

## NEWS

## BYTES

~ Click ~

**Gorbachev mourned as rare world leader but some still bitter**

~ Click ~

**AP, other news outlets sue Uvalde officials for records**

~ Click ~

**Leaky battleship in Texas begins trip for \$35M repairs**

~ Click ~

**AP Source: Russell Wilson gets five-year, \$245M extension**

## WHAT'S INSIDE

~ page 2 ~

**1STLT Sven Jorgensen earns Golden Stick**

~ page 3 ~

**HM1 Laboy retirement**



~ page 4 ~

**Special Operations Command ceremony**

Follow us on [www.facebook.com/NASMeridian](https://www.facebook.com/NASMeridian)

# Anderson takes helm of VT-9

From Staff Reports

The "Tigers" of Training Squadron Nine (VT-9) held a change of command ceremony onboard Naval Air Station Meridian, at which Cmdr. Jared "Blake" Thomas was relieved by Cmdr. Jim "RAD" Anderson, Aug. 19.

Cmdr. Thomas served as the commanding officer of VT-9 from May 2021 to August 2022.

Thomas thanked the leadership of Training Air Wing One and his sister Squadron Training Squadron Seven (VT-7) for their support during his time as leader of VT-9. But it was the civilians and military staff he recognized as going above and beyond to support the "Tigers" of VT-9.

"To the student aviators, I offer you as my parting gift the one full proof strategy to succeed in flight school and the fleet... listen to your



Photo by Adam Prince

**Training Air Wing One Commodore Capt. Robert Lanane, left, salutes Cmdr. Jared Thomas, center, outgoing commanding officer of Training Squadron Nine. Cmdr. James Anderson, right, became the incoming commanding officer of VT-9 during a change of command ceremony, Aug. 19.**

instructors," Thomas said. "To the instructor pilots I will say again I have been continuously impressed with your skill, dedication and hard work. The work you put in here in Meridian is the most challenging and regions flight training in the world -- it is what makes us the world's best Navy on the battlefield. Train well, fly safe and I hope to see you on the flight deck soon."

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Capt. Scott Wastak, Deputy Commander, Airborne Command & Control and Logistics Wing.

"We each choose to serve for our own unique and selfless reasons, but when the flag goes up and it's time to fight our selfless reasons become one -- service above self -- this is what is special about the camaraderie and resiliency we building when you are part of a squadron."

● VT-9, page 2

## CNATRA visits



Photo by Adam Prince

**Lt. Cmdr. Douglas DeVouno, left, speaks with Rear Adm. Richard Brophy, chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), as they walk from a flight in the T-45C Goshawk jet at the flightline of McCain Field onboard Naval Air Station Meridian, Aug. 25. This is Brophy's first visit to Training Air Wing One since taking command of CNATRA in July.**

## Low on water, prep football adapts in Mississippi's capital

By David Brandt  
AP News

Even so, he considers his team one of the lucky ones as a water crisis roils Mississippi's largest city.

The football coach at Murrah High School — right in the middle of Jackson, Mississippi, not far from the state capitol — says that his fieldhouse has about 40 to 50 cases of bottled water stacked along the walls thanks to players' parents, administration and other benefactors. That should be plenty for his team to drink over the next few days at practice.

"Hydration isn't much of a problem," he said "It's everything else."

Many Jackson residents have been without running water in their homes and businesses this week because of breakdowns in the city's main water

treatment plant. Torrential rains caused the Pearl River to flood, exacerbating problems with pumps.

Jackson schools moved to online classes and canceled some of this week-end's high school football games because of uncertainty about water. Some restaurants closed, while others are bringing in tankers of clean water from the suburbs. People are waiting in long lines to receive bottled water for drinking or non-potable water for flushing toilets.

Even before the water pressure dropped perilously low, Jackson's water system was fragile and officials had warned for years that widespread loss of service was possible.

Now it's happened — right in the middle of the hottest part of football season.

● Jackson, page 4

## Navy's newest Sailors sponsored by III MEF

**"Navy and Marine Corps Integration should start at the very lowest levels; and I could not think of a better place than Recruit Training Command."**

— III MEF Command Master Chief Curtis Blunt

By Staff Sgt. Caitlin Brink  
III Marine Expeditionary Force

For the first time in history, III Marine Expeditionary Force sponsored a U.S. Navy boot camp division as part of the recruit division sponsorship program at Recruit Training Command Great Lakes, Illinois, providing mentorship from their first day to their graduation on Aug. 26, 2022.

