VETERANS STRENGTHENING AMERICA

NATIONAL SECURITY DIVISION'S WEEKLY REPORT

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October 30 - November 4, 2022

STAFF ACTIVITY

- NS Director participated in a "*Military Housing Roundtable"* hosted by the Military Family Advisory Network. The NS Director and Ms. Katie Isaacson from the Legislative Division discussed American Legion priorities and its focus of effort on privatized housing matters and quality of life.

- NS Staff observed a Podcast titled *"Straight Talk with Ramon Colon-Lopez"* hosted by David Conley from One More Day. The discussion focused on the stigma faced by servicemembers when trying to get help, problems with overmedicating service members while in treatment, and current efforts by DoD to reduce suicide and provide new and quality advanced treatment options for PTSD and mental health. Legionnaires can watch the podcast here.

- NS Staff attended a virtual press briefing by Pentagon Press Secretary BG Ryder during which he discussed efforts involving U.S. military personnel who are inspecting the accountability of weapons shipments sent to Ukraine. The conversation also focused on ensuring US Forces would not be sent into combat and the avoidance of engagement with Russian forces.

- NS Staff attended a full-day Department of the Army sponsored VSO/MSO in-person update at the Pentagon. Discussions included issues involving:
  - The U.S. Army revamping their branding to better attract today's youth into military service. New branding will be released mid-late 2023.
  - BG Davis, Army Recruiting Command, provided an update involving the difficulties and efforts associated with attracting today's youth ages 16-24. The Army is focused on recruiting in key cities that have traditionally brought in the majority of recruits. BG Davis also briefed efforts to recruit legal permanent residents and the introduction of a program to accelerate citizenship for new soldiers, an issue that the NS Division testified on earlier in 2022.
  - LTG Jensen, Director, US Army National Guard (NG) update on the influence and impact the NG has in local communities as "the face" of the US military. Additionally, LTG Jensen introduced the highly underutilized Minuteman

Scholarship that provides a four-year ride to a university to any youth who agrees to join the guard or reserves.

- Update and discussion with Sergeant Major of the Army Grinston regarding the operational and global relevancy of the US Army over the past three years. His message focused on how "America" perceives the military is no longer busy as a result of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, yet all nine Army brigades are either deployed, just returned from deployment, or are preparing to deploy. DoD is busier than ever across a multitude of mission sets.
- Update from MG Mosser, Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Reserves, involving the challenges associated with serving in the reserves while balancing full-time jobs, family life, and how VSO support contributes to their improved quality of life.
- Update from the Office of Resiliency involving efforts in response to the results of the CY 2021 DoD Suicide report which added data on military family-related suicide for the first time ever.
- Presentation on the Soldier For Life Program and the services provided to Soldiers as they transition out of the US Army, Guard, and Reserve forces into the civilian world.

- NS Staff attended a webinar titled *"The 2022 National Defense Strategy, A conversation with Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl"* hosted by the Brookings Institute. The discussion focused on critical elements of the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2022 Missile Defense Review and how the U.S. will continue to address heightened risks posed by North Korea, Iran, violent extremist organizations, and emerging challenges such as climate change.

- NS Staff is in the process of coordinating details for the National Commander's upcoming travel to Departments of Hawaii and Philippines (Okinawa, Japan visit).

- As significant discussions surrounding illegal Immigration, asylum, and other national security-related issues continue, NS Division will provide updates on a range of issues as we engage with various expert and associated entities. Our focus of effort remains: Numbers of illegal immigrants (and Asylum seekers) who continue to arrive and/or get away at our borders; reporting the latest facts on issues surrounding illicit drugs coming into the country such as fentanyl, cocaine, and heroine; the readiness, recruitment, retention, proper equipping of, and the quality of life of our Border Patrol. Legionnaires can find current data on the CBP website here.

- For Legionnaires who have not had the opportunity to do so, please read the National Security Strategy and 2022 National Defense Strategy policy documents released by the White House and DoD.
- For those Legionnaires who would like to sign up for the daily (weekdays only) e-mail version of the Department of Defense's ***Early Bird Brief Newsletter,*** please register at the following link: *Defense News Early Bird Sign Up*

POW/MIA

October 31, 2022

- Soldier accounted for from Korean War (Tuttle, A.)
- Airman accounted for from World War II (Triplett, J.)

November 1, 2022

- Airman accounted from World War II (Ropp, J.)

DPAA has identified/repatriated ***168*** servicemembers so far this year.

PROGRAMS (The American Legion Military Surplus Equipment)

- Processed request: Ammo – 11,160; Rifle – 10; Clips – 50; Static Display – 2
- Participants: Post – 8; Department – 7

Tip of the Week

Starting Jan. 1, 2023, "*Accredo"*, a TRICARE-contracted company, will be the primary in-network pharmacy to fill specialty drugs. If you are currently filling your specialty drugs at a retail network pharmacy, you can move your specialty drugs to Accredo to avoid disruptions to your medication therapy. Specialty drugs treat long-term complex conditions, like multiple sclerosis, rheumatoid arthritis, hepatitis C, and cancer.