VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

Mario Marquez, Director
MMarquez@legion.org

May 4 – May 10, 2024

STAFF ACTIVITY

- NS Staff attended an MSO/VSO Roundtable hosted by the Honorable Secretary of the Air Force, Frank Kendall III. The meeting was held in 2 parts:
- 1st session attendees:
    - Ms. Gwendolyn Delphini, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary
    - Ms. Katherine Kelley, Deputy Chief of Space Operations for Human Capitol
    - Mr. Horace Larry, Director of Air Force Services
    - The discussion revolved around servicemember quality of life and military family programs. The American Legion inquired about Air Force recruiting which the Department stated they were on track to meet their recruitment numbers for the Space Force, Air Force and Air Force Reserve for FY24. Currently the Air National Guard is not on track to meet their FY24 recruiting goal. Additionally, they stated the Air Force has adopted the DoD body fat standards in lieu of the stricter Air Force standards. The adoption of the DoD standard allowed an additional 5,000 recruits to attend basic training, and only about 2% of those failed to graduate. The Air Force has also removed the requirement of having a drivers license to enlist.
- 2nd session attendees:
    - The Hon. Secretary of the Air Force, Frank Kendall III
    - General Alvin, Chief of Staff of the Air Force
    - General Michael Guetlein, Vice Chief of Space Operations
    - The executive session with the Secretary focused on operations and the current threat environment. The Secretary opened his remarked by expressing his assessment on China and their military modernization, including their increase in nuclear programs and concluded his remarks by stating the threat of China is much more severe, and not only contained to the Pacific. The American Legion expressed their concerns about China as well and gave an overview of our foreign policy and national security programs. TAL Staff inquired about the Air Force Secretary's policy on VSO base access as required by SecDef Hagel's 2014 memorandum which task military department secretaries with writing a memo on VSO access.
    - Vice Chief of Space Operations, General Guetlein, also expressed his concerns in the space realm, including Russia's ambition to employ nuclear capable technology in space. For example, he explained the impact that losing GPS services for a period of time would pose on emergency services and crisis response in America.

- NS Director briefed the Commander's Advisory Committee on several topics which will be worked through the commission at a later date.

- NS Staff solidified ALA attendee for the 2024 Memorial Day events at Arlington National Cemetery.

- NS Staff attended a virtual interview put on ForeignPolicy.com called, "*Inside China's New Diplomatic Push*". The Subject of the interview was Evan Medeiros, Chair of Asian studies at Georgetown University.

- NS Staff attended a seminar hosted by the Women's Foreign Policy Group at the Embassy of Canada titled, "Climate Change: Implications for National Security." Sara Cohen, the Embassy of Canada's Deputy Head of Mission, Foreign Policy & National Security, Sherri Goodman, Secretary General of the International Military Council on Climate and Security, and the Honorable Rachel Jacobson, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations, Energy and Environment, discussed the impact of climate change and extreme weather on NATO strategy and military construction.

- NS Staff conducted a legislative review of the FY2025 NDAA to propose provisions that ought to be maintained in the text of the bill.

- NS Staff conducted a bill review of H.R. 7975 titled "*Reserve component Healthcare Access and Expansion Act".*

- NS Staff conducted a bill review of a Senate bill titled "*Healthcare for our Troops Act".*

- NS Staff is finalizing the June 2024 National Commander's European schedule.

- NS Staff continues to build on the "Border Security and Immigration Policy White Paper" to clarify and solidify The American Legion's multi-faceted position.

- NS Staff began receiving The American Legion Spirit of Service Award packages and is in the process of reviewing them.

- NS Staff hosted a zoom meeting for the Legion volunteer board to select the 2024 Army and Navy Spirit of Service Award winners.

- NS Staff attended the Spring NEC meetings in Indianapolis in support of the NS Chairman.

- NS Staff met with various potential speakers for the New Orleans National Convention to discuss topics and logistics.

- NS Staff continues to discuss BASE Program visits with various military installations and TAL Departments.

POW/MIA

May 8, 2024

- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Dent, L.)
- Pilot Accounted for From WWII (Knepp, A.)

May 7, 2024

- USS Glennon Sailor Accounted for from WWII (Alexander, H.)

May 6, 2024

- USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted for from World War II (Titterington, E.)
- Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Spruell, J.)

May 3, 2024

- Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Seloover, R.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated 63 service members this year.

PROGRAMS (The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment)

- Processed request: Ammo – 4960; Rifles – 1; Clips – 0; Static Displays – 0
- Participants: Posts – 7; Departments – 6

The American Legion JROTC/ROTC Program

- Military Excellence – 3
- Scholastic Excellence – 3
- Departments – 2

TIP OF THE WEEK

If you would like to take part as a volunteer in search and recovery in support of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), Terra Search Promise, a non-profit is looking for volunteers:

WHO/WHAT: Terra Search Promise – the nation's first Service-Disabled Veteran owned and led (non-profit) MIA recovering organization deploys in support of DPAA to recover a missing WWII servicemember.

WHERE: Vicinity of Stuttgart, Germany

WHEN: 17 June to 15 July 2024

WHO is invited to participate: Veteran volunteers; Veteran and Gold Star Families, Professional First Responders.

Requirements:
1. Interest in participating, no experience necessary
2. Team Player
3. Able to work outdoors in a field environment (slightly sloped hill in a rural German forest).
4. Health insurance

Billeting: Deployed team will be in a local guest house in the vicinity of the recovery site. Meals and transport to the site provided.

Participating Categories: 1. Volunteer, fully supported. 2. Sponsored fully or partially by a third-party tax-deductible donation

For more information and if interested: Reach out on Facebook, LinkedIn, and www.terrasearchmia.com