

THE SKYLINE



Volume 61, Number 20

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September 28, 2023

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Mississippi GOP governor says his plan would aid hospitals

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Congress may create medal to honor heroic military dogs

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Navy to start fielding new hearing protection helmet

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Senate confirms new Chairman of Joint Chiefs

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Commander, Naval Air Forces visits TW-1



Photo by MC2 Molly Crawford

Rear Admiral George M. Wikoff, Commander, Naval Air Forces, left, shakes hands with CAPT Luke Davis, NAS Meridian commanding officer, during a site visit at the airfield onboard NAS Meridian, Sept. 26. Rear Admiral Wikoff was onboard NAS Meridian to meet with Training Air Wing ONE and Squadron leadership, instructors, and students.

Top 20 under 40



Photo by Penny Randall

MA1 Calvin Green and GySgt Christopher Jaeger were honored as part of the Top 20 Under 40 class of 2023 during a ceremony on Sept. 18 at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience. They were selected for their outstanding service to the community and the base. The Meridian Home Magazine and Mississippi Power sponsored the event.

Navy Federal to offer assistance in case of government shutdown

From Staff Reports

Navy Federal Credit Union announced this week it is offering a paycheck assistance program, providing an advance on direct deposit for eligible members impacted in the event of a government shutdown. This program is available for all active duty servicemembers, federal government employees and contractors who are paid directly by the federal government whose pay will be affected by the shutdown, and have direct deposit set up with Navy Federal for their paycheck.

Navy Federal will continue to accept registration for the program until three business days after the scheduled pay day.

"In the event of a government shutdown, we want to provide our members with peace of mind," said Pete Amstutz, senior vice president of savings and membership at Navy Federal. "Serving our members is foundational to our mission. We want to do the right thing and be there when they need us the most."

For members impacted by the shutdown who do not meet the eligibility requirements, our member service representatives may be able to offer alternative services for financial relief.

Navy Federal offered assistance and activated support in similar situations in 2011, 2013 and most recently in 2018-2019, when the credit union provided loans to nearly 20,000 members.

About Navy Federal Credit Union: Established in 1933 with only 7 members, Navy Federal now has the distinct honor of serving 13 million members globally and is the world's largest credit union. As a member-owned and not-for-profit organization, Navy Federal always puts the financial needs of its members first. Membership is open to all Department of Defense and Coast Guard Active Duty, Veterans, civilian and contractor personnel, and their families. Dedicated to its mission of service, Navy Federal employs a workforce of 24,000 and has a global network of more than 350 branches. For more information about Navy Federal Credit Union, visit navyfederal.org. Federally insured by NCUA. Equal Opportunity Employer.

NAS Meridian hosts Bells Across America ceremony



Photos by MC2 Molly Crawford

NAS Meridian hosts a Bells Across America ceremony at the Naval Reserve Center onboard NAS Meridian, Sept. 21. Bells Across America for Fallen Service Members ceremonies are held to honor those who died while on active duty. These memorial events are a way for the military community to honor and remember the sacrifice of our fallen service members and the loved ones they left behind.

Recipients honored for commitment to service members, families

By David Vergun

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

The Defense Department's Spirit of Hope Award was awarded to six people and a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping military families during a Pentagon ceremony last week.

The award is presented annually to recipients who epitomize the values of comedian Bob Hope: duty, honor, courage, loyalty, commitment, integrity and selfless dedication. Recipients are nominated and selected by each of the military services.

Hope entertained troops from World War II through Operation Desert Shield.

The awardees are also expected to have contributed time, talent and resources that benefit service members and their families.

Acting Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Ashish S. Vazirani said Hope was always dedicated to supporting the nation's military. He often insisted on traveling to the front lines, even occasionally placing himself in harm's way.

Hope wanted to put on a variety show of comedy, singing and dancing to those far from the comforts of home, always bringing the same level of energy and enthusiasm to every performance, Vazirani said.

His shows provided a moment of levity in an otherwise dark and challenging time. These performances served as a distraction from the misery of war, bringing service members a pleasant reminder of home while they were deployed in distant lands and seas, Vazirani said.

