



Survivor's Link

COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES



Spring: A Time for New Beginnings – One Step at a Time

By Susanna Del Llano, NAS Corpus Christi Gold Star Coordinator

Spring is a time for new beginnings for so many things. “Fresh buds bloom, animals awaken and the earth seems to come to life again. Farmers and gardeners plant their seeds, and temperatures slowly begin to rise. The timing of springtime changes varies depending on location,” wrote Nola Taylor Redd, Live Science contributor, in “Spring: Season of New Beginnings.”

First and foremost, decide that you actually want to move forward and that you are ready to see what comes next. You may ask yourself, “Where do I start?” The point to new beginnings is to begin somewhere. It is important that you work on creating a new path for yourself: one that works for you and has the best fit within your life.

The key to beginning anything in life is to start, take that first step, and begin anew. Do not expect to know exactly what you want within days, weeks or even months after your loss. Finding clarity often takes time. We all experience strife; the response is up to you, no matter what tools you may use. Find someone you trust who can be a mentor for you, someone who can guide and support you in your healing journey.

“This is your life. How do you want to live and experience it? You have to take ownership over it and direct yourself along the path you want to travel. Life is a journey, full of twists and turns, bumpy roads and newly paved streets. We can never be fully prepared for what lies ahead. But, if you want to go on this new path, don't let the roadblocks stop you from fulfilling your hopes and dreams. Starting today, pledge to making your life the best trip you can” (as cited in “New Beginnings,” Shoba Sreenivasan, Ph.D., and Linda E. Weinberger, Ph.D.).

Your healing journey is just that – it's yours. Each of us on a journey of healing follows a different timeline of healing. It could be easy for an individual to compare oneself with another who has lost a loved one, but we cannot allow

ourselves to do that. Each of us is on a different path or journey toward healing. It is important to remember that we all process things differently and at different rates. Your thoughts create your feelings; positive thoughts equal positive feelings.

“Remember – we may never get answers for all the why's of loss ... why it happened, why now, why him/her? We can find meaning in what comes next by finding purpose in our lives” (as cited in “Finding Purpose After Loss,” <https://www.griefincommon.com/blog/finding-purpose-loss/>).





'wear blue: run to remember' Creates Support Network

From www.wearblueruntoremember.org

Wear blue: run to remember is a national, nonprofit running community that honors the service and sacrifice of our fallen military personnel. It creates a support network for military members and their families, helps bridge the gap between military and civilian communities, and serves as a living memorial for our country's fallen military members. The organization exists for the fallen, for the fighting and for their families.

Wear blue has two very unique programs, the wear blue Mile and the Gold Star Race Program.

The wear blue Mile is at officially designated races and is comprised of two parts: faces of the fallen posters and American flags (each draped with a black ribbon bearing the name of a fallen military member) held by volunteers. On race day, volunteers line a mile of the course to hold large American flags with the names of fallen service members embroidered onto ribbons attached to each flag. Leading up to the flags, posters are displayed with the photograph and name of each fallen military member whose flags are being held.

The organization emboldens running as part of the healing process for Gold Star family members and believes the family members who have sacrificed all in service to our nation deserve the opportunity to not only heal but thrive after losing their loved ones. The Gold Star Race Program provides these family members race selection and access as well as the training and support necessary to complete a wear blue endurance-running event. Each program recipient receives one personalized wear blue shirt, one pair of running shoes, one race entry, airfare to race, lodging for race, training plan for race, a certified running coach, and support throughout the training and race experience. The athlete's fallen service member will be uniquely honored on the tribute wear blue Mile.

Please visit www.wearblueruntoremember.org/gold-star-programs for more information.

2020 Gold Star Races

Rock 'n' Roll Seattle, Wash. – June 7

Rock 'n' Roll Chicago, Ill. – July 19

Marine Corps Marathon, Washington, D.C. – Oct. 25

Rock 'n' Roll San Antonio, Texas – Dec. 6

Moving Forward: 'When Families Grieve'

The following is an excerpt from "When Families Grieve," a special guide provided by www.sesamestreetformilitaryfamilies.org.

Feelings of grief may never completely go away, but with time, they can be easier to endure. At some point you may notice that you and your family are taking "grief breaks," moments when you forget your sadness. Give yourself and your children permission to feel happy again. Be assured that the memory of your loved one can live on in the hearts of your family.

