



DEPARTMENT OF
**COMMUNITY &
HUMAN SERVICES**

Service Members, Veterans, and Their Families (SMVF)

Newsletter: October 2025

Happy October! This month is filled with many important observances and awareness events. There are also many valuable trainings and workshops happening this month, and we encourage you to fully engage with the SMVF (Service Members, Veterans, and their Families) in your life and amplify messages about the significant role we all play in asking the question and being there for the SMVF community.

NEWSLETTER UPDATES

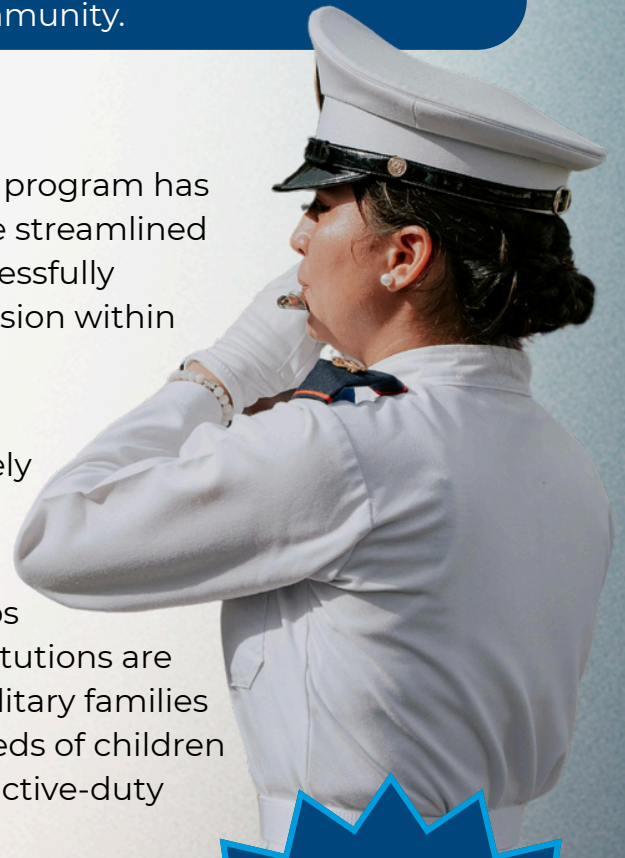
Over the past few months, the Same Day Access program has undergone several exciting developments. We've streamlined processes, celebrated staff promotions, and successfully integrated with the Youth and Family Intake Division within our CSB.

As a result of this transition, we are now serving children as young as four years old and are actively working with local schools to raise community awareness about the services our CSB offers.

In addition, we've established strong partnerships with Alexandria's Purple Star Schools. These institutions are recognized for their dedication to supporting military families and play a vital role in addressing the unique needs of children affected by deployment, family transitions, and active-duty service.

Check out the featured Purple Star Schools below to learn more about the incredible work they're doing in our community!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT SMVF →



Community Highlights

Purple Star Schools in Alexandria, Virginia, are recognized for their dedicated support of military-connected students and families. These schools go above and beyond to address the unique challenges military families face, providing tailored resources, welcoming environments, and specialized staff to assist with transitions. By fostering strong community connections and ensuring staff are trained to understand military life, Purple Star Schools in Alexandria create a supportive and inclusive educational experience for students whose families serve in the armed forces.

As of the 2024–25 school year, the following schools in Alexandria, Virginia, have earned the **Virginia Purple Star Designation Award**, recognizing their exceptional support for military-connected students and families:

