Volume 60, Number 5

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March 3, 2022

### News Briefs

### ~ Click ~

CDC: Many healthy Americans can take a break from masks

~ Click ~

Oil prices surge above \$100 a barrel as war on Ukraine rages

### ~ Click ~

MLB extends deadline to salvage openers to March 8.

### ~ Click ~

From banking to sports to vodka, Russia's isolation grows

### Wingings



► Feb. 18 TW-1 Winging Ceremony click to view

► Feb. 24 TW-1 Winging Ceremony click to view



~ page 4 ~

House to vote on bill to help veterans exposed to burn pits

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### Military Star School Program comes to Mississippi

#### From Larry Mullins

Last month, Governor Tate Reeves announced the launching of the Military Star School Program to support Mississippi military-connected children and families.

This program is designed to help schools respond to the educational and social-emotional challenges military children face during their transition to a new school.

In 2020, there were more than 7,300 children of active duty military members in Mis-

sissippi. The average military child will move six to nine times during their parent's time in service.

These transitions – along with parental deployments – present unique challenges to military families. The Military Star School Program encourages schools to address these issues; and will recognize schools that maintain a culture supportive of military children.

The Mississippi Department of Education will administer the program and de-

termine if a public or charter school has met the eligibility requirements to earn the Military Star designation.

## A school applying for the designation must meet the following criteria:

- 1. Designate a staff member as a Military Ambassador.
- 2. Maintain a webpage on the school's website which includes resources for military students and their families.
- 3. Maintain a peer-to-peer transition program that assists military students in trans

sitioning into the school.

4. Offer professional development training opportunities for staff members on issues relating to military students.

The Department may establish additional criteria to identify schools that demonstrate a commitment to or provide critical transition supports for military-connected families.

For more information on this program, contact NAS Meridian School Liaison Larry Mullins at 601-679-2473 or email: larry.n.mullins@navy. mil

### **Building 91 Lift Station Project**



Danny Rose, PWD Meridian **Equipment Operator, and** Chris Nutt, PWD Meridian Transportation Supervisor, oversee rigging operations for comminutor manhole placement for the Building 91 Lift Station Project. The Building 91 Lift Station Project, awarded by PWD **Meridian to APC Construction** LLC on June 29, 2021 for \$1.7 million, will demolish and replace the old lift station system, to include the pump station wet well, comminutor manhole, generator, and diesel tank, as well as reroute associated utility lines. Work commenced on the project in November 2021 and is on schedule for completion in June

Submitted photo

# Ukraine puts up stiff, courageous resistance to Russian incursion

#### By David Vergun

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

Effective and creative Ukrainian resistance, combined with poor Russian logistics and sustainment has hindered Russian invasion progress, said a senior defense official who held an onbackground press briefing recently.

There hasn't been a lot of significant change on the ground in Ukraine since yesterday, the official said.

In terms of committed Russian combat power inside Ukraine, yesterday it was around 80%. Today it's about 82%, which is still not an insignificant percentage of combat power, the official said.

In Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Kyiv, in northern Ukraine, there's continued Ukrainian resistance to Russian advances, with an increase in Russian missile and artillery fire targeting infrastructure and media outlets, the official said.

Those cities are under assault, but with no appreciable movement by the Russians to take them. They are clearly meeting with resistance," the official said.

In the south, the Russian invaders made progress, threatening Kerson and approaching Mariupol from the south, and they are also deploying forces from Donetsk in the east toward that area. The official said those cities are still contested.

"The airspace over Ukraine remains contested. The Russians had not achieved air superiority over the whole country. The Ukrainian air and missile defense capabilities remain intact and viable," the official said.

Russia has now launched roughly 450 short-range and medium-range ballistic and cruise missiles, since the start of the war, the official said.

Read more, click here



Photo by Master Sgt. Michael Cowley, DOD

Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman Ramón "CZ" Colón-López briefs the department's senior noncommissioned officers on the new publication "Developing Enlisted Leaders for Tomorrow's Wars" during a meeting in the Pentagon.

# Changes coming to enlisted joint professional military education

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

Change is coming to enlisted professional military education ensuring the new realities of strategic competition are addressed and emphasizing joint education, the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman Ramón "CZ" Colón-López said.

The changes mirror what is happening in the force, he said

Colón-López and the other senior enlisted leaders have issued "Developing Enlisted Leaders for Tomorrow's Wars" — an in depth look at the vision they have for professional military education.

