

# Soundoff!

PUBLISHED IN THE INTEREST OF THE FORT MEADE COMMUNITY

THURSDAY, DEC. 8, 2016 | 68th Year Number 48  
FTMEADE.ARMY.MIL

## Hello Santa

Enlisted Spouses Club  
greet holidays with  
annual party **PG 10**



PHOTO BY DANIEL KUCIN JR.

Avelyn Crounk is mesmerized by Santa during the Enlisted Spouses' Club's annual Children's Holiday Party on Saturday at Pershing Hill Elementary School.

### TWO YEARS RUNNING

Fort Meade Police  
wins national award

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, 5-6:30 p.m.:** Tree Lighting Ceremony, Main Post Chapel  
**Dec. 10, 8 a.m.:** Reindeer Run, Murphy Field House  
**Dec. 10, 8-11 a.m.:** Breakfast with Santa, Club Meade  
**Dec. 13, 5:30 p.m.:** EFMP Holiday Party, Potomac Place

### MILES ON THE ROAD

Post volunteer  
leader retires

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# Soundoff!

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## COMMANDER'S COLUMN-GUEST

# Deadly fires illustrate the danger of dry trees

The evening of January 18, 2015, was magical for a family in Anne Arundel County.

Four young children were spending the evening in their grandparents' castle on the water. The 16,000-square-foot home was still decorated for the holidays. The Christmas tree in the great room was adorned with ornaments and twinkling lights.

When the family laid down that night, nobody imagined they would never again wake up.

In the early morning hours of Jan. 19, the Christmas tree that had brought so much joy during the holiday season ignited. The entire house was consumed by fire within minutes.

All six people perished.

On Dec. 12, 2015, a three-alarm fire destroyed the Annapolis Yacht Club. The fire occurred in the early afternoon. This fire also began when an electrical malfunction ignited a Christmas tree.

The fire caused over \$9 million in damages.

The U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Protection Agency report that in an average year, Christmas trees are the first items ignited in over 200 fires. These fires cause an average of seven deaths, 19 injuries and \$17.5 million in direct property loss annually.

As a result of the Anne Arundel mansion fire, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms conducted several burn tests on Christmas trees.

The information gathered revealed that a tree watered once a week can ignite within five seconds, reach peak burning at 35 seconds, and have a heat release of over 17.5 megawatts of energy.

That is the equivalent of over four full-size couches burning in your living room.

Christmas trees are one of the most flammable items you can put in your home. Fort Meade recognizes this hazard. As a result, the installation fire regulation, FGGM 420-7, prohibits live trees anywhere on post, with the exception of family housing.

Residents are strongly encouraged to



**Capt. John Trotman**

FIRE  
PREVENTION  
OFFICER  
FORT MEADE  
FIRE &  
EMERGENCY  
SERVICES

celebrate the holidays with an artificial tree. Most are treated with a fire retardant and are much less susceptible to fire.

For those families who do decide to celebrate the holidays with a live tree, we offer the following suggestions:

◆ When selecting a tree, make sure it's as fresh as possible. The tree has already been cut down for 30 to 60 days, on average, when you bring it home. The needles should be green and springy. If they snap, the tree is very dry.

◆ When you get home, cut off the lower 2 inches of the tree trunk. This will get rid of the hardened sap at the bottom and allow the tree to absorb more water.

◆ Water your tree every day. The test described above was conducted on a tree that was watered weekly.

The AFT conducted a similar test on a tree that was watered daily. That tree took over seven minutes to ignite, and its peak heat release was 4.3 megawatts, the equivalent of one full-size sofa.

◆ Position your tree at least 3 feet from any heat source and out of exit paths. Do not block your doors.

◆ Always unplug the tree lights when you go to bed or leave the house. The lights on the mansion tree were left on almost continuously, which may have helped dry out the tree.

◆ Remove your tree after 30 days, or by Jan. 2, whichever comes first. If you start noticing a lot of dropping needles, or if the needles become brittle, remove your tree sooner.

The tree in the mansion fire had been in the house for 60 days. Ironically, it was scheduled to be removed the following day.

Please follow these basic guidelines to help ensure your family stays safe this holiday season.

On behalf of the Fort Meade Department of Fire & Emergency Services, we hope you and your love ones have a happy holiday.

For more information on Christmas tree safety, download the flier at [http://fireadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CommonVoices\\_Safety-Flyer.pdf](http://fireadvocates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/CommonVoices_Safety-Flyer.pdf).



# Local cops are tops again nationally

Fort Meade department first in Military Police category at Law Enforcement Challenge for second straight year

BY MADDIE ECKER

Staff Writer

For a second consecutive year, the Fort Meade Police Department took first place in the military police category for the International Association of Chiefs of Police's 2016 National Law Enforcement Challenge.

The ceremony was held Oct. 18 at the San Diego Exposition Center.

The Fort Carson Police Department in Colorado took second place, with Fort Eustis Police Department in Virginia coming in third.

NLEC was designed to challenge law officials and push traffic safety to the community. The Fort Meade Police Department competes against other police departments within the DoD.

"For us to win, in an environment where resources are thinned and shortened, shows that my traffic section excelled by being creative and utilizing resources," said Fort Meade Police Chief Capt. Thomas Russell.

"Winning this award speaks volumes of my personnel. It means a lot to the whole department. To my knowledge, winning this award two years in a row has never been done in the DoD."

Lt. Daniel P. Schismenos, Fort Meade's traffic chief since February 2014, credits the win to creative traffic campaigns carried out by his staff.

"In 2015, we reduced traffic crashes on the installation by 22 percent from 2014," he said. "That's one of the reasons we won the award. We're beating departments that are four times bigger than we are — and we did that two years in a row."

Since handing in the application packet for the 2016 challenge, Schismenos and his team have already seen a decrease in crashes by about 4 percent.

"This kind of vindicates us to say that there's light at the end of tunnel," he said. "That what we are doing, when you put everything together at the end of the year, we have made a difference."

Looking forward to 2017, Schismenos wants to reduce traffic collisions by 5-10 percent and have zero traffic fatalities on the installation.

"The main purpose of the traffic office, for my section, is to reduce traffic collisions so that people are safe," he said. "Traffic safety is public safety."

The application for the National Law



Lt. Daniel Schismenos and Staff Sgt. Richard Hall hold Fort Meade Police's first-place award in its category in the National Law Enforcement Challenge.

Enforcement Challenge is composed of four sections: speed enforcement, impaired driving, occupant protection and a local category. For the 2016 application, Schismenos included aggressive driving.

The "Trick or Treat Pedestrian Safety" campaign resulted in zero traffic collisions involving pedestrians. Schismenos said the purpose of this aggressive campaign was to put more patrol cars on the road to encourage drivers to slow down.

For Staff Sgt. Richard Brian Hall, the traffic noncommissioned officer in charge, there were two traffic campaigns that were the most effective.

"Our distracted-driving and aggressive-driving campaigns have been two of our most successful," he said in an email. "I hope that we can still improve on both of these areas because we are still seeing a lot of traffic collisions that result from both of these driving violations."

Schismenos said the traffic department combines educational enforcement and hands-on simulation training to reduce crash statistics on post and change long-term driving behavior.

"So what if I did six impaired driving classes?" he said. "Well, if you look at the numbers, our number of DUIs reduced from the year before. That's the 'so what.'"

Schismenos uses the electronic signs at the access control points to remind the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE FORT MEADE POLICE TRAFFIC SECTION

Cpl. William Murray conducts speed enforcement to ensure motorists on post comply with speed limits to keep pedestrians and other motorists safe.

Fort Meade community to slow down, buckle up and be patient on the road.

He posts on the police department's Facebook page to alert the community of traffic changes and regulations on the installation.

"We are 100 percent committed to traffic safety of the Fort Meade community," Schismenos said. "We take every complaint seriously, but things don't change overnight. In order to make changes, there have to be traffic studies or surveys conducted to validate a complaint."

Schismenos recalled being asked to submit an application for NLEC during his first year at Fort Meade. Instead, he requested that he take a year to analyze the department and see how it could improve.

