



Survivor's Link

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



New Year, New Checklist - Updating Your ID Cards

By Rufus Bundrige, CNRSE Gold Star Coordinator

Each new year, we all start off with resolutions that we never quite accomplish. Sometimes these goals simply get pushed aside because we aren't sure what we need to do in order to make them happen. In this article, we will outline what you need to do in order to keep your dependent IDs current.

Be sure to set a reminder on your calendar, phone, tablet, etc., at least 60 days prior to the expiration of your ID. You don't want to have a lapse in services or access because your ID card has expired.

Did you know that family members with a DS Logon can update their DEERS information on the RAPIDS Self-Service Portal? Visit <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/selfservice> to find out how. You can also request a DS Logon if you don't already have one.

Did you know you can make an appointment online to get a new ID card? Visit <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco> to find your closest RAPIDS ID Card Office and make an appointment.

In order to make the ID card renewal process as easy as possible, make sure you have the following documents when you arrive for your appointment.

- ✓ Two forms of ID that match the name as it appears in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS).
 - One form of ID must be an unexpired state photo ID, driver's license or passport.
 - The second form of ID may be a Social Security card, voter registration card or a certified copy of the birth certificate.
 - DD Form 1300 to update DEERS.

How can a dependent child be added to DEERS after the death of his/her service member parent?

- ✓ The Survivor must have a birth certificate that shows the deceased service member's name on it and the Social Security card for the newborn.
 - If the service member has a new child after death, then the spouse must provide the birth certificate with the deceased service member's name on it.
 - If the service member is not married, then the mother of the child must provide an original/certified copy of the judicial paternity documents when a sponsor is deceased.
 - Must have the hospital's live birth worksheet (good for 60 days). If more than 60 days, a birth certificate and Social Security card are required.

Please contact the ID card section at your local Personnel Support Detachment (PSD), Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC), Air National Guard unit, or the military activity nearest you if you have any additional questions.





Hidden Benefits of Volunteering During the Pandemic

By Patsy Jackson, NDW Gold Star Coordinator

Volunteering can build friendships, enhance your career skills and make you feel happy. The Navy Gold Star Program has so many talented moms, dads, sisters, brothers, daughters, sons, husbands and wives with varying skill levels. With the very active lives that Gold Star families have with virtual work and virtual schooling, what time is left in a day? Take some time to look into volunteering virtually.

Volunteering offers a needed skill to a worthwhile cause. What better cause than serving each other - families of the fallen? Each of you has a skill or know someone with a skill. Your hidden skills can be shared and are meaningful to others. Connectivity with each other prior to the pandemic was crucial, and is even more so during this pandemic. Learning a new skill, advancing your career and having fun with friends can improve your well-being.

Connecting with Others

Volunteering has a lasting impact on the community served. Helping out with the smallest task can make a big difference, such as tutoring a struggling child virtually with schoolwork. You will have gained a new friend, helped another person and enhanced your social skills. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people. Navy Gold Star families share a common bond. Once you have connected with each other, your many hidden talents such as yoga, interacting with people, art, music, etc., will become known to others and the Navy Gold Star Program.

Hidden Skills/Talents

The Navy Gold Star Program in Washington, D.C., has volunteers from the community as well as Gold Star family members. Rachel Eckels (Gold Star mom) leads yoga sessions, while Savannah and Sierra Saunders (Gold Star children) have assisted with registration for events. Lois and John Drury (Gold Star parents) assisted another Gold Star father with obtaining his stimulus check during the pandemic, and Kathy Sheehy (Gold Star mom) assisted another Gold Star mom with shared conversation after the loss of her son during the first month after his death. College students Rebecca Jackson and Raquel Marmelejos provided face painting during events, and Anndrea Bond (college student) provided sip & paint activities during the pandemic. Monique Valliere (Gold Star sister) sang the National Anthem at events. In that list of volunteers, we have seen effective communicators, effective listeners, artists, singers, caseworkers, and healers. Can you see your resume building as a result of volunteerism?

