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THE Currents™

Vol. 26 No. 12

Serving the New Orleans Regional Military/DoD Communities

December 2015

NAS JRB New Orleans Changes Command

By Mass Communication Specialist
 1st Class John Hulle
 The Currents' Staff

Military members and civilians assigned to Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans along with family, friends, elected officials and special guests welcomed a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony Nov. 6 at the base.

Capt. Mark Sucato relieved Capt. Scott Gootee as commanding officer. The ceremony also served as a retirement ceremony for Gootee who accepted command of the base in November 2013.

The ceremony was held in Fleet Logistics Support Squadron (VR) 54's hangar, with various tenant aircraft as backdrops.

Keynote speaker, Capt. Sean Butcher spoke of watching Gootee's leader-



Capt. Mark Sucato, right, NAS JRB New Orleans commanding officer salutes outgoing commanding officer Capt. Scott Gootee. This exchange of salutes signifies a change of command at NAS JRB New Orleans.

Photo by MC1 John Hulle

ship style developed while flying H-60 Sea Hawks during special operations missions in Iraq and later going on to lead an air station for two years.

Gootee a native of Bedford, Ind., graduated from Purdue University in December 1991 with a degree

in aeronautical engineering and received his commission through Purdue Naval Re-

Change of Command Page 11

LANG, Top Recruiters Receive Awards for Excellence

By Spcs. Tarell J. Bilbo
 and Megan Zander
 Louisiana National Guard

NEW ORLEANS – Soldiers from the Louisiana Army National Guard's Recruiting and Retention Command (RRC) accepted a coveted award on behalf of the state during the Region V Strength Maintenance Advisory Council conference in Kansas City, Kan., Oct. 24.

The Salem 1636 Award of Excellence, which draws its name from the founding of the National Guard on Dec. 13, 1636, in Salem, Mass., goes to the state with the highest overall accomplishment in strength

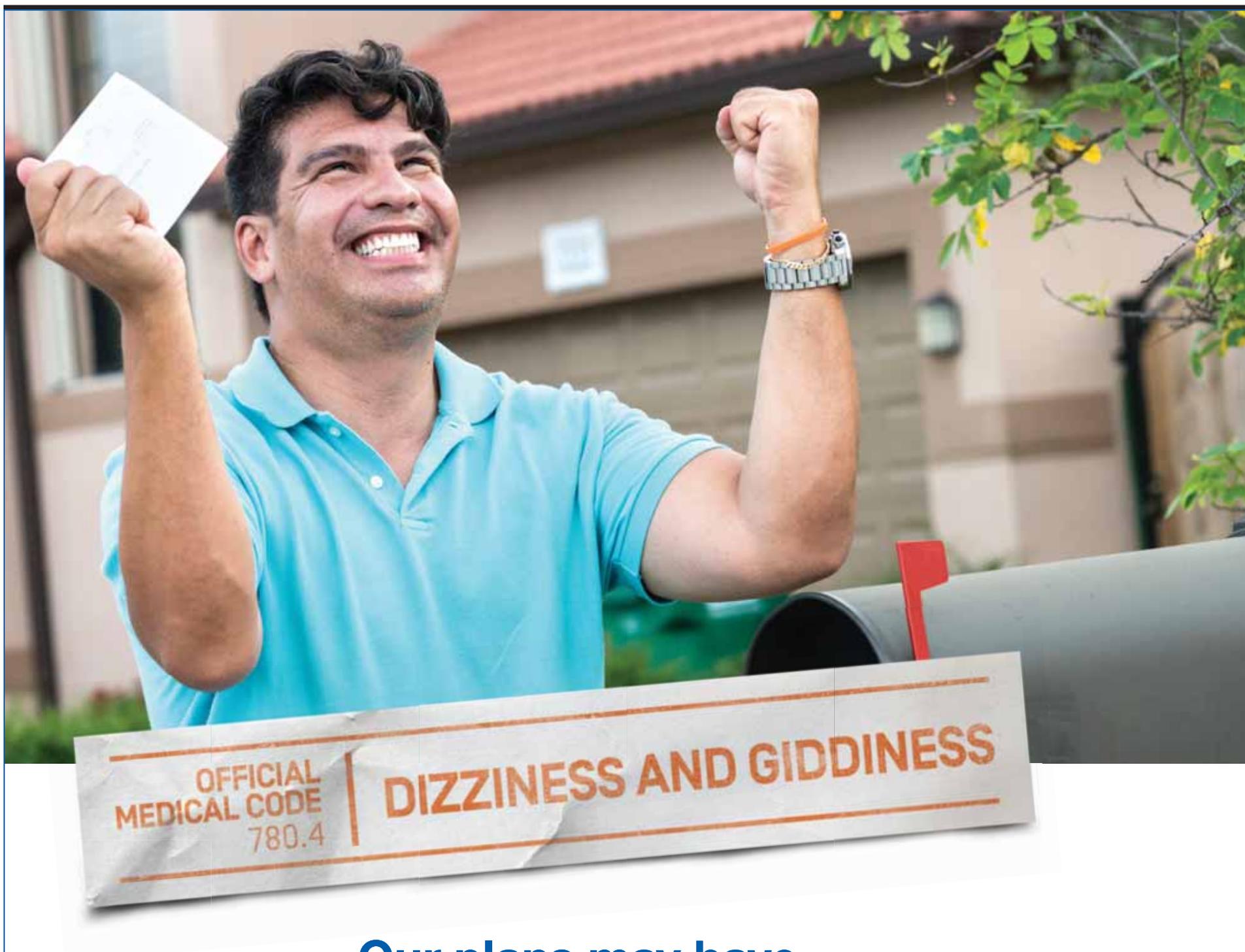


From left: 1st Sgt. Brett Simon, Sgt. Maj. Paul Bordelon, Staff Sgt. Christopher Taylor, Master Sgt. Jimmy Hotard and 1st Sgt. Todd Derrick stand tall with the Salem 1636 Award of Excellence for recruiting and retention for the Louisiana Army National Guard.

