

## Issue 2010-03 — March, 2010

### Notices

#### **Korea Retirees' Schedule of Events**

**Mar 1** – the Military Retiree Assistance Office is closed for the Sam Il Korean Independence Movement holiday.

**Mar 2** – USAG-Daegu RSO Office will be open Tue 1000-1400 at the Garrison Hq Building.

**Mar 16** – USAG-Daegu RSO Office will be open Tue 1000-1400 at the Garrison Hq Building.

**Mar 16-17** – USAG-Yongsan RSO Office will be open Tue & Wed 0900-1500 in the Soldier Support Center, Bldg 4024, Room 140.

**Mar 23-24** – USAG-Yongsan RSO Office will be open Tue & Wed 0900-1500 in the Soldier Support Center, Bldg 4024, Room 140.

#### **Relocation of Suwon Immigration Office**

The Suwon Immigration Office has relocated and retirees report that the service is better and there's plenty of parking available if you drive there.

There is a [color map](#) available and annotated in Korean that can be printed and used to direct a taxi driver to the Immigration Office.

*Military Retiree Assistance Office*

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## **Medical Care Matters**

### **No Tricare Hike in 2011 Budget Request**

*By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service*

Tricare recipients will see no increase in their premiums next year if Congress approves that provision of the fiscal 2011 defense budget request, as expected.

However, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates told reporters Feb. 1 that he wants to work with Congress to find ways to help control escalating military health-care costs that are consuming an ever-increasing chunk of the budget.

Noting the skyrocketing costs of the military health-care system – \$19 billion in 2001 to \$50.7 billion in the fiscal 2011 budget request – Secretary Gates questioned how sustainable the program can remain without cost controls or higher premiums.

"It's only going to go up," he said, with Military Health System officials estimating 5 to 7 percent annual cost increases through fiscal 2015. "And it is absorbing an increasing percentage of our budget."

Officials predict that the program will grow from 6 percent of the defense budget to more than 10 percent by fiscal 2015.

"We absolutely want to take care of our men and women in uniform and our retirees," Secretary Gates said, "But at some point, there has to be some reasonable tradeoff between reasonable cost increases or premium increases or co-pays or something and the cost of the program."

There has been no Tricare premium increase since the program was founded in 1995, Secretary Gates said, adding that Congress has rejected recent Pentagon proposals for "very modest" increases. Expecting the same action this year, the Defense Department recommended no increase this year, he said.

"I ask anybody to point me to a health insurance program that has not had a premium increase in 15 years," Secretary Gates said.

Tricare benefits, he said, are "generous, as they should be for our men and women in uniform."

But Secretary Gates compared the \$1,200 average out-of-pocket costs for a family of three under Tricare to about \$3,300 for the same family under a health maintenance organization plan in the Federal Employees Health Care Program.

"We see a lot of people coming back into Tricare because the benefits are so good and the costs are so low," he said.

The Military Health System has 9.5 million eligible beneficiaries, including active-duty military members and their families, military retirees and their families, dependent survivors and certain eligible reserve-component members and their families.

Military Health System officials expect more eligible beneficiaries to continue returning to the Tricare system as costs of programs offered through their employers or spouses continue to increase.

The Government Accountability Office [GAO] recently found that more than 85 percent of retirees ages 45 to 49 and half of retirees between ages 60 and 64 had access to other group health insurance, but chose Tricare instead.

As Tricare usage increases, so does the number of health-care visits that beneficiaries make, officials noted. Between fiscal 2005 and fiscal 2008, the average number of outpatient visits per enrollee increased from 8.7 to 9.97. Pharmacy use increased 5.5 percent over the timeframe.

*AFPC News Release 02-02-10, Feb 3*

### **Cervical Cancer**

Cervical cancer was once the number one cause of death from cancer in women. Thanks to cervical cancer screening with the Pap test, the number of women in the United States who develop cervical cancer has dropped a great deal.

With cervical cancer screening doctors can find cancer early or treat changes in the cervix before they develop into cancer. The VA provides gynecologic care, including routine pelvic exams and cervical cancer screening, to eligible women veterans.

