

LtGen Jack Klimp, USMC (Ret)

How Have We Changed These Past 10 Years?

Ten years ago, on September 11, 2001, terrorists suddenly and deliberately attacked the United States of America, an event that changed all our lives. For our uniformed services, these changes have been profound and long lasting. For many other Americans, however, life has pretty much returned to how it was before the attacks. Sure, we wait in longer lines and take off our shoes and belts to board airplanes, and there is a heightened sense of alertness concerning the potential for terrorism, but I think most Americans are more focused on the economy and their ability to make a living than on national defense. **On the other hand, I also believe there is a genuine increase in the respect and admiration of those who serve in uniform, even though only about one percent of us choose to do so.** But the urgency has waned. And, while most of our readers today will always remember where we were and what we were doing that September day, nearly one quarter of today's servicemembers may have trouble doing so – as they were only children, 10 years old or even younger that day.

Since becoming your President in June, I have talked with many NAUS members, your elected Board of Directors, and other military servicemembers and retirees. I've also been up on Capitol Hill introducing myself and discussing issues important to our members with Congressional leaders.

Frankly, I'm concerned with what I'm hearing and seeing. With the focus of most Americans on other pressing economic issues, the rise of uncompromising partisan positions on both sides of the aisle, a skyrocketing budget deficit and recognition that big changes are needed, this "perfect storm" of circumstances threatens to un-do many of the advances we have made over the years to protect and enhance the earned benefits of uniformed service. The 13 percent hike in TRICARE Prime enrollment fees for "working age" (under 65) retirees is all but a done deal, even though the Senate could still act to try and halt it. And while a 1.6 percent pay raise is likely to be passed for 2012, there are calls for lower military pay raises in the future, or even a pay freeze. Even the military retirement system is on the table – with calls for major reform that could effectively end retirement after 20 years' service with a pension (plans would defer retired pay until a later age). Also, while unemployment among Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans is even higher than it is among the overall population, there are rumblings of cutting back the educational benefits of the Post 9/11 GI Bill, enacted just a few short years ago to enable our

Iraq and Afghanistan veterans access to the same educational opportunities afforded to previous generations of servicemembers.

This "perfect storm" means our Association, as the Servicemember's Voice in Government, needs to grow our membership, especially among those men and women serving in uniform today, and take a principled stand for those who serve and have served. If we don't, our fate will be in the hands of those who never jumped at the sound of reveille, never took an oath to "protect and defend," and never sacrificed like those who serve do and have. **Benefits like pay and allowances, health care, retirement, and education assistance, are not government handouts or entitlement programs – they are earned as part of the overall compensation promised those who volunteer to serve our nation in uniform. We know what sacrifice means, we know what sacrifice costs, and we have answered the call for the greater good of our nation. Servicemembers, retirees and other veterans, their family members and survivors, should not be first in line for even more sacrifice. We've been there, and done that, already.**



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Nominations to the NAUS Board of Directors

The following individuals have been nominated to serve on the NAUS Board of Directors for a four year period beginning January 1, 2012.

COL Dan Dennison, USA (Retired)

After a dual-track career in the Army and Federal Government, COL Dan Dennison retired to Arlington in 2002.

COL Dennison served as an Army helicopter aviator at the Battle of Dakto, November 1967 and the Allied response to the Tet Offensive at Pleiku, Republic of Vietnam, January - April 1968. Other assignments included serving as a Cold War contingency planner who prepared leaders at Defense, Treasury and the White House to respond to nuclear war emergencies and as the Operations officer responsible for logistics and support for 85,000 enemy prisoners of war and 10,000 civilian internees captured by U.S. Armed Forces during Operation Desert Storm and transferred by Saudi Arabian Armed Forces.

Currently COL Dennison is Vice President of Virginia Chapter, VA-5 of NAUS, a charter member of Virginia Chapter, VA-3 and contributes to the *Uniformed Services Journal*. He also gives presentations on historical subjects; one being "Remembering the Unknown Soldier of World War I", which won a Bronze International Telly Award in August 2010.

COL Dennison is married to Linda Dennison and has two children; son, MAJ David Dennison is a Neurologist in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and daughter, Lindsey McCormick served as a Combat Nurse with the 101st Airborne Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He now works as a commercial photographer specializing in aerial, architectural and landscape photography.

Col Thomas W. Parker, USMC (Retired)

Col Parker was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps Reserve in 1972 and assigned as a Platoon Commander in 3rd Marine Division upon graduation from The Basic School.

Subsequent tours included infantry and reconnaissance battalion assignments; the Joint Staff Operations Directorate; and Marine Corps Manpower and Reserve Affairs. He also commanded both a Recruiting Station and a Recruiting District.

Col Parker is a graduate of Amphibious Warfare School, USMC Command and Staff, and the National War College. He holds a BS from the University of Maryland and a masters degree in government from Harvard University. His personal decorations include the Navy Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of

Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal and Combat Action Ribbon

Upon retirement Col Parker worked as a senior executive of a credit card processing company, Applied Card Systems. Subsequently, he returned to the Washington, DC area where he managed Marine Corps projects for Anteon Corporation. From 2005 to 2009 Colonel Parker served as Chief of Staff and Vice President of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association. He is currently a Senior Consultant with BCPInternational, Ltd.

Col Parker lives in Beaufort, SC with his wife of 34 years, Debbie. Their son, Lt Thomas C. Parker, US Navy and his wife Leah have a daughter, Elise.

LCDR Nicole M. Manning, NOAA

LCDR Nicole M. Manning has served as a NOAA Corps commissioned officer for nearly 10 years. She has had a balanced operational career, with 5 years of sea duty aboard NOAA Ships conducting hydrographic surveys for nautical charts and oceanographic research, most recently, serving as the Operations Officer aboard NOAA Ship Ronald H. Brown.

LCDR Manning served as Chief Recruiter for the NOAA Corps for four years, where she coordinated all aspects of the recruiting program from initial interview of prospective candidates to their assignment to the Basic Officer Training Course. In her current assignment, Lcdr Manning serves as Program

Analyst for the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) where she assists with coordination across all NOAA programs to ensure that OMAO strategic objectives are aligned to NOAA and Department of Commerce Vision and Strategic Plans.

LCDR Manning holds a bachelor's degree in Biology from James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA and currently lives in Maryland with her husband and daughter.

Sgt Karl P. Karl, USMC (Veteran)

An immigrant from Germany, Karl Karl became a US citizen in 1960. He joined the Marine Corps in 1966 and served 18 months of his enlisted term in Vietnam with the Ground Surveillance unit of the 3rd Marine Div as Sensor Emplacement NCO; he was promoted to Sergeant and awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with the "V" device for Combat and the Combat Action Ribbon, along with other accolades.

Karl worked to reestablish the County Veterans Service Office in Marina, California in 1982. He then worked to establish the new office for the Department of Veterans Affairs "Vet Center" in 1985, working as a Readjustment Therapist

and Team Leader.

Karl helped found several organizations in his county; The United Veterans Council, The Vietnam Veterans of Monterey County, and the Veterans Transition Center of Monterey County.

Karl is passionate about helping Veterans and is an active member of the Fort Ord Retiree Council and is President of NAUS Monterey Chapter CA-2.

The National Association for Uniformed Services is holding its 43rd Annual Meeting on Saturday, November 5, 2011.

The meeting will be held at the Fort Belvoir Officers' Club, Fort Belvoir Virginia, beginning at 10:30 AM, followed by lunch, the keynote address and a brief business session.

Join the NAUS Staff and Board of Directors in a farewell to Tamie Boone after her more than 21 years of exemplary service to our members.



Please mail the NAUS Official Ballot/Proxy and or Reservation Form for the 2011 Annual meeting to the NAUS Headquarters office:
NAUS Elections, 5535 Hempstead Way, Springfield, VA 22151-4094.

OFFICIAL BALLOT/PROXY FOR 2011 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark an "X" in the spaces that reflect your vote for the Board of Directors candidate. For your ballot to be valid, do not vote for more than four individuals to fill the projected vacancies that will exist on the Board of Directors. If you do not wish to vote for one of the nominees, you may write in the name of a candidate and mark the block opposite his/her name with an "X". Also, please provide your name and member number. It will serve as your identification and entitlement to vote.

