National Security Division Report
Week ending March 12, 2021

American Legion Birthday March 15

March 15, the designated birthday of The American Legion, is the day in 1919 when the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris. Much as the birthday of the United States is celebrated on July 4 – for the day in 1776 when revolting patriots declared the independence of the British colonies and the spirit of America was born – March 15 is the date on which the Legion came to life.

Suggested Remarks for The American Legion 102nd Birthday March 15-17, 2021

The American Legion was born during a global pandemic. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 50 million people died of an influenza outbreak which was first identified in 1918, spread rapidly in 1919 and continued into 1920. An estimated 500 million people —one-third of the global population — were infected, according to the CDC.

The doughboys of World War I suffered greatly. Though it was frequently referred to as the "Spanish Flu" some trace the first outbreak to Camp Funston, Kansas. In 1918, more than 121,000 sailors and Marines were admitted to Navy hospitals for influenza. It is estimated that the disease caused many of the 63,114 "non-battle deaths" of U.S. servicemembers during World War I.

Click Here For Suggested Remarks for The American Legion 102nd Birthday

Capitol Police requests extended National Guard presence on the Hill

The Capitol Police has asked the National Guard to extend its deployment to the Capitol beyond next week amid mounting concerns over domestic extremists seeking to target Congress.

Capitol Police's request described the timetable for the troop presence as indefinite, with no specific end date. More than 5,200 Guard members, drawn from multiple states, are currently deployed to Washington, D.C., in the wake of the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol. The existing deployment authorization expires on March 12.

The request from Capitol Police underscores the gravity of the ongoing security threats to the building that have lingered after the Jan. 6 insurrection. The prospect of open-ended troop deployment on the Hill comes amid warnings from federal law enforcement officials about a potential attack on Congress by a militia group on Thursday and an unspecified plot to attack the Capitol during President Joe Biden’s State of the Union address, which has yet to be scheduled.

Capitol Police issued a statement later Thursday confirming that it had asked for an extension. The Pentagon is considering the request and has not made any final decision, a defense official said.

“There has been no decision on any extension requests,” said National Guard spokesperson Darla Torres.

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Coast Guard Education Programs

Like the other military branches, the Coast Guard offers its members great opportunities to get a college education. These programs are generally referred to as Voluntary Education or Vol Ed. The Coast Guard Institute offers the following programs to help Coast Guardsmen reach their education goals.

Tuition Assistance

If you are an Active Duty, Selective Reserve or Coast Guard federal employee, the Coast Guard will pay up to 100% of your college tuition. Click here to get more information.

The Coast Guard Foundation Grant

If you are an active-duty enlisted member the Coast Guard Foundation offers you an annual Education Grant. This grant program is open to active-duty enlisted personnel in pay grades E-3 to E-9 with two or more years of Coast Guard service. This $350 grant may be used in conjunction with the Coast Guard Tuition Assistance Program, or other non-funded relevant education items.

Coast Guard Mutual Assistance (CGMA)

CGMA offers a Supplemental Education Grant (SEG) of up to $250 per year. You can use this grant for *any* family member's education expenses. However, it does not cover Tuition expenses. This grant can also be used to pay for ASVAB, CLEP, SAT, and other study guides. CGMA also offers several education related loans. Click here to learn more.

Additional Education Assistance

The Coast Guard also offers dependent spouses and Federal Coast Guard employees the opportunity to take CLEP, DANTES, and other tests at no cost.

Citing 'Current Trends,' Coast Guard Lifts Almost All Travel Restrictions for Troops

The U.S. Coast Guard has lifted most travel restrictions to "pre-pandemic status," according to a service-wide message issued Wednesday.

Citing "current trends of the pandemic combined with the national vaccination effort," Coasties are free to move about the country, based on their vaccination status and COVID-19 conditions at their destinations.

Service members still must adhere to local restrictions and guidelines when not engaging in official travel, according to ALCOAST 096/21, but they are able to take domestic leave and leisure activity without fear of breaking Coast Guard-wide rules.

"All personnel must be aware of changing conditions in locations they intend to travel to and through when making travel decisions," the message states. The new guidance also allows for foreign leave and leisure travel, but personnel must get command endorsement and approval from the first flag officer or senior executive service employee in their chain of command.

