November is Military Family Appreciation Month

Each year the President signs a proclamation declaring November Military Family Month. This annual proclamation marks the beginning of a month-long celebration of the Military Family in which the Department of Defense and the nation will honor the commitment and sacrifices made by the families of the nation’s service members.

MILITARY FAMILY MONTH, 2014

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA - A PROCLAMATION

For more than two centuries, members of our Armed Forces have defended our country with unyielding courage. In our Nation’s times of need, these brave patriots step forward to answer America’s call, leaving behind everything they know and love. And as they help secure our freedom and democracy, their families sacrifice alongside them. During Military Family Month, we recognize every spouse, parent, sibling, child, and loved one who stands with our service members, and we reaffirm our solemn vow to serve these families as well as they serve us.

The selflessness of our military families tells a story of unfailing duty and devotion. Through long deployments, difficult separations, and moves across the country and overseas, spouses and partners put their careers on hold and children take on extra responsibilities. With grace and resilience, families endure the absence of loved ones and shoulder the burdens of war. And when battle ends and our service members return home, their families support their transition and recovery.

To fulfill our sacred promise to our service members and their loved ones, my Administration continues to make supporting our military families a top priority. This year, we launched the Veterans Employment Center, an interagency resource to connect transitioning service members, veterans, and their spouses to meaningful career opportunities. We are also committed to fostering partnerships with organizations that help military caregivers and making consistent and effective family services available, including mental health care and counseling, deployment and relocation assistance, and child care and youth programs. Through their Joining Forces initiative, First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden are working to ensure members of our Armed Forces, veterans, and their families have all the opportunities and benefits they deserve. And since 2011, their efforts have encouraged businesses to hire more than 500,000 veterans and military spouses.

Every day, our military families at home and abroad inspire us and remind us of our obligation to take care of those who do so much for our country. As a grateful Nation, we pay tribute to the women and men who have made our military the finest fighting force the world has ever known, and we honor the enduring strength and dedication of their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States do hereby proclaim November 2014 as Military Family Month. I call on all Americans to honor military families through private actions and public service for the tremendous contributions they make in support of our service members and our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand fourteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-ninth

BARACK OBAMA
I’ve realized throughout my life that it is very easy to overlook the simple things that make everyday life just a bit less stressful. It’s easy to take things for granted, but my experiences in the military changed that. Appreciating what I have and what is given to me started when I was 18 years old. I joined the United States Army right out of high school. Going to college was definitely a priority for me, but at that point I wanted to be able to do something different and experience something new. I was thrust into Army life, during basic training and AIT. The simplest liberties and luxuries were hard to come by. Simple things like using the telephone became one of those luxuries, or even being able to walk wherever I wanted. I went from thinking I was a grownup to having to ask for permission to do anything. Of course basic and AIT didn’t last forever and I eventually was transferred to my permanent duty station. Life wasn’t as stressful as before, but it sure was regimented. I had very specific deadlines that had to be met on a daily basis. Waking up for PT, going to breakfast, lunch or dinner chow at certain times (or else you didn’t eat), getting to work on time. I knew the Army wasn’t a cake walk, but I felt that all free time had disappeared. I adjusted to my daily duties, but then came the real task of dealing with a deployment. It was a rough experience that first time. For me it was difficult because, not only was I given the task of trying to make it home alive, but also the responsibility of 6 other Soldiers and their well-being throughout this deployment. It was a task that I would see through, and thankfully I was able to make it back, and with all of my troops in one piece. I remember during that first deployment we had been deployed to almost every corner of Iraq. My infantry unit had been tasked with various QRF missions in support of other units. We went from Tuz, Kirkuk, Najaf, Fallujah, TQ, Samarra, Tikrit, Tal Afar, Mosul, and then back to Kirkuk where we would finally begin our RIP-TOAs. What really stands out in my mind was what happened in Najaf. We had arrived at a barely there outpost. I believe at the time it was called FOB Duke and there was nothing there. I remember that first night we actually had to set up a perimeter with crew serve weapons and a mortar position because there wasn’t any wire. The next couple of weeks we set up a small base and then tents eventually showed up. The local townspeople obviously knew we were there, and began to come around trying to sell us snacks and soda, lighters, cigarettes, the usual stuff. The one thing that stood out for me was when the locals brought us two huge blocks of ice. At this point in time, I had not had a cold drink in weeks, and it gets really old really fast when you have to drink warm water because that’s all you have. The temperature at that point was about 125-130 degrees during the day and 85-90 degrees at night. The ice arrived, and it brought tears to my eyes because I felt relieved to finally have a chance at drinking something cold. Our guys rushed the ice and started to pull out their knives or something to try to break off chunks of it. We couldn’t put the ice into our water because it had come from a local water source, so all we could do is try to put it in buckets and throw a whole bunch of bottled water and wait for it to cool down. We felt like little kids with the ice, dropping it down each other shirts, or just taking a piece and putting it to our foreheads. It really did feel like Christmas. It’s amazing that such a feeling of relief can come from such a simple thing as ice, something that is so simple that you can get anywhere. After that moment, I told myself that I would never take anything for granted ever again. Every day we take those little things that make our lives easier for granted. I, on the other hand, appreciate those little things, because you’ll never know when you’ll be without them, and then you’ll realize how much the little things make a big impact.

