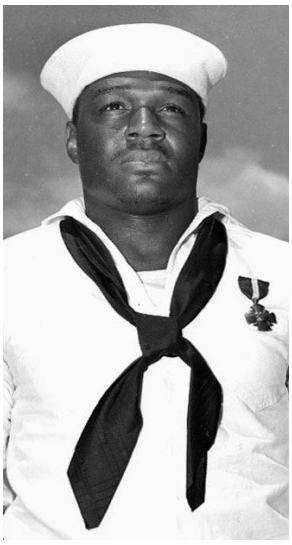
National Security Division Report
Week ending 2 October 2020

American Legion national commander extends well wishes to president, first lady

American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford issued the following statement regarding the announcement that President Trump and First Lady Melania Trump tested positive for COVID-19.

"The American Legion extends its heartfelt prayers that President Trump and the first lady have a full and speedy recovery from COVID-19. Our nation has accomplished remarkable feats in its history. We have prevailed against powerful enemies. We can, we must and we WILL defeat this dread disease that has caused so much pain and damage worldwide."

A Military 1st: A Supercarrier Is Named After An African American Sailor



Doris "Dorie" Miller, U.S. Navy mess attendant 2nd class, became one of the first American heroes of World War II for his actions during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
U.S. Navy/National Archives

(NPR) Military names can echo down through the ages, a fact underlined by the current fight in Washington, D.C., between President Trump and Congress, which has voted to strip the names of Confederate generals from several Southern Army bases. The president has vowed that won't happen, but the battle might not be resolved before Election Day.

The Navy, meanwhile, has quietly charted a new course. A supercarrier now on the drawing boards will be christened the USS Doris Miller. It's the first to be named for an enlisted sailor and the first to be named after an African American.

Most supercarriers are named for U.S. presidents — the USS John F. Kennedy. USS Ronald Reagan. USS Abraham Lincoln. Henry Kissinger called them "100,000 tons of diplomacy," and that power has long been reflected in the Navy's conventions for naming them.

Doris Miller, who went by "Dorie" in the Navy, was one of the first American heroes of World War II. During the attack on Pearl Harbor, as his battleship, the USS West Virginia, was sinking, the powerfully built Miller, who was the ship's boxing champion, helped move his dying captain to better cover, then jumped behind a machine gun and shot at Japanese planes until his ammunition was gone.

As a Black sailor in 1941, he wasn't supposed to fire a gun even. This means that when he reached for that weapon, he was taking on two enemies: the Japanese flyers and the pervasive discrimination in his own country.

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Legacy of Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Sabah: Farewell 'Mr Fix-It'

(AlJazeera) When world leaders mount the marble podium during the annual United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), they often spout a lot of doom and gloom. Not so for Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah. When he entered the global spotlight in October 1963 as foreign minister of a newly independent Kuwait, he gushed with more passion and optimism than your average diplomat.

He said, "genuine hopeful signs of lasting peace on Earth are appearing on the horizon" and issued a call to "banish colonialism, racial discrimination, religious intolerance" while also ending war, poverty and hunger. He never let up. Sheikh Sabah, who died on Tuesday aged 91 after a series of medical setbacks, will be remembered as a steadfast optimist in a volatile region who spent a 70-year career putting out fires at home and abroad.

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Military suicides went down in the last year, but 2020 may end up reversing that trend

(Military Times) Suicides among troops were down 8 percent between 2018 and 2019, a bit of hope in a time when rates have been climbing. While the active-duty component saw an increase of 16 deaths, or roughly 1 percent, the National Guard saw more than a 30 percent drop, from 136 to 89, with the Reserve down from 81 to 65, a drop of more than 4 percent. But the impact of 2020 on the mental health of service members is only just beginning to show itself, as numbers from the first half of the year emerge.

“At this time, it’s too early to determine whether suicide rates will increase for 2020," Karin Orvis, the Defense Department’s suicide prevention office director, told reporters Thursday. “We’ll need to have the full year of data, and investigations completed, to determine the cause of death.”

So far, DoD has only released its suicide numbers from January through March, the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the second-quarter numbers are due to be released within a matter of days, Orvis declined to comment on what’s in them. The Army, however, in an exclusive interview with the Associated Press, last week divulged that it has seen a 30 percent spike in suicide deaths so far this year.

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DOD Takes Steps to Safeguard Supply Chain

(DoD) The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the domestic and foreign supply chains has led the Defense Department to focus more intensely on identifying critical infrastructure and vulnerabilities and to take measures to protect those assets, said Gregory Kausner, executive director for international cooperation, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment.

Kausner spoke this week at the ComDef 2020 forum, a virtual conference providing insights and perspectives on issues facing the international defense communities. Regarding the programmatic impacts of COVID-19 across the department, Kausner said: "To be very blunt, we're still assessing those impacts. We're doing so with a scalpel, trying to understand what the short-term, medium- and long-term consequences are and then appropriately reorienting the department's efforts through a broad range of responses."

Since Kausner's area of focus is international suppliers, he mentioned some steps his office is taking. After identifying weaknesses in the foreign supply chain, the department has been in diplomatic consultation at the highest levels of government to ensure allies and partners understand the impacts of foreign supply chain disruption to the U.S. warfighter, he said. In turn, the department has balanced its concerns with an understanding of the dynamics of the pandemic, and its resurgence at times, which affects nations in different ways, he said, adding that not every country is equally prepared to deal with those effects.

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POW/MIA Update

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

September 28, 2020: Soldier Accounted For From Korean War (Hill, J.)
September 29, 2020: Marine Accounted For From World War II (Langan, J.)
September 29, 2020: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Whitson, A.)

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 continue preparations for the upcoming Fall NEC meetings to be held virtually October 14-15, 2020.
- Staff worked this week on updates to the National Security Division's Standard Operating Procedures for the various activities and responsibilities in its jurisdiction.
- 1 October, Staff participated in a DoD Conference Call in advance of the public release of the DoD CY2019 Annual Suicide Report. Leading the discussion was Dr. Elizabeth Van Winkle, who is the Executive Director of the Office of Force Resiliency for the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. She was joined by Dr. Karin Orvis, who is the Director of the DoD Suicide Prevention Office (DSPO) and Mr. Travis Bartholomew, DSPO Deputy Director. The full report is available on the DSPO website at: https://www.dspo.mil/asr/

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division