VA recommends that all women talk with their health care providers about cervical cancer screening. VA understands the health care needs of women veterans and is committed to meeting these needs.

Women are now the fastest growing subgroup of veterans. Their number will increase in the next 10 years, and VA health care will be there for them. Find out more about VA health care for women veterans at [Women's Health](#).

*NAUS Weekly Update, Feb 5*

### **Veterans Act Signed by President**

President Barack Obama recently signed the Veterans' Emergency Care Fairness Act of 2009. This NAUS endorsed new law allows the [Department of Veterans Affairs] VA to reimburse veterans enrolled in VA health care for the remaining cost of emergency treatment if a veteran's outside insurance only covers part of the cost. Previously, VA could reimburse veterans or pay outside hospitals directly only if a veteran had no outside health insurance. The law will ensure that veterans with limited insurance will not face financial ruin due to an uncovered emergency room visit.

*NAUS Weekly Update, Feb 12*

### **VA and the New Agent Orange Provisions**

Last fall, the [Department of Veterans Affairs] VA announced three additional illnesses – B-cell leukemias, such as hairy cell leukemia, Parkinson's disease, and ischemic heart disease – had been added to the list of conditions considered service-connected and presumptively associated to exposure to Agent Orange, an herbicide and defoliant used extensively in Vietnam.

The rulemaking process to include these diseases in federal regulations is underway. Veterans who have filed an original claim, or reopened claims to include any of these illnesses, should expect to receive notice from the VA that their cases will be held pending completion of the rulemaking process.

The VA will help speed cases along by encouraging veterans to see their family physicians to obtain the specific information the VA requires to determine a claim instead of requiring a VA examination. More information will be published as it becomes available.

*MOAA News Exchange, Feb 23*

### **Regenerative Medicine Shows Promise for Wounded Warriors**

*By Donna Miles, American Forces Press Service*

Movie-goers have seen the concept play out time and time again on the big screen. Sinister Borg drones reconstitute missing digits and limbs before their eyes in the Star Wars series. Alien Jack Jeebs in Men in Black re-grows his head after it's damaged or blown off. The military is working to bring some of that science-fiction capability to wounded warriors so they can harness their own body's power to regenerate itself and repair disabling and disfiguring battlefield injuries.

The Armed Forces Institute of Regenerative Medicine is leading the charge with an ambitious program that aims to help soldiers with burn and blast injuries re-grow muscle, skin, tendons, nerves and even bone, said U.S. Army Col. (Dr.) Robert Vandre, the project director, based at a western Maryland Army post.

"Ultimately, we will be able to grow limbs," Vandre said. "But in the next decade, we should be able to reduce the number of limbs that have to be amputated, just because we will have new ways to fix things that can't be fixed now."

A dentist with a background in combat casualty care research, Vandre said he's been impressed by the way the military has saved warfighters' lives, even those who in past wars would have died from their combat wounds. "They are alive, but a lot of them still have deformities, or things that are wrong," he said. "What we want to do is to put wounded warriors back together, and restore them to how they were before their injury."

Think of a salamander that's able to regenerate a lost tail, and apply that same amphibian technology to humans, U.S. Army Surgeon General Lt. Gen. (Dr.) Eric Schoomaker said last spring as he unveiled the five-year, \$250 million initiative.

The effort has attracted some of the best minds in regenerative medicine, working together through consortiums at Wake Forest and Rutgers universities, and in cooperation with the Army Institute of Surgical Research. Funding comes from the Defense Department, the National Institutes of Health and a broad range of public and private organizations.

But unlike other regenerative medicine programs, which focus primarily on basic research or commercial enterprises, the AFIRM effort is dedicated to "translational research" - which Vandre defines as putting research into practice. "We are aimed completely toward the clinic," he said. "Our goal is to take research being done, get a clinical trial and get it into military patients."

Over the course of the program, the AFIRM plans to develop clinical therapies to repair burns; reconstruct the head, skull and face; reconstruct, regenerate or transplant limbs; eliminate scarring as wounds heal; and reduce inflammation around wounds that can damage nerves and kill muscle cells.

