



# Military Department Newsletter

This newsletter is published for the benefit of the Military Department employees but is also available to the public. For questions or comments please email [REMARKS@MDMILDEP.ORG](mailto:REMARKS@MDMILDEP.ORG).  
Volume V, Issue 2, February 2012

## NEWS ITEMS OF INTEREST

- [What makes you sick](#)
- [Edge of Solar System Photos](#)
- [Maryland's Winter Adventures](#)
- [Misinformation on Driver's Licenses Renewals](#)
- [Check your Maryland Refund Status](#)
- [Check your Federal Refund Status](#)
- [Elkton's Own Antique Road Show](#)
- [Ask Us Now](#)
- [Consumer Tips and Publications](#)

"A WORD TO THE WISE"  
Go to Wise

## COMPUTER TIPS

- [Extend Your Laptop's Battery Life](#)
- [Reasons Not to Use the Spacebar](#)
- [Select a Paragraph REAL FAST](#)

## BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

PHILIP ABRAMS, TRACIE BARNICKEL,  
ANDREW CHMYR, MICHAEL CRUZ,  
MICHAEL EDWARDS, NORMAN GIFFORD,  
JOSEPH HAGENS, RIKESHA HAWKINS,  
ZACHERY JAMES, MILFORD JOHNSON,  
BRANDON JONES, JERON JOSEPH, STEVE  
KNOUSE, STEPHEN KOESTER, LAKEN  
OYEDOKUN, LINDA PIAZZA, DANIEL PYLE,  
ANGEL ROSS, JEANINE SCHAFER,  
RONALD SPENCE, JANET STAGGS,  
GARRETT TALLEY, CHARLES TENNYSON  
III, KEVIN WARD

## Features

JEFF'S DONE IT AGAIN

## Free File: Do Your Federal Taxes for Free



IT'S FAST. IT'S SAFE. IT'S FREE.



Free File is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. No lines. No waiting. No fees. Use Free File to prepare and e-file your tax return. It's ready when you are. Best of all, when you e-file and select direct deposit, you can get your refund in as few as 10 days.

Let Free File do the hard work for you with brand-name software or online Fillable Forms. You can prepare and e-file your federal return for free. Participating software companies make their products available through the IRS. Some also support state tax returns.

[click here for more information](#)

## Workshops of the Month



MSRP will be presenting "Workshops of the Month -this one entitled Stretch Your Dollars" in the cafeteria at 301 W. Preston St., generally on the 3rd Thursday of each month at 9:00 AM and 11:30 AM.

Click below for February's Workshop which will be on February 16 – Stretch Your Dollars. Please give this information to our employees who work at or near the Preston St. complex and do not have access to a computer. Encourage them to attend these convenient educational sessions!

[\(for further information click here\)](#)



## NAVY BASKETBALL MARYLAND STATE EMPLOYEE NIGHTS!

Join Navy Basketball for our Maryland State Employees Appreciation Nights! All Maryland State Employees can attend up to 3 games for just \$3 a person! This promotion will run for the following Navy Basketball Games at Alumni Hall in Annapolis:

- Men's Basketball vs. Colgate – Saturday, February 18th at 7pm
- Men's Basketball vs. Lehigh – Wednesday, February 22nd at 7pm
- Women's Basketball vs. Bucknell – Saturday, February 25th at 7pm

For further information [\(click here\)](#)

Special Contest – The first 50 people to email [grosse@usna.edu](mailto:grosse@usna.edu) with the answer to the following trivia question will receive one (1) FREE ticket to the Men's Game vs. Colgate on February 18th: What athletic conference do the Navy Midshipmen play basketball in?  
Should you have any questions, please contact Chris Grosse at 410-293-8785 or [grosse@usna.edu](mailto:grosse@usna.edu).

## About Buying Firewood



DNR gets many calls from people either with questions about buying their seasons supply of firewood or what they can do after recently purchasing wood they were less than happy with. There are a few things you should know about wood and the laws regarding selling firewood that will help you make the best decision when making your firewood purchase.



The MSP Polar Bear Plunge benefits Special Olympics Maryland and the thousands of children and adults with intellectual disabilities who experience the life-changing benefits of participating in the organization's year-round training and competition programs - all at no cost to themselves or their families.

Jeff Braxton, shown here in his winter swim attire, a Finance and Administration employee of the Military Department has been a volunteer for 8 years now and this year he personally collected \$2,473 for the Special Olympics. His group "Ravens Roost 79" along with 122 other "Roosts" totaled \$87,663. Jeff, remembering that last year it snowed, told us that it was a not as chilling as previous years because of the warm temperatures, however, he was quick to point out that the water was still icy cold.