"If we're going to do something, we're going to do it right," Schismenos said. "We're going to do it better than everyone else and we're going to set the standard. That's our goal."

Cpl. William Murray, a traffic in-

vestigator at Fort Meade since 2009, attributes the department's win to the efforts of one man in particular.

"The main reason for winning the award two years in row is the dedication of the traffic chief — Lieutenant Schismenos," Murray said in an email. "Without [his] hard work, there would be no award."

Schismenos, however, said that earning the award was a team effort.

"It's great that we got this [award]," he said. "I'm ecstatic our

department got this because [it shows] the effort of my section and the support from patrol. This isn't just the traffic section. When we do our campaigns, we ask for support."

For Hall, winning first place is a way to recognize the accomplishments of the department.

"I'm just thankful that all of the hard work that our department put in can be recognized on such a high level," he said. "This also shows that our law enforcement officers are very dedicated and some of the best in the Department of Defense."

***'To my knowledge, winning this award two years in a row has never been done in the DoD.'***

*Capt. Thomas Russell, chief, Fort Meade Police Department*



# NSA internships pave way for future success

BY MADDIE ECKER  
Staff Writer

**S**eventeen-year-old Brandon Lea will graduate high school in 2017 with a security clearance.

The senior is one of two Meade High students participating in an internship at the National Security Agency through Anne Arundel County Public School's internship program.

"I thought it was a great opportunity," Lea said. "It's pretty cool to work for the NSA in high school."

The internship program partners AACPS high school seniors with local organizations and businesses. The impact is twofold: students get real-world job experience and local businesses get talented workers.

To be considered for an NSA internship, students must be at least 16 years old, a U.S. citizen and a rising high school senior. They are required to fill out an online and hard copy application, attach their transcript and have a minimum of a 2.5 GPA.

Jill McKay, internship facilitator for AACPS at Meade High School and Severna

Park High School, works with students to improve their resumes, prepares them for interviews, and ensures they have a positive experience by reviewing daily logs on the internship portal.

"[This program] is huge," she said. "It gives kids real-world experiences. It gives them purpose; it gives them direction."

"Kids are coming out of high school with an incredible amount of talent. It's endless what these kids can do so quickly."

For an internship at the NSA, students must also complete certain business education and computer-related classes before sending in their application.

"My high school classes taught me the basics," Lea said. "Where I work, we get full details."

A military child, Lea said that without the military he wouldn't have this opportunity.

"What the military has done for me is that it placed my family here," he said. "I was able to take advantage of that."

Lea, who plans to major in software programming in college, said his experience at the NSA is directly related to what he wants to pursue in the future.

"They're teaching me things I never knew before working there," he said. "I'll definitely use these skills later. I love computer programming."

"I saw the internship and decided I really wanted to do this."

To help motivate students and promote awareness about internship opportunities, internship facilitators across the county offer "Lunch and Learns," a monthly activity for students that covers topics like communication skills, resume writing and the effect that social media can have on job outcomes.

Tammy Diedrich, manager of the AACPS internship and business programs, and her team of nine internship facilitators work with and monitor students' progress through an online portal.

Using the portal, businesses and students can create profiles, browse job postings and apply to open positions. Students can log hours and write a short synopsis of their day.

AACPS Superintendent George Arlotto's eventual goal is for 100 percent of seniors to complete internships before leaving high school, said Diedrich.

"The best time to start thinking about an internship is in the junior year of high school," Diedrich said. "Students can start preparing, writing their resume and working with their internship facilitator to get prepared."

Students interested in pursuing an in-

ternship can apply during open enrollment in the fall and spring semesters. Throughout the course of the internship, students will be released early from school and aim to complete about 135 hours of work per semester, said McKay.

In 2016, around 900 Anne Arundel County seniors applied for various internships. Through the program, they were partnered with local businesses that aligned with their career interests.

Diedrich said that 100 percent of students that apply for an internship generally get one.

"The benefit for the students is being able to apply academic and technical skills in a real-world situation," she said. "They can build their resumes for future opportunities and prepare for college and future employment."

"It's a great way to explore before leaving high school," Diedrich said. "Students will be able to graduate high school with a general direction of where they're going."

*Are you a student interested in  
interning or a business thinking about  
adding an internship position?  
Contact Jill McKay at 443-679-6207  
or [jmckay@aacps.org](mailto:jmckay@aacps.org) or follow the  
internship facilitator team on Twitter  
@AACPSinternship.*



## Anne Arundel County Public Schools

### Upcoming Events

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Dec 3</b>  | First Annual Vendor Craft Flea Fair: 8 a.m. to noon<br>Meade High School, Admission: 25 cents  |
| <b>Dec 5</b>  | SAT Testing – Meade High School<br>Visit <a href="http://MeadeSeniorHigh.org">MeadeSeniorHigh.org</a> for more information   |
| <b>Dec 6</b>  | Winter Wonderland Elementary Student Art Exhibit<br>Artist Reception: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.<br>Westfield Annapolis Mall   |
| <b>Dec 7</b>  | Army Field Band Jazz Ambassadors: 7 p.m.<br>Meade High School Auditorium<br>Fort Meade, MD   |
| <b>Dec 10</b> | ACT Testing – Meade High School<br>Visit <a href="http://MeadeSeniorHigh.org">MeadeSeniorHigh.org</a> for more information   |
| <b>Dec 13</b> | Be a Star Anti-Bullying Rally: 10:15 – 11:15 a.m.<br>MacArthur Middle School   |
| <b>Dec 16</b> | Winter Dance Concert: 4 – 7 p.m.<br>Meade High School, Tickets: \$6.25<br>Purchase at <a href="http://www.tututix.com/MeadeHighSchool">www.tututix.com/MeadeHighSchool</a> |

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For more information, visit: [www.aacps.org](http://www.aacps.org)



PHOTO BY MADDIE ECKER

Meade High School senior Brandon Lea, 17, talks with Jill McKay, Meade High School internship facilitator, about his internship at the National Security Agency.



# Army Volunteer Corps manager retires

Marie Miles leaving Dec. 30 after seven years heading Fort Meade program and 32 years as Department of the Army civilian employee

BY LISA R. RHODES  
Staff Writer

**M**arie Miles has been a volunteer all of her adult life. Whether working with other women to build international relationships abroad or leading a Christian singles ministry, she has always devoted time to serving others.

So when Miles retires Dec. 30 as Fort Meade's Army Volunteer Corps Program manager after seven years in the position and 32 years as a Department of the Army civilian, she plans to continue contributing to the Fort Meade community — but in a nonprofessional capacity.

"I'm retiring, but I'll be here — at the commissary, the Exchange — and somewhere doing volunteer work," she said.

Army Community Service is hosting a retirement luncheon for Miles at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Club Meade.

Vonicle Farmer, the former Survivor Outreach Services coordinator, took over as manager of the Army Volunteer Corps Program on Nov. 14.

Doris Tyler, director of ACS, said Miles and Farmer are "enjoying a rare opportunity to have program turnover, as it is typical to experience a six- to eight-month gap" before filling a vacancy.

Tyler said Miles will be missed and described her as a "caring, confident, committed professional, devoted to her family and larger community."

As the Army Volunteer Corps Program manager, Miles has done "outstanding work" that has led to a 250 percent increase in registered volunteers and a savings of more than \$35 million for the installation during her tenure, said Tyler.

Miles said her efforts in leading the garrison's volunteer program has paid off.

"People are excited about volunteering," she said.

A native of Georgia, Miles moved to Pennsylvania at an early age to complete her primary education. She earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a minor in special education from Millersville State University Teacher's College in Lancaster, Pa.

Since that time, Miles also has com-

pleted the requirements to become an ordained minister and — along with her husband, Danny Miles — a professional marriage counselor.

"I've always had a passion for working with youth," she said. "It's something I really enjoy and I am very happy that I have been able to incorporate youth programs into every position I've had in my career."

By 1982, Miles was working as a special education teacher in Columbia, S.C., when she met her husband, a Soldier stationed at Fort Jackson, S.C.

The couple met while shopping at K-mart.

"I consider me his 'blue light special,'" Miles joked.