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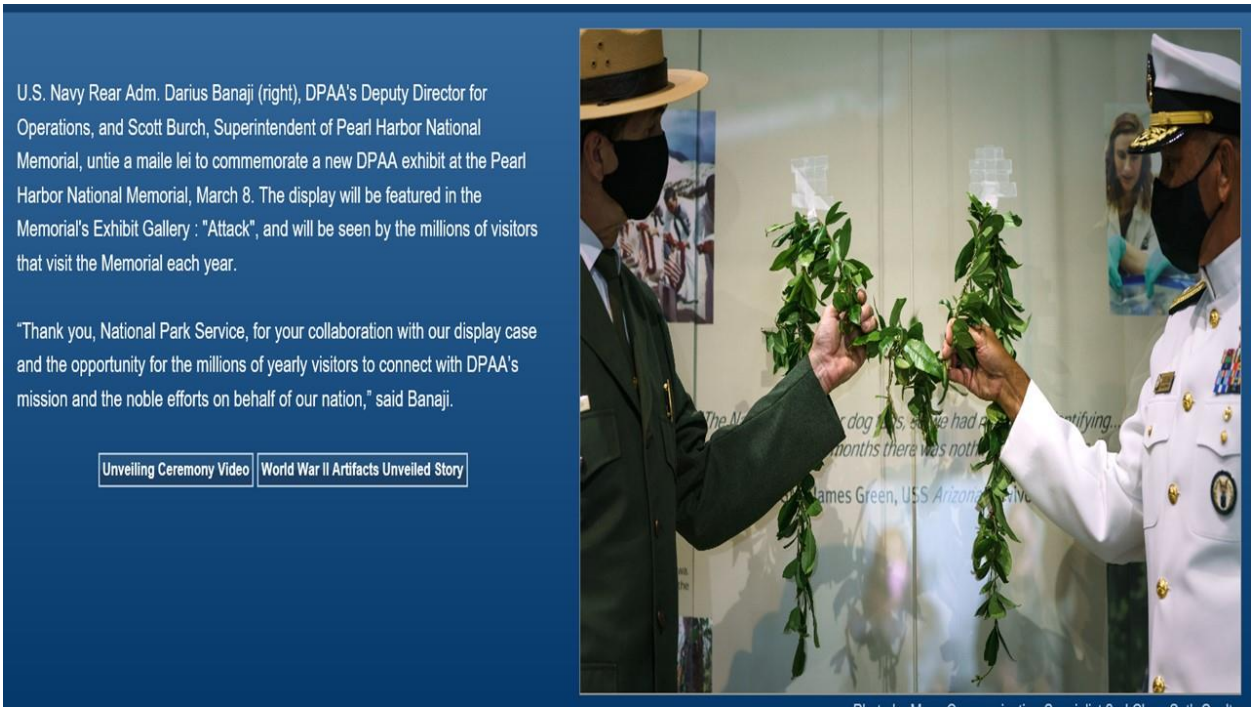
DEFENSE POW/MIA ACCOUNTING AGENCY
FULFILLING OUR NATION'S PROMISE



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

March 5, 2021: Chaplain Accounted For From Korean War (Kapaun, E.)

March 10, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Hesler, A)

March 10, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Malek, M.)

Legislative Issues

 Availability of Healthcare benefits for residents at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in proposed language of the FY22NDAA – The American Legions support funding that provides long-term solvency and viability of the Armed Forces Retirement Home (Resolution No. 107, 2016)

 Quality of Life for Service members and their Families – We owe our military men and women a debt of gratitude we can never repay for all that they — and their families — sacrifice

to serve our country. The American Legion supports a fully funded quality of life (Resolution No. 85, 2016)

 Ensure the Coast Guard is paid – The American Legion supports a fully funded United States Coast Guard (Resolution No. 23, 2016)

 Expedited Citizenship through Honorable Military Service – The American Legion supports measures to ensure the process of naturalization through military service is completed prior to discharge (Resolution No. 15, 2018)

 Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure – The American Legion supports refined processes and policies that will enhance interagency cybersecurity…and promulgation of best practices and standards, and to ensure the protection of critical infrastructure from cyber and other electronic attack. (Resolution No. 20, 2017)

 Addressing the Forever Wars – The American Legion advocate for elevating diplomacy to build a better safer world (Resolution No. 22, 2020)

Staff Activity:

Draft SFR:

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
TO THE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ON
AMERICA FORWARD: RESTORING DIPLOMACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN A FRACTURING WORLD

Chairman Meeks, Ranking Member McCaul, and distinguished members of this Committee, on behalf of our National Commander James Oxford and the nearly two million members of The American Legion, we thank you for the opportunity to address the important issue of restoring diplomacy and development in a fracturing world. As the largest veterans service organization in the United States, we stand ready to assist this committee and the Department of State to strengthen our nation's interest and ensure that diplomacy is the primary instrument of national power considered at the highest level.

DRAFT LoS:

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard E. Neal
Chairman

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Ranking Member

Committee on Ways and Means
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Committee on Ways and Means
1139 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

As the Armed Services Committee prepares to draft the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2022, on behalf of the nearly 2 million members of The American Legion, I am pleased to express support for fiscal authorizations for the Armed Forces Retirement Home to avoid expanding monthly deductions from military pay to members of the National Guard and Reserves who were made eligible for the Home in last year's NDAA.

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Week ending 03/12/2021