VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

Ariel A De Jesus Jr, Acting Director
adejesus@legion.org

(January 6, 2025 – January 10, 2025)

Meetings

- NS Staff participated in a meeting titled "U.S.-Japan Alliance for the Future Confirmation." The Honorable Minoru Kihara, who most recently served as Japan's Minister of Defense until October 2024, shared his insights on Japan's ongoing efforts to maintain a strong and adaptable U.S.-Japan alliance in the face of evolving geostrategic challenges.

- NS Staff members met for a planning session to discuss and finalize the logistical details of the American Legion's inaugural ball. Topics included venue arrangements, vendor coordination, scheduling, and operational requirements.

- NS Staff conferred with a representative from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency to discuss The American Legion's future participation in the Director's Roundtable.

Policy

- NS Staff actively and continuously monitors emerging national security threats and events, assessing their potential impact.

Programs

- NS Staff members are preparing official nomination letters for the American Legion Spirit of Service Award, which will be submitted to each branch of the U.S. military.

- NS Staff consulted with the Director of TACOM to address concerns regarding replacing ceremonial rifles.

- NS Staff have commenced preparations for the ANAVICUS segment of the Washington Conference. This includes contacting Arlington National Cemetery to arrange vehicle access and secure a bugler for the event.

The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment

- Items requested: Ammo- 7440; Rifles- 11; Clips- 0; Static Displays- 0
- Request Submitted by: Post- 5; Departments -6

POW/MIA

Jan. 7, 2025

- Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Clifton, A.)
- Pilot Accounted For From Vietnam (Downing, D.)

Jan. 2, 2025

- Marine Accounted For From World War II (Van Heck, R.)

Dec. 26, 2024

- Soldier Accounted For From World War II (Moore, J.)

Dec. 20, 2024

- Airman Accounted for from World War II (Hansen, D.)
- Airman Accounted For From World War II (Mann, J.)
- Airman Accounted For From World War II (Bradbury, G.)

Dec. 19, 2024

- Airman Accounted For From World War II (McLaughlin, H.)
- Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Grace, L.)
- Airman Accounted For From World War II (McCollum, R.)

Be The One:

A new depression medication, RR-HNK—a byproduct of ketamine—has shown promise in early research, potentially delivering ketamine's rapid benefits without its side effects or misuse risks. In a recent NIH-funded study, 74 healthy participants received various doses of RR-HNK or a placebo; the drug proved very safe, with only mild, transient side effects. Researchers also confirmed that RR-HNK enters and remains in the brain for several hours, which is important for its potential effectiveness. While early findings hint at positive effects on brain activity, more trials are needed to determine if RR-HNK can effectively treat depression or other mental health conditions.

Link to the news article
https://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2024/new-hope-for-rapid-acting-depression-treatment

Link to the medical journal
https://ascpt.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/cpt.3391

Focus Topic:

What Yoon's Impeachment Means for International Relations

On December 14, 2024, South Korea's opposition-led National Assembly impeached President Yook Suk Yeol just 11 days after his brief declaration of martial law. Within six months, the Constitutional Court will decide whether to uphold the impeachment: if upheld, a new election will occur within 60 days; if not, Yoon's powers will be restored. In the interim, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, a nonpartisan technocrat with experience in liberal and conservative governments, will serve as acting president.

This political turbulence raises concerns about South Korea's partnerships with key allies, particularly the United States and Japan, who have pledged to maintain relations despite the volatility. Observers also worry that North Korea, emboldened by its stronger ties with Russia, may exploit South Korea's moment of vulnerability. Consequently, South Korea and its allies must remain vigilant, especially near the demilitarized zone, and maintain a robust military presence to deter potential threats.