Courtesy photo

LANG Page 14

<p>This month in Navy & Marine History</p>	<p>December 8, 1941 WWII US declares war on Japan.</p>	<p>December 21, 1861 Medal of Honor Congress authorizes the Medal of Honor, the Nation's highest award, for Naval personnel.</p>
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From the Flightline

By Capt. Mark Sucato
NAS JRB Commanding Officer

It is an honor to share a few words with you as the new commanding officer of Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans. My family and I are excited to be here and I look forward to serving you as well as Capt. Gootee. We are all better for his tireless efforts to improve every facet of the air station.

As one of my first official acts as your commanding officer, I will brief the New Orleans City Council at their annual Military Appreciation Day on Dec. 10th. On your behalf, I plan to speak to the tremendous work you have done in the community during the past year. From assisting homeless Veterans off of the street to mentoring our youth to volunteering at animal shelters, your efforts positively impacted many lives in this community. Your hard work and dedication keeps our base foremost in the minds of community leaders, who know how important it is to have a military installation nearby. Your positive impact reminds local residents that military personnel are solid citizens. Thank you to all who volunteer their time and energies in the New Orleans area.

Happy holidays! It's a busy time of year for travel, parties with friends and family gatherings. I hope you



have a great time on liberty and leave! I'd also like to stress the importance of having a plan for safely returning from each event. Don't drink and drive! It could ruin, or end, your career, your life or the lives of others. It's not worth it! Get a designated driver or call a cab.

Also, be careful when shopping this holiday season. In these tough economic times, criminals would like the double pleasure of robbing your wallet and your presents. Don't shop alone if at all possible. As always, be mindful of your surroundings, especially off base.

My family's welcome to New Orleans has been fantastic and I greatly appreciate the warmth all have shown us in our transition to this area. I'm looking forward to this tour of duty with high expectations. Thank you all for your service as military and civilian professionals. It's a distinct honor to serve you as commanding officer!

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THE Currents

Vol. 26 No. 12

December 2015

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The next issue of The Currents will be published on Friday, January 1, 2016. Questions concerning content for publication are heartily encouraged and must be received at the Public Affairs Office, Naval Air Station, Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB), 400 Russell Ave., New Orleans, LA, 70143-5012, phone (504) 678-3260, by close of business on Friday, December 18, 2015.

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Naval Air Station JRB New Orleans
Capt. Mark Sucato

Commanding Officer



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Editors/Writers.....MC1 John Hulle
Tammy Prine

For The Polo Company

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Holiday Fire Safety Tips Can Save Homes, Lives

By Wendy Shimmin
NAS JRB Fire and
Emergency Services

The most joyous of times can also be deadly. During the holiday season, Christmas trees are involved in approximately 400 fires. According to the National Fire Protection

Winter Holiday Fire Safety

Are you ready for a safe holiday?



**The Currents' staff
would like to thank our
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From, Sam and Vicki Polo

Jerry Forstater, Norm Umholtz and Ashleigh Vasquez

Association (NFPA), holiday fires result in several deaths and injuries and several million dollars in property loss and damage.

Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are more likely to be serious. One of every three home Christmas tree fires is caused by electrical problems with short-circuiting tree lights cited as the leading cause. Remember to always unplug tree and holiday lights before leaving home or going to bed.

If using a real tree during the holidays, make sure that it has fresh, green needles that aren't easily broken. Keep live trees as moist as possible by giving them plenty of water. If using an artificial tree ensure they are Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) labeled flame retardant. Use only sturdy tree stands designed not to tip over. Keep curious pets and children away from Christmas trees.

December is the peak time of year for home candle fires started with decorations placed too close to the open candle flame. Remember to place Christmas trees, candles, and other holiday decorations at least three feet away from heat sources like fireplaces, portable heaters, radiators, heat vents and candles. Always extinguish candles before leaving the room or going to bed.

