmas Parade

DECEMBER 9 • 1000 • HOUSING & MCCAIN RECREATION

Santa will be joining us in the Parade through base housing at 1000! Afterwards come by McCain Recreation for arts & crafts, games, free bowling & a holiday movie marathon!

Trees for Troops' Christmas trees will be available for Active Duty Military Personnel & their dependents (must show ID)



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### HOLY & JOLLY IN HAWAII PARTY

DECEMBER 8 • 1800 • LIBERTY CENTER

COME CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS AS OUR HAWAIIAN HOLIDAY PARTY! REFRESHMENTS, DOOR PRIZES, & GAMES WILL BE AVAILABLE!



### Letters to Santa Story Time

December 13th • 1000 • Library

Come to Story Time to write a letter to Santa!



### Wreaths & Wine

December 14th • 1730 • Putters

HO! HO! HO!  
Let's go to MWR's Christmas Wreath-making event! Valerie Overton will be there to instruct you & you don't want to miss it!

- Costs \$25 per person
- Price includes materials & 2 alcoholic beverages

Register & pay for the class by Dec 12th at McCain Recreation Center  
Spots are limited!  
\*NO OUTSIDE BEVERAGES ALLOWED\*

### Holiday Book Exchange

December 15th • 0915-1030 • CDC

Wrap a book & bring it to exchange with other kids! Santa will be there to take photos with nice boys & girls!

