National Security Division Report

Week ending 7 August 2020

Tricare enrollment fees are set to increase for many in 2021

(Stars and Stripes) The Defense Department on Wednesday announced thousands of Tricare beneficiaries will be required to pay new enrollment fees in 2021.

Tricare Select Group A retirees will be required to pay new fees starting Jan. 1, 2021. An individual's monthly enrollment fee will be $12.50 or $150 annually.

Monthly family fees will be $25 or $300 annually. There are 407,431 beneficiaries of Tricare Select, according to 2019 data from the Defense Department.

The new fees were mandated by the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act's reorganization of Tricare, the health care program for service members, retirees, and their families.

Any service member who joined the military before Jan. 1, 2018 is in Select Group A. Select Group B are those who enlisted or commissioned after Jan. 1, 2018, and have already been paying enrollment fees. The Defense Health Agency said there are no changes to Group B.

Beneficiaries will need to contact their Tricare regional contractors and set up their enrollment payments. The Tricare regions are: Humana Military in the eastern United States, HealthNet Federal Services in the west, and International SOS Government Services overseas.

"In order to maintain health coverage unless waived by law, Tricare Select Group A retired beneficiaries must take action and pay their Tricare Select enrollment fees," according to a statement from the Defense Health Agency, which oversees health care for the military.

However, enrollment fees are waived for Chapter 61 retirees, their family and survivors of deceased service members. Chapter 61 refers to veterans who were medically retired from military service with a rated disability of 30% or greater, according to the Army's Human Resources Command.

Military finds vehicle that sank in a training incident that killed 8 Marines and a sailor

The US military has identified the location of the amphibious assault vehicle that sank last week off the California coast, killing eight Marines and one sailor.

The AAV was found Monday off San Clemente Island, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force tweeted Tuesday. Human remains on board were identified using remotely operated video systems, according to the tweet.

"The Navy has expedited the movement of assets to recover the remains of the Marines and Sailor, and raise the AAV," the Marine Expeditionary Force said.

Sixteen servicemen were on board the AAV for shore-to-shore operations Thursday when crew members reported they had taken on water, the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit said Sunday in a news release.

Five were rescued and taken aboard the USS Somerset, while at least one died and eight others were presumed dead, the release said. Those rescued were wearing normal combat gear including body armor and an inflatable vest. Some were found floating, Gen. David Berger, commandant of the US Marine Corps, said.

Lance Cpl. Guillermo S. Perez, 20, of New Braunfels, Texas, was pronounced dead at the scene before being taken by helicopter to Scripps Memorial Hospital in San Diego. He was a rifleman with Bravo Company, Battalion Landing Team (BLT) 1/4, according to Sunday's release.

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Terror, death, devastation in Lebanon explosion

As they watched a huge mushroom cloud rise over the seaport capital, many who felt the massive explosion in Beirut on Tuesday thought it was a nuclear detonation. Others described the popping and bursting of fireworks and a raging fire that spread to another building, triggering the blast felt kilometers (miles) away.

The explosion collapsed balconies, shattered windows and ripped bricks from buildings, killing more than 70 people and injuring more than 3,000.

A gallery of photos curated by Associated Press photographers captures the horror, devastation and reach of the explosion: Dazed people covered in blood staggering or standing motionless on streets strewn with glass and mortar; distraught men carrying the limp body of an unconscious, or possibly deceased, woman; a man with a bandage-wrapped head, his face half-hidden by blood; motorcycles and Army vehicles weaving through debris-covered streets to rescue and ferry those

hurt to hospitals; small clusters of people carrying stretchers bearing the wounded; thick black smoke billowing from the explosion site.

The explosion also happened amid rising tensions between Israel and the militant Hezbollah group along Lebanon's southern border. Israel denied any responsibility.

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U.S. Army To Soldiers As Training Resumes: 'Get Your Masks On'

The Army is now getting back to large-scale training, after several months preparing to hold off that invisible foe: the coronavirus.

Back in May at its massive training base in the Mojave Desert, the Army practiced taking temperatures, isolating soldiers who tested positive and socially distancing.

It was all in preparation for 4,000 National Guard soldiers from 20 states who arrived recently at Fort Irwin, Calif., for two weeks of training at this vast swath of deserts and mountains the size of Rhode Island.

The soldiers, who started arriving in the last several weeks are the first to return to large-scale training here since March, when the pandemic hit. The Army cancelled two other units during the spring until it could come up with safety measures.

On this recent training day, the soldiers attack the mock village of Seize Razish. Machine gun fire, artillery barrages echo off the barren hills. Armored vehicles speed across the open desert, kicking up plumes of dust.

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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:

July 31, 2020: Marine Accounted For From World War II (Athon, F.)

Legislative Issue Tracker

Below is legislation the National Security Division is tracking in Congress. 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 continues working to get all National Security resolutions together in a digital file for distribution to the National Security Commission and Committees. These will be broken down by committee and sent by both email and USPS mail to the relevant chairmen when completed.
- Staff continues work on several award programs: Law Officer & Fire Fighter of the Year and Spirit of Service.
- Staff continues work on improving the military equipment program process.
- On Tuesday, August 4, staff participated in the Conservative Working Group weekly teleconference hosted by Republican leadership in the Senate.
- On Thursday, August 6, staff attended a virtual ceremony whereby the Air Force's military leadership changed hands at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland. Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper, Air Force Secretary Barbara M. Barrett and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark A. Milley applauded retiring Gen. David L. Goldfein's 37 years of service and welcomed Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., who succeeds Goldfein as the Air Force chief of staff and member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Charles Quinton Brown Jr., United States Air Force four-star general, now serves as the 22nd chief of staff of the Air Force. He is the first African American to be appointed as Chief of Staff and the first African American to lead any branch of the United States Armed Forces. Brown said he was inspired by those before him and he is committed to addressing today's challenges while preparing for the future to better compete, deter and win. Video of the ceremony is available here: https://www.af.mil/Live/. Legion Resolution No. 216: Support for the United States Air Force.
- On Friday, August 7, staff held a Teams call with National Security Chairman Steve Brennan to plan for several upcoming National Security events and meetings.

Rhonda Powell, Director, National Security Division