



Survivor's Link

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Gold Star Coordinators Receive Recognition

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Our Navy Gold Star coordinators work daily to provide support to our Gold Star survivors, whether it's direct support to a survivor or working with community and military partners in support of survivors. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate a few of our coordinators who have been recognized for their exceptional service and dedication to the families of our fallen heroes.



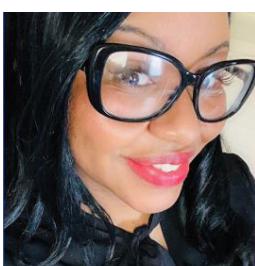
2021 Navy Gold Star Coordinator of the Year

April Tischler serves as the Navy Gold Star coordinator for Naval Submarine Base New London, Conn. April provides support to Gold Star survivors in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York (excluding the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island), Rhode Island, and Vermont.



4th Quarter 2021 Senior Civilian of the Quarter

Ken Moreland serves as the Navy Gold Star coordinator for Naval Air Station Jacksonville, Fla. Ken provides support for Gold Star families in the state of Florida.



2021 Junior Civilian of the Quarter

Katrina Rush serves as the Navy Gold Star coordinator for Naval Weapons Station Earle, N.J. Katrina provides support for Gold Star families in Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and the five New York City boroughs (Brooklyn, Bronx, Manhattan, Queens and Staten Island).

Each of these coordinators continuously demonstrates a strong commitment and dedication to the Gold Star survivor community, and we are proud that they are a part of the Navy Gold Star team!

Gold Star Coordinator Provides Comprehensive Support

By Navy Region Southeast Gold Star Coordinators

Did you know? An installation Navy Gold Star coordinator is available to provide long-term assistance to you, as the parent, spouse, child, or sibling, of a service member who died while on active duty. The role of your coordinator is comprehensive support with governmental and civilian support to ensure your individualized needs are being addressed.

As a coordinator, I am a listening ear. I call to check on you and the loved ones within your household to determine any concerns or interests you have that we can share resources to support. I call to hear stories about your service member, your family, your highlights, and your struggles. I call to determine how to help you get answers to your questions about documents, investigations or benefits. I love when you answer the phone, so I can get to know you, and you can learn more about the Gold Star Program and how I can help.

As a coordinator, I am a writer. I write emails to share information as a tool to keep you informed about updates, resources and special events. I provide information or reports to other coordinators to obtain requested information from a subject matter expert or elevate your concerns. I may even write and send you notes or cards as a way to acknowledge that I am thinking of you.

As a coordinator, I am a network. I correspond with government and civilian organizations so I can share information with you, the survivor. I speak with other military service branch representatives to ensure I have up-to-date information and people to connect you with. I may have networked with your casualty officer to ensure you are taken care of when their time with you ends and your involvement in the Gold Star Program begins.

As a coordinator, I am a planner. I collaborate with base/installation departments, government or civilian organizations, and even create special events to allow you to honor your service member and have comradery with other survivors. I facilitate trainings or workshops throughout the year to educate our active-duty population on the Gold Star community, and share special recognition dates for awareness and opportunities for service members to honor their brothers and sisters. I plan outreach times based on upcoming “milestones” for changes in your benefits, with a goal of providing ample time for you to take action.

As a coordinator, I am a human. I do not know all the answers, but I am always willing to explore information for you. I am empathetic to your concerns and know this is one of the most difficult times in your life. I may make mistakes, forget, or say something that hurts your feelings unknowingly. Ultimately, as your coordinator, I want you to know you are part of our Navy family, and I will do what I can to assist you in the journey ahead as long as you would like to be connected.

In order to provide the best possible support to Gold Star families, we are scattered at Navy installations throughout the continental United States: Ventura County, Coronado, San Diego, Smokey Point, Corpus Christi, Jacksonville, Tennessee (Mid-South), Gulfport, Naval District Washington, Norfolk, Oceana, Great Lakes, and New London. Our regional program coordinators are located in Jacksonville, Naval District Washington, Norfolk, San Diego, and Washington State, with our program headquarters located in Naval District Washington. Do you know your coordinator? If not, please contact the Navy Gold Star Program and get connected with one of our coordinators for the area in which you reside. Call 1-888-509-8759, or visit www.NavyGoldStar.com or <https://www.facebook.com/NavyGoldStar>.