Five years later, the Miles family, which grew to include daughter Aisha, and son Trier, moved to Rheinberg, Germany. Miles worked as coordinator for the Installation Volunteer Corps and Army Family Action Plan Program.

"Things were not computerized then," Miles said in regard to registration of volunteers and tracking service hours. "We worked out of a 10-story building and maybe had about 200 volunteers."

In 1990, the family moved to Belgium where Miles worked as a budget assistant in finance and later for the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Budget Office.

During her spare time, she volunteered with the American Women's Activity Germany and as a fashion model with other civilians and Soldiers in Amsterdam. During that time, she also was the director of a chapel youth ministry.

In 1996, Miles relocated with her family to Daegu, South Korea, where she was director of Family Child Care and the Child Development Center.

She also volunteered as a ski instructor and as a team leader for a religious group for military spouses. Miles also oversaw the multicultural youth ministry at Camp Walker Chapel in Daegu.

"Everything I am is because of the foundation of my religious beliefs as a Christian," Miles said.

Three years later, the family moved to Mannheim, Germany, where Miles continued her work as an FCC and CDC director. She and her husband oversaw a



DANIEL KUCIN JR./BALTIMORE SUN MEDIA GROUP

**Marie Miles, who is retiring as manager of Fort Meade's Army Volunteer Corps Program, speaks at the annual Volunteer Awards Banquet in April at Club Meade.**

singles ministry and she led a youth ministry.

From 2007 to 2009, Miles was the Family Programs coordinator in Kaiserslautern until her husband received orders for duty at Fort Meade.

She arrived at Fort Meade in 2009, and her husband retired from the Army Reserve. He then became the chief of ACS at Adelphi Laboratory Center.

## Tripling in size

When Miles began her tenure at Fort Meade, there were about 846 registered volunteers. Today, there are 2,900.

Her first step in her new position was to survey the volunteer needs of the community.

"A lot of people didn't know the program existed," she said.

After the survey, Miles formed partnerships with organizations off post to provide viable volunteer opportunities for nontraditional volunteers.

Virtual volunteering became popular for those who had small children at home, but still wanted to sharpen employable skills and give back to the community. She also worked hard to tailor the program to specific groups such as retirees and veterans.

Retired Col. Edward C. Rothstein, who was the garrison commander at the time, also reached out to Miles and other garrison leaders to inquire about starting a program for Fort Meade youth.

Miles met with the leaders and

proposed creating a youth volunteer program. After weighing the pros and cons, a program that later became the Teen Leadership Challenge was launched in 2012.

The challenge provides teens with required service learning hours for graduation and skills for the job market.

Today, the garrison's volunteer program maintains a partnership with Sarah's House, Hospice of the Chesapeake, Honor Flight of BWI and Wreaths Across America.

Miles also introduced the Presidential Volunteer Service Award to Fort Meade's annual Volunteer Banquet to recognize volunteers who have earned more than 100 community-service hours. To date, more than 1,000 Fort Meade volunteers have received the award.

As for her retirement, Miles said she looks forward to spending time with her two grandchildren and traveling. Her husband will retire from his position at Adelphi in March after 43 years of Army, Reserve and civilian service.

The couple plans to move from their home in Bowie to Charlotte, N.C., in about a year.

To the many volunteers who have worked with Miles during the past seven years, she has prepared a farewell that she will share at her luncheon.

"Please know that I genuinely appreciate and value your commitment of time toward bettering our community," Miles wrote. "... To my friends around the world, I'll see you later!"



# WWE pins down Fort Meade for a visit

Stars to hold meet and greets with service members prior to Tribute to Troops show at Verizon Center

By MADDIE ECKER  
Staff Writer

**T**eam Meade, get ready to rumble! World Wrestling Entertainment will hold its 14th annual Tribute to the Troops show on Tuesday from 7 to 10 p.m. in Washington, D.C.

In an effort to meet and uplift as many service members as possible, the USO has planned visits by the WWE superstars to Fort Meade and Naval Support Activity Bethesda before the evening show.

At Fort Meade, one team of WWE superstars will complete challenges with the Asymmetric Warfare Group, meet with service members and their families, and speak at the "Be A STAR Rally," an anti-bullying assembly, at MacArthur Middle School.

AWG Soldiers will give WWE superstars a taste of military life through weapons training and a rappelling challenge. Separated into two teams, the wrestlers will rappel a short wall, high tower and rock climbing wall.

After the weapons training, the team will fire M4 assault rifles and 9 mm pistols at paper targets.

The WWE superstars' trip to the Naval Support Activity Bethesda is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The team will observe an adaptive sports demonstration of wounded, ill and injured service members and physical therapists.

A wheel chair basketball game, and meet and greet autograph session will follow.

Tribute to the Troops began in 2003 to honor members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

"For the 14th year, WWE is honored to give back to American military personnel and their families for their commitment to and sacrifice for our country," said WWE Chairman and CEO Vince McMahon, according to the WWE website.

"Our servicemen and women work tirelessly and selflessly for our freedom, and it is an honor to continue the Tribute to the Troops tradition for them this year in our nation's capital."

The USO of Metropolitan Washing-



COURTESY OF WWE  
**WWE Superstar The Big Show poses with a Soldier at Fort Bragg, N.C.**

ton-Baltimore is working with WWE to host the event.

"We are so excited to partner with WWE on Tribute to the Troops, an event that truly has become a holiday tradition for our service members and their families," said Elaine Rogers, president and CEO of USO of Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore, according to the WWE website.

"What better way to thank our active-duty military members and their families for their service than by providing them with an amazing evening of fun and entertainment?"

Tickets were distributed Nov. 28 on the USO-Metro website to active-duty service members, Reservists, National Guardsmen and their dependents.

For those who want to watch from home, Tribute to the Troops will air Wednesday on the USA Network.

## WWE Fort Meade Schedule:

- ◆ Meet and Greet: 8-10 a.m. at Asymmetric Warfare Group
- ◆ Be A STAR Rally: 10:15-11:15 a.m. at MacArthur Middle School
- ◆ Meet and Greet: 12:30-2:30 p.m. at the Exchange



FILE PHOTO BY SHANNON RUSH

**WWE executive Stephanie McMahon and wrestler David Otunga give former Garrison Commander Col. Edward C. Rothstein a WWE belt at the USO-Metro center grand opening in 2013. With them are former Deputy Garrison Commander John Moeller (left) and former Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Latter.**



## ACCESS GRANTED

## Holiday visitors

### BY DEMPS VISITOR CONTROL CENTER

If you reside on post and are expecting visitors for the holidays, you can start the process now for them to obtain gate access passes.

Steps to take:

1. Fill out the FGGM 191-001-R-E, which can be found online at [ftmeade.army.mil](http://ftmeade.army.mil).

2. Click on the post access icon, then click the printable VCC forms and then click on the FGGM Form 191-001-R-E.

If you are unable to access the form online, pick up hard copies at the Demps Visitor Control Center at 902 Reece Road.

3. Bring the completed form, along with your DoD ID or permanent Automated Installation Entry badge, to the VCC.

The following authorized sponsors can submit Form 191: Service members, military spouses, dependents ages 18 and older, federal employees with a DoD Common Access Card, and permanent AIE badge holders.

For more information, call the VCC at 301-677-1064.

### ACP holiday operating hours

Operating hours for the installation access control points will be reduced during the holiday periods Dec. 23-26 and Dec. 30-Jan. 2.

- Reece Road: Open daily 24 hours
- Mapes Road and Route 32: Open daily from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- Rockenbach Road: Closed
- Mapes Road and Route 175: Closed

For more information, call Joseph Shinskie, chief of Physical Security, at 301-677-6618 or email [joseph.r.shinskie.civ@mail.mil](mailto:joseph.r.shinskie.civ@mail.mil).



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Every day your local USO provides moments that count in the lives of our troops and their families. From a hot cup of coffee, to a place to relax while traveling and critical services such as emergency housing, the USO Metropolitan Washington-Baltimore is dedicated to serving those who serve.

Take a moment to support our troops and their families by donating to your local USO at **USOMetro.org**.

