



# THE EAGLE



## THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

[www.pa-coc.org](http://www.pa-coc.org)



### NEWS AND VIEWS March 2015

#### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Preparations are under way for MOAA's 2015 "Storming the Hill" in Washington the week of April 13<sup>th</sup>, with the "Storming" event happening on Wednesday the 15<sup>th</sup>. MOAA's needs the help of our chapters to contact their federal legislators in their district offices and educate them and their staff on military on veteran's issues. Most have not served and have little or no understanding of the importance of these issues to their constituents. MOAA provides issue papers on their web site and you can contact the Government Relations office if you need help finding resources to provide to your legislators. VADM Ryan has always said that the reason MOAA gets in the door at the Capitol is because of the work we do in the chapters to educate the legislators and keep the issues alive in the districts.

This year the fact sheets cover the elimination of harmful sequestration cuts to the defense budget, reject disproportional TRICARE fee hikes and health plan changes and to sustain military pay and benefits. I will attach them to the email with this newsletter and you can also find them by going to the PA Council of Chapters Web site under the Legislative tab at: [www.pa-coc.org](http://www.pa-coc.org)

Letters requesting appointments with the sixteen members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation have been sent and appointments are being scheduled. Appointments are already scheduled with the two senators. We are asking for the help of our chapters to contact their federal legislator's district office and educate them and their staff on MOAA's three vital military and veteran issues. They will know that their constituents are interested in these issues and you can help them understand the

impact they will have on our military. VADM Ryan has always said that the reason MOAA gets in the door at the Capitol is because of the work we do in the chapters to educate the legislators and keep the issues alive in the districts.

Respectfully,

Bob Gray

Visit the Council web site:

[www.pa-coc.org](http://www.pa-coc.org) .

## COUNCIL 2015 MEETING DATES

Council meetings will be held at the Carlisle Country Club in Carlisle, near Carlisle Barracks, in the Harrisburg area on Saturdays at 11:30 AM. Legislative meetings will start at 11:00 AM for spring through fall meetings.

**January 17, April 25, July 25, and October 24.**

\* \* \* \* \*

## Six recipients chosen for 2015 Military Child of the Year, one lives in PA

**By Karen Jowers, Staff writer** *March 17, 2015*  
Several teens who volunteer their time to help children with special needs are among this year's recipients of the Operation Homefront 2015 Military Child of the Year awards.

Operation Homefront has added a category for the National Guard, bringing the number of recipients to six. Also, this year each recipient will receive \$10,000, twice as much as in previous years, and will be flown with a parent or guardian to Washington, D.C., for a special recognition gala on April 16. Each also will receive a laptop computer and other donated gifts.

They were selected by a committee that included active-duty and retired service members, spouses of senior military leaders, veteran service organization leaders, teachers and community members.

The recipients were selected from a pool of about 500 nominees. The recipient for the **Army: Cavan McIntyre-Brewer**, 13, of Duncannon, Pennsylvania, son of Michelle McIntyre-Brewer and Army Capt. Steven Brewer, a medical detachment commander at Kirk Army Health Clinic. Cavan, a seventh-grader, is founder of Socks for Vets, collecting socks and other donated items for wounded warriors. He helps his sister with her Heart Hugs program collecting pillows for pediatric heart patients.

## PENNSYLVANIA LEGISLATURE

**Bob Gray Legislative Chairman**

The Pennsylvania Legislature's established committees, such as the Veteran's Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee, is holding information meetings with the state's agencies to provide them with the opportunity to tell the committees about the operation for the agency and what they plan to accomplish in the coming year. This information will be used to evaluate the agency's budget request in the coming months. The Deputy Adjutant General for Veteran's Affairs, BG Jerry G. Beck USA, Ret. gave a very comprehensive testimony on March 17<sup>th</sup> to the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee. A copy of his testimony is included in this newsletter. The Pennsylvania War Veteran Council and State Veteran's Commission will present testimony before the House Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee at 1:00 PM on Tuesday March 24<sup>th</sup> in Room G 50 of the Irvis office building.