Celebrate your loved one's life and important place in the family. Create and continue traditions to help keep the memories alive. Here are a few suggestions:

- *Keep celebrating your loved one's birthday. Eat a favorite meal, light a candle, or look through family photos together.*
- *If religious traditions are part of your family's life, include them in your memory celebrations.*
- *Carry in your pocket a small seashell or stone from a place you liked to visit together.*
- *Volunteer or find simple ways of helping others - in memory of your loved one.*

As your family heals, you can begin to think about the future in a positive way. You can create new routines. Remember, you can still have fun and love the person who died. After a while, you may plan vacations or special occasions, giving your family something to look forward to. A new family structure may emerge. You might find that you are open to living in a new place or feel that you want to share your life with others who have gone through similar experiences. As you move forward, you may find your family laughing and having fun together more often. Trust that the memories you and your children create and celebrate will go a long way toward building a sense of emotional resilience that can last a lifetime.

More tips, resources and activities to help children grieve can be located at www.sesamestreet.org/grief.



Communicating Across Generations

By Christy Forsling, CNRNW Gold Star Coordinator

It should be no surprise that different generations communicate differently. Slang, communication style and preferred communication method change each decade and sometimes year to year. Changing technologies, political influences, media content, and economic situations propel this forward progression of what each generation prefers. Having a general knowledge of the communication tendencies across each generation helps to increase opportunities for positive communication and collaboration.

Traditionalists (1925-1945)

This generation highly values respect, fiscal responsibility, authority and meeting their obligations. Traditionalists often prefer more formal communication styles (letters, phone calls and face-to-face) rather than casual methods. While traditionalists tend to be excellent communicators, they are often more private regarding their personal life and opinions³. When speaking to a traditionalist, remove distractions and provide your full attention with good eye contact and active listening. Multitasking while having a conversation with a traditionalist may make them feel disregarded, not of value, and disrespected. Address the traditionalist by their formal title (Mr./Mrs./Ms.) unless invited to use another name¹. Investing time in the relationship to ask many questions is the best way to get to know a traditionalist's thoughts and feelings, as they may not openly express them unless directly asked.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Baby boomers respect authority and value existing structures while remaining open to change where they can see a benefit. A large amount of optimism characterized the formation of this generation along with the mentality that with hard work and sacrifice, anyone can accomplish great things³. Boomers inherited

a comfort level with more formal communication styles, but many have also embraced more casual methods, such as email and texting, due to the ease of quick communication. While casual communication methods may be used, boomers may not be as adept at their utilization as some of the more recent generations. Using slang with boomers should be avoided, as they tend to have a limited familiarity and comfort level with slang¹. Giving baby boomers your undivided attention when communicating will produce the best results; they value open individual communication with strong listening skills. For this reason, face-to-face and phone communication are often preferred by baby boomers.

Generation X (1965-1985)¹

Generation X is accustomed to change and has experienced significant economic ups and downs. Members of this generation retain proficiency with more formal communication styles but fully embrace technology. They are the first generation to regularly use social media and they appreciate validation and feedback. Gen Xers tend to challenge existing structures and question authority figures. They tend to lead very busy lives and therefore prefer communication to be straight to the point. Ensuring this generation feels valued and heard, even if you do not agree with their opinions, will encourage increased communication with them. Gen X is often less comfortable with phone communication than previous generations. It matters less what method of communication you use with Gen X - it matters more that you convey you value them through the way you communicate.

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Millennials (1981-1996)¹

This generation experienced a technological boom through their formative years and are most comfortable communicating through it. They prefer texting, social media and email but are also comfortable communicating face-to-face. Millennials often try to avoid phone calls and may not follow traditional protocol when using more formal methods of communication. They value frequent feedback, informal communication and the ability to conduct multiple tasks concurrently. They strongly dislike being talked down to and desire to be treated as equals. They crave information and believe you should not only have opinions, but be prepared to defend them. Explaining the reasoning behind a decision will help millennials to embrace the decision.