The work already is paying off, Vandre said, with three clinical trials under way, and five more to start within the next year. And it's already showing promise.

Former Marine Josh Maloney, 24, who lost his right hand in a training accident at Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va., was among the first troops to benefit from the effort. When he received a hand transplant last March at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, his doctors introduced a new protocol that combines cell therapy and a bone marrow transplant.

The goal, Vandre explained, was to get Maloney's body to accept the new hand while reducing the risk associated with toxic anti-rejection drugs. Just 10 days after his transplant, he had some movement in his fingers.

In another trial, researchers used regenerative medicine to get a soldier whose entire thigh muscle had been blown away a roadside bomb to generate new tissue. They applied "extracellular matrix" material - a mix of growth factors, protein and connective tissue taken from a pig's bladder - to the wound. This, Vandre explained, signaled the body to start the tissue re-growth process.

So far, AFIRM researchers have used the procedure on two patients, and they plan to conduct 15 more surgeries as part of their trial.

In other trials, researchers are constructing "scaffolding" in the exact shape of a nose or other missing or damaged body part, then applying cells on it to grow new tissue. After the new growth is completed, the biodegradable scaffolding material dissolves.

The AFIRM initiative to begin next month shows particular promise for burn patients, whose treatment often requires multiple painful, invasive skin grafts. Researchers will begin "cell spraying," taking a postage stamp-size piece of a burn victim's healthy skin, exposing it to an enzyme that separates the cells from each other, then immediately spraying them onto the damaged skin. "There's much less pain and cost, and the results look way better," Vandre said of results seen in a previous clinical trial conducted in Australia. "The results are pretty incredible."

Meanwhile, researchers also are looking into ways to reduce the scarring associated with burns. Not only is it unsightly, but it also limits movement and flexibility after patients have healed. One trial soon to be introduced will involve injecting fat cells under the burn scars - a procedure Vandre said dermatologists and plastic surgeons do all the time, with good results.

Vandre gets downright giddy talking about the developments already being seen, and the potential they hold for wounded warriors. It's the ultimate reward for an effort he took on with crusade-like enthusiasm, pitching the concept for an armed forces regenerative medicine program, identifying the government and private-sector funding sources and helping attract what he calls "the Einsteins" in the regenerative medicine field.

"I'm just thrilled that I have been able to have the chance to do something like this, that can mean so much to so many people, and that it's gotten this level of support," he said. Chuckling, he added, "I just think I have the greatest job in the whole world."  
*News of the Force (page 3), Feb 25*

## Pay Matters

### **DoD Budget on Pay Raise, Concurrent Receipt, TRICARE Fees**

The Pentagon rolled out its FY2011 defense budget this week, proposing a \$549 billion base budget (a 3.4% increase over 2010) and \$159 billion more to support war operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

During testimony before the House and Senate Armed Services Committee this week, Secretary of Defense Gates outlined three major priorities in the [Department of Defense] DoD base budget:

- Strengthening the nation's commitment to the all-volunteer force
- Rebalancing America's defense posture to prevail in current conflicts
- Continuing DoD's commitment to reform, especially in acquisition

Highlights of initiatives proposed in the new budget include:

**Pay Raise:** A military pay increase of only 1.4%. This would match private sector pay growth between 2008 and 2009. But it would be the lowest military raise since 1963. If enacted, it would be the first year since 1999 without at least some progress in reducing a basic pay raise gap that still stands at 2.4%.

**Concurrent Receipt:** The budget again proposes a five-year plan to phase out the disability offset to military retired pay for all members whose service-caused conditions forced them into medical retirement. Congress failed to enact a similar proposal last year after being unable to identify cost offsets.

**Family Support:** The budget provides \$8.8 billion - an increase of \$450 million from last year - to emphasize the importance of child support and youth programs, spouse employment, commissaries, and schools.

**Health Care:** The budget proposes \$50.7 billion to fully fund the Defense Health Program without any TRICARE fee increases for retirees.