We are all strained with having to stay home and in a bubble during this pandemic. If you have hidden talents or skills you'd like to share, please reach out to your Gold Star coordinators and experience the benefits of volunteering during and beyond the pandemic. Remember: Giving of yourself in even the smallest ways can improve your overall happiness, help someone else, and improve your resume.



Gold Star Awareness Month Honors Fallen Service Members, Families

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Each year thousands of military personnel make the selfless sacrifice to defend our country and the freedoms in it. Our strong and patriotic military-affiliated families understand the importance of serving our nation and the commitment it takes to serve, as they stand with the men and women who serve so valiantly.

As a country, we support and thank those men and women for their service, as we should; however, our support should not end there. Every year we lose hundreds of service members because of suicide, combat, training accidents, accidental occurrences, illness or homicide. In 2019 alone, the Navy lost 169 active-duty Sailors, leaving behind loved ones – our Gold Star families.

While the nation has become more familiar with the term “Gold Star,” many still do not realize the difference between the pins’ designation. The Gold Star recognition originally appeared on flags in 1918, when families would pin a gold star over the blue service star hanging in their window to indicate that their loved one had been killed overseas while serving in the U.S. military.

In 1947, Congress approved the design, manufacture and distribution of the official Gold Star lapel button. The Gold Star lapel button consists of a gold star on a purple background, bordered in gold and surrounded by gold laurel leaves. It is designated for eligible Survivors of service members who have lost their lives in combat operations. The lapel button for the next of kin of deceased personnel, featuring a gold star on a gold background surrounded by laurel leaves, was introduced in 1973, and symbolizes active-duty service members who lost their lives in noncombat operations.

Honor in military service is associated with recognizing the worth of someone’s courage and commitment – to highly value something, to appreciate and cherish it. This is why the Navy Gold Star Program has declared the month of May as Gold Star Awareness Month. This designation gives the program an opportunity to host events that pay tribute to the service members we have lost and provide their surviving family members with opportunities to connect with one another. It also allows us and the community to honor and recognize these heroes and the Gold Star families left behind so they know their service member will never be forgotten.

While the debt of gratitude can never be repaid to our lost heroes, we can recognize their service and sacrifice by helping their families carry on their memories. Anytime you see someone wearing the Gold Star or next-of-kin lapel pin, remember that he or she has lost a loved one who selflessly served our nation, and take that moment to honor and remember all of our Gold Star families who have committed and sacrificed so much for our great nation. Behind every Gold Star pin there are stories of fallen service members and strong Survivors.



Craving Perspective

By April Tischler, SUBASE New London Gold Star Coordinator

“You are lucky to have survived” were the parting words my hematologist stated as I was released after a week in the hospital with a bilateral pulmonary embolism. I had not heard of the term until I found myself desperate to breathe and in the emergency room just a week before. I learned it was a blood clot lodged in both of my lungs that had traveled through and damaged my heart. Prior to this sudden downgrade in my health, I ran three miles during my lunch hour and identified as a healthy person. This recovery experience would significantly impact and shape my viewpoints on life going forward. The challenge while navigating what was happening was trying to identify who I was becoming in the present. I began to grieve my loss of normalcy and my identity. I was very familiar with the stages of grief identified in the 1960s by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: denial, anger, depression, bargaining, and acceptance. I was grieving the loss of energy and the identity I worked so hard to achieve.

Mindset

After a face-off with mortality, one may realize they have a second shot at life, so I adjusted to the actual business of recovery. I was introduced to “The Spoons Theory.” This theory instructs that you start out with so many spoons per day, and you manage them carefully. It was the first time I got to experience unconditional grace for myself and acknowledge limitations and working through them. I decided I needed something to look forward to and to mark my recovery, so I registered for a 200-mile distance relay race with 11 other friends.

Just because I had so many energy spoons did not mean I had to also have a “fixed mindset.” A fixed mindset is assuming we cannot change in a meaningful way and avoiding failure at all costs to

maintain a static sense of success. A “growth mindset” thrives on challenge and considers failure a springboard for growth.

