



“Our challenge will be to design budgets that eliminate wasteful and duplicative spending while protecting those core elements that we absolutely need for our nation’s defense.”

~ SecDef Nominee Leon Panetta at his Senate Confirmation Hearing ~

Proudly fly your flag on Flag Day June 14!

WASHINGTON REPORT

Senate Holds SecDef Confirmation Hearing

This week, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) held a hearing for the confirmation of the nomination of Leon Panetta to become the next Secretary of Defense when Secretary Gates retires at the end of the month. A 16-year Representative from California, White House Budget Director and Chief of Staff for President Clinton and current CIA Director, Panetta has broad support among the Committee members and is expected to be confirmed by the full Senate shortly.

SASC NDAA Markup

The SASC has announced its schedule for marking up its version of the fiscal 2012 defense authorization bill next week. The subcommittee markups will be Tuesday and Wednesday, with the full committee taking up the bill Wednesday afternoon and continuing until it's done. All the markups are closed. A press conference will be held Thursday or Friday to announce what has been approved. NAUS will pass on anything we learn concerning what the bill contains as soon as possible.

Army Ranger to Receive Medal of Honor

An Army Ranger from New Mexico who lost his hand throwing a grenade away from two fellow soldiers in Afghanistan will become one of only two living service members awarded the elite Medal of Honor in the current round of conflicts, Army officials said Thursday.

Sgt. 1st Class Leroy Petry, will receive the nation's highest award for valor from President Obama on July 12.

Only nine Medals of Honor have been issued in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan -- seven posthumously -- compared with 248 in Vietnam, 136 in Korea and 465 during World War II. About 3,400 have been granted since the Civil War.

The other living Medal of Honor recipient from the current wars is Army Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, who rushed into enemy fire and pulled three wounded soldiers to safety in Afghanistan in 2007.

Remember D-Day

This past week, on June 6, many paused to remember the Allied invasion of Europe, which occurred 65 years ago. The beaches of Normandy, where thousands of men lost their lives in the largest amphibious assault in history are quiet now. Many who were either involved in the invasion or lost a loved one there, took a few minutes to remember how their lives were changed forever.

If you are ever in southwestern Virginia near the town of Bedford, please take the time to visit the National D-Day memorial. Just off the Blue Ridge Parkway, the memorial is a beautiful monument to those who sacrificed all and to those who can still come to remember their fallen comrades.

Why is the memorial located in the small town of Bedford, VA? Bedford lost 26 residents of their community on D-day and it was determined that per capita it had made the greatest sacrifice of any community in the country on that fateful day in June 1944.

If you can't visit the memorial in person, visit the [D-Day Website](#).

HEALTH CARE NEWS

DS Logon for Reservists

TRICARE Management Activity Recently announced that retired reservists can now get a DoD Self-service Logon (DS Logon) account at any TRICARE Service Center (TSC) worldwide.

With the DS Logon, retired Reservists can go online to purchase TRICARE Retired Reserve (TRR) health care coverage.

The DS Logon can be used to access the Web-based Reserve Component Purchased TRICARE Application (RCPTA) to qualify for and purchase TRR, a premium-based health care plan available to qualified gray-area retired reservists and their survivors. If a retired reservist does not have a DS Logon account, he or she can still call the DSO at 1-800-538-9552 (1-866-363-2883 for the hearing impaired) to request documentation via remote proofing. DSO will provide step-by-step instructions and the appropriate documentation to get a DS Logon.

Retired reservists may also still go to designated VA regional offices to complete in-person-proofing and get a DS Logon account. To locate a VA regional office, visit this [website](#).

Getting a DS Logon is not restricted to retired reservists. Members of the Selected Reserve most likely have either a Common Access Card or Defense Finance and Accounting Service account that allow them to access the RCPTA to qualify for and purchase TRICARE Reserve Select. However, for those who do not, National Guard and Reserve members can also get DS Logon accounts as mentioned above, similar to retired reservists.

TRICARE Reserve Select

Many reservists who could benefit from the TRICARE Reserve Select program know little about the system because of shortcomings in how DoD publicizes the program, according to a new Government Accountability Office report.

The study, which can be read [here](#), grew from lawmakers' questions on whether reservists have adequate information on the health care benefits, notes that only about 67,000 individuals have enrolled in TRICARE Reserve Select. About 390,000 reservists are eligible for the program, which allows certain reservists to purchase health care coverage through the DoD.

Researchers said that participation rate might be higher if reservists could more easily find information on the benefits. They noted that reserve components "do not have a centralized point of contact to ensure that members are educated about the program" and that contactors charged with providing assistance to reservists on benefits issues "do not have comprehensive information about the units in their areas of responsibility."

The Defense Department acknowledged the problems in its response to the report, saying that Defense Reserve Affairs officials will develop policies requiring each of the service components to designate a point of contact for TRICARE education programs, to better answer questions on the benefits.

Nearly 860,000 individuals currently serve in the seven reserve components. Almost 570,000 of those are in the Army National Guard and Army Reserve.