● Changes, page 2

### Eight aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in February ceremonies

There were naval aviator designation ceremonies on Feb. 18 and Feb. 24 onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

Eight aviators received their "Wings of Gold" during the ceremonies. 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."

### Feb. 18 Winging





**ENS Thibaut Morel** 

**ENS Guillaume Wyns** 

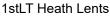
### Feb. 24 Winging





LTJG John Gasper 1stLT Matthew Hundt

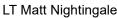


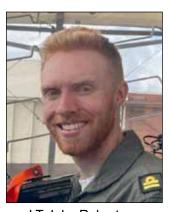




LT Grant Mason







LT Jake Robertson

### Feb. 18 Golden Stick



Photo by MC1 Krystina Coffey

CDR Gregory Enzinger, commanding officer of VT-7, presents ENS Thibaut J.J. Morel, French navy, with the Golden Stick during a ceremony in the chapel, Feb. 18. The award is sponsored by the Mississippi Council of the Navy League and is given to the top aviator in each winging class.

### Feb. 24 Golden Stick



Photo by Adam Prince

CDR Jared Thomas, commanding officer of VT-9, presents 1stLT Matthew Hundt with the Golden Stick during a ceremony at the chapel, Feb. 24. The award is sponsored by the Mississippi Council of the Navy League and is given to the top aviator in each winging class.

#### Changes

Tied to it is the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff publication "Enlisted Professional Military Education." Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Kristofer Reyes, the manager for enlisted joint professional military education on the Joint Staff, worked with Colón-López to see the project

The idea of "joint" has grown over the years. In the 1960s, it meant two or more services worked together - mostly at the senior levels.

Military leaders saw the advantages of the services working together, and the move since then has been to plan together and fight together. What started with senior officers has pushed down the ranks - officer and enlisted - with the realization that even entry-level service members need to know something about the capabilities provided by members of other services.

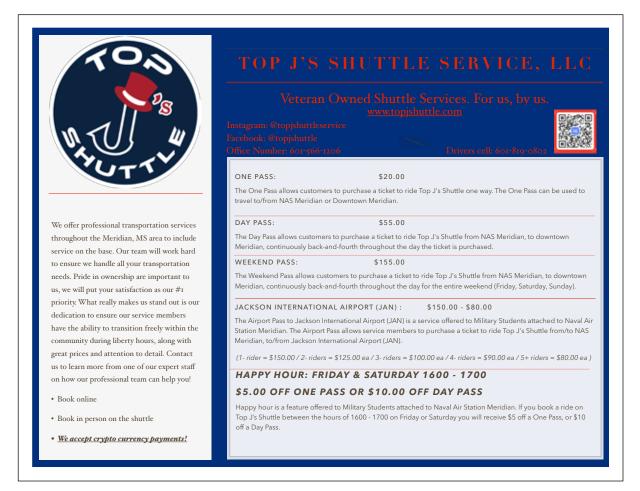
In Iraq, it was not unusual for an Army patrol to go outside the wire, with Air Force and Navy personnel helping defend against the improvised explosive device threat. Air Force, Army, Marine or Navy aircraft may have provided the close-air support needed. Persistent observation may have come from any of the services; overarching everything would be satellite communications and surveillance – usually run by the Air Force, but not

Service members still have to know the procedures and capabilities of their own services first, but they also need to understand the advantages that working as a joint force team provides.

But it now goes even beyond that. The military works as part of a whole-of-government team. The civilian agencies - the departments of State, Treasury, Justice, Agriculture and more provide capabilities that can be crucial to success of U.S. security efforts.

The place to learn about the joint force concept can't be on the battlefield, on the fly, Colón-López said. This is why he oversaw a revision of the enlisted professional military education effort – emphasizing the joint nature of operations and the responsibilities of noncommissioned officers and petty officers to lead the way.

Army Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, gave Colón-López his marching orders soon after taking office in October 2019. "He asked me to look at the way that we were professionally educating our enlisted force, specifically, on the joint enterprise and how we need to go ahead and start shaping it for strategic competition," the SEAC said in an interview.



### $The \ Skyline$ ~ Naval Air Station Meridian, Miss.

**Command Staff** Commanding Officer ~ **CAPT Timothy B. Moore** Executive Officer ~ **CDR Jamie Epps** Command Master Chief ~ **CMDCM Craig Johnson** 

Editorial Staff Public Affairs Officer ~ Penny Randall Public Affairs Specialist~ Adam Prince Staff Writer/Photographer~ MC1 Krystina Coffey

#### Hotlines & Helpful Numbers SAPR Victim Assistance: 601-604-3037

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# Local Happenings

#### MARCH

5: Redd Hot Steam at Soule' at 6-9 p.m. at the Soule Steam Feed Works. Experience a night under the stars strolling along the hidden cobblestone alleyways of Meridian's historic Soule' Steam Works while enjoying exquisite cocktails and small bites. Tickets are \$35 single/\$60 couples; call 601-693-2224.