# Don't leave tax breaks sitting on the table

**By JANE M. WINAND**  
Legal Assistance Attorney

**A**s income tax season approaches, it is important to note that there are special tax benefits available to members of the U.S. Armed Forces.

IRS Publication 3, "Armed Forces Tax Guide," is a free booklet that contains valuable information and tips designed to help service members and their families take advantage of all the tax benefits available by law.

Easily searchable information is also accessible at the Tax Information for Members of the Military website at [www.irs.gov/individuals.military](http://www.irs.gov/individuals.military).

Below are some of the more common tax benefits:

◆ Combat pay is partially or fully tax-free. Service members serving in support of a combat zone also may qualify for this exclusion.

◆ An automatic extension to file a federal income tax return is available to service members stationed abroad. Furthermore, those service members serving in a combat zone typically have until 180 days after they leave the combat zone to file and to pay any tax due.

◆ An IRA or 401(k)-type plan can allow a tax payer to save for retirement while also lessening tax liability. Service members who contribute to such a plan, including the Thrift Savings Plan, may also be able to claim the Retirement Savings Contributions Credit.

◆ The Earned Income Tax Credit may

be worth up to \$6,269 for low- and moderate-income service members.

A special computation method is available for those who receive nontaxable combat pay. Choosing to include nontaxable combat pay as taxable income may increase the Earned Income Tax Credit for a service members, resulting in a smaller tax bill or even a larger refund.

◆ Reservists, whose Reserve-related duties take them more than 100 miles from home, can deduct their unreimbursed travel expenses, even if they don't itemize their deductions.

◆ Service members leaving the military and looking for civilian employment may be able to deduct some job-search expenses such as the costs of travel, preparing a resume and job-placement agency fees.

Moving expenses may also qualify for a tax deduction.

One of the biggest tax benefits that Fort Meade service members have is the free federal and state income tax preparation services offered through the Fort Meade Joint Installation Tax Center.

Opening day for the 2017 tax season is Jan. 30. The center is located at 4217 Morrison St. on the first floor in the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate.

For more information about income tax preparation, call the Legal Assistance Division at 301-677-9504 or 301-677-9536 until the Tax Center opens Jan. 30.

Once the tax center is open, you may call 301-677-9366 to speak with a tax assistant.

## COMMUNITY CRIME WATCH

**COMPILED BY FORT MEADE  
DIRECTORATE OF EMERGENCY  
SERVICES**

**Nov. 22, Driving vehicle while under the influence of alcohol, driving while impaired by alcohol:** Police were notified of a no-injury traffic crash. While talking to the driver, police smelled a moderate odor of an alcoholic beverage emitting from his breath. Police conducted standardized field sobriety tests, which the driver failed. The driver took a breath test with the results of .17 percent blood alcohol content.

**Nov. 29, Shoplifting:** AAFES loss pre-

vention personnel stated she observed, on closed circuit TV, the subject conceal one pair of Ardell Fashion Lashes in her jacket pocket and fail to offer payment before exiting the store.

## TRAFFIC FOR NOV. 28-DEC. 4

Moving violations: 56  
Nonmoving violations: 1  
Verbal warnings for traffic stops: 78  
Traffic accidents: 15  
Driving on suspended license: 2  
Driving on suspended registration: 0  
Driving without a license: 0

# Pearl Harbor survivor, 103, talks past, future

Veteran journeys to Hawaii to mark attack's 75th anniversary, praises present generation

PHOTO AND STORY BY LISA FERDINANDO

DoD News,  
Defense Media Activity

**H**ONOLULU — As the second-oldest known Pearl Harbor survivor, retired Navy Lt. Jim Downing, 103, wants the memory of the Dec. 7, 1941, attack to stay alive for future generations.

Downing, of Colorado Springs, Colo., has come to Hawaii to join other survivors for commemorations of the 75th anniversary of the attack this week.

"I understand this is going to be the last big anniversary, so I am sorry to see it pass down into history," Downing said. "But there are not enough of us left to commemorate it."

"I hope history books and history teachers won't forget."

"There's a tendency as time passes to forget about the past, so I'm hoping history books and teachers will keep the memories alive."

The Navy veteran was interviewed after viewing a screening of the World War II Foundation's documentary "Remember Pearl Harbor."

Downing and other veterans, including fellow Pearl Harbor survivors, were guests of honor at the event held at the Pacific Aviation Museum on Ford Island in Pearl Harbor.

## Memories of attack

"[The attack] happened just a few hundred yards over here," Downing said, gesturing toward the harbor.

His ship, the USS West Virginia, was severely damaged in the Japanese attack.

"We were right next to Ford Island, so it's hard to forget what happened now, just being on the spot," he said.

Downing was a gunner's mate first class at the time of the attack.

When the surprise Japanese assault began, the then-28-year-old was having breakfast at home with his wife and some of his shipmates.

He and the other sailors rushed over to

the ship to help.

"Nine [torpedoes] hit the West Virginia — and we sunk pretty quickly after that — and everything above the waterline was on fire," he recalled.

More than 100 men on the ship were killed, including at least 17 of Downing's close friends.

Despite the loss, he did not despair, he said, explaining that his friends were part of his Bible study.

Downing has faith that he and his friends will be reunited.

"I rejoiced that I would see them in the future," he said.

For the dead and injured on his ship,



Pearl Harbor survivor Jim Downing visits with Sailors at a screening of "Remember Pearl Harbor" on Sunday at the Pacific Aviation Museum at Pearl Harbor. Downing was a gunner's mate first class serving aboard the USS West Virginia.

Downing composed personalized letters for the families.

"The ones that I didn't know, while I was fighting the fire, I memorized their identification tags and wrote to their parents so that was a sense of closure, both on my part and on the part of their own parents," he said.

Downing heard back from many of them, he said, including parents who learned their sons were actually alive.

"They were grateful," Downing said. "They rejoiced."

"They didn't know that their sons were still alive until they got the letter."

## Return to Pearl Harbor

Downing, who also came to Pearl Harbor for last year's anniversary, stays connected with fellow Pearl Harbor survivors.

"The greatest pleasure is to renew acquaintance with my shipmates," he said. "I've been coming to these reunions for a long time."

"There is a lot of camaraderie among the ship's crew. In fact, it never runs out."

But as time passes, fewer survivors remain, he points out.

"I just wonder how many I will see next year," he said.

"Most of my friends are in heaven, so I

look forward to seeing them over there."

Downing said he is grateful for the nation's support of its military veterans.

"I am glad for this wave of patriotism that is sweeping the country," he said.

Downing said he does have a message for the younger generation.

"I tell them: 'You're the leaders of tomorrow. You're the voters of tomorrow. You're the taxpayers of tomorrow. You're the legislators of tomorrow. My charge to you is, keep America strong,'" he said.

"I want America to be kept so strong — in cyberspace, in space, in the skies, on the ground, on the sea, under the sea — that no dictator will even think about attacking us."

## One day at a time

Downing said his optimistic view comes from his life philosophy to take life as it happens and whatever it brings.

He said he doesn't worry about yesterday or tomorrow, or weigh himself down with things he can't control or change — including the events of that day 75 years ago.

"So I live one day at a time," he said. "I don't brood over what happened there. It happened and [there's] nothing I can do about it, so I've got to live with it."





Nine-year-old Jaden Anderson (left) and 4-year-old Caleb Anderson pose in elf cut-outs at the holiday party sponsored by the Enlisted Spouses' Club.



Seven-year-old Alejandro Gonzalez works on an arts and crafts project in the festively decorated Santa's Workshop.



To his great joy, 4-year-old Wesley Izzo tosses a beanbag on target.

# Spirited celebration

More than 1,000 attend Enlisted Spouses' Club's annual Children's Holiday Party

By LISA R. RHODES

Staff Writer

PHOTOS BY DANIEL KUCIN JR.

The Grinch could not steal the holiday spirit at the Enlisted Spouses' Club's annual Children's Holiday Party on Saturday afternoon.

Although the nemesis of Christmas tried to rattle the Fort Meade families who stood in line at Pershing Hill Elementary School to receive a free Christmas tree, he was unsuccessful.