Thanks to Jeff and people like him the Special Olympics are just that "SPECIAL". Thanks Jeff!!!!



Jeff and members of Ravens Roost 79

To get some answers [click here](#)



## Federal Women's Training and Awards Program

The Federal Executive Board (FEB) is proud to announce open registration for the 30th annual Federal Women's Training and Awards Program on Wednesday, March 21 at Martin's West in Baltimore. There will be workshops and a keynote speaker. The Federal Women's Council has approved a lower fee (\$85.00) this year. This fee includes all materials, continental breakfast, breaks and a double entrée luncheon. You can recognize an employee by nominating them for the Woman or Organization of the Year award. Please see the 3 attached documents memorandum, program workshop synopsis and registration information.

[\(For Training document click here\)](#)

[\(For SF282 click here\)](#)

[\(For Memorandum document click here\)](#)



## 12 Things You Should Consider Not Buying in 2012

Want to save some \$\$\$ this year then check below for some money making tips for 2012..

[Click here for story courtesy of Mainstreet.com](#)

## "Items of Importance to State Employees"

Procedures for Release of State Employees Under Emergency Conditions [\(click here\)](#)



Military Department Reg 5-8 Management of MDNG Personnel During Emergencies [\(click here\)](#)

Emergency Essential Employee Acknowledgement Document [\(click here\)](#)

## TID BITS

- **Federal Holidays for the Year** [\(click here\)](#)

- **State Holidays - For the Year** [\(click here\)](#)

THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT PUBLISHES STATEWIDE EMERGENCY AND CLOSURE INFORMATION ON ITS WEBSITE AT <http://dbm.maryland.gov/employees/pages/weatherrel.aspx>. That Department's Office of Personnel Services and Benefits also authorizes and coordinates media announcements concerning inclement weather using radio stations serviced by the Associated Press, which are listed on its website. However, employees should verify media announcements with their supervisors or by calling the Joint Forces Headquarters phone line at 1-866-400-6364 and selecting Option 5. Employees located at the Warfield Air National Guard Base may also call the base's main greeting line at 410-918-6210 and selecting Option 2. Employees may also opt to follow closure announcements on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/#!/MdStateClosing> or by SMS by texting follow MdStateClosing to 40404 in the United States. Standard message and data rates apply.

## Idle Thoughts of a Retiree's Wandering Mind

I planted some bird seed. A bird came up. Now I don't know what to feed it.

I had amnesia once--or twice.

I went to San Francisco. I found someone's heart. Now what?

Protons have mass? I didn't even know they were Catholic.

All I ask is a chance to prove that money can't make me happy.

If the world were a logical place, men would be the ones who ride horses sidesaddle.

What is a "free" gift? Aren't all gifts free?

## A WORD TO THE WISE

## The China Syndrome?



A Chinese-based cyber attack is targeting the Defense Department's Common Access Cards with technology that could steal information from military networks while troops and civilians work at their desks, researchers say. The new cyber weapon apparently can get inside individual computers after users unwittingly open a standard PDF email file. Once embedded, it logs the users' keystrokes to obtain personal identification numbers or codes associated with that card and user, according to AlienVault, a Silicon Valley-based cyber security firm.

"Basically, they are able to steal the PIN and then they can get access to whatever they want," said Jaime Blasco, the lab manager for AlienVault who published detailed technical information about the attack. The attacks are a variant of a virus, or malware, known as "Sykipot" and date back as far as March 2011, Blasco said.

The new Sykipot strain specifically targets the technology used to support the Pentagon's CAC system and the emails seeking to spread it often are disguised as official military or government communications, Blasco said. To lure defense workers to open the infected attachment, some of the emails have used information about new drone technology and pictures of unmanned aerial vehicles, he said.

The hackers behind the virus can access military systems only as long as an infected user's card remains logged into a system. Pentagon spokeswoman Air Force Lt. Col. April Cunningham declined to comment on the details published by AlienVault. "We are aware of reports regarding this matter and take these type of reports seriously. However, due to operational security, we are not able to provide further details," she told Military Times.

Blasco said the virus is linked to a "command and control server" that appears to be based in China; some flaws buried deep in the code revealed Chinese language characters, suggesting that only a Chinese speaker would be able to launch it.

Defending against attacks using this technology is extremely difficult. The best way to keep military networks secure is to train troops and civilian employees not to open any unfamiliar files or email attachments, Blasco said.

Many military officials are eager to begin widespread use of smart phones, tablets and other wireless devices, but cyber security experts caution that such technology can be more vulnerable to cyber attacks.

[Back to Top](#)

---

### Funny Quote of the month

**"People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do. "**

---