The division sponsorship program allows commands to support boot camp divisions throughout their rigorous eight-week transformation from civilians to U.S. Navy Sailors.

"The sponsorship program was developed due to the high interest by military and civilian organizations to learn about the recruit training command, provide mentorship to recruits, and be a part of the Sailorization process," said Senior Chief Carl Haydysch, a Recruit Services Officer and Sponsorship Coordinator. "Sponsorship develops a special bond between recruit divisions and military or civilian organizations. Mentorship and direct contact from these entities enhances basic training and provides a unique learning experience for recruits and sponsoring groups."

Sponsoring commands are highly encouraged to be present at key events such as Battle Stations, a 12-hour culminating event that leads to the capping ceremony where recruits receive Navy ball caps to replace their recruit caps, and finally, the pass-in-review graduation ceremony.

III MEF Command Master Chief Curtis Blunt traveled from Okinawa, Japan to tour RTC facilities, interact with recruits, and provide mentorship to the Navy's newest sailors. The graduates of Division 263 were given the opportunity to speak to Blunt and ask questions about life as a Sailor and working alongside Marines with III MEF.

● Marine, page 2

## Two aviators earn 'Wings of Gold' in August pinning ceremony

There was a naval aviator designation ceremony Aug. 26 on-board Naval Air Station Meridian.

Two naval 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 Ryan Baxter



1STLT Sven Jorgensen

### ● VT-9

Cmdr. Thomas's leadership and innovative resourcefulness were instrumental in achieving production goals, and training the highest quality United States Navy and Marine Corps student naval aviators and our allied countries of the United Kingdom, Spain, and Italy. Training Squadron Nine executed 17,423 training flight hours in the T-45C Goshawk.

Despite a challenging and rapidly changing pandemic environment, he optimized production through eight carrier qualification detachments. Additionally, his proactive approach and mission focused enabled Training Squadron Nine to wing 58 Navy and Marine Corps Strike/Fighter Aviators, six E-2/C-2 aviators, and five international military students.

Cmdr. James Anderson is a native of Theodore, Alabama. He received his commission in 2003 from the United States Naval Academy. After training in Training Squadron (VT) 27 and VT-31 in Corpus Christi, Texas, and VT-21 in Kingsville, Texas, he was designated a naval aviator in July 2005. After winging, he reported to Carrier Airborne Early Warning Squadron (VAW) 120 in Norfolk, Virginia, for Fleet Replacement training in the E-2C Hawkeye.

In 2006, Anderson completed two deployments aboard the USS Nimitz (CVN 68) with Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 11 in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

In June 2009, Anderson transferred to NAS Meridian, for a tour with the "Eagles" of VT-7 where he was designated an instructor pilot in the T-45C Goshawk.

In December 2016, Anderson reported to Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) in Washington, D.C. During his time at OPNAV, he served as branch officer for N310, operations and information and as an assistant battle watch captain. Anderson reported back to TW-1 in February 2019 as the FTS operational support officer (OSO), where he provided administrative support to 46 selected reserve instructor pilots. Anderson has accumulated more than 3,500 flight hours and more than 200 carrier arrested landings.

VT-9 trains the highest quality Naval Aviators for service in



Photo by Adam Prince

Melissa Anderson places the command pin on her husband's, Cmdr. James Anderson, uniform during the change of command ceremony for Training Squadron Nine onboard NAS Meridian, Aug. 19. Anderson is the incoming commanding officer of VT-9, one of two squadrons which train student Navy and Marine Corps aviators in the T-45C Goshawk.

the fleet and allied partner nations' operating forces. Its personnel include 38 active-duty and Navy Reserve instructor pilots who train on average 85 student naval aviators a year. VT-9 operates under Training Air Wing 1 as part of the Naval Air Training Command headquartered in Corpus Christi, Texas.

## Golden Stick



Photo by Adam Prince

Roger Burke, left, President of the Mississippi Council of the Navy League presents 1STLT Sven Jorgensen, with the Golden Stick award during a winging ceremony in the chapel onboard NAS Meridian, Aug. 26. The Golden Stick is presented to the student with the highest composite score during flight training.

## NMRTU Frocking



Photo by Adam Prince

From left: HM3 Ian Brannon, HM3 Kennedy Lemoine and HM3 Nicholas Stacy are frocked to 3rd class petty officer during a ceremony at Navy Medical Training and Readiness Unit Meridian, Aug. 29.