JOINT BALLOT: Separate ballots are NOT being sent to spouses when both husband and wife are NAUS members. The ballot is designed to accommodate joint membership. Service members, please use the left column of boxes to vote; spouses who are members, use the right column of boxes.

A SPOUSE WHO IS NOT A NAUS MEMBER, IS NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE. ASSOCIATE MEMBERS ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO VOTE.

SELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS: The following nominees have been recommended for the Board of Directors.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> COL Dan Dennison , USA (Retired) | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Col Thomas W. Parker , USMC (Retired) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> LCDR Nicole M. Manning , NOAA | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Sgt Karl P. Karl , USMC (Veteran) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | |

PROXY: An authorization or document empowering a person to act in place of another, as an agent or substitute, as in voting. Therefore, ONLY if you wish to have someone else vote for you, please select one of the following Vice-Chairmen as your proxy.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> MajGen William Bowden , USAF (Retired) | 1 st Vice Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> LTG Carmen Cavezza , USA (Retired) | 2 nd Vice Chairman |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> COL Janet Frasier Hale , USAR (Retired) | 3 rd Vice Chairman |

VOTER CERTIFICATION: (Please Print) **Member Number** _____ **Date** _____

 (Member's Name) (Signature)

 (Spouse's Name) (Spouse's Signature)

RESERVATION FORM

For members and guests attending the Annual Meeting, please complete this form marked with number of attendees and a check or money order (payable to NAUS) as payment for each reservation to the above address.

I will attend the Annual Meeting Luncheon. The check or money order (payable to NAUS) covering the total number of reservations is enclosed. The cost is \$20.00 per person that includes a seated full-course served luncheon. Payments must accompany the Reservation Form.

_____ **Number of luncheon reservations** _____ **Total amount of money enclosed**

BALLOTS AND RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 21, 2011.

Questions? Contact Mike Boone at 1-800-842-3451 or mboone@naus.org.
 Please invite others who are interested in military concerns to attend.

Bills in the 112th Congress

Throughout the 112th Congress, NAUS will identify and track certain bills that address issues important to our members. Over time the list will expand to include newly introduced bills replacing older or less comprehensive bills. We do this because of space limitations. While we support any and all bills that lead towards the achievement of our legislative goals, we place the most emphasis on the more comprehensive bills. Also appearing will be some bills for information purposes to readers interested in the issue so that they can make their position known to their congressional delegations.

The Library of Congress provides online information concerning Congress and the legislative process through a website named THOMAS, located at thomas.loc.gov. This is an easy to use tool to help you track bills in which you are interested but we do not list due to space limitations. THOMAS also provides access to other congressional committees for you to do independent research. The dates in each summary generally denote when the bill was introduced.

Defense

H.R. 24 – (209 Cosponsors), Rep. Walter B. Jones (R-NC), 01/05/11 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. Redesignate the Department of the Navy as the Department of the Navy and Marine Corps.

H.R. 493 – (4 Cosponsors), Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), 01/26/11 – Referred to House Armed Services Committee. To provide for forgiveness of certain overpayments of retired pay paid to deceased retired members of the Armed Forces following their death.

H.R. 1003 – (1 Cosponsor), Rep. Don Young (R-AK), 03/10/2011 – Referred to House Armed Services Military Personnel Subcommittee. The Gray Area Retiree, and Surviving Spouses Space-available Travel Equity Act would authorize space-available travel on military aircraft for reserve members, former members of a reserve component, and unremarried surviving spouses and dependents of such members and former members. **Companion Bill: S. 542** – (8 Cosponsors), Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK), 03/10/2011. Referred to Senate Armed Services Committee.

H.R. 1092 – (17 Cosponsors), Rep. Walter Jones (R-NC), 03/15/2011 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. The Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act would prohibit increases in TRICARE fees and copays for military health care.

H.R. 1285 – (4 Cosponsors), Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-MN), 03/31/11 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. The Military Health Care Affordability Act would prohibit increases in fees for military health care (TRICARE) before fiscal year 2014.

H.R. 1263 – (No Cosponsors), Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), 03/30/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to provide surviving spouses with certain protections relating to mortgages and mortgage foreclosures.

H.R. 1540 - (1 Cosponsor), Rep. Buck McKeon (R-CA), 4/14/11 - National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012. Passed by House on 5/26/11 and sent to Senate. **Companion Bill: S. 981** – (1 Cosponsor), Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI), 5/12/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services.

H.R. 1935 – (7 Cosponsors), Rep. Peter King (R-NY), 05/23/11 – Referred to House Armed Services Committee. The Supply Our Soldiers Act of 2011 would provide for free mailing privileges for personal correspondence and parcels sent to members of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in Iraq or Afghanistan.

H.R. 1968 – (4 Cosponsors), Rep. Steve Israel (D-NY), 05/24/11 – Referred to House Armed Services Committee. Provide for the

award of a military service medal to members of the Armed Forces who served honorably during the Cold War. **Companion Bill: S. 402** – (3 Cosponsors), Sen. Olympia Snowe (R-ME), 02/17/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services.

S. 67 - (No Cosponsors), Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), 01/25/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services. Permit former members of the armed forces who have a service-connected disability rated as total to travel on military aircraft in the same manner and to the same extent, as retired members of the armed forces are entitled to travel on such aircraft.

S. 68 – (No Cosponsors), Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-HI), 01/25/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services. Authorize certain disabled former prisoners of war to use Department of Defense commissary and exchange stores.

S. 472 – (3 Cosponsors), Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK), 03/03/2011 - Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services. The Service Members Permanent Change of Station Relief Act would increase the mileage reimbursement rate for members of the armed services during permanent change of station and to authorize the transportation of additional motor vehicles of members on change of permanent station to or from non-foreign areas outside the continental United States.

S. 490 – (2 Cosponsors), Sen. Daniel Akaka (D-HI), 03.03/2011 – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program.

Flag Amendment

H.J.RES.13 – (54 Cosponsors), Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), 01/07/11 – Referred to House Subcommittee on the Constitution. A proposal to amend the Constitution of the United States to give Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States. **Companion Bill: S.J. Res. 19** – (24 Cosponsors), Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) – Referred to Senate Committee on the Judiciary. A proposal to amend the Constitution of the United States to give Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

Guard & Reserve

H.R.152 – (27 Cosponsors), Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX), 01/05/11 – Referred to House Armed Services Committee. The National Guard Border Enforcement Act would utilize the National Guard to provide support for the border control activities of the United States Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security

Bills in the 112th Congress

H.R.179 - (3 Cosponsors), Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), 01/05/11 - Referred to House Armed Services Committee. Eliminate the requirement that certain former members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces be at least 60 years of age in order to be eligible to receive health care benefits.

H.R.181 - (61 Cosponsors), Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), 01/05/11 - Referred to House Armed Services Committee. The National Guardsmen and Reservists Parity for Patriots Act would ensure that members of the reserve components of the Armed Forces who have served on active duty or performed active service since September 11, 2001, in support of a contingency operation or in other emergency situations receive credit for such service in determining eligibility for early receipt of non-regular service retired pay.

H.R. 1283 - (36 Cosponsors), Rep. Tom Latham (R-IA), 03/31/2011 - Referred to House Armed Services Committee. The Reserve Retirement Deployment Credit Correction Act would eliminate the per-fiscal year calculation of days of certain active duty or active service used to reduce the minimum age at which a member of a reserve component of the uniformed services may retire for non-regular service.

MGIB & Educational Benefits

H.R.472 - (2 Cosponsors), Rep. Dan Boren (D-OK), 01/26/11 - Referred to House Committee on Education and the Workforce. The Impact Aid Fairness and Equity Act would reauthorize the Impact Aid Program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

H.R.1383 - (11 Cosponsors), Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL), 04/06/11 - Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Restoring GI Bill Fairness Act would temporarily preserve higher rates for tuition and fees for programs of education at non-public institutions of higher learning pursued by individuals enrolled in the Post-9/11 Educational Assistance Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs before the enactment of the Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Improvements Act of 2010. **Companion Bill: S. 745** - (5 cosponsors), Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY). Signed into law as PL-112-26 by the President on August 3, 2011.

