

# THE SKYLINE



Volume 61, Number 14

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July 6, 2023

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Mississippi picks a new interim state superintendent of education

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Pentagon to tighten controls over classified info after major leak

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U.S. Marines lead Marine Corps' first operational East Coast F-35B squadron

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Navy prep course aims to launch hundreds of recruits into the fleet

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Protect yourself from mosquitoes

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# Freedom Fest 2023



NAS Meridian's Morale, Welfare and Recreation department hosted Freedom Fest 2023 onboard NAS Meridian, June 30. Nearly 2,000 people braved the heat and attended this year's event. Festivities included: live music, family games, plenty of ways to cool off, lots of food and a spectacular fireworks show to end the evening.

Photos by MC2 Molly Crawford



# Twelve aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in June pinning ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony June 30 onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

Twelve 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."



1STLT John Dreylick



LT Jamie Foy



1STLT Benjamin George



LTJG Jacob Granick



LT Tyler Haritan



LT Anthony Janssen



LTJG Gunner Jongebloed



LTJG Connor King



LTJG Kevin Lu



1STLT Mason Lynch



LT Vashaana Sahadeo



LTJG William Vincent

# DOD calls for better weapons to fight artificial intelligence

By Hope Hodge Seck  
AP News

After years of catching grief for exquisite weapons acquisition programs with creeping requirements leading to lengthy delays and budget overruns, the Pentagon now finds itself with a different sort of headache: how to stop weapons and systems that are dirt cheap.

The growing problem of inexpensive unmanned systems employing autonomy and artificial intelligence has been a longtime subject of military study and discussion.

But the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has underscored just how effective smart tech accessible to anyone may be in neutralizing the elaborate tools of conventional warfare. In one example from the war, Ukraine reportedly used a Chinese-made DJI drone worth \$2,000 to destroy a Russian T-90 tank worth millions of dollars.

Drawing on a newfound urgency, the U.S. undersecretary of defense for research and engineering published a need statement in May, calling on industry to help develop new weapons that

can effectively meet the new threat from unmanned, autonomous and AI defense-driven systems.

"Multi- and cross-domain Uncrewed Systems (UxS) continue to be a threat to U.S. forces around the world. This threat is expanding in all domestic and international regions," the need statement begins, citing the directive in the 2022 National Defense Strategy to stay ahead of the problem. "This threat is no longer just in the aerial domain, but also from ground, subterranean, sea, and undersea domains. Near-peer adversary nations are rapidly incorporating robust UxS capabilities into their military formations, and non-state actors are using UxS to increase their asymmetric advantage."

While aerial drones have had the most opportunities to make a mark on the battlefield, both in Ukraine and the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the South Caucasus, undersea systems may not be far behind.

Ukrainian unmanned underwater vessels, such as the Toloka TLK-150, likely already have been responsible for limiting Russian aggression at sea.

[Read more, click here](#)



US Navy photo

**The U.S. Navy says Iran tried to seize two oil tankers near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, July 5, firing shots at one of them. This photo, released by the U.S. Navy, shows damage sustained by the commercial tanker Richmond Voyager.**

# Navy: Iran tried to seize 2 oil tankers in Gulf, fired shots at one

From AP News

Iran tried to seize two oil tankers near the strategic Strait of Hormuz early Wednesday, firing shots at one of them, the U.S. Navy said.

It said that in both cases, the Iranian naval vessels backed off after the U.S. Navy responded, and that both commercial ships continued their voyages.

"The Iranian navy did make attempts to seize commercial tankers lawfully transiting international waters," said Cmdr. Tim Hawkins, spokesman for the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet. "The U.S. Navy responded immediately and prevented those seizures."

The U.S. Navy says Iran tried to

seize two oil tankers near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, July 5, 2023, firing shots at one of them. This photo, released by the U.S. Navy, shows damage sustained by the commercial tanker Richmond Voyager. (Navy)

He said the gunfire directed at the second vessel did not cause casualties or major damage.

There was no immediate Iranian comment on the incidents.

The U.S. Navy said an Iranian naval vessel approached the Marshall Islands-flagged TRF Moss in the Gulf of Oman at around 1 a.m. The U.S. deployed the USS McFaul, a guided-missile destroyer, as well as MQ-9 Reaper drone and a P-8 Poseidon patrol plane.

● Tanker, page 4

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

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# Local Happenings

## JULY

**Saturdays in July** – The Temple Theatre, 2320 8th Street, downtown Meridian hosts Summer Movie Days. Movies at noon and 3 p.m. \$5 per person. Doors open at 11 a.m. Purchase tickets online at [www.thetempletheatre.com](http://www.thetempletheatre.com).

