

## News Bytes

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**Navy rolls out new incentives for Sailors who refer new recruits**

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# Meridian: CNRSE Security Force of the Year

## ASF contributes to Security's success

By MC2 Molly Tice  
 NAS Meridian Public Affairs

Commander, Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) recently named Naval Air Station (NAS) Meridian the 2023 Navy Security Force (NSF) of the Year for small installations.

This award recognizes installations for their exceptional efforts, resilience in the face of many challenges and dedicated performance in accomplishing the security mission of protecting the Navy's fleet, fighter and family.

While the NAS Meridian NSF team does an amazing job at protecting the installation and its people, sustaining that level of superior performance requires a little back up – enter the Auxiliary Security Force (ASF).

"ASF is the Auxiliary Security Forces," said Master-at-Arms Chief Ralph Garcia, Operations Leading Chief Petty Officer. "They bolster the security posture during significant incidents that may occur on base and assist with big base events on top of the two - eight hour watches they stand every month."

● ASF, page 4



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Sailors assigned to the Navy and Auxiliary Security Forces train on tactical movements and room clearing at the Lakeside Building onboard NAS Meridian.

## Happy Birthday Chiefs!



Chief Petty Officers from NAS Meridian and various tenant commands muster for morning colors outside the Administration building onboard NAS Meridian, April 1. This day marked the 131st birthday of the Navy's Chief Petty Officer rank.

Photo by Adam Prince



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Nearly 50 law enforcement officers from Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana recently attended the Synthetic Opioid and Fentanyl Processing Class at the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy located onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

## RCTA hosts synthetic opioid and fentanyl processing class

By Penny Randall  
 Public Affairs Officer

The Regional Counterdrug Training Academy hosted a Synthetic Opioid and Fentanyl Processing Class for law enforcement members at their facility located onboard Naval Air Station Meridian March 29.

The group was comprised of nearly 50 civilian and military law enforcement members from Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana for the day-long class.

The course is designed to combat the emerging synthetic opioid threat while focusing on the hazards associated with contact of these dangerous substances. Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is up to 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. It is a major contributor to fatal and nonfatal overdoses in the U.S.

The instructor for the recent class was Gil Van Attenhoven, a retired Senior Special Agent in Charge from the California Department of Justice, who has 29 years of law enforcement experience. He stressed to the class that the synthetic opioid production and distribution is at the highest levels he has seen in years.

"It's not slowing down at all," Van Attenhoven said. "It's important to show officers and train them on what's out there, what's happening with the drugs, and then also, to learn how to investigate these types of cases."

### In the class, law enforcement members learned:

- Recognize opioid users and why they overdose on these dangerous drugs.
- Recognize synthetic opioid labs including all paraphernalia, safely process all suspected drugs as evidence and safely dismantle all equipment.

● RCTA, page 4

## Fair Winds and Following Seas, Daryl



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Military Working Dog, Daryl, poses in a picture with his handler, Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Anthony Barretta, April 1. After working with the Navy for nearly six years, Daryl retired and was adopted by Barretta.



## Nine aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in March pinning ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony March 29 onboard Naval Air Station Meridian.

Nine 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."



Capt. Francisco Blankemeyer



LT Thomas Courtney



LT Ryan Gibbons



1STLT Kier Hilaire



LTJG Benjamin Meinster



LT Jacob Mendelson



LTJG Ryan Quigg



Capt. Kenneth Sandy



LTJG Matt Underwood

## Golden Stick



Laura Carmichael, President of the Mississippi Council of the Navy League, left, presents LTJG Ryan Quigg with the Golden Stick award during a winging ceremony in the Chapel onboard NAS Meridian, March 29. The Golden Stick is awarded to the student with the highest composite score during training.

Photo by Adam Prince

## NTTC Pass and Review



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

Naval Technical Training Center Meridian accompanied by Marine Aviation Training Support Squadron One and Naval Air Technical Training Center enlisted "A" School students completed a Pass and Review on March 28. Nearly 350 Navy and Marine Corps personnel participated in the event.

## Women's History Program



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

The Lean on Us Association-Meridian Chapter along with the Multi-Cultural Committee hosted a Women's History Month Program March 28. The guest speaker was Senior Airman Baylee Beightol, a loadmaster with the 815th Airlift Squadron at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. She also holds the title of Miss New South 2024 and will compete in Miss Mississippi this June.