### September Event Highlights

Questions: POC Kristal.M.Mutwiri@navy.mil

September 1 <sup>st</sup>	Wear yellow to show you support suicide awareness and prevention. Snap and post a selfie with #BeThere for #EverySailorEvery Day.
September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	NAS MERIDIAN Proclamation Signing & Yellow Ribbon Hanging
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	Join the effort to prevent the 22 veteran / soldier deaths that happen every day in the US. Participate in the Stronger Together 5K event at 0800 Meridian City Hall. 1-mile kids fun run / 2.2-mile memorial walk.
September 14 <sup>th</sup>	Chalk the walks. Gather your family, friends, & neighbors and write messages of hope and healing on the sidewalks at your home or The Fleet & Family Support Center. Snap and post a selfie with #1SmallAct.
September 15 <sup>th</sup>	Take the 1 Small Act pledge. Decorate and post a pledge (online, in your work area, or your home) stating how with 1 Small Act you can help Be There for Every Sailor Every Day.
September 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Help keep you and your loved ones safe. Visit Fleet & Family's Gun Lock Distribution Table at the Administration Building #255.

**Project 1 Small ACT**  
1 Small ACT can make a difference or save a life.

#### SIGNS TO HELP RECOGNIZE WHEN YOU'RE STRESSED:

- PHYSICAL SIGNS** change in energy level, muscle tension, etc.
- EMOTIONAL SIGNS** negative thoughts, feeling overwhelmed, easily agitated, etc.
- SOCIAL OR BEHAVIORAL SIGNS** spending less time with friends/family, increased use of alcohol or tobacco, etc.

**CONFIDENTIAL, 24/7 SUPPORT FOR STRESS:**

**MILITARY ONESOURCE:**  
call 1-800-342-9647  
visit [www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)

**REAL WARRIORS LIVE CHAT:**  
call 866-966-1020  
visit [www.realwarriors.net/livechat](http://www.realwarriors.net/livechat)

**GIVE AN HOUR:**  
visit <https://giveanhour.org/get-help/>

**CRISIS TEXT LINE:**  
text 741741

**TO PROMOTE RECOVERY**  
IT'S OKAY TO SPEAK UP WHEN YOU'RE DOWN

**SEEK GUIDANCE** from a medical professional, support resource, counselor, or a Navy chaplain.

**COMMUNICATE** with a trusted shipmate or leader to harness support and promote safety.

**PRACTICE** the strategies you identified above.

**SAIL**  
Sailor Assistance & Intercept for Life

**IF YOU ARE IN CRISIS AND NEED IMMEDIATE HELP:**

**CALL** Military Crisis Line for 24/7 confidential support at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) and Press 1

**TEXT** 838255

**VISIT** [www.militarycrisisline.net](http://www.militarycrisisline.net) for chat support.

### ● Marine

"RTC San Diego was 35 years ago for me, but I definitely would have liked to speak to someone that was not a [recruit division commander]," said Blunt. "I spoke to [the recruits] as I would any other Sailor or Marine that I serve with today. From the very start I ensured that no topic was off limits. I believe it motivated them to speak to someone out in the fleet."

"Navy and Marine Corps Integration should start at the very lowest levels; and I could not think of a better place than Recruit Training Command," said Blunt. "About 10-15% of the Sailors in our sponsored division will become [hospital corpsmen] or [religious program specialists]. Sailors like to receive as much information as possible, as soon as possible, and any interaction with someone in the fleet will be a building block in their career." "Being sponsored had a huge impact on not just myself, but our whole division," said Rutledge, who was also named the top

Sailor in his training group of 909 graduates. "When Command Master Chief visited us and spoke about how much he loved his job and being in the Navy, that was something we needed to hear from someone outside of boot camp. He even sat with us at chow and was asking us what our life's plans were. He was super inspiring with his advice. That was one moment that will stand out for me in boot camp, talking with master chief."

The sentiment was shared by Blunt, whose visit with the Navy's newest Sailors left him invigorated.

"They left me feeling like our Navy will be in great hands well after I'm out of uniform," said Blunt. "It was especially inspiring that Division 263 was integrated [male and female], a reminder to me that our military is a place of opportunity for anyone that desires to serve their Nation. I believe that there is at least one future general, admiral, [sergeant major] or [command master chief] within every recruit division or company."