The Grinch tried to snatch winter hats but a group of superheroes, including Batman, Ironman and Superman, whisked him away so Santa Claus could make his grand entrance in a Fort Meade fire truck.

Mavi Conner, vice president of ESC and chairperson of the event, said the Grinch's shenanigans could not derail the purpose of the holiday party, which has become a

Fort Meade tradition over the past decade.

"It's important to us to bring a sense of community, family and unity to keep the tradition going every year," Conner said.

The Officers' Spouses' Club donated \$200 so the club could purchase materials for arts and crafts projects at the party.

Lisa Rickard, wife of Garrison Commander Col. Tom Rickard, and Patricia Forbes, wife of Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. Rodwell L. Forbes, helped children design superhero masks and Santa keys.

The ESC strives to "meet the needs of the community" through its scholarship program and annual spring installation clean-up to support military families and their quality of life at Fort Meade.

"We are happy to do this," Conner said. "To see a kid's smile when they see Santa — that's priceless."

The highlight of the festivities was a giveaway of live Christmas trees from Trees for Troops to the first 65 families



Girl Scout Troops 10320, 3096 and 89 sing Christmas carols outside Pershing Hill.

who arrived at the party.

"There's always a need for help at this time of the year," Conner said. "There are families who don't have the means to have a good Christmas. We want to make the holiday better for them."

More than 1,000 people attended the four-hour event, which featured games, face painting, refreshments and a photog-

rapher to take photos with Santa and the superheroes.

Conner said the response to the party on social media has been "great."

One military spouse posted a message on the ESC Facebook page that the party helped her family deal with the difficulties of deployment.

"That's the purpose," Conner said.



Youngsters, assisted by family members, create art projects at Santa's Workshop during the Enlisted Spouses' Club's annual Children's Holiday Party on Saturday afternoon.



The Grinch tries to snatch a winter hat from 7-year-old Liam Witkop. His nefarious plan to grab hats was thwarted by a team of brave superheroes invited to the party.



Santa waves to eager youngsters as he arrives in a fire truck Saturday at Pershing Hill Elementary School. The four-hour event featured photos with Santa, games, face painting and a giveaway of live Christmas trees to the first 65 families.



## JIBBER JABBER - OPINION

# When in doubt, call doc!

**T**ook my first nitroglycerin pill Monday. Talk about a kick in the gut.

About five years ago, an EKG showed my right bundle-branch was blocked and my ventricle wasn't working at 100 percent.

After a second EKG on Monday, it appears my bundle-branch is a bit worse.

I emphasize the word "bit" because I wasn't rushed to the hospital, and I did wake up the morning after, so chances are my condition isn't immediately life-threatening.

The cardiologist will tell me more on Wednesday.

Life-threatening or not, I'm scared. I'm 42, have three young kids, a wife I adore, and the lingering tweak in my chest is a constant reminder I won't be here forever.

Scared or not, one thing I'm not after Monday's visit to the doctor is unsure.

I've been asking, "What's wrong with me?" since I took a knee during a routine walk to CSM Forbes' office a month ago.

Since then, there's been random light-headedness, twinges in the left arm, a bit of numbness in my leg and the nag in my chest.

At first I shrugged it off on a few things: diet, lack of rest, and even the new inserts I put into my shoes.

When things kept feeling off, I popped a few baby aspirin and worried a bit until I fell asleep.

To be honest, I hesitated calling my doctor because of a long-standing battle with the insurance company that I was unwilling to give in on.

That is until Saturday night.

I had a hard time sleeping, so instead I binged on "Gotham" and hyper-analyzed every tick and fibrillation in my body.

When I woke up on Sunday, I was grateful. I know that is dramatic, but it's the truth, and first thing Monday morning, I made an appointment.

After my EKG, the doctor was clear that even though my branch was blocked, my symptoms were likely caused by indigestion and anxiety as opposed to a prelude to a heart attack.

Another positive is, I haven't had any of the "serious" signs of doom: pain, tightening in the chest or troubled breathing.



**Chad T. Jones**

PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
OFFICER

So there are a lot of things up in the air, but thanks to my doctor's visit, I'm better prepared: I've talked to my wife, hugged the kids, and I sat down with my division chiefs at work to let them know I may be missing some more work, and where I keep my nitro pills.

You know, in case the big one comes while editing pages, sorting out the WWE's visit or putting together your weekly dose.

I can also tell you I'll be making a return to the Wellness Center and Gaffney gym for the Healthy Chad Initiative Volume 2 (after I speak with my cardiologist).

Heart trouble, anxiety or just plain gassy, my health isn't where it is supposed to be, and as the EKG reaffirmed, it isn't going to get better on its own.

Thankfully, Fort Meade has a lot of resources that can help.

And getting help is really what it's about. Stubborn and dead is still dead, so remember: going to the doctor and taking a sick day doesn't mean you are weak.

You work hard for your benefits, so if anything, not using them shows that your thinking may be fuzzy.

Telling people about your issues isn't weak either.

Nobody — myself included — wants to be the person who's always complaining or always has something wrong. But that is not the same as being upfront about what's going on in your life.

During my time here at Fort Meade, it's obvious most of the people I've served with, care. Most people want to know if you aren't at your best because they want to help.

Also, as our safety officer and resident Seahawks fan Kirk Fechter will tell you, the willingness to share and talk about your issues makes it easier for others to share theirs with you.

In synopsis: nitroglycerin goes under your tongue. If you are not feeling well, go to the doctor.

And if you ever need someone to talk to, read below:

*If you have comments on this or anything to do with sports, contact me at [chad.t.jones.civ@mail.mil](mailto:chad.t.jones.civ@mail.mil) or hit me up on Twitter @CTJibber.*

## SPORTS SHORTS

## Fort Meade Run Series

The final race in the 2016 Fort Meade Run Series is the Reindeer Run 5K on Saturday at Murphy Field House.

The race starts at 8 a.m. and includes a 1-mile walk.

The race, sponsored by Fort Meade's Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation, is open to the public.

Registration costs \$25 per person, and \$60 per family of three to six people.

Register online at [meade.armymwr.com/us/meade/programs/run-series](http://meade.armymwr.com/us/meade/programs/run-series).

For more information, call 301-677-7916.

## New Year's Eve cosmic bowling parties

The Lanes is hosting cosmic bowling parties on Dec. 31.

◆ Family Party: 5-8 p.m.

Package for up to six people includes: One lane rental and shoe rental for all; one bottle of sparkling cider; one large single-topping pizza; one pitcher of soda; snacks and party favors; and games and prize drawings.

◆ Prime Time Party: 9 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Package for up to six people includes: One lane rental and shoe rental for all; one bottle of sparkling cider or one bottle of Champagne; one large single-topping pizza; one pitcher of soda; snacks and party favors; and games and prize drawings.

Families with children under age 21 will only be served sparkling cider. All others will be served Champagne only upon request.

Advanced reservations are recommended.

To reserve a lane, call 301-677-5541.

## Pigskin Pick'em Contest

Take part in the NFL Football contest at The Lanes that runs through December.

Participants can pick up a free entry form and select the anticipated game winners of all Sunday NFL games.

Entry forms will be available every Tuesday beginning at 4 p.m. for that Sunday's game.

Entry forms must be submitted by 1 p.m. Sunday at The Lanes.

Weekly winners will receive a prize pack and be entered for a chance to win the grand prize.

The free contest is open to the Fort Meade community.

Watch Sunday games on The Lounge's large TV screens, and enjoy food and beverage specials.

For additional contest guidelines and

rules, visit [meade.armymwr.com](http://meade.armymwr.com).

## EFMP Bowling

The Exceptional Family Member Program offers bowling for exceptional families on the third Wednesday of every month from 5:30-7 p.m. at The Lanes.

The next event is Dec. 21.

Exceptional family members can bowl one free game with free shoe rental.

Discounted games and shoes are available for \$2 each to other family members.

To register, call Sonya Zoller at 301-677-4779.

## Dollar Day

Dollar Day is offered at The Lanes every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bowling, shoe rental and food specials each cost \$1.

For more information, call 301-677-5541.

