



***“Brotherhood. Sacrifice. Love of country. And it is my fervent prayer that we may honor the memory of the fallen by living out those ideals every day of our lives, in the military and beyond.”***

~ President Obama at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day ~

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## WASHINGTON REPORT

### **House Begins MilCon/VA Appropriations**

Following House passage of the fiscal year 2012 Homeland Security appropriations bill (H.R. 2017) by a 231 to 188 vote, the House turned its attention to consideration of the fiscal year Military Construction and Veterans Affairs spending bill (HR 2055) on Friday.

According to full Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY), “This legislation provides \$72.5 billion in discretionary funding for military construction projects, veterans programs and other agencies that support the quality of life of our warfighters and veterans. This funding level represents a \$615 million cut from last year’s level and a \$1.2 billion reduction from the President’s request.

The Committee Chairman informs that much of the reduction in this bill comes from savings related to the BRAC process and from rescissions of previous year funding left over from lower-than-estimated construction costs.

The bill includes 14.0 billion, for the Military Construction programs, \$58.3 billion is in discretionary funding for Veteran Affairs, \$69.5 billion is for mandatory VA programs and \$205.4 million to fund the Related Agencies under Committee jurisdiction. The related agencies funded in this bill include the American Battle Monuments Commission, the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, Army Cemeteries Expenses (including Arlington National Cemetery) and the Armed Forces Retirement Home.

House decision on the MilCon/VA bill is anticipated to occur Friday following open consideration of numerous amendments and debate on the President’s military policy in Libya and the provisions of law under the War Powers Act. The Senate has yet to consider its version of the spending bill.

### **House Defense Appropriations**

Thursday, the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee approved its fiscal 2012

spending bill. According to reports, the Defense bill would boost core DOD spending by \$17 billion in fiscal 2012 and provide some \$119 billion for overseas contingency operations. The panel's mark, which trims Obama's request by \$9 billion, is in line for full House consideration in the coming weeks.

In related action, the Senate last Wednesday unanimously rejected 97 to 0 the President's fiscal year 2012 budget. Senators also rejected 40 to 57 the House-passed budget sponsored by Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), which leaves the chamber without a budget four-months before the October 1 start of fiscal year 2012. Once again, it's a slow start in the Senate.

### **New DoD Leadership Announced**

On Memorial Day, President Obama announced new leadership for the Department of Defense, naming recently appointed Army Chief of Staff General Martin E. Dempsey to replace Admiral Mike Mullen as the next Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Admiral James Winnefeld as Vice Chairman. General Raymond Odierno has also been named to replace General Dempsey as Army Chief of Staff.

### **Gates Suggests Pay Cuts**

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has long avoided using reductions in military pay and active duty benefits to reduce costs. However pressure from the administration to make \$400B in cuts may have forced a change in his stance. In the past Sec. Gates has sought to squeeze some excess costs from TRICARE, by asking to increase annual premiums and fees for military retirees and to tax their employers if retirees opt out of employer provided health care. Although unwilling to say where any compensation cuts may occur, recently Secretary Gates has put the possibility of cuts in military pay and benefits on the table. NAUS will be watching any proposal Secretary Gates may offer before he retires at the end of the month. We will also watch what Secretary of Defense nominee Leon Panetta will propose in the future. Panetta's nomination is expected to come before the Senate next week.

### **Vote Pending on Libya Operations**

A vote is expected today in the House on two different resolutions regarding the US involvement with NATO in Libya.

The first, H.Con. Res. 51, offered by Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), would demand the total withdrawal of all U.S. forces within 15 days.

The second resolution, H. Res 291, offered by Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) would require the administration to justify its strategy on Libya within two weeks. This resolution falls short of declaring the administration in violation of the 1973 War Powers Act or calling for the administration to end its participation in the NATO-led operation.