## 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

**Hotlines & Helpful Numbers**  
SAPR Victim Assistance: 601-604-3037  
SAPR Civilian Victim Assistance: 601-486-3122  
SARC: 601-481-4274  
SAFE Helpline: 877-995-5247  
Suicide Hotline: 800-273-8255  
Military OneSource: 800-342-9647  
CEAP (DoN Civilian): 844-366-2327  
EAP (NAF Civilian): 800-932-0034  
FFSC Meridian: 601-679-2360  
Chaplain: 601-604-2015  
NMCRS Duty Cell: 601-604-2206  
EEO (NAF): 866-295-0328  
EEO (GS): 904-542-2802

This DoD newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of The Skyline are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or NAS Meridian, Mississippi. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the NAS Meridian Public Affairs Office. The Skyline solicits news contributions from military and civilian sources. It reserves the right to edit material selected for dissemination. The deadline for material is 4:30 p.m. the Thursday before publication. Send submissions to: The Skyline, 255 Rosenbaum Ave., Suite 163, Public Affairs Office, Naval Air Station, Meridian, MS 39309-5003 or e-mail: penny.randall@navy.mil or adam.prince@navy.mil. For more information, call (601) 679-2318 or (601) 679-2809. The appearance of any advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement by the Department of Defense or NAS Meridian of products or services advertised. Everything advertised in this publication shall be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation, or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron.

# Local Happenings

## SEPTEMBER

**3: First Saturday at The MAX** from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience. First Saturday of each month at The MAX has reduced admission: \$5 adults, \$1 ages 6-17 and free for 5 and under; call 601-581-1550, ext 35.

**8: Mingle with the Maestro** from 6-9 p.m. at the Meridian Museum of Art. Start the new concert season by celebrating Maestro Rubardt's 10th Anniversary. The Meridian Museum of Art will be displaying the work of renowned regional and Mississippi artists. Single tickets \$50/couples \$90; call 601-693-2224.

**8: Full Moon on 5th** from 6-9 p.m. at Dumont Plaza on 5th Street between 22nd and 23rd Ave. 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.

**10: Stronger Together 5K** at 8 a.m. at City Hall. Stronger Together is an organization that provides support to family and friends of veterans who were lost to suicide. 5K run, 5K walk and fun run; fees are \$22; call 601-934-7119.

**10: CowKids Youth Rodeo** is an all day event at the Lauderdale County Agri-Center. CowKids Youth Rodeo is a ministry based, non-profit organization established to give children an opportunity to experience the sport of rodeo. For information, email Cokidsyouth@gmail.com.

**23: EMBDC Golf Classic** from 7:30 a.m.- 5 p.m. at the Northwood Country Club. Entry fee \$125; call 601-693-1306.

## Pacific Partnership 2022 kicks off in Solomon Islands

Pacific Partnership 2022 kicked off in Honiara, Solomon Islands, August 29.

Now in its 17th year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. This is Pacific Partnership's fifth time in the Solomon Islands, and Military Sealift Command hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) is conducting her first visit to the country.

"Today, we make history as we join hands in partnership and friendship to welcome and celebrate the inaugural visit by the U.S. Navy Hospital Ship Mercy to Solomon Islands under the Pacific Partnership 2022 program of cooperation," said Solomon Islands Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare during a public ceremony in Unity Square in the heart of Honiara.

A combined team of civil service mariners

and uniformed military members make up the crew of Mercy, which can staff up to 1,200 medical personnel. The 1,000-bed hospital ship has all the capabilities found in modern hospitals, including those in the National Referral Hospital, where many PP22 activities will take place. The ship has 12 fully equipped operating rooms, 1,000 hospital beds, radiological services, a medical laboratory, a pharmacy, optometry facilities, a CT scanner and an oxygen-producing plant.

"Pacific Partnership participants, including colleagues from Japan and Australia, look forward to conducting medical knowledge exchanges and seeing patients together with our hosts, whether on board the ship or in clinics throughout Solomon Islands," said Capt. Jeff Feinberg, Mercy's commanding officer.

-- From LTJG Molly Sanders

[Read more, click here](#)

## VP-5 showcases P-8A capabilities in Indonesia

Patrol Squadron (VP) 5 deployed an aircraft, aircrew, and maintenance personnel to Batam, Indonesia, in support of Exercise Super Garuda Shield 2022 from July 31 to August 6. The crew provided a P-8A static display for Gen. Andika Perkasa, commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI), and his chiefs of staff, during which the crew showcased the advanced capabilities of the P-8A Poseidon aircraft.

