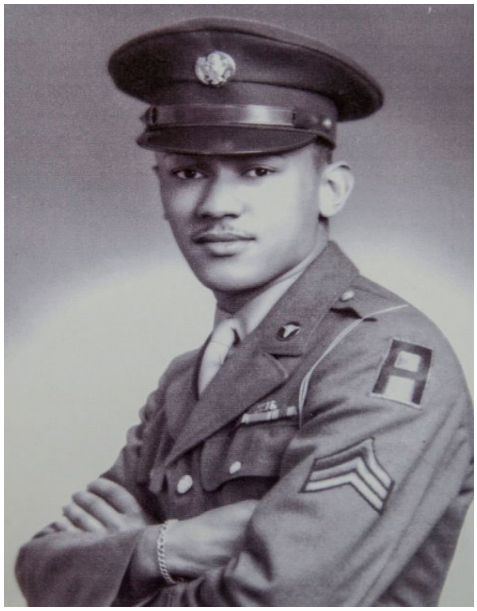
National Security Division Report

Week ending 11 September 2020

Senators Push For Medal Of Honor For Late Black Medic Who Saved Lives At Normandy



Cpl. Waverly B. Woodson Jr. was an Army medic in the only all African American combat unit in the Normandy invasion on D-Day. He got seriously wounded that June 6, 1944, but went on to help save scores of his fellow soldiers' lives.

On Tuesday, a bipartisan group of lawmakers introduced legislation to posthumously award Cpl. Woodson a Medal of Honor for his heroism.

"His valor was never fully recognized due to the color of his skin. That's unacceptable," said Democratic Sen. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland.

Woodson was part of the 320th Barrage Balloon Battalion, whose mission was to set up hydrogen-filled balloons and cables to deter Nazi planes from attacking.

Paris-based journalist Linda Hervieux wrote about the Black battalion in her 2015 book Forgotten. U.S. lawmakers have cited the work as supporting research in urging the military to review Woodson's case.

"He worked through his pain to save lives," Hervieux tells NPR. "He pulled out bullets, he patched wounds, he dispensed blood plasma, he amputated a right foot. And when he thought he could do no more, he rescued four drowning men. Thirty hours after, he collapsed from his own injuries."

Click Here To Read More

US withdrawing thousands of troops from Iraq and Afghanistan

(AP) WASHINGTON — The United States will pull thousands of troops out of Iraq and Afghanistan by November, the top American commander for the Middle East said Wednesday, as President Donald Trump tries to make good on his campaign promise to get America out of "endless wars."

During a visit to Iraq, Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the commander of U.S. Central Command, said the reduction in Iraq — from about 5,200 troops to about 3,000 — reflects the Trump administration's confidence in the ability of U.S.-trained Iraqi security forces to handle the militant threat from the Islamic State group.

Later, McKenzie said troop levels in Afghanistan would drop to 4,500 by November. He made the statement in a telephone call with a small group of reporters, according to officials at his Central Command office.

"We're on a glide slope to be at 4,500 by the November time frame — October, late October, November time frame," he said, according to a transcript made available by his office. He said the path to 4,500 would be determined in part by the military's ability to get equipment out of the country.

"At 4,500 we're still going to be able to accomplish the core tasks that we want to accomplish," he said. "And we've shown more than ample goodwill and our willingness to demonstrate that we don't want to be an occupying force in this country. But we do have strategic interests, vital interests, that compel us to be certain that these entities, such as al-Qaida and ISIS, can't be guests there to attack the United States."

The U.S. had reduced its presence in Afghanistan to 8,600 in June and was known to plan further reductions, although McKenzie had not previously cited a projected number. He gave no exact date for reaching the 4,500 level; he said a specific date has been targeted but he would not reveal it.