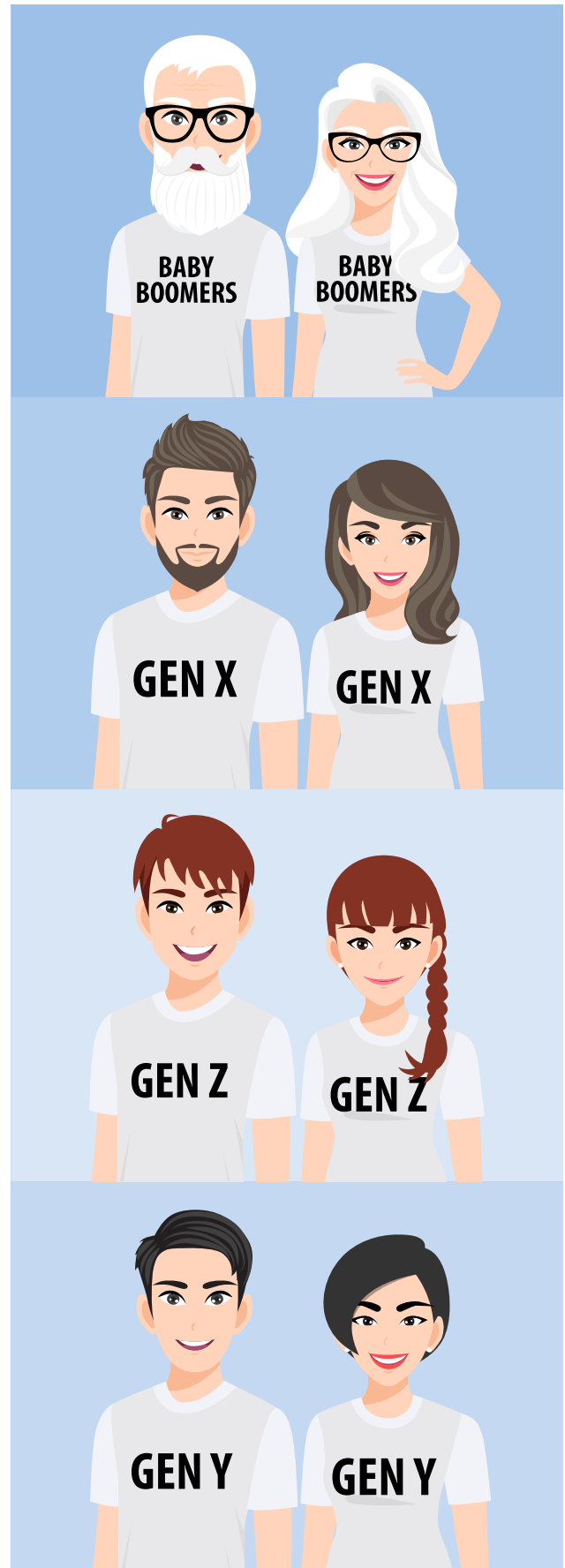
Generation Z (1997-Present)²

Generation Z is completely comfortable with all forms of technological communication but still highly values communicating face-to-face. Their members have little experience with formal communication styles and prefer to use technology to communicate, including social media platforms and phone apps. They communicate frequently and openly on topics they care about and value feeling connected. Members of Gen Z use slang frequently in their communication, and their verbiage adapts quickly with cultural changes and media influences. They are happy to explain what slang means when asked and enjoy being asked questions about themselves. Making them feel valued and mentored through regular, honest communication encourages open connection to Gen Z.

Most people want to feel significant, heard and respected. Keeping generational differences in mind, along with brushing up on your active listening skills, will help you connect and communicate with those in your life in a meaningful way.

Citations:

1. Serafino, J. (2018). *New Guidelines Redefine Birth Years for Millennials, Gen-X, and 'Post-Millennials.'* Retrieved from <http://mentalfloss.com/article/533632/new-guidelines-redefine-birth-years-millennials-gen-x-and-post-millennials>.
2. Staff, R. (2018). *Communicating with Gen Z Employees: The Modern Manager's Guide.* Retrieved Feb. 5, 2020 from <http://risepeople.com/blog/gen-z-communication>.
3. Tolbize, A. (2008). *Generational differences in the workplace.* Retrieved from University of Minnesota: https://rtc3.umn.edu/docs/2_18_Gen_diff_workplace.pdf.





Good Grief, Charlie Brown!

By CNRSE Chaplain Dan Stallard

Charles Schulz, the creator and artist of Peanuts, published more than 18,000 comic strips from 1950-2000. The often-flat humor of Peanuts appeared around the world in 75 countries, was translated into 21 languages, and had an estimated 350 million readers. As a child I did not always “get the humor” of Peanuts. However, after looking back upon these timeless strips of laughter I discovered great meaning in the characters – such as Snoopy bravely flying his dog house, or Linus sucking his thumb and clinging to his security blanket, or Franklin the African-American boy making his first appearance in 1968 when the U.S. was being torn apart by Vietnam, politics and social injustice.