Super Garuda Shield, a part of Operation Pathways, is a longstanding annual bilateral military exercise conducted between the U.S. military and the TNI. The exercise reinforces U.S. commitments to our allies and regional partners, joint readiness, and interoperability.

"The opportunity to grow relationships with the TNI was invaluable during this time of global strategic competition, said Lt. Bradley Bailey, officer in charge of the detachment. "Our ability to showcase the P-8A while executing coordinated joint operations with a

foreign partner enhanced readiness and improved our joint capabilities. The squadron's interactions with our TNI partners promoted a common understanding between our cultures and strengthened our enduring relationship with an important partner nation in the Indo-Pacific region."

The "Mad Foxes" of VP-5 conducted two flights in support of Super Garuda Shield. Working alongside an Indonesian Air Force (IDAF) B737 Maritime Patrol reconnaissance Aircraft (MPRA) from 5 SQDN IDAF, VP-5 completed a search and rescue exercise, a maritime domain awareness event, and a photo exercise with surface ships.

"Participating in Super Garuda Shield was a rewarding experience, allowing us to showcase the capabilities of the P-8A, as well as improve interoperability with a partner nation," said Naval Aircrewman (Operator) 2nd Class Collins C. Cummings.

-- From Patrol Squadron 5 Public Affairs

[Read more, click here](#)

## Laboy Retirement



Photo by Adam Prince

**HM1 Hector Laboy salutes sideboys during a retirement ceremony in the chapel onboard NAS Meridian, Aug. 26. Laboy retired after 20 years of faithful service; he was assigned to Navy Medical Readiness and Training Unit Meridian.**

## U.S. Naval Special Warfare establishes Assessment Command

U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command established Naval Special Warfare Assessment Command (NSWAC) under the Naval Special Warfare Center during an Aug. 18 ceremony onboard Naval Amphibious Base Coronado.

NSWAC substantively transforms the Navy's commando force in its ability to compete for talent capable of solving the hardest problems from the maritime domain. It proactively engages diversity in all forms and enrolls future candidates who possess the Force's standards and ethos.

This new command accelerates the ways the Force continuously assesses and selects for the character, cognitive and leadership attributes necessary for the highest complexity and risk maritime operations mission to expand nation-

al leverage and deterrence options- and win if deterrence fails.

During the ceremony, Cmdr. Aaron Brown, a Navy Special Warfare Officer, assumed command. Rear Adm. H.W. Howard, III, commander, U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command, was the presiding officer of the establishment ceremony.

"Across the spectrum of warfare, the United States and its allies face new challenges and threats. The complexity of the strategic and operating environments demand we evolve quickly and creatively," said Howard. "We're aggressively seeking edge in human capital and technology to expand the margins between mission success and failure."

-- From PO2 Alex Perlman

[Read more, click here](#)

## Sale... Or

### BOATS/CAMPERS/TRAILERS

**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:** 1BD/1BA furnished apartment; 12 minutes from the base. Perfect for single Sailors. \$500 per month. Call 601-480-1601.

**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 at: <https://www.facebook.com/marketplace/item/851262408853834/>

**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.

**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

**Service for Hire:** Dixie Perfect 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 Thursday prior to publication.

Listings in the "Sale...Or" column are free for anyone who works at NAS Meridian. To include your announcement, email [adam.prince@navy.mil](mailto:adam.prince@navy.mil)

# Ceremony pays homage to Special Ops Command

By Jim Garamone

DoD News, Defense Media Activity

While it was a change of command ceremony for Special Operations Command at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, today, the real stars of the ceremony were the men and women of the command who serve as the point of the spear around the world.

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III; Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke, the outgoing commander; and Army Gen. Brian Fenton, the incoming commander, all concentrated on the people of the command and what the U.S. owes to its “silent warriors.”

All this comes from “special operations truths” – a code promulgated in the 1980s – with the first truth being that “humans are more important than hardware.”

“I know that your SOF [special operations forces] truths are unique to this command, but they also drive at something that’s fundamental to our entire military,” Austin said during the change of command ceremony. “It’s this: The United States has the strongest fighting force in the world, and it’s not because we have superior weapons – although we do. It is not because we have better tactics – although we have those, too. Ladies and gentlemen, we are the world’s strongest fighting force because our people and the values that our people stand for are far and beyond what everybody else brings to the table.

“Our strength is our people,” he continued. “And at Socom, I’m proud of the way that you prove that every single day.”