10: Brown Bag Lunch Performance: Irish Step Dancing ffrom 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience. Catherine Bishop leads this educational talk about Irish dance with a demonstration by performers from St. Andrew's Episcopal School. Free and open to the public; call 601-581-1550.

26: 5th Annual Allie Cat Run & Festival from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at City Hall Lawn. Join the 5K run; 2 mile run/walk and kids fun run. All proceeds benefit MORA, Allie Carruth Scholarship and Allie Carruth Grant. For info, visit http://time2run.net.

26: MCM-Meridian's 1st Birthday! from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian. Come celebrate our first birthday. Tickets are \$10; call 601-512-0278.



### Service Academies directed to build up Sexual Assault Prevention Programs

The U.S. military service academies are doing a good job taking care of victims of sexual assault, but they can do more in the way of preventing those assaults from happening in the first place, the acting director of the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office said.

The U.S. military service academies are doing a good job taking care of victims of sexual assault, but they can do more in the way of preventing those assaults from happening in the first place, the acting director of the Defense Department's Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office said.

During a virtual briefing February 17, following the release of DOD's Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies, Nate Galbreath said academy programs are "heavily responseoriented," noting that they're good at taking care of victims once they report, ensuring they're given proper support, and following through with criminal investigations.

-- From C. Todd Lopez, DoD News

Read more, click here

### F-35C brings advanced strike capabilities to jungle warfare exercise

As 3rd Marine Division commences Jungle Warfare Exercise 22, a largescale, joint force exercise, Marine Wing Fighter Attack Squadron 314 is integrating the capabilities of the F-35C Lightning II. VMFA-314 will be supporting ground operations from their position deployed onboard the Nimitzclass aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, displaying their ability to deliver long-range strike capabilities and close air support from an aircraft car-

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VMFA-314, the first Marine squadron to deploy the F-35C, continues to demonstrate its proficiencies during JWX 22 by conducting simulated offensive and defensive air support, as well as air to ground support training missions alongside the Marines of 1st Marine Air Wing, Japanese Air Self-Defense Forces and the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group in support of Expeditionary Advance Base Operations.

-- From Capt. Charles Allen

Read more, click here

### U.S. Navy ships participate in bilateral drills with Italian navy

The Blue Ridge-class command and control ship USS Mount Whitney (LCC 20) and guided-missile destroyers USS Forest Sherman (DDG 98) and USS Roosevelt (DDG 80) conducted bilateral maneuvering and communication exercises with Italian Navy aircraft carrier ITS Giuseppe Garibaldi (C551), Feb. 22.

Bilateral ship maneuvering drills, communication tests and other simulated tactical exercises ensure the navies are able to effectively communicate and work seamlessly together during realworld operations.

Giuseppe Garibaldi is an antisubmarine warfare (ASW) carrier and based in Taranto, Italy. The ship is equipped with surface-to-air missiles, torpedo tube launchers and defensive close-in weapons system (CIWS) mounts and has the capability to launch and recover AV-8B Harrier II jump jets

and a variety of helicopters.

"Garibaldi is a veteran ship and is one of the most important in the Italian Navy, being the first aircraft carrier Italy has had post-WWII," said Lt. j.g. Gianmatteo Francavilla, an Italian naval officer participating in a one-year foreign exchange program and currently serving as assistant navigator aboard Forrest Sherman.

The maneuvers, executed in accordance with international law, highlight the professionalism and skillful seamanship of the navies involved.

"We are grateful for this opportunity to practice operating together with our Italian counterparts," said U.S. Navy Capt. Milciades "Tony" Then, commodore of Destroyer Squadron (DESRON)

-- From Lt. Cmdr. Fernando Rivero and Lt. j.g. Kathleen Barrios, U.S. 6th Fleet Public Affairs

Read more, click here

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.

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: 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 https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/ item/851262408853834/

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: 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. 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.

### MISCELLANEOUS

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

For Sale: Office desk with file cabinets and hutch, Item retails for well over \$1000; selling it for \$300 (or best offer). Please contact LtCol Topping at 858-736-5812.

