

Navy Gold Star Program Prepares to Launch

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WASHINGTON (NNS) -- A new initiative to assist Gold Star Families - those whose military members have died in service - will be launched Oct. 1 by Commander, Navy Installations Command (CNIC).

The Navy Gold Star (NGS) program will provide Gold Star Families a level of long-term assistance and support not previously available through the Navy. It is enhanced with the active participation of new NGS region and installation coordinators, which are the lead agents for actions within the long-term casualty supporting process.

"I am excited about this new Navy program. I believe in it,"

said Vice Adm. William French, commander, Navy Installations Command during his opening comments for the NGS coordinators' initial training held at the CNIC headquarters in Washington, DC. "Gold Star Families need and their sacrifices need to be recognized. I envy you all because you come to an organization that makes a big difference to families."

According to the NGS Program Manager for CNIC Mike Bruner, NGS coordinators play an important role providing support for family members through a very difficult time, helping them build resilience and establish a new normal. Guided by the coordinators, Gold Star Families will be able to connect with support groups and grief counselors. Additionally, new services may also include chaplain care, school liaison assistance, and family employment.

The training for the coordinators is a two-day program filled with informational tools including the description of the duties and responsibilities of the Casualty Assistance Calls Officers, an overview of all CNIC fleet and family support programs, discussions on the standardized procedures for survivor assistance, and training on the Defense Casualty Information Process System (DCIPS), among others.

"Another great benefit is the inclusion of financial counselors that can provide education on budgeting and investing," added Bruner. "These financial counselors are committed to assisting survivors to create a solid foundation for financial success."

At the training French also spoke to each one of the coordinators stressing the importance of collaboration and team work.

"You are building this program; take all the great ideas from our counterparts, the best ones and leverage each other, push the headquarters ... we want all of you to have the tools in place to be successful," he said.

French spoke about the standardization of procedures across the enterprise and emphasized that this new program provides the opportunity to work on regulating the delivery of services across the regions. In order to accomplish this, he



Vice Adm. William French, Commander Navy Installations Command (CNIC) delivers remarks to the Navy Gold Star Coordinators present for a foundation building event at CNIC headquarters. The Navy Gold Star Program is a CNIC Fleet and Family Readiness program that honors the sacrifices of Sailors who have lost their lives. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class John Belanger)

highlighted the importance of the coordinators and urged them to begin working on achieving consistency, identifying the inconsistencies they come across, selecting the ones that really matter, and then feeding back to CNIC so that leadership may be involved in helping solve those inconsistencies.

"A program like this one cannot be managed from the headquarters," French said. "We need the people from the deck to push us for change."

For more information about the Navy's Gold Star Program visit <http://www.navygoldstar.com>

For more information about Navy Installations, visit <http://www.cnic.navy.mil>