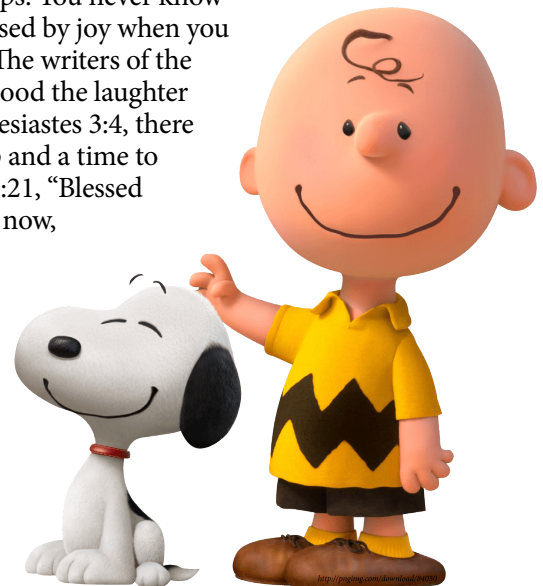
Then there is Linus’ big sister Lucy. She is my favorite character. I especially liked Dr. Lucy the psychiatrist. I can see the comic strip now of her sitting behind what appears to be a lemonade stand with a sign on the front saying “the doctor is in.” Her first fees were a nickel – they increased over time to a quarter. This booth is where she dispensed her often-terse advice to Charlie Brown. However, Lucy said wonderful things too, such as “Happiness is a warm puppy.” Now the humor of Peanuts causes me to think, to be self-aware, to do self-examination and question the meaning of life – yes, a cartoon strip can cause you to laugh and think deeply about what matters most.

There is a lot of good psychology, philosophy and theology in the Peanuts comic strips and movies. In addition, there are many catch phrases; the one that captures for me the essence of Charlie Brown is “good grief.” Charlie often appeared pessimistic, down in the dumps, frustrated, nervous, and lacking confidence. Yet he was lovable, and in the end, optimistic and things seemed to work out for good. However, why use the word good with grief? For those of us experiencing grief life may not feel so good. Life may be like Charlie Brown falling flat on his back after Lucy jerks the football away before he kicks it and leaving Charlie thinking “good grief.”

Grief can feel like life has been pulled out from under our feet. But grief can be good if we take the time to process our loss. Dr. Wayne Oates, one of my seminary professors, wrote a book entitled, “Your Particular Grief.” In this practical guide, Dr. Oates discussed many things associated with grieving such as mourning and the emotional work we do with family and friends. One of the most important aspects of coping, according to Dr. Oates, is the idea “your loss is your particular grief.” Our grief is unique to us; even though there is commonality in grieving among family and friends, the truth remains: “Our grief is our grief.”

How do you make your particular grief good? First, we need to accept our grief and pain may subside, but it will never go away. The key is to take our grief and turn it into meaningful, positive memories. Second, there is no normal timeline to grieving; some people grieve faster than others, while for some of us our grief lingers. If a person gets stuck in their particular grief, I recommend seeking professional support. In addition, you may have heard about the stages of grief. There are very good insights to grieving in this theory; however, stages give us the idea that after 1, 2 and 3 are complete, the grief is over. This is not true; you may wake up one morning feeling great, and then there is a particular sound or smell that triggers a memory and you quickly realize your particular grief again. Re-experiencing sorrow is expected, but the key is to embrace it, accept it and move forward with a sense of hope. Then there are all the negative emotions: anger, guilt, sadness and fear. Processing and coping with negative emotions is draining and hard work. The key is to take care of your personal well-being through exercise, healthy eating, sleep, active coping, being in community, and love.

Comedian Barbara Johnson wrote, “Love makes the world go around, but laughter keeps us from getting dizzy.” I recommend as part of your grieving that you read some Peanuts comic strips. You never know – you may be surprised by joy when you get a good laugh. The writers of the Scriptures understood the laughter principle too: Ecclesiastes 3:4, there is a “Time to weep and a time to laugh,” and Luke 6:21, “Blessed are you who weep now, because you will laugh.” May your particular grief transform into good grief so you can laugh again.





