VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA
NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

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

September 22 – 28, 2024

Meetings

- NS Staff listened to a webinar from the Brookings Institution titled, *"US Immigration Policy: Separating Fact from Fiction."* Webinar provided valuable insights into the state of border security and immigration through a security lens.

- NS Staff attended a hearing titled "Cyberspace under Threat in the Era of Rising Authoritarianism and Global Competition: hosted by the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs (Subcommittee on East Asia, The Pacific and International Cybersecurity Policy). As cybercrime is increasingly utilized by foreign adversaries, NS Staff is working diligently to stay up to date on news and developments on the topic. This hearing can be viewed here.

- NS Staff met with representatives from the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office (TECRO) to discuss the National Commander's upcoming Pacific trip, which includes a visit to Taiwan.

- NS Staff met with leadership from the Department of Hawaii to discuss the National Commander's upcoming Pacific trip, focusing on key visits to Pearl Harbor and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) headquarters in Hawaii.

- NS Staff met with the leadership team of Shaw Air Force Base to discuss the upcoming BASE Program visit.

- NS Staff participated in a call with the ACLU to discuss the Department of Defense's efforts to eliminate naturalizations during basic training.

- NS Staff watched a hearing from the House Oversight Committee titled *"The Border Crisis: The Cost of Chaos"* to better understand the wide-ranging impacts of border management. This hearing can be viewed here.

- NS Staff virtually attended a hearing from the House Foreign Affairs Committee entitled, *"An Assessment of the State Department's Withdrawal from Afghanistan by American's Top Diplomat."* Video of the hearing can be viewed here.

- NS Staff virtually attended an Atlantic Council event entitled, *"America and the World: The Perils of Isolationism"* featuring former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Video of the event can be viewed here.

- NS Staff virtually attended an event hosted by The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace entitled, *"A Conversation with Abdallah BouHabib, Lebanese Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants"* which can be viewed here.

Policy

- NS Staff drafted a letter ahead of the FY25 NDAA Conference to outline provisions the Legion seeks to be retained in the final bill.

- NS Staff researched and analyzed President Biden's meeting with leaders from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, more commonly referred to as "the Quad." Comprised of Australia, India, Japan, and the US, the Quad discussed XYZ over the weekend.

- NS Staff completed a brief on the recent escalation of events in El Fasher, Sudan between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Armed Forces. The escalation comes as Russia and China are stifling U.N. efforts to intervene and curb the violence in Sudan. Moreover, President Biden met with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates to discuss the conflict. The leaders released a joint statement expressing their "deep concern over the tragic impact the violence has had on the Sudanese people." Although, it should be noted that the United Arab Emirates has been widely accused of fueling the conflict in Sudan.

- NS Staff is following developments from the Lebanon after Israel's deadly barrage of missiles targeting Hezbollah occupied regions and retaliatory strikes against Tel Aviv made by Hezbollah.

- NS Staff is following updates from the Department of Defense on the announcement to send additional US troops to the Middle East AOR to assist in de-escalation and prevention of the outbreak of a wider regional war. For now, the Department has not publicly announced the number of troops however, roughly 40,000 troops are in the region currently.

- NS Staff has been following updates and speeches from this week's United Nation's General Assembly session hosted in New York City.

- NS Staff is continuing to follow developments in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict.

- NS Staff successfully completed a detailed draft paper addressing the Department of Defense's ongoing recruitment crisis. The draft aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the factors contributing to the crisis and offers actionable recommendations to mitigate the issue, ensuring the military's readiness and capability moving forward.

Programs

- NS Staff reviewed the National Security portion of the Positions and Programs booklet and updated with current information.

- NS Staff finished updating resolution for National Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awardees.

The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment

- Items requested: Ammo- 3720; Rifles- 16; Clips- 50
- Requests submitted by: Posts- 6; Departments- 5

POW/MIA

Sept. 25, 2024
- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Kovaleski, E.)

Sept. 24, 2024
- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Darrigan, E.)
- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Sheppick, D.)
- Marine Accounted for from Vietnam (Forrester, R.)
- Airman Accounted for from WWII (Lord, L.)
- Sailor Accounted for from WWII (Rix, G.)
- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Bryant, R.)

Sept. 23, 2024
- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Drewes, N.)
- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Webb, M.)
- Soldier Accounted for from Korean War (Ortiz, E.)
- Soldier Accounted for from WWII (Reiser, C.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated 168 service members this year.

Be The One (BTO)

In alignment with the Be the One (BTO) campaign, NS Staff identified several key priorities for the FY25 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). One critical item is the **pilot program on pre-programming suicide prevention resources into smart devices** issued to service members (House Sect 738). Integrating these resources directly into devices will provide immediate access to assistance for service members in crisis. This proactive measure aims to reduce stigma and improve mental health outcomes by promoting timely support for those in need.

Focus Topic:

Access Your MHS GENESIS Patient Portal

Looking to access your health information? It's never been easier, thanks to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal. This secure, online tool allows you to manage your health care at military hospitals and clinics from the comfort of your home or on the go. Here are the ways you can access MHS GENESIS.

The most straightforward way to access the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal is through a web browser.

1. Open your preferred browser and navigate to the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal.
2. Log in using your DS Logon credentials.
3. If you don't have a DS Logon, you can create one on the site. This method gives you full access to your medical records and appointments. You can use messaging services with your health care providers as well.

On the go? You can also use a web browser on your mobile device.

Assistance through the MHS GENESIS Help Desk

If you have any issues with the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, you can get support from the MHS GENESIS Help Desk at 800-600-9332. Help Desk representatives can guide you through logging in and navigating the portal. They're available to help you gain seamless access to your health information whenever you need it.

By using the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal, you have the power to manage your health care in a way that fits your lifestyle. Whether you prefer using a desktop computer, mobile device, or on-site kiosks, the portal is flexible and user friendly.

Take control of your health information today! Experience the convenience of the MHS GENESIS Patient Portal.