Angel Wings for Veterans Supports Gold Star Families

By Gabrielle Kubinyi, Gold Star Spouse of EN2 Jeffery Ferren II

The most important thing I learned after the sudden loss of my active-duty Navy husband, Jeff, in 2012, was how important taking care of my physical, mental and emotional health is. Our health is precious, and military life and loss can take a toll on us. I also learned the importance of giving myself time with other military survivors, even at almost 10 years post-loss.

Fortunately, in this country, we have thousands of organizations whose mission is to support in some way the healing of the military/veteran/caregiver/survivor community. These organizations provide care in many different ways, including medical care, service dogs, retreats, rehabilitation, adaptive sports events, and more.

We are also fortunate as a community that many of these services are provided free of charge for everything, except transportation. Transportation to and from care is a barrier affecting a lot of people. The sad part is that transportation may be the only reason a community member puts off or does not access that care.

This is where Angel Wings for Veterans, a program of Mercy Medical Angels, comes in. I have the honor of working as their veteran outreach specialist. Our mission is to ensure service members, veterans and their families – including surviving families, can access transportation to the healing care they need to deal with the stresses of military service. We can help with travel in the air with commercial airline flights and private volunteer pilots, and on the ground with bus and train tickets and gas cards.

Angel Wings for Veterans holds a special place in my heart because I have benefited so much from participating in programs for surviving spouses and families. After losing my husband, I moved back to my parent's home in a non-military area. This meant in addition to losing Jeff, I lost the support of the Navy community that I had grown to love. I had made great friends while he was stationed at Norfolk Naval Station in Virginia. While I was lucky to have the love and support of my family, friends and community, they didn't understand any of the military aspects of the loss.

Then I started to find other surviving spouses by connecting with different organizations. The first time I was with other military survivors, I realized that I wasn't losing my mind. By listening and talking to these other survivors, I found people who understood me in a way no one else did. When survivors speak among themselves, the veil of protection that we build around ourselves can be lowered for a bit of time. I realized that the thoughts and feelings I was having didn't make me crazy – they made me a human being dealing with trauma and grief. That realization alone changed my mindset for the better.

Angel Wings for Veterans partners with some amazing organizations that provide retreats such as Holbrook Farms or The Warrior Connection. I'm looking forward to attending a surviving spouse retreat in Minnesota this summer with Holbrook Farms, as even a decade after my loss, I still need "widow time." You could also go on a retreat like one provided by The Warrior Connection in Vermont; it's now run by a veteran who initially went to the retreat himself and found it so healing that he was inspired to start working there.

Finding your footing as a survivor can be a struggle after a loss. Connecting with fellow survivors can help with all aspects of grief and help with rebuilding your life. I would suggest everyone connect with organizations where you are supported in your grief, and if you need help with transportation, remember Angel Wings for Veterans is here to help. You can find more information and the application for assistance at www.angelwingsforveterans.org.

Gold Star Spouses Day

April 5, 2022

*Remember the Love.
Honor the Sacrifice.*



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Gold Star Spouses Day Honors Surviving Loved Ones

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

Gold Star Spouses Day will be recognized on April 5, 2022, a day where we can pay tribute to the husbands and wives of those who died while serving on active duty. While not a national holiday, many installations have their own observances that honor the spirit of Gold Star Spouses Day.

Since 2010, Congress has passed an annual resolution recognizing April 5 as “Gold Star Wives’ Day” to pay tribute to the contributions of individuals belonging to the Gold Star Wives of America, a nonprofit established in 1945 that was made up of women who lost their husbands in service to the country. As the military has evolved over the years, so has the role and demographics of the military spouse. Guidance was changed to be more inclusive, and now the observance is known as Gold Star Spouses Day.