Health Care & Medicare

H.R.409 - (18 Cosponsors), Rep. Mike Rogers (R-AL), 01/24/11 - Referred to House Armed Services Committee. The Chiropractic Health Parity for Military Beneficiaries Act requires the Secretary of Defense to develop and implement a plan to provide chiropractic health care services and benefits for certain new beneficiaries as part of the TRICARE program.

Social Security

H.R. 149 - (3 Cosponsors), Rep. Ron Paul (R-TX), 01/04/11 - Referred to House Ways and Means Committee. The Social Security Beneficiary Tax Reduction Act would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to repeal the 1993 increase in taxes on Social Security benefits.

H.R.456 - (31 Cosponsors), Rep. Charles Gonzalez (D-TX), 01/26/11 - Referred to the House Ways and Means, Education and Workforce Committees. The Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers Act would enable the establishment of a Consumer Price Index for Elderly Consumers to compute cost-of-living increases for Social Security benefits.

S.123 - (No Cosponsors), Sen. David Vitter (R-LA), 01/25/11 - Referred to Senate Budget Committee. The Social Security Lock-Box Act of 2011 would establish a procedure to safeguard the Social Security Trust Funds.

Taxes

H.R. 238 - (10 Cosponsors), Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), 01/07/11 - Referred to House Ways and Means Committee. Military Retiree Health Care Relief Act of 2011 would amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a refundable credit to military retirees for premiums paid for coverage under Medicare Part B.

S.113 - (No Cosponsors), Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), 01/25/11 - Referred to Senate Committee on Finance. The Public Servant Retirement Protection Act seeks to repeal the windfall elimination provision and protect the retirement of public servants.

Veterans

H.R. 23 - (49 Cosponsors), Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), 01/05/11 - Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2011 would direct the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs to establish the Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund to provide benefits to certain individuals who served in the United States merchant marine (including the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service) during World War II.

H.R.28 - (No Cosponsors), Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-NC), 01/05/11 - Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Improve the outreach activities of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

H.R.115 - (3 Cosponsors), Rep. Bob Filner (R-CA), 01/05/11 - Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The CHAMPVA Children's Protection Act of 2011 would increase the maximum age to 26 from 23 for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program.

H.R.329 - (13 Cosponsors), Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), 01/19/11 - Referred to House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The Chiropractic Care Available to All Veterans Act would require the provision of chiropractic care and services to veterans at all Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers and to expand access to such care and services.

H.R. 814 - (5 Cosponsors), Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA), 02/18/11 - Referred to House Committees on Ways and Means, Energy and Commerce, and Veterans' Affairs. The Medicare VA Reimbursement Act of 2011 would provide Medicare payments to Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities for items and services provided to Medicare-eligible veterans for non-service-connected conditions. (This is called Medicare Subvention)

S. 277 - (8 Cosponsors), Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), 02/03/11 -

Referred to Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. The Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act would furnish hospital care, medical services and nursing home care to veterans who were stationed at Camp Lejeune, N.C., while the water was contaminated at Camp Lejeune.

S. 491 – (11 Cosponsors), Sen. Mark Pryor (D-AR), 03/04/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act of 2011 would recognize the service in the reserve components of the Armed Forces by members who were never activated for Federal Service during their careers, by honoring them with status as veterans under law. **Companion Bill: H.R. 1025-** (49 Cosponsors), Rep. Tim Walz (D-MN), 03/10/2011 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

S. 1359 – (4 Cosponsors), Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT), 07/13/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Honoring Service through National Park Access Act. Make the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass available at a discount to members of the Armed Forces and veterans.

H.R. 1288 – (63 Cosponsors), Rep. G.K. Butterfield (R-NC), 03/31/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The World War II Merchant Mariner Service Act would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to accept additional documentation when considering the application for veteran status of an individual who performed service in the merchant marines during World War II.

H.R. 1742 – (23 Cosponsors), Rep. Brad Miller (D-NC), 05/05/11 – Referred to House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial affairs. The Jamey Enslinger Act would direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish a presumption of service connection for illnesses associated with contaminants in the water supply at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and to provide health care to family members of veterans who lived at Camp Lejeune while the water was contaminated.

H.R. 2002 – (1 Cosponsor), Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-UT), 05/26/11 – Referred to House Committee on Armed Services. Permit disabled or injured members of the Armed Forces to transfer Post 9/11 Educational Assistance benefits after retirement.

H.R. 2383 – (No Cosponsors), Rep. Bill Johnson (R-OH), 06/24/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The **"Modernizing Notice to Claimants Act."** Authorize the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to use electronic communication to provide required notice to claimants for benefits under laws administered by the Secretary. **NAUS Note: This would be optional for those veterans who choose to receive electronic communications.**

Survivors

H.R. 120 – (10 Cosponsors), Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-NC), 01/05/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Disabled Veterans' Surviving Spouses Home Loans Act would provide for eligibility for housing loans guaranteed by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the surviving spouses of certain totally disabled veterans.

H.R. 178 – (146 Cosponsors), Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), 01/05/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Military

Surviving Spouses Equity Act would repeal the requirement for reduction of survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan for military surviving spouses to offset the receipt of veterans Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

Companion Bill: S. 260 – (45 Cosponsors), Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL), 2/2/11 – Referred to Senate Armed Services Committee.

Pay & Compensation

H.R. 186 – (19 Cosponsors), Rep. Joe Wilson (R-SC), 01/05/11 – Referred to House Committees on Armed Services, Veterans' Affairs and Budget. Expand the eligibility for concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation to include all members of the uniformed services who are retired under chapter 61 of such title for disability, regardless of the members' disability rating percentage.

H.R. 303 – (65 Cosponsors), Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), 01/18/11 – Referred to House Veterans' Affairs and Armed Services Committees. The Retired Pay Restoration Act would permit additional retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability to receive both disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for their disability and either retired pay by reason of their years of military service or Combat-Related Special Compensation and to eliminate the phase-in period under current law with respect to such concurrent receipt. **Companion Bill: S. 344** (27 Cosponsors), Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV), 2/14/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Armed Services.

H.R. 333 – (139 Cosponsors), Rep. Sanford Bishop (R-GA), 01/19/11 – Referred to House Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees. The Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act would permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to eliminate the phase-in period for concurrent receipt and to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service.

H.R. 1407 – (8 Cosponsors), Rep. Jon Runyan (R-NJ), 04/06/11 – Referred to House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. The Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2011 would increase, effective as of December 1, 2011, the rates of compensation for veterans with service-connected disabilities and the rates of dependency and indemnity compensation for the survivors of certain disabled veterans. (Depends on CPI) Passed House 5/24/11 and sent to Senate. **Companion Bill: S. 894** (14 Cosponsors), Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) – Referred to Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee.

S. 696 – (5 Cosponsors), Sen. Jon Tester (D-MT) – 03/31/11 – Referred to Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Treat Vet Centers as Department of Veterans Affairs facilities for purposes of payments or allowances for beneficiary travel to Department facilities.

Miscellaneous

H.R. 1775 – (51 Cosponsors), Rep. Joseph Heck (R-NV), 05/05/11 – Referred to House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security. Amend title 18, United States Code, to establish a criminal offense relating to fraudulent claims about military service.



Legislative Update

By Rick Jones, Director;
and Mike Plumer, Deputy Legislative Director/Veterans Affairs

Basic Outline: The Debt Ceiling Deal

At the start of August and under threat of default, the President and Congress completed S. 365, the Budget Control Act of 2011, an oftentimes contentious debt ceiling deal that would make dramatic cuts in defense and poses a serious challenge to our national security.

Tough choices lay ahead.

In effect, it is a two-step plan. In the first step, the plan limits 2012 and 2013 discretionary spending below current levels in conjunction with spending reductions to reduce spending \$900 billion. And in the second step, the plan directs a joint committee of House and Senate members to find more than a trillion dollars in additional

cuts by Thanksgiving.

As part of the \$900 billion of first round cuts, the plan calls for \$350 billion in “security” related cuts over 10 years from the Pentagon, the State Department, Homeland Security Department, and the Veterans Affairs Department. For Defense, the directed cuts closely mirror the \$400 billion amount President Obama asked in April the Pentagon find over the next 12 years.