When asked about rising health costs, Secretary Gates made it clear he thinks retiree fees should rise. "There has not been an increase in the premium for TRICARE since the program was founded in 1995," he said. "I ask anybody to point me to a health insurance program that has not had a premium increase in 15 years... We absolutely want to take care of our men and women in uniform and our retirees, but at some point, there has to be some reasonable tradeoff between reasonable cost increases or premium increases or co-pays or something and the cost of the program."

Gates said that when DoD previously proposed fee hikes and cut the budget to reflect that, Congress refused to make the increases, so the funding shortfall had to be made up. Rather than facing that scenario again, DoD has proposed full program funding, and looks to Congress for any action on TRICARE fees.

*MOAA Legislative Update, Feb 5*

### **Post 9/11 GI Bill Update**

Due to problems with processing Education Benefit claims, on October 2, 2009, VA began issuing advance payments to student veterans who had not yet received their [Department of Veterans Affairs] VA benefits for the fall enrollment period. Those enrolled were entitled to an advanced payment of up to \$3,000.

The VA issued 122,392 advanced payments totaling \$355.4 million for all education programs. Distributions from the website totaled \$247.9 million for 85,408 payments and totaled \$107.4 million from Regional Offices for 36,984 payments.

When the recipients were issued the advanced payments, they were required to acknowledge that the advance payment must be repaid and that the advance payment would be recouped from future VA payments.

Because spring enrollment processing is proceeding in a timely manner, VA closed the on-line advance pay website on January 12 and in-person requests for advance payments at local regional offices were discontinued February 8.

During the week of January 25, letters advising advance payment recipients of the reimbursement process were sent by email and through the U.S. Postal Service.

From now until February 19, all advance pay recipients will receive a second letter from the VA Debt Management Center that provides options for reimbursing VA for the advance payments and explaining the right to dispute the recovery of the advance and the right to request waiver of recovery. Individuals will be allowed 30 days to respond.

According to VA, options include a monthly repayment plan which can extend as long as one year, but each plan will be determined based on individual circumstances.

If advance pay recipients are currently receiving education benefits and they do not establish a repayment agreement with the Debt Management Center VA will deduct \$750 from monthly education payments beginning April 1.

- Post-9/11 GI Bill tuition-and-fee payments to schools will not be affected
- Benefits payable as a result of enrollment changes or reenrollments for additional terms will also be applied to recovery after 30 days
- Arrangements must be made to repay any balance remaining at the end of the enrollment period, unless the Debt Management Center is notified of plans to reenroll in the near future
- Advance pay recipients not currently receiving VA educational benefits must make arrangements with the Debt Management Center to reimburse VA
- When all efforts to recover are exhausted, the Debt Management Center will forward the remaining balance for collection by the Treasury Offset Program

*NAUS Weekly Update, Feb 12*

### **Where's the Money?**

Last week's update highlighted the President's appointment of the co-chairs of a new National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform that will scrutinize all government spending for cuts — to include Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, federal/military retirement, and other defense and veteran programs, as well as options for revenue increases.

That prompted [the Military Officers Association of America] MOAA to do a little preparatory research on federal budget trends.

According to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the federal budget is expected to grow to \$4.4 trillion in 2015 — a seven-fold increase since 1980.

The projected FY2015 defense budget of over \$600 billion shows a roughly similarly pace of growth — about 500% since 1980.

What areas of spending have seen the greatest growth since 1980?

OMB's figures highlight Medicare, Social Security, and interest on the national debt among the biggest areas of growth.

By way of comparison, the Medicare budget was only about one-third the size of the defense budget in 1980. Social Security spending totaled a little less than the defense budget at that time, and interest on the national debt was only about 40 percent of defense spending.

By 2015, net interest and Medicare are projected to nearly match defense spending, while the Social Security budget will cost nearly a third more than defense.

And the disproportional growth in Social Security and Medicare will only continue as many more millions of baby boomers retire after 2015.

On a percentage basis, defense spending would hardly seem to be the culprit in government spending growth. But remember the words of the thief who, when asked why he robbed banks, answered, "Because that's where the money is."

While the "Remaining Federal Budget" column is the largest single number on the OMB chart, it's important to remember that figure isn't a single entity, but a composite of thousands of other much smaller-budget programs - almost every one of which is some legislator's favorite.