## Wheeler Commissioning



Ensign Andrew Wheeler recites the Oath of Office during a commissioning ceremony at the Navy Reserve Center onboard NAS Meridian, April 1. Wheeler -- previously an Air Traffic Controller Chief Petty Officer -- was commissioned as part of the Limited Duty Officer Program, and will continue his Naval career in San Diego.

Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

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

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# Local Happenings

## APRIL

**6: Maker Faire Meridian** from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Soule Steam Feed Works. Maker Faire Meridian is a family-friendly event that gives everyone an opportunity for conversations with Makers — crafters, educators, tinkerers, hobbyists, engineers, science clubs, authors, artists, students, inventors, photographers, tech enthusiasts, and entrepreneurs. Call 601-693-9905 or visit <https://www.makefairemeridian.com>.

**12: Full Moon on 5th** from 6-9 p.m. at 5th Street between 22nd and 23rd Avenues. Join the Arts and Community Events Society for a magical night in Downtown Meridian! String lights and two giant illuminated moons set the mood for a unique block party that you don't want to miss. Call 601-480-6100 or visit <https://www.acesmeridian.org/>.

**20: Kids Fishing Rodeo** from 8-10:30 a.m. at QV Sykes Park. Kids ages 5-17 participate in trying to catch as many catfish as possible with some being tagged for prizes. Call 601-485-1802 or visit [jamescarson@meridianms.org](mailto:jamescarson@meridianms.org).

**26: Family Escape Room: The Case of the Missing Guitar** from 6-9 p.m. at Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience. Unleash your inner detective and embark on a thrilling adventure at The MAX! Call 601-581-1550, ext 35 or visit <https://www.msarts.org/events/family-escape-room-the-case-of-the-missing-guitar/?occurrence=2024-04-26>

# Area Happenings

## APRIL

**11: French Quarter Festival 2024** at 11 a.m. in the French Quarter, 400 N Peters St #205, New Orleans. Visit <https://www.neworleans.com/event/french-quarter-festival/3268/>

**21: Lewis Black** at 7 p.m. at Buckhead Theatre, 3110 Roswell Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30305. Visit <https://www.lewisblack.com/products/atlanta-ga-apr-21-2024>.

**20-21: Talladega GEICO 500** at the Talladega Superspeedway. NASCAR's Most Competitive venue announced that select ticket options, including premium upgrades and new, modified fan experiences, are available. Visit <https://www.talladegasuperspeedway.com/>

## Navy launches culture of excellence 2.0

The Navy launched Culture of Excellence 2.0 (COE 2.0) with NAVADMIN 051/24 on March 11, 2024, as an actionable approach to building great culture at every Navy command.

Culture of Excellence 2.0 focuses on building Great People, Great Leaders, and Great Teams, with the knowledge that this is the best way to prepare for victory in combat, innovate and solve hard problems, and prevent harmful behaviors. It is designed to simplify, streamline, and align traditional Navy programs with new concepts in order to close the gap between the Navy's highest and lowest performing commands.

"I am releasing Culture of Excellence 2.0 (COE 2.0), the foundation by which our Navy builds its Warfighters — our People, Leaders, and Teams — as a key

enabler of delivering the decisive combat power I talked about in 'America's Warfighting Navy,'" Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti wrote in the naval administrative message.

Culture of Excellence 2.0 is written for command triads and leaders at all levels, but it can also be used by every member of the Navy Team, including civilians, to define what great culture looks like at every Navy command.

Several products accompany the launch. These include a new COE 2.0 visual placemat that serves as a concise explanation of "what right looks like," and a playbook that serves as a comprehensive guide to implement COE 2.0 at the command level.

-- From Chief of Naval Personnel  
Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

## Navy resources arrive in Baltimore to support Key Bridge efforts

The Chesapeake, a 1,000-ton lift capacity derrick barge, the Ferrell, a 200-ton lift capacity revolving crane barge, and the Oyster Bay, a 150-ton lift capacity crane barge have arrived in Baltimore Harbor. An additional 400-ton lift capacity barge is on track to arrive early next week. The barges, contracted through Naval Sea Systems Command, will support the Coast Guard-led Unified Command in its effort to clear and reopen the channel.