Under the second step, the debt ceiling law creates a bipartisan, bicameral Congressional Committee of six Democrats and six Republicans, three from the House and three from the Senate. The Special Committee is

charged to find an additional \$1.5 trillion through entitlement reform, cutting spending or raising revenues.

Under the plan, the Special Committee, often referred to as the “*Super Committee*,” is scheduled to present its plan by November 23 and Congress would vote on it by December 23.

In the event Congress and the President fail to agree with the joint committee package, the debt ceiling agreement sets in place an automatic across-the-board spending cut using a “*trigger*” provision to force dramatic reductions. The spending cuts would start in 2013 and be equally divided between defense and non-defense programs and exempt Social Security, Medicare and low-income programs.



At a meeting on Capitol Hill, NAUS President Jack Klimp (l) met with Congressman Mike Michaud (D-ME) to talk about veterans health care and related veterans issues. Rep. Michaud is the Ranking Member on the House Veterans' Affairs Health Subcommittee and a staunch champion of measures to improve care for veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones stands at the right.

The Debt Ceiling Defense Cuts

To explain the defense cuts in the debt deal, Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew said the “*security*” budget will actually be cut only \$4 billion next year and since the cuts come not only from Defense but also from State, foreign aid, intelligence, the Department of Homeland Security, Veterans Affairs, and some Department of Energy programs, the money would not come entirely from Defense.

The OMB Director said, “*Assuming roughly proportional cuts ...*”

approximately \$330 billion would be specifically from the Department of Defense.” These reductions would be made over ten years. Lew continued, “The agreement reduces discretionary security spending in Fiscal Year 2012 by \$4 billion as measured from Fiscal Year 2011, and then increases the reduced amount by \$2 billion in Fiscal Year 2013.”

While the Budget Director counsels that the projected “savings” are closely consistent with the President’s April call for \$400 billion in security cuts, it should be recalled that former Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned that the President’s cuts as proposed risked once again “hollowing out” the Armed Forces.

In an interview for the *Military Times* newspapers, NAUS President retired Marine LtGen Jack Klimp agreed with the former Secretary calling the package “a serious threat to the military and to the people who are serving, have served or will serve.”

In Capitol Hill testimony, senior military leaders also warned that massive cuts in defense spending will break the force. Army General Martin Dempsey, the current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and at the time a nominee for the position, cautioned that serious reductions would undermine defense policy and result in additional risks overseas and at home.

And the second part of the debt ceiling bill holds the potential for greater harm as another \$600 billion of automatic defense cuts may occur unless the new Special Committee, Congress and the President agree on \$1.5 trillion in new cuts next year.

House Armed Services Committee Chairman Howard “Buck” McKeon (R-CA) spoke for the majority of the defense community and in agreement with NAUS when he said, “There is

no scenario in the second phase of this proposal that does not turn a debt crisis into a national-security crisis.”

In a special message to Department of Defense personnel, Secretary of Defense Leon E. Panetta warned that the “trigger” cuts of \$600 billion in the second phase of the bill are dangerous and should they go into effect “would do real damage to our security, our troops and their families.”

Pressure to Cut Defense Spending

As outlined, the debt ceiling deal calls for cuts of nearly \$400 billion in



NAUS Board of Directors Co-Chair Bob Larson, MSgt, USAF(Ret)(c), visits with Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)(l), at the ground breaking for the new VA clinic in Austin, TX. At 184,000 sq. ft., it will be the largest VA clinic in the nation. Larson thanked the Senator for his support of VA funding, and reminded him of other NAUS legislative goals.

defense and security spending over the next 10 years and establishes a Special Congressional Committee to find an additional \$1.5 trillion in entitlement reform, spending reductions or increased revenues.

Over the coming months, defense spending faces a number of serious challenges to readiness, personnel and related programs.

A former assistant defense secretary working at the Center for American Progress insists, however, “The proposed deal does not go far enough in reigning in a military budget which in real terms is higher than at any time since World War II.”

In fact, NAUS finds a significant segment of Congress which supports cutting defense, is calling for deeper reductions and is looking at various options to further trim the Pentagon’s budget to hold spending steady on domestic programs.

Defense Spending as a Percentage of GDP

In historic terms, our federal government spends only a small portion on defense. The base budget this year provides \$530 billion, 3.5 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 4.5 percent when the expense of the

Iraq and Afghanistan wars are included. During the Cold War defense spending was 7.5 percent of our national economy as expressed by GDP. Defense was 6.3 percent at the height of the Reagan buildup in 1986.

As former Defense Secretary Robert Gates said, “The defense budget is not the cause of this country’s fiscal woes.” In testimony Gates added, the Pentagon would have to add approximately 2 to 3 percent simply to maintain its current force but could tighten its belt and survive on 1 percent growth. Instead, the

Pentagon faces the possibility of funding regression under the debt ceiling deal.

Pattern of Ignoring Obvious Areas of Wasteful Spending

For years NAUS has presented information on fraud and waste in an assortment of government run programs. Yet as we begin to see reductions in defense spending, little to no federal action has been taken to shift attention to these thefts and mismanagements of government programs.

According to the most recent report from the Government Accountability

Office (GAO), federal agencies reported improper payments estimated at \$125.4 billion, an increase of \$16.2 billion from the \$109.2 billion estimate in fiscal 2009. The GAO defines improper payments as “overpayments, underpayments, and payments that were not adequately documented,” as well as fraud.

The \$125 billion in improper payments came from 70 different programs across 20 federal agencies. GAO said ten programs accounted for 94 percent of all improper payments in 2010, led by Medicare, which reported \$34.3 billion in improper payments – mainly because of medically unnecessary services and insufficient documentation.

Federal programs making the “top ten” list are as follows:

1. Medicare reported \$34.3 billion in improper payments.
2. Medicaid (Health and Human Services) reported \$22.5 billion.
3. Unemployment Insurance (Labor Dept.) reported \$17.5 billion.
4. Earned Income Tax Credit (Treasury Dept.) reported \$16.9 billion.
5. Medicare Advantage (Health and Human Services) reported \$13.6 billion.
6. Supplemental Security Income (Social Security Administration) reported \$4.8 billion.
7. Old Age Survivors’ and Disability Insurance (Social Security Administration) reported \$3.2 billion.
8. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (Agriculture Dept.) reported \$2.2 billion.
9. National School Lunch (Agriculture Dept.) reported \$1.5 billion.
10. Pell Grants (Education Dept.) reported \$1.0 billion.

According to GAO, government agencies offer many different reasons why they incorrectly sent a percentage of their budgets out the door erroneously, yet the errors of wasteful government

spending continue year after year with little correction.

NAUS urges Congress and the Administration to focus on fiscal responsibility in the vast array of programs under its operation, to protect a strong national defense and to accept its obligations as promised to those who serve and have served in America’s uniformed services. The price the nation pays to those who serve is no where near the value our country has received the freedom they have protected.

Senate Works to Bring National Defense Authorization Act to Vote

With the end of its August recess, the Senate needs to pick up its pace of work as it faces the start of a new fiscal year, Fiscal Year 2012, which begins 1 October. There is much yet to complete, including the National Defense Authorization Act and the Defense Appropriations bill for FY 2012.

As readers know, the House passed its version of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act (H.R. 1540) in June. The Senate has yet to act on its version though the Committee on Armed Services filed it bill ready for floor action on June 22, three months ago.

Similar to the House bill, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), led by Chairman Carl Levin (D-MI) and John McCain (R-AZ), has proposed an authorization of \$553 billion for the Department of

Defense base budget, \$118 billion for overseas contingency operations and \$18 billion for the Department of Energy atomic energy defense programs.

Among the many NAUS endorsed provisions, the proposed measure contains a number of major provisions to improve the quality of life of our dedicated troops and their families. Like the House bill, the Senate Committee has proposed a 1.6 percent pay raise for active duty troops and extends for another year authority to pay certain bonuses and allowances to military personnel, including reserve forces, healthcare professionals, and enlisted members and officers. Without extension, such agreements are scheduled to expire Dec. 31, 2011.