**13: Stuff the Bus** from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at Uptown Meridian Mall. Come out and support the United Way as they collect back to school items for area kids. What an easy way to support our community. Call 601-693-2732.

**13: Distinguished Young Women of MS** from 7-9 p.m. at the Evangel Temple. Contact Susan Keith at [susanms@distinguishedyw.org](mailto:susanms@distinguishedyw.org).

**22: The Jazz Age on Stage** at 7 p.m. at the Temple Theatre. Authentic 1920's Jazz by Warren Ertle's Hot Peppers Band. Step back into the 1920's as The Temple Theatre is turned into a speakeasy for a one-night roaring 20's party and concert. Purchase tickets online at [www.thetempletheatre.com](http://www.thetempletheatre.com).

**27: An Evening with Smokey Robinson** at 7:30 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center. Smokey Robinson has won a Grammy Legend Award, Lifetime Achievement Award, National Medal of Arts, Kennedy Center Honors and many other accolades. Contact Penny Kemp at [penny@leadingedges.net](mailto:penny@leadingedges.net) or call 601-483-9810.

**28-29: Back to School Tax Free Weekend** from 10 a.m.-8 p.m. at Uptown Meridian Mall. It's time to save some money. Back to School Tax Free Weekend July 28th and 29th. Call 601-693-3433, ext. 222.

**29: Harry Potter's Birthday** from 10 a.m.- 3 p.m. at the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian. Festivities will include potion making, wizard training, muggle art, wizard chess and herbology class. Costumes are encouraged! Call 601-581-1550, ext 35.

# Area Happenings

## JULY

**21-23: World Deer Expo** at the BJCC, 2100 Richard Arrington Jr Blvd N Birmingham, AL 35203. Friday: 3-9 p.m.; Saturday: 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Sunday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Call 205-678-4141 or email [info@worlddeerexpo.com](mailto:info@worlddeerexpo.com).

**23: Lynyrd Skynyrd & ZZ Top: The Sharp Dressed Simple Man Tour** from 6:30-11:30 p.m. at the Ameris Bank Amphitheatre, Alpharetta, GA 30009. Call 404-733-5010.

## Navy expands support services for sexual harassment

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) Carlos Del Toro signed a new policy expanding available support services for victims of sexual harassment.

Effective immediately, uniformed military personnel who experience sexual harassment are eligible to receive the range of support options available to victims of sexual assault through the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Program. The new policy implements requirements of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act and Independent Review Commission recommendations.

"This policy reflects the Department's commitment to creating a culture of dignity and respect, and strengthening victim support services," said Secretary Del Toro. "We take victims' experiences seriously, and we are committed to creating an environment where victims of

sexual harassment are heard, validated, and feel safe to report their experience and receive supportive services."

Victims of sexual harassment now have the option to receive crisis intervention, safety assessments, counseling resources, victim advocacy support and to discuss reporting options with SAPR personnel.

"Preventing sexual harassment within an organization requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach," said Andrea N. Goldstein, acting director, DON Office of Force Resiliency. "We will continue to implement policies and procedures that clearly define sexual harassment, improve victim response, and educate members on the importance of bystander intervention, to reduce the likelihood of sexual harassment occurring."

-- From Office of SECNAV Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

## Supreme Court to rule on whether vets should get more GI Bill benefits

The Supreme Court agreed to take up an ongoing veterans education benefits case which could dramatically rewrite federal benefits rules and give additional tuition money to potentially millions of veterans.

And if the nation's highest court upholds the decisions of lower federal courts, the ruling could finally end the eight-year-old legal fight, forcing Veterans Affairs leaders to start paying out the money in coming college semesters.

The case — Rudsill vs. McDonough — has been closely watched by advocates for years because of its potential wide-

ranging impact on veterans seeking college degrees.

Monday's decision to take up the case means that lawyers for the plaintiff and the federal government will argue their cases before the Supreme Court sometime this fall, with a final decision expected sometime in spring 2024.

In a joint statement, Troutman Pepper partner Misha Tseytlin and associate Timothy McHugh — who have handled the case in recent years — called the high court's decision a welcome chance at finally resolving the case.

-- By Leo Shane III

[Read more, click here](#)

## Georgia base tapped to host F-35 fighters as A-10 fleet retires

Moody Air Force Base, Georgia, is the service's top pick to become the next active duty home of the F-35A Lightning II fighter.

The Air Force said recently it plans to bring two F-35 squadrons to the Valdosta base starting in fiscal 2029, when it hopes to complete phasing out its fleet of A-10C Thunderbolt II attack planes.

The service must first study the proposed move's environmental impact on the surrounding area before formally green-lighting the project. That review is slated to finish in fall 2025.