ACTIVE DUTY NEWS

JCS Chairman Mullen Warns of Pay Cuts

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen has responded to an administration call for reducing the DoD budget by \$400 billion by FY2023, saying that it will force the DoD find ways to cut the cost of pay and benefits for servicemembers -- active, reserve, and retirees. Mullen told reporters, "we have to put initiatives in place in the mid-term that would start to generate cash in the out years. Two of the big places the money is tied up are in pay and benefits." **NAUS Note: If cutting military personnel and their pay and benefits is the first reaction to making budget cuts, soon there won't be anybody to run all the fancy equipment, fly the planes or**

drive the tanks. We think there are many other places that money can be saved first. Just look.

New Fort Bliss Commissary to open June 29

The Defense Commissary Agency will open a new commissary at Fort Bliss, Texas, June 29, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 9 a.m. A scheduled six-day celebration will offer food sampling, prizes, and promotional prices

The event will feature spectacular savings as commissary vendors have stepped up to offer hundreds of promotional prices. The six-day event will be marked with food sampling, drawings for prizes and other festivities. Commissary vendors will give away several televisions, a washer and dryer set, a motorcycle, an SUV and hundreds of smaller prizes to customers. On grand opening day and June 30, there will also be a soccer kick, a football toss, two race car simulators, a super slide, a clown and face painting for children.

The store is located at 1620 Marshall Road, on the south end of Freedom Crossing at Fort Bliss, a first-of-its-kind shopping, dining and entertainment marketplace located on a U.S. military installation. The mall opened in November 2010 with an Army and Air Force Exchange Service main store, food court, theater and other retail shops. The addition of the commissary, anchoring one side of the mall, will make retail shopping more convenient on Fort Bliss.

VETERANS NEWS

Two VA Under Secretaries Sworn in

On June 6, retired Brig. Gen. Allison A. Hickey, a 27-year Veteran of the United States Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserves and a graduate of the first U.S. Air Force Academy class to include women, was sworn in as the VA Under Secretary for Benefits.

As head of the Veterans Benefits Administration, Hickey is responsible for a \$72.3 billion budget and benefit programs that include compensation and pension benefits for more than four million veterans and survivors, education programs including the Post 9/11 GI Bill, home loan guaranties, vocational rehabilitation and employment services, and one of the nation's largest life insurance programs.

Also on June 6, Steve L. Muro, a Vietnam Veteran with leadership experience at every level within the VA National Cemetery Administration, was sworn in as Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. Muro has been the Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs since January 2009.

As the senior official for VA's burial operations and memorial affairs, Muro is responsible for overseeing 131 national cemeteries that provide burial services for military veterans and eligible family members. He is responsible for operating and maintaining VA

cemeteries as national shrines and for land acquisition and other activities related to establishing additional national cemeteries. His responsibility also includes programs that provide headstones, grave markers, medallions and Presidential Memorial Certificates for eligible Veterans, as well as federal grants to help U.S. States, territories and tribal governments establish veterans' cemeteries.

VA to Expand Use of Unused Buildings for Homeless Veterans and Families

The VA continues to develop housing opportunities for homeless and at-risk Veterans by adding 34 VA locations across the country. This strategy will increase the Department's available beds by over 5,000. VA currently has 15,000 transitional beds available to homeless veterans.

Culminating two years of work to end homelessness among veterans, a recent strategic study, the Building Utilization Review and Repurposing (BURR) initiative, identified unused and underused buildings at existing VA property with the potential to develop new housing opportunities for homeless or at-risk veterans and their families through public-private partnerships and VA's enhanced-use lease (EUL) program. Under the EUL program, VA retains ownership of the land and can determine and control its reuse.

Additional opportunities identified through BURR will include housing for returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and their families, assisted living for elderly veterans and continuum of living residential communities.

The project will support VA's goal of ending veteran homelessness by providing safe, affordable, cost effective, and sustainable housing for veterans on a priority basis.

To expedite the project, contractors will be asked to develop multiple sites in a region. VA will hold a one-day national Industry Forum in Chicago for interested organizations on July 13, 2011. For information regarding the forum contact VA_BURR@va.gov.

Flight Program Offers Dignity for Paralyzed Veterans

An existing Transportation Security Administration (TSA) program, the [Military Severely Injured Joint Services Operations Center Program](#), has been expanded to permit all paralyzed veterans to proceed through airport security safely and with dignity. The veteran or service member should contact the TSA Operations Center's 24-72 hours before a confirmed flight at the toll-free number [\(888\) 262-2396](tel:888-262-2396) with flight information. The passenger may also email the call center at MSIJSOC@DHS.GOV with the itinerary. Callers will be connected to a TSA liaison officer who will notify security officials. The hotline will not be able to assist if the call is more than 72 hours or less than 24 hours before the flight is scheduled to leave.

NAUS NEWS

NAUS on the Road

Ft. Ord RAD: NAUS President MG Bill Matz will be delivering his last Legislative Update tomorrow at the Ft. Ord, Monterrey, CA, Retiree Appreciation Day. It will be held from 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the General Stilwell Community Center, Ord Military Community (formerly Ft. Ord). Come and greet President Matz and his wife Linda for the last time before he retires. Bring a friend to join.

Tinker, AFB: The Oklahoma NAUS Wiley Post Chapter will be manning tables at the Tinker, AFB RAD in Oklahoma on June 18. General Billy Bowden, Chapter President says "Chuck and Linda Murphy, our new Region VPs, will help me man the NAUS booth." Presentations will be at the base theater and chapel. Everything kicks off at 0800.