**REFLECTIONS**

We continue with personal reflections from student Veterans who attend NVCC Alexandria. These reflections will be part of a series that we hope can offer a glimpse of the experiences that some Veterans have faced while serving in the United States Armed Forces.

**“A New Appreciation for the Little Things”**
by U.S. Army Veteran, 12 yrs. & 4 combat deployments

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“To meet the On-Time Registration policy requirement, all students must register before 11:59 p.m. on the day before the session start date. Once the session begins, registration is closed. Students who wait until 11:59 p.m. on the day before the session begins still have until 5:00 p.m. the next business day to pay for their classes.”

NOVA IDOL!!!
Campus Auditions for the Alexandria Campus on November 3rd, 2014 from 4pm-8pm, Tyler Building, Rm 121.
**Academic Calendar Reminders**

- **16 Week Session (FA-14)**
  - 30 Oct 14: Last Day to Drop without Grade Penalty

- **First 8 Week Session (FA-14)**
  - 12 Oct 14: Classes and Examinations End

- **Second 8 Week Session (FA-14)**
  - 15 Oct 14: Session Begins
  - 24 Oct 14: 100% Tuition Refund Drop Deadline (census date)

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**Fall-14 BAH Requirements**

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**NOVA CATALOG: Programs of Study**

*Programs of Study* refers to an associate degree with its own curriculum code and all related specializations, certificates, and career studies certificates. The following is an alphabetized list of all NOVA programs with their degrees and certificates along with details of each program, including the purpose of the program, campuses where the program is offered, course completion requirements by semester, course content summaries for each course in the program, general transfer information and advising sheets. Each certificate also has gainful employment information.

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**Alexandria Library & Technology Resources**

The librarians at the Alexandria Campus Libraries have created a Student Veteran Research Success LibGuide specifically developed for veterans and military students. The purpose of this research guide is to introduce you to NOVA library resources, to guide you through the research process, and to connect our NOVA service members and veterans with the information they need to be successful student researchers.

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**“The People Behind the Uniform”**

Student Veterans Panel presented by AL Veterans & Military Student Resource Office

Please join us in recognition of Veterans Day as we honor those who have served in armed forces.

**Date:** Tuesday, November 11, 2014  
**Time:** 10:45 am to 12:30 pm  
**Location:** AA196

Reception in lobby immediately following

For more information, please contact Diana Campos at veterans-al@nvcc.edu

Northern Virginia Community College makes every effort to accommodate individuals with disabilities. If you need an accommodation to attend a NOVA event, submit your request to disabilservices@nvcc.edu.
10 Tips for Enjoying Holidays Alone

Seasonal hype leads us to believe that the only way to achieve holiday happiness is by spending time with family and loved ones. The truth, however, is that it's all about your attitude. Being alone does not have to mean being lonely.

There are plenty of things you can enjoy on your own during the holiday season. Just stay positive, and avoid getting into a negative mindset. Here are some tips that might help.