Check out the General Assembly web site to see the newly elected legislators and see the

committee assignments. Click on this link to the web page: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us>

## Secrets of the Capitol

Patriot News/Pennlive.com

In looking for a photo for the newsletter I came across a web site posted by the Patriot News/Penn Live capitol reporter on secrets of the capitol. It shows photos of seldom seen views of capitol rooms and locations that you do not see on the Capitol tour. The photos include the governor's and the lieutenant governor's offices and the state Supreme Court chambers on the fifth floor of the capital. It is a very interesting photo tour with good information.

[www.pennlive.com/projects/2014/capitol-secrets](http://www.pennlive.com/projects/2014/capitol-secrets) (click on link)

## Bills of Interest

### HB 601 Veterans Lottery Ticket

Rep Barrar introduced his bill for the veteran lottery ticket. HB 601 for Veterans Day Care funding. This link will take you to the page for HB 601 so you can read it.

<http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billInfo/billInfo.cfm?sYear=2015&slnd=0&body=h&type=b&bn=601>

The bill states that the funds will be used for veterans over age 60 for the reasons listed:

(1) The secretary shall market and advertise the instant lottery game operated under this section to inform the public that the game tickets are available for purchase daily and that the game proceeds will be used to fund

the following: (i) **Veterans' day-care services as established and administered by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.** (ii) **Veterans' benefit programs as provided by the Commonwealth.** (iii) **Veterans' outreach as determined by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs.**

### House Co-Sponsorship Memoranda

#### MEMORANDUM

**Posted:** January 9, 2015 12:57 PM

**From:** [Representative Stephen Barrar](#)

**To:** All House members  
Veterans Instant Lottery Ticket to

**Subject:** Fund Elderly Veteran Daycare Program

In the near future, I plan to introduce legislation amending Act 91 of 1971, known as The State Lottery Law, to establish an instant Pennsylvania lottery ticket for veterans to help fund an elderly veteran's daycare program in addition to the Veterans Trust Fund for veterans programs and benefits.

The addition of the veteran daycare program will further enhance the goal of the state lottery, which is to benefit older Pennsylvanians. This bill will indeed assist our aging veterans. Moreover, the implementation of this program could aid in the drawdown of federal funding for this program.

I am proposing this legislation to further assist our veterans in receiving the compensation and benefits they have earned by their service and sacrifice to the commonwealth and this country. It is both fitting and proper that those who put their lives on the line to serve our country should be afforded this assistance.

My proposal has received the endorsement of both the PA Was Veterans Council and the PA State Veterans Commission. Both entities have moved to make this proposal one of their top legislative priorities for this Session.

It is necessary to amend the State Lottery law to further provide for our aging veterans

population. Please join me in sponsoring this important legislation.

**HB 131** An act conferring limited residency status on military personnel, their dependants and civilian personnel assigned to a active duty station in Pennsylvania. (1 July 2015 VA law requires states to only charge In-state tuition rates to veterans attending state sponsored schools. Rep. Steven Barrar. Passed the House Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee

**HB 157** Requires state agencies to allow returning veterans that held a state issued license to be able to renew that license as though they has not been away. It also requires state agencies to look at military training and experience to meet license requirements. Rep. Doyle Heffley. Passed the House Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> and is in the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee.

**SB 42** Penalties for falsely claiming you are a veteran. Senator Lisa Baker. The bill passed in the Senate. It was assigned to the House Transportation Committee March 6th.

**SB 23** Provides special license plate for WWII, Korea & Vietnam veterans. Senator Greenleaf. The bill was assigned to the Transportation Committee Jan. 14<sup>th</sup>.

## DMVA Announces Veterans' Trust Fund Grant Recipients

*County Directors of Veterans Affairs and Veterans Symposium Awards Announced*

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) has selected 12 Pennsylvania County Directors of Veterans Affairs Offices to receive **\$99,840** in grants from the Pennsylvania Veterans' Trust Fund (VTF). Additionally, the DMVA has selected Veteran Community Initiative, Inc. to receive a \$41,000 grant to be its co-sponsor

for the first Veterans Appreciation Day Symposium.

