

# MERLION STAR

Serving the Sembawang Community

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Issue 7

## DON'T FORGET

- ✦ Little Tykes Fire Station Field trip, Mar. 31
- ✦ Newcomers Orientation, April 4
- ✦ Sundown Marathon, May 26

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Spring fever? Keep it safe with these helpful tips.



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Benefits offered to Sailors transitioning due to the Enlisted Retention Board



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April is Month of the Military Child. Learn how to raise happy and optimistic children at this workshop.



## PACFLT VISITS SINGAPORE

Singapore (20 March, 2012) Adm. Cecil Haney, Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet, listens to a question from Lt. Cmdr. Mike Morley, Public Affairs Officer at Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific during an all hands call. Haney was in Singapore to meet with officials from the Republic of Singapore Navy, and visit U.S. Sailors in Singapore.

## MCPON Testifies on Hazing

WASHINGTON -- Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) (SS/SW) Rick D. West testified before Congress March 22.

MCPON appeared before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on Hazing in the Military along with top enlisted leaders from the Marines, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard to discuss hazing prevention in the Navy and respective military branches.

"People are absolutely our most precious asset," said West. "Their individual success and Navy's

collective mission accomplishment lie in our ability to provide an environment that promotes inclusiveness and a validated sense of value to the team."

Hazing is not tolerated in the Navy due to its demoralizing and destructive nature to an individual's self-esteem and detrimental impact on unit cohesion.

"The secretary of the Navy's instruction on hazing is the cornerstone of our approach to education, prevention, enforcement and accountability," said West. "Training on hazing, equal opportunity, and core values begins with recruits at boot camp and is reinforced regularly in a variety

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# Merlion Star

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## Safety Tips for Sailors with Spring Fever

The biggest stereotypes about spring break revolve around alcohol abuse. While movies and television may glamorize binge drinking, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report that this behavior can be deadly. They define binge drinking as a male consuming five or more alcoholic beverages or a woman consuming four or more alcoholic beverages within a two-hour period. They report findings that have alarming implications for Sailors:

\* The prevalence of drinking among men is higher than the prevalence among women.

\* About 90 percent of the alcohol consumed by those under the age of 21 is in the form of binge drinks.

\* Binge drinkers are 14 times more likely to report alcohol-impaired driving than non-binge drinkers.

Given that there are a large number of males and younger adults in the Navy, these statistics show there is reason for concern. Nonetheless, Sailors have plenty of smart options, according to Dan Dray, a traffic and recreation safety specialist at NAVSAFECEN.

"We know that the young Sailors and Marines are going to go out and have fun, but the biggest asset they have in terms of safety is their peers. Everyone carries a cell phone these days, so

if you've had too much to drink, call a friend to come pick you up or take advantage of the safe ride programs that many ships offer," Dray said.

Training and awareness appear to be paying off. The Naval Safety Center tracks whether alcohol was a factor in fatal mishaps. The recently completed winter safety campaign ran from Dec. 1, 2011, through Feb. 29, 2012. This season there were two fatalities where alcohol was a contributing factor. Both were motor vehicle mishaps. While those are two too many, when compared to winter 2010-2011 when there were six alcohol-related fatalities and winter 2009-2010 when there were nine, it's an obvious improvement and a trend consistently moving in the right direction.

While impaired driving is an obvious danger associated with over-consumption of alcohol, there are other problems as well. Aside from health risks such as high blood pressure, stroke, neurological damage and liver disease, the CDC reports that alcohol abuse is a major factor in sexual assaults. Eliminating this criminal behavior is a major goal in the Navy and Marine Corps according to a recent blog post detailing Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus' 21st Century Sailor and Marine initiative.

Using alcohol responsibly and maintaining situational awareness are important steps toward achieving this goal, Dray said.

### 2012 Summer Physical Fitness Assessment

- 24-25 April.....BCA
- 1 May.....Run
- 1 May.....Swim
- 2-3 May.....Elliptical/Bike/Treadmill
- 30 May - 5 June.....Stragglers PFA

For more information contact the command PFA Coordinator at 6750-2468

# MCPON Testifies before Congress on Hazing

*Continued from page 1 -*

of forums throughout a Sailor's service."

Since 2009, 46 hazing incidents have been reported with 20 of these resulting in punitive, administrative or disciplinary action.

"Navy policy requires Commanders to formally report every suspected incident of hazing to the chain of command as soon as possible," said West. "Every Sailor has the responsibility to make the appropriate authorities aware of hazing. Those who commit violations of the policy and those in leadership positions who may tolerate such acts are held accountable."

MCPON pointed to the deck plate leaders aboard the ships and on the ground throughout the Navy as the pinnacle of success or failure of the Navy's hazing prevention policies and corrective measures.



WASHINGTON (March 22, 2012) Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) Rick D. West and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force (CMSAF) James A. Roy speak together before testifying before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on Hazing in the Military at the U.S. Capitol. U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Thomas L. Rosprim.