Congress eventually will have to cut many, many hundreds of billions from the budget, and the rest of the government isn't simply going to be eliminated.

If Congress is going to have to make hard choices on Social Security and Medicare (as it will), then defense and military/federal retirees are extremely unlikely to escape unscathed.

MOAA's challenge will be to make the case that there's a major difference between social welfare programs and compensation earned by a career of service and sacrifice for the country.

*MOAA Legislative Update, Feb 26*

## Community Matters

### **Osan Hospital Clarifies Retiree Care**

At the Feb 23 Health Care Advisory Council meeting, hospital personnel discussed two items of interest to retirees. The first is that the appointment system is fully opened to retirees. That means that retirees can call in starting at 7am, and appointments can be booked out to the next available date and time.

The second item addressed is the perception by some groups that retirees have 'priority' access to the Osan Hospital. The hospital staff explained that retiree care is provided by the Internal Medicine Clinic. Internal Medicine specializes in the types of problems seen in an aging population. For active duty members and their authorized dependents, the Primary Care Clinic is their main source for care. If a problem requires the specialized care provided by Internal Medicine, they will be referred to that clinic and have priority over retiree access to appointments.

Always remember, however, that we are still being seen on a Space Available basis. Remind yourself and your dependents of that fact and don't abuse it. The people who provide the care are not the people who make the decisions about care population, so don't complain to the doctor, the pharmacist, appointments clerk, etc. Finally, when you make an appointment, show up. If you can't make it, call in to cancel or reschedule.

*Military Retiree Assistance Office*

### **New Law Makes Absentee Voting Easier for Overseas Americans**

On October 28, 2009, Congress enacted the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment (MOVE) Act. This legislation amends existing law regarding overseas voting in federal elections, and should make voting easier for overseas Americans.

### ***New Procedures for 2010 Elections***

Beginning with the November 2010 general election, and for all subsequent general, special, and primary elections, states will be required to mail out ballots at least 45 days prior to an election for a federal office. This requirement may cause some states to select earlier primary dates in order to comply with the 45-day mailing deadline, or to request waivers due to special circumstances.

In addition to mailing ballots to overseas voters, the states will be required, at the voter's request, to provide registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and blank ballots via fax or email. However, each state's laws determine whether ballot requests or voted ballots can be returned via fax or email. The new law prohibits states from rejecting marked ballots based on notarization, paper size, or paper weight requirements. The witnessing requirements of individual states remain in place.

### ***Overseas Absentee Ballot Requests***

Effective immediately, states will no longer be required by federal law to continue to mail election materials to overseas addresses (even when they are determined to be invalid) for two complete general election cycles on the basis of a single ballot request. It will now be up to each state to determine how long to continue to send out election materials before requiring overseas voters to submit new ballot requests. This change, sought by local election officials, should greatly decrease the volume of voting materials sent abroad to addresses where Americans no longer reside.

### ***State Department Recommendations***

In light of these changes, the Department of State recommends that all U.S. voters residing abroad request absentee ballots from their local election officials at the start of each calendar year, and whenever there is a change of address, change of e-mail address, or change of name, by completing and sending in a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). To locate information on your specific state's requirements, and to obtain an on-line version of the FPCA, please visit [www.fvap.org](http://www.fvap.org). Voters may also pick up a hard copy of the FPCA from any U.S. embassy or consulate. FPCAs may be mailed to your local voting officials in the United States via international mail or from any U.S. embassy or consulate. Many states allow U.S. citizens overseas to submit the FPCA by e-mail or fax.

The Department of State strongly encourages all U.S. overseas voters to provide email addresses or fax numbers on their FPCAs to enable local election officials to transmit election materials in the fastest manner available, which should then allow sufficient time for the return of voted ballots. For information regarding your specific state, please visit [www.fvap.org](http://www.fvap.org).