Switching missions at Moody isn't expected to create any new jobs on base, the Air Force said, although it had previously announced that the U.S.'s most advanced fighter jet would bring in another 500 or so workers.

It's unclear what other bases were considered as part of the process.

Winding down much of America's combat operations overseas has prompted a significant shift in Moody's missions at home.

-- By Rachel S. Cohen, Military Times

[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:** Water front home in Dalewood. Spa-

acious two-story home facing the Lake; great for fishing and relaxing. Remodeled kitchen and new appliances. Rent is \$2,000; 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](mailto:lucindawnichols@gmail.com), call 601-527-7829 or 601-917-6145.

**For Rent:** 2 BD/1 1/2 BA 1100 square foot home in Dalewood with main lake access. Asking \$1300 a month. Email: [\[loproperties@gmail.com\]\(mailto:loproperties@gmail.com\) for information..](mailto:rosscande-</a></p>
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**For Rent:** Lake Cabin near NAS Meridian. 1 BD/1 BA; \$700 month. Unfurnished.

**For Rent:** 3BD, 2BA home with washer/dryer, wifi, lawn service and water included. \$1500/month. Call 601-917-8594.

**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. 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

**Event Space for Rent:**

Deer Creek Banquet Hall. 6000 sq. ft. indoor with 1600 sq. ft. outdoor spaces for rent for gatherings and events. Call Reginald at 251-455-1559.

**Service for hire:** Dixie 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](mailto:adam.prince@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)

# Austin swears in new service members as DOD marks the anniversary of the all-volunteer force

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

It's an oath that all members of the U.S. military know:

"I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. And I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same."

For 85 young men and women at the Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station, it was a bit more involved as they were sworn into service by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III.

Austin, who spent 41 years in the Army, used the occasion to mark the 50th anniversary of the start of America's all-volunteer military. He also took the time to meet the newest members and welcome them "to the greatest team in the world."

Many of those swearing into service also shipped today. They arrived at the processing station at Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, were sworn in and will find themselves at Fort Moore, Georgia; Parris Island, South Carolina; or Great Lakes, Illinois, by the end of the day.

"This is a big day for the young people standing in front of me," Austin said. "You've arrived here as individuals, but you're going to leave here as part of a team."

They are also the latest members of the all-volunteer force. "Fifty years ago this



Photo by Chad J. McNeely, DOD

**Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III congratulates new recruits at the Baltimore Military Entrance Processing Station after administering the oath of enlistment, Fort George G. Meade, Md., July 5.**

week, the United States stopped drafting citizens into service and turned instead to an all-volunteer force," Austin said. "Ever since then, Americans like you have joined our military, out of conviction and not out of compulsion."

Beginning in 1940, the Selective Service

— the Draft — manned the military and provided the forces needed for World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the Cold War.

"Shifting over to an all-volunteer force, was a pretty bold step," the secretary said. "No other military with such formidable

capabilities operated on a volunteer basis. But the whole world has seen the results." Austin joined the Army in 1975. "And I've watched over the decades, as the U.S. military has grown into the outstanding and incredibly professional fighting force that it is today," he said. "America's all-volunteer force is the strongest military in human history. And the power of today's military is a testament to every American patriot who freely volunteers to keep our republic safe."

The new service members are now part of something much bigger than just themselves. "We rely on you, our democracy relies on you, and your country relies on you," Austin said.

In the armed forces, the new service members will find opportunities to grow and to lead, he said. "You'll work hard. You'll learn new skills and you'll put them to use at home and abroad," the secretary said. "And you'll learn that success is a team sport. You will stand proud alongside outstanding teammates from all walks of life. And you will work, train and fight together as soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines and guardians."

Austin said the department has a sacred obligation to take care of those volunteers as well as their families. "We commit ourselves to take care of you just as you are committing yourselves to take care of all of us," he said.

## ● Tanker

Three hours later, the U.S. Navy received a distress call from the Bahamian-flagged oil tanker Richmond Voyager more than 20 nautical miles off the coast of Muscat, the capital of Oman. The Navy said another Iranian naval vessel had closed within a mile (1.6 kilometers) of the tanker and had ordered it to stop.

The same U.S. destroyer sped toward the tanker at "maximum speed," the Navy said in a statement. "Prior to McFaul's arrival on scene, Iranian personnel fired multiple, long bursts from both small arms and crew-served weapons," it said.

The U.S. Navy says Iran has seized at least five commercial vessels in the last two years and has harassed more than a dozen others. Many of the incidents have occurred in and around the Strait of Hor-

muz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which 20% of all crude oil passes.

In April, masked Iranian navy commandos conducted a helicopter-borne raid to seize a U.S.-bound oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman, footage of which was aired on Iranian state TV. Iran said the tanker was seized after it collided with another Iranian vessel but provided no evidence. In the past, Iran has seized commercial vessels to use as bargaining chips with the West.

