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Senate and House committees are back following the Presidents Day break with a full slate of hearings on Capitol Hill. AFSA is ensuring the enlisted voice is heard.

Air Force Leaders Testify. Defense and military officials testified before Congress this week and addressed issues related to the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq , plans and funding for the FY 2009 Defense Budget, Intelligence planning, and reserve and civilian programs. Lt Gen Richard Y. Newton III, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, addressed the Personnel Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee, speaking about future personnel needs and strategies stating, “The Air Force undertook significant personnel reductions to generate billions of dollars to reprogram towards recapitalizing and modernizing essential air, space, and cyber systems, congruent with our three key mission priorities. The impact on our warfighting Airmen has been significant. We have been compelled to make some very difficult choices with respect to our people. Fewer platforms that require fewer operators and maintainers are part of the equation. We are taking a hard look at all our processes and streamlining our organizations.

At the same time, we want to improve the training and professional development of our Airmen. However, maintaining a Required Force of 86 modern Combat Wings will also be significantly impacted by current programmed reductions in Air Force end strength. The Air Force has submitted a report to Congressional defense committees on Total Force end strength requirements due to new and emerging missions. This report identifies our Total Force end strength requirement of 681.9K in FY 09 growing to 688.5K by FY 15 to operate, maintain, and support a Required Force of 86 modern Combat Wings and how the AF will fund these requirements.” Hearings will continue into March as Congress formulated the Fiscal Year 2009 National Defense Authorization Act.

CMSAF McKinley’s Recent Testimony. During recent testimony before the House Appropriations Committee Military Quality of Life and Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee, CMSAF Rodney J. McKinley talked about the need to support military families. The Chief emphasized investment in families correlates to retention. He pointed out nearly half of all servicemembers are married and have children. He repeated what he has said in the past, “We recruit Airmen, but we retain families.” Taking care of families allows Airmen to more effectively carry out their important work as part of America’s Air Force. To read more about the Chief’s statement, click [HERE](#).

Top Air Force Personnel Chief Speaks about Recruiting. Lt Gen Richard Y. Newton III, Deputy Chief of Staff, Manpower and Personnel, recently told Congress, “As we prepare for an uncertain future, we are transforming the force to ensure we are the right size and shape to meet emerging global threats with joint and battle trained Airmen. Our recruiting force has met their enlisted recruiting mission through persistence and dedication. Since 2000, the Air Force has enlisted 258,166 Airmen against a goal of 254,753 for 101 percent mission accomplishment. For Fiscal Year 2008, the active-duty requirement is 27,800 and 9,258 new Airman have accessed up to this point with 9,461 waiting to enter Basic Military Training. We’re on track to meet our goals. To date for Fiscal Year 2008, we’ve accessed 100% of our active duty goal, and

accessed 100% and 114% of our Reserve and Guard accession goals, respectively.” America’s sons and daughters continue joining fellow patriots to fly, fight and win for this nation.

Palace HART is now officially re-designated as the Air Force Wounded Warrior (AFW2) program . The name change makes it easier to identify/associate it with wounded heroes. The AFW2 program provides enhanced services, including benefits counseling, employment assistance, and a host of other services based on the needs of the wounded Airman and their family. Program staff maintains contact with wounded members for up to five years after discharge. AFW2 complements other Air Force Survivor Assistance program activities, providing initial and on-going support through Family Liaison Officers. Together, these programs care for Airmen and their families.

RECENTLY INTRODUCED LEGISLATION

S. 22, the “Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2007,” was re-introduced by Senator James Webb, D-VA, during the afternoon session on 28 Feb 08. In his remarks on the floor of the Senate, he cited the current MGIB was appropriate for the time, but this benefit should be modernized to reflect the realities of 21st century service. This proposed legislation currently has 32 co-sponsors. Additional details will be provided in next week’s newsletter.

H.R. 5481, the “Military Pay Improvement Act of 2008,” sponsored by Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-FL, would provide an additional 0.5 percent increase to military basic pay for members of the Uniformed Services above the pay increase proposed by the Department of Defense. This would ensure a minimum pay increase of 3.9 percent for members, further narrowing the pay gap between the military and private sector.

S. 2658 (No Title), by Senator John F. Kerry, D-MA, would amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to extend the period a member is protected from mortgage foreclosure from 90 days to one year after the member is released from active duty with the Armed Force.

GENERAL NEWS

Airman’s Roll Call. This week’s Roll Call focuses on the Air Force’s new slogan: “Above All.” This slogan will be the centerpiece of the Air Force’s recruiting and retention efforts. To read about the new slogan and the related advertising campaign, click [HERE](#).

USAF Honor Guard Drill Team Begins New Season. The United States Air Force Honor Guard Drill team recently performed in downtown Washington, DC at Union Station. The public stopped in its tracks to watch this team’s precise moves. To read more about the Air Force’s premier drill team, click [HERE](#).

Returning Veterans Now Entitled to Five Years of VA Health Care. In a change mandated in the FY 2008 National Defense Authorization Act, veterans who served in combat since Nov. 11, 1998, including veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, are now eligible for five years of free medical care for most conditions from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The care would be provided in a VA hospital, outpatient clinic or nursing home. Prior to this change, the effective time period for such care was two years. This five-

year period has no effect upon a veteran's right to pursue care or compensation for service-related medical conditions. To read the VA press release on this subject, click [HERE](#).