Click Here To Read More

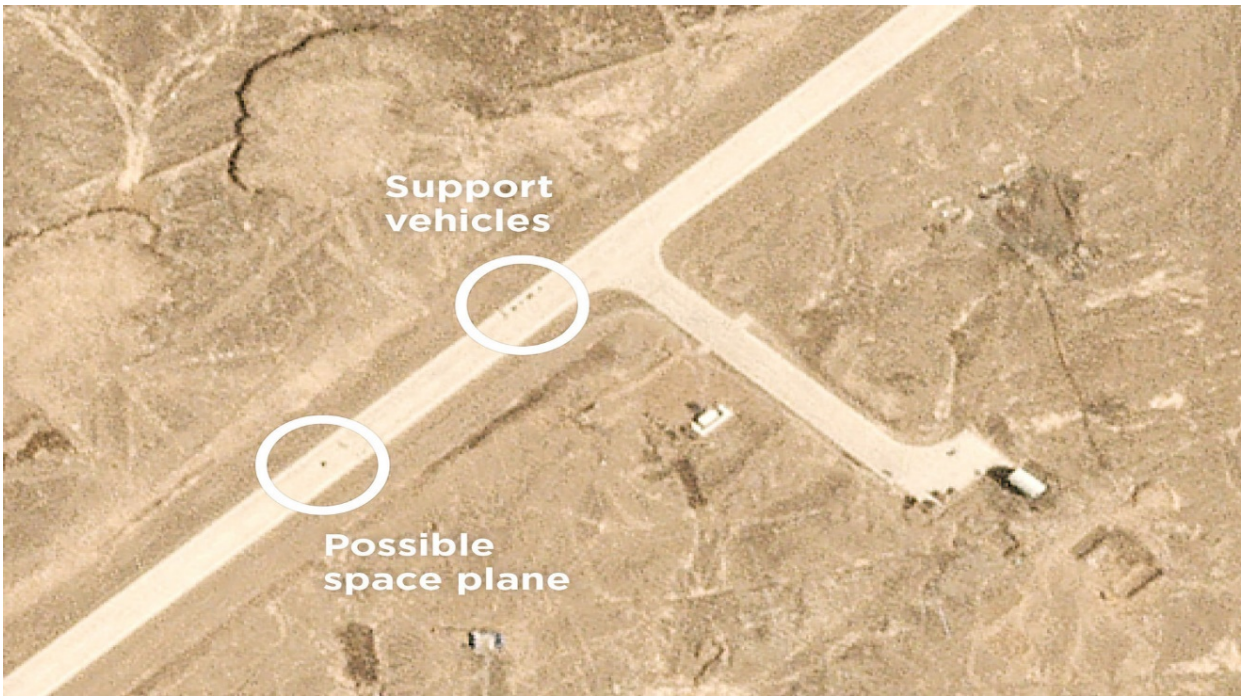
New Chinese Space Plane Landed At Mysterious Air Base, Evidence Suggests

(NPR) A commercial satellite photo may reveal a new Chinese space plane just moments after it landed at a remote site on the western side of China.

The photo, which is too low resolution to be conclusive, was snapped by the San Francisco-based company Planet. It shows what could be the classified Chinese spacecraft on a long runway, along with several support vehicles lined up nearby.

Terse statements by China's official Xinhua news agency said only that a Long March 2F rocket had carried a "reusable experimental spacecraft" into orbit and that the launch and landing were

successful. The landing took place on Sept. 6 at almost the exact time the photo was snapped by the passing satellite.



"I'm reading a lot into a few little dots," admits Jonathan McDowell, an astronomer with the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, who diligently tracks spacecraft and satellites. But, he says, the photo, combined with other circumstantial evidence, such as the new spaceship's orbital path, strongly suggests that China has launched and landed a small, unscrewed, space-shuttle-like vehicle. "The information sort of all hangs together now that this was a test of something, probably a space plane, that made a winged reentry and landed on the runway," he says.

Click Here To Read More

POW/MIA Update

This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency released the following announcements. Click on the links to read more:

September 8, 2020: Marine Accounted For From World War II (Athon, F.)
September 10, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Flaherty, F.)
September 10, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Chess, P.)

Legislative Issue Tracker

Below is legislation the National Security Division is tracking in Congress. New bills are highlighted in yellow. Click on the bill numbers to see more information about the bills.

Bill #	Short Title
S. Res. 510/H. Res. 910	A resolution commending the people of Taiwan on holding free and fair democratic presidential and legislative elections, and congratulating Madame Tsai Ing-wen on her re-election to the presidency of Taiwan
H. RES. 1012	Recognizing the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War
H.R. 3508/ S.1634	South China Sea Sanctions
H.R.367	Pay Our Coast Guard Parity Act of 2019
S.2297	Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2019
H.R. 4710	The bipartisan Pharmaceutical Independence Long-Term Readiness Reform Act
H.R. 303	Retired Pay Restoration Act
H.R. 4890	The Veteran Deportation Prevention and Reform Act
H.R. 5151	Honoring the Oath Act
S.2794	Bring Our Heroes Home Act
H.R.6395	FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act
S. 3393	A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to provide for concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for disability retirees with fewer than 20 years of service and a combat-related disability, and for other purposes.
S. 1041	Veterans Visa and Protection Act of 2019
S. 3732	A bill to amend title 18, United States Code, to further protect officers and employees of the United States, and for other purposes
S 1218/HR 2249	World War I Valor Medals Review Act
H.R.4807	Cold War Service Medal Act
H.Con,Res 10	Authorizing the use of the rotunda of the Capitol to honor the last surviving Medal of Honor recipient of the Second World War upon death.
S. 3258	SHIPS Implementation Act
H.R.3233	National Defense Strategy Implementation Act

Click on the link below to open an Excel spreadsheet to see the full legislative tracker:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1KgPaIfx04RA13m20qLDh5br8dyxiupVX5Dc5ByZteRQ/edit?usp=sharing

Staff Activity:

- National Security staff continued preparations for a series of virtual National Security Commission and Committee meetings next week in advance of the 2020 Fall NEC meetings in October.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division