Hope was also a frequent visitor of wounded service members, as well as veterans in hospitals, he said. "These values of Bob Hope in service to the warfighter are



Photo by Penny Randall

From left to right: Comedian Hal Block, comedian Bob Hope, actor Barney Dean, Army Lt. Gen. George S. Patton, singer Frances Langford and musician Tony Romano pose for a photo in Sicily, Italy, Aug. 21, 1943. Hope and his USO troupe arrived in Sicily three days after the 7th Army took the key town of Messina, Italy.

also embodied by the recipients we are paying tribute to today."

Office of the Secretary of Defense recipient: Walter E. Penk, a clinical and research psychologist, now retired after 60 years with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Penk improved the treatment of wounded and injured veterans and changed the nation's outlook about the critical role of post-service employment as service members transition into civilian life.

Air Force recipient: Senior Master Sgt. Christina S. Schwarztrauber, first sergeant

with the 78th Security Forces Squadron at Robins Air Force Base, Georgia, for outstanding leadership and care. Schwarztrauber's efforts were vital to the health, welfare, and success of military and civilian personnel and directly impacted 24,000 personnel.

Army recipient: Brenda L. Seubert, administrative officer with the 838th Transportation Battalion, Kaiserslautern, Germany, for contributing an extraordinary amount of time in the service of the Kaiserslautern military community. Seubert

by volunteering in after-school programs for the last 25 years and assisting Ukrainian refugees living in Poland during her Thanksgiving break in November 2022.

Coast Guard recipient: Leroy "Roy" Vander Putten, a trustee emeritus for the Coast Guard Foundation, for founding and funding Enlisted Education Grants and Spouse Education Grants. Putten and his wife funded a Christmas party for Station Lake Worth Inlet, Florida, providing gifts for the children of the unit.

Marine Corps recipient: Capt. Jergen D. Campbell with the Marine Aircraft Group 12 at Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni, Japan, for efforts in suicide prevention, morale-building events, resiliency outreach events and speaking engagements. Campbell's efforts that benefited the mental and physical well-being of service members, veterans and their families.

Navy recipient: Anthony Allen Teravainen, on behalf of Support the Enlisted Project (STEP), San Diego, for supporting the Enlisted Project. Teravainen also devoting time to the social, welfare and morale needs of junior, active-duty, enlisted service members, as well as recently separated enlisted veterans and their families in Southern California and Washington state.

Space Force recipient: Maj. Nathaniel J. Lee, chief of training requirements, Headquarters Space Training and Readiness Command in Colorado Springs, Colorado, for commitment to Gold Star families through work with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. Lee served as a group leader and legacy mentor at children's camps, leading 23 military mentors and over 100 survivors in bonding.

Bill would ease federal loan forgiveness process for troops, vets

By Leo Shane III

Military Times

Troops and veterans would be able to more easily access a key federal loan forgiveness program under bipartisan legislation introduced in the Senate on Wednesday.

The proposal centers around the Public Service Loan Forgiveness initiative, which can erase thousands of dollars on certain federal student loans for individuals who work in some public service posts.

Two years ago, Department of Education officials announced they would count time spent in the military towards the public service requirements of the program, making tens of thousands of troops and veterans newly eligible for the benefit. But program administrators have said only a small fraction of those individuals have received the benefit because of confusion surrounding program rules.

New loan forgiveness program needs veterans to help spread the news to peers, fellow troops

Tens of thousands of individuals in the military community could have student loans erased if they are eligible.

Lawmakers said part of the problem has been the lack of data sharing agreements between the Education and Defense Departments, preventing the federal agencies from quickly and easily discerning eligibility for the loan forgiveness.

Their proposal would mandate those arrangements be put in place within a year

to enable automatic credit for qualifying troops and veterans.