**AVOID BEING ALONE!!!**

**Extend invitations:** Be proactive. Call up other people who might be on their own and arrange a holiday dinner, agreeing to split the meal preparation duties. Lots of singles look forward to their “orphans’ Christmas” each year, celebrating with old friends and new ones. Don’t assume that everyone you know will be busy throughout the holidays. Even if they have family commitments, they still might welcome the opportunity to escape to spend some time with you.

**Accept invitations:** When people ask about your plans, don’t create a fictitious family gathering out of embarrassment. Be honest and say you don’t have any plans. With any luck, someone will issue a sincere invitation for you to join them for a holiday meal or special outing.

**Consider canine company:** Although it may seem like an unusual idea, create your own company by offering to dog sit for friends who are going out of town. Of course, this will only work if you actually like dogs, and if you’re familiar with their dog in particular. You’ll be doing both them and yourself an enormous favor. A dog can be great company on a long winter’s night. And who knows? When you’re with Rover, you might meet the woman of your dreams in the park. Dog walkers are usually a friendly bunch.

**MAKE THE BEST OF BEING ALONE**

**Make resolutions:** Take the opportunity that comes with solitude to reflect on some realistic New Year’s resolutions. This is the perfect time to take stock of your goals and create an action plan to attain them. Most resolutions are broken because they’re too broad. Avoid this outcome by breaking yours down into a workable to-do list. If you want to lose 30 pounds and get into shape, you need to select a gym, join it, buy new cross-trainers, schedule your workout times, throw out the junk food, make a grocery list of healthier foods, and so on. You get the drift. You’ve got some solo time on your hands, so use it to your advantage.

**USE TIME ALONE FOR SELF INDULGENCE**

**Indulge yourself:** A lot of new movies come out in December and many theatres are open on Christmas Day, so treat yourself to a show. Otherwise, go skating or to an outdoor festival. Or maybe just drive around and look at holiday lights and decorations. Whatever you enjoy doing, indulge yourself.

**Indulge others:** Combat any potential for loneliness by making sure that you’re with other people. Volunteering to serve dinner at a homeless shelter is one way to perk up your mood. Dropping in at a seniors’ residence to boost the spirits of some lonely old folks is another.

**PLAY CATCH-UP**

**Do reading and rentals:** Catch up on your reading or rent some movies that you’ve always wanted to see. Chat or play games online, or e-mail New Year’s greetings. Research your next vacation. Relax and enjoy the peacefulness of a day without obligations and deadlines.

**Be a glutton:** Hit up that trendy eatery you’ve been eyeing for a while, or stop by the deli counter at the supermarket and try some interesting ethnic dishes. Buy a great big steak and your favorite bottle of wine and savor both. The holidays are synonymous with good food, so why not enjoy it, even solo?

**Get away for a while:** If you’ve found yourself stranded this year, that doesn’t mean that you have to stay home alone. Get online and find yourself a last minute cruise or resort vacation. If Tijuana or Lisbon have always been on your list of cities to visit, why not do so now? Or if you want to do the local thing, just book a room in a downtown hotel. Play tourist, enjoy room service, relax and unwind.

**DODGE THE PERILS OF SOLITUDE**

**Keep your chin up:** Elvis Presley’s “Blue Christmas” sums up many people’s feelings about the holidays. It’s normal to experience some pangs of loneliness, to feel a little sorry for yourself, and to be nostalgic for the way you think the holidays should be.

Not all feelings of depression, however, are normal. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) strikes a lot of people each year when the lack of direct exposure to sunshine results in decreased melatonin production. If negative thoughts seem to be taking control of your life and, in spite of all these tips, you’re still not able to shake your melancholy mood or banish feelings of hopelessness, you may be suffering from depression. If you are, it’s not enough to just tell yourself to snap out of it. Millions of people in the world suffer from clinical depression. See your doctor about getting a prognosis and treatment.

**’TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY**

Recognizing that no one else is responsible for making your days merry and bright is the first step to enjoying a stress-free holiday season alone. There are lots of worse positions to be in than “on your own,” so get into the spirit of the season and celebrate.

Enjoy your own company. Do what you take pleasure in but never seem to find time to do. And most of all, remember that it’s just a day. Make it a happy one, however you choose to spend it.