The Gold Star recognition first 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 symbolizes service members who lost their lives in combat operations. This pin features a gold star on a purple background. The lapel button for next of kin of deceased personnel was later introduced in 1973 to symbolize active-duty service members who lost their lives in noncombat operations. This pin features a gold star on a gold background surrounded by laurel leaves.

The survivor support community has adopted April 5 as a way to acknowledge the sacrifices of and say thank you to all Gold Star spouses. The Navy Gold Star Program is committed to providing support and ensuring Gold Star families remain connected to their Navy family for as long as they desire.

As we observe Gold Star Spouses Day, let us all remember that no one has given more for our nation than the families of the fallen, and let them know they will never be forgotten. If you see someone wearing a Gold Star lapel button or the lapel button for next of kin of deceased personnel, remember that these symbols identify the families of our fallen heroes. If you know or meet a Gold Star spouse, please take the opportunity to acknowledge their loved one’s sacrifice and thank them for their continued service.

To find out about how the Navy Gold Star Program is honoring Gold Star spouses in your area, be sure to connect with your closest Navy Gold Star coordinator. Visit www.NavyGoldStar.com/locations to find out how.



Spotlight on Resources: Summer Camp Opportunities for Gold Star Children

No Barriers Youth: This program invites children of fallen service members to carry on the legacy of their loved ones as they experience the transformational power of rafting down the San Juan River. The rafting camp will be held in Arizona from July 21-29. For more information, contact Mariah Nelson at mariah.nelson@nobarriersusa.org.

Project COMMON BOND: This week-long program, from July 24-31, targets young adults who have lost an immediate family member due to terrorism or whose parent had served in the military. The campers all share a “common bond” of pushing past tremendous loss. For more information, contact Deirdre@tuesdayschildren.org.

Kanakuk Kamp: Kanakuk provides children with fun, safe and professional outdoor youth camping experiences that help them grow spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially. The camp will be offered in one-week terms that begin on June 4 and end on August 12. To enroll a child in the camp, contact kimie@kanakuk.com.

Friends Never Forget: Through donations and fundraising, Friends Never Forget sponsors children of our fallen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen to attend summer camps throughout the United States. The foundation provides the cost of camp, travel to and from camp, lodging and meals. To be considered for sponsorship, contact camp@friendsneverforget.org.

Camp Hometown Heroes: This week-long summer camp is for children and siblings of fallen U.S. military heroes who died in any manner. Camp Hometown Heroes is offered free of charge to children ages 7-17, including travel expenses. In addition to all the regular camp activities, Camp Hometown Heroes offers art and music therapy through pediatric grief counseling. This gives the children a chance to begin or continue the healing process and experience significant personal growth. The children find that they’re not alone. When someone says “I know how you feel,” it’s the sad truth. They have all experienced loss and share a sad bond. This Wisconsin-based camp still has spots available for this summer. If you’re interested, contact Deb at 262-546-0421 or paschke@hometownheroes.org.

No Barriers Warriors: A team of female survivors of fallen service members will embark on a cost-free, five-day river adventure that includes world-class whitewater, rich cultural history, hikes, yoga, fellowship, and quality time spent relaxing at camp. Days will be filled with teamwork, challenges and adventures, and the evenings will be filled with terrific food, camaraderie and facilitated group conversations. Participants return home with a sense of accomplishment, a new “Rope Team,” and newfound inspiration. Click here to apply or contact John Toth at john.toth@nobarriersusa.org.

Note: It is the mission of the Navy Gold Star Program to provide survivors with information on resources available to them. Survivor's Link is one of several tools used to accomplish that mission and will sometimes include information (including phone numbers and websites) for various nongovernmental resources. The Department of the Navy does not warrant or endorse these entities, products or services.





March 25 is National Medal of Honor Day

By Stephanie Hunter, Navy Gold Star Program Analyst

In 1990, Congress designated March 25 of each year as National Medal of Honor Day. The holiday was signed into law by President George H.W. Bush as a day to honor the heroism and sacrifice of Medal of Honor recipients.