Chaplain's Corner: Self-Care is a Spiritual Mandate in our Lives

By CNIC Force Chaplain's Office

We need to invest more! Sometimes the best investment is simply spending a few minutes with our own thoughts focusing on our own selves. This is the heart of practicing self-care.

Investing time in thinking about our own selves is extremely important. For some, it may sound selfish to indulge in such activity. However, the heart of practicing self-care is being intentional in doing just that! Self-care is an intentional act of showing concern for your own well-being by creating opportunities to experience goodness and kindness beyond justice.

Intentional acts, defined as self-care, include fun physical activities such as swimming, running, reading or dancing. However, mental activity is just as important to self-care as physical activity. Granted, thinking about ourselves can usher us into feeling alone. Feeling alone can be intimidating. Why? Because we may have to think about things that we would rather not dwell on; or even worse, being alone with our thoughts may usher us into painful reminders of the losses in our lives. So, where is the personal gain? Practicing self-care can serve as a marvelous door to a richer perspective on what is truly important in our lives.

Self-care is intentional. Self-care is about being mindful of the joy and the pain in our lives. It is about appreciating balance that causes us to be grateful for what we have (i.e., gains) and for what we had (i.e., losses). For instance, thinking of a favorite aunt who meant the world to us but is no longer living can bring joy and sorrow at the same time. It's hard to fully comprehend, but just the memory of that special person is also a definite reminder of how blessed we are to have been loved by her.

Recalling fond times of a special person serves as a spiritual highlighter in practicing self-care. It reminds us that we live with a mandate to pass on as much goodness and kindness beyond justice as we can. The Bible says it best: "To whom much is given, much is required" (Luke 12:48).

Keeping the Legacy of IT2 Timothy 'Timmy' Eckels, Jr., Alive

By Rachel Eckels, Gold Star Mom

In the words of Rachel Eckels, Gold Star mother of the late IT2 Timothy Eckels, "Timmy was such a compassionate soul who loved, respected and inspired everyone he encountered. Also, he was so passionate about a healthy lifestyle for himself, which included physical fitness and holistic cooking. He would encourage his friends and colleagues to improve their overall well-being as well. Taking pride in his workout regimen, Timmy would create YouTube videos emphasizing the correct form for a specific area on the body (e.g., leg day, shoulder day, abs day). Not only was he creating videos while based at Ft. Meade, he was motivating his peers to increase their PT records during the yearly check-in. In addition, Timmy would prepare meal plans and exercise shakes and would discuss them with others at the gym, making certain the things he was consuming were only organic and without harmful byproducts. His peers often looked forward to what new ideas he would come up with.

"Thus, staying true to Timmy's passions, my mission in keeping his legacy alive is to provide a healthy wellness platform including fitness and holistic health practices via yoga, meditation, exercise and healthy meals, and creating videos, websites and blogs for people to educate and inspire them to change for the better. Furthermore, we are establishing a foundation for high school youths in inner city Baltimore whose passion is either fitness or culinary education that will provide them with assistance in reaching their dream of attending either the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), or a university that emphasizes culinary arts or sports and health sciences. Through these programs, we believe we are not separated from Timmy, but are spiritually closer to him through his passions of friendship, food and fitness."

Rachel Eckels has taught yoga and meditation classes at the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling Fitness Center, Gold Star Mission BBQ annual cookout, and the Baltimore Heroes Run for the Fallen event. Survivors benefit from these classes and learn how instrumental they are for anyone's healing journey.

One of Rachel's favorite quotes is:

"Goodbyes are only for those who love with their eyes. Because for those who love with heart and soul, there is no such thing as a separation."

– Rumi



Understanding the Probate Process

By *Military OneSource*

While no actions can erase the pain you feel after losing a family member or loved one, getting your financial and legal affairs in order can be a small step in the right direction and can provide some peace of mind during this difficult time.

Here are a few essentials to consider as you address financial and legal affairs in the days following the death of a loved one.

When your loved one dies, the probate process will begin in the county of their legal residence at the time of death. If your loved one had a will, the person they named as the executor will take charge of finalizing his or her affairs. If there isn't a will, the court will appoint an administrator. With or without a will, the probate process can be divided into four steps. Here's what you can expect to happen.

Step 1: The Probate Hearing

The judge formally appoints the executor or administrator to be the personal representative throughout the probate process. The validity of the will is established and the court issues an order "admitting the will to probate," which causes the will to become public record. The personal representative is given a document, called the "letters of administration" or "letters testamentary," that grants him or her the full authority to deal with the decedent's probate property and accounts.