NAUS continues its push toward eliminating the offset in concurrent



Following a visit to NAUS chapters in Southern New Jersey, NAUS President Jack Klimp (l) visited the Rayburn House Office Building to talk with Mark A. Aitken, II, Military Legislative Assistant for Rep. Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ). NAUS is continuing its successful work with Rep. LoBiondo and the Department of Veterans Affairs for improved access to health care for veterans in Southern Jersey.

receipt of disability compensation and retired pay, but the Senate bill does not at this time advance the issue. It is likely, however, that the Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid will attach language to the bill on this key change when it comes to the floor.

Unfortunately, the bill does not end the reduction of payments under the Survivor Benefit Plan by the

amount a survivor receives in Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. NAUS is informed, however, that Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) will offer an amendment to advance this important policy when the bill comes to the floor.

In the House bill, there is a provision to increase Special Survivors Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), raising payment to \$163 from \$90 in fiscal 2013, to \$200 in 2014, \$215 in 2015, \$282 in 2016 and \$314 for fiscal 2017. This provision, which remains far short of the more than \$1,150 deducted monthly under the current SBP/DIC offset, would compete in conference with the Nelson amendment.

Despite every effort from our membership, the Senate Committee on Armed Services did not, repeat, not stop the Pentagon's proposed

Without change in the SASC position, there will be few details left to be worked out in conference on changes in TRICARE Prime and the prescription program. As readers know, a similar proposal is included in the House Armed Services bill (H.R. 1540).

As we go to press, the fight now goes to the Senate, which is preparing to act on its version of the NDAA in mid-September. Even though the Senate Committee has proposed increases, nothing is yet set in stone. We urge you to continue to let your two Senators know how you feel about increases in TRICARE fees.

Proposal Advances to Increase TRICARE Prime Fees 13 percent

NAUS has consistently opposed the 13 percent increase in TRICARE Prime fees for working age retirees, as originally proposed by the Department of Defense.

In a NAUS survey, National Association for Uniformed Services members overwhelmingly responded with appeals to "hold the line" on TRICARE fees for retirees and active duty families.

Though 25 percent said they might be willing to pay more, a vast majority of members agreed that TRICARE is an earned benefit and practically all members—93 percent—said keeping costs as they are is a way for the government to honor its promises of lifetime health care, particularly when the country is at War.

The 13 percent increase is called modest, but it is important to understand that **more than 70 percent of uniformed services retirees receive a retirement of less than \$30,000 a year. While the amount is barely above the poverty level for a family of two adults, once food, mortgage and necessities are paid, there is little left for discretionary use.**

Our military retirees are not "fat cats" living off the public welfare. The benefits to which they are legally entitled are not the product of some social welfare program, as some might argue. **Rather they are yet another cost of freedom that unfortunately is too often forgotten.**

TRICARE Program Ends Year in Surplus, Funds Shifted to Unrelated Purposes

After hearing the secretary of defense and the chairman of the joint chiefs say repeatedly, for more than a year, that the rising cost of TRICARE was crippling our nation's national security, NAUS discovered at the end of the year that the House has proposed to use \$330 million of unspent TRICARE medical funds to pay for 22 congressionally directed medical research programs, many of which are unrelated to the Pentagon's traditional research of battlefield medicine or related military study.

NAUS fully recognizes that using unobligated or unspent balances from previous years to pay for new programs is a typical way of paying for programs being added to the annual defense budget. **But as NAUS President Jack Klimp said in a *Military Times* interview, it is hard to square the Pentagon's complaint about high medical costs if there was money leftover in TRICARE accounts.**

"Despite the fact that the TRICARE program is spending less than appropriated, certain leaders in Congress have agreed with the Department of



At a Capitol Hill event, House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee Chairman Joe Wilson (R-SC)(r) stood with NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones. Earlier, Rep. Wilson spoke with Jones about the tight schedule for conclusion of this year's defense policy bill and shared his strong interest in NAUS related defense matters.

13 percent increase in TRICARE Prime enrollment fees. The Committee also opened the door for the Department to begin automatic fee increases beginning in 1 October 2012 at an amount equal to the retiree cost of living adjustment rates. The Committee bill also would allow sharp increases in pharmacy copays as requested by the Department.

Defense to increase TRICARE Prime fees 13 percent next year,” Klimp said, referring to language in both the House and Senate versions of the 2012 defense authorization bill.

How these unused TRICARE funds are used does not negate the fact that DoD told us TRICARE was breaking its back. Whereas, the actual fact is TRICARE never spent the money it was allocated.



Legislative Director Rick Jones prepares to deliver NAUS testimony at a Senate hearing on defense appropriations. The morning hearing had not yet started.

Deficit Reduction, Possible Change to Lower COLAs

Discussions on the size of the national debt have brought forward a series of articles, proposals and studies on new plans to overhaul the Pentagon retirement system and to change the calculation for determining the annual cost-of-living adjustment to Social Security, veterans disability compensation and military retired pay.

Discussion on changing the COLA has centered mainly on an option presented by the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office. In effect, the proposal would link the cost-of-living adjustment to a new standard that adjusts for changes in a consumer's behavior. The current COLA calculation would be adjusted downward to reflect the fact that as prices rise consumers buy alternative products to replace higher priced goods. If enacted,

such a change would mean a reduction of approximately 0.25 percent less than what the current method provides.

Deficit Reduction, Possible Changes in the DoD Retirement System

Another proposal would reform the Pentagon's retirement system, ending the 20-year system and establishing a corporate-style benefit program that provides matching contributions rather than paying a future monthly retirement.

The Defense Business Board, made up mostly of civilian businessmen with little direct military experience, presented an overhaul plan in late July. The Board's plan would radically alter the military retirement system.

In sum the plan would scrap the 20-year model and replace it with a 401(k)-type account, giving troops the choice on how to invest their retirement account. The board recommends that the plan would be payable without penalty at age 60 to 65, similar to Social Security. Early withdrawal would require payment of a penalty, except for education, health care or other emergencies.

To date, NAUS members, without exception, have disagreed with virtually every part of the Business Board proposal. One member called it an unworkable solution to a manufactured problem. The most common response says the Board's plan is no better than any other investment portfolio and, most important, it does not enhance retention. *"If you replace or offset traditional retirement pay with a saving plan,"* writes a commentator to NAUS, *"the real incentive will be to leave early rather than later."*

NAUS is particularly concerned about the potential loss of mid-level officers, NCOs and Petty Officers who are so critical to service leadership, experience, know-how and

training so vital to our national security posture. Why stay 20 or 30 years when you can leave at 5, 10, or 15 and still get some retirement?

Prior experience with radical reform of the retirement system is not an unknown.

In 1986, Congress passed, over the objection of the Department of Defense, the Military Retirement Reform Act of 1986 (known as the REDUX system). REDUX adversely affected midcareer decisions and, effectively, undermined retention. Congress repealed the program when, 12 years later, the Joint Chiefs of Staff made repeal of REDUX their number one readiness priority.

Defense Commissary System Under Attack

Several proposals are in discussion that would eliminate the \$1.3 billion-a-year subsidy that supports the Defense Commissary system of 252 grocery stores on military bases worldwide.

One proposal would phase out the subsidy over a period of years to allow commissaries to become self-sufficient. Another would consolidate the commissary and exchange programs.

NAUS firmly believes that, if implemented, either of these proposal would eventually lead to the demise of the commissary benefit, costing military families more for the products they now buy at commissaries. These types of plans call for increased prices to compensate for the loss of appropriated subsidy, driving patrons to shop elsewhere.

Medicare Physician Payment Reform, the "Doc Fix"

If Congress fails to act before December, Medicare is scheduled cut physician payments by nearly

30 percent on Jan. 1, 2012. These reductions in physicians' payments for treating Medicare and TRICARE patients would occur at a time when medical practice costs are rising.

To avoid the payment reductions, Congress has passed legislation to reverse the physician payment cut in every year it would have occurred, passing legislation 5-times last year alone. These actions were taken because cuts in a doctor's Medicare/TRICARE payment are required due to a fatally flawed payment update formula, passed in prior Medicare law, called the Sustainable Growth Rate, or SGR.

Without appropriate changes in the current policy that determines a physician's payment rate for Medicare/TRICARE treatment, the Medicare payment cuts to physicians will damage access to care for military retirees, their families and America's seniors.