The Medal of Honor is the highest award for valor in action against an enemy force that can be bestowed upon an individual serving in the armed services of the United States. The Medal Of Honor is generally presented to its recipient by the president of the United States of America, in the name of Congress.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed a bill to produce and distribute 200 Medals of Honor for enlisted Navy personnel. Then in 1862, he signed a bill for 2,000 Army Medals of Honor.

On March 3, 1863, both services made the decoration permanent. In addition, the Army extended eligibility for the Medal of Honor to officers as well as enlisted personnel. The Navy medal remained available only to enlisted personnel until 1915.

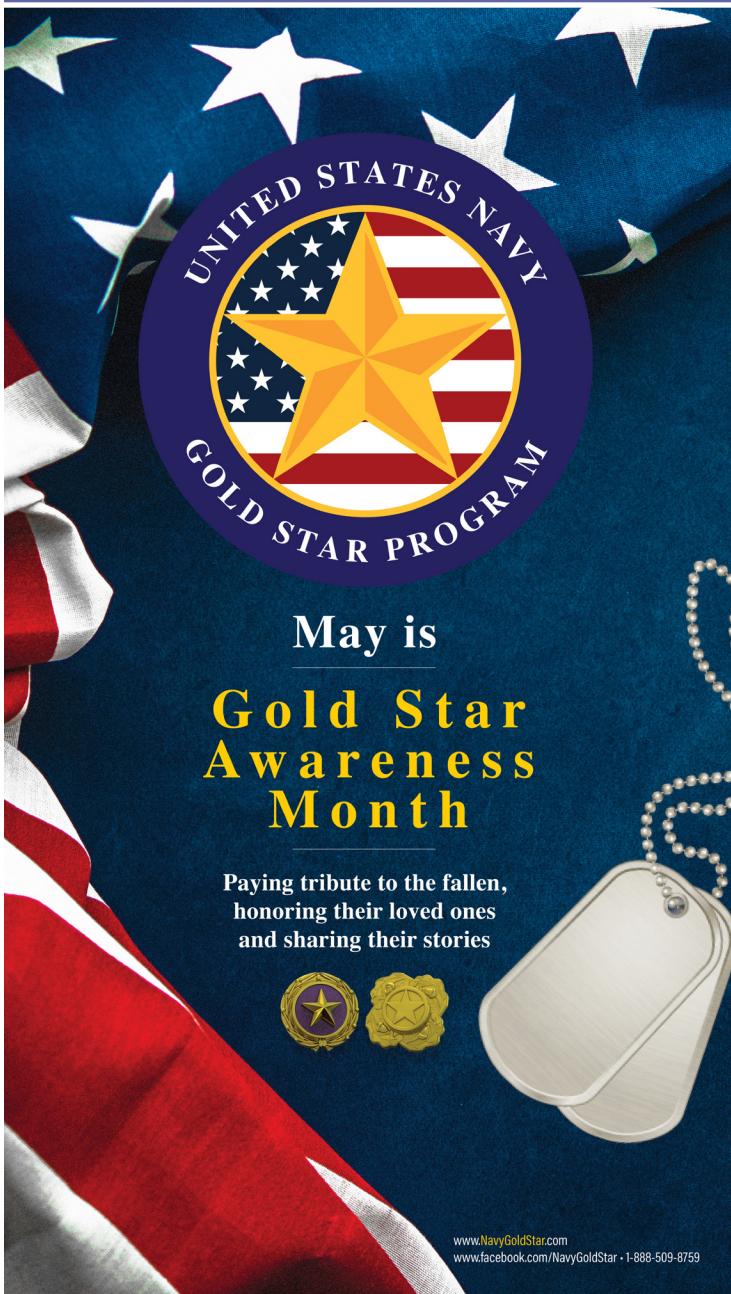
There have been 3,511 Medal of Honor recipients and 19 double recipients of the Medal of honor. There are 66 Medal of Honor recipients currently alive today. To learn more about the Medal of Honor and its recipients, visit www.cmohs.org.

Do you know the difference between Memorial Day, Veterans Day and Armed Forces Day?

Memorial Day, the last Monday in May, honors those who died in military service.