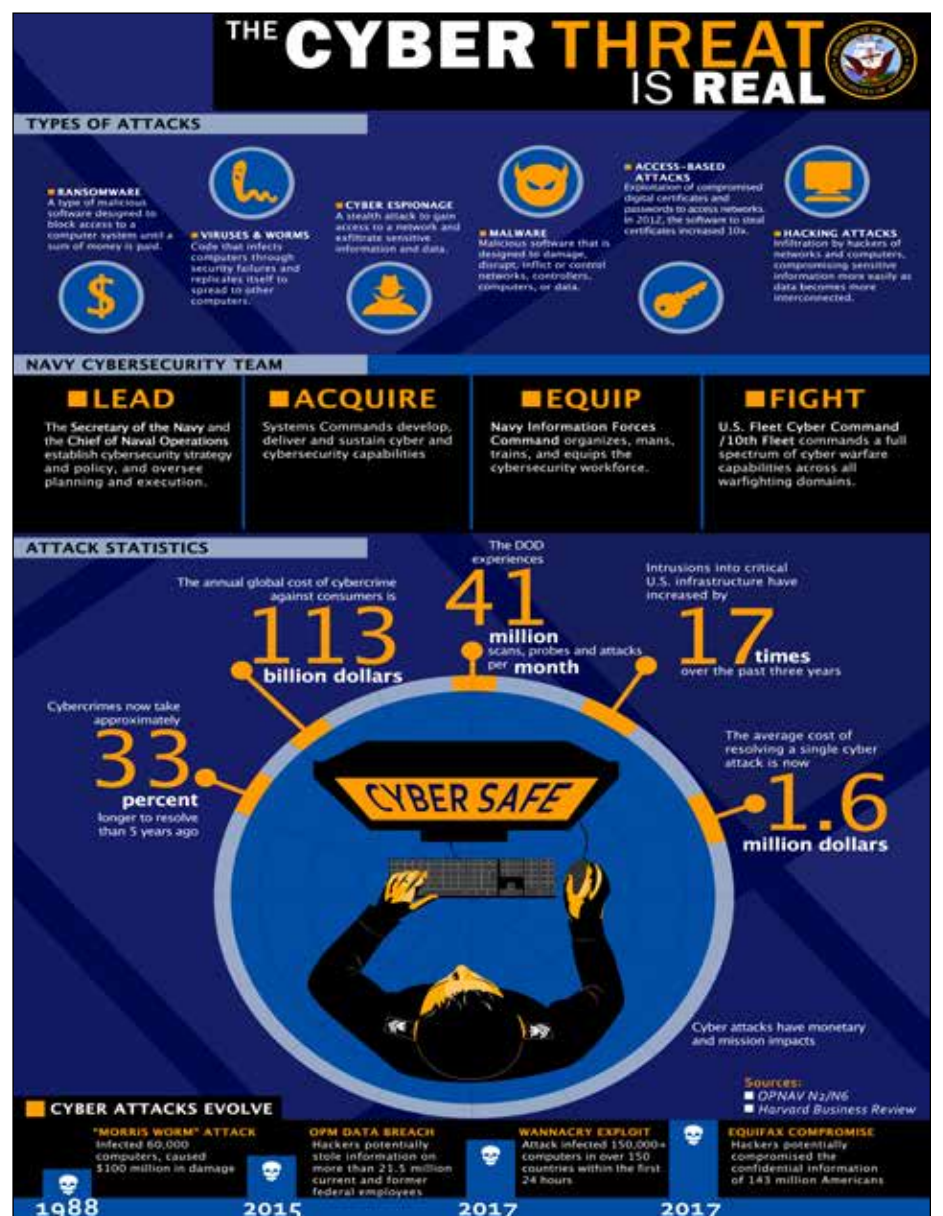
In a statement, bill sponsor Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., said federal workers "should be making it easier for [troops] to get their loans forgiven after serving this country" and lamented that current operations "are keeping too many military members and veterans from accessing benefits they've earned."

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kansas, and ranking member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, co-sponsored the measure and echoed that sentiment.

"Streamlining the process to access loan forgiveness will help our military members receive their earned benefits and help them achieve financial freedom," he said in a statement.

The legislation is backed by multiple veterans groups, including Student Veterans of America and Veterans Education Success. Justin Hauschild, policy counsel with SVA, said he is hopeful the new legislation will jump-start efforts to get troops and veterans better integrated into the program.

Whether the loan forgiveness legislation can make its way through Congress this year is unclear. Lawmakers are scrambling this week to negotiate a budget deal to prevent a partial government shutdown next month. After that, the House and Senate still have full-year appropriations plans for federal agencies and the annual defense authorization bill to finalize before the close of December.