“This is the second year that grants from the Veterans' Trust Fund have been awarded, and Pennsylvania's veterans and their families are truly the fortunate beneficiaries,” said Brig. Gen. Jerry Beck Jr., deputy adjutant general for veterans affairs. “The Veterans' Trust Fund has grown significantly thanks to generous Pennsylvanians who have voluntarily made a \$3 donation when applying for or renewing their driver's license or photo ID and/or renewing a motor vehicle registration, as well as proceeds from the sale of the Honoring our Veterans license plate.”

DMVA received 13 County Director of Veterans Affairs grant applications totaling **\$204,454.00**. Grant applicants slated to receive funding identified **\$61,603** in matching funds to be used in conjunction with their grant request. Combined with the VTF grant funding, this will result in veterans initiatives totaling **\$161,603** over a period of up to 24 months.

Grants of up to \$100,000 were available for new, innovative and expanded programs operated by County Directors of Veterans Affairs or the Pennsylvania Association of County Directors of Veterans Affairs. The three areas of emphasis for these entities were health care enrollment, veteran outreach initiatives and veterans' court initiatives within Pennsylvania at the community, county, regional or statewide level. Grants were awarded to:

- Cambria County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Centre County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$3,500 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Fayette County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to expand transportation services for veterans in the Pittsburgh area

- Forest County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$1,035 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Franklin County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to initiate several outreach programs to assist veterans
- Jefferson County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to purchase equipment that will enable them to electronically store valuable veteran documents
- Juniata/Mifflin (joint county application) Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to create a Healthy PA Veterans Affairs Program
- Lehigh County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$2,750 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Lycoming County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$2,155 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Montgomery County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,000 to increase transportation services for veterans
- Perry County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$6,000 to expand existing outreach services for veterans
- Westmoreland County Department of Veterans Affairs: \$12,400 to expand their existing outreach services for veterans

A grant of up to \$50,000 was available to statewide charitable organizations having 501(c)(3) non-profit status and a mission to serve veterans to co-sponsor a Veterans Appreciation Day Symposium with the DMVA. The grant was awarded to Veteran Community Initiative, Inc.

Veteran Community Initiative, Inc. will utilize the VTF grant to co-sponsor the first annual Veterans Appreciation Day Symposium with the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The event will be held at Fort

Indiantown Gap on Saturday, October 10, 2015. This one-day event is designed to provide veterans, service members and their families with information on a wide range of benefits and services that are available to them. These include benefits briefings, program information, educational resources, employment resources and opportunities, family counseling and many other veteran-related services. Pennsylvania veterans from any branch of the armed services and their family members are encouraged and welcome to attend this Veterans Appreciation Day.

“By awarding grants from the Veterans’ Trust Fund, DMVA is able to fund many worthwhile programs that assist and support Pennsylvania’s nearly one million veterans and their families,” Beck added. “Providing programs and services that benefit veterans is our common denominator.”

All grants are contingent upon the completion of a fully executed grant agreement.

An announcement from DMVA regarding awards to 501(c)3 organizations who applied for VTF grants to non-profits is expected in late March.

The VTF was established in 2012 and the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs is authorized to solicit and accept donations to the VTF on behalf of the commonwealth. Tax-deductible donations to the VTF can be made to: PA Veterans’ Trust Fund, Bldg. 0-47 Fort Indiantown Gap, Annville, PA 17003.

To learn more about the VTF, visit [www.vtf.state.pa.us](http://www.vtf.state.pa.us) or follow DMVA on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/padmva](https://www.facebook.com/padmva).

**Office of Policy, Planning & Legislative Affairs – DMVA contact:** 717.861.8719 or [RA-MVDMVALEGISLATIVE@pa.gov](mailto:RA-MVDMVALEGISLATIVE@pa.gov)



## Federal Bills of Interest

MOAA Legislative Update March 13, 2015

Several important veterans' bills have been introduced in the 114th Congress. Click on the bill numbers below to send your legislators a MOAA-suggested message in support.