VA Adds 20 New Veterans' Centers. Secretary of Veterans' Affairs, Dr. James B. Peake has announced that the VA will open 23 new centers during the next two years. Fifteen of the VA centers are already operational and five others are operating out of temporary facilities but are already seeing patients. To read more about these centers and where they are/will be located, click [HERE](#).

Military-Civilian Firefighters Respond Together When B-2 Crashes on Guam. When a B-2 bomber recently crashed at Andersen AFB, a coordinated civilian-military effort ensued. They responded quickly and effectively due to joint training that had taken place to prepare for such a situation. To read about this coordinated response, click [HERE](#).

Building a Bomb. Airmen around the world are engaged in the wide variety of tasks that it takes to defend this nation's interests. Munitions Airmen from the 455 Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron explain some of the tasks involved in assembling guided munitions. To read more, click [HERE](#).

Remains of Three Airmen Lost in World War II Identified. The DoD POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) announced today the remains of three U.S. servicemen, missing from World War II, have been identified and will be returned to their families for burial with full military honors. Click [HERE](#) to read more about these Airmen who are finally coming home.

ANNOUNCING THE ALL NEW CMSAF CHALLENGE COINS!

After more than a year working with CMSAF (Ret) Paul Airey, and CMSAF (Ret) Sam Parish the first and only CMSAF Challenge Coin site has been launched!

With the sole purpose of raising funds for the CMSAF Scholarship program, these exceptional challenge coins and commemorative sets have the blessing of all of the former CMSAFs and CMSAF McKinley. Purchased as a complete set, or individually, these finely crafted coins will make a wonderful addition to any coin collection. To order your CMSAF coins, visit www.cmsafcoin.com.

All proceeds from the coin sales will go to the CMSAF Scholarship (managed by the Airmen Memorial Foundation) program that provides scholarships to dependent children of AFAD, ANG, AFRC active and retired enlisted members. ATTENTION: AFSA Chapter Presidents, please add this important information and link to your websites. Help us raise funds for AFSA Scholarship programs.

SCHOLARSHIPS DEADLINE FAST APPROACHING:

AIR FORCE ENLISTED MEMBERS DEPENDENT CHILDREN AND AIR FORCE SERGEANTS ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL AUXILIARY MEMBERS

The Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), the Airmen Memorial Foundation (AMF), and the Chief Master Sergeants of the Air Force (CMSAF) join together annually to conduct a scholarship program to

financially assist the undergraduate studies of eligible, dependent children of Air Force Active Duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command enlisted members, and Air Force Sergeants Association members in active, retired, or veteran status.

To date, the AFSA Scholarship programs have granted \$1.5 million to dependents of the Total Air Force enlisted members. Dependent youth who have a grade point average of 3.5 or higher and a minimum combined SAT score of 1650 or minimum combined ACT score of 24 are encouraged to submit an application. More criteria and application package information is available on the AFSA website: www.afsahq.org All completed applications packets must be received at AFSA Headquarters no later than Monday, March 31, 2008. Incomplete packages are ineligible for the competition.

AFSA END-OF-THE MONTH WIRELESS SPECIALS!

We're celebrating Leap Year with fantastic savings on a wide variety of AFSA members-only discounted cell phones and wireless plans. The specials listed below are available immediately and through midnight (Pacific time) Friday, February 29 only!

Visit the AFSA website www.afsahq.org, click on Member Services, and scroll down to the AFSA Members-Only Wireless Phone Center.

Additional details:

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AT&T Plans:

\$100 Instant discount on all family plans

- AT&T Tilt – Now \$99.99 at the lower rate plans
- Motorola Q Global – Now \$49.99 Out The Door + Rebate
- Moto RAZR2 V9 – now Free
- Nokia N75 – Now Free
- Palm Treo 680 – Now \$99.99 Out The Door and Free after Rebates
- Palm Treo 750 – Now \$199.99 Out The Door and Free after Rebates

1GB iPod offer: Use this link for iPod offer details: [AFSA Wireless Center iPod Offer](#)

- Moto RAZR (all colors)
- Nokia 2610
- Nokia 6085 (both colors)
- Nokia 6126
- Nokia 6555 (all colors)

Sprint Plans:

\$50 Instant Discount

- LG Rumor (all colors) – Free Out The Door
- Moto Q9
- Moto RAZR2 V9 – now \$49.99 Out The Door + Rebate

- Palm Centro (all colors) – Free Out The Door + Rebate
- Palm Treo 755p (all colors) – now \$59.99 after Rebate
- Sanyo Katana DLX (all colors) – Free Out The Door + Rebate
- Sanyo 7050 – Free Out The Door

1GB iPod offer: Use this link for iPod offer details: [AFSA Wireless Center iPod Offer](#)

- Samsung M-300
- Samsung M-510
- Sanyo 3200 (all colors)
- Moto V3m (all colors)

Nextel Plans:

\$50 Instant Discount

- Blackberry 7100
- i560
- i570
- i580
- i760
- i880 (all colors)
- ic902

For access to the “click HERE” links, please visit www.afsahq.org