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SAFE Helpline: 877-995-5247
Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255
Military OneSource: 800-342-9647
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EEO (NAF): 866-295-0328
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Local Happenings

SEPTEMBER

30: Rose Hill Cemetery Costumed Tour from 6 a.m.-8 p.m. at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Meridian. As always the cemetery tour is geared toward telling and teaching local history. All storytellers are volunteers with great enthusiasm for the arts of storytelling and drama. The event is free but donations are always needed. Call 601-479-2483 or 601-681-8525.

OCTOBER

7: Meridian Railroad Pioneering Days from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Meridian Railroad Museum. Come hear documented stories as presented by storytellers in period costume about the beginnings of a City eventually known as Meridian. There was quite a dilemma selecting the name of the thriving settlement. Call 601-479-2483 or 601-681-8525.

21: BOO!seum from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Mississippi Children's Museum - Meridian. Superheroes, princesses, and silly monsters alike are invited to the Mississippi Children's BOO!seum for spooky science, festive fall games, creepy-crawly crafts, and glowing dance parties. Call 601-512-0270.

28: Fall Pops! A Symphony of Illusion from 7-9 p.m. at the MSU Riley Center. Prepared to be amazed (and maybe a little bit spooked) as illusionist Michael Grandinetti, star of the hit TV series Masters of Illusions and World's Most Dangerous Magic, combines his astonishing magic with the powerful and mysterious music of the Meridian Symphony Orchestra. Call 601-696-2200.

Area Happenings

OCTOBER

13-15: Crescent City Blues & BBQ Festival -- All weekend in Lafayette Square, S Maestri St, New Orleans. For information, visit <https://www.neworleans.com/event/crescent-city-blues-%26-bbq-festival/3205/>

13-14: CelticFest Mississippi from 4 p.m. Friday to 10 p.m. Saturday at 1112 North Shore Parkway Brandon, MS. For information, visit <https://www.theclanbuchanan.com/events/2023/10/13/celticfest-mississippi>

15: Outlaw Music Festival - Feat. Willie Nelson from 5-9 p.m. at the Oak Mountain Amphitheatre, 2041 Oak Mountain Dr, Pelham, AL. For information, visit <https://discovershelby.com/venue/oak-mountain-amphitheatre/>

DLA energy continues to expand utilities support to U.S. Navy

Defense Logistics Agency Energy continues to expand its utilities partnership with the U.S. Navy, increasing the service's energy reliability, security and resilience.

DLA Energy Utility Services worked with Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command to award its second utilities privatization contract on Aug. 15 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, for the water and wastewater systems.

"DLA Energy Utility Services supports Military Service partners by offering specialized contracting and technical expertise to obtain safe, reliable, and environmentally sound utility systems, at a relatively lower cost than they would under continued government owner-

ship," said Martha Gray, Director of DLA Energy Utility Services. "We offer cradle-to-grave contracting support including full range of pre- and post-award contract administration for the 50-year contract term."

The Department of Defense is working to leverage commercial sources to ensure it has reliable, resilient, and cyber secure energy resources, generation assets, distribution infrastructure, and facility-related controls and data. Military bases are working to "privatize" electric, gas, water, wastewater, and other utility systems to transfer ownership to the experts and ensure compliance with energy security, energy resilience, and cybersecurity requirements.

-- From Connie Braesch

[Read more, click here](#)

VRC-30 flies its last C-2A Greyhound

As taps played in the distant background the last C-2A Greyhound aircraft assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VRC) 30 arrived at Naval Station (NS) Norfolk, Sept. 20, after flying its final flight.

Airborne Command & Control and Logistics Wing (ACCLGOWING) leadership and Sailors assigned to VRC-40 welcomed the crew after their eleven-hour flight from Naval Air Station North Island to land their last C-2A Greyhound which will be used by VRC-40 for the next several years. VRC-30 will officially sundown later this year.

VRC-30 began flying the C-2A Greyhound aircraft in 1981 and continued to use the aircraft for carrier onboard de-

livery (COD) to transport passengers, equipment, gear and supplies around the fleet for 42 years.

Cmdr. James Light, VRC-30's commanding officer, participated in the final flight which also signified his last flying mission of his naval career as he is expected to retire from the Navy. Light has accumulated more than 2,900 flight hours and 200 carrier arrested landings in the C-2A including arrestments on all ten Nimitz-class aircraft carriers.