The barges will be used by the Navy's Supervisor of Salvage and Diving to remove submerged portions of the Francis Scott Key Bridge.

SUPSALV will accomplish the work in phases. Following an overall assessment, work will focus on disassembling

and removing the bridge section by section. The disassembled pieces will be lifted onto barges, which will then be transported away.

An additional 12 crane and support vessels including tugs, survey, dive and crew boats are in the mobilization process and will arrive to Baltimore in the coming days. SUPSALV will manage the operation and use of all assets to provide centralized oversight of all salvage operations.

SUPSALV is a world leader in the ocean engineering discipline of marine salvage, towing, pollution control and abatement, diving and diving system safety, salvage equipment procurement and underwater ship husbandry.

-- By Navy Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

## Nearly 250,000 veterans to receive payouts in 3M earplug settlement

Officials from 3M said that more than 249,000 veterans will receive payouts through a settlement over combat earplug defects. (Richard Drew/AP)

More than 249,000 veterans will receive part of the \$6 billion lawsuit settlement against 3M as part of the Combat Arms Earplug settlement announced in 2023, corporate officials announced.

The figure represents more than 99% of all of the claimants who filed suit against the manufacturing company, ac-

cusing them of causing hearing damage in troops through faulty production of military-grade hearing protection.

The earplugs, produced by Aearo Technologies before that company was bought by 3M in 2008, were sold from 1999 to 2015 and used extensively by troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as other locations.

The high-profile legal fight has been grinding through courts for years ...

-- By Leo Shane III

[Read more, click here](#)

# Sale... Or

### BOATS/CAMPERS/TRAILERS

**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 tow-

ing 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:** 4 BD/2.5 BA home 3632 sq ft, just over 6 acres with workshop attached to 2-car carport. Owners will consider a lease of 12-36 months, and rent is negotiable the longer the term. Call (601)

517-1707 or (601) 517-1707.

**For Rent:** 3BD /2BA home near North Hills. Spacious yard, concrete patio for gatherings, home gym and covered car garage. Rent \$1,100 per month. Call Jeremy at 601-410-8555.

**For Rent:** 3 BD/1.5 BA home 15 minutes from NAS at 4814 36th Ave. New refrigerator and 2-year old AC & furnace. Call Terrance at 469-318-9769.

**For Rent:** 3 BD/1.5 BA with another room used as a gym. All kitchen appliances included. Large backyard. Address 145 Skyland Drive, Meridian.

About 25 minutes to Navy Base. \$900 per month, with \$900 deposit. Available Aug. 1. No pets. Call 601-490-0849.

**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 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

**For Sale:** Husqvarna RZ 4623 Zero Turn Mower. 46 inch cut. \$1250. Call 601-616-4242.

**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, email [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)



## Ramirez MAP



Photo by Adam Prince

**CAPT Luke Davis, left, commanding officer of NAS Meridian, presents Master-at-Arms Second Class Nicholas Ramirez with a Certificate of Appointment during a ceremony outside Security onboard NAS Meridian, March 29. Ramirez -- NAS Meridian's Blue Jacket of the Quarter -- was meritoriously promoted to Second Class Petty Officer during the ceremony.**

## Awards Quarters



Photo by Adam Prince

**Civilians and Sailors pose for a photo during an awards ceremony at the Air Operations building onboard NAS Meridian, March 21.**

## Teacher Salute



Photo by MC2 Molly Tice

**NAS Meridian's Commanding Officer CAPT Luke Davis presents Sidney Clay with the "Teacher Salute" award in her classroom at West Lauderdale Elementary School. Clay is a kindergarten teacher and was selected to receive the award for her dedication to teaching, inspiring, and growing the hearts and minds of all students, especially military children. The award is given quarterly to teachers in Lauderdale County Schools.**

### ● ASF

After being selected to join ASF, Sailors and Marines must undergo three weeks of training -- called the ASF Academy -- before passing their final examination and becoming a qualified watch stander.

"Our ASF Academy training includes OC spray, weapons qualifications, room clearing, anti-terrorism and force protection," said Garcia. "Sailors are then tested on their knowledge and ability to perform before we can fully qualify them to stand an armed watch."