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 annoucement, email adam.prince@navy.mil

### House to vote on bill to help veterans exposed to burn pits

By Kevin Freking AP News

The House is poised to pass legislation that would dramatically boost health care services and disability benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits in Iraq and Af-

The bill set for a vote Thursday has the backing of the nation's major veterans groups and underscores the continued cost of war years after the fighting has stopped. If passed into law, it would increase spending by more than \$300 billion over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

"If we're not willing to pay the price of war, we shouldn't go," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

The bill would open up Department of Veterans Affairs health care to millions of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans exposed to toxic substances during their service even if they don't have a service-connected disability.

The bill also would provide new or increased disability benefits to thousands of veterans who have become ill with cancer or respiratory conditions such as bronchitis or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. The VA would presume that veterans developed their illness as a result of exposure to toxic substances during their service.

The bill's supporters say it is a clear recognition from Congress that veterans were exposed to toxic substances, they are suffering as a result and the process of proving to the VA that their illness was caused by their exposure is too burden-

Opponents of the legislation say it would grant health and disability benefits to many veterans whose conditions may not have anything to do with their military service. They expressed worry that the influx of cases would tax an already stressed VA system, leading to longer wait times for health care and processing disability claims.

The political dynamics surrounding the vote was evident on the House floor Wednesday as scores of Democrats, some from competitive swing districts, spoke in favor of the bill.

"This bill addresses the true cost of war



AP Photo by Simon Klingert

In this April 28, 2011, photo, an Afghan National Army pickup truck passes parked U.S. armored military vehicles, as smoke rises from a fire in a trash burn pit at Forward Operating Base Caferetta Nawzad, Helmand province south of Kabul, Afghanistan. The House is poised to pass legislation that would dramatically boost health care services and disability benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.

and opposing it would be a vote against our servicemembers and veterans," said Rep. Mark Takano of California, the Democratic chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Republicans generally left it to Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks of Iowa to do all the talking Wednesday in opposition to the bill. Miller-Meeks is a U.S. Army veteran and said she hears from fellow veterans frequently in Iowa who wait months, or even years, for the benefits they earned, and that problem will only grow if the bill becomes law. She also noted that the projected cost of the bill is more than the budgets of nine Cabinet-level departments

'We are not doing right by our veterans by being fiscally irresponsible in their name," Miller-Meeks said.

The military routinely used burn pits to dispose of waste during operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. A 2020 study from the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine found that existing

health studies provided insufficient evidence to determine whether exposure to burn pit emissions are linked to adverse respiratory conditions such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer. The authors of the study said the uncertainty doesn't mean there is no association only that there was insufficient data to draw definitive conclusions.

President Joe Biden is among those who has voiced suspicion that his son's death from brain cancer was linked to burn pits that were in use while Maj. Beau Biden served in Iraq.

"And they come home, many of the world's fittest and best trained warriors, never the same — headaches, numbness, dizziness, a cancer that would put them in a flag-draped coffin," he said during Tuesday's State of the Union address

Biden said it's unknown whether a burn pit caused his son's brain cancer, or the diseases of so many others who served, "but I'm committed to finding out everything we can.'

The White House has endorsed the House bill, which goes beyond Iraq and Afghanistan. It also adds hypertension to the list of illnesses that Vietnam veterans are presumed to have developed because of exposure to Agent Orange. The CBO estimates that about 600,000 of the 1.6 million veterans who served in Vietnam and who already receive disability compensation also have hypertension, or high blood pressure. They would be eligible for increased compensation, which would depend upon the severity of the illness.

Biden called on the VA last year to examine the impact of burn pits and other airborne hazards. He has backed expanding the number of conditions that the VA would presume were caused by toxic exposure from burn pits.

In November, the White House announced that soldiers exposed to burn pits who developed any of three specific ailments — asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis within 10 years can receive disability benefits. The House bill greatly builds on that effort with 21 additional presumptive conditions, and possibly more to come in ensuing years.

The bill also provides for retroactive benefits to veterans whose disability claims have been denied and to survivors of deceased veterans.

The sums are substantial. For example, Vietnam veterans eligible for retroactive payments due to hypertension from exposure to Agent Orange would receive retroactive payments averaging about \$13,500, while survivors would receive about \$100,000, the CBO said in a December report.

Meanwhile, some 268,000 veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan whose claims have been denied would receive retroactive payments averaging about \$50,000. And some 5,500 survivors would receive about \$160,000, on average, CBO said.