"It has been the greatest ride in the world," Light added reflecting on a career spent supporting logistics movement of manpower and equipment.

-- From Jennifer Cragg,
Naval Air Force Atlantic Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

U.S. forces conduct joint aviation integration exercise in the Gulf of Oman

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and U.S. Air Forces Central (AF-CENT) conducted a joint Air Operation in Maritime Surface Warfare (AOMSW) exercise in the Gulf of Oman, Sept. 23-24.

The AOMSW exercise included a live Surface Combat Air Patrol and the employment of joint fires against surface threats improving the tactical proficiency. Participating platforms included Air Force A-10 Thunderbolt II's from AFCENT's 75th Fighter Squadron and U.S. Navy's Arleigh Burke-class guided-

missile destroyer, USS Stethem (DDG 63).

This exercise marks the sixth iteration of the joint and combined AOMSW between U.S. Navy and Air Force this year. Previous exercises incorporated the Air Force Two U.S. Air Force F-35A Lightning II aircraft operate alongside USS Bataan (LHD 5) & USS Thomas Hudner (DDG 116) in the Gulf of Oman, in August; An A-10 firing a 30mm practice rounds on a practice target on the surface of the water in July 10.

-- From NAVCENT Public Affairs

[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 Causeville 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

New! 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.

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, 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

DOD Is taking steps to shore up industrial workforce

By Joseph Clark

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

The Defense Department is taking steps to ensure the U.S. industrial base can meet the growing demand for skilled workers well into the future, a senior Pentagon official said today.

Keith DeVries, managing director of manufacturing technology for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, said manufacturers' demand for skilled workers is projected to grow significantly over the next few years — and meeting that demand is critical for the U.S. to maintain its economic and warfighting edge.

"Based on estimates from our manufacturing institutes, there are more than 800,000 open jobs in manufacturing today," DeVries said during a webinar on the future of defense manufacturing. The webinar was hosted by Defense News.

"The industry over the next decade will require more than 4 million jobs to maintain sustainable throughput, and the current estimate says that if we cannot address the skills gap by 2030 we could be looking at over \$1 trillion in [gross domestic product] impact," he said.

Those figures apply to commercial manufacturers, as well as the defense industrial base.

"The defense industry is tapping into the same

pool as the commercial industry," he said. "If Caterpillar or Toyota were to hire 1,000 assemblers or 2,000 welders for their commercial demands, that impacts the defense industry's ability to tap into the same skill sets."

He said the daunting workforce figures have compelled defense officials to take a long-term approach to shore up the supply of skilled workers into the future.

"One of the things that we talk about a lot in our office and in our community is that workforce supply is a supply chain issue of its own," DeVries said.

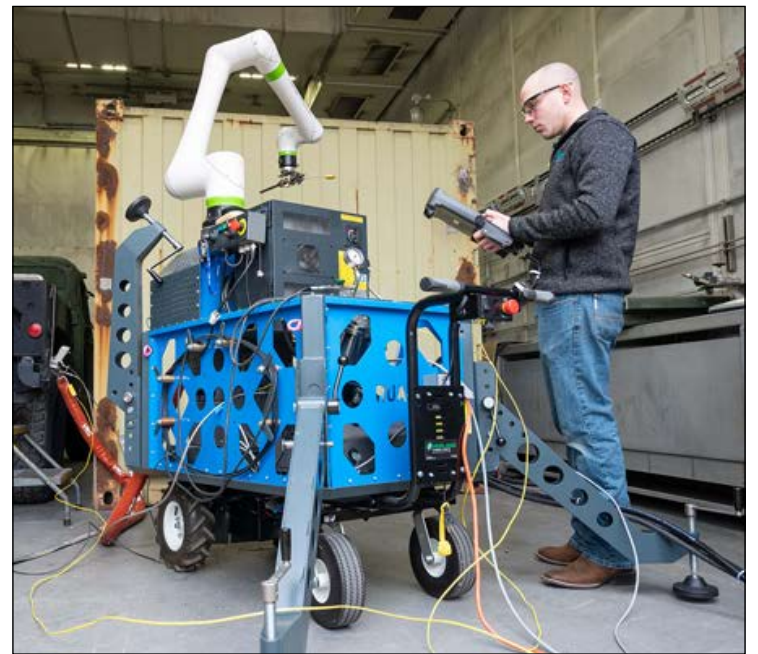
We cannot simply pour money into a problem today and expect a result tomorrow," he said. "We have to take a longer view. We have to develop, nurture and mature capability for not only traditional manufacturing but advanced manufacturing as well."