Milley – a special operator himself – also

emphasized this, saying the change of command ceremony really is about people. “Socom, as we know, creates and develops the most elite forces from across the joint force and integrates their skills into all the domains of space, cyber, air, land, maritime and subsurface,” he said. “Socom provides globally integrated capabilities for every geographic combatant command, and this capability is not something that you can create very quickly. There are no shortcuts.”

He said the U.S. Special Operations Command is “the world’s most credible and capable force.” These forces work to further U.S. goals and values, and they work alongside allies and partners around the world to ensure peace and give enemies pause, he said.

Foreign and domestic service members set up equipment for a training event at dusk.

The command has more than 5,000 troops deployed in 80 countries. Socom personnel were among the first in Afghanistan and led efforts to take down the Islamic State.

The general said the U.S. Special Operations Command is “always at the intersection where freedom meets fear. Special operations forces are always at the point of the spear. They are literally at the edge of liberty. Our enemies around the world take note of what our operators do; it gives them pause. It changes their calculus.”

The sacrifices these special operators make is amazing, he said. “These men and women execute some of the nation’s most complex and dangerous missions that most will never hear about,” Milley said. “They do it at night; they do it in horrible weather. They do it against fanatical enemies, and they are risking it all on every objective in the bloody crucible of ground combat. Sometimes,



Photo by U.S. Southern Command

**Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and Army Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, participate in the change of command ceremony for U.S. Special Operations Command in Tampa, Fla., Aug. 30. Army Gen. Richard D. Clarke relinquished command to Army Gen. Bryan P. Fenton.**

you may hear about the mission or what they accomplished, and oftentimes you never will. They don’t do these missions for glory. They do it for you. They do it for us. They do it for America. And they do these missions consistently and routinely without complaint.”

Austin noted the ceremony occurred on the one-year anniversary of the end of the war in Afghanistan – a conflict where special operators played an outsized role. “I remain enormously proud of the U.S. military’s professionalism and bravery over 20 years of war, proud of the work

our NATO allies and partners who supported our hope for a better future for the Afghan people, and proud of this command’s relentless fight doing what only ... special operators can do,” the secretary said. “It was [the] quiet professionals of Socom who were among the first on the ground in Afghanistan and Iraq and served as a Centcom [U.S. Central Command] commander, I relied on special operators and support teams for your skill, for your precision, and for your bold determination to confront any threat anytime.”

## ● Jackson

While there are certainly more important things to worry about during a crisis, football is a staple of the state’s cultural identity. Coaches and players are trying to find ways to press forward, even in less than optimal conditions.

“We’re kind of used to it,” said Murrah receiver Christian Jackson before Wednesday’s practice. “After two years of COVID-19, we just make it work. You bring your own water to practice if you can and make the most of opportunities, because some of our practices have been canceled.”

Gibson said keeping everything clean is the biggest challenge. He said assistant coaches are working out plans to wash practice and game uniforms at laundromats outside the city or at any other place with enough water pressure.

Callaway High School coach Dameon Jones said he just takes his team’s clothes home and washes them himself since he lives a few miles outside of the city.

“We’re taking it one day at a time,” Jones said. “What I tell my kids – adversity is going to come. It’s how you’re going to deal with it.”

Murrah and Callaway are among four of the biggest city schools preparing to play in a “Graduation Classic,” which was originally expected to be at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium. That’s been canceled due to the lack of water, though there’s hope the games can be moved elsewhere. Thousands of fans were expected.

Three high school football games remained on schedule for Thursday and Friday nights as of Wednesday.

“We will certainly have plenty of hand sanitizer and different things,” said Sherwin Johnson, executive director of public engagement for Jackson Public Schools. “Although our restrooms don’t have water, we are reserving and will have portable restrooms at each of our stadiums, enough to accommodate the crowds that we anticipate.”

**Prescription opioids can be addictive and dangerous.**

It only takes a little to lose a lot.

[cdc.gov/RxAwareness](https://www.cdc.gov/RxAwareness)

[www.cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

## ‘Pardon, is that a bit of spleen in your teeth?’

Living overseas in the military provided our family with unique opportunities to learn about foreign cultures first hand. We didn’t imagine what it would be like to be European while stationed in England and Germany, we simply lived it. We believed that sampling local foods was a necessary part of the experience, but many Americans shy away from this aspect of the adventure.

### COLUMN



Molinari

The pervasiveness of McDonald’s provides a safe-haven for those whose taste buds are less adventurous, and some only leave their flavor comfort zone for benign dishes such as Italian pizza margherita, French crepes filled with Nutella, chocolate covered Belgian waffles, Spanish churros, and German schnitzel.