### ***Emergency Ballots***

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) serves as an emergency ballot for the November general elections for federal offices, although some states also permit its use for elections for state and local offices. Beginning in January 2011, the new law allows use of the FWAB for primary, special, and runoff elections for federal offices. Voters who request an absentee ballot in advance of their state's ballot request deadline, but who fail to receive an official ballot from local election officials in time to vote, should complete the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot and send it back to local election officials in time for it to be counted. An on-line version of the FWAB, together with instructions for its use, is available at [www.fvap.org](http://www.fvap.org).

### ***Questions?***

The Voting Assistance Officer at the U.S. Embassy, Seoul is also always available to answer questions about absentee voting. To contact the Voting Assistance Officer, call 02-397-4040 or send an e-mail to [VoteSeoul@state.gov](mailto:VoteSeoul@state.gov).

Embassy Seoul contact information:

American Citizen Services  
U.S. Embassy Seoul  
32, Sejongno, Jongno-gu  
Seoul 110-710, Korea

Tel: 02-397-4114 (operator available 24 hours a day)  
Fax: 02-397-4101  
DSN: 721-4114  
Website: <http://seoul.usembassy.gov>  
Email: [SeoulInfo@state.gov](mailto:SeoulInfo@state.gov)

*U.S. Embassy, Seoul, Feb 26*

## **Federal Service Matters**

### **White House to Require Contractors to Certify Tax Status to Win Awards**

President Obama has issued a memo calling on the IRS commissioner to review the tax status of companies bidding for federal work.

The memo cites [Government Accountability Office] GAO estimates that the total amount of unpaid taxes owed by tens of thousands of companies performing government work is over \$5 billion.

The memo also directs the director of [the Office of Management and Budget] OMB – working with the Treasury Secretary – and other agency heads to evaluate the practices of contracting officers and debarring officials in response to contractors' certifications of serious tax delinquencies and to provide the President, within 90 days, recommendations on process improvements to ensure those contractors are not awarded new contracts.

The memo also requests a plan to make contractor certifications available in a government-wide database, as is already being done with other information on contractors.

## ***Federal Manager's Daily Report, Feb. 4***

### **OPM Revamps USAJOBS**

[The Office of Personnel Management] OPM has launched a revised version of its USAJOBS website to focus more on searching for listings and refining searches and creating more continuity in the search process while removing or de-emphasizing clutter.

The pared-down, Google-like home page focuses on a simplified search form with fields for title and location and little else.

Search results can be further refined according to salary, grade, occupation, agency, student jobs, senior executive jobs, posting dates and work schedules.

Users can save electronic versions of documents on file and forward postings through social media outlets including Facebook – which gave OPM input on the redesign – and Twitter.

***Federal Manager's Daily Report, Feb. 4***

### **OPM Issues Plan to Improve Use of Employee Incentives**

[The Office of Personnel Management] OPM has issued a memo outlining plans to work with agencies on how to improve the administration and oversight of employee recruitment, relocation and retention [3R] incentives.

Last year OPM convened an interagency work group to develop recommendations for improving the administration and oversight of the 3R authorities with a special emphasis on developing approaches for measuring the cost-benefit of the 3Rs program.

Based on the group's recommendations OPM said it would develop additional guidance and tools to help agencies write stronger justifications for 3Rs authorizations, write improved 3Rs plans, as well as more explicit agency internal monitoring procedures, with greater emphasis on the consideration of the costs and benefits of the 3Rs.

It also plans to issue proposed regulations to require agencies to review all retention incentives and group recruitment incentives at least annually to determine whether they should be revised or discontinued.

### ***Concerned With Over-Reliance of 3R Incentives***

OPM director John Berry said he remains concerned with continued growth in 3Rs [recruitment, relocation and retention] payments given recent labor market conditions and called for more contemporaneous and active management of the 3Rs program.

OPM said it plans to review data that the biggest incentive users have submitted to OPM's Central Personnel Data File and Enterprise Human Resources Integration systems.

Further, it said it would ask agencies to validate or certify the data accuracy, then track 3Rs trends on an on-going basis and if necessary, investigate anomalies and take corrective actions.