The DOD has put several programs in place to get ahead of the curve, he said.

DeVries said the DOD's defense manufacturing community support program, for example, includes efforts to help companies across the defense industrial base ensure their workforce can meet current and future demands.

The program, which was authorized in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 2019...

[Read more, click here](#)



DoD Photo

Participants from across the Defense Department, private industry and academia gather for a demonstration of the latest applications of cold-spray additive manufacturing technology at Letterkenny Army Depot, Pa.

Senate confirms Chairman of Joints Chiefs, two defense leaders

By C. Todd Lopez

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

The Senate has confirmed the appointment of three military leaders to positions within the Defense Department.

The Senate voted to confirm Air Force Gen. CQ Brown, Jr. to be chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Today, the Senate voted to confirm Gen. Randy A. George as Army chief of staff and Gen. Eric M. Smith as Marine Corps commandant.

"I want to congratulate Gen. Charles Q. Brown, Jr. on his confirmation as our nation's next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III said following last night's confirmation vote. "He will be a tremendous leader of our joint force, and I look forward to working with him in his new capacity."

Since August 2020, Brown had served as Air Force chief of staff. In his new role, he will replace outgoing Chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, who retires at the end of this month. Brown will be sworn in later this month.

Brown began his service as a pilot. He has served as both an instructor and commandant at the Air Force Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada. He was also the commander of the 8th Fighter Wing, dubbed the Wolf Pack, in Kunsan, South Korea.

Brown's nomination as the new chairman was announced in May. At the time, Austin voiced his approval of the choice when he said Brown "has developed the expertise, the vision and the warfighting acumen to help the president and senior DOD [Defense Department] leaders navigate today's toughest national security challenges. In his tenure leading the U.S. Air Force, he has been a model of strategic clarity and a powerful force for progress."

Austin also offered congratulations to George and Smith following their confir-

mations.

"I want to congratulate Gen. Randy A. George and Gen. Eric M. Smith on their confirmation as our nation's next chief of staff of the Army and commandant of the Marine Corps, respectively," Austin said. "They will each be incredible leaders of their service and will work to strengthen and modernize our military for the challenges ahead."

During testimony in July, George said preparing for future conflicts would be among his top priorities as chief of staff of the Army.

"My No. 1 focus will be on warfighting, so that our Army is always ready to respond when our nation calls," George said. "Second, I will work to ensure that we are continually improving to stay ahead of our potential adversaries. As the war in Ukraine has shown us, we are in a rapidly changing strategic environment. We can't afford not to evolve."

Smith took over as acting commandant of the Marine Corps in July, following the departure of outgoing Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. David H. Berger. Smith had served as deputy commandant for combat development and integration at Marine Corps headquarters and as commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

Over the past several months, a hold in the Senate has prevented lawmakers from using traditional means to confirm military personnel who have been nominated to leadership positions in the Defense Department. The most recent confirmation votes used an alternative voting method to confirm those leaders.

The current Senate hold has affected more than 300 general and flag-officer nominations and continues to affect the smooth transition of leadership within the department, defense leaders have said.

[Read more, click here](#)

Here come the house guests: The misery of expecting company

On Monday morning, I sat at the kitchen island to write my To Do list for the week. Company was coming on Thursday, and there was much to do.

This wasn't just any company. Not our siblings, who were easy-going enough to ignore the tumbleweeds of dog hair blowing through our house. Not our mothers, who were too old to see the moldy caulk in the corner of the shower. Not our high school or college friends, who we had enough blackmail "dirt" on to keep them from complaining.

The houseguests coming Thursday were Doug and Suz, Navy friends we'd met in 2001, while stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. Although Doug and Suz were Navy folks like us, our lives had been very different. When we met, we were in our mid-thirties. Our family lived in a suburban house on a cul-de-sac

with a playset in the back yard. I drove a minivan sprinkled with cold french fries, and my idea of luxury was taking long showers at the YMCA while the kids were in childcare.