- **Samuel W. Tucker Elementary School:** Awarded the Purple Star Designation for its commitment to supporting military families.
- **Lyles-Crouch Traditional Academy:** Recognized for its dedication to nurturing an inclusive environment, particularly for military students and families.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, Oct. 11, 8:30 a.m. to Sunday, Oct. 12, 5 p.m.:** Battle for the Airfield WWII Re-Enactment Weekend. [Register \(Tickets \\$25 to \\$40\)](#).
- **Monday, Oct. 13, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.:** Tackling Safety Together: Safety Planning Intervention. [Register](#)
- **Sunday, Oct. 21, 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.:** Military Children's Family Relationships. [Register](#)
- **Wednesday, Oct. 22, 1 to 2 p.m.:** Conversations That Protect: Supporting Kids and Families Through Mental Health Challenges. [Register](#)
- **Friday, Oct. 31, 9 a.m.:** WVI Foundation & Dept. of Veterans Affairs Annual Benefits Claim Clinic. [Register](#)

MILITARY OBSERVANCES

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| • Agent Orange Awareness Month | • Monday, October 13: |
| • Red Ribbon Month | • Navy Birthday |
| • National Disability Employment Awareness Month | • Sunday, October 19: |
| • Domestic Violence Awareness Month | • Purple Thursday |
| • Friday, October 10: | • Tuesday, October 21: |
| • World Mental Health Day | • National Pets for Vets Day |
| • Saturday, October 11: | • Sunday, October 26: |
| • General Pulaski Memorial Day | • National Day for the Deployed |

Military Stories, History, and More

The History Behind Tabasco Sauce & American Soldiers

by Claudia J. Irigoyen, LCSW

The McIlhenny Company are the producers of the famous Tabasco sauce since 1868 and has a story connected to the U.S. military. Edmund McIlhenny invented the Tabasco sauce while living in his plantation on Avery Island, Louisiana. In 1863, during the Civil War when the Union Army arrived, the McIlhenny family fled their plantation and returned post-war to find only “Capsicum frutescens peppers” and salt from the island’s mines, which he used to make Tabasco sauce. Fast forwarding to World War II, Walter McIlhenny, the grandson of Edmund McIlhenny, and a decorated U.S. Marine introduced Tabasco sauce to the soldiers. His experience with bland C-rations inspired him to integrate this sauce into the military when he became president of the McIlhenny company (1949–1985).

Tabasco’s inclusion in military rations began in 1966, when Walter McIlhenny published “*The Charlie Ration Cookbook or No Food Is Too Good for the Man Up Front.*” This pocket-sized cookbook, wrapped around a two-ounce Tabasco bottle, offered recipes with this hot sauce that were shipped to soldiers in Vietnam. This Tabasco sauce soon became a hit for the troops, and it was officially included in Meals, Ready-to-Eat (MREs) at the beginning of the Gulf War in 1990. In 2011, the military briefly switched over from 1/8-ounce glass bottles to ketchup-style packets in MREs; however, after, soldiers demanded the Tabasco glass bottles return, in 2019.

Tabasco sauce remains a favorite in MREs for U.S., Australian, British, and Canadian forces and has been used in NASA’s space missions, including Skylab and the International Space Station. According to the McIlhenny Company, Tabasco sauce can now be easily found in 195 countries and is labeled in 36 languages and dialects.



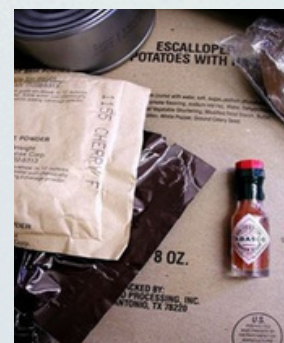
Tabasco sauce ad, 1905
Advertisement for Tabasco sauce, 1905.



Advertisement for the Tabasco Brand Pepper Sauce Field Pack, containing a small bottle of the condiment, The Charlie Ration Cookbook, and a mailing tube-carrying case, circa 1966.



The First Bottle Ever Produced in 1968 and sealed in green wax.



Miniature bottle of Tabasco sauce in a military MRE
Miniature bottle of Tabasco sauce in a military MRE (Meal, Ready-to-Eat), circa 2000.

Sources:

1. [Tabasco Visit Avery Island Tabasco and War Tabasco Sauce](#)