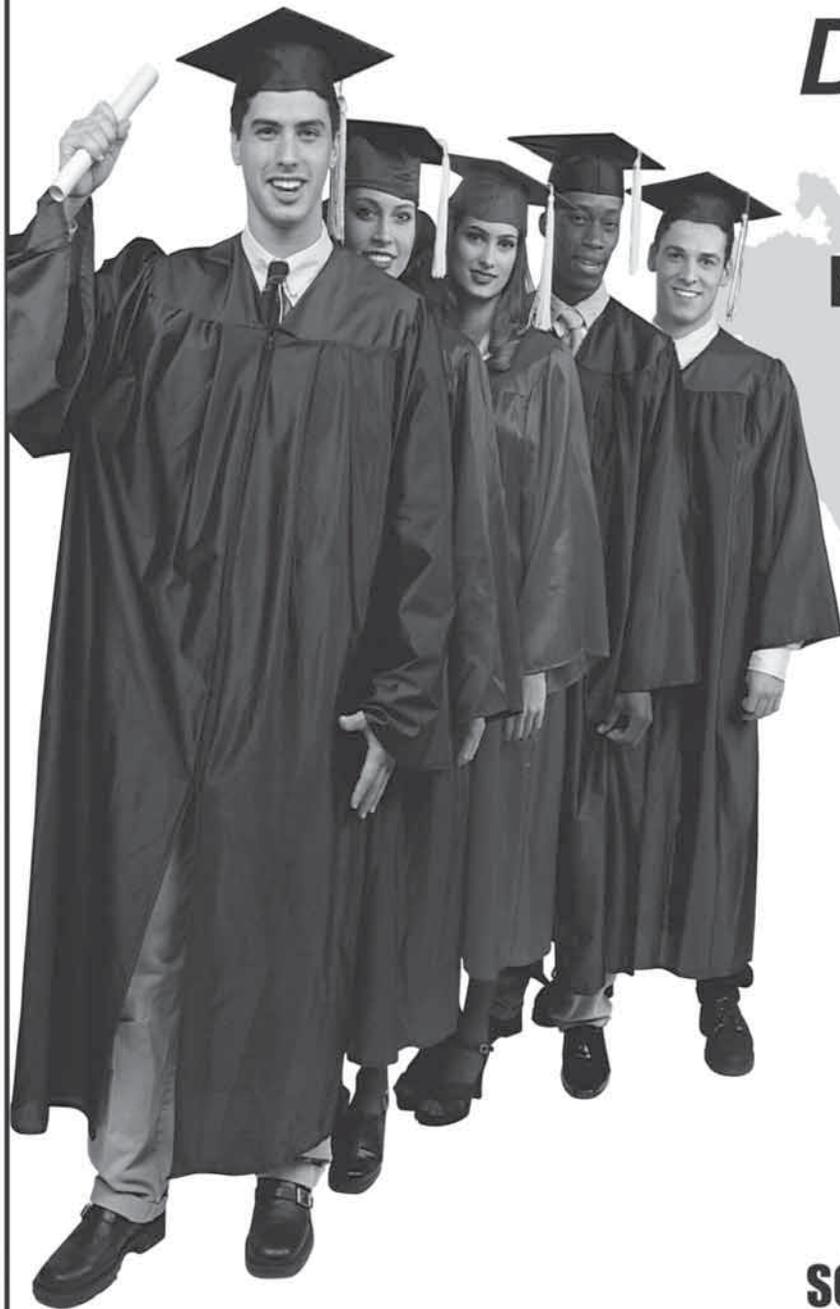
Remember that smoke alarms save lives. Install a smoke alarm near kitchens, on each level of the home, near sleeping areas, and inside and outside bedrooms if sleeping with the doors closed. Use the test button to check alarms each month and replace all batteries twice a year.

Following these guidelines will help people avoid being another statistic in the National Fire Protection Association or United States Fire Administration report during the upcoming holiday season.

Anyone with questions or for more information on holiday fire safety call the base fire and emergency services fire prevention office at 504-678-3845.

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Veterans, Scouts Retire American Flags With Honor

By Tammy Prine
The Currents' Staff

Despite an afternoon of steady rain a group of military veterans and Boy Scouts came together Nov. 21, at the Medal of Honor Park in Belle Chasse, La., to retire nearly 100 tattered and torn American flags.

The flag retirement ceremony was sponsored by the Viet Nam Vets/Legacy Vets Motorcycle Club (VNV/LV MC, A Chapter, La.) in association with Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 378, from Gretna, La.

Senior Master Sgt. Kelby Belgard from the 159th Fighter Wing at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans is also the president of the VNV/LV A Chapter.

"My wife Sonya is the assistant scout master for Troop 378 and our group offered to help with the event. The troop has been collecting flags for about six months and we set today for the event," said Belgard. "It's unfortunate that we have to do this in the rain but we can only plan the event, not the weather."

The collected flags had been flown at veterans groups, government buildings, individual's homes and NAS JRB New Orleans and more. They ranged in size from small, 3 inches by 5 inches, to large sizes often seen in military aircraft hangars.

After the opening remarks, the National Anthem and



Jonathan Lopez, left, and David Lopez, members of Boy Scout Troop 378, salute as retired American flags burn during a flag retirement ceremony, Nov. 21 at the Medal of Honor Park in Belle Chasse, La.

Photos by Tammy Prine



Kelby Belgard, president of the local chapter of the Louisiana A Chapter of the Viet Nam Veterans/Legacy Veterans Motorcycle Club, stokes the fire set for burning of unserviceable flags, at the Medal of Honor Park in Belle Chasse, La. Under a light steady rain Belgard and other members of the club kept the fire burning during the flag retirement ceremony.

Pledge of Allegiance, each service flag was raised during the playing of the service songs.

Jody Coyne, who manages the park, was glad to have to group use the park for the ceremony.

"We encourage groups to use the park for these types of events," said Coyne. "My family helps me in keeping the park clean and available for groups to use."

The Plaquemines Parish Sheriff's office provided the stage and seating area for the event.

The Medal of Honor Park is located on Barriere Rd., just outside the back gate of NAS JRB New Orleans.

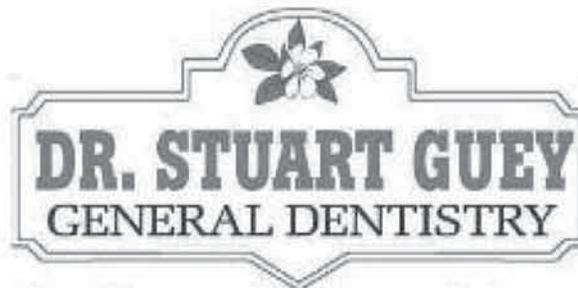
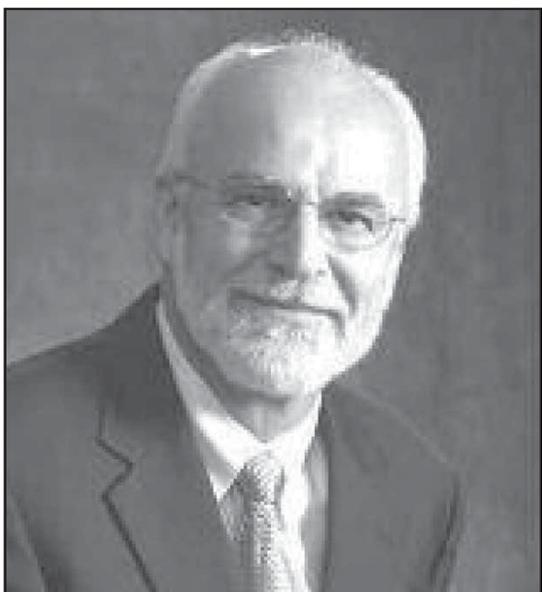
For more information on the Medal of Honor Park visit their page on Facebook or their website at <http://www.lmohpark.com>.