What makes ASF so unique is the fact that these Sailors and Marines must learn new skills and information, and then utilize their training for situations that are completely unrelated to their jobs. NAS Meridian's ASF team is comprised of Sailors with all types of rates including Corpsman, Air Traffic Controller and even a Religious Programs Specialist.

"When I was in A-school I didn't think I would end up armed and standing sentry," said Religious Programs Specialist 3rd Class Kentaija Brown, whose day-to-day job is to assist the base Chaplain. "But I'm enjoying my time on ASF, especially when it's training day and we get to learn things like tactical movements and room clearing."

Although different from her normal job, the importance of ASF is not lost on Brown.

"ASF is important because of the stress and pressure we are able to relieve from our Master-at-Arms (MA)," said Brown. "The MAs are our 24/7 watch standers, but when you add in ASF, we can supplement when or where needed -- ensuring that our mission needs are not only met but exceeded."

The Security team onboard NAS Meridian stands as an excellent example of "Ship, Shipmates, Self"; prioritizing the safety and security of the base; the people and only then ... themselves. It's no wonder how they've been able to achieve so many milestones, but none of it could have been done without the ASF Sailors and Marines.

### ● RCTA

- Employ proper safety equipment and protocols needed to search, seize and properly submit evidence of all synthetic opioids -- while avoiding exposure to potential life-threatening substances.

- Recognize and safely confront subjects using synthetic opioids.

- Recognize and respond to any law enforcement accidental or other exposure to synthetic opioids and properly deploy naloxone on another officer.

"We are training these officers how to respond to the scene, how to hopefully identify the trafficker or the dealer, and then subsequently prosecute them," Van Attenhoven said.

NAS Meridian Security Force Training Officer Major Jonathan Stanley attended the class.

Before coming to NAS Meridian, Stanley served on a drug task force in Atlanta, Georgia, as a metro police officer.

"I worked numerous cases where people had accidentally overdosed on opioids and used it recreational," Stanley said. "Our Naval Security Forces (NSF) need the training because we deal with a multitude of people visiting NAS Meridian and some have contraband that may be dangerous to our personnel -- military and civilians. I will use this training to train our NSF members on the dangers and how to protect themselves when collecting dangerous drugs as evidence. The training was extremely informative because it can help save a life at home or at work."

Jimmy Webb who served as a law enforcement

officer in Louisiana for 30 years was a student in the recent class. Webb is now a campus policeman at Bossier Parish Community College in Louisiana.

"Statics are just staggering. It causes us a great deal of concern because we are dealing with students and young people every day," Webb said. "I was very interested in updating my knowledge and gaining some instructions on how to deal with these synthetic drugs," Webb said.

Webb also mentioned what he found interesting in the class.

"They talked about the use of the, Narcan, which we have on our campus and this class helped me to better understand how to use it to help someone," Webb said.

Narcan is the nasal spray has recently been approved as an over-the-counter opioid overdose treatment which can aid law enforcement officers in times of emergencies.

### What is RCTA?

The Regional Counterdrug Training Academy was established to provide counterdrug training to members of federal, state, tribal and local law enforcement agencies, community base organizations, and military members with tuition free instruction on drug interdiction and counterdrug activities, and drug demand supply, reduction and prevention techniques. For more information on the many classes offered at the Regional Counterdrug Training Academy visit their website at Regional Counterdrug Training Academy -- The Best in Counterdrug Training ([www.rcta.org](http://www.rcta.org)).

## High school reunion road trip; Standing the test of time

I tooted the horn before pulling out onto our street. My husband waved, with the dog standing nearby. I wouldn't see them again until Sunday afternoon.

When our military family was active duty, I was content taking a couple of trips a year. But now, as a "retired" military spouse that doesn't move anymore, I depend on weekend getaways to break up the monotony of normal civilian life.

I had planned this trip with my high school girlfriends months ago, and my excitement was building. In four hours, I'd arrive in the Catskills, and meet up with Patrice, my best friend since ninth grade, and three other girlfriends whom I hadn't seen much since we graduated from high school in 1984 -- Andrea, Peggy and Ann.