"We understand people are truly the singular measure of your Navy's success," added West. "We appreciate your passionate interest in protecting their welfare and stand committed to meeting your

expectations."

For more information, visit [www.navy.mil](http://www.navy.mil), [www.facebook.com/usnavy](http://www.facebook.com/usnavy), or [www.twitter.com/usnavy](http://www.twitter.com/usnavy).

**Field Trip For  
LITTLE TYKES  
and their families:  
Visit to the  
Singapore  
Fire Station**



To sign up: Contact Barbara Rinehart  
[barbara.rinehart.ctr@fe.navy.mil](mailto:barbara.rinehart.ctr@fe.navy.mil) 6750-2316.

# Transition Assistance: Maximizing Enhanced ERB-Transition Benefits

MILLINGTON, Tenn. – Sailors transitioning from active-duty as a result of the Enlisted Retention Board (ERB) are encouraged to work closely with their chain of command in order to maximize available transition assistance, officials said March 20.

BY: NAVY PERSONNEL  
COMMAND,  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

“The NPC Fleet Engagement Team has traveled to many fleet concentration areas to increase awareness of available benefits and resources for these Sailors,” said Capt. Kate Janac, transition assistance program manager, Chief of Naval Operations.

Command leadership should visit Navy Personnel Command’s (NPC) website at [www.npc.navy.mil](http://www.npc.navy.mil) to keep current on the latest ERB updates, according to Janac.

“As a result of questions and information learned during our engagements we’ve been able to expand or clarify benefits for ERB affected Sailors,” said Janac. A new policy guidance memo released Feb. 24 authorized short term extensions for some ERB Sailors whose end of obligated service (EAOS) or high year tenure (HYT) date is prior to the Sept. 1 ERB separation date.

“This new policy provides additional time for Sailors to take advantage of the employment outplacement services of Challenger, Gray & Christmas (CGC), or Navy Credentialing Opportunities On-Line (COOL) that must be used while on active-duty,” said Janac. Commands should review the memo in its entirety for specific details on short term extensions.

Additional information regarding application procedures

for Temporary Early Retirement Authority (TERA) will be posted to the site as policy is finalized.

Janac said that she has found that some ERB affected Sailors have not yet taken full advantage of key transition assistance programs. To date only 1,600 of 2,941 Sailors separating from ERB have signed up for free services provided by CGC which offers job search assistance, personal coaching and custom resumes. Those who have not yet enrolled may contact CGC at 1-800-971-4288 or via e-mail at [cgcusnavy@challengergray.com](mailto:cgcusnavy@challengergray.com).

Navy COOL is another program that can help Sailors transitioning as a result of ERB. Navy COOL is a centralized, Web-based hub that consolidates information from federal, state and local sources on certifications, licenses and apprenticeships that correspond with each Navy rating, job and occupation. Sailors are typically required to have at least one year remaining on their enlistment to receive funding toward commercial certification and/or

licensure exams found on the Navy COOL website, but Navy has authorized waivers for ERB affected Sailors requiring only 60 days before the end of their enlistment.

Currently more than 100 ERB separating Sailors are using Navy COOL, according to Janac.

“Commanding officers must be involved in ensuring ERB Sailors and their families are engaging with transition services including attending Transition Assistance Program (TAP) workshop and other events offered at base Fleet and Family Support Centers,” said Janac.

Commanders stateside may authorize up to 60-days for transition under existing Navy policies. The transition period may also include any combination of normal working hours, liberty, temporary duty and leave.

Commanders overseas (including Hawaii) are required to give Sailors separating due to the ERB the opportunity to be in the continental United States for at least 60 days prior to separation, according to NAVADMIN 332/11.

Transitioning service members should talk with their chain of command, and download the Transition Assistance Handbook from the NPC web site.



# Raising Happy and Optimistic Children Workshop

Tuesday 10th April 2012  
Yankee Station Training Room  
9 am – 11 am  
Facilitator: Cate Hey

To sign up, contact: **Barbara Rinehart**  
@ 6750-2316 or [barbara.rinehart.ctr@fe.navy.mil](mailto:barbara.rinehart.ctr@fe.navy.mil)



**Open to all Active Duty and Department of Defense Members and their spouses.**

The benefits of optimism have been proven over and over again by research. Optimists enjoy better health, increased longevity, experience less stress, and achieve more in life.

This workshop will cover:

- ❖ The importance of optimism
- ❖ Ways to encourage your children to lead more optimistic lives
- ❖ Practical strategies on raising happy & optimistic children

## About the Facilitator:

Cate Hey is a Clinical Psychologist and is currently the Director of SACAC Counselling. Cate holds a Master's Degree in Psychology and a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology from the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Specifically Cate works with youth who have behavioral issues, adjustment, depression, anxiety, self-harm, eating issues and alcohol and drug misuse.



*Singapore's Comprehensive Mental Health Practice, est. 1973*