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Photo by Tammy Prine



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NAS JRB New Orleans Welcomes New Command Master Chief

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Hulle
The Currents' Staff

Sailors at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) New Orleans have a new command master chief (CMC).

Command Master Chief (CMDCM) Chad Helms relieved CMDCM John Harlin in November as the senior enlisted advisor to the commanding officer.

Helms said his short-term goal is be successful at NAS JRB New Orleans and to continue "on serving in the Navy as long as I am making a difference."

"Attitude is how you approach everything. It starts when you wake up and put on your uniform," said Helms. "We are a major installation with a high operational tempo and a lot of admin work — we support the fleet through our tenant commands. It's how we approach everyday with the right attitude. That is the mentality I want to set here."

CMCs ensure there is active communication throughout a chain of command.

They advise their respective commander or commanding officer and provide input in the formulation, implementation, and execution of policies concerning morale, job satisfaction, discipline, family support and training of enlisted Sailors, as well as provide input and advice in matters affecting mission and operations.

Helms was born in Fort Mill, S.C. He enlisted in the Navy on June 10, 1997. "I needed direction and discipline," said Helms. "The Navy gave that to me."

After boot camp and personnelman school, he reported to Fleet Reconnaissance Patrol Squadron 11, in Brunswick, Maine. He advanced to third class petty officer and following decommission, he transferred to the Personnel Support Detachment, in Charleston, S.C.

During this tour, he was trained as an auxiliary security force and served aboard Special Reaction Team 21 augmenting the Naval Weapons Station's offensive posture during events following Sept. 11, 2001. Ad-

vancing to second class, he returned to the aviation community as personnel supervisor at Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 52, Willow Grove, Penn. He served on multiple Mediterranean and Pacific detachments as operations and administration leading petty officer (LPO) forward.

In 2006, Helms reported to Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC), Greensboro, N. C., serving as NOSC LPO ultimately selected to chief petty officer. He then relocated to Naval Reserve Forces Command in New Orleans and completed a follow on homeport change to Norfolk, Va., in 2009. During his tenure, he served in the Commander, Naval Reserve Forces Command manpower and operations departments.

In June 2011 he transferred to Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group as the command services leading chief, command master chief executive assistant, and served as the senior enlisted Leader on-board 1st Navy Expedi-



Command Master Chief Chad Helms

tionary Logistics Regiment, Williamsburg, VA.

Helms is a graduate of the Senior Enlisted Academy, the Command Leadership School and has completed a command tour at NOSC, Denver.

Helms said the most chal-

lenging aspect of his job here so far has been the learning curve. "You leave a small element like Denver, and come into a major installation, the decisions you make will now have an impact on hundreds if not thousands."

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Local Veterans Share Military Experiences With Students

By Tammy Prine
The Currents' Staff

More than 80 military veterans, from World War II to present day, recently spent a morning sharing their military experiences with students at Belle Chasse High School in Belle Chasse, La. The Nov. 20 visit was part of the school's annual salute to veterans.

For more than 15 years the high school's "Our Heroes-Our Veterans" program, has honored veterans of all ages and service branches at the school on the Friday before Thanksgiving. The program brings together active-duty, reserve, retired and former military members of all branches of service.

The program began when then, U.S. History teacher, Douglas Schilling, invited one veteran to come talk to students at the school. After that the students wanted more one-on-one time to listen to adventures and experiences ranging from war stories to education and to ask questions of veterans. Since then the number of veterans speaking continues to grow.

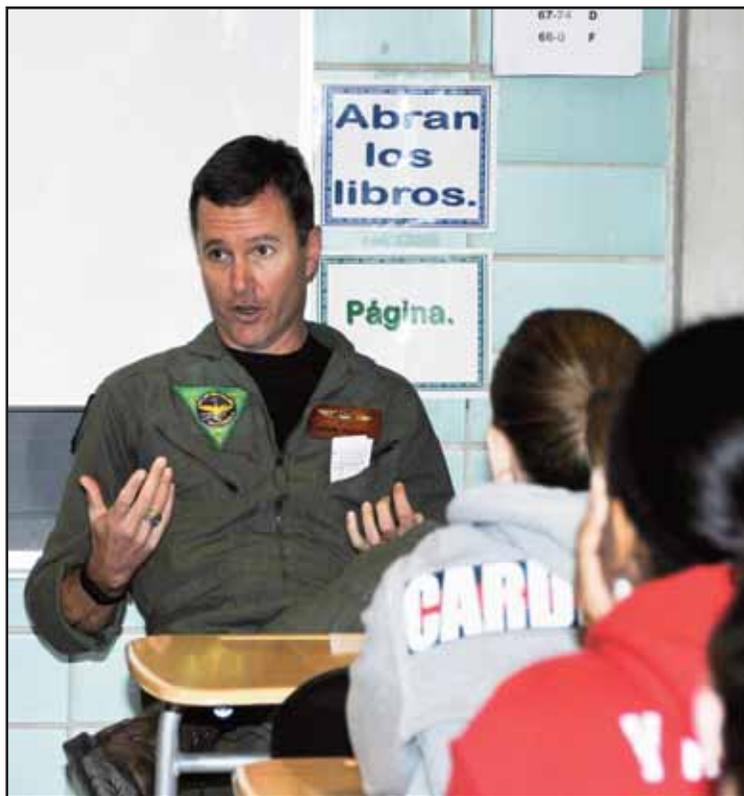
"This program is part of our service learning project," said Lisa Adams, an educator in the social studies department and one of the primary organizers of the event.