While we ducked into many a European McDonald’s to hit the bathroom, my husband and I encouraged (READ: forced) our family

to broaden their food horizons beyond french fries. This philosophy was not without its drawbacks, however, and we now have a host of interesting (READ: nauseating) tales of our experiences.

While awaiting housing in Stuttgart, my meat-loving husband ordered the “wurst salat” at a Vaihingen restaurant, envisioning the German version of a chef salad. However, what he was served was devoid of vegetables, unless you count the massive pile of sliced raw onions, which was tossed with julienned cold cuts that looked like fleshy rubber bands and tasted like the mystery meat in baloney and hot dogs.

One spring in Spain’s Costa Brava, I ordered fresh-caught fish at a restaurant overlooking the azure Mediterranean Sea. As the waiter set the dish before me, I could almost hear Billy the Big Mouth Bass singing “Take Me to the River” as the fish stared at me from the plate. Some may say it’s gauche of me to be turned off by whole-roasted fish, but it felt wrong eating a creature that looked like it might be enjoying the sea views.

On a fall trip fall to Berchtesgaden, one of our guests ordered the “Leberknodelsuppe” just because it was fun to say. Giggling, we all repeated the tongue-twisting word until the

bowl was presented to the table. A large grayish dumpling sat in a broth bath, and although the color looked off, we kept an open mind. Cutting into the doughy ball, its pungent, iron-rich aroma clued us in on what should have been obvious – “leber” is liver, and this German delicacy was made from that particularly bloody organ meat.

One cannot escape getting caught up in the festive, albeit touristy, atmosphere at the Hofbrauhaus in Munich, and part of the experience is ordering a liter of beer and a heaping helping of hearty Bavarian food. Swinging my stein to and fro, I ordered the traditional “Schweinshaxe,” a Bavarian specialty. Not realizing I’d requested a roasted pig’s knuckle, I was surprised at the effort it took to extract the meat morsels that were tangled among cartilage, skin and bone.

On a day trip to Strasbourg, France, our family stopped at an outdoor restaurant on a lovely cobblestone square. Interested in the mix of German and French cultures, I ordered “Sûrkrût Royale,” an Alsatian sauerkraut dish. Soon, I was presented with a steaming heap of sauerkraut, with potatoes, onions, dumplings and at least seven different varieties of pork nested among its pickled strands. Wursts and

pork loin were among the few cuts of meat I could recognize, but the rest were unidentifiable slabs intertwined with fat and sinew. Although I was squeamish about the gelatinous bits, the scent of bacon and white wine motivated me to plow forth, and I found the dish to be a delectable treat.

Despite the queasiness that inevitably springs forth when we recall these culinary tales, our family is still sampling indigenous cuisines. Be it Belgian mussels in creamy beer broth, southern shrimp and grits, spicy Croatian cevapi, saucy Japanese Okonomiyaki, traditional British bangers and mash, fresh Alaskan salmon, hearty Portuguese sopas, or pork-filled Hawaiian manapua, every delicious regional dish we stumble upon makes it worth every fish head, hunk of fat, and organ meat that makes its way to our table.

So, Buen Provecho, Smaczne, Smaklig måltid and Bon Appetit! But don’t forget to pack the Alka Seltzer, just in case.

