VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

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

December 14, 2024 – December 20, 2024

Meetings

- NS Staff attended the "Global Conflicts to Watch in 2025: Escalating Humanitarian Needs" event at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. The session provided valuable insights into emerging regimes and rising conflicts, enhancing the staff's understanding of the geopolitical landscape and potential challenges in the coming year. This knowledge will support more informed decision-making and strategic planning for the National Security Division.

- NS Staff met with representatives from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office to discuss the National Commander's upcoming visit to Taiwan. The meeting highlighted The American Legion's longstanding relationship with Taiwan's Veterans Affairs Council and reinforced mutual support for veterans' initiatives and regional stability.

Policy

- NS Staff has finalized legislative priorities for the 2025 National Security agenda, addressing key areas from border security to the defense industrial base.

- NS Staff is finalizing the National Commander's Pacific Trip Report, which covers visits to Taiwan, Guam (including Andersen AFB and Camp Blaz), and Hawaii (Hickam AFB and Schofield Barracks).

- NS Staff is researching the negative impacts of the Jones Act on Guam. Restrictions on foreign-built and foreign-flagged vessels increase shipping costs and delays. These challenges hinder the timely and cost-effective delivery of essential supplies, affecting military readiness and logistical efficiency. As a strategic Indo-Pacific location, such constraints undermine Guam's ability to support national security objectives and reduce U.S. military operational flexibility.

Programs

- NS staff prepped letters to be sent out to the Spirit of Service for the seven service branches to send after the holidays.

The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment

- Items requested: Ammo- 6200; Rifles- 22; Clips- 100
- Requests submitted by: Posts- 4; Departments- 3

POW/MIA

Dec. 17, 2024

- Airman Accounted For From World War II (Yeary, H.)
- Airman Accounted For From World War II (Jackson, L.)

Dec. 18, 2024

- Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Bowman, J.)
- USS West Virginia Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Frye, N.)
- Airman Accounted For From World War II (Bruntmyer, L.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated (241) service members this year.

Be The One:

Recommendations from the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee Report from 2022.

At the Direction of Congress, Secretary Austin established the Suicide Prevention and Response Independent Review Committee (SPRIRC) on May 17, 2022, to conduct a comprehensive review of clinical and non-clinical suicide prevention and response programs. The SPRIRC was led by Dr. Gayle Iwamasa, who was joined by nine highly qualified subject matter experts external to the Department of Defense (DoD), with experience in the public health approach to suicide prevention, mental health services, epidemiology of suicide, sexual assault, lethal means safety, service member and family support services, and civilian employment within the Services, including several Veterans with extensive military leadership at multiple levels.

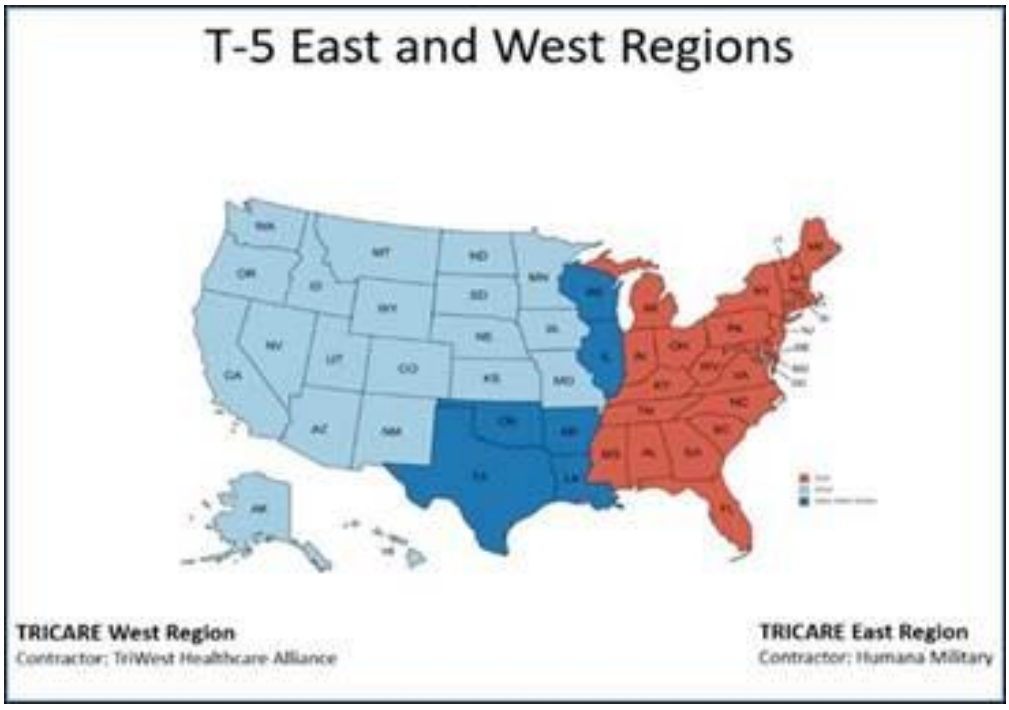
Focus Topic:

TRICARE and VA Collaboration Overview

TRICARE is the Department of Defense (DoD) healthcare program for uniformed service members, retirees, and their families, with all Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare facilities participating as TRICARE network providers. Under Title 38 USC 8111, VA facilities have been offering care to Active-Duty Service Members (ADSMs), military retirees, and their families on a space-available basis since 1995. This collaboration ensures continuity of care for transitioning service members and dual-eligible veterans, though beneficiaries are advised to confirm specific services at their local VA facilities.

Protecting Veteran Care and Resources

Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs) ensure that TRICARE network agreements do not compromise healthcare access or quality for veterans. Per TRICARE agreements, VA facilities provide care to non-veteran TRICARE beneficiaries only when resources permit, maintaining priority for core veteran patients. The Under Secretary for Health must certify that these agreements do not delay or deny care for veterans, preserving the integrity and priorities of VA healthcare services.

TRICARE T-5 Contracts and Agreements

The new T-5 TRICARE contracts, effective **January 1, 2025**, will maintain two regions while shifting six states from the East Region to the West Region. Humana Military (HM) will manage the East Region, and TriWest Healthcare Alliance will manage the West Region, replacing Health Net Federal Services. VA will establish a new provider network agreement with TriWest and renew its agreement with HM. These agreements are distinct from TriWest's Community Care Network for veterans and will not affect veterans' access to timely and quality healthcare services.