"The school honors veterans all during the month of November but this is our special day," she said.

The veterans were assigned to a classroom and had three 20-minute time slots to speak to students who rotated through. After the classroom presentations, an assembly was held in honor of the visiting veterans including musical numbers by a local band followed by a lunch served by the students.

Capt. Mark Sucato, Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB) commanding officer was one of the honored guests to speak to the students in the classroom as well as to the entire assembly.

"I encourage you all to be-



Capt. Mark Sucato, NAS JRB commanding officer, talks to students at Belle Chasse High School during the school's "Our Heroes-Our Veterans Program Nov. 21.



A bulletin board at Belle Chasse High School proudly displays photos of some of the family members of students at the school. The school honors all veterans all during the month of November culminating with the "Our Heroes-Our Veterans" program held the Friday before the Thanksgiving holiday.

come an active citizen for your country," Sucato told the students.

"Don't be an island. Find a way to contribute to America. You're on the cusp of being an adult and there's no better opportunity for you to follow your dreams than now."

The program, which is organized by the BCHS Social Studies Department, is fully funded by the Brown Foundation Service Learning Grant. Each year, the school applies for this grant that covers the cost of food, drinks and everything else involved in the project.

"We look forward to this program all year and the most

powerful portion of the day is the personal portion-when the veterans share their experiences with the students. It can be a real eye opener to students who maybe don't have a family member or neighbor that has served," said Adams.

"It takes a lot to get everything ready for this day and without all the students that come together to set everything up it couldn't be done," she said.

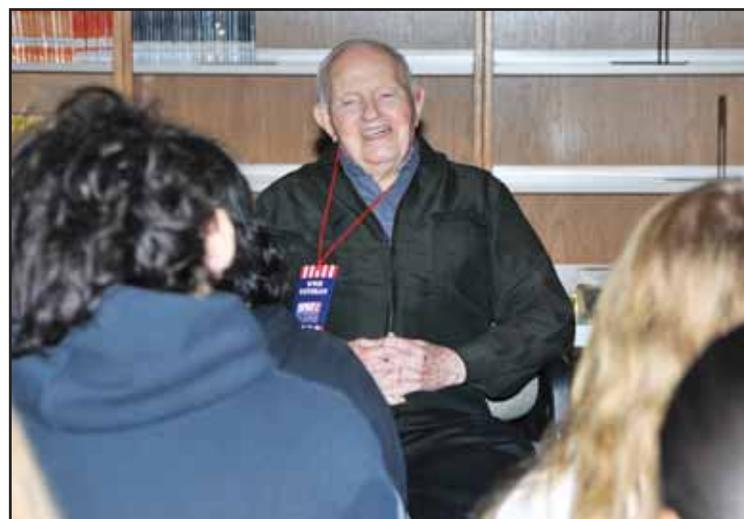
Volunteers come from the student council, the Beta and the Interact Clubs set up the school's gymnasium with patriotic decorations, tables and chairs and clean up after the program.



Lt. James Reilly, from Coast Guard Air Station (CGAS) New Orleans at NAS JRB New Orleans, explains the wearing of a dry suit to a Belle Chasse High School students. Reilly and other members from CGAS New Orleans spoke to students about the history of the Coast Guard, types of missions within the organization and the many career opportunities available. Students were allowed to try on some of the gear used by the pilots and rescue teams from the air station.



Liz Carl, from the Region Legal Service Office Southeast, at NAS JRB New Orleans, talks to Belle Chasse High School students about her career in the Navy. Carl, a retired yeoman, also served during the Vietnam War.



A World War II veteran and volunteer at the World War II Museum, talks to students about his service during the war.

Photos by Tammy Prine

Change of Command: *continued from page 1*



Capt. Scott Gootee accepts a Seven Seals Award from Ken Demarest, from the Louisiana Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR). The Seven Seals Award was given in recognition of Gootee's support to the ESGR mission during his tenure as NAS JRB commanding officer.



Capt. Scott Gootee salutes the sideboys as he is piped into retirement following his change of command at NAS JRB New Orleans. Sideboys were: Capt. Nels Enberg, Capt. Edward Heflin, Capt. Robert Pritchard and Cmdr. William Maske.

serve Officer Training Corps program.

Gootee said it was an honor to lead the Sailors, and civilians of the air station and to support all of the tenant commands.

Gootee and his family now reside in Gulf Breeze, Fla.

Sucato graduated with honors from the United States Naval Academy in 1994 with a Bachelor of Science in Ocean Engineering. He was designated a Naval Aviator in 1996.

"The welcome that my family and I have received since



Capt. Mark Sucato, left and Capt. Scott Gootee share the official cake cutting duties at the reception following the NAS JRB New Orleans change of command ceremony.

Photos by MC1 John Hulle

our arrival has been overwhelming – from Captain Gootee and his family, many others on base and in the community – you have all made us

feel right at home," Capt. Sucato said. He added that he looks forward to leading the command and meeting everyone on board.



Sailors assigned to NAS JRB New Orleans pause for a photo in front of a C-130 following the change of command ceremony Nov. 6.