## Tae Kwon Do

Child and Youth Services offers a Tae Kwon Do class Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Youth Center.

Classes are broken into different age groups.

Classes for ages 4 to 6 cost \$45 per month. Classes for ages 7-17 cost \$85 per month.

For more information, call 301-677-1149.

## Gaffney fitness classes

Gaffney Fitness center offers a variety of fitness classes.

Classes are open to authorized users ages 18 and older.

Cost is \$3 per drop-in class; \$20 for a 10-class pass; and \$40 for a 20-class pass.

- Boxing Circuit Training
- Water Aerobics
- Spin
- Belly Dancing
- Vinyasa yoga
- Pilates
- Metabolic Effect
- Strength and Core
- Rip and Roll Cyle + Abs
- Zumba
- Zumba Gold for seniors

For more information, call 301-677-2349 or 301-677-3716.

## Coaches needed

Youth Sports is seeking volunteer coaches for futsal or basketball.

No experience is necessary. Training is provided.

For more information, call 301-677-1329 or 301-677-1179.



## NEWS & NOTES

The deadline for Soundoff! community "News and Notes" is **Friday at noon**. All submissions are posted at the editor's discretion and may be edited for space and grammar. Look for additional community events on the Fort Meade website at [ftmeade.army.mil](http://ftmeade.army.mil) and the Fort Meade Facebook page at [facebook.com/ftmeade](https://facebook.com/ftmeade).

### How to submit announcements

Community members can advertise their upcoming event, meeting or class on the *Soundoff!* community announcements page by visiting [ftmeade.army.mil](http://ftmeade.army.mil) and clicking on the Press Center tab.

Once you are in the Fort Meade Press Center, click on PA services, story or promotion request and electronic inquiry form.

Inquiry forms should be submitted at least two weeks before the date of the event, meeting or class.

## NEWS & EVENTS

### VCC hours

Operating hours at the Demps Visitor Control Center are Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. at 902 Reece Road. The VCC is closed weekends and from 7 a.m.-noon on the third Wednesday of each month for training.

All individuals who do not have a DoD-issued identification card must go to the VCC for a day pass.

Visit the VCC at least 10 business days in advance to apply for a long-term access pass.

Visitors who arrive on post when the VCC is closed must be escorted on post by an authorized DoD cardholder. This includes weekends and federal holidays.

For more information, call the VCC at 301-677-1064 or visit the Fort Meade Facebook page for announcements on temporary changes to operating hours.

### ACP holiday operating hours

Operating hours for the installation access control points will be reduced during the following holiday periods:

◆ Dec. 23-26

◆ Dec. 30-Jan. 2

Access Control Points:

• Reece Road: Open daily 24 hours

• Mapes Road and Route 32: Open daily, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

• Rockenbach Road: Closed

• Mapes Road and Route 175: Closed

For more information, call Joseph Shinskie, chief of Physical Security, at 301-

## 2016 Holiday Religious Services

### CATHOLIC SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Dec. 8: Immaculate Conception Mass — 7 p.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Confessions (Blessed Sacrament Chapel) — 3 p.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Carol Service & Children's Christmas Pageant — 5 p.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Vigil Mass — 5:30 p.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 25: Christmas Day Mass — 9 a.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 25: Christmas Day Mass — 12:15 p.m., Post Chapel

Jan. 1: New Year's Mass/Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God — 9 a.m., Chapel Center

Jan. 1: New Year's Mass/Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God — 12:15 p.m., Post Chapel

### PROTESTANT SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service — 7 p.m., Post Chapel

Dec. 25: Christmas Day Service (Traditional) — 10:30 a.m., Post Chapel

Dec. 25: Christmas Day Service (Contemporary) — 10:30 a.m., Cavalry Chapel

Dec. 25: Christmas Day Service (Gospel) — 11 a.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 31: Gospel Watch-Night Service — 10 p.m., Chapel Center

Jan. 1: (No Gospel Sunday Morning Service)

### JEWISH CELEBRATION

Dec. 27: Menorah Lighting — 6:20 a.m., Chapel Center

Dec. 27: Hanukkah Observance & Lunch — Noon, Chapel Center

Dec. 27: Afternoon Service — 12:45 p.m., Chapel Center

*Times of the regular weekend Catholic and Protestant services during the day will remain the same if not noted.*

677-6618 or email [joseph.r.shinskie.civ@mail.mil](mailto:joseph.r.shinskie.civ@mail.mil).

### Tree Lighting Ceremony

Fort Meade's annual Tree Lighting Ceremony is Friday from 5-6:30 p.m. outside the historic Main Post Chapel, 4419 Llewellyn Ave. and Roberts Avenue.

The Religious Support Office is sponsoring the 90-minute event.

Garrison Commander Col. Tom Rickard will light the tree.

The U.S. Army Field Band's Brass Quintet will perform.

The ceremony also will feature caroling, cookies and a visit with Santa. The USO will provide hot chocolate.

For more information, call 301-677-6703.

### DHR closure

The Directorate of Human Resources, Military Personnel Division, ID Card Section, Administrative Services Division, Education Center, Soldier for Life-TAP, Retirement/Transition Office, Finance, Transportation, Personnel Support Detachment (Navy), and Alcohol and Substance Abuse Office will close Friday at 11 a.m.

Normal operations will resume Monday.

For more information, call DHR at 301-677-5406.

### Library closing early Dec. 16

The Medal of Honor Memorial Library will be open Dec. 16 from 10 a.m. to noon and then be closed so that staff may attend the annual holiday party for the Directorate of Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation.

For more information, call 301-677-5522.

### 'Tis the Season

Corvias Military Housing will sponsor its annual resident Tis' the Season holiday celebration on Friday from 5-7 p.m. at the Potomac Place Community Center.

Enjoy food, games, crafts, a candy room and a visit by Santa Claus. Bring your camera!

For more information, call Potomac Place at 410-672-2981 or the leasing office at 410-305-1258 or email [meadefamilyhousing@corvias.com](mailto:meadefamilyhousing@corvias.com).

### WWE Tribute to Troops

The WWE will hold its annual Tribute to the Troops show on Tuesday in Washington, D.C.

The USO of Metropolitan Washington-

Baltimore is partnering with the WWE for the event.

USO-Metro will distribute thousands of tickets to local military.

In addition, there will be visits from the WWE's cadre of stars.

One team of four to six stars will visit Fort Meade on Tuesday.

The interactions and matches will air Wednesday on the USA network.

WWE schedule at Fort Meade:

◆ Meet and Greet at Asymmetric Warfare Group: 8-9:30 a.m. Team will participate in challenges.

◆ Anti-bullying rally at MacArthur Middle School: 9:30-11:30 a.m.

◆ Meet and Greet at the Exchange: 12:30-2:30 p.m.

For more information, call the Fort Meade USO at 410-305-0660.

### Holiday Decorating Contest

Corvias Military Housing invites all residents to participate in Corvias' annual Holiday Decorating Contest.

Winning houses will be chosen based on creativity and the overall impression of the yard.

Email your photo submission directly to your community office, or inbox a photo to the Corvias Facebook page between Monday and Dec. 18.

All submissions will be posted to the Corvias Facebook page on Dec. 19.

The photo with the most likes in each community will receive a gift card and recognition.

Winners will be announced Dec. 22 on the Facebook page.

For more information, call the leasing office at 410-305-1258 or email [meadefamilyhousing@corvias.com](mailto:meadefamilyhousing@corvias.com).

### Newcomers Orientation

Army Community Service will now host the Newcomers Orientation briefing every other week.

But during the months of May through September, which are considered high peak for service members who are undergoing a PCS move, the briefing will be held every week.

This will assist in eliminating a backlog and will provide a smooth transition for service members experiencing a PCS move.

The next Newcomers Orientation briefings are scheduled for: Jan. 11, Jan. 25, Feb. 1, Feb. 8, Feb. 22, April 5, April 19, May 3, May 10, May 17, May 24, May 31, June 7, June 14, June 21 and June 28.

For more information, call 301-677-4107.