Tensions have steadily risen since the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers and restored crippling sanctions. Iran has responded by ramping up its nuclear activities — which it says are purely peaceful — and is also providing armed drones to Russia for its war against Ukraine.

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## Chewing worms: Mothering doesn't end with empty nest

Five hours into my thirteen hour drive home from our annual family vacation, I got the call. "I'm in the ER," my daughter said in a groggy voice.

"What's wrong?" I replied urgently, steadying the steering wheel.

It had been an unusual vacation. Normally, my husband and I would reserve the same 1970s rental beach cottage in North Carolina's Outer Banks for us and our three children, now adults. We had been vacationing there since they were born. As a military family that moved often, the cottage had become like home to us. We also invited my mother each year, and sometimes my best friend and her family. We'd all pack into the little cottage with its ancient wood paneling and uncomfortable This-End-Up furniture, and spend a week or two taking a much-needed break from the grind.

### COLUMN



Molinari

But this summer, my husband was absent, due to recent surgery and scheduled follow-up appointments. And our son, Hayden, a young software engineer, had obligations at work that kept him from making the trip. With the two males in my family unable to come, our vacation turned into a girls' trip. The group of women included me, my 80-year-old mother, my 25-year-old daughter Anna, my 22-year-old daughter Lilly, my BFF Patrice, and her 20-year-old daughter Olivia.

As the ostensible host, I stayed at the cottage for the full occupancy, but the others showed up when their work and travel schedules permitted. We overlapped for a few fun-filled days before they each took off for their respective homes and obligations. Anna flew back to her East Village apartment in New York City three days before I checked out and began my long drive back to Rhode Island.

"I was throwing up all night and my back hurts really bad," Anna said on the phone. "They said I have a kidney infection." Immediately, I wanted to crawl into the phone to get to her. The misery in her voice triggered something. For three decades of being a military

spouse, I'd been the primary caregiver to our three children due to my husband's work demands. Even though our kids were mostly on their own, I still felt an urge to mother them.

I wasn't compelled to lick Anna's hindquarters or drop chewed worms into her mouth, but my animal instinct told me that I needed to go to her. Tuck her into bed. Take her temperature. Bring her juice. Make her soup. Clean her apartment. Kiss her on the forehead.

Stuck in my packed-to-the-gills car with our 18-month-old puppy, I careened northward on Route 13 through Maryland, prepared to detour to New York City if needed. "Are you sure I shouldn't come?" I asked, or pleaded more accurately, as I crossed the George Washington Bridge and saw the Manhattan skyline in the distance.

"No, Mom ... I just need sleep," she instructed after she was discharged with a prescription for antibiotics. I reluctantly continued on, arriving home just before bedtime.

The next day, a hint of need in my daughter's text was all it took. "Do you need me to come to NYC?" I texted. "Yeah it might help, but my apart-

ment is really gross, I'm a bit embarrassed," she replied. Within minutes, I was on the way to my daughter.

For two days, I mothered. I ran errands. I brought toast, fruit and yogurt. I cleaned. I tucked. I gave medications. I did laundry. I made soup. Whether it filled a need in me, in Anna, or in both of us, I wasn't certain. All I knew is that it felt right.

On the second night, Anna turned the corner, and we decided I could go back home the next morning.

"Thank you so much for everything, Mom. You didn't have to do all that," Anna said as I packed my bag to go.

"Honey, believe it or not, it feels good to take care of you. I'm used to doing it, and it justifies my role as your mother," I heard myself say.

Back on I-95 headed northward again, I realized that motherhood doesn't end when the nest empties. We will always need our moms, and our moms will always need to mother.

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.



# CAPTAIN'S CUP VOLLEYBALL LEAGUE

**Registration:**  
July 1st-August 3rd

**Team Meeting:**  
August 3rd at 1500

**Games begin:**  
August 7th at 1730

Scan the QR Code or  
call (601) 679-2367  
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## PUSH THROUGH JULY

July 1-31st at the Fitness Center

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### ELECTRONIC DART LEAGUE

July 10-August 28 • Mondays at 1100  
McCain Recreation

Join us for our Electronic Dart League! The league will play every Monday beginning July 10th - August 28th!



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### SAND ART

Story Time at the Library

July 12th • 1000

COME MAKE COLORFUL SAND ART AT STORY TIME!



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### Painting with Friends

July 16th • 1400 • Liberty Center

Bring a friend to our summer themed painting party! All materials will be provided while supplies last! Space is limited!



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### STORY TIME AT THE POOL

July 19th • 1100 • Aquatics Center

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