OPM noted that the 3Rs report to Congress for 2008 shows that 47 agencies paid 39,512 3Rs payments worth more than \$284 million, and that between 2007 and 2008, the total number of incentives paid increased by more than 21 percent and the total incentive cost increased by more than 37 percent.

While OPM said it makes sense for most agencies to delegate the administration of their 3Rs programs to subordinate organizations and to the field, it said it appears that the problem for many agencies is that there is neither detailed knowledge nor adequate overview at the headquarters level of 3Rs use in the subordinate organizations and field.

*For more information on 3R, go to <http://www.federaldaily.com/federaldaily/archive/2010/02/FD021210.htm#c>*

***Federal Manager's Daily Report, Feb 23***

### **Startling High Level of Contract Employees at DHS**

At a hearing this week of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) stated that they had 200,000 contractors and 188,000 civilian employees (not including the uniformed members of the Coast Guard). Both Chairman Senator Joe Lieberman (ID-Conn) and Ranking Member Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) stated that

they were shocked by such a ratio. During the hearing on the Department's proposed FY2011 budget Chairman Lieberman said: "To me this is just a shocking and unacceptable number. Our Committee has long been concerned about DHS's heavy reliance on contractors because it raises the question of efficient use of taxpayer money, but also the question of who is in control of the Department's mission: Is it federal contractors or fulltime employees?" The Department stated that they are working to "rebalance the proposals." The Senators asked that they be given a breakdown of contractor to federal employees within each agency of the Department. So this may be a good time to start looking for jobs at DHS.

**TREA Washington Update, Feb 26**

## Laughing Matters

### **One Marine**

A large group of Taliban soldiers are moving down a road when they hear a voice call from behind a sand-dune say, "One Marine is better than ten Taliban."

The Taliban commander quickly sends 10 of his best soldiers over the dune whereupon a gun-battle breaks out and continues for a few minutes, then silence.

The voice then calls out, "One Marine is better than a hundred Taliban soldiers."

Furious, the Taliban commander sends his next best 100 troops over the dune and instantly a huge gun fight commences. After 10 minutes of battle, again silence.

The Marine voice calls out, "One Marine is better than one thousand Taliban."

The enraged Taliban commander musters a thousand fighters and sends them over the dune. Cannon, rocket, and machine gun fire rings out as a huge battle is fought. Then silence.

Finally one wounded Taliban fighter crawls back over the dune and with his dying words tells his commander, "Don't send any more men, it's a trap. There are two of them."

**from the Internet**

*(Note from Jack: In honor of St. Patrick's Day Mar 17, here's a bit of Irish humor.)*

### **The Genie**

Three guys, one Irish, one English, and one Scottish, are out walking along the beach together one day. They come across a lantern and a Genie pops out of it. "I will give you each one wish, that's three wishes in total," says the Genie.

The Scottish guy says, "I am a fisherman, my Dad's a fisherman, his Dad was a fisherman and my son will be one, too. I want all the oceans full of fish for all eternity." So, with a blink of the Genie's eye FOOM! the oceans were teeming with fish.

The Englishman was amazed, so he said, "I want a wall around England, protecting her, so that no one will get in for all eternity." Again, with a blink of the Genie's eye POOF! there was a huge wall around England.

The Irishman asks, "I'm very curious. Please tell me more about this wall." The Genie explains, "well, it's about 150 feet high, 50 feet thick, protecting England so that nothing can get in or out."

he Irishman says, "Fill it up with water."

**from the Internet**

### **The Irish Farmer**

An aging man lived alone in Ireland. His only son was in Long Kesh Prison, and he didn't know anyone who would spade up his potato garden. The old man called his son about it, and the son quickly answered, "For heaven's sake, don't dig up that garden, that's where I buried the GUNS!!!!!"

At 4 A.M. the next morning, a dozen British soldiers showed up and dug up the entire garden, but didn't find any guns.

Confused, the man called his son telling him what happened and asking him what to do next.

His son's response: "Just plant your potatoes."