### Wing It Thursdays

The Brass Lounge at Club Meade offers See **NEWS & NOTES**, page 14



## NEWS & NOTES, *From page 13*

wings for 50 cents every Thursday night from 4-8 p.m.

Dine-in only, no carry out.

For more information, call 301-677-6969.

## Children's Library closing permanently

The Children's Library at Kuhn Hall will close its doors on Dec. 16.

All books will be transferred to the Medal of Honor Memorial Library next door at 4418 Llewellyn Ave.

For more information, 301-677-5677.

## Thrift Shop hours

The Post Thrift Shop, located at 392 Llewellyn Ave., is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Consignments are taken by appointment only.

For more information, call 410-672-3575.

## Freedom Inn open to post employees

The Freedom Inn Dining Facility, located at 8502 Simonds St., is open to all active-duty service members, military retirees, DoD civilians, contractors, and Department of the Army security guards and firefighters on Monday through Friday.

Active-duty service members on Basic Allowance for Subsistence are also authorized for meals on the weekend. Family members of military personnel may purchase meals on weekdays if they are accompanied by the service member.

For more information, call 301-677-5503.

## Holiday concert series

The U.S. Army Field Band will perform its annual holiday concert series, "Sound the Bells," on Saturday at 3 and 7 p.m. at Centennial High School in Ellicott City.

The concerts will include a variety of selections including holiday classics, choral arrangements and patriotic favorites.

Concerts are free but tickets are required.

To view the full schedule and print free tickets from the Army Field Band's website, go to [www.ArmyFieldBand.com/](http://www.ArmyFieldBand.com/) tickets or call 301-677-6586.

## Symphony of Lights

Symphony of Lights, a 20-minute drive-through of more than 100 larger-

than-life holiday light displays, is open through Jan. 1 on Wednesdays through Sundays from 5:30-10 p.m. at Merriweather Post Pavilion in Columbia.

Military appreciation nights, today and Dec. 8, offer service members a 50 percent discount off tickets to the drive-through. Active-duty service members, retirees and Reservists with government-issued IDs and their dependents qualify.

Symphony of Lights features refurbished light displays and 20 new custom displays, a laser light show and a 3-D holiday video projected 50 feet high.

Tickets regularly cost \$20 per car except Saturdays, when the cost is \$25. Symphony of Lights is closed to vehicles on Dec. 31.

An ice skating rink also opened at Symphony of Lights — Howard County's only outdoor rink — through Jan. 8.

The rink, located near the corner of Little Patuxent Parkway and Broken Land Parkway, is open Tuesdays through Thursdays from 3 to 8 p.m. and Fridays through Sundays from noon to 9 p.m.

Two-hour admission tickets cost \$9 for adults and \$7 for children, with skate rentals for \$4.

Special-rate tickets cost \$7 for service members on Wednesdays, and for seniors on Tuesdays through Thursdays. Group rates, season passes and private rink rentals are also available.

For more information, call 410-740-7666 or visit [www.hcgh.org/symphonyoflights](http://www.hcgh.org/symphonyoflights).

## EDUCATION

### Financial, Job Readiness

Joint Services offers workshops and briefings by Army Community Service at the Community Readiness Center, 830 Chisholm Ave., and the Navy Fleet and Family Support Center at 2212 Chisholm Ave., unless otherwise noted.

The free classes are open to active-duty service members and family members, DoD civilian employees and retirees. Registration is required for each class.

#### Military

- Retiree Brief: Monday, 8-11:30 a.m., FFSC

- Pre-Deployment Brief: Dec. 15, 10-11:30 a.m., FFSC

#### Financial

- Thrift Savings Plan Overview: Tuesday, 9-11 a.m., ACS

- Home Buying: Dec. 20, 9 a.m. to noon, ACS

#### Employment

- Salary Negotiation: Today, 9 a.m. to noon, ACS

This workshop provides an understanding of what a job offer entails, salary and

benefits negotiation as well as tips on knowing your worth.

- Ten Steps to a Federal Job: Tuesday, 9 a.m. to noon, ACS

Learn to understand job vacancy announcements, how to write a federal and electronic resume, and how to track applications.

- Interviewing Skills: Dec. 15, 9 a.m. to noon, ACS

#### Life Skills

- Time Management: Today, 9-11 a.m., FFSC

- Healthy Relationships: Dec. 16, 9-11 a.m., FFSC

#### Navy

- Navy Family Orientation: Wednesday, 5-7 p.m., FFSC

- Navy and Marine Corps (only)

- Navy Family Orientation: Wednesday, 5-7 p.m., FFSC

- Budget for Baby: Dec. 16, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., FFSC

To register, call FFSC at 301-677-9017 or ACS at 301-677-5590, or visit [fortmeadeacs.checkappointments.com](http://fortmeadeacs.checkappointments.com).

## YOUTH

### Breakfast with Santa

Breakfast with Santa Claus on Friday from 8-11 a.m. at Club Meade.

The annual event is open to the Fort Meade community.

Space is limited. Tickets are required and are only available at the Youth Center.

Tickets cost \$8 per child ages 5-11 and \$14 for ages 12 and older.

Activities include a letter-writing workshop, cookie-decorating station, Santa's Elves Workshop, story time with Mrs. Claus and a photo with Santa Claus.

The breakfast buffet will feature scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, home-fried potatoes, French toast, grits, biscuits, waffle and omelet stations, assorted cereals, fresh fruit and a hot chocolate bar.

For more information, call the Youth Center at 301-677-1437 or 301-677-6054.

### Project Elf

Fort Meade USO's Project Elf is Wednesday from 4-7 p.m. at the USO at 8612 6th Armored Cavalry Road.

The annual project matches military children to donors to make sure that the children have presents for Christmas.

More than 400 Fort Meade children will receive gifts.

For more information, call 410-305-0660.

### Youth Center activities

The Youth Center is offering the follow-

ing events in December:

- ♦ Movie & Wings Night: Friday, 5:30 p.m.

- ♦ Dodgeball: Wednesday, 5:30 p.m.

- ♦ 2016 Winter Camp: Dec. 23-30, 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.

- ♦ Power Hour: Every school day, 4:30 p.m.

- ♦ Lego Robotics Club: Fridays, 4:30 p.m.

For more information, call 301-677-1437.

### Teen Center events

The Teen Center offers several activities in December:

- ♦ Lightning Uno Battle: Friday, 2:30 p.m.

- ♦ Paint and Snack: Tuesday, 4 p.m.

A guest painter will present an entertaining session on painting portraits and landscapes.

Snacks and appetizers will be provided.

- ♦ Wii Sports Olympics: Dec. 15, 5 p.m.

- ♦ Rock Band Tournament: Dec. 19, 2:30 p.m.

- ♦ DIY Holiday Gifts: Dec. 22, 4 p.m.

For more information, call 301-677-6054.

## RECREATION

### Out & About

- **Christmas Village** at the Inner Harbor, modeled after traditional German Christmas markets, is open at 11 a.m. daily through Dec. 24 at West Shore Park, 501 Light St.

The free event features gift vendors, food and visits from Santa. For more information, visit [baltimore-christmas.com](http://baltimore-christmas.com).

- **Six Flags Holiday in the Park** tickets is offered by Leisure Travel Services through Jan. 6. Admission only: \$26 each. For more information, call 301-677-7354.

- **Toby's Dinner Theatre** presents "A Christmas Carol" through Jan. 8 at 5900 Symphony Woods, Columbia. Reserve seats for the 2017 season: "Showboat," "Disney's Beauty and the Beast," "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" and "Dreamgirls." Discounted tickets are available at Leisure Travel Services. For more information, call LTS at 301-677-7354 or Toby's at 410-730-8311.

- **Leisure Travel Services** will offer its next monthly bus trip to New York City on Dec. 24 from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Cost is \$60. Discounted tickets to attractions will be provided. For more information, call 301-677-7354.

## MEETINGS

- **Fort Meade E9 Association** meets



the second Friday of every month at 7 a.m. in the Pin Deck Cafe at the Lanes. The next meeting is Friday. The association is open to active, retired, Reserve and National Guard E9s of any uniformed service. All E9s in this area are invited to attend a breakfast and meet the membership. For more information, go to [e9association.org](http://e9association.org).