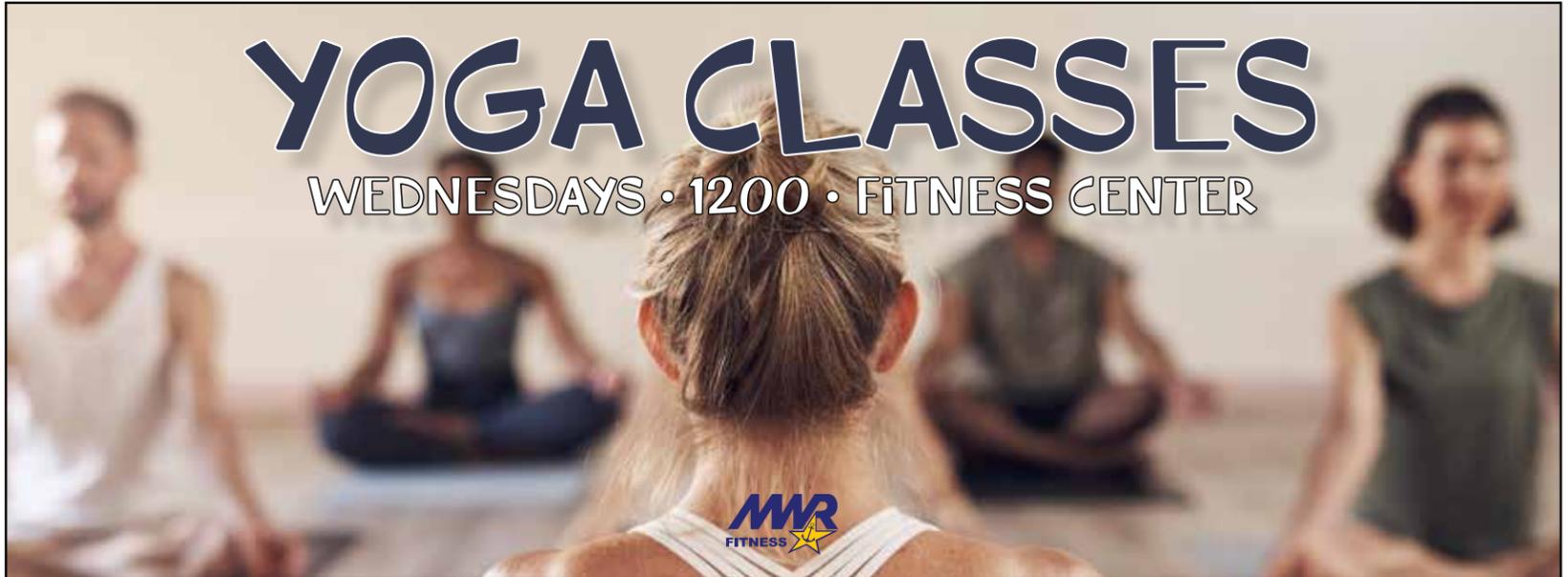
Lisa Smith Molinari’s self syndicated columns appear on her blog, [www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com](http://www.themeatandpotatoesoflife.com) and she recently co-authored Stories Around the Table: Laughter, Wisdom, and Strength in Military Life Follow [Lisa@MolinariWrites](mailto:Lisa@MolinariWrites).



# NAS Meridian, MS • Morale, Welfare and Recreation

## Facility Phone Numbers

Fitness Center	679-2379	Library	679-2326	MWR Admin.	679-2551
Liberty Center	679-3760	Rudders Pub & Grill	679-2780	MWR Jobs Line	679-2467
Tickets	679-3773	CDC/CDH	679-2652		
McCain Rec Center	679-2651	SAC	679-5252		
Equipment Rental	679-2609	School Liaison	679-2473		



**SKREET RANGE**  
CALL (601) 679-2526

**IT'S CARNIVAL TIME!**  
**SEPTEMBER 17 • 1200-1400**  
OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL-AGE CARE CENTER IN BASE HOUSING  
ENJOY OUTDOOR GAMES LIKE BALLOON DARTS, CORNHOLE, FOOTBALL TOSS, RING TOSS AND MORE!

SPONSORED BY:

\*THE DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY COMPANY, SPONSOR OR THEIR PRODUCTS OR SERVICES.

**TICKETS & TRAVEL**  
CALL (601) 679-2526

**PUTT-PUTT TOURNAMENT**  
SEPTEMBER 1 • 1900-2000 AT THE MCCAIN REC CENTER

NAVYMWRMERIDIAN.COM

**BACK TO SCHOOL FAMILY POOL DAY**  
SEPTEMBER 5 (LABOR DAY) • 1100-1900 • AQUATICS CENTER POOL  
INCREASED CLOTHING REFUND FOR ONE DAY ONLY (NO SWIM SUITS, SWIM CAPS, SWIM GOGGLES) AT THE POOL WITH CASH COINS AVAILABLE WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

NAVYMWRMERIDIAN.COM

**POOL TOURNAMENTS**  
SEPTEMBER 9 & 23 • 1900 • LIBERTY CENTER

WINNERS WILL RECEIVE PRIZES!

NAVYMWRMERIDIAN.COM

**9/11 NEVER FORGET 5K**  
SEPTEMBER 16 • 6000 • MCCAIN CENTER BUILDING LOT 1

REQUIRED TO WEAR ALL GEAR, AND A SIGN FOR OTHER & HEALTH PARTICIPANTS. THE FIRST 50 PEOPLE TO SIGN-UP AT THE RACE WILL RECEIVE A SHIRT.

NAVYMWRMERIDIAN.COM