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377th TSC Soldiers in the Community at the Belle Chasse Primary Fall Festival

By 377th TSC
Public Affairs

Since 1993, the month of November has been recognized as Month of the Military Family across the Department of Defense as a way to thank all family members who have supported the career of a service member. Military family month reiterates the Army's commitment to strengthen the readiness and resilience of the Army Family.

This year's theme is "Military Families: Keeping Our Army Strong!" The collective strength of the Army depends on the people — including Family members. Families play a huge role in every phase of the Soldier life cycle.

LANG: continued from Page 1

maintenance as measured by recruiting, retention, and attrition. Louisiana earned the award by focusing recruiting efforts on filling unit vacancies and focusing attrition management and retention efforts on reducing turnover and maintaining more qualified Soldiers in their units, the Army National Guard and the United States Army.

"The Salem 1636 is an award to be enjoyed by the entire organization, from general to private on the ground," said Col. Kenneth Donnelly, commander of the RRC. "It speaks to the teamwork of every leader and Soldier assigned to the Louisiana Army National Guard."

Louisiana was the only state in Region V, also consisting of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas,



Staff Sgt. Chekima Barnwell (r) and Sgt. Richard Williams (l) help a student onto the back of an up-armored High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle, also known as a Humvee, during Belle Chasse Primary School's annual Fall Festival. The Soldiers, who are with the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, were part of a team that brought the vehicle to the school grounds for display during the popular event.

They help Soldiers start strong, serve strong, reintegrate strong and remain strong throughout their careers.

Missouri, Nebraska and Kansas, to reach 98 percent of the assigned mission for recruiting.

Also during the conference, individual awards were given to the top performing recruiters in Region V.

LANG Master Sgt. Jimmy D. Hotard Jr. was named an "Expert 7," the distinction for the top NCO in charge in each of the nation's seven recruiting regions.

"It means a lot to be the first person from Louisiana to win the Expert 7 in more than ten years," remarked Hotard. "I couldn't do it without my great team of supporters. It felt great to be the guy to bring it back."

As the regional recruiting NCOIC of the Year, Hotard will go on to compete at a national competition in San Antonio in December.

Another notable accomplishment was that LANG Staff Sgt. Christopher R. Taylor placed third for Recruiter of the Year.

"Recruiting, to me, is about benefitting the kids. It's about giving them the opportunity to be successful," said Taylor. "I want them to have an understanding of what they're signing on for. I want them to be excited about it and ultimately become a productive Soldier."

"The individual awards that Hotard and Taylor received signifies their work ethic and professionalism to be the best at what they do," said Donnelly. "They epitomize all of the traits and qualities of a top Soldier, NCO, and recruiter of the Louisiana Army National Guard. I am proud of these two NCOs."



377th Theater Sustainment Command Soldier Sgt. Richard Williams gives a high five to a young New Orleans Saints fan attending Belle Chasse Primary School's Fall Festival. The popular event draws hundreds of students and their family members to the school grounds for the annual gathering, which includes arts and crafts, games and music. The 377th TSC teamed up with Belle Chasse Primary School last spring as part of its Adopt-a-School Program.



U.S. Army Reserve Soldier Spc. Derrick Durham gives out candy from a Kevlar helmet during Belle Chasse Primary School's annual Fall Festival that came just before Halloween. Durham, who is assigned to the 377th Theater Sustainment Command, joined a team of Soldiers who brought an up-armored Humvee, greeted children and for those who asked, allowed some to try on the helmets. The 377th TSC teamed up with the school last spring as part of the command's Adopt-a-School Program, which pledges to contribute military resources to nurture the intellectual, emotional, social and physical growth of children.

Army photos by Angele Ringo

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Board of Directors

November Meeting -
2 November 2015 • 7 p.m. at BCA

December Meeting -
7 December 2015 • 7 p.m. at BCA

Please check the BCA web site for
Board of Directors Committees Meetings and
PTO Meeting

For information & updates: www.bellechasseacademy.com

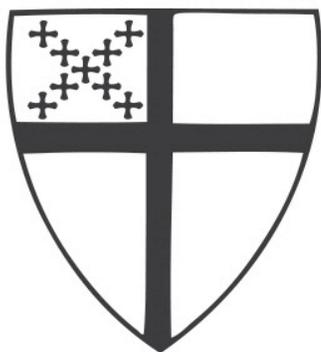
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La. Guardsman Named All-Army Boxing Champion

By Spcs. Joshua Barnett and
Garrett L. Dipuma
Louisiana National Guard

Louisiana National Guard Spc. Trey “The Truth” Alexander, from Houma, La., won the 141-pound light welterweight class at the All-Army Boxing Championships at Fort Huachuca, Ariz., in September. Alexander’s win earned him a coveted spot on the All-Army Boxing Team.

Alexander, a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment (HHD), 139th Regional Support Group (RSG), at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans, was the only National Guardsman in the country to compete at the prestigious tournament and was one of approximately 30 Soldiers from across the Army to be invited.

“Spc. Alexander has always been a model Soldier. Now he

has the opportunity to display that not only to the 139th family, but quite possibly the entire world as he progresses with the All-Army Boxing Team,” said Capt. Kerry G. Lewis, HHD, 139th RSG commander. “Anytime a soldier has an opportunity that can generate a positive effect upon their civilian and military careers, it should be regarded as a good situation for everyone.”

Alexander joined the Guard right out of high school in 2011 as a food service specialist, looking for opportunity.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do with my life, and I figured the National Guard would discipline me and keep me on track with my life, which it did,” Alexander said.

What he didn’t know at the time was that, in addition to providing direction in his personal life, the Guard would help advance his boxing career.