As my GPS rattled on, I thought of the tote bag in the trunk containing a

motherlode of high school memorabilia: my old yearbooks, photographs, journals, and dog-eared notes passed in study hall. My hoarding tendencies had paid off after all.

While making my way to Upstate New York, I envisioned our rental house. The Airbnb photos depicted a spacious, Swiss-style chalet, seemingly plucked straight out of the Alps, in a gorgeous sylvan setting, with a charming warming hut and an outdoor hot tub.

"We're going to have a blast," I thought, imagining us as unrealistically stylish, thirty-something actresses, flipping locks of shiny hair, flashing brilliant white teeth, wearing slouchy cotton sweaters and well-worn Levis, drinking fine wines around an open fire, before a spectacular mountain backdrop.

It was a bad habit of mine -- imagining things to be far better than reality -- that set me up for disappointment.

That cold, drizzly afternoon, I drove my car through dreary, mud-splattered towns, past abandoned motor lodges and rinky-dink diners. Over a bridge and up a hill, I turned onto an unpaved dead end road, and finally, onto our rental property as directed by my GPS. "You have arrived."

"Wait, what?" I said, peering bug-eyed

out of the smeary windshield of my car. "This is it?" The small, wood-sided house looked nothing like the photographs online.

"It'll be fine," my best friend said, laughing. Patrice had driven up from Pittsburgh with Peggy. Soon, Andrea arrived, followed by Ann, who surprised us by wearing her old cheerleading sweater.

I was prepared to impose a strict activity schedule to combat awkward silences. However, the chatter never stopped. Conversation and laughter flowed for hours on end as if we'd never left high school. Food and drink appeared in a haphazard, chaotic dribble throughout the night, until the table was piled high with burnt pizza burgers, wine glasses, pierogis, peanut butter confection bars, buffalo chicken dip, cheese and crackers, chips, yearbooks and photographs.

"Oh my God, listen to this!" each of us yelled before reading lines from an old note or yearbook autograph. Our adolescent scribbles expressed the immature sentiments of our teen years: "The dance is in two days and no one has asked me yet!" "I hate Chemistry!" "Did you tell him I like him?" "Gag me with a fork!" "I'll never get a boyfriend!" "She's so FAKE!"

Although we'd made plans to explore

the Catskills on Saturday, we barely made it out of our pajamas. Pots of coffee led to bloody marys and mimosas. This time, the table was heaped with bagels, sweet rolls, quiche, fruit, and again, our yearbooks. That afternoon, while snow fell over the Catskills, we sat around a roaring fire in the warming hut, singing along to The B-52s, The Go-gos, The Squeeze, U2, Prince, Tears for Fears, Depeche Mode, The Police, and more.

That night, although we were all reluctant to stuff our imperfect 57-year-old bodies into bathing suits, we got in the hot tub. Like a water-filled time machine, the hot tub transported us back in time. Bobbing in the bubbles, we were fifteen again, cracking juvenile jokes and busting each others' chops.

On my Sunday drive home, I noticed that overnight, the trees had been encased in thick layers of ice, glittering like silver sequins in the bright sunlight. It occurred to me that the weekend hadn't disappointed me after all. In fact, reality was even better than I'd imagined.

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

### COLUMN



Molinari





# CAPTAIN'S CUP BASKETBALL LEAGUE

**REGISTRATION: APRIL 9 - MAY 3**

**TEAM MEETING: MAY 2 AT 1500**

**GAMES BEGIN: MAY 6 AT 1730**

**SCAN THE QR CODE OR CALL (601) 679-2367 FOR MORE INFO.**





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### ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

April 9 • 1530-2145 • Liberty Center



JOIN US AS WE RECOGNIZE ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH BY USING "DRUNK GOGGLES" TO VISUALIZE THE EFFECTS OF DRINKING TOO MUCH.

WE'LL HAVE AN ADULT TRICYCLE AVAILABLE FOR IMPAIRED TEST DRIVES TO EXPERIENCE THE DANGER OF DRUNK DRIVING FIRST-HAND.



### FISHING TOURNAMENT

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### Sip & Spin

April 16 at 5 p.m.



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### Purple Up Day!

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Child Development Center

Celebrate Month of the Military Child by wearing purple!



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