I registered and joined the local YMCA, and I walked for 800 meters and was done. I came home that night and started a journal to count three joyful moments for the day. The next day I walked 900 meters before stopping. The third day I was too tired to walk, and I gave myself permission to rest. That was a first. I recall thinking how strange it was to nap as part of my process for training, but I learned to embrace it. I walked 1,500 meters without stopping the following day. This process continued until I could walk 1 mile, then 2 miles, then 3 miles. I had to let go of all of the training and success I had experienced before facing the adversity of recovery. What got me to this moment would not get me to be physically and emotionally ready for that relay race. I captured three joyful moments a day all along the way.

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life's best teachers, and yet while growing through the experience, it can be hard to see anything other than grief and overwhelming emotions. Learning to change one's perspective and mindset is a vital part of facing hardships in life.

Tips to try when the ocean in life gets choppy:

Rest. There is recovery in rest; it is a springboard. Naps and sleep hygiene are just as important as those eight glasses of water we all tell our doctors we are drinking daily.

Surround yourself with positive influence. Do a quick inventory of the number of people in your life you can call on right now. Program them in your phone with a star emoji to remind yourself that you always have the phone a friend option that can help you with your perspective.

Capture your joy. Some do this with a journal, while others do it through a photo log to record their joyful moments. This will help with the decision to challenge your perspective.

Perspective and Humor

The famous food critic and protagonist in the Disney Pixar film "Ratatouille," Anton Ego, replied to the inquiry on what to order at the fictional restaurant, Gusteau's: "You know what I'm craving? A little perspective. That's it." Ego takes the first bite and the audience then sees Ego ushered to childhood moments of simplicity and happy memories. He also soon would meet the chef, a rat named Remy, who prepared the dish that so deeply served him perspective. It was in this moment I realized that life's protagonist moments can hold deeper meaning and purpose with humor and perspective. Sometimes perception is confused with truth, as many hold different perceptions of the world. Your perception of any event or change is shaped by life experiences and what those experiences have taught one to believe. There is a huge amount of empowerment in the realization that perspective can be changed and influenced.

I started to surround myself with people and positive influencers who had the same perspective I wanted to have in life. I had been served a course of humble pie and my perspective in life on what was essential was shifting. Between the energy spoons, the growth mindset and adopting a positive perspective, I met my goal and made it to the finish line of the 24-hour relay race and completed nearly 28 miles in 24 hours. My last leg was 6 miles, and I crossed the finish line with my 11 friends waiting for me at the Pilgrim Monument in Providence, Massachusetts. I was exhausted, and yet only five months before I was told I was lucky to have survived. I developed a new and ever-growing mindset.

I once read these words by Franklin D. Roosevelt: "A smooth sea never makes a skillful sailor," and one doesn't make it through life without facing adversity, be it death of a loved one, a medical diagnosis, divorce hardships or loss of identity. Difficult times are





Military OneSource Launches New App

By Lisa Bauch, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst, Washington Navy Yard

Did you know that Military OneSource is a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) program that offers services and support to our military members and their families? Did you know that the support they provide extends even after death to the service member's dependents? Did you know that Military OneSource just launched a free new app that helps military personnel and their families easily navigate the resources they offer? If you answered “no” to any of these questions, then read on, my friends.

The Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy (MC&FP) is directly responsible for programs and policies that establish and support community quality of life programs for service members and their families worldwide. MC&FP offers a host of services, including Military OneSource, that connect the military community to resources such as financial planning, counseling and spouse employment, to name a few. These services are available to dependents even after the death of a service member, and Military OneSource also has a dedicated section for questions that are unique to our Survivor community.

The new app recently launched by Military OneSource makes navigating these resources even easier. The app is available for free download on Android and Apple devices. Search for “My Military OneSource” in your device’s app store. Once on the app, I find the easiest way to access Survivor-related topics is either by using the “Home” tab to search or using the “Benefits” tab and scrolling to

“Survivors & Casualty Assistance.” Either way, I encourage you to explore the app to learn more about the resources and support available to you through Military OneSource. To learn more, visit www.militaryonesource.mil/app.