• **Meade Branch 212 of the Fleet Reserve Association** meets the second Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. at VFW Post 160, 2597 Dorsey Road, Glen Burnie. The next meeting is Saturday. Active-duty, Reserve and retired members of the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard are invited. For more information, call 443-604-2474 or 410-768-6288.

• **Marriage Enrichment Group**, sponsored by Army Community Service, meets the second and fourth Monday of every month from 3-4 p.m. at the Community Readiness Center, 830 Chisholm Ave. The next meeting is Monday. For more information, call Celena Flowers or Jessica Hobgood at 301-677-5590.

• **Single Parent Support Group** meets every second and fourth Monday of the month from 5:30-7 p.m. at School Age Services, 1900 Reece Road. Children welcome. The next meeting is Monday. For more information, call 301-677-7823.

• **Glen Burnie NARFE Chapter 1519** meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. at the Holy Trinity Parish Hall, 7436 Baltimore Annapolis Blvd., Glen Burnie.

The next meeting of the National Active and Retired Federal Employees is Tuesday.

The speaker is Anne Healy from Blue Cross/Blue Shield who will discuss health care changes.

Federal employees and retirees who are members of NARFE are welcome to attend.

For more information, call Barbara Jacobs at 410-969-5980.

• **Moms of Multiples Group** meets every first and third Thursday of the month from 1:30-2:30 p.m. at the Family Advocacy Program, 2462 85th Medical Battalion Ave. The next meeting is Dec. 15. For more information, call 301-677-7823.

• **Families Dealing with Deployment** meets the first and third Monday of every month from 5:30-6:30 p.m. at the Family Advocacy Program, 2462 85th Medical Battalion Ave. Children welcome. The next meeting is Dec. 19.

The group is for families experiencing an upcoming or current deployment, or the service members who have recently returned from deployment. For more information, call 301-677-7823.

• **Daddy & Me** interactive playgroup

for fathers with children ages 2-4 meets the first and third Monday of every month from 5-6 p.m. at the Family Advocacy Program, 2462 85th Medical Battalion Ave. The next meeting is Dec. 19.

Space is limited. Registration is required for each session. For more information, call 301-677-4118.

• **Kritikos Toastmasters Club** meets on the first three Mondays of every month at 6:15 p.m. at Perry's Restaurant, 1210 Annapolis Road, Odenton. The next meeting is Monday.

The club offers an opportunity to service members and civilian residents in the Fort Meade community to improve their public speaking skills in a supportive environment.

For more information, go to [1686.toastmastersclubs.org](http://1686.toastmastersclubs.org) or call 410-305-9190.

• **Prostate Cancer Support Group** meets at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda on the third Thursday of every month. The next meeting is Dec. 15 from 1-2 p.m. and 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the America Building, River Conference Room, third floor.

Spouses/partners are invited. Military ID is required for base access. Men without a military ID should call the Prostate Center at 301-319-2900 at least four business days prior to the event for base access.

For more information, call retired Col. Jane Hudak at 301-319-2918 or email [jane.l.hudak.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:jane.l.hudak.ctr@mail.mil).

• **Enlisted Spouses' Club** meets the third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at Potomac Place Community Center, 4998 Second Corps Blvd. Location and time subject to change. The next meeting is Dec. 15 at 6:30 p.m. For child care during ESC functions, email [membership@FtMeadeESC](mailto:membership@FtMeadeESC).

For more information, call 301-908-3773.

• **The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA)** Fort Meade chapter meets the third Tuesday of each month from 7:30-8:30 p.m. at the Potomac Place Neighborhood Center, 4998 2nd Corps Blvd. The next meeting is Dec. 20.

For more information, visit [trea.org](http://trea.org) or call Charles Green, the local chapter president, at 443-610-4252 or Otis Whitaker Sr., chapter secretary, at 443-306-1104.

• **Society of Military Widows** meets for brunch the third Tuesday of the month at 11 a.m. at Club Meade. The next meeting is Dec. 20. For more information, call Betty Jones, 410-992-1123.

• **Military District of Washington Sergeant Audie Murphy Club** meets the third Wednesday of each month. The next meeting is Dec. 21. For more information, email Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Barfield, club

vice president, at [aaron.a.barfield.mil@mail.mil](mailto:aaron.a.barfield.mil@mail.mil).

• **Air Force Sergeants Association Chapter 254** meets the third Wednesday of every month from 3-4 p.m. in the auditorium of the Airman Leadership School, 8470 Zimborski Ave. The next meeting is Dec. 21. For more information, call 831-521-9251 or go to [AFSA254.org](http://AFSA254.org).

• **Monthly Prayer Breakfast**, hosted by the Religious Support Office, is held the first Thursday of every month at 7 a.m. at Club Meade. The next prayer breakfast is Jan. 5. There is no cost for the buffet. Donations are optional.

Menu features eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits, gravy, grits, Danish pastries and fruit.

All Fort Meade employees, civilian and military personnel, and family members are invited.

For more information, call 301-677-6703.

• **Anne Arundel Genealogical Society's** next meeting and holiday gathering is Jan. 5 from 7-9:30 p.m. at Severna Park United Methodist Church (Fellowship Hall), 731 Benfield Road, Severna Park. Guests are welcome.

Tom McCarriar, AAGS president, will discuss "Sarah Goldsborough: Civil War Widow — Persistence Pays Off."

Shelley Pollero, AAGS past president, will present on "Using Power Point to Share Your Family History Research."

Louis Sapienza, research volunteer for AAGS, will share "Tips for Finding Maiden Names."

Refreshments and networking will follow the meeting.

For more information, visit [aagenso-c.org](http://aagenso-c.org) or call the group at the Kuethe Library at 410-760-9679 from Thursday to Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

• **Sip and Share**, hosted by the Exceptional Family Member Program, meets the first Thursday of every month from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the Fort Meade USO, 8612 6th Armored Cavalry Road. The next get-together is Jan. 5.

Inform each other about resources available in the local community.

For more information or to register, call 301-677-4779.

• **Fort Meade First Class Petty Officer Association** meets the first Thursday of every month at 3 p.m. at The Lanes. The next meeting is Jan. 5. All first class petty officers are invited. For more information, call 410-854-2763.

• **Meade Rod and Gun Club** meets the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. at Perry's Restaurant and Oddie's Pub at 1210 Annapolis Road, Odenton, in the banquet hall in back of the building. Dinner is served at 6 p.m. For more information, call 240-568-6055.

## MOVIES

*The movie schedule is subject to change. For a recorded announcement of showings, call 301-677-5324. Further listings are available on the Army and Air Force Exchange Service website at [www.aafes.com](http://www.aafes.com).*

*Movies start Fridays at 6:30 p.m., Saturdays at 6 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. PRICES: Tickets are \$6 for adults (12 and older) and \$3.50 for children. 3-D Movies: \$8 adults, \$5.50 children.*

## Today through Dec. 18



QUANTRELL D. COLBE/UNIVERSAL PICTURES

**Friday & Sunday: "Almost Christmas" (PG-13).** A dysfunctional family gathers together for their first Christmas since their mom died. With Kimberly Elise, Omar Epps, Danny Glover.

**Saturday: 2 p.m. FREE SCREENING (PG-13).** Tickets available at the Exchange Food Court. Seating open to non-ticket holders 30 minutes prior to showtime.

**Saturday: "Trolls" (PG).** After the Bergens invade Troll Village, Poppy, the happiest Troll ever born, and the curmudgeonly Branch set off on a journey to rescue her friends. With the voices of Anna Kendrick, Justin Timberlake, Zooey Deschanel.

**Dec. 16 & 18: "Arrival" (PG-13).** A linguist is recruited by the military to assist in translating alien communications. With Amy Adams, Jeremy Renner, Forest Whitaker.

**Dec. 17: "Loving" (PG-13).** The story of Richard and Mildred Loving, an interracial couple, whose challenge of their anti-miscegenation arrest for their marriage in Virginia led to a legal battle that would end at the U.S. Supreme Court. With Ruth Negga, Joel Edgerton, Will Dalton.