NAUS is working closely with a number of other military, veterans and medical associations to see that payment decision are based on annual increases in practices costs instead of the SGR. Clearly, a "Doc Fix" needs to be ready before the end of the year. Prior uniformed service personnel and their families who have earned the health care benefit should not face a broken promise.

Open Homosexuality In Uniformed Services

The Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010 requires that before the law takes effect, the President, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff transmit to Congress written certification by each that statutory prerequisites for certification have been met.

Those prerequisites include confirmation that the Department of Defense has prepared the necessary policies and regulations to implement

repeal and that those policies and the implementation are consistent with standards of military readiness, military effectiveness, unit cohesion and recruiting and retention.

In late July, Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen, each signed and transmitted to the President written confirmation that, in their judgment, the statutory prerequisites for certification have been met. According to the Pentagon, their written confirmation was based on consultation with and advice and input from the service chiefs, service secretaries and combatant commanders, who unanimously reported that the services were now prepared for repeal.

Those two written instruments were transmitted to the White House July 21. The next afternoon, Secretary Panetta and Chairman Mullen met with President Obama. The President, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff all signed the certification document, and that document has now been transmitted to Congress.

Per the requirements of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell Repeal Act of 2010, passed after the November 2010 elections in the lame duck 111th Congress, the submittal of the certification starts a 60-day waiting period until the ban is lifted. Specifically, that date will be Tuesday, September 20.

NAUS has serious concerns about lifting the ban. We believe "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" is working well. With our men and women in uniform fighting on three fronts, serving under the stress of combat and war deployments, now is not the right time to lift the ban and generate additional and unnecessary stress on our service members and their families.

NAUS is proud of our troops, and we respect their mission at home and overseas. Changes in the standards of conduct, revised

eligibility for military benefits and the unanswered question about compatibility of open homosexuality pose the potential to disrupt the best fighting force in the world, especially in wartime.

NAUS continues to believe that whatever one's personal opinion, the single guiding principle should be only what's best for combat readiness and military effectiveness.

Walter Reed Army Medical Center Merger

A matter of great interest to The National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS) is the plan to realign and consolidate military health facilities in the National Capital Region.

Under BRAC deadlines, approved in 2005, the plan includes the realignment of all highly specialized and sophisticated medical services currently located at Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, DC, to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, MD, and the closing of the existing Walter Reed by Sept. 15, 2011.

To achieve a smooth transition, NAUS believes that Congress must keep close review on the situation and stay ready to consider additional



Rep. Randy Forbes, Chairman of the House Armed Forces Readiness Subcommittee, discusses NAUS shared concerns about the potential for severe cuts in the defense budget. The Virginia Republican told NAUS that reductions in the defense budget would force major changes and carry with them serious risk. The message is clearly understood. NAUS members know the services cannot reduce capabilities without adding operational stress to the force.

resources for WRAMC to maintain its base operations support and medical services to maintain uninterrupted care of our catastrophically wounded soldiers and Marines as they receive needed treatment.

The last thing military medicine needs right now is a big mess over the care of our

wounded warriors and pushing more retirees into the private sector for surgery and care at double the cost. And most important to NAUS, it is the last thing our soldiers and Marines and their families need.

Recent reports indicate that doctors at Walter Reed Army Medical Center fear that the newly expanded medical center in Bethesda, Maryland, and the new community hospital at Fort Belvoir in Fairfax County, Virginia, are unready for the move.

According to these reports, a number of operating rooms and patient services are not in condition to allow transferring patients and staff from Walter Reed. Yet, top medical officials continue the push to keep the September deadline.

Despite claims from top medical officials that the new hospitals are ready, sources familiar with the move say there is little room for error in the military's complex plan to schedule surgeries at as many as four different sites in Maryland and Virginia.

"They are stretched to the limit with this damn self-inflicted deadline," said a Walter Reed doctor who asked not to be named.

"If we don't have the patient facilities to support these guys, that's a real problem," according to a congressional



NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones (r) proudly stands with His Excellency, Duk Soo Han, Republic of Korea Ambassador to the United States, before the Korean War Memorial at the 58th anniversary Armistice Day Commemoration and Memorial Ceremony on the Mall in Washington, DC. NAUS participated in the remembrance of the Korean War and delivered a Floral Wreath in remembrance of those who served and those who paid a great price for freedom.

staff aide familiar with the military's plans. *"Wounded-warrior care, that's the entire mission of the military's medical care in the capital region."*

The Department of Defense has spent almost \$2.5 billion on the two new hospitals, which must open by 15 September.

By that date, Walter Reed in the District will be shuttered. About two-thirds of the hospital's patients will have moved to Bethesda and the rest to Fort Belvoir.

Vice Adm. John Mateczun, commander of the Joint Task Force National Capital Region Medical told the *Military Times* that the combined operating room capabilities at Bethesda and Fort Belvoir would be capable of handling treatment of all those now at Walter Reed. And the commander recently said he expects everything to go without a hitch.

Changes to Post 9/11 GI Bill

The VA is reaching out to inform veterans of recent changes made by Congress to the Post 9/11 GI Bill that take effect in 2011.

Allison Hickey, Under Secretary for Benefits, said, *"The Post 9/11 GI Bill is incredibly important because it reduces the financial burdens of higher*

education so that veterans have an opportunity to achieve their education goals. VA believes it is important for veterans to be aware of changes to the GI Bill this year and learn more about how these changes may affect them."

She also said, *"Today, more than 537,000 students have*

received over \$11.5 billion in GI Bill benefits to help them take charge of their future."

Changes to the Post-9/11 GI Bill which began August 1, include paying the actual net cost of all public in-State tuition and fees, rather than basing payments upon the highest in-State tuition and fee rates for every State; capping private and foreign tuition at \$17,500 per academic year; and ending payments during certain school breaks, to preserve veterans entitlement for future academic semesters. Also, certain students attending private schools in select States can now continue to receive benefits at the same rate payable during the previous academic year.

Beginning Oct. 1, eligible individuals will be able to use the Post-9/11 GI Bill for programs such as non-college degrees, on-the-job training, and correspondence courses, and they will be eligible to receive a portion of the national monthly housing allowance rate when enrolled only in distance learning courses.

VA is implementing the latest round of changes to the Post 9/11 GI Bill and is continuing to process fall 2011 enrollment certifications. Outreach by VA has helped to increase participation by colleges and universities in

the Yellow Ribbon program, which helps students avoid out-of-pocket costs that may exceed the benefit.

Today, more than 2,600 schools are participating in the Yellow Ribbon program.

Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee

The Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee recently approved several bills to improve quality of life for veterans and their families. One bill, S. 277, the Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act, introduced by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Ranking Member Sen. Richard Burr (R-NC), would provide medical care for Marines and, in certain circumstances, their families,

pay for medical care, the bill calls for consolidating the commissary system with the exchange systems, resulting in one military resale system.

This funding proposal would seriously damage commissaries and exchanges. Stores will go out of business and leave military families with no benefit and higher costs. DoD has proposed, several times in the past, to combine exchange systems only to have numerous studies prove that it would not work. NAUS looks forward to working with Congress to find an alternative funding source.

In light of massive negative reactions from NAUS and most military and veterans groups, Sen. Burr is taking another look at the funding source. We are working with the Senator and

much easier for wounded and disabled military members when they leave service. Formerly, both the DoD and VA each did their own physical evaluation, many times just days apart. IDES eliminates one physical exam to more rapidly decide disability cases.

However, more and more evidence is showing the new system still has a way to go. At a recent Senate Veterans' Affairs committee hearing it was pointed out in at least one case the new system cannot speedily handle the most obvious of cases.