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Chaplain's Corner: Self-Care in the Midst of COVID-19

By CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

Our lives have been constrained and unduly influenced by COVID-19. Many of us have our personal experiences of tragic loss due to COVID. We know of some who survived COVID but will live with debilitating side effects. Everyone, on some level, has been impacted by loved ones and acquaintances who have succumbed to this pandemic. As the disturbing death toll mounts, the comforting news of hope in the form of vaccinations gives us reason to aspire. Better days are sure to come. Nonetheless, we have been impacted. Our work and recreational patterns have changed. No doubt COVID will leave an indelible impact on our personal sense of normalcy (whatever that means).

Because of COVID, this important question comes to mind: Do you have a self-care plan? One interesting thing that COVID has done is impressed on each of us, on some level, the importance of simply doing the right thing for the right reason. Fundamentally, one significant right thing we can do for ourselves is to have a self-care plan. The truth is, we all are fellow sojourners. We live our lives. In living, we seek paths to wholeness, joy and fulfillment in a fragmented world. We journey. For many of us, COVID has uncovered the importance of being intentional about self-care, which informs our journey.

What is self-care? Self-care is simply doing for ourselves what needs to be done to provide a modicum of peace, direction and fulfillment in our lives. Self-care is the practice of claiming responsibility of carving out "me time" in the midst of a hectic schedule. The schedule is necessarily hectic because we desire, to the best of our ability, to do good by our family, friends, neighbors and even strangers. Self-care is medicine for the heart and the soul. Self-care is a sanity keeper. Self-care is the shot of adrenalin you get from running a distance race and knowing that the finish line is around the bend even though you presently do not see it. Self-care is claiming responsibility for loving on your own self.

What does self-care look like? For some, self-care is singing or reading. For others, self-care is jogging or writing. For all, self-care is engaging in activities that breathe life into our labored existence. Self-care is living in hope as we face trepidations.

COVID has stolen loved ones. COVID has disrupted and outdated our sense of normalcy. Yet, in the midst of our great sense of loss, on so many levels, COVID has dropped into our laps an energizing opportunity. We have an opportunity to live up to the challenge of practicing self-care daily.

So, what is the payoff for practicing self-care daily? Fidelity in taking care of our own selves daily (emotionally, physically and spiritually) requires the discipline to own a clarion truth: If we do not practice self-care, no one can do it for us. No one has that responsibility but the person you see in the mirror every day.



Personal Financial Management

By Katrina Rush, NWS Earle Gold Star Coordinator

In the wake of COVID-19, more is required from individuals and families to become better managers of strong emotions resulting from deaths, speculations and the news, and stress, pressure and expectations from work (and loved ones).

Also very important is the need to manage our personal finances. Contrary to popular opinion, you don't need fancy degrees or a special background to become an expert at managing your finances. If powerful nations are struggling to maintain financial stability (or even bounce back from recession), then we can imagine what it would be like for Gold Star families to manage their personal finances in these times.

With this in mind, we believe it's important to share with you some uncommon tips to help effectively manage your finances. In the end, we want you to be confident sitting in the driver's seat of your finances and be able to face the future with hope and enthusiasm using the following simple personal finance strategies.

Set yourself up for control over your finances. Strive not to be an easy target for unscrupulous, commission-based financial planners or self-acclaimed gurus with ill intentions. It's a good practice to set aside about one hour (or more) each week to learn about finance, whether it means reading a book on finance or catching up on articles from reputable financial blogs or websites. Do this every week and you'll never be caught off guard.

Invest in your health. COVID-19 is a brutal reminder that indeed "health is wealth." So we keep emphasizing the need to "guard your health" as a way to indirectly manage your finances effectively. Which is better? Paying a monthly health insurance premium or paying exorbitant medical bills for ailments that are avoidable from the onset? By taking daily steps to keep yourself healthy - such as eating fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, exercising, etc., you can manage your health and personal finances effectively in the long run.