It is unclear how the House bill will fare in an evenly divided Senate where legislation generally needs 60 votes to ad-

The Senate has unanimously passed a much narrower bill extending how long combat veterans are guaranteed VA care. But House Democrats said the Senate legislation is just a fraction of what is need-

### Too much is more than enough during winter getaway

After two years of pandemic mo-

notony, I threw a royal hissy fit.

COLUMN

The novelty of "staying home" had worn off long ago. I told my husband, Francis, I desperately needed to get away, or I'd lose my mind. He could see from the spittle on my chin and the crazed look in my twitching right eye, that I was serious.



Molinari

A month later, Francis surprised me with tickets for a week at an "all-inclusive luxury resort"

Despite having traveled extensively during two overseas tours, we didn't have much experience with Caribbean islands, much less tropical resorts. Our previous trips were on a strict military family budget, which usually involved driving our minivan, renting inexpensive accommodations, packing our own food, and rejecting pricey excursions and paid tour guides.

But as I perused the website of our

Aruban all-inclusive luxury resort, we could've gone bankrupt for all I cared. If I didn't have to cook, clean, or find another damned show to binge-watch on Netflix, this trip would be priceless.

Our plane left Boston late because of the extensive de-icing required for takeoff, but six hours later, we stood under the blazing equatorial sun, while aqua blue waters lapped the resort's white sand beach, and 85-degree breezes blew through palms and cacti.

We squeezed our pale, flakey, fleshy, winter bodies into bathing suits (flagrant pandemic overeating) and hit one of the resort's many outdoor bars for our first round of all-included cocktails. "This is exactly what I needed," I told Francis while sipping a frozen mango margarita under a palapa on the beach.

Interestingly, all of the resort's cocktails, wine, beer, soda, apple juice and milk were served in identical, opaque plastic tumblers like the ones stacked by the buffet at Golden Corral, Drinking chardonnay out of institutional vessels wasn't exactly glamorous, but we assumed that, with so many guests walking barefoot around pools and beaches, this was a necessary safety precaution.

Our "ocean view" fourth-floor room looked over one of the resort's many

pools and out to the sea. "Wow, how about that view?" Francis said, sitting on our balcony, sipping bourbon from his Golden Corral tumbler while waiting for me to dress for dinner.

I stepped out onto the balcony just as someone below bellowed, "JACKPAHT!" We'd soon learn that the group in the pool had been on our flight from Boston, and were in Aruba for a wedding. Their extended family, which included aunts, uncles, grandparents and lots of kids, had rented the pool-side rooms below us. By the end of the week, we could identify them by their heavy Boston accents and poolside outbursts.

"C'mahn, Uncle Jimmy, let's play Jackpaht!"

"Hey Bahb! I'm stahhving!" "MAHHKO! POLO! MAHHKO

"MA! Jayden's diy-pah fell off in the

Our meal options included five themed restaurants (Mexican, Asian, Italian, Fine Dining, and a Tropical Grill featuring heated tables where guests grilled raw meats with a medic standing by to dress burn wounds), two buffets (nothing says "luxury" like scraping at the sides of a metal vat of macaroni and cheese), and various snacks offered at the outdoor bars (to

lessen the risk of diabetic coma from the syrupy coconut rum, amaretto, grenadine, peach schnapps and margarita mix). Determined to get everything our all-inclusive package offered, we gorged ourselves at them all.

We signed up for a snorkeling "booze cruise" where we saw more drinks than fish, and a violent off-road Jeep tour during which I nearly burst my spleen in the Arikok National Park.

"A cocktail, honey?" Francis offered on our last day under the palapa.

"Just a Diet Coke, please." Sunburned, sore and battling diarrhea, I'd had my fill of unlimited cocktails, food, sunshine, adventure, pool patrons, and warm tropical breezes. At least that's what I told myself.

Real life isn't an all-inclusive tropical resort, so I thought of our charming New England house, roll-hiding wool sweaters, home-cooked meals, cozy TV nights, our kids, the dog. Turns out, the water is bluer, the breezes are warmer, the drinks are cheaper ... and the grass is always greener on the other side.

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



### NAS Meridian, MS • Morale, Welfare and Recreation

### **Facility Phone Numbers**

**Fitness Center** 679-2379 679-3760 **Liberty Center** 679-3773 **Tickets** McCain Rec Center 679-2651 Equipment Rental 679-2609

679-2326 Rudders Pub & Grill 679-2780 CDC/CDH 679-2652 SAC 679-5252 **School Liaison** 679-2473 **MWR Admin.** 679-2551 **MWR Jobs Line** 679-2467