Mrs. Crystal Nicely, whose Marine husband Todd lost both arms and legs in Afghanistan in 2010, told the Committee while IDES *"is supposed to be a faster, more efficient way to complete the evaluations and transition service members, that has not been our experience."* For example, Nicely said, *"A very simple narrative summary of how my husband was injured sat on someone's desk for almost 70 days waiting for a very simple approval."*

Other anecdotal evidence NAUS has heard also points out that the new system is not exactly working the way both DoD and VA say it is. **Why would a severely wounded warrior, after having both arms and legs lost to combat have to wait one extra day, much less 70? NAUS is pressing the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees to exercise more rigorous oversight over this new system, so it will work as envisioned and "advertised."**

Veterans Jobs

At an August 5 press event held at the Washington Navy Yard, President Obama appealed to American business to hire returning veterans. To help prepare veterans for the job market, the President also directed the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense to develop a *"Reverse Boot Camp"* to help returning veterans find



House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller (R-FL-1) takes a moment to stand outside the Cannon House Office Building with NAUS Legislative Director Rick Jones (right) following a luncheon meeting to discuss veterans and military related issues before Congress. The HVAC Chairman is also a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee. The First District is home to Naval Air Station Pensacola, to Eglin Air Force Base, to Hurlburt Field, to Naval Technical Training Center Corry Station, and to Naval Air Station Whiting Field.

who served at Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base, North Carolina, and were exposed to contaminated water for many years. Earlier this year both DoD and the VA testified in opposition to this bill.

NAUS heartily applauds committee efforts to correct a tremendous wrong, however, we are concerned about the provision in S. 277 that provides the funding that pays for proposed care. In order to

a number of other associations in discussion to find an acceptable alternative source of funding, so those who have been harmed by exposure to toxic chemicals can be helped.

Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES)

IDES is a system, started as a trial in 2007, created to enhance the physical evaluation system and make it

a meaningful career path following their service.

The Department of Labor reported in June that one million veterans were unemployed and more than 600,000 of these veterans were between the age of 35 and 64. **NAUS welcomes the President's new emphasis on veterans employment. It is critical that every effort is taken to improve the employment outlook.**

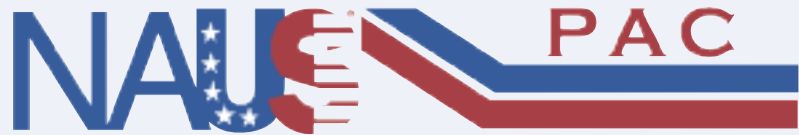
A few days before the President's announcement, House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Rep. Jeff Miller (R-FL) introduced legislation (*H.R. 2433*) called *The Veterans Opportunity to Work Act (VOW)*. The Miller bill, reported out of Committee and awaiting further action, would provide unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 a time-limited educational benefit to enroll at a community college for the training and development of skills necessary to compete in today's job market.

In addition, Chairman Miller has introduced NAUS endorsed legislation to assist small business in hiring veterans. The bill, called the Tax Credit to Hire Veterans (*H.R. 2443*), is closely similar to the President's call for legislation to provide a tax credit to business that hire disabled veterans.

Commenting on the President's initiatives, Chairman Miller said, "I am delighted that President Obama is willing to join Congress to stem veteran unemployment."

The Chairman noted the importance of making a firm commitment "to institute policies and programs that reduce veteran unemployment to less than 5 percent over the next two years."

NAUS welcomes the work of Chairman Miller and the members of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee to provide training assistance to veterans and reduce the unacceptably high unemployment in the number of men and women who have served in uniform.



The National Association for Uniformed Services is the only military service organization that has an active Political Action Committee (PAC). The NAUS PAC allows our organization to stand out from other associations and through your contributions allows us important one-on-one access to members of Congress.

NAUS PAC is a non-partisan, voluntary, non-profit organization that allows NAUS members to participate in the political process by supporting federal candidates seeking re-election, who by virtue of their voting records, have supported military and veterans issues. Candidates seeking PAC support are assessed on their past support and current positions and their willingness to work with the NAUS legislative team. We also entertain requests from our chapters who wish to support a candidate in their local areas.

NAUS PAC has traditionally asked our members for support during every other year during the major election cycles. The next major fund drive for NAUS-PAC will be in 2012 for the Presidential election cycle. However, we do gratefully accept contributions from our members anytime. **If you are NOT a NAUS member we cannot accept your PAC donation and it will be returned to you.**

WHY SUPPORT NAUS-PAC?

Financial support of the PAC allows your NAUS Legislative Team the access to meet with Representatives and Senators face to face in order to present our positions on various issues or to thank them for their previous and current support of our legislative goals. It allows all NAUS members the opportunity to participate in the political process. Along with the many emails, letters and phone calls your voluntary contributions make a difference and we appreciate your help. Together we are doing very good things and supporting your PAC helps tremendously.

National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day Commemoration and Memorial Ceremonies

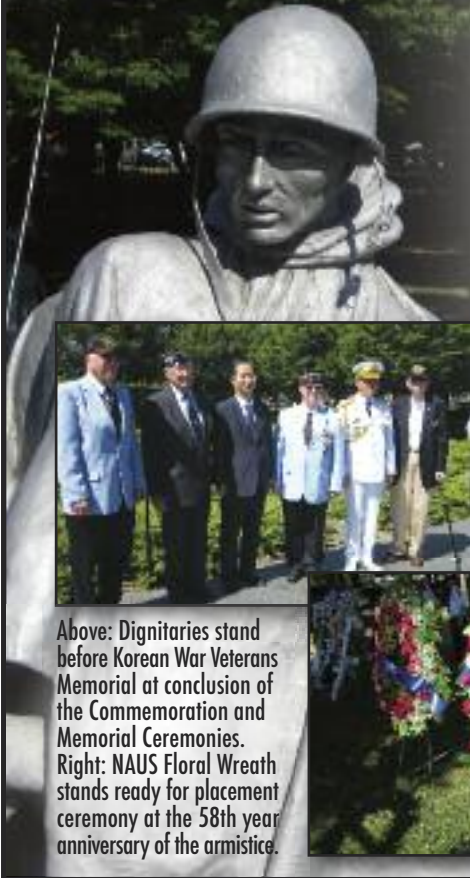
NAUS was privileged July 27 to attend the National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day Commemoration and Memorial Ceremonies held at the Korean War Veterans Memorial in the Nation's Capitol.

The Armistice Day's celebration marked the date 58 years ago in 1953 when an armistice – a temporary cease-fire by agreement of warring parties to stop fighting – was signed to end the hostilities which had begun on 25 June 1950.

NAUS presented a Floral Wreath to remember those who gave their lives and to honor all those who took part in that conflict under our flag.

The three-year commitment America gave to the Korean people to halt the spread of communist aggression cost the lives of 36,940 American forces and wounded 92,134.

Truly, as the Memorial on the Mall reads, *"Freedom is not Free,"* and we are proud to remember those who served in the *"Forgotten War."*



Above: Dignitaries stand before Korean War Veterans Memorial at conclusion of the Commemoration and Memorial Ceremonies. Right: NAUS Floral Wreath stands ready for placement ceremony at the 58th year anniversary of the armistice.



NAUS DISTINGUISHED WARRIOR AWARD

The NAUS President established the Distinguished Warrior Award (DWA) in 1998. The purpose of this award is to recognize NAUS members who have made significant, lasting contributions to the military/veteran community while fighting to save promised, earned benefits and maintaining a strong national defense. Every year since, through 2005, a worthy recipient has been awarded the DWA.

Within his first 30 days as president, General Klump decided to revitalize this award along with a few changes. Instead of the president deciding who the recipient would be, a committee has been formed to determine the winner based on a new set of written criteria. The committee is comprised of an officer and enlisted member from the Board's Executive Committee, a Regional Vice President and the Chapter Manager from the NAUS headquarters.

The following precepts are included as part of the evaluation process:

- Significant lobbying/grassroots activity with members of Congress and their staffs
- Demonstrated leadership at the Chapter, Board or RVP level.
- Significant impact on the Association's fund development activities.
- Member Recruitment.

The NAUS Board Co-Chairman will present the DWA each November during the Annual Membership meeting held at the Fort Belvoir Officers' Club. The winner will receive an engraved Distinguished Warrior Trophy and his or her name will be engraved on this large trophy.