Step 2: Collection and Inventory of Assets

The designated personal representative takes an inventory of the estate assets and files this inventory with the court. These assets may include money owed to the decedent or the estate, bank and stock brokerage accounts, and evaluations of real estate or property. Money owed to the decedent or the estate includes loans, a final paycheck, life insurance payouts or retirement account(s). Bank and stock brokerage accounts includes account numbers and latest balances.

Evaluations of real estate or property will probably require a professional appraisal.

Step 3: Bills, Taxes, Expenses and Creditors

Any final bills, debts, taxes or claims against the deceased are reviewed for their validity and then paid with funds from the estate. You are not personally responsible for paying these expenses out-of-pocket, even if estate funds are not available. Once all debts and bills are paid, the personal representative files a report with the court to account for all income received and payments made on behalf of the estate.



Step 4: Formal Transfer of Remaining Estate Property

The remainder of the property is distributed as the will directs or according to state law if there isn't a will. Depending on the state, there may be a state-required waiting period before property can be officially sold or transferred, which is usually six months. Once all remaining estate property is transferred to heirs and beneficiaries, the personal representative completes a final settlement of the estate that details all dealings. The judge then approves the final settlement and the personal representative's duties are complete.

If you need more information on the probate process, contact your local legal assistance attorney. You can find legal assistance offices through the Armed Forces Legal Assistance website. Make sure your wishes are properly carried out should the unthinkable happen by creating a last will and testament. Plan ahead with everything you need to know about estate planning.

Your Navy Gold Star coordinator can provide you with additional financial counseling resources, or Military OneSource offers financial counseling and can help you with financial- or benefits-related questions. Contact your Navy Gold Star coordinator directly or call 1-888-509-8759 to be connected. For Military OneSource, call 800-342-9647.

Navy Gold Star Program Directory

Name	Phone	Address*
NAVY REGION SOUTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	619-532-2886	FFSP / 937 N HARBOR DR BOX 53 SAN DIEGO CA 92132-0058
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 INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	619-556-2190	NB SAN DIEGO FFSC 3005 CORBINA ALLEY STE 1 BLDG 259 SAN DIEGO CA 92136-5190
NAVY REGION NORTHWEST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	360-396-2708	FFSC / 610 DOWELL ST BLDG 35 KEYPORT WA 98345
SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	425-304-3721	SMOKEY POINT SUPPORT COMPLEX 13910 45TH AVE NE SUITE 857 MARYSVILLE WA 98271
NAVY REGION SOUTHEAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR	904-542-5712	FFSC / BLDG 919 LANGLEY ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212-0102
NAS JACKSONVILLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	904-542-5706	FFSC / 554 CHILD ST NAS JACKSONVILLE FL 32212
NSA MID-SOUTH INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	901-874-5017	FFSC / 5722 INTEGRITY DR BLDG 456 MILLINGTON TN 38054-5045
NCBC GULFPORT INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	228-871-4569	FFSC / 5301 SNEAD ST GULFPORT MS 39501-5001
NAS CORPUS CHRISTI INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	361-961-1675	FFSC / 11001 D ST CORPUS CHRISTI TX 78419-5021
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON REGIONAL COORDINATOR	202-433-3059	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NAVAL DISTRICT WASHINGTON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	202-685-1909	FFSC / 2691 MITSCHER RD SW BLDG 414 WASHINGTON DC 20373
NAVY REGION MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL COORDINATOR	757-445-3073	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 209 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
NWS EARLE INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	732-866-2110	FFSC / 201 RT 34 BLDG C59 COLTS NECK NJ 07722
NAVSTA GREAT LAKES INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	847-688-3603 ext 127	FFSC / 525 FARRAGUT AVE STE 300 BLDG 26 GREAT LAKES IL 60088
NB NORFOLK INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-322-9182	FFSC / 7928 14TH ST SUITE 102 NORFOLK VA 23505-1219
SUBASE NEW LONDON INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	860-694-1257	FFSC / BLDG 83 BOX 93 GROTON CT 06349-5093
NAS OCEANA INSTALLATION COORDINATOR	757-492-8282	2073 TARTAR AVENUE, BUILDING 585, FFSC AT DAM NECK ANNEX, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23461-1917

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