*from the Internet*

*(Note from Jack: Readers may remember that Laughing Matters used to have a number of jokes from Christian Voices. That web site closed down ten months ago. I'm happy to report that Christian Voices is back on-line at <http://christianvoicesworldwide.net/> and here's the first offering.)*

#### **Mom's Where?**

One evening after dinner, my five-year-old son Brian noticed that his mother had gone out. In answer to his questions, I told him, "Mommy is at a Tupperware party."

This explanation satisfied him for only a moment. Puzzled, he asked, "What's a Tupperware party, Dad?"

I've always given my son honest answers, so I figured a simple explanation would be the best approach. "Well, Brian," I said, "at a Tupperware party, a bunch of ladies sit around and sell plastic bowls to each other."

Brian nodded, indicating that he understood this curious pastime. Then he burst into laughter. "Come on, Dad," he said. "What is it really?"

*Docs Daily Chuckle by way of "[Christian Voices](#)"*

## Director's Corner

### **Air Force Unofficial Historian Dies**

On Feb 18, Kalani O'Sullivan died of complications from pneumonia. Retirees around the world, particularly those who had spent time in Korea, are familiar with his web site, <http://www.kalaniosullivan.com>. He provided extensive historical information on Kunsan Air Base and the surrounding area while he was stationed there, and then lived there as a retiree before moving to the Osan Air Base area. He then gathered considerable historical information covering the Osan area prior to and following the 1952 construction of Osan Air Base.

Of particular interest was that he got out and interacted with the local Korean community for details, and that added the Korean flavor and color to the historical information he posted on the web site.

For those interested in the future of his web site, Kalani's daughter told me that she wants to keep the web site active. I think it would be a great memorial for his service to all of us.

*Jack Terwiel*

### **Post Office Issues Stamps Honoring Sailors**

On Thursday [Feb 4], the Post Office issued four new stamps called "Distinguished Sailors Stamps" to honor four Sailors who served with bravery and distinction during the 20th century. William S. Sims, Arleigh A. Burke, John McCloy, and Doris Miller were selected for the honor. The stamps were unveiled in a ceremony at a First-Day-of-Issue Ceremony at the Navy Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Vice Adm. William S. Sims served as Commander of U.S. Naval Forces in European waters during World War I. He was an outspoken reformer and innovator who helped shape the Navy into a modern fighting force. After his service, Sims continued to write and lecture about naval reform until his death in 1936, at which time the New York Herald Tribune declared that he had "influenced our naval course more than any man who ever wore the uniform." The Navy has named three destroyers after Sims. The most recent, USS W.S. Sims (DE-1059) was commissioned in 1970.

Adm. Arleigh A. Burke was one of the top destroyer squadron commanders of World War II. He had an equally distinguished

post war career in which he played a major role in modernizing the Navy and guiding its response to the Cold War. When Burke died in 1996, he was hailed as a "Sailor's Sailor" who defined what it meant to be a naval officer: "relentless in combat, resourceful in command, and revered by his crews."

Lt. Cmdr. John McCloy was described by a shipmate as "like a bull" who couldn't be stopped. He has the distinction of being one of the few men in the nation's history to earn two Medals of Honor for separate acts of heroism. McCloy retired from active duty in 1928 after a 30-year career in the Navy and "a lifetime of service on all the seven seas," and died in 1945. In 1963, the Navy commissioned a destroyer escort, USS McCloy (DE-1038), which was named in his honor.

Petty Officer Doris Miller has been given the title of "the first African American hero of World War II." Miller became an inspiration to generations of Americans for his actions at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Although he was only the first of a number of African Americans to be recognized for their heroism in World War II, Miller is singularly remembered for providing inspiration to a campaign for equal recognition and opportunity for blacks in the military, a campaign that bore fruit in 1948 when then-President Truman ordered "that there shall be equality and opportunity for all persons in the Armed Forces."

*NAUS Weekly Update, Feb 5*

### **Fast Track to a Train Wreck**

With the national debt at unprecedented levels and growing, many are calling for "fast track" legislative action on recommendations by a special commission to address the growing disparity between federal spending and revenues — including Social Security, Medicare, and military/federal retirement programs.

MOAA Government Relations Director Steve Strobridge provides some perspective in his February [As I See It](#) column.

*MOAA Legislative Update, Feb 19*