“As a Guardsman, I have more opportunities. The All-Army Team, the Army World Class Athlete Program, those are roads straight to the Olympics, straight to all the big tournaments,” Alexander said. “Civilians have to work two or three times harder to get those opportunities. They have to work harder, raise money, fight in more tournaments than I have to.”

“The Guard paid for me to go, paid me to be there, so I had a lot of room to breathe. All I had to focus on was boxing and training. Knowing I was getting paid to do what I love, it’s pretty good.”

Alexander says being a Soldier has made him a better boxer too.

“In the Guard, you have to be physical, you have to think, and you can use all of those things in the ring,” he said. “Boxing is different from any other sport. You can play bas-



Spc. Trey Alexander, a Louisiana National Guardsman and amateur boxer, trains in Houma, La., in preparation for the All-Army Boxing Tournament, Aug. 13, 2015. Alexander, a food service specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 139th Regional Support Group, travelled to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., winning his weight class and earning a spot on the All-Army Boxing Team. Army National Guard photo by Spc. Garrett L. Dipuma

ketball, you can play football, physical.”

you can play tennis, but you can’t play boxing. It’s 90 percent mental and 10 percent

Alexander is now training to qualify for the 2016 Olympic team tryouts.

La. Guardsman Receives Soldier’s Medal for Selfless Heroism

By Spcs. Joshua Barnett and
Garrett L. Dipuma
Louisiana National Guard

BATON ROUGE, La. – Louisiana National Guard (LANG) Capt. Andrew Gremillion received the Soldier’s Medal, the military’s highest award for non-combat heroism, during a ceremony at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Baton Rouge, Oct. 30.

In February 2014, in Ascension Parish, Gremillion realized that a civilian was in extreme danger and immediately reacted to rescue and save a person from a sinking vehicle in a canal. His quick decision, actions taken, and selfless service saved the woman’s life.

“In my opinion, anybody that wears this uniform would have done the exact same thing I did, because we’re just programmed that way,” Gremillion said. “I was just fortunate enough to be the one there to help out a nice lady in a time of need.”

Gremillion joined the Army in 1995 and transitioned to the LANG in 1999. He deployed to Afghanistan in 2002. In 2005, Gremillion was commissioned as a second lieutenant. He currently serves as the force inte-

gration readiness officer for Joint Force Headquarters, La.

“Andy has served this nation with distinction and honor throughout his career. His actions on the day when he saved a lady’s life may surprise some people, but it really doesn’t surprise me,” said Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, adjutant general of the LANG. “I am very honored to stand with this hero today and give him this medal.”

Gremillion was with his wife and young son near the New River Canal in the Baton Rouge area, around Gonzales when he heard a loud splash. He said within 20-30 seconds, he was in the water.

“What stands out most in my mind is that as I got to the shore, my wife was standing there with my son, holding his hand. As I’m walking up, he looked up and said mommy, daddy just saved that woman’s life. To me, that was profound. He was proud of me.”

In 1922, the War Department issued orders for acts of bravery during peacetime, leading to an Act of Congress establishing the Soldier’s Medal for acts of heroism not involving actual conflict with an enemy.

“This is not just any award, you have to put yourself at



Louisiana National Guard Capt. Andrew Gremillion receives the Soldier’s Medal from Maj. Gen. Glenn H. Curtis, adjutant general of the Louisiana National Guard, during a ceremony in Baton Rouge, La., Oct. 30, 2015. Gremillion was recognized with the highest award for non-combat valor for risking his life to save a woman trapped in a sinking car.

National Guard photo by Spc. Joshua Barnett

great risk; that means your own life at risk, and that’s something that Andrew did,” said Maj. Eric Stiller, 769th Engineer Battalion commander, who recommended Gremillion for the award.

Gremillion’s previous awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal

with one Oak Leaf Cluster, the Army Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Achievement Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal, National Defense Service Medal w/ service star, the

Armed Forces Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the NCO Professional Development Medal, the Coast Guard Special Operations Ribbon, the Armed Forces Reserve Medal with “M” device, the Global War on Terrorism and the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medals.



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Is The Season of Peace Cancelled this Year?

By Lt. Cmdr. Shawn Tupin
NAS JRB Chaplain



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Tuesday-Friday at 11:30 a.m.
Protestant Service
Sunday at 11 a.m.

Looking over the past few months, the past few years, and especially the past few weeks, these have been unusually turbulent times for our economy, for our military, for our political process, for our feeling of safe travels, for our allies facing new and horrific threats, and for our lives in general. More closely to home, many of you—military and civilian alike—have been struggling to make sense of job or benefit cutbacks, balancing of work-

life relationships, and separations that strain your closest relationships.

Furthermore, despite Christmas and the “Season of Joy” being upon us, the past few months have also revealed a lot of raw feelings about death. The grandson of my own chaplain friend was gunned down on the streets of Charlotte. Another chaplain was diagnosed with acute leukemia. Two

young active-duty service members died tragically here in New Orleans. The military deaths in Chattanooga are burned into our memories. Some of you will experience the first Christmas without a loved one.

Peace on Earth. It almost seems like a joke.

During the Thanksgiving season, I would often ask “What are you thankful for?” More and more, the answer is the simple word PEACE. Parents are thankful for peace with their children. Employees are thankful for peace with their bosses. Sick people are thank-

ful for their bodies being at peace. Governments are thankful for peace with their enemies. We are all thankful for peace in the world.

Peace. What does that mean to you? Let me go beyond talking about cessation of hostilities on the battlefield or in our homes. I’m talking about a cessation of turmoil in your own soul. Does this strike a chord with you? Recently, I preached a sermon from Matthew 11:28-30 on peace. You see, God never promised peace to our circumstances; rather He promised peace to our souls. Look it up. See for yourselves. That is a

real promise.