An emergency fund is still a good idea. We have seen people who have kept all the "commandments" of personal finances, but an unprecedented emergency threw them off balance. While we expect the best for all of you, we want everyone to be prepared for whatever lies ahead in life's curves by contributing to a separate account for emergencies on a monthly basis. To achieve this, we encourage you to identify some money in your budget to sock away in an emergency fund every month. Once you can contribute monthly to an emergency fund, you can move on to save for retirement, vacations and so on.

Bulletproof your wealth. It's in your best interest to see that your wealth is protected from every form of loss. To achieve this, we recommend that you subscribe to the appropriate insurance plan that suits your lifestyle and/or business. You can go a step further to protect your finances from inflation by making sure that all of your money is earning interest through savings vehicles such as high-interest savings accounts, money market funds, CDs, stocks, bonds and mutual funds.

We encourage you to take action today, and you'll be one step closer toward becoming your own expert in managing your personal finances. Please reach out to your local Fleet and Family Support Center (FFSC) for more information and assistance on personal financial management.

"Good fortune
is what
happens when
opportunity
meets
planning."

-Thomas Edison

Navy Gold Star Program Directory

| Name | Phone | Address* |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR | 619-705-5980 | FFSP / CNRSW N40 750 PACIFIC HIGHWAY SAN DIEGO CA 92132 |
| NB VENTURA COUNTY INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 805-982-6018 | FFSC / 1000 23RD AVE BLDG 1169 CODE N91 PORT HUENEME CA 93041 |
| NAVBASE CORONADO INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 619-767-7225 | FFSC / BUILDING G SAUFLEY RD SAN DIEGO CA 92135-7138 |
| NB SAN DIEGO REGIONAL COORDINATOR | 619-556-2190 | NB SAN DIEGO FFSC 3005 CORBINA ALLEY STE 1 BLDG 259 SAN DIEGO CA 92136-5190 |
| NAVY REGION NORTHWEST INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 360-396-2708 | FFSC / 610 DOWELL ST BLDG 35 KEYPORT WA 98345 |
| SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 425-304-3721 | SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX 13910 45TH AVE NE SUITE 857 MARYSVILLE WA 98271 |
| NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR | 904-542-5712 | FFSC / BLDG 919 LANGLEY ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212-0102 |
| NAS JACKSONVILLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 904-542-5706 | FFSC / 554 CHILD ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212 |
| NSA MID-SOUTH INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 901-874-5017 | FFSC / 5722 INTEGRITY DR BLDG 456 MILLINGTON TN 38054-5045 |
| NCBC GULFPORT INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 228-871-4569 | FFSC / 5301 SNEAD ST GULFPORT MS 39501-5001 |
| NAS CORPUS CHRISTI INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 361-961-1675 | FFSC / 11001 D ST CORPUS CHRISTI TX 78419-5021 |
| NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON REGIONAL COORDINATOR | 202-433-3059 | FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373 |
| NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 202-685-1909 | FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373 |
| NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COORDINATOR | 757-445-3073 | FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 209 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219 |
| NWS EARLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 732-866-2110 | FFSC / 201 RT 34 BLDG C59 COLTS NECK NJ 07722 |
| NAVSTA GREAT LAKES INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 847-688-3603 ext. 111 | FFSC / 525 FARRAGUT AVE STE 300 BLDG 26 GREAT LAKES IL 60088 |
| NB NORFOLK INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 757-322-9182 | FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 102 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219 |
| SUBASE NEW LONDON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 860-694-1257 | FFSC / BLDG 83 BOX 93 GROTON CT 06349-5093 |
| NAS OCEANA INSTALLATION COORDINATOR | 757-492-8282 | 2073 TARTAR AVENUE, BUILDING 585, FFSC AT DAM NECK ANNEX, VIRGINIA BEACH VA 23461-1917 |

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