



NAVY JOINT TRANSPORTATION RESERVE UNIT OMBUDSMAN NEWSLETTER

Special points of interest:

- Navy JTRU Ombudsman Appointment
- PEDs no longer allowed in USTRANSCOM Buildings.
- Free Tax Support
- IA Information and Support & Resources

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Command Leadership

Commanding Officer:
CAPT Christopher Ryan
Executive Officer:
CAPT (sel) Craig de Beaumont
Senior Enlisted Leader:
YNC Dan Monahan



Always Moving Forward!

February 2008

Navy JTRU Ombudsman Appointed

Michelle Monahan has been appointed to take the position of Ombudsman for the Navy JTRU. She stepped into the position officially on 12 January 2008 and has begun

her training.

Michelle is married to YNC Dan Monahan. They live in central IL and are awaiting the adoption of their first

child from China, hopefully sometime this year.

Michelle works as a Neonatal Intensive Care Nurse, she works 2-3 days per week,

What is a Navy Ombudsman?

An ombudsman serves as a link between you, the command families and the command itself. They provide information and outreach to command family members. They also serve as a referral system for those in need of professional assistance to appropriate resources. An ombudsman also acts as an advocate for family members while maintaining the critical

element of confidentiality and a high level of professionalism.

The Command wants family members to have a contact person for just about any questions you may have.

Michelle will be available for our Reserve members and their families effective immediately. She can be reached by phone or email at:

Home Phone: 618-635-7120

Cell Phone: 618-292-6650

Email: jtruombudsman@yahoo.com

She is unable to carry a cell phone while at work in the NICU, if your need is NOT an emergency please leave a message and she will return your call, if your need IS an emergency you can reach YNC Monahan at 618-292-1462.

Command News

Interim Policy on the Use of Portable Electronic Devices (PEDs) in USTRANSCOM Facilities and Areas

Due to security concerns a new policy governing the use of Portable Electronic Devices (PEDs) has been established by USTRANSCOM. The policy went into affect in January 2008 strictly prohibiting

personal cell phones, laptops computers with wireless capability, audio/video recording devices, wireless message devices, personal digital assistants (PDAs) and Blackberries being brought into a USTRANSCOM Facility.

This policy means to most of us that the USTRANSCOM and JTRU Personnel will not be allowed to bring their elec-

tronic devices, like cell phones, into the buildings. Even when the device is turned off, this is still considered a security risk.

In Cases of Emergencies, you can reach the JTRU members at this number:
618-229-8277

The Navy Fleet and Family Support Center Website, www.nffsp.org contains a wealth of information to support families Prepare for and Successfully Manage Navy Life and Deployment.

MilitaryOneSource.com Offers Free Tax Preparation

Military OneSource is offering free tax preparation services for service members and your families. Effective January 14, 2008, service members can access H&R Block TaxCut Basic Online through www.militaryonesource.com and complete your own federal and state tax returns electronically. Military OneSource also offers telephone tax support for those with questions about their returns and can provide assistance with other financial planning as well.

Eligibility: Eligible users are active duty, Army and Air National Guard and Reserve (regardless of activation status), spouses and dependent children (authorized in DEERS), family members handling the affairs of a deployed service member, and severely injured service members or family members handling their affairs.

Program access: Users must create a membership on Military OneSource Online and log into the site. Once logged on, follow the

directions on how to access TaxCut Online. Services. Participants will have free access to the H&R Block Basic TaxCut program.

Please Note: Those with more complicated returns may incur charges if they upgrade to the H&R Block TaxCut Premium program. Participants can e-file one state resident return for each federal return that they e-file with TaxCut Online.

Individual Augmentee (IA) Information

Many of our recent deployments within our unit have been as Individual Augmentees (IA). IAs are deployed to assist other armed forces like the Army. Many are sent to assist in the Middle East with the Global War on Terrorism but they can be utilized throughout the world.

IA deployments are often given shorter notification and less specific information. There may be more communication challenges for the Sailor and their fami-

lies. Families may find it more difficult to network with other IA families and the homecoming experience may be different, quieter.

Readiness and Preparation is key.

The Navy Fleet and Family Support Center (www.nffsp.org) has an entire area of their website dedicated to assisting the Sailor and their families during this journey as an Individual Augmentee. Including:

- IA Deployment Presentation
- IA Command Handbook
- IA Sailor Handbook
- IA Family Handbook
- List of resource websites covering pay, emergencies, deployment stress and many other areas to assist the entire family.
- IA Family Support Resources including a Newsletter (Feb 2008 has just been posted, previous newsletters are also available for viewing) and In-person & Virtual Discussion groups.