Veterans Day, November 11, honors those who have served in the military

Armed Forces Day, the third Saturday in May, honors all of the U.S. military services as well as its members, both past and present.



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 2021 alone, the Navy lost 202 active-duty Sailors, leaving behind loved ones – our Gold Star families.

We have a duty to take care of our Gold Star families and honor the legacies of their fallen service members. This is one of the reasons the Navy Gold Star Program has dedicated the month of May as Gold Star Awareness Month. Throughout the month of May, we emphasize the education of our military and local communities on what it means to be a Gold Star survivor. We also provide opportunities to our survivors to participate in events that pay tribute to the fallen and offer survivors an opportunity to connect with one another.

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. Regardless of military service, cause, location or circumstances of the loss – surviving family members deserve our acknowledgement and deepest respect. 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.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program, please call 1-888-509-8759, or visit www.facebook.com/NavyGoldStar or www.NavyGoldStar.com.

Every year during the month of May, the Navy Gold Star Program shares tributes to our fallen service members on our Facebook page. These tributes give families the opportunity to share memories of their loved ones and ensure their memory lives on. If you would like to ensure your service member is included, be sure to reach out to your coordinator to find out how. You can find us on Facebook at www.fb.com/NavyGoldStar.

Tax Tips for Survivors



The Primary Next of Kin is responsible for the deceased Sailor's last tax return.
Know your rights and benefits as a Surviving taxpayer.



What is my tax filing status as a Survivor?

Year 1

If you were married at the time your spouse died, you may still file a joint return for the year of your service member's death. This gets you the best tax rate (and the largest standard deduction, if you do not itemize).

Survivors filing a joint return may claim the full exemption amount for the decedent regardless of the date during the year when the death occurred.

Years 2-3

If you have one or more children, you may file as a "qualifying widow or widower" for the next two tax years, so long as you do not remarry. This status lets you use joint-return tax rates.

Year 4

Starting in year four, if you have dependent children, you may file your tax return as a "head-of-household." Tax rates are less favorable than those for joint returns but better than the rates for single taxpayers.

When will I get my service member's W-2?

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) issues a W-2 for deceased service members who had income during the tax year. The W-2 will be sent to the address on record for the service member after January 1 of the year following the member's death.



How do I replace a lost W-2?

If the address on record is incorrect and the W-2 cannot be delivered, or if the document is lost, you can request a reprint by calling DFAS (Cleveland) at 1-888-332-7411. Phone tree prompts are 4, 2, 4, then select the branch of service, then 1 and 1.



What about state taxes?

Don't overlook the possibility that your state may offer its own tax benefits. See, for example, <https://www.marylandtaxes.gov/business/estate-inheritance/index.php>.

Most states also have income tax forgiveness policies in place for veterans who serve in combat zones; check with your state's revenue department to find out if you qualify.

Which of my benefits are taxable?

TAXABLE

Salary income (including the "pay" portion of an unpaid compensation claim).

Income from Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) payments.

Social Security Survivor benefits (up to 85%).

Life insurance benefits (including Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI)).

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments.

Death Gratuity.

TAX EXEMPT



Are there any special tax provisions for Survivors?

Yes. In certain cases, widows and widowers get a tax break on individual retirement accounts (IRAs) inherited from a spouse and on proceeds from the sale of a home.

If the service member died as a result of active service in a combat zone (according to the definitions provided in the benefit laws), the member's Federal income tax liability may be forgiven. Any taxes paid for the year of death will be refunded, and any tax liability at the date of death will be forgiven.

Parents of an unmarried deceased service member must file a tax return on behalf of their child for the year of the death. See <https://www.irs.gov/publications/p559> or consult a tax professional.

For more information on the Navy Gold Star Program...

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U.S. Armed Forces personnel with active duty service between November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975, regardless of location of service.

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**NATIONAL
VIETNAM WAR VETERANS
DAY: 29 MARCH**

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 / BLDG 27 RANGER ST BOX 136 NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212-0136
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

*When communicating with your coordinator via mail, please add NAVY GOLD STAR PROGRAM and contact column info to all mailing addresses to ensure delivery.