Doug had recently left active duty to be an airline pilot, so he and Suz bought a house in a cool part of Virginia Beach, steps from the ocean. Without any kids to worry about, they owned a vintage red Jeep Wrangler, and their "family room" contained a large pool table and a stocked liquor cabinet. Their home decor included original paintings from their favorite modern artists. They went to rock concerts, took winter ski vacations, and ate at Michelin Star restaurants around the globe.

At the top of my To Do list, my handwriting started at a pleasingly legible 16-point script. But as I thought of more and more tasks to squeeze onto the small slip of paper, it became barely visible. "I can't let them see our kitchen like this ... they make their own sushi for criminy's sake," I muttered, as panic set in.

I dug underneath the sink like a deranged underground miner, coming up with three sponges, six bottles of cleaning products, and the frayed toothbrush I used to scrub dog doo out of tennis

shoe treads. In a frenzy, I scoured the cabinets, appliances, and backsplash. I feather-dusted the fan blades, mopped the floor and collected cobwebs in the corners.

While wiping up crumbs, I spied the melange of health aids I kept on the countertop for easy access — Metamucil for regularity, and a large pill organizer packed with a self-prescribed assortment of vitamins intended to delay my eventual demise. "How embarrassing," I realized, quickly stuffing it all into a drawer.

On Tuesday, while vacuuming the living room, I noticed the water rings on Aunt Millie's buffet and the fresh chew marks on my parents' 1978 coffee table from our seven-month-old lab, Gilligan. The hodgepodge of second-hand furniture that once passed for "shabby chic" suddenly looked like dusty old junk. Remembering Doug and Suz's sleek modern home decor, I futilely plumped pillows and hid knickknacks.

On Wednesday, while putting fresh sheets on the guest bed, I saw myself in a mirror and gasped. I was young when I met Suz. In the last 22 years, I'd raised three children while moving seven more times. I'd lost my legal career, countless friends, and bladder control.

I'd grown squishier, wrinklier, saggier and infinitely more tired. Conversely, Suz and Doug had spent that 22 years living at their beach house, developing careers, working out, straightening their teeth, and growing their enormous friend group.

"The Navy did this to me!" I scrambled for an explanation for why I'd let myself go, envisioning Suz looking me up and down with her damned aqua-blue eyes, blonde locks and lean frame.

Just then, the retro "dance" ringtone I'd selected on my phone startled me. "Hello, Suz?" I answered, apprehensively. We discussed their arrival time and our plans for the weekend, before I confessed, "I'm really old now, by the way."

To my surprise, my military spouse friend of 22 years replied, "Me too," and we shared stories about the pains in our hips and knees. They say, "Misery loves company," but I was just happy that my friend and I still had something in common after all.

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

COLUMN



Molinari



www.NavyMWRMeridian.com



4V4 COED VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

Registration:
October 9-November 9

Team Meeting:
November 9th at 1500

Games begin:
November 13th at 1730

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Chili Cook-off: 1300-1530 at Rudders
Haunted House: 1800-2100 at Bldg. 266

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FIRE PREVENTION STORY TIME

October 4th • 1000 • Library

CREEPY CRAWLY GUESSING JAR

EVERY TUESDAY AT THE LIBERTY CENTER

Every Tuesday come out to the Liberty Center to guess how many creepy crawlies are in a jar! Winners will be notified every Wednesday to pick up their prizes!

Friday the 13th Weekend Movie Marathon

Oct. 13th-15th • McCain Theater

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1300: Addam's Family (PG)	1300: Haunted Mansion (PG)	1300: Ruby Gillman, Teenage Kraken (PG)
1500: Beetjuice (PG)	1500: Young Frankenstein (PG)	1500: Barbie (PG-13)
1800: Friday the 13th (R)	1800: Blair Witch Project (R)	1800: Rocky Horror Picture Show (R)

Sip & Spin

When: October 17th at 1700
Where: Hobby Shop located Behind the Library

A little wine, clay, & a whole lot of dirty fun! Enjoy a night of wheel throwing & refreshments.

Costs \$20 per person
Price includes materials & 2 alcoholic beverages
Register and pay for the class from October 1-16th at McCain Recreation Center.
Spots are limited!

NO OUTSIDE BEVERAGES ALLOWED