The St. Louis VA's Seamless Transition Program Announces a
"WELCOME HOME CELEBRATION"
 for All Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) Service Members and Families Regardless of current Military Status

Saturday 17 May 2008

1000 to 1400 hours with Ceremony at 1100 Hours

Archery Field (Next To Science Center Planetarium) Forest Park, St. Louis MO

Special Guest speakers, Special events for the Kids,

Take the family to the St. Louis Art Museum or the Zoo to round out a great day.

THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICE!!!

For a copy of the entire flyer send an email to jtruombudsman@yahoo.com

****Below is a list of upcoming Virtual IA family meetings offered through the Navy Fleet and Family Support Center. Directions on how to join these meeting go to the [IA Family Virtual Meeting](#)**

Virtual IA Family Meetings

Opportunity to virtually meet other IA family members to share information, ask questions, and provide tips and resources on:

**Thursday, February 21, 2008
7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EST**
[https://
www1.gotomeeting.com/
register/481089306](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/481089306)

My Sailor’s Coming Home!

Homecoming – there’s nothing more exciting! Are you ready? During this 60 minute discussion we’ll talk about changes, expectations, and helping your Sailor readjust to fam-

ily and friends after being deployed. We’ll also touch on what to do if you are concerned your loved one may have experienced too much stress due to serving in a combat zone with options

for help, if needed.
**Wednesday, February 20,
2008 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM EST**
[https://
www1.gotomeeting.com/
register/211037482](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/211037482)

Guidelines for Navy Family Emergency Preparedness Handbook

Today’s ever-changing world presents an increased need for emergency preparedness. Navy families must be prepared – with or without their service member. The handbook “Are You Ready? Guidelines for Navy

Family Emergency Preparedness is available. The key elements of this self-preparedness include creating a Family Emergency Plan, completing Emergency Contact Cards and compiling an Emergency Supplies Kit. To order a copy of this publication :

1.) Visit the Naval Services FamilyLine website: [www.lifelines.navy.mil/
FamilyLine](http://www.lifelines.navy.mil/FamilyLine)

**Several other informational publications are also available through Naval Services Family Line which may be of interest.

Virtual Family Meetings Provide Support when In-person meeting are unavailable due to timing or location.

Do You Have any Comments or Suggestions Regarding the Newsletter?

We are looking for suggestions for the title of the Newsletter as well as any ideas/suggestions of topics you feel would be helpful to you or others. Please email your suggestions to Michelle Monahan, JTRU Ombudsman at: jtruombudsman@yahoo.com

*Expansion of
FMLA benefits
employees who
has a family
member deployed
or is caring for an
injured service
member.*

Family and Medical Leave Act Changes Affect Navy Families

On Monday, January 28, 2008, the President signed into law (P.L. # - not yet available) the first expansion of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

The National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 4986) provides additional FMLA leave for military families. Specifically, Section 585 of the bill adds two new FMLA-qualifying events, expanding FMLA to include employees caring for an injured service member as well as family members who have a family member called to active duty.

Under the new law, FMLA-eligible employees will now be entitled to the following:

Family Leave Due to a Call to Active Duty-This benefit provides 12 weeks of FMLA leave due to a spouse, son, daughter or parent being on active duty or having been notified of an impending call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces. Leave may be used for any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the service member's current tour of active duty or because the service member is notified of an impending call to duty in support of a contingency operation.

Caregiver Leave for an Injured Service member-This benefit provides 26 weeks of FMLA leave during a single 12-month period for a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or nearest blood relative caring for a recovering service member. A recovering service member is defined as a member of the Armed Forces who suffered an injury or illness while on active-duty that may render the person unable to perform the duties of the member's office, grade, rank or rating.

Most of the provisions of the FMLA remain unchanged and will apply to these new types of FMLA leave, including employer coverage, employee eligibility requirements, health insurance continuation, and reinstatement rights.

Employees can utilize the leave on an incremental basis or in the smallest increment that the employer's payroll system tracks under both of these new leave requirements,

While the Department of Labor (DOL) will need to issue regulations to fully implement this new law, they have released guidance that indicates the caregiver provision of the law is effective as of January 28, 2008, but the call to active duty provision will not be effective until the Secretary of Labor issues final regulations defining "any qualifying exigency." In the interim, the DOL encourages employers to provide this type of leave to qualifying employees.

JTRU OMBUDSMAN CONTACT INFORMATION

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