Now, there is a catch. You can’t make it on your own, whether in your office or on the flight line immersed in your own thoughts. In Matthew 6 & 10, God cares for the helpless little birds. And you are of much more value than any sparrows (verse 26). God cares for you. He has also placed people in your lives to care for you. If you are struggling with peace in your soul, you are not alone. Talk to someone.

May God’s Peace be Upon You,
Chaps

Blue Angels Welcome New Commanding Officer

By Navy Flight
Demonstration Squadron
Public Affairs



Cmdr. Ryan Bernacchi
Navy Blue Angels
commanding officer

PENSACOLA, Florida (NNS) — U.S. Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron, the Blue Angels, held the squadron’s change of command ceremony at the National Naval Aviation Museum on Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola Nov. 8.

Cmdr. Ryan Bernacchi relieved Capt. Tom Frosch as Blue Angels commanding officer/flight leader and spoke of his optimism for the future and pride in taking command of the prestigious squadron.

“It is an absolute honor to have the opportunity to lead the Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron,” said Bernacchi. “I am humbled to join such a talented group of dedicated professionals as we head into the team’s 70th air show season.”

Bernacchi joined the Blue Angels in September. Prior to his selection as the Blue Angels’ commanding officer, he served as a federal executive fellow at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts. Bernacchi’s previous commands include Strike Fighter Squadron 125 (VFA-125), the “Rough Raiders,” NAS Lemoore, California; VFA-113, the “Stingers,” NAS Lemoore; U.S. Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN), NAS Fallon, Nevada; (VFA-

87), the “Golden Warriors,” NAS Oceana, Virginia; VFA-81, the “Sunliners,” NAS Oceana; Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group, Newport, Rhode Island; and VFA-192, the “World Famous Golden Dragons,” NAS Lemoore.

Frosch joined the Blue Angels in September 2012. He led the team through three different, three-month long training work-ups, where pilots completed 360 practice flights between 2012-2015. He has also completed more than 130 air show performances in more than 70 locations throughout the U.S. Frosch is scheduled to transfer from the Blue Angels to Naval Education Training Command (NETC), NAS Pensacola.

The mission of the Blue Angels is to showcase the pride and professionalism of the United States Navy and Marine Corps by inspiring a

culture of excellence and service to country through flight demonstrations and community outreach. In 2016, the Blue Angels will

celebrate their 70th anniversary. Since 1946, the Blue Angels have performed for more than 484 million fans. For more information on

the Blue Angels, visit www.blueangels.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/blueangels, or www.twitter.com/blueangels.



MWR Spotlights December 2015

MWR Holiday Hours of Operation

Christmas Eve—Boondoggles Closed
 Christmas Day—all MWR facilities will be closed except for the Liberty Center
 The Liberty Center will be open for a 35-hour holiday celebration. Opens Dec. 24 at 11 a.m. and closes Dec. 25 at 10 p.m. Open to all single service members E-6 and below.

December Library Events

Jolly Jubilee
 Holiday fun for the whole family. Thursday, Dec. 10 at 5 p.m. in the library. There will be games, door prizes, crafts, treats and more.

Book Club
 The NAS JRB Library Book Club meets Wednesday, Dec. 16 at noon. This month’s book is “The Collector” by Nora Roberts.

Coloring Contest
 The contest coloring sheets are due Dec. 29. Prizes will be awarded Dec. 30 for children in ages 3-5, 6-8, and 9-11. Winners will be contacted by phone.

Holiday Hara-Kiri 5K Run/Walk

The 5K Run/Walk at NAS JRB New Orleans will be Saturday, Dec. 19 9 a.m.
 Registration deadline is Friday, Dec. 11. Sign up at the NAS JRB Fitness Center. Race starts and ends at the Liberty Center.
 For more information call 678-3230

Holiday Housing Door Decorating Contest

Decorate until Monday, Dec. 14. Judging set for Tuesday, Dec. 15. Prizes awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Contest is for military and military families only. For details on how to enter call 678-3710. Winners need not be present for judging.

Boondoggles New Year’s Eve Party

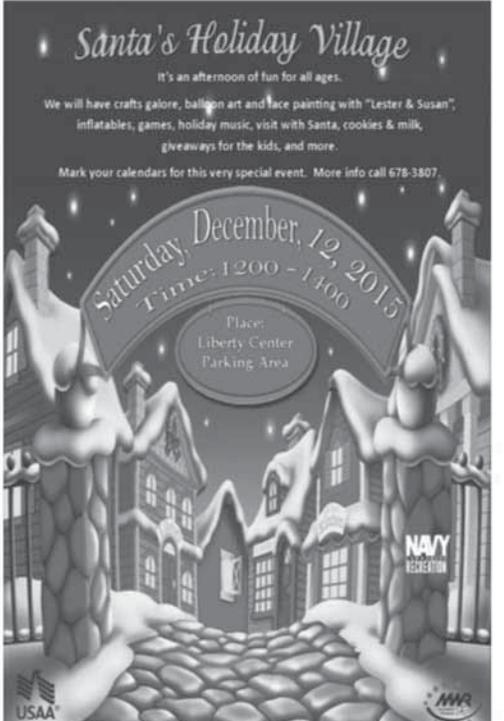
Come join everyone at Boondoggles for a New Year’s Eve celebration in Bldg. 40 from 7 p.m. until half past midnight. Lots of great music, merriment, drink specials party favors and more.
 Call 678-3807 for more information.



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December 15th, 16th & 17th
 Time: 1000 - 1700
 Place: Mag-T, Bldg. 40

You and your children are invited to the upcoming “Santa’s Secret Workshop”. This event makes it possible for children to experience the joy of choosing their own special gifts for family and friends.
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