Most reports suggest that a majority will favor Speaker Boehner's proposal as it being more reasonable and would offer the members a vehicle to "clearly express the will of their constituents in a responsible way that would reflect commitments to allies and our

troops.”

Clearly, the record needs to be straightened out and firmly stated as to what exactly our policy is in Libya.

## HEALTH CARE NEWS

### **TRICARE Adds Cancer Tests**

TRICARE has added coverage for the enhanced cervical cancer-screening test called HPV DNA. The test is covered as a cervical cancer screening under TRICARE's clinical preventive services when performed in conjunction with a Pap smear for women aged 30 and older. Preauthorization for HPV testing is not required, and beneficiaries have no copayments or cost-shares for routine cervical cancer screening under TRICARE. TRICARE also covers the CDC recommended vaccine series to prevent HPV infection in girls as well as screening for breast, colorectal and prostate cancer without cost shares or copays. For more information, visit the [TRICARE website](#).

### **TRICARE Management Activity (TMA) receives communication awards**

National Association of Government Communicators (NAGC) picked TMA Deputy Director Christine Hunter, RM, USN, for the top award in the speech writing competition for 2010. Rear Admiral Hunter won for her speech entitled, *“Inspiration, Balance and Courage: Military Healthcare 2010 and beyond.”* Admiral Hunter was the keynote speaker at the 2009 NAUS Annual Meeting.

Awards were also garnered by the TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery Communications Campaign at the Hermes Creative Awards which also honored TRICARE Beneficiary Bulletin podcasts and the publication, *“TRICARE and Medicare, Turning 65.”* You can read more on the awards [here](#).

### **Army Medical Graduate Program ranked “Best in the Nation”**

The Anesthesia Nursing Graduate Program at the Army Medical School in San Antonio was recognized as the top program in the US. The rankings are published every year by the prestigious magazine, US News & World Report. The school won over stiff competition from 113 other programs throughout the US. The school has been producing nurse anesthesiologists for over 50 years and graduates receive a Masters Degree in Nursing Anesthesia from Northeastern University School of Nursing. The school's physician assistant program was also highly ranked at 13th.

## ACTIVE DUTY NEWS

### **Navy to Name Next Aircraft Carrier After JFK**

The U.S. Navy announced this week that it will name its next aircraft carrier after the late President John F. Kennedy.

The new carrier is the second such vessel to be named after Kennedy. CV 67 was named in his honor and was retired in 2007 after serving for 40 years, including during

Operation Desert Storm.

The ship will be built in Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia and is scheduled for completion in 2019. The Gerald R. Ford-class warship is nuclear-powered.

### **Hero Miles Program**

Hero Miles is a program that provides family members commercial airline flights to where and an injured service member in the hospital or rehabilitation programs by using donated frequent flyer airline miles. Currently, Air Tran, Alaska, American, Delta, Frontier, United - Continental and US Airways participate in the program. Participants in the frequent flyer miles programs may donate their miles to Hero Miles through the airline's frequent flyer program. For more information, visit the [Fisher House's Hero Miles Program webpage](#).

### **Education for Deployed Soldiers**

The Army's Distributed Learning System developed by the Army's Deployed Digital Training Campus (DDTC) is seeking to provide deployed soldiers with the ability to work on their military education while overseas. Each DDTC is equipped with 20 laptop workstations, Internet accessibility, video tele-training, voice over IP or VOIP, designated satellite access, access to more than 1,200 pre-loaded Army Learning Management System courses, and can be set up in less than two hours. For more information, visit the [Distributed Learning System website](#).

### **Thunderbirds Testing Alternative Fuel**

The Air Force Thunderbirds flying demonstration team recently performed its first flight using an alternative fuel. The team flew with camelina-based hydrotreated renewable jet fuel as part of the nation's overall strategy to use "home grown" alternative energy sources. The Air Force will continue to test and evaluate biomass fuels derived from camelina, or plant seed oil, beef tallow, or animal fat, and various waste oils and greases. For more information on the Thunderbirds and its show schedule, visit the [Thunderbirds website](#).

### **Military Dogs Honored**

Military and civilian law enforcement dogs were honored and remembered during a recent ceremony at the Military Working Dog (MWD) memorial at the Air Armament Museum at Elgin Air Force Base, Fla. The ceremony honored MWDs and civilian K-9s for their service, and remembered those that had fallen. For more information on military working dogs, including educational materials, visit the [United States War Dogs Association website](#), or the [Military Working Dogs webpage](#),

### **Pat Tillman Scholarship**

The Pat Tillman Foundation's Military Scholars program supports our nation's active and veteran servicemembers and their families by removing financial barriers to completing a degree or certification program of choice. The scholarships cover not only direct study-related expenses such as tuition and fees, but also other needs, including housing and childcare.. [Click here for more information or to apply for the scholarship.](#)

## VETERANS NEWS

### VA IG Audit Uncovers Large Discrepancies

A recent audit of 16 Regional Offices, looking at the VA Disability Compensation System, the VA Inspector General office estimates that 23 percent of the 45,000 claims examined were incorrectly processed. Of the 16 Regional Offices, Baltimore, MD and Anchorage, AK scored the lowest in compliance with VA standards. Both failed to meet 14 of the 15 process requirements. Extended management vacancies were cited as one of the linking factors between all poorly performing Regional Offices. Because of the vacancies, these offices lacked continuity and proper oversight. As a result, procedures were not developed or implemented to correct previously identified problems. **NAUS Note: Almost one quarter of all examined cases were wrong. Maybe now the VA will climb down off their insistence on making its claims personnel work on a quota system and change to a results based system. The fewer claims done wrong the fewer cases that are added back to the claims backlog. Quality over quantity always works better for the client.**

### Who Receives Your Final Pay?

*DFAS Press Release*

Retired pay earned but not paid in the final month of your life goes to whoever is listed as your Arrears of Pay (AOP) beneficiary. Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) will also contact this person for help with closing your account.

You can choose anyone, from family members to friends to associates, to be your AOP beneficiary. But if you don't designate someone, it could take many months to locate your survivors, identify who is legally entitled to your pay, and then make the payment.

To designate or change your Arrears of Pay (AOP) beneficiary, all you have to do is follow these simple steps:

1. Complete a Designation of Beneficiary Information form (DD 2894). Get the form [here](#).
2. Sign and date the form. (Unsigned and undated forms will not be processed.)
3. Mail or fax the form to:

DFAS U.S. Military Retired Pay  
P.O. Box 7130  
London, KY 40742-7130  
Fax: [800-469-6559](tel:800-469-6559)

You must notify DFAS of any changes in your AOP beneficiary's contact information. Otherwise all correspondence will be sent to the wrong address, further delaying closure of your account.

### VA Reports Most OIF-OEF Vets May Have PTSD

The VA estimates that as many as 95 percent of veterans returning from combat in Iraq

and Afghanistan have some form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Symptoms can include (1) nightmares, (2) feeling numb, (3) having difficulty experiencing love or closeness with others, (4) feeling jittery or overly alert, (5) having difficulty sleeping, (6) experiencing anger or irritability, (7) having difficulty concentrating, (8) substance abuse problems, (9) having feelings of despair or hopelessness. For more information, visit the [National Center for PTSD webpage](#).

## **NAUS NEWS**

### **NAUS on the Road**

Ft. Ord RAD: NAUS President MG Bill Matz will be delivering his last Legislative Update at the Ft. Ord, Monterey, CA, Retiree Appreciation Day on June 11. 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.

### **New NAUS President Reporting on Board**

LtGen Jack Klump, USMC (Ret), will report on board NAUS next week to begin his transition with MG Matz as our new President. During the two-week transition the staff will be busy briefing General Klump while providing noteworthy customer service to NAUS members.