**H.R. 333** and **S. 271: Full concurrent receipt.** MOAA's ultimate concurrent receipt bills. These bills authorize full concurrent receipt for retirees with a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent, including Chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service.

**H.R. 303: Concurrent receipt.** This bill authorizes full concurrent receipt of military retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for retirees with regular or Guard/Reserve retirements, regardless of disability rating.

**H.R. 969** and **S. 681: Blue water Navy veterans.** This bill authorizes potential veterans' benefits to Navy veterans who served onboard ships in the territorial waters of Vietnam, facing possible exposure to Agent Orange.

**H.R. 216: Develop a long-term veterans strategy.** This bill requires the Secretary of the VA to establish a Chief Strategy Office to advise the Secretary on long-range VA planning.

**S. 172: Access to appropriate immunizations.** This bill establishes quality measures and metrics to ensure veterans receive immunizations at appropriate times as set forth by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS).

**S. 170** and **H.R. 218: CHAMPVA children's protection.** This bill increases the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the CHAMPVA program to age

26, similar to other TRICARE and insurance provided under the Affordable Care Act.

**S. 210: Military spouse job continuity.** This bill provides a \$500 tax credit to military spouses who must pursue new licensing or certification in a different state due to their servicemember's military ordered relocation.

- See more at:

[http://www.moaa.org/Main\\_Menu/Take\\_Action/Top\\_Issues/Retired\\_Still\\_Working/Benefits/Bills\\_of\\_Interest.html#sthash.vzQrTBXV.dpuf](http://www.moaa.org/Main_Menu/Take_Action/Top_Issues/Retired_Still_Working/Benefits/Bills_of_Interest.html#sthash.vzQrTBXV.dpuf)

### **H.R.1384 Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act**

Introduced in House (03/16/2015) Honors as a veteran any person who is entitled to retired pay for nonregular (reserve) service or who, but for age, would be so entitled. Provides that such person shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of such recognition. The Military Coalition in Washington will push to get this bill through congress. MOAA Director of Government Relations, Mike Hayden Col, USAF (Ret), said in an email that MOAA will add it to their key bills for 2015. To learn about the bills past history read an article from Military Times. Click on the link: <http://www.military.com/benefits/2013/02/07/reserve-retirees-may-soon-get-veteran-status.html>

The bill language is below: HR 1384

To amend title 38, United States Code, to recognize the service in the reserve components of certain persons by honoring them with status as veterans under law.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

#### SECTION I. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Honor America's Guard-Reserve Retirees Act".

## SEC. 2. PROVISION OF STATUS UNDER LAW BY HONORING CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS AS VETERANS.

### (a) Veteran Status.--

(1) In general.--Chapter 1 of title 38, United States Code,

is amended by inserting after section 107 the following new section:

“Sec. 107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components “Any person who is entitled under chapter 1223 of title 10 to retired pay for nonregular service or, but for age, would be entitled under such chapter to retired pay for nonregular service shall be honored as a veteran but shall not be entitled to any benefit by reason of this section.”.

“107A. Honoring as veterans certain persons who performed service in the reserve components.”.

(b) Clarification Regarding Benefits.--No person may receive any benefit under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs solely by reason of section 107A of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection (a).

## VA Eases Health Care Rules

MOAA Legislative Update March 20, 2015

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continues their effort to ease the administrative requirements that saddle veterans attempting to receive VA benefits and services.

This week VA Secretary Robert McDonald announced the VA is changing the way it determines eligibility for health care.

The VA no longer requires veterans to disclose their net worth. Net worth is determined by combining a veteran's income and assets. Prior to this decision, a veteran's

net worth was used to determine eligibility for health care and cost of copays.

In yesterday's announcement, the VA will now consider a veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses as factors for determining health care eligibility and cost responsibility.