The deadline for submission is Oct 15, 2011 and anyone can nominate a member for the 2011 award. To do so, send a one page letter showing the committee why this person should received the award. Please list the accomplishments, community service, offices held and recruiting numbers. **Send all nominations to Director of Chapter Management Jack Chmielewski by mail to the NAUS Headquarters or by email at jackski@naus.org. Please give Jack a call at 703-750-1342, Ext 1005 if you need help or advice on what to send.**



ACTIVE DUTY DOWNLOAD

2012 Pay Raise Outlook: 1.6 Percent

The President requested a 1.6% military pay raise for 2012, and the House-passed version of the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) would provide it. The Senate version of the NDAA also includes a 1.6% pay raise, but while it has been approved by the Armed Services Committee, the bill has yet to be acted on by the full Senate. **NAUS expects the 1.6% pay raise to pass. Future raises may have a tougher time depending on the outcome of budget and deficit reduction talks or legislation.**



Congress Considering Tougher Protections for Military Sexual Assault Victims

The Defense Sexual Trauma Response, Oversight and Good Governance Act, introduced in the House by Rep. Niki Tsongas (D-MA) and Rep. Michael Turner (R-OH), was incorporated into the House version of the FY2012 NDAA passed in May. Similar legislation was introduced in the Senate by Sen. John Kerry (D-MA) and Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) and has been referred to the Senate Armed Services Committee. The legislation is aimed at addressing a number of findings contained in the Defense Department's 2009 Task Force Report on Sexual Assault, which found that many victims of sexual assault did not feel they received sufficient support after the alleged crime. The Defense Department has estimated that there were some 19,000 alleged cases of sexual assault last year, based on survey results, but only 3,158 were reported. One of the key provisions in the legislation would give victims the right to seek a transfer from their base or unit. The legislation would also establish that communications between victims and their advocates, including calls to the 24-hour sexual assault response hotline maintained by DoD, are considered privileged. (Currently, such conversations can be subpoenaed and used in court.) The legislation would require that DoD provide victims of sexual assault access to a military lawyer who can represent their interests – now, defendants are guaranteed such access, but victims are not.

New Program for Military Spouses Employment

A formal career matching program launched this summer gives military spouses more access to steady and portable employment. The Military Spouse Employment Partnership, a partnership between the Defense Department and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, is designed to help wives and husbands of servicemembers with long-term career opportunities. According to the Partnership, more than 25% of military spouses are unemployed and looking for work, and those who do work earn 25% less than their civilian counterparts. Under the program, companies agree to target jobs for military spouses and offer employment that can continue when servicemembers are transferred. When the program launched at the end of June, 72 companies across many different industries were participating (including WalMart, Booz Allen Hamilton, Northrop Grumman, The Home Depot, Lowe's, DISH Network Corporation, CVS, Hyatt, CACI, AAFES, Amazon, TJX, 3M, Dell, Verizon, McKesson, KGB, AT&T, Kelly Services, Manpower, Inc., and many more). The program, an expansion of an Army program in place for several years, features a website that allows spouses to search job openings of partnership companies and for employers to sign up for the program: www.msepjobs.com.

Unified Medical Command Would Save \$460 million a Year

According to a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report, the Defense Department could save \$460 million a year – more than double the anticipated “savings” DoD estimates raising under-65 military retirees’ TRICARE fees 13% in 2012 will yield – by consolidating the military health system into a single joint medical command. That idea is No. 2 on a list of 34 recommendations for eliminating duplicative functions and saving money across the federal government, compiled by the GAO in this report. Since the 1940s, at least 15 studies have addressed the structure of the military health care system, the most recent in 2005 by the GAO, and all but three favored a unified system, with the others also calling for stronger central authority to improve management and coordination among the services. But the calls for a joint medical command have never gone anywhere because of resistance from the individual Services. In this report, the GAO says the concept has gained new importance in light of the deepening federal budget crisis and the military medical health system’s soaring annual costs, up from \$19 billion a decade ago to more than \$50 billion today.

Military Running Shoes Made in China?

Since World War II, servicemembers have worn American-made apparel from head to toe – all government-procured uniform items are required to be made in a U.S. factory. This provision on military apparel, known as the Berry Amendment, dates to 1941, even though the law has been revised several times since. Now a policy change made two years ago that exempted athletic shoes from the made-in-America procurement process has some members of Congress concerned. Since 2009, most Services have been providing members with a voucher to buy their athletic shoes themselves. The Congressional delegation from New England, home to the only major company still manufacturing athletic shoes in the United States (Boston-based New Balance) wants to know why, and was able to include a requirement for the Defense Department to explain the policy change in the 2011 NDAA. The Pentagon’s interim report issued in March said the Secretary of Defense or one of the branches can exempt an item from the made-in-America provision if the item can’t be bought in the quantity, quality or price that the military demands. The Army, Air Force, and Navy provide vouchers for athletic footwear, though the Marine Corps neither issues shoes nor provides vouchers. Athletic footwear of course is a highly personal choice, and according to industry sources, the U.S. is dependent on imports in the footwear sector much more so than in many other apparel sectors. But Rep. Michael Capuano (D-MA) said of the Pentagon’s position, *“Whether it is or it isn’t [a misreading of the law], it certainly flies in the face of the spirit of it.”* And Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), with three New Balance factories in her State, said, *“There’s nothing that prevents any of the other shoe manufactures from re-basing their operations in the United States if they want to compete for this market. As long as the Berry Amendment is on the books, from my perspective it ought to be complied with.”*



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Navy Allows “Barefoot” Shoes for PT

Sailors may now wear minimalist footwear with the Navy Physical Training Uniform during command, unit or individual physical training and the semi-annual physical readiness test. NAVADMIN 238/11 authorized the wearing of this type of footwear following a review of the potential benefits and impacts in the fleet. Minimalist or so-called “barefoot” shoes are designed to allow the foot to function naturally without added support or cushioning found in most athletic shoes. Specific examples of this type of footwear cited in the NAVADMIN are Vibram Five Fingers, Nike Free Shoes, Vivo Barefoot Shoes, Inov-8 Shoe, and FeelMax.



Use an Active Duty Alert to Protect Against Identity Theft

Protect yourself and your family while deployed by placing an “active duty alert” on your credit report. The service, recommended by the Federal Trade Commission, requires creditors to verify identity before additional credit is issued. The alert is placed on the servicemember’s credit report, so a business will see the alert before issuing credit. With the servicemember deployed and unable to verify identity, no credit can be opened. The active duty alert is effective for one year, and a request can be made to remove the alert sooner or extend it. A personal representative can place or remove the alert as well. For more information on the active duty alert, how to activate or remove the alert, and other information on identify theft prevention, visit <http://ftc.gov/idtheft/military>.

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New NAUS Member Benefit - Excelsior College Partnership

A new education partnership between NAUS and Excelsior College, a nonprofit, accredited distance education college in Albany, NY, provides NAUS members with access to reduced tuition and fees for undergraduate degree programs. In addition, the education agreement benefits extend to NAUS members' spouses who wish to begin or complete their college education. Learn more online: www.Excelsior.edu/National-Association-for-Uniformed-Services.



Army Ranger Awarded Medal of Honor

President Obama awarded SFC Leroy Petry the Medal of Honor on July 13 at a ceremony at the White House. It's the second time since the Vietnam War that a living servicemember was awarded the honor for an ongoing conflict.

Petry received the award for his action in combat in Paktia, Afghanistan, in May 2008. Petry was shot through both legs and lost his right hand after throwing aside a live grenade, saving the lives of fellow Army Rangers.



Marine to Receive Medal of Honor

Pentagon officials recently said that President Obama will award the Medal of Honor to a Marine who braved enemy fire in Afghanistan in a bid to find and retrieve three missing Marines and a Navy corpsman.

Dakota Meyer, who left active duty in June 2010, will be the first living Marine in 41 years to be awarded the nation's highest award for valor.



NAUS salutes SFC Petry and Sgt Meyer.

Are you socially networked?

Become a NAUS Facebook fan and follow NAUS on Twitter!

That's right, NAUS has a Facebook page and we even started tweeting in November. (We're a little too old for MySpace, even though we do have a MySpace page too!)

NAUS uses Facebook and Twitter to keep interested members and others up-to-speed on what we're doing in a less formal and more interactive way than our news sections on our website or our popular NAUS Weekly Update e-newsletter.

You can find our Facebook and Twitter feeds and links on the NAUS website (Member News and the other news sections), and we include them in the Weekly Update occasionally as well.

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