National Security Division Report
Week ending 5 February 2021

<u>February 4, 2021 Homeland Security Committee hearing brief:</u>

On February 4, 2021 Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee Bennie G. Thompson held a hearing on Examining the Domestic Terrorism Threat in the Wake of the Attack on the U.S. Capitol. Expert witness included

- Dr. Christopher Rodriguez- Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, District of Columbia
- Ms. Elizabeth Neuman- Founder and Managing Director, Neu Summit Strategies and Former DHS Assistant Secretary for Counterterrorism and Threat Prevention
- Mr. Jonathan Greenblatt- Chief Executive Officer, Anti-Defamation League
- Mr. Brian Michael Jenkins- Senior Advisor to the RAND President, The RAND Corporation

Dr. Christopher Rodriguez, Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency, District of Columbia testified; "The American people's, willingness to persist in this fight. The mental and psychological toll of what happened on January 6, as some of you, your staffs, and our police officers can personally attest, can be overwhelming, and tragically, some of our finest have already taken their lives following the insurrection. Our best chance for success is to be straight with the American people that the threats we now

face is arguably as dangerous as they were in the immediate post-9/11 environment, and these threats are not going away."

Ms. Elizabeth Neuman, Founder and Managing Director, Neu Summit Strategies, testified; "I have spent my career immersed in homeland security related government reforms stemming from government failures, like the attacks of September 11, 2001, or the Hurricane Katrina response, as well as emerging threats. The security failure of January 6, 2021 is nearly incomprehensible for me. I believe the failure was not one of intelligence, but a failure of imagination born of a lack of judgment and preparation."

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO, ADL testified; "For decades, our Center on Extremism has been actively monitoring extremists and hate groups of all stripes and, in recent months, we have tracked this new mutant strain of extremists lashing out at elected officials in the wake of last November's election. So, for us, what happened at the U.S. Capitol was in some ways the most predictable terror attack in American history."

Mr. Brian Michael Jenkins, Senior Advisor to the RAND President, The RAND Corporation testified; "The invaders describe themselves as "patriots," and Revolutionary War symbols were certainly abundant on January 6. In the eyes of most people, invading the Capitol and threatening the lives of democratically elected officials hardly qualifies as an act of patriotism or a defense against criminal charges, but it is significant that the invaders see themselves in this way. If they were merely a mob of vandals and looters, devoid of intellectual content or spiritual impetus, this would be a security and law enforcement problem. The thinking they reflect runs deeper and poses a greater societal challenge.

Veterans who Led on Toxic Exposure Call Defense Bill Passage a Critical First Step

A massive defense bill passed by Congress on Friday (December) includes provisions that would require government studies of military toxic exposure among fighter pilots and some of the first forces that deployed after the 9/11 attacks.

Veterans see the approval of those provisions as a significant step that they hope will lead to a recognition by the U.S. government that their illnesses were tied to that service.

The final version of the $740 billion fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act covers military pay and benefits and also funds warships, submarines, missiles and military aircraft.

One provision would require government studies to determine whether veterans who served at a base in Karshi-Khanabad, Uzbekistan, or K2, after 9/11 developed illnesses from exposure to radiation, chemical weapons and other toxins that were in the ground.

“It’s a victory for sure, because we now have legislation that codifies K2. It’s official recognition by the U.S. government for the first time for K2 and Uzbekistan veterans,” said retired Army Staff Sgt. Mark Jackson, a K2 veteran and cancer survivor. “It is a great start, having gone from nothing, and having no recognition whatsoever.”

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Resolution No. 85: Support for Military Quality of Life Standards

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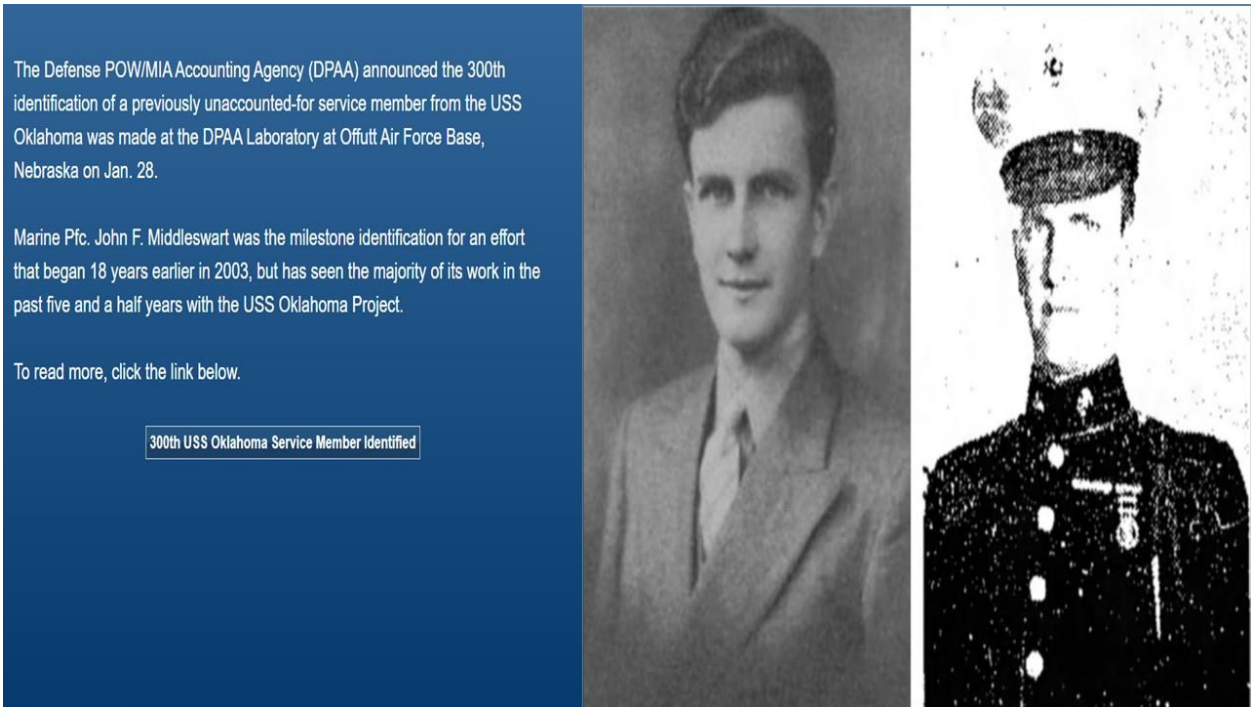
This week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency released the following announcements. Click on the links to read more:

February 2, 2021: USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Magers, H.)
February 4, 2021:USS Oklahoma Sailor Accounted For From World War II (Middleswart, J.)



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

Staff Activity:

- A collaboration of the National Security Division, the VE&E Division, and the Legislative Division held a courtesy meeting with the U.S. Embassy of Botswana, Ambassador Kitso Mokaila, Defense Attaché COL Mbikiwa, and Col Matthew Wenthe, NGB State Partnership Program – International affairs to discuss Legacy Lessons Learned of The American Legion's 100 years of existence in efforts to assist the Botswana Defense Force Military Retiree Association with initiatives in employment/education, reintegration/transition mechanisms from mil to civ society, ingenuities in healthcare and additional sponsored resources with the interest of a mutual cooperation of the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program. We look forward to improving diplomatic security cooperations through the whole of government approach.
- Staff collaborated with the Legislative Division to record digital media in direct support with the 'Know Before You Go' initiative for the 61st Annual Washington Conference.

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Week ending 02/5/2021