The elimination of the net worth criteria means lower income; non-service connected veterans will pay less money out of pocket for care.

MOAA is encouraged by the announcement. “According to the VA, 190,000 more veterans will see their health care costs reduced over the next five years because of these rule changes,” said MOAA Deputy Director for Government Relations, Cdr. René Campos, USN (Ret).

Last March, the VA eliminated annual requirements for veterans to report financial information. The VA will now verify veteran income automatically through Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration records.

This is good news for the VA as it works hard to rebuild trust with veterans—and great news for veterans because it is one less piece of information they have to remember to provide the VA.

## Federal Legislation Introduced to Aid Veterans

Military Times

Sen. John Hoeven, R-N.D., and Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., announced the Veterans Access to Extended Care Act Monday that would roll back federal regulations limiting veterans' ability to receive long-term care. They said only 20 percent of nursing homes in their respective states have contracts with the Department of Veterans Affairs because of

regulations. Their bill would allow the VA to easier contract with nursing homes and also provide hospice and home health care. Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-Ind., and Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, D-Hawaii, have introduced the legislation in the House.

## DOC Fix Heats Up

MOAA Legislative Update March 20, 2015

For the last few weeks, Congress has been discussing a resolution to prevent a 21% payment cut to doctors who see Medicare and TRICARE patients, known as the “doc fix.”

According to sources, Congress has never been this close to repealing the current Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) formula, a legislative mechanism used to pay medical providers who see Medicare and TRICARE patients.

Congress has been trying to fix the flawed formula for the past 13 years, often with short-term patches. Talks of permanent repeal have previously fallen apart at the last minute due to a lack of consensus on how to finance the deal.

Permanently repealing the doc fix will remove a great source of concern from both providers and TRICARE beneficiaries. Because TRICARE reimbursement rates are tied to Medicare's, the doc fix affects TRICARE beneficiaries of all ages. Additionally a permanent deal is needed to sustain Medicare and TRICARE for Life benefits.

The current payment patch expires March 31, and lawmakers are trying to create a permanent solution instead of passing what would be the 18th temporary fix since 2003.

Congressional leaders from both parties have hammered out a deal that would partially pay for replacing the flawed doc fix formula. For beneficiaries, the deal could involve charging wealthier seniors higher premiums for Medicare Part B and Part D. Providers might

see a shift of when payments are made to Medicare Advantage plans.

Details are scarce at this time, but the proposed legislation is rumored to consist of a new pay system for physicians, a consolidation of programs, and paying providers based on performance. Pay will be based partly on how well physicians coordinate care by introducing clinical care guidelines. MOAA will keep you informed as details emerge.

**Stop the 21 % Medicare-TRICARE Cut. Click on this link to send congress a message:**

<http://capwiz.com/moaa/issues/alert/?alertid=62956216>

## Protect Your Private Information

TRICARE Message 3/19/2015

TRICARE wants to remind you that it will never call beneficiaries and ask you for your personal information, and if you receive this type of call it is fraud. Beneficiaries should remain vigilant in protecting their personal information and their personal health information from people looking to use it for fraudulent reasons. You should never give out personal information, like your social security number, to anyone over the phone.

In more sophisticated telephone scams, the caller may have specific information that makes the call seem official, typically your address, phone numbers or doctor's name. The caller is hoping this will convince you they are a legitimate vendor and that you will give them your social security number and additional personal information.

If you receive a call like this, DO NOT give any of your personal identifiable information, such as birth date, social security number or banking information. TRICARE never asks beneficiaries for this information when calling for an official Department of Defense survey.



The Defense Health Agency (DHA) Program Integrity Office always closely monitors possible fraud against our beneficiaries. If you receive a call of this nature, please do not provide your information and contact the DHA Program Integrity Office directly. For more information, go to the [Report Fraud or Abuse](#) page on the TRICARE website.

## Pay and Retirement

MOAA News Exchange March 18, 2015

The MCRMC proposes modifying the current retirement system by adding a defined contribution in the form of a Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) with a guaranteed 1 percent government contribution. The TSP account's success will be completely dependent on the servicemember's contribution and a government match of up to 5 percent.

MOAA has serious concerns that a blended retirement benefit will fail to provide the necessary draw to retain service members to 20 years of service. We are also wary of major changes to the retirement system because REDUX, the last major alteration to military retirement, required repeal years later due to its harmful impact to retention.

Although MOAA supports providing a transportable career device for those who leave the service prior to attaining 20 years of service, it should not come at the expense of those who serve for a full career. This recommendation also fails to provide government matching to TSP accounts beyond 20 years of service, discouraging and disincentivizing continued service.

The retirement benefit value suggested is unpredictable and is contingent on variables like fund choice, return rates, member contributions, inflation, the economy, and cost-of-living increases. Management of this unpredictable retirement system is also transferred to the servicemember, signifying a dramatic change in military culture by shifting a major element of retirement planning away from the DoD onto the servicemember.

The recommendation's success is predicated on the accomplishment of major education in financial literacy of the force. By the commission's admission, only 12 percent of servicemember respondents said that they received financial information from their command or installation.

We remain skeptical of the services' ability to provide sound financial and health care counseling based on industry past practices and whether highly qualified, government-sponsored financial planners will be available at all locations to provide continued assistance to service members and retirees.

We also have concerns with how Guard and Reserve retirement would be addressed. Our review of continuation pay appears to create real inequities. These inequities could have an adverse impact on career retention in the reserve components.

Finally, by reducing the retirement multiplier, disabled retirees receiving retirement pay and VA disability compensation would receive less compensation.

***MOAA Position – This recommendation requires further analysis and study given the potential impact a blended retirement system could have on the retention of the mid-career NCOs and officer corps.***

In addition to the traditional SBP program, the proposed additional SBP option requires servicemembers to fully fund SBP costs, so that they will no longer be subject to offset by DIC payments.

MOAA is concerned that this proposal does nothing to eliminate the current offset inequity affecting approximately 60,000 survivors. Under a two-tier system, retirees will be paying for elimination of the SBP-DIC offset through higher premiums.

The higher premium costs will be most beneficial to survivors of retirees that are the most financially strapped – 100 percent total and permanent disabled retirees. MOAA

believes we should not ask these disabled retirees to pay higher premiums.

Our analysis shows that while some service members support a two-tier system, an overwhelming majority will not be willing to pay higher premiums for the benefit. We believe that higher premiums would provide a disincentive for retirees to enroll in the program altogether.

***MOAA Position – MOAA does not support the recommendation.***

The MCRMC states that, “Financial education should be provided to service members to develop a culture of personal financial responsibility. Training should contain real-world, practical lessons packaged to engage the youngest cohort of Service members.”

Messaging on financial literacy from leadership is in place through the [Military Saves Program](#). Currently, some bases share Personal Financial Managers with other installations, limiting their availability.

MOAA believes any plan to grow a more robust financial and health benefit training program must be expanded to include service members, retirees, and family members.

Any plan to promote financial literacy should include education on accessing benefits at key touch points during the military life cycle and when leaving military service.

***MOAA Position – MOAA supports the recommendation.***

The MCRMC wants Congress to replace the 30 current Reserve Component (RC) duty statuses with six broader statuses. The RC structure will focus on active duty, inactive duty, and full-time National Guard duty as the three primary statuses.

***MOAA Position – MOAA supports the recommendation but believes the final number of statuses requires vetting by the reserve component to ensure service members are provided proper credit for their duty.***

\*It’s important to note that the MCRMC put forth recommendations. At this time, these recommendations are not legislative proposals.

To learn more about MOAA’s positions on other recommendations from the MCRMC, please [click here](#).

## **Air Force: F-15s, F-16s for Close-Air Support**

NGAUS Washington Report March 10, 2015

Top Air Force officers, including Gen. Frank J. Grass, the chief of the National Guard Bureau, spent last week talking about the service’s close-air support mission, but focused on using F-15s and F-16s for the mission, not the A-10 Thunderbolt, which has long been the service’s go-to aircraft for CAS.

The Air Force wants to retire all A-10s, including those in Air National Guard wings in Idaho, Indiana, Maryland and Michigan. Some members of Congress are not keen on the idea. NGAUS opposes the move.

Gen. Herbert J. Carlisle, the commander of Air Combat Command, told reporters after the summit that the Air Force will create squadrons of F-15s and F-16s for close-air support.

"We will always do close-air support. We have always been committed to it," Carlisle said, according to *Air Force Times*.

And, he said, the service will use the A-10 for that role as long as it is viable. But, he said, the Air Force has to plan for the future.

"There's only so much you can get out of that airplane," he told reporters. "Those airplanes are going to wear out. They've been worked very, very hard. They've done incredible things for us. But eventually that platform is going to age out."

He said the Air Force is moving A-10 pilots to other platforms already, pointing out that

one-third of the F-35 pilots at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., once flew the A-10.

The summit also included Gen. Mark Welsh, the Air Force chief of staff, Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff, and Gen. Joseph Dunford, the Marine Corps commandant.

## Freedom's Sentinel now qualifying operation for GWOT medals

By Jon Harper Stars and Stripes Published: March 12, 2015

WASHINGTON — Operation Freedom's Sentinel is now a qualifying operation for award of the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Pentagon announced Thursday.

The designation, approved in a memo issued Wednesday by Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Jessica Wright, is effective Jan. 1, 2015, the official start date of OFS.

OFS is a mission to train Afghan soldiers and conduct counterterrorism operations against extremists in Afghanistan. It is a follow-on mission to the Afghanistan component of Operation Enduring Freedom, which was launched against al-Qaida, the Taliban and other extremist groups after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

The new GWOT-EM designation for OFS applies to troops who have deployed overseas to support the operation from countries or ships outside of Afghanistan. There are no deployment requirements for the GWOT-SM.

Servicemembers stationed in Afghanistan participating in OFS are eligible for the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, not the GWOT-EM.

The following are the approved operations for the GWOT medals:

- Enduring Freedom (OEF)
- Iraqi Freedom (OIF)

- Nomad Shadow (ONS)
- New Dawn (OND)
- Inherent Resolve (OIR)
- Freedom's Sentinel (OFS)

## First Air Force Seeks F-16 Upgrade

NGAUS Washington Report March 10, 2015

First Air Force has filed an "urgent operational need" to improve Block 30 F-16s. The upgrade would be the installation of the Northrop Grumman APG-83 SABR active electronically scanned array radar, according to *Air Force Times*.

The upgrade would benefit aircraft in the Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve. The Air Force dropped earlier plans to provide this equipment for budget reasons. The Air Force, Air Combat Command and 1st Air Force, also called Air Forces Northern, declined to comment, according to the publication, which learned about the request last week.

In a statement provided to *Air Force Times*, the National Guard Bureau said, "Recently, the IAF/AFNORTH Commander signed and issued an Urgent Operational Need request pertaining to the Aerospace Control Alert mission. While the specifics of the UON are classified, no specific material solution has been identified, and the [request] is presently under consideration by the Air Force for validation. The Air National Guard did not request, author or submit the [request], though we did coordinate with IAF/AFNORTH per their requests to do so."

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## GLORIOUS INSULTS

“I feel so miserable without you; it’s almost like having you here.” - Stephen Bishop



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### PA COUNCIL OFFICERS 2014-2015 Term

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PA MOAA chapters have 1,894 members and another 10,591 MOAA national members live in PA and are not in chapters. That means our total PA membership is 12,485 and climbing. Thank you for staying involved!

*The Eagle* is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America. Its content does not reflect the official position of the DoD, any branch of the US Armed Forces, NOAA, USPHS, nor MOAA National. Please send articles and audio-visual submissions to the Editor, Bob Gray, at [pacocnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:pacocnewsletter@gmail.com).