

**VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA**

**NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT**

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**February 6 – 10, 2023**

**STAFF ACTIVITY**

* NS Director attended a working lunch with NS Chairman Shuman and the National Legislative Director to discuss updates and efforts involving preparation for the American Legion's pending Quality of Life program.
* NS staff continues preparations for the upcoming Washington Conference.
* NS Director met with the Marine Corps Combat Development Command at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA, to discuss their upcoming participation at the *Commander's Call* during the 2023 Washington Conference.
* NS staff attended a House Oversight and Accountability Committee hearing titled: *On The Front Lines of the Border Crisis: A Hearing with Chief Patrol Agents*. Chief John Modlin of the Tucson Sector and Chief Gloria Chavez of the Rio Grande Valley Sector were testifying on behalf of Customs and Border Protection. The hearing focused on security at the Southern border and influx of asylum-seeking migrants, others entering the country illegally, and concerns with the flow of the illicit drug Fentynal that is killing tens of thousands of Americans. Written testimony and video are [here](https://oversight.house.gov/hearing/on-the-front-lines-of-the-border-crisis-a-hearing-with-chief-patrol-agents/).
* NS staff met with Mr. Gill Stevens, Director, Novo Nordisk, to discuss his company's efforts to reduce obesity in the United States, focusing on how their work can positively impact military recruitment (and retention).
* NS staff met with a servicemember from California who volunteers her time assisting military families. The discussion focused on why families are not qualifying for the new [Basic Needs Allowance](https://www.dfas.mil/MilitaryMembers/payentitlements/bna/) and issues involving temporary increases in housing allowances that have not benefitted families stationed at Camp Pendleton, CA.
* NS staff attended an event at the National War College hosted by the Japan-American Society of Washington, DC, entitled *"U.S.-Japan Alliance in the Indo-Pacific: Contemporary Role of the Defense Sector."* The guest panel included Motosada Matano, Political Minister, Embassy of Japan, and Om Prakash, Chief Executive, Northrop Grumman Japan. The event description and guest speaker bios can be viewed [here.](https://jaswdc.org/events/u-s-japan-alliance-in-the-indo-pacific-contemporary-role-of-the-defense-sector/)
* NS staff attended the House Armed Services Committee hearing on *"The Pressing Threat of the Chinese Communist Party to US National Defense,"* which can be viewed at this [link.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvLjweoSwJQ) Opening statements submitted by the witnesses can be viewed [here.](https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings/full-committee-hearing-pressing-threat-chinese-communist-party-us-national-defense)
* NS staff attended the House Armed Services Committee hearing on *"State of the Defense Industrial Base,"* which can be viewed at this [link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n62KE-1yQu4). Opening statements submitted by the witnesses can be viewed [here.](https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings/full-committee-hearing-state-defense-industrial-base)
* NS staff attended the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing titled "*Evaluating U.S.-China Policy In The Era Of Strategic Competition*." Written testimony and video are [here](https://www.foreign.senate.gov/hearings/evaluating-us-china-policy-in-the-era-of-strategic-competition).
* NS staff continued researching and developing a white paper on military food insecurity.
* NS staff met with key Indianapolis staff in preparation for the ANAVICUS Breakfast and wreath-laying ceremony during the Annual Washington Conference.
* NS staff attended the House Armed Services Committee hearing titled: "*The Role Of Special Operations Forces In Great Power Competition."* Written testimony and video are [here](https://armedservices.house.gov/hearings/iso-hearing-role-special-operations-forces-great-power-competition).
* NS staff attended a virtual event hosted by the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) titled: *The Role of Allies and Partners in the National Defense Strategy*. The event featured Dr. Celeste Wallander, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, who discussed how the DoD plans to work with allies and partners in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa to manage regional crises and achieve the aims of the National Defense Strategy. More information and video are [here](https://www.cnas.org/events/mission-brief-the-role-of-allies-and-partners-in-the-national-defense-strategy-with-dr-celeste-wallander).
* NS staff attended a virtual event hosted by the East-West Center titled: "*What Xi Jinping's Third Term Means for Taiwan and the US*." More information and video are [here](https://www.eastwestcenter.org/events/rendezvous-destiny-what-xi-jinpings-third-term-means-taiwan-and-united-states).
* NS staff participated in a meeting with the congressional offices of Seantors Tim Kaine (D-VA), Todd Young (R-IN), and Representatives Chip Roy (R-TX) and Barbara Lee (D-CA) where they discussed final preparations for the reintroduction of bipartisan legislation to repeal the 1991 and 2002 Authorizations for Use of Military Force (AUMFs). A press release on Thursday's bill introduction, including the bill text, is [here](https://www.kaine.senate.gov/press-releases/kaine-young-lee-roy-spanberger-and-cole-introduce-bill-to-repeal-1991_2002-aumfs-formally-ending-gulf--iraq-wars).
* NS staff reviewed townhall footage from Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan, and Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, Japan, regarding the impact of the new DHA law forcing TRICARE eligible personnel (to include retirees, DOD civilian employees, dependents, and eligible veterans) to seek medical care off base at Japanese hospitals. The Camp Foster town hall can be viewed [here](https://www.facebook.com/OkinawaMarines/videos/879283239966576/), and the Kadena Air Base town hall can be viewed [here.](https://www.facebook.com/KadenaAirBase/videos/717086046452964/)
* NS Director attended the US Army's quarterly MSO/VSO meeting at the Pentagon. With the VE&E Division Director. Guest speakers and highlights of the meeting are below:
* *MG John Rafferty, Chief of Public Affairs,* stressed the need for the MSO/VSO community to support military recruitment efforts across the nation and presented information on recent Senior Army leader online events.
  + Also, see *Army Chief of Staff Gen McConville's* interview on AUSA's "Morning Coffee" series [here](https://youtu.be/-yP4ywVgLFo). Gen McConville discusses Ukraine, the Army's Transformation/Modernization, Supply Chain Management, and Recruiting/Retention efforts.
  + Also, see *Gen James E. Rainey, Army Futures Command,* discuss current efforts involving the various aspects of modernization and transformation of the future Army, click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6UWhy5TXP4).
* *Ms. Dee Geise, Director, Soldier and Family Readiness and Quality of Life (QOL) Task Force, G-9*, spoke about the Army's 6-tiered approach to issues that impact QOL: Housing, Relocation, Healthcare, Spouse Employment, Childcare, Support & Resilience.
  + A discussion on food insecurity ensued regarding concerns with the low number of service members that qualified for the "Basic needs allowance" but also the negative optic that DoD pushing for lower-income military families to be on food stamps presents.
  + Of specific interest was the Army announcing that it had doubled its allocated budget for new barracks and significant improvements in family housing.
  + The Quality of Life Task Force's first three years has successfully identified and addressed issues, so the Army is considering extending the Task Force's work for an additional three years. Read about it [here.](https://www.army.mil/qualityoflife/)
* *LTG Walter Piatt, Director of the Army Staff*, provided personal thoughts on Challenges that impact the US Army today, from modernization to how the US Army logistically supported and is implementing the Congressionally mandated Base Renaming Commission outcomes. **LTG Piatt thanked the American Legion** specifically for taking the lead with its "Be the One" initiative and related efforts that have not gone unnoticed.
* *MG Mark Bennett, Director of the Army Budget*, discussed the Army's concerns with the impacts that Continuing Resolutions (CR) have on the military when a budget is not passed. He also stated that while the Army's end strength reduced in size, the overall budget increased to facilitate military construction, modernization efforts, and an increased presence in the Pacific, Europe, and the Artic regions of the world.
* *Mr. John Paschal, Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff, G3/5/7, TRADOC*, spoke about the Army's new *"Future Soldier Preparatory Course,"* which has had successful results since its inception. Read about the program [here](https://www.army.mil/article/263129/future_soldier_preparatory_course_to_expand_based_on_initial_success).
* *Mr. Nati Mavridis, Deputy Chief of Army Marketing, and Maj Dave Huffman, Marketing Associate,* discussed US Army branding efforts and a pending announcement of the new Army Logo and related branding decisions to be held during March of 2023 at the US Army Museum.
* *Mr. Michael Brady, Principle Deputy Chief of Public Affairs*, held a discussion and Q&A session with the group, during which the MSO/VSO organizations asked to be included in further discussions and working groups involving all matters discussed during the update, where possible.

**POW/MIA**

**February 8, 2023**

* USS Oklahoma Sailor accounted for from World War II (Stott, D.)

**February 6, 2023**

* Airman accounted for from World War II (Eeds, C.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated 21 servicemembers so far this year.

**PROGRAMS (The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment)**

* Processed request: Ammo – 12,400; Rifle – 44; Clips – 45; Static Display – 0
* Participants: Post – 11; Department – 10

**TIP OF THE WEEK**

As most Americans that follow the recruitment and retention issues in the military know, there are Military Occupational Specialties (MOS) that need specific attention in the US Army. The MOSs currently in high demand are 18X (Special Forces; Elementary Language Proficiency), 37F (Psychological Operations Specialist), 25P (Microwave Systems Operator-Maintainer), 35M (Human Intelligence Collector: Language Proficiency), and 14P (Air Missile Defense Crew Member). The large demand for these MOSs have led to large sign-on and re-enlistment bonuses. These are just a few of the MOSs in the military that need attention. More information is provided in the links below.

* [Active Duty Bonuses For Service Members | The Official Army Benefits Website](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Bonuses?serv=122)
* [Military MOS Lists: Classifications by Branch (militarymoney.com)](https://www.militarymoney.com/careers/mos-lists/)
* [Specialized Skills Training For Soldiers | The Official Army Benefits Website](https://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil/Benefit-Library/Federal